

NEWSLETTER

FOR MEMBERS & FRIENDS OF FALKNER SWAMP UCC

OUR CHURCH'S MISSION STATEMENT (adopted 11/13/2022)

as printed in the Constitution & By-laws

We, the Congregation of Falkner Swamp United Church of Christ offer this mission to all members, friends, and neighbors near and far:

1. To be a place of welcome and a peaceful spiritual retreat for all of God's children.
2. To strengthen and share our relationship with God through the Holy Word, prayer, music, worship, and service to others.
3. To spread God's love by modeling our daily lives as examples set before us by Jesus Christ.

See inside for:

- *Financial Update through February 2024*
- *Luke's Italian Delight*
- *Committee Updates/Events*
- *New Members*



- **The most recent financials and committee reports** submitted are posted on the bulletin board outside the church office. We have a couple new committees added to the board so be sure to check it out.
- **Falkner Swamp participates in Redner's Save-A-Tape program.** Save your entire receipt, including the Save-A-Tape total (sample below) and turn them into the church office. Full details on this program on the last page of this newsletter.

Today's 1% Save-A-Tape Total \$14.74

Dear Falkner Swamp Friends,

Hope broke.

The top arm of the “E” on my red HOPE sign, that is, while I was putting away Christmas decorations in January.



Hope is a central theme of Advent and it is also one of the echoes of Easter. Not wishful thinking or optimism, Christian hope, says Sister Joan Chittester, “digs in the rubble of the heart for memory of God’s promise to bring good out of evil and joy out of sadness and, on the basis of those memories of the past, takes new hope for the future. Even in the face of death. Even in the fear of loss. Even when our own private little worlds go to dust, as sooner or later, they always do.”

The disciples found hope amidst the rubble of crucifixion and loss of dreams about their idea of a Messiah. Later, the apostle Paul would write to encourage the church in Rome, “And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” (Romans 5:3-5)

Eastertide, the 50 day season that stretches beyond Easter Sunday, is an opportunity to renew hope, especially *participatory* hope that requires practice in order to manifest it. Not optimism, but deep trust in God’s overturning of death, and the death-dealing ways of the world. Put away ruby slippers; break out your cleats.

Participatory hope looks like what William Barber II, now a civil rights activist and pastor, experienced when his family moved back to his parents’ hometown of Roper, North Carolina, in the 1960s. Barber’s grandmother would go out each Sunday afternoon to visit someone who was ill and suffering. “We’ll be back shortly,” she’d say, “We’ve got to go hope somebody.”

Barber thought in her Carolina accent she was mispronouncing the word “help.” Gradually it dawned on him that he heard her exactly as she said it. She was going out to hurting people, “people who were despised by the white society around them, downtrodden by the forces of poverty, and in the name of Christ she was ‘hoping’ them, bearing witness to the Lord whose wounds are still seen and to the Easter world that has overcome all hatred and oppression.”*

Hope born of Christ and spread through the power of the Holy Spirit never breaks. It is born anew in us, revealed in us, shared through our words and actions.

My HOPE sign is whole again. It needed glue, a clamp, and some time. You can still see the crack. Participatory hope is like glue and the clamp; we spread it on the broken spot and hold each other tightly to help it stick. Suffering and pain leave scars but hope buffs them with life-giving meaning.



The cross is our symbol of Christian hope. As we walk this season of Eastertide, I will offer a sermon series on “the many meanings of the cross.” We begin on April 7 with “The Great Reversal,” where everything is backward! God reversed death at Easter, and so in our worship we begin starting with the end. Come and see!

With you on the journey,

Rev. Frances

*Thomas G. Long, “The Shock of Easter,” *Journal for Preaching*, Vol XLVII, #3, Easter 2024.



Lucas Krause has decided for his Confirmation project, he will serve a lasagna lunch after worship on April 21st. He asks if you can try to invite a friend to church service that Sunday and stay after for lunch. It will be a free will donation, for a local family. Lucas has come to learn this year that an 11 year old student at his school, Luis Maradiaga, was diagnosed with Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma (DIPG), which is a rare and very aggressive, inoperable brain tumor. This family is in our Gilbertsville/Boyertown community and is facing difficulties in covering necessary expenses to help Luis.

What is DIPG?

