

# 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 January 2024*
- *Prayer Vigil*
- *Season of Lent schedule*
- *Peanut Butter egg pictures*

*Did You Know?*

- **The most recent financials and committee reports** submitted to the church office are posted on the bulletin board outside the church office.
- **You can receive texts from the church** about Sunday happenings and other timely matters by signing up for Flocknote. Contact Sharon in the church office for details.
- **Collecting Crushed Cans for Cash!** Please rinse and crush your ALUMINUM ONLY cans for the church. A can crusher is available in the Fellowship room, on the window sill closest to the back stairwell. A blue recycling bin is placed to the left of the door leading to the cemetery, at the bottom of the back stairwell. Thank you, Rob Krause, for the idea and providing the bin, and for taking the cans in for cash. Thank you to Larry & Ann for donating the can crusher. Thank YOU reader and future can collector!

Dear Falkner Swamp Siblings in Christ,

Why is Purple the Color for Lent?

The other day I was awe-struck to drive by a ranch home with light purple flowers scattered all over the front lawn. A few neighborhoods later I saw another one, and then I was ravenous to see more like it. Turns out wild violet can grow like that.

Celie in Alice Walker's The Color Purple, said, "I think it pisses God off if you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don't notice it. People think pleasing God is all God cares about."

If you can excuse the rough expression, I am right there with Celie, and I'm so glad I happened to see those yards boasting the Lenten purple. Then there's the purple Lenten rose bush, and the purple crocuses....purple is the color of early spring for sure, but it's not why the signature color marks the season of Lent.

The purple of royalty is subverted in Lent to stand for Jesus' humility and suffering. In John's gospel, the Roman governor Pilate orders Jesus to be whipped then dressed in a purple robe and a crown of thorns. Once Jesus is crucified, Pilate has a public notice written and posted on the cross, reading "Jesus the Nazarene, the king of the Jews."

When we break out the purple during this season, we stand in solidarity with Jesus who suffered as God's son and as a human who pressed on with his mission. Purple is intended to be a penitential sign, as well, as we bow to our heavenly King, turning Pilate's joke on its head.

You may notice the same purple comes out at Advent. Truthfully, I'd love to see a deep blue at Advent over the purple, to give Lent the full weight of the purple and to give Advent its own special color. Anyone up for crafting new Advent paraments (cloths for our church sanctuary furniture) please come talk to me!

Keep your eye out for the beauty of purple. God will rejoice.

With you on the journey, Rev. Frances

## Financial Update through January 2024

Update from the budget committee:

Total funds available for general use at the end of December:	<b>\$49,697.36</b>
Total Income received in the month of January:	<b>+ \$20,112.63</b>
Total Expenses paid in the month of January:	<b>- (\$13,800.76)</b>
Total funds available for general use at the end of January:	<b>\$56,009.23</b>

We welcome ideas from the congregation on ways to bring more people in to our faith community.



- **March 5 – The Dogs @ Good Shepherd @ 1 PM**
- **March 10 – PND Meal** following worship
- **March 10 – New Members' Inquiry Class**, meet with Rev. Frances
- **March 23 – Egg Hunt @ 1 PM**
- **March 24 – Palm Sunday**, One Great Hour of Sharing special offering
- **March 28 – Prayer Vigil** from noon Thursday – noon Friday
- **March 28 – Maundy Thursday @ 7 PM**, Church World Service special offering
- **March 31 - Easter Sunday** – Communion services @ 8 & 10 AM, Future of Falkner Swamp special offering



Prayer Vigil  
from noon Thursday, March 28 – noon Friday, March 29  
Please sign up on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.  
*Many slots still available.*



Thank you to our Cleaning Crews! They keep all our church spaces sparkling & fresh. For March, we thank Susan Mercer, Olga Rees and Joanne Lewis.

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](mailto:falknerswamp@comcast.net)



The Dogs of Falkner Swamp will be singing to the Seniors of Good Shepherd UCC, Boyertown, PA on Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The program will be 60 minutes of music and begins at 1 PM. Gloria Frimann, who organizes programs for their Senior Group has invited anyone from Falkner Swamp to join them. The Good Shepherd Seniors meet regularly on the first Tuesday of each month.

Save the date for Ladies Night – Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>

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 by April 7th  
Enjoy music from the men of Falkner Swamp.



**Bethany Children's Home Christmas Gifts - 2023**

We collected \$765 in gift cards for Bethany! Thank you to all who contributed for your generosity.

# March

					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Community Breakfast 8 – 11 AM
<b>3</b> <b>10 AM Worship w/Communion</b>  Joyful Noise  Confirmation Class 11:15  7 PM/AA Mtg.	<b>4</b>      7 PM M & W Meeting	<b>5</b>  Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM  Women's Ministries 10 AM  1 -2 PM Scripture Study	<b>6</b>  Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	<b>7</b>      <b>**Rev. Frances'</b> office hours	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> <b>10 AM Worship</b>  PND Meal  New Member Class  7 PM/AA Mtg.	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>  Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM  1 -2 PM Scripture Study  7 PM Property Mtg.	<b>13</b>  Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	<b>14</b>      <b>**Rev. Frances'</b> office hours	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> <b>10 AM Worship</b>  Confirmation Class 11:15  7 PM/AA Mtg	<b>18</b>      7 PM Consistory	<b>19</b>  Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM  1 - 2 PM Scripture Study	<b>20</b>  Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	<b>21</b>      <b>**Rev. Frances'</b> office hours	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>  <b>Egg Hunt 1 PM</b>
<b>24</b> <b>10 AM Worship</b> Palm Sunday OGHS special offering  7 PM/AA Mtg	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>  Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM  1 -2 PM Scripture Study	<b>27</b>  Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	<b>28</b>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; color: purple;">Prayer Vigil</div>  <b>**Rev. Frances'</b> office hours  Maundy Thursday Service @ 7 PM CWS special offering	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> <b>8 &amp; 10 AM Worship</b> Easter Sunday Future of F.S.  7 PM/AA Mtg	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; width: 40%;"> <b>** Times vary, please call or text for an appointment:</b> </div> <div style="background-color: yellow; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; width: 55%; margin-left: 10px;"> Please send any newsletter submissions by 9 AM on the final Tuesday of each month (except December &amp; July when they are double month editions), to Sharon Sgriccia, falknerswamp@comcast.net. </div>					

The following was adapted by Mary Ann Erb from the magazine *Everyday Faith*, Fall 2022, pg. 38-39.



## Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

When you find yourself at a crossroad,

God will lead you in the right direction.

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, "Till now the LORD has helped us." 1 Samuel 7:12 ESV

Think about a time you experienced a big transition or faced a significant shift in your life. It may have been an unwanted change or one you saw as good and helpful (those kinds have their share of adjustments and challenges too!) Did you wonder how you would possibly get through it? Whether we view change as positive or negative, it is rarely easy—and it may take a while to find our footing once we get to the other side of the episode. Have you ever stopped to look back at the beginning of it all and thought, *Did that really just happen?* What a journey! How in the world did I make it through?

As God's children, we recognize that it isn't the world successfully bringing us through these times. We know it's Him, in all kinds of ways—guiding us by bringing people into our lives, orchestrating circumstances, or providing holy nudges and His heart-lifting words of encouragement.

Many of us have heard the term "Ebenezer," referring to the stone that was set up by the Hebrew prophet Samuel to commemorate the help God had given the Israelites. Samuel knew it was important not only to express his thanks but to remember what God had done—and to remind His people too. We humans can be a forgetful bunch, and the more often we remind ourselves (and one another) of how God provides, the less fear we'll have about the next leg of the journey. We know that He has shown Himself faithful and that we can count on Him to be there again. The story we tell about our journey can be our Ebenezer."

We can assure ourselves that the road ahead will be marked with more altars of remembrance, because He will never stop showing up for us. As the hymn "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" reminds us:

Here I raise my Ebenezer;

Here by Thy great help I' ve come;

And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,

Safely to arrive at home.

We can all use a reminder now and then that we will never walk alone.

**THE SEASON OF LENT 2024**  
“CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART” ~ PSALM 51

*Oh, feed me this day, Holy Spirit, with the fragrance of the fields and the freshness of the oceans which you have made, and help me to hear and to hold in all dearness those exacting and wonderful words of our Lord Christ Jesus, saying: Follow me.*  
-Mary Oliver, modern poet, in her collection *Thirst*

**ASH WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 14**  
**6:30 PM, RECEIVING ASH AND COMMUNION**  
**SUNDAYS IN LENT**  
**FEB 18 & 25**  
**MARCH 3 (COMMUNION) 10, 17, 24**

**HOLY WEEK**  
**MAUNDY THURSDAY MARCH 28**  
**7PM, TENEBRAE, COMMUNION**  
**FEATURING A CAPELLA “WERE YOU THERE” SUNG BY TENOR BOB ERB**  
**24-HOUR PRAYER VIGIL, NOON THURSDAY TO NOON ON GOOD FRIDAY**

*O Holy Spirit, descend plentifully into my heart. Enlighten the dark corners of this neglected dwelling and scatter there Thy cheerful beams.*  
Saint Augustine, 4<sup>th</sup> c. bishop & church father



*Prayer requests will be kept on the prayer list for 3 weeks.  
Please contact Rev. Frances if the prayer request should be extended.*

-Ed, who is still in the hospital recovering from a stem cell transplant, Brenda reports his numbers are improving , just very slowly

-Harold, uncle of Robin & Penny, who is having some health issues

The biggest thank you to all who supported the peanut butter egg fundraiser this year. Whether you purchased ingredients, donated money, sold eggs, bought eggs, mixed, rolled, dipped, weighed, boxed, cleaned up or thought and prayed for us, you helped make this a huge success! \$3191 was raised and 245 boxes were sold. Whew and congratulations!

