

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:

~Delegates needed for Keystone Conference
~Little Free Library
~Property Update
~Thanksgiving Tree



- **Next Budget Meeting, November 1st following worship.**
- **Organ Concert, November 8 @ 3PM. Our own organist Philip Crush and Vince Ryan will provide a concert in the sanctuary. Free will offering.**
- **Annual Congregational Meeting following worship on Sunday, December 13**
- **Christmas with the Dogs – Sunday, December 13 from 2 - 3:30 PM**

Dear Falkner Swamp Family,

Recently I listened to a sermon referencing Psalm 1:
Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked or take the path that sinners tread or sit in the seat of scoffers, [2] but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. [3] They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. [4] The wicked are not so but are like chaff that the wind drives away. [5] Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous, [6] for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. (NRSVue)

The sentence in the sermon that caught my attention drew from verse 4:
"In a season when so many of us are becoming chaff, driven by anxiety, outrage, the latest news cycle, the most counter cultural thing a follower of Jesus can do is go deeper. Get rooted. Bear fruit in season." -Rev. Dr. Michael Cheuk*

This isn't a pass to get passive, but a call to put our energy in a different direction. Cheuk reminds us of the power of a tree planted by a water source. Its roots change the ground around it, and its developing branches and leaves provide shelter and shade for many living things. Even in winter, a dormant season, the tree is storing energy for later growth.

Like a tree's rootedness in the good water and soil, so our abiding in the source of our being yields fruits of the spirit such as gentleness, patience, self-control, and love.

Read Psalm 1 again from the First Nations Version. Notice how verse 1 helps us see what "the path that sinners tread" might look like. Notice, too, how "righteous" becomes "good-hearted," and "wicked" becomes "bad-hearted." What else do you notice?

Psalm 1, First Nations Version
[1]Harmony and well-being rest on those who do not walk the path of the bad hearted, the ones who do not stand with those who stir up disharmony, those who will not sit in a circle where others are spoken of with scorn and disrespect. [2]Instead, they take joy in grandfather's clear instructions. As the sun and the moon circle the sky, they think deeply about his ways. [3]The ones who walk this path will be like a tree whose roots reach deep into the banks of the river. When the harvest moon comes, they will bear much fruit. Their shoots and leaves will not turn brown and fall to the ground. All they put their hands to will go well for them. [4]But this is not so for the ones who follow their bad hearts. They are like dry corn husks blown about by the wind. [5]There will be no seat for them to speak in the council house. When the good-hearted gather there will be no room for those who follow their bad-hearted ways. [6]For grandfather walks with the ones who have good hearts and good minds. He turns his thoughts away from those on the wrong path, who will come to a bad end.

The ways of the bad-hearted profit by our racing minds, leaping hearts and fretting hands, a response to the chaos the bad-hearted help produce. How do followers of the Way of Jesus break this cycle? Where do we place our trust? Psalm 1 calls us to stillness, then to plant our roots in the One who will clear our minds, strengthen our hearts, and make right action of our hands. The fruit we bear can indeed help heal a hurting world, one person at a time, beginning with ourselves. May it be so.

With you on the journey,
Rev. Frances
*I recommend you listen to Rev. Dr. Michael Cheuk's excellent sermon, "Who's Side is God on?" here, on Good Faith Media: https://vimeo.com/1237405424?fl=pl&fe=vl

VOTE ON NOVEMBER 3



I believe as a Christian it's my sacred duty to vote. Put simply, I've understood democracy as a function of all adults working together for the common good. Voting is adjacent to Jesus's greatest commandment, found in the synoptic gospels, which is a double-commandment from Torah, or Jewish law:

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6:5) coupled with "...and your neighbor as yourself. (Leviticus 19:18).

When asked "what is the greatest commandment" by experts in the law, Jesus responds with this double-commandment (Matthew 22:34–40, Mark 12:28–34, and Luke 10:25–28).

The love God commands is not just a long list of "dos and don'ts" but is the rudder to guide us through the rough waters towards a vibrant, healthy shared life together.