DIPG is a type of tumor that starts in the brain stem, the part of the brain just above the back of the neck and connected to the spine. The brain stem controls breathing, heart rate and the nerves and muscles that help us see, hear, walk, talk and eat. These tumors are called gliomas because they grow from glial cells, a type of supportive cell in the brain.



- **April 7** – Our children sing “Easter Bells” again as they collect for Joyful Noise offering.
- **April 14** – Lee Comer leads us in worship & offers a message.
- **April 20** – Property & Cemetery Work Day 9 AM - noon
- **April 21** – Luke’s Italian Delight – stay after worship for Lucas Krause’s confirmation project – a lasagna lunch with a free will offering, proceeds to benefit a local family in need.
- **April 23** – Ladies Night @ 6:30 PM (details below)
- **April 27** – Parent-and-Me Painting class with Jana Robbins (details below)
- **April 28** – New Members join our faith community.

Ladies Night – Tuesday, April 23rd



6 PM – doors open

6:30 PM - dinner (catered by Women’s Ministries)

\$15/adult, free for children ages 12 & under

Cash only to Judy Miller

Enjoy music from the men of Falkner Swamp.

A donation to Falkner Swamp’s general fund will be made from the proceeds in appreciation of the men working in the kitchen & providing the entertainment.

Parent-and-Me Painting Class w/Jana Robbins



Saturday, April 27th

1 – 3 PM

\$25/participant

Financial Update through February 2024

Update from the budget committee:

Total funds available for general use at the end of January:	\$56,009.23
Total Income received in the month of February:	+ \$14,914.44
Total Expenses paid in the month of February:	- (\$11,530.18)
Total funds available for general use at the end of February:	\$59,393.49



Thank you to our Cleaning Crews! They keep all our church spaces sparkling & fresh. For April, we thank Becky Comer, Barb Geary, and Lee Heffner.

We can always use more team members, please contact the church office if you have some time & can help out: 610-323-4053 or falknerswamp@comcast.net



The Property and Cemetery Committees are holding their annual work day on Saturday, April 20th 9 AM to Noon (roughly). Robin will serve lunch to the workers at approximately Noon. Some of the areas that need 'help' would be the garden areas around the church, bush trimming, stone straightening in the cemeteries, with other jobs to be added to the list as we begin looking around to see what's needed.

It would help if individuals could supply the tools for the area they're working in: gloves, sturdy shoes (or boots), appropriate clothing (no idea what the weather will be), shovels, rakes, trimmers. Large construction garbage bags will be available, topsoil, tractor and trailer for moving dirt ... whatever you think you'll need.

We'd love to see a large turnout. Any questions? ... talk to Robin Zerr or Mary Ann Erb



	1	2 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM Women's Ministries 10 AM 1 -2 PM Scripture Study	3 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	4 **Rev. Frances' office hours	5	6 Community Breakfast 8 – 11 AM Fellowship Hall Rental 2:30 – 7:30 PM
7 10 AM Worship w/Communion Joyful Noise Confirmation Class 11:15 7 PM/AA Mtg.	8 7 PM M & W Meeting	9 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1 -2 PM Scripture Study 7 PM Property mtg.	10 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM 6 PM Stewardship mtg.	11 **Rev. Frances' office hours	12	13
14 10 AM Worship Apostolic Sunday; Lee Comer leads worship 7 PM/AA Mtg.	15 7 PM Consistory	16 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1 -2 PM Scripture Study	17 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM 2 PM Confirmation Class	18 **Rev. Frances' office hours	19	20 Work Day 9 AM – noon Confirmation Visit to Synagogue 9 AM - noon
21 10 AM Worship Luke's Italian Delight following worship 7 PM/AA Mtg	22	23 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1 -2 PM Scripture Study	24 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	25 **Rev. Frances' office hours	26	27 Parent & Me Painting Class 1 – 3 PM
28 10 AM Worship 2 – 5 PM Covenant Assoc. Spring mtg. @ St. John's Pricetown 7 PM/AA Mtg	29	30 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1 -2 PM Scripture Study				

** Times vary, please call or text for an appointment:

Please send any newsletter submissions by 9 AM on the final Tuesday of each month (except December & July when they are double month editions), to the church office, falknerswamp@comcast.net.

