

## A brief history of Falkner Swamp U. C. C.

In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, German refugees of the Reformed faith from the Palatinate (the Rhine Valley, north of Switzerland) came to the New World and settled in this area, bringing with them their Bibles, hymn books, catechisms and an unbreakable faith in God. Because of persecution, oppression and famine in the Old World these German emigrants came to Pennsylvania to seek religious freedom.

At first they had no church edifice and worshiped in private homes and barns. Having no minister, they eventually hired a school teacher, John Philip Boehm, to be their layreader in 1720. Boehm was an enthusiastic, consecrated leader, and was soon urged to assume some of the offices of the ministry, even though unordained. He drew up a "*Kirchenordnung*," a form of church government, for the Falkner Swamp Reformed Congregation. In the same year, October 15, 1725, he distributed the elements of the Holy Communion for the first time to forty communicants at Falkner Swamp. (At this time, Boehm also served the congregations at Skippack and White March.) The historical marker which stands along the road next to our church commemorates this great event in the words:

*This congregation is the oldest  
in continuous existence in the  
Evangelical and Reformed Church.  
Organized October 15, 1725,  
by the Rev. John Philip Boehm,  
founder of the German Reformed Church  
in Pennsylvania.*