In this spirit I offer this Prayer Before Voting:

Holy and gracious God,
I thank You that You are not a God of one political party over another. When I vote, guide my choices according to the needs of my community and our nation as well as my own. When there is a conflict among those needs, may your spirit intercede with wisdom and help me make the most faithful choice.

Keep me from falling prey to social media or commentators aimed to enrage or scare me and keep me at the feet of Jesus, like Mary, listening always for Your word, especially on this day, as I hold the ballot in my hands.

In places where voting is less secure and seeds of distrust have been sown, I pray for peaceful resolution and reason to rule the day.

May we who love You remember that You are sovereign above whoever is elected and whichever party is in power.
Thank you for being with me in this small holy act of filling in these little circles. Amen.

When do you plan to vote on Tuesday, November 3?

Two Church Delegates Needed for Keystone Conference Fall Meeting

- Saturday Nov. 14, 9 AM
- Blessedly short: ONE HOUR, on Zoom.
- You don't even have to get out of your pajamas.
- You will be asked to vote to pass the 2027 Keystone Budget.



Can you say "Yes"? If so please let Rev. Frances know and she can send you the link to sign up or sign up for you.



FALKNER SWAMP UCC
PRESENTS
AN AMAZING

Vincent Ryan and Philip Crush

ORGAN CONCERT



Vincent Ryan is the Minister of Music and Organist at Advent Lutheran Church in Harleysville, PA.

Philip Crush is the Music Director and Organist at Trinity Lutheran Church in Perkasie, PA.

NOVEMBER 8, 2026

Falkner Swamp UCC

2077 Swamp Pike
Gilbertsville, PA
610.323.4053

3:00 PM

A Welcome Reception to follow the concert



Christmas with the Dogs will be the second Sunday in December; December 13th, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. The Dogs and Friends will sing some of your Christmas favorites. Following the program, cookies and beverages will be provided. Remember to put this event on your calendars, we all know how quickly time flies and our calendars become crowded and you don't want to miss this much anticipated event.

Church members and friends: Would you be willing to bake some cookies for the refreshment part of Christmas with the Dogs? Chocolate chip, sugar cookies, cut-outs, whatever your favorite cookie, please consider sharing! A sign-up sheet will be posted in the fellowship room to give us an estimate of our cookies. Thank you!

Be informed

Keeping you in the loop



Little Free Library – Take a Book. Share a Book.

Thanks to Patty Fritz for bringing to life our Little Free Library: from crafting the wood box and stand to registering it online so all who have the app can locate it. Thanks also to Bob & Sharon and Ron for erecting it on the edge of the cemetery near the small parking lot. Please feel free to leave a book or take a book, and tell your friends and neighbors about it.

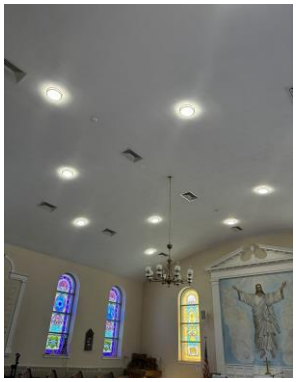
PROPERTY NEWS

Property Update: We hope you will take some time to notice the projects that the Property Committee has accomplished (or is in the process) lately.

Sanctuary lights updated to LED, a new kitchen door, weather sealing the red doors (thanks Bob S. and his brother Rocky), and changing lights throughout the building to LED bulbs (thanks Ron).







CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS

Committee Reports/Consistory Minutes

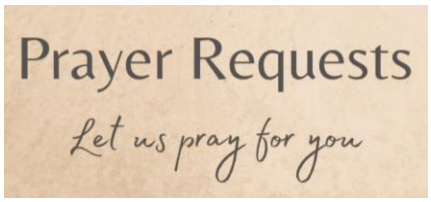
Committee reports that are received by the Church Office, and Consistory Meeting minutes that are approved by Consistory, are refreshed on the board outside the church office after each monthly Consistory meeting, typically the third Monday evening of each month, excepting one summer month.

