

## ***President's Message—Ted Bertke***

**Memberships:** The 2026 MCDO Membership drive is wrapping up. If you have not already submitted your 2026 Membership, the form is included on page 6. If you have questions, please contact Deb Otte at [admin@marioncommunities.com](mailto:admin@marioncommunities.com). Thank you to all those who have supported the MCDO! Memberships for the year are \$15 per family or \$60 per business. We greatly appreciate the support provided for memberships as your membership contribution is invested locally, for the benefit of all those living in this great community. The MCDO focuses on supporting infrastructure and business development, agricultural education for our students, and housing development. Other areas of support include various sports activities for the youth, Chapel Hill Preschool, Marion Local FFA, Carthage Park, and Marion Township Greenway Bike Path.

**Community Luncheon:** On March 8th, 2026 the MCDO held a Community Luncheon at the Maria Stein American Legion. After a delicious lunch by Everyone Cooks, Angie Homan, we had some great community updates starting with Lee Heitkamp updating us on the Marion Township Park, Ben Kramer updating us on the many updates going on in the Chickasaw community and Steve Kramer updating us on the growth in the Osgood community. Mike Pohlman gave us an update on the new school building and what is happening at the Marion Local Schools. After Mike's update we welcomed guest speaker Ohio Senator, Susan Manchester. Senator Manchester did a great job giving us an update on what is going on within the state. She talked about how she did not agree with the property tax being dissolved. She also left time at the end to answer any questions community members had. Thank you to all that attended!



## ***Marion Township Park—Lee Heitkamp***

The Park Board of Marion Township Park meets monthly. We continue to focus on improving and maintaining the park for our community. If you have an idea for the park please feel free to reach out to a Park Board Member. The park is up and running, at the time of this writing. The Park Board is getting ready for some exciting plans this summer. Baseball and softball schedules are being finalized. Baseball is planning to have Baseball Day on May 9th. New this year the softball committee is planning to have a Softball Day on May 2nd. We will be helping kick off our young ball players with playing in the dirt and having some fun. Come out and cheer on our young athletes!

We are pleased to announce that plans are moving forward for the new shelter house project. The Park Board is teaming up with H.A. Dorsten as the general contractor. "Park Place" officially broke ground on March 28th. The Park Board is excited to finally be bringing this space to life for gatherings, celebrations, and community events. We plan to start renting "Park Place" at the start of 2027. See our social media post for when you can begin to reserve your dates! If you would like to donate to the shelter house please scan the QR code below.

**MARION TOWNSHIP PARK  
SHELTER HOUSE PROJECT  
UPDATE**

100% of Donation Goal

90%  
80%  
70%  
60%  
50%  
40%  
30%  
20%  
10%  
0%

SCAN FOR DONATION FORM



If you have suggestions for the park's future, we welcome those discussions. Current Park members include: Lee Heitkamp (President – 419-305-8238), Troy Luebke (project manager- 419-733-1675) Jeff Wolters (Treasurer – 419-953-0373), Diane Alexander (Social media/email coordinator – 419-733-5968), Ryan Stucke (Rentals – 419-852-5088), Greg Hartings (419-852-8177), Jodi Winner (419-953-3290), Brenda Hamberg (419-852-0292, Secretary/Concession Stand).

Please follow us on **Facebook (Marion Township Park)**, **Instagram (mariontwppk)** or email us at **mariontwppk@gmail.com**.

## ***The Retreat House: Spiritual Centers—Steve Pulskamp***

We hope you spend a few minutes on our new and still improving website that offers information about facility updates and events at the Retreat Center. Visit us at: [www.spiritualcenter.net](http://www.spiritualcenter.net)

The December Advent Sacred Painting Workshop was a great success! Marcie Stammen led a group of 30 aspiring artists in creating uniquely inspired works of art. Future Sacred Painting sessions are being planned, so keep an eye out for social media and email newsletters.

### **WHAT'S COMING UP**

A first-ever outdoor winter event is happening this December! Inspired by traditional German Christ Child markets, the 'Christkindlmarkt' will take place on the grounds of the Maria Stein Retreat Center and the Shrine of the Holy Relics, creating a festive Christmas community atmosphere! The two-day event on December 11 and 12 will include traditional German food and drinks, a Market Hut featuring vendors with unique items for sale, a silent auction, a Christmas concert by Nashville artists Caleb + Kelsey, and much more!