FUNdraising Committee Update

We're off to a great start! Our first fundraiser was a bake sale at Freed's Market. Due to rain and potential flooding, we postponed the sale from Saturday, March 23, until Sunday, March 24. It was still cold and windy, but also beautifully sunny! Our total profit for the sale is \$715!! So many church members, as well as friends and family, donated baked goods for the sale—thank you all VERY much! We truly couldn't have done it without you.



Our next event is a basket raffle. We are not asking for any donations, but would love for you to check out the baskets when they go on display on April 21. We will be selling tickets for \$1 each, or \$5 for 6 tickets. The drawing will be held on May 12 (Mother's Day). We have lots of fun ideas and we're sure there will be something to pique everyone's interest!

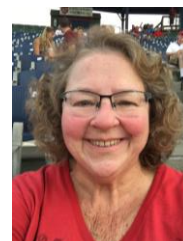
If you will recall the 2024 Budget approved by the Congregation in January, we estimated income of \$2,000 from fundraising efforts to go toward our general expenses. That is the goal we hope to meet and exceed to help Falkner Swamp continue moving forward.

If you are interested in joining the FUNdraising Committee, please talk to Chair Rob Krause, or any of our members: Cassandra Krause, Patty Fritz, Barb Geary, and Karen Miller.



The Beideman Family: Jamie and Tom are originally from the local area having graduated from Methacton and Perkiomen Valley High Schools respectively. We were married at Heidelberg United Church of Christ in Schwensville and shortly thereafter moved to the Harrisburg area to pursue a work opportunity. We recently moved back to the area and enjoy the fact that our girls, Macy and Cecily, have the opportunity to build close bonds with their grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. We are grateful to have found Falkner Swamp UCC, where as a family, we can continue our faith journey.

Hello! My name is **Barb Cole** and I've been coming to Falkner Swamp for about a year. I was invited to your delicious free breakfast by Brenda Becker. I take care of her mom, Veronica Rosenberry, and she was also coming to the breakfast. The people were so friendly! The next day was Communion Sunday and I had missed communion for so long I knew I had to come. I knew I had found a new church home. I come from a background of independent evangelical.



Valeria (Val) Horne joins Falkner Swamp having been a lifelong member of the UCC in Spring City. Her three grown children all live in the area and are active at three different churches, and she also has six adult grandchildren. Several of her children and grandchildren are teachers in various school districts. While raising her three children, Val worked at a foundry, at a doctor's office, eventually working for and retiring from American Baptist Churches, at "the donut" building in Valley Forge. Every Wednesday morning she bowls, then spends time with her brother, who lives close by. She is glad to be joining the Falkner Swamp faith community.



Falkner Swamp Garden News
submitted by Rev. Frances

Debbie Lord weeds in preparation for spring flowers. Yellow daffodils brightened the ground when this was taken during Holy Week. I wonder what is popping up now?

The white rain barrel was installed last fall by Jim Kooser. A hose will be hooked up from the gutter to capture rain, which can be accessed by a spout at the bottom to water our garden for years to come. Stacey Brennan helps weed and water throughout the growing season.

Thank you, Debbie, Jim and Stacey for your caring stewardship!



SAVE-A-TAPE PROGRAM

Redner's is committed to the communities that we are a part of, and we want to help out the non-profit organizations whose members shop in our stores. In this interest, Redner's developed our 1% Save-A-Tape program.

Here's how it works:



Your group must be a charitable or non-profit organization. Each member must stop at the store office or Customer Service area to get a Save-A-Tape card. By using this card each time you purchase merchandise at Redner's Warehouse Markets, your receipt will be designated as a Save-A-Tape customer receipt. To expedite your 1% payment, we ask that you total all the Save-A-Tape totals on your receipts. When you have accumulated enough tapes to receive a meaningful rebate, (at least \$50 rebate) please arrange them in an orderly fashion and give them to the Manager on duty. Please be sure to include verification of your totals and the entire register/sales receipts. (Example: calculator tape, computer print out, hand written summary etc.) They will then be verified and within eight weeks you will receive a check for 1% of the total amount of the tapes submitted. (Excluding items controlled by the government such as tax, milk and tobacco products) Laws prohibit discounting tax, milk or tobacco products.)