Financial Update through September 2026

Total funds available for general use at the end of August:	**$70,996.79**
Total Income received in the month of September:	**+$12,587.52**
Total Expenses paid in the month of September:	**($17,485.53)**
Total funds available for general use at the end of September:	**$66,098.78**

The net financial results from general church activity for the month of reflected September a loss in the general fund of $4,898.01 (this amount does not include the parsonage rental income).

We gratefully receive your financial offerings for the mission and ministry of Falkner Swamp UCC through our weekly worship and via checks sent in the mail. We can also receive your financial gifts through this QR code to the left. Your donation will be processed through Vanco and is safe and secure. For all the ways you give, our church thanks you!



-our elders at home: Betsy B., Ed & Jane H., Judy & Russ M., Doris M., Joan R., Joyce R., Evelyn S., Ellie S.

-for Cindy and husband Matt, friends of Ann

-for Kim S. and family on the passing of her father

-for Jessica Erb Foster and family on the passing of her mother-in-law, Barbara



1 **10 AM Worship w/Communion** All Saint's Sunday Neighbors in Need special offering Budget mtg. following worship 7 PM/AA Mtg	**2**	**3** Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 10 AM Women's Ministries 1 – 2 PM Scripture Study 5:30 – 7 PM Girl Scouts	**4** Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM	**5** **Rev. Frances' office hours	**6**	**7**
8 **10 AM Worship** Organ Concert 3 PM 7 PM/AA Mtg	**9** Music & Worship mtg. 7 PM	**10** Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1 – 2 PM Scripture Study 5:30 – 7 PM Girl Scouts	**11** Sharon's office hours 9 - 2 PM	**12** **Rev. Frances' office hours	**13**	**14** Keystone Conference Fall meeting by Zoom 9 AM
15 **10 AM Worship** New Members' Inquiry Class 11:15 AM 7 PM/AA Mtg	**16** Consistory 6:30 PM	**17** Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1 – 2 PM Scripture Study 5:30 – 7 PM Girl Scouts	**18** Sharon's office hours 9 - 2 PM	**19** **Rev. Frances' office hours	**20**	**21**
22 **10 AM Worship** Raffle basket drawing 7 PM/AA Mtg	**23** Sharon's office hours 9 - 2 PM	**24** Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1 – 2 PM Scripture Study 5:30 – 7 PM Girl Scouts	**25** No office hours today	**26**  	**27**	**28**
29 **10 AM Worship** 1st Sunday of Advent BAMS, Future of F. S. & Joyful Noise special offerings 7 PM/AA Mtg	**30**					

Help decorate for Advent - Music & Worship invites all who can to stay **after worship on Nov. 29** to set up the tree, lights, and other decorations for the Advent and Christmas seasons.

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.

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



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

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



The CEMETERY COMMITTEE needs some help putting up driveway snow markers in the upper (next to the New Hanover Fire Company) cemetery. The more volunteers the better. We'd like to wait until the mowing season is over so we aren't putting up obstacles for our landscapers. We're thinking sometime in early November, hopefully before the ground freezes! The purpose of the snow markers is to show where the driveway and corners are in the event we have a snowfall when a funeral is scheduled. If the driveway requires plowing for the funeral party, we can't wait until the last minute to take care of it. Please contact Bob [484-941-4568] or Mary Ann Erb [484-941-4569] to indicate your availability. Thank you.

Women's
SEEKING HIM
+
SERVING OTHERS
Ministry

Women's Ministries will be selling Yuletide Logs. They will be available on December 3rd. $15 each. Please see Carol if interested.

Save the Date: All women are invited to the annual breakfast @ Sunflower Café on December 2nd @ 9AM. There will be a sign-up sheet soon.