If you are interested in applying to be a Vendor, please contact Robin at [robin@spiritualcenter.net](mailto:robin@spiritualcenter.net) or call 419-925-7625 to request an application form. A jury committee will review applications and select vendors based on product uniqueness and market fit. Vendors will be assigned a space in the Market Hut tent.

Here are a few events happening this spring and summer:

- Healing Masses will be held on April 7 and May 12, beginning at 7:00 pm in the Chapel "at the Lake" in Montezuma.
- Eagle Eye Summer Institute Retreat for youth June 15-20
- Vacation Bible School July 27-30
- Fatima August 14

## ***Maria Stein Shrine—Heidi Pierron***

As spring approaches and the days grow warmer, there's no better time to visit the Maria Stein Shrine of the Holy Relics. With flowers beginning to bloom, the peaceful grounds offer a beautiful setting for reflection and prayer. Visitors can spend time in the Shrine's courtyard, which features a stunning Pietà statue as well as the Stations of the Cross, available for private devotion.

Beginning the week of Memorial Day, the Shrine will offer free guided tours of the Relic Chapel every Tuesday and Thursday at 10:00 a.m. Guests are invited to meet in the Gathering Space, located across from the reception area. These tours will continue through Labor Day, providing a wonderful opportunity to experience the Shrine in a deeper way.

It's often said that even those who live just minutes away are surprised to discover the rich history housed within the Shrine. These tours are a perfect chance to explore the sacred relics and learn more about the origins and mission of this treasured local site.

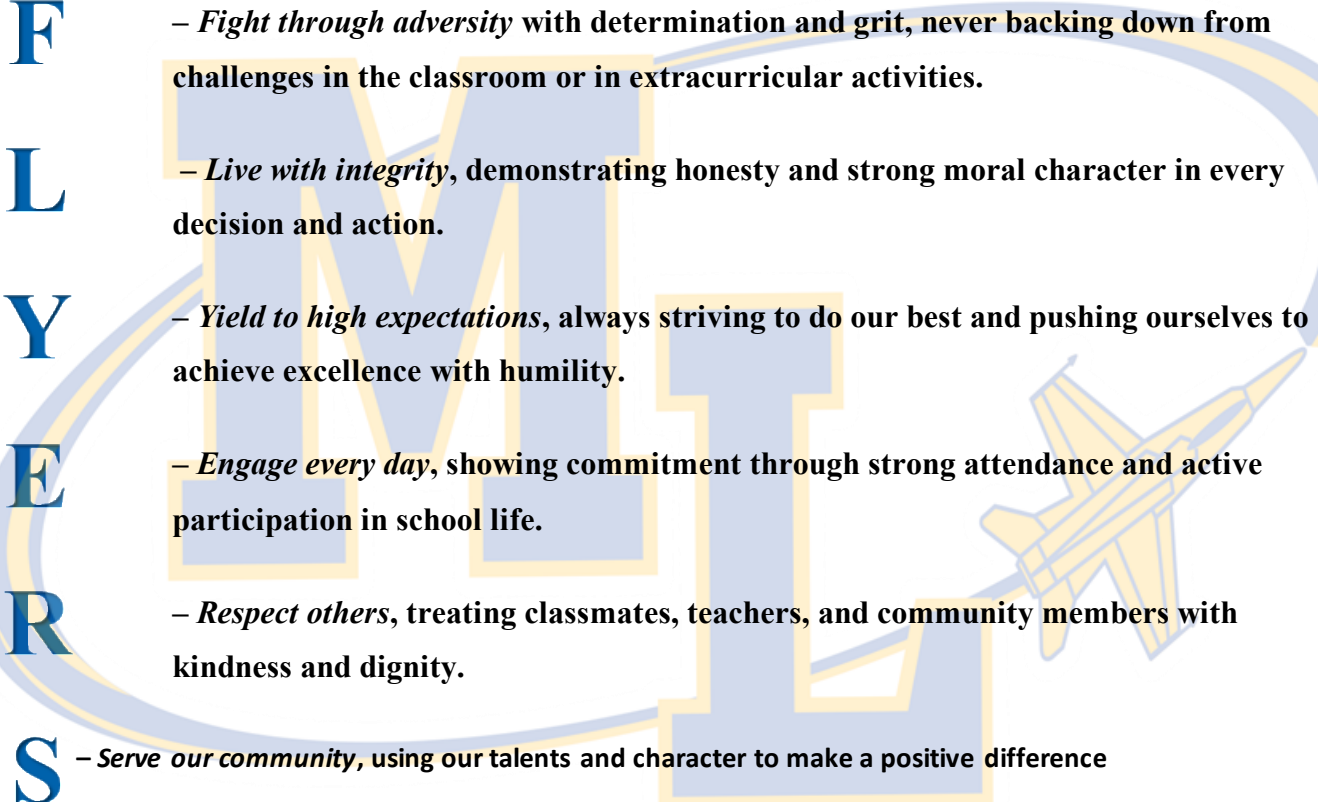
In addition, throughout the entire month of April, the Pilgrim Gift Shop will feature a 10% discount on all First Communion merchandise—ideal for families preparing for this special sacrament.

