

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 March 2024*
- *Graduation News*
- *Committee Updates/Events*
- *Stewardship Seeds*



Joyful Noise offerings:

Total raised 1st Sunday April 2024 - \$74

Running total since November 2022 -\$1,195.49

Split evenly between the Mustard Seed Malawi and Operation 143

Dear Falkner Swamp Siblings in Christ,

This month on Pentecost our church confirms Lucas Krause, affirming his baptism and joyfully receiving him as a member of the church.

A team of three led Lucas in his course this year: Becky Comer, Susan Mercer, and me. A team of two, rotating each session, met with Lucas twice monthly from September to May. We covered the typical subjects for a Confirmation class: the Bible, the Trinity, the church's foundation, purpose, and the UCC, the sacraments and spiritual disciplines.

Susan's teaching experience led to creative materials, games and visuals, including a scrabble-like bulletin board to help Lucas learn "church-y" words, like salvation. Take a peek inside the room downstairs – you can refresh your vocabulary!

We visited two other places of worship, St Theresa of Calcutta in Limerick and the synagogue in Pottstown, Congregation Hessed Shel Emet (Mercy & Truth). We were welcomed in each location and offered a brief tour with an opportunity to ask questions.

Lucas participated in service, both in our church and beyond. He helped serve a meal with our members at First Presbyterian in Pottstown and at some of our Community Breakfasts and rode along with the Comers to deliver Meals on Wheels. You have also been greeted by him as you came to worship on several Sundays, and he assisted as lay leader or with the children's messages.

Rounding out his introduction to membership in a faith community, Lucas also attended various meetings for that "behind the scenes" education. He and his dad attended our denominational Pennsylvania Southeast Conference Fall meeting in November. Lucas joined Rob also for a Consistory meeting and his mom for a Music & Worship meeting.

Many participated in Lucas' capstone project on April 21, "Lucas' Italian Delight," a selection of scrumptious lasagnas for lunch after worship or to take away. Lucas announced in church on April 28 that \$800 was raised through our participation, all given to the family of a classmate who has a rare brain tumor, for his care.

I know we all look forward to May 19, when Lucas becomes, like our other Confirmands, not only the "youth of our church" but our brother in Christ, a fellow traveler on the Way.

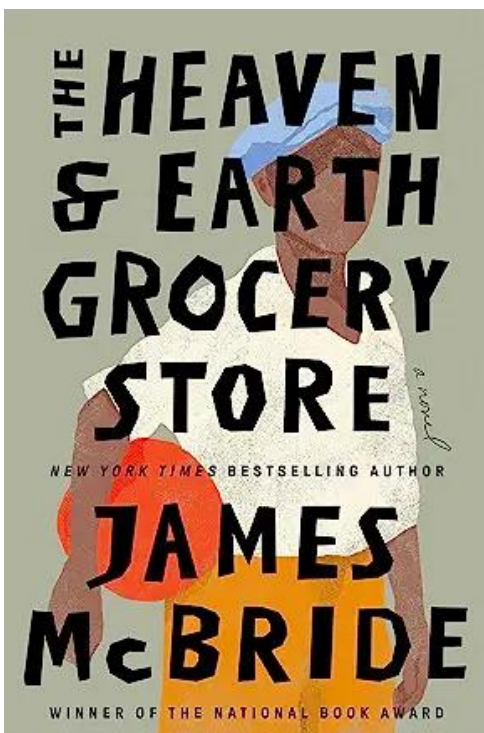
With you on the journey,

-Rev. Frances



GRADUATION NEWS

On Saturday, May 4, Robbie Keebler is graduating from Slippery Rock University's College of Engineering and Science with a B.S. in Environmental Geoscience with a concentration in Environmental Science. Proud mom Karen will be in attendance. Congratulations, Robbie! (no photo, here is a graphic of Slippery Rock:



The Pottstown Cluster is hosting a free Zoom book group to discuss the Pottstown-based historic novel, *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*. It has layers of social justice, intersectionality, mental health, and religion and culture. It should be a springboard to discuss much that all of us still wrestle with today. Please join us for one or both of these two lunch-time sessions on May 29 and June 5 at noon. When you register using the following link, you will get the Zoom link.

<https://www.pottstowncluster.org/bookgroup/>



- **May 4** – Community Breakfast (last one of the year)
- **May 5** – Communion, Joyful Noise offering
- **May 12** – commissioning of new Consistory members & new committees
- **May 19** – Pentecost Sunday (wear red!), Confirmation of Lucas Krause, Strengthen the Church special offering
- **May 20 – 26** – Rev. Frances Education Week (Rev. Ann Few available for emergency pastoral care and can be reached at 717-468-4981)
- **May 26** – Rev. Ann Few leading worship



Raffle basket drawing on May 12....still time to buy tickets! Baskets include everything from the purely practical (check out the Hefty basket with cleaning and household supplies) to the party planners' dream (check out the Cinco de Mayo basket).

See any member of the FUNdraising Committee: Rob and Cassandra Krause, Barb Geary, Patti Fritz, Karen Miller.

Financial Update through March 2024

Update from the budget committee:

Total funds available for general use at the end of February:	\$59,393.49
Total Income received in the month of March:	+ \$17,642.26
Total Expenses paid in the month of March:	- (\$12,309.26)
Total funds available for general use at the end of March:	\$64,726.49



Thank you to our Cleaning Crews! They keep all our church spaces sparkling & fresh. We don't have a team for May, but Becky has recruited various people to complete cleaning tasks throughout the month. Thank you for saying "yes"!


