



# The VOICE



## Pastor's Message

Dear Falkner Swamp Family:  
 Glad to greet you again through the VOICE after our summer sojourn! Grace and peace to you.  
 Over the summer our national office of the UCC has been busy. It hosted the every-other-year General Synod (gathering of all national churches and members) in Baltimore July 1-4. Due to family plans I was unable to attend, but many in our region did and offered their leadership. A new mission focus with branding was also announced:

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST has recently adopted a new purpose, mission and vision statement:

We will love the Lord our God with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength; and our neighbor as ourselves.  
 (Purpose)

United by the Holy Spirit and inspired by God's grace we love all, welcome all, and seek justice for all. (Mission)

A just world for all. (Vision)



With this new vision comes a new logo to reflect it. The former black and red comma logo is replaced by a new logo of green and blue with the tag line, "3 Great Loves, a just world for all." What are the 3 Great Loves? They are: **Love of neighbor, love of children, love of creation.**

Over the next two years, all the settings of the UCC will be joining together in worship and mission to further commit ourselves to the 3 GREAT LOVES through 3 calls to action -- Basic Needs Drive (Fall 2017), School Supplies Drive (Fall 2018), and 3 Great Loves Walk (Summer 2019).

Churches are encouraged to offer their stories for how they live out the 3 great loves on the website: <http://3greatloves.uccpages.org/> Go on it and click around; see some of the stories that have already been shared. They range from big moves (a pastor goes to Iraq to help refugee women) to helping the neighbor next door (a church in Flint, MI, pays bills to help people keep their water turned on).



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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- VBS pictures
- September Birthdays
- New Choir Director
- #dearyoungperson
- Rally Day

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# VBS 2017



~continued from page 1

**Right now, we can ask ourselves, how does Falkner Swamp already practice these 3 great loves?**

We can affirm and rededicate ourselves to what we already do: provide bi-weekly supplies of food and household goods to Boyertown Multi-Service; through our weekly & special offerings continue to give monetary support to BMS, Boyertown Area Creative Housing, Bethany Children's Home, Joyful Noise offering for our CE programs, the "5 for 5 mission offerings" (Our Church's Wider Mission, Neighbors in Need, Strengthen the Church, The Christmas Fund, and One Great Hour of Sharing), Church World Service, the Future of Falkner Swamp and others that come up as needed; offering space and opportunity for children's education and events; offering the Community Breakfasts.

**Right now is also the time to ask ourselves, how can Falkner Swamp creatively build upon one more of these 3 great loves?**

What story might we tell one year from now that is different than the story we'd tell today?

On a final note: Last October the church voted in a special Congregational meeting to begin conversations with other churches to join in shared ministry. Chief among the sharing would be to combine resources to call a full-time pastor, as well as to combine energy and people to enable greater mission to our communities. It's time to renew *our* vision as we walk down this road.

I am humbled and blessed to be walking this walk with all of you, knowing that "we make the road by walking" (Paolo Freire) and "we're all just walking each other home (Ram Dass).

Blessings of peace & joy,  
Rev. Frances



**Save the Date!**

**"What is Discernment?"** led by Janeen R. Adil  
**Saturday, October 21, 9:30-11:30 am, Fellowship Hall**

Considered a powerful "tool" in our spiritual toolbox, practicing discernment deepens our relationship with God, in aligning our desires and God's. How to begin, what steps to follow, how to hear holy invitations and more will be covered.

Ms. Adil, of Hungry Soul Ministries, is a spiritual director and a member of St. Paul's UCC in Birdsboro.

**\*\*Please see Rev. Frances if you'd like to come and could benefit from child care.\*\***



**A Note of Thanks to Erica Creed from Choir Members:**

Everyone in our church choir would like to shout out a HUGE **“THANK YOU”** to Mrs. Erica Creed! We have had a wonderful 3 years with Erica leading our choir. She has been patient in teaching us and has put up with our shenanigans (we almost always have times of laughter and we get sidetracked). She has been a true blessing to our choir members and our church family as a whole.

Some of you may remember Erica being our choir director when she was still in high school. Back then she pushed us to be more than we ever thought we could be, insisting we do the music correctly. We all wanted so much to please our young director that we worked hard, but always had fun. We entered a competition (at Erica’s insistence) coming up against a number of very good choirs from the area...and we came in second (losing only to a choir 4 or 5 times larger than our choir)! Then, before we were ready to “let go” – Erica went off to college.