To stay connected and up to date on upcoming events and offerings, be sure to follow the Shrine on Facebook or visit [mariasteinshrine.org](http://mariasteinshrine.org).

## ***Marion Local Schools—Mike Pohlman***

Spring has arrived, and with that comes spring sports, the school play, state testing, and planning for next school year. I would like to congratulate our winter athletic teams for all of their success. I am excited for our high school musical “Aladdin Jr.” to be performed by our students in early April. Prom will take place on April 25<sup>th</sup> and this is a good time to ask for your assistance in reminding your child about the importance of making good choices. It is of the utmost importance that we have a safe and enjoyable event.

At Marion Local we know that success for our students depends on the strong partnership between our school and our parents. Together, we must remain steadfast in maintaining high expectations and not allow the pressures of society to lower the standards we set for our children. Hard work, perseverance, and accountability help shape strong character and future success. I want to thank the parents in our community for your continued support and for holding your children to those expectations alongside us. We as parents have to resist the urge to bail our children out of failures. There are many times failures are great learning tools that encourage reflection and it helps students be better prepared for the real world. Below is an acrostic poem that exemplifies the expectations for a Marion Local Flyer.



**F** – *Fight through adversity with determination and grit, never backing down from challenges in the classroom or in extracurricular activities.*

**L** – *Live with integrity, demonstrating honesty and strong moral character in every decision and action.*

**Y** – *Yield to high expectations, always striving to do our best and pushing ourselves to achieve excellence with humility.*

**E** – *Engage every day, showing commitment through strong attendance and active participation in school life.*

**R** – *Respect others, treating classmates, teachers, and community members with kindness and dignity.*

**S** – *Serve our community, using our talents and character to make a positive difference*

## ***Zahn Marion Township Library—Juli Berning***

Here's what's happening at the library.

Make sure you and your child sign up for our summer reading program. Your child could win prizes, have fun and it is a great opportunity for family time. This year's theme is "Unearth a Story". Registration will begin in late May and sign up will be online. Our kickoff party will be on Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup> at 1:30 pm **only** with entertainment provided. We will have programs at 1:30 and again at 3 pm on the Mondays of June 8<sup>th</sup>, June 15<sup>th</sup>, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, June 29<sup>th</sup> and July 6<sup>th</sup>. Door prizes are awarded and a craft is made at each Monday session. Kids going into grades 1 thru 5 can read to earn incentives and prizes. Kids going into kindergarten or younger can be read to for a chance to win prizes. Kids going into 6<sup>th</sup> grade thru adults can read to win prizes like: Kings Island tickets, zoo passes and much more. You can also earn points by attending our in-house programs, picking up crafts and a scavenger hunt. More information will be handed out at school or available in our library starting in late May.

Join us for these other upcoming events:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Tuesday, May 12 <sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm      | - Family night. Enjoy stories, songs and make a craft. No pre-registration needed.  |
| Thursday, May 21 <sup>st</sup> 6:30-7:30 pm   | - Lego night. No age limit. Parental supervision required as some pieces are rather small. Lego night is held the third Thursday of every month.  |
| Thursday, May 28 <sup>th</sup> 11:30/12 noon  | - Lunch & Learn at the library. Rich Brosher with Hand Up Village will speak. Lunch will be at 11:30 am and is available to first 25 who sign up. Presentation begins at 12 noon. Register at Mercer County Council on Aging 419-586-1644.            |
| Monday, June 1 <sup>st</sup> 1:30 pm          | - Kick-off to summer reading party. Entertainment provided.   |
| Tuesday, June 9 <sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm      | - Family night. Enjoy a story, songs and a craft. No pre-registration needed.   |
| Thursday, June 18 <sup>th</sup> 6:30-7:30 pm  | - Lego night. No age limit. Parental supervision required as some pieces are rather small. Lego night is held the third Thursday of every month.  |
| Thursday, June 25 <sup>th</sup> 11:30/12 noon | -Lunch & learn at the library. Karen Homan from Mercer Health will speak about diabetes. Lunch will be at 11:30 am and is available to first 25 who sign up. Presentation begins at 12 noon. Register at Mercer County Council on Aging 419-586-1644. |
| Tuesday, July 14 <sup>th</sup> at 1 pm        | - End of summer reading party. Prizes will be given out. Entertainment will be provided by Matt Jergens, juggler/comedian. This will be held at The Edge this year.   |
| Tuesday, July 14 <sup>th</sup> 6:30 pm        | - Family night. Enjoy stories, songs and a craft. No pre-registration needed.   |
| Thursday, July 16 <sup>th</sup> 6:30-7:30 pm  | - Lego night. No age limit. Parental supervision required as some pieces are rather small. Lego night is held the third Thursday of every month.  |
| Thursday, July 23 <sup>rd</sup> 11:30/12 noon | -Lunch & learn at the library. Speaker to be announced. Lunch will be at 11:30 am and is available to first 25 who sign up. Presentation begins at 12 noon. Register at Mercer County Council on Aging 419-586-1644.                                  |

Story hour is also held on every Thursday morning beginning at 10:30 am. Everyone is welcome!

Senior citizens play cards in the library basement every Thursday at 1:30 pm. Join the fun!

All dates, times and information on all of our upcoming programs are available on our Facebook page. Just go to [www.facebook.com/ZahnMarionLibrary](http://www.facebook.com/ZahnMarionLibrary) and "like" our page. Or you can call us at 419-925-4966. So come in to the library today and check us out!

## 301 Club—Doug Bender

The MCDO 301 Recreation Club hosted their Appreciation Party in January. Entertainment, food and beverages were provided for all members and their families, thank you to all who were able to attend.

All winners of gift certificates should have been notified by a committee member in the past few weeks. Thank you to the following businesses for donating a gift certificate:

**Maria Stein Legion Bar, Winan’s Coffee and Chocolates, Scott’s Carryout, Chickasaw Qwik Stop, Winner’s Meats, Town Tavern, Moeller Brew Barn, Korner Kafe, Mercer County Elks, and MVP Sports**

As always, we thank all of the businesses who help our cause by donating gift certificates. We also thank all of our members for your continued support of not only our organization, but your support of our youth programs and parks in the Marion Community. Also, a special thank you to the Legion for hosting again this year.

If anyone would like to join the MCDO 301 Recreation Club, please reach out to Doug Bender through email at [mcdo301.group@gmail.com](mailto:mcdo301.group@gmail.com) or by phone at 419-252-0763 or any of the other committee members (Luke Bertke, Alex Moeller, Aaron Timmerman Danny Liette, Kyle Mescher, Greg Wolters & Dustin Seitz). A special thank you to Wes Everman, Matt Homan and Kyle Moeller for their dedication to the committee. We welcome Kyle Mescher, Greg Wolters and Dustin Seitz to the 301 Club Committee.

Chicken dinner tickets are being packaged and sent to our local softball and pony league teams, please keep an eye out for those in the coming weeks. The chicken dinner pick-up date is scheduled for Sunday, July 12<sup>th</sup>.

The MCDO 301 Recreation Club is a non-profit group that has been actively supporting Marion youth programs and our local parks since 1996. Our goal is to help sustain active programs and the development of our parks. We are able to accomplish this through membership fees, donations & our annual chicken dinner sales. Our community and children benefit from your generosity. Go Flyers!

## 2026 MCDO Membership Form

### 2 Membership Form Options:

- Complete the online form at <http://marioncommunities.com>.
- Complete and mail the membership form below.

MCDO Membership Business \$60 / Family \$15			
Name:			
Address:			
City, State, Zip:			
Email:			
Phone:		Date:	

### 3 Payment Options:

- Please make checks payable to: Marion Community Development Organization
  - Please send remittance to: MCDO - PO Box 65 - Maria Stein, OH 45860
- Pay by Venmo - Username: @MarionCommunity-DevelopmentOrg
  - (Please include "MCDO Membership" in Description)
- Pay by Paypal: [paypal.me/marioncommdeveloporg](https://paypal.me/marioncommdeveloporg)

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