The Thanksgiving Tree! For a few weeks in November, we will introduce "The Thanksgiving Tree". We will ask you to write on a Fall leaf something you are thankful for...or, blessings you feel you have received. In these days of stress for many people, it is sometimes hard to remember there are blessings in our lives. We want to fill our "tree" with many, many, many leaves! An anonymous donor has said they will give a donation to our church for each leaf on the tree. So, take a few moments during your daily prayer or devotion to find gratitude. What makes you feel blessed? What you are thankful for in your life? Thank you!

Nov 1 – Neighbors in Need Offering received in worship

Neighbors in Need

NIN is a UCC "5 for 5" offering, one of five annually in our denomination that supports ministry efforts. While several offerings go global, NIN stays stateside. One-third of the offering is given to the Council for American Indian Ministries that supports 20 congregations linked to the UCC, and the remaining two-thirds supports UCC grant programs to fund church ministries. Envelopes will be provided for this Offering in worship on Nov 1. Thanks for your support.



It's Basket Raffle is time!

The FUNdraising Team is hosting a basket raffle beginning Sunday, November 1, with winners to be drawn after worship on Sunday, November 22. It's a little shorter timeframe than in the past, so make sure you check the baskets out soon! Many thanks for all the donated baskets!

Raffle tickets are $1 each, or 6 tickets for $5.

Please see Patty or Karen with any questions.

Thank you for your continuing support!

The Covenant Association

of the Keystone Conference UCC
News from around the Association
November 1, 2026

Greetings!

Honoring the Saints, Embracing Our Responsibility

As November rolls in, we find ourselves reflecting on two important parts of our lives: honoring the saints who have gone before us and exercising our responsibility as citizens in the upcoming elections. At first glance, these may seem unrelated, but I believe they share a common thread: the legacy of love, courage, and hope we leave for future generations.

On All Saints' Sunday, we remember those whose lives touched ours. Some were outspoken advocates for justice, while others quietly demonstrated God's love through kindness, generosity, and compassion. They weren't perfect, but they helped shape who we are today. Their lives remind us that faith isn't simply something we believe; it's something we live.

As we approach Election Day, we have another opportunity to put our faith into action. Voting is more than choosing candidates or political parties. It is an opportunity to consider the kind of world we want to leave behind. Jesus calls us to love our neighbors, care for the vulnerable, welcome the stranger, and seek justice. These values transcend political divisions and challenge us to look beyond our own interests.

We won't all vote alike, and that's okay! Our differences need not divide us. What matters is that we approach one another with respect, compassion, and a willingness to listen.

Hebrews 12:1 reminds us that we are surrounded by a "great cloud of witnesses." Those saints who came before us carried the torch of faith, hope, and love. Now it's our turn.

May we honor their memory not only through remembrance, but through the choices we make, the kindness we share, and the courage we show.

After all, someday we will be someone's saints. What legacy of love will we leave behind?

The Rev. Tammie Wisniewski
One UCC, Kenhorst

A Personal Note

As many of you know, I have stepped down as Moderator for a number of reasons. I am deeply thankful for the opportunity to serve you. It has been an honor, and I am grateful for the encouragement, prayers, and support you have shared with me along the way.

I also need to speak plainly: we urgently need people who are willing to help—not only in our local churches, but across our Association. Christianity was never meant to be lived alone. Christ calls us to come together and work for mercy, justice, love, and hope. We cannot simply stay in our own churches, trying to hold on and hoping someone else will step forward. The need is here, and the time to respond is now.

This is bigger than any one of us or any one congregation. It is about helping bring Christ's kingdom to life here and now. I thank God for every person who has already given time, energy, ideas, and prayer to this work. I ask every church in the Covenant Association to pray—and then to act—so that together we can build a vibrant ministry that shines the light of Christ in a world that needs it.

Please prayerfully consider stepping forward to volunteer. Your gifts are needed, your ideas matter, and your willingness to help can make a real difference. With grateful hearts, let's answer Christ's call together.

Rev. Sharon Morris

REMINDER:

Deadline for any church announcements for the December bulletin insert is November 22nd. Send to covenantassociation@yahoo.com.