Many years later (Erica graduated college, got married, is teaching and has 3 children), when our church and our choir needed an extra boost – Erica agreed to return for an “interim”...“just to fill in for a while until we found a new choir director”. Three years later, she is now leaving us to help free up her VERY busy schedule. We are so very sorry to see her leave as our choir director, but we certainly understand the busy life of a young family. We have been blessed so very much to have had her teaching us, once again, after all these years. We want Erica to know how much we enjoyed our time and how much we appreciate her patience, persistence and dedication. Erica – you are a special person and we hope you will still be a part of Falkner Swamp United Church of Christ in the future. God’s blessing to you and your family!

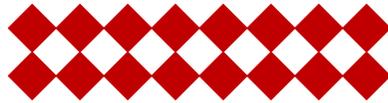
**Love, from everyone and every member of The Choir.**

**P.S.** By the way – Erica found a replacement choir director for us (yee ha)! We look forward to working with another young lady who is currently a senior in high school. Miss Erin Ahart has agreed to take on the challenge for the next year before she heads off to college. Ahh – another young lady for us to break in! What fun! We are all looking forward to continuing the choir with Erin...exciting times ahead!

**P.S.S.** Another “by the way”. Please – anyone who would like to join our choir – Please...come to choir practice at 7:00PM Thursday nights. Truly, we promise you...90% of us do NOT read music! Music notes go up and music notes go down – that’s about all we know. So – do not be intimidated thinking you can’t read music so you can’t be in the choir. Hogwash! We welcome you. So, please give it a try. It truly is a fun time, with wonderful people, as well as a chance to learn (you are never too young or old to learn).

**Again...thank you to Erica Creed and thank you to Erin Ahart!!!**

Brenda Semach and Rev. Frances are in discussions for future adult faith formation. We are throwing the idea around for a one-Saturday a month morning opportunity, kicking it off with "What is Discernment?", a workshop on Oct 21. Future gatherings could include guest speakers or a study series...please let us know your thoughts & ideas to help guide any plans. Thank you!



### **A Word from the Pastor of Visitation**

Dear fellow members of Falkner Swamp, It is an honor to be serving God with you. It is gratifying to be invited into your homes when you are not able to attend worship services in church. Then there are the times of illness, sadness, confusion, and being overwhelmed by life's realities. Being invited to be a vessel for God's love with you at these times is a blessed privilege for me. Even though you may want to leave a message for Rev. Frances or for Secretary Sharon or for President Bob Schnaars, who will contact me when they get the message, you are welcome to call me directly in an emergency - both physical and emotional (610-659-2775 or mestme@aol.com). Long telephone calls are welcome and may be a blessing.



**But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.  
2 Corinthians 4:7**

May God bless our community of believers and our communion with each other and our neighbors.

Rev. Mary Etta Mest (Rev. M)

# SEPTEMBER 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Apostolic Sunday	4 	5 9 AM Women's Min. 6:30 PM Property 7 PM PRC	6	7 7 PM Choir	8	9
10 Communion Rally Day 1st Day of Sunday School PND Meal	11 7 PM Music & Worship	12	13	14 7 PM Choir	15	16
17 Youth Sunday	18 7 PM Consistory	19	20	21 7 PM Choir	22	23
24 Drama "A Mid-Summer Canaanite Dream"	25	26 7 PM Christian Ed	27	28 7 PM Choir	29	30

## Sundays at Falkner Swamp:

◇ 9 AM Sunday School ◇ 10 AM Worship ◇ 11:30 Fellowship Time ◇ 7 PM AA Meeting

**Sept. 3**— Apostolic Sunday, Mr. Al Benner-Smith preaching

**Sept. 10** — Communion, Rally Day, 1st Day of Sunday School, PND Deal,

BACH Special Offering

**Sept. 17** — Youth Sunday, Joyful Noise Offering

**Sept. 24**— Drama: "A Mid-Summer Canaanite Dream"

Rev. Frances Hours: (generally) Wednesdays 9:30AM-2PM	Secretary Hours: (generally) Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays 9AM-2PM
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Women's Ministries will be meeting on