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

Thank you to all who contributed to Lucas' lasagna lunch on April 21. The event raised \$800! Lucas is very grateful for his Falkner Swamp church family who helped him make this lunch possible and raised money for his school mate.

Ladies Night was a huge success! Great food, fellowship and entertainment. Thank you to everyone involved who helped make the evening so special.






			1 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	2 **Rev. Frances' office hours	3	4 Community Breakfast 8 – 11 AM
5 10 AM Worship w/Communion Joyful Noise Confirmation Class 11:15 7 PM/AA Mtg.	6 7 PM M & W mtg.	7 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1 -2 PM Scripture Study 7 PM FUNdraising mtg.	8 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	9 **Rev. Frances' office hours	10	11
12 10 AM Worship Mother's Day 7 PM/AA Mtg.	13	14 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1 -2 PM Scripture Study 7 PM Property mtg.	15 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM 6 PM Stewardship mtg.	16 **Rev. Frances' office hours	17	18
19 10 AM Worship Pentecost Lucas' Confirmation Strengthen the Church special offering 7 PM/AA Mtg	20 7 PM Consistory	21	22	23 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	24	25
Rev. Frances Education Week – please contact Rev. Ann Few for pastoral emergencies @ 717-468-4981.						
Please note change in Sharon's schedule this week.						
26 10 AM Worship Rev. Ann Few leading worship 7 PM/AA Mtg	27 	28 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1 -2 PM Scripture Study	29 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	30	31	

** 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.



stewardship is **Heart** Work

Our Stewardship Seeds: Stewardship is Heart Work

A new committee has been formed. We call ourselves the Stewardship Team. Our goal is to create in our church family a true and clear understanding of what stewardship means, what it feels like, and how to infuse it into our daily Christian living. We will be transparent as we keep you informed about the structures and finances of our church.

The goal of pure stewardship is simply not "more giving". But rather, it is the development of a **spirit of gratitude and generosity**. Out of our love and gratitude for everything God gives us, the love and joy in generosity springs forward. As our United Church of Christ Statement of Faith explains, "He (Christ) calls us into His Church to accept the cost and **joy** of discipleship(stewardship)."

We are all disciples of Christ Jesus. As **Christians**, we shape our living in the way Jesus Christ lived- loving and caring for ourselves and others. Living and loving and caring from the heart. Stewardship, just like discipleship, is indeed HEART work.

As a Stewardship Team, we understand and accept the "rightness" of the following statement:

Stewardship, like discipleship, is a lifelong journey.

We are all in different stages, moving at a different pace.

No matter where we are on our life journey, as Christian Stewards, we need to consider the essential elements of stewardship, **Time, Talents, Treasures, and Truth/Transparency**, and how we can invest ourselves in them. What will our current life situation allow? Which element(s)? How much? When? Where? How long? We know the combination of our choices will change as our life's dynamics change and evolve.

What does not change is our gratitude to God for all the blessings He has given us. What does not change is that what we lovingly give back to God comes from the heart. Our choices reflect an awe-inspiring spirit of gratitude and generosity, pure and simple.

If you would like to be part of the Stewardship Team, we have a place saved just for you. Come join us- Karen Miller, Lee Comer, Susan Mercer, and Rev. Frances (ex-officio)

Essential Elements of Stewardship: Treasures/Transparency/Truth

What do we do with the **treasures (collection monies)** we give to the church?

On each envelope, 3 broad areas are designated- **Current**, **Benevolence**, and **Special/Other**.

Each person decides where and how much of their gift goes into those areas. To help us understand more clearly what is covered in each category, please look at the lists below. As you see, the **Current** list encompasses a large part of our day-to-day running expenses, which became the energy behind our consideration for increasing our gifts by 10%. If the gift is \$5 now, can it be raised to \$5.50? We will be tracking this endeavor and letting you know its impact.

**FALKNER SWAMP REFORMED CHURCH
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**
2077 Swamp Pike
Gilbertsville, Pennsylvania 19525

CURRENT	BENEVOLENCE	SPECIAL/OTHER	TOTAL
\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertising Building Maintenance Repairs Bulletins Cemetery: Gas Costs Cemetery: Mower Repairs Cemetery: Mowing Costs Choir Director/Organist Salary Christian Education Cleaning Supplies Comprehensive Insurance Computer Copier Machine Copyright Service Electric Electronic Giving Fees Evangelism / New Ministry Flock Notes Fundraising Expenses Heat Internet Live Streaming Music Supplies Newsletters Organ/Piano Maintenance Paper towels Parsonage: Maintenance & Repairs Parsonage: Sewer Pastor Continuing Education Pastor Mileage Reimbursement Pastor Ministry Expenses Pastor Pension Pastoral & Staff: Pulpit Supply Pastoral & Staff: Salary Pastoral & Staff: Social Security Allowance Pastoral & Staff: Worker's Compensation Ins. Payroll & Vendor Fees Printing Envelopes Printing Offering Envelopes Sewer Service Snow removal Telephone toilet paper Treasurer Website Worship & Sermon Materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endowment Repayment Our Church's Wider Mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Saints Bethany Children's Home Boyertown Multi-Service Building Fund Cemetery Church World Service Future of Falkner Swamy Kitchen Mustard Seed Neighbors in Need One Great Hour of Sharing Operation 143 Property Fund Strengthen the Church Veterans of the Cross Samaritan Fund 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">00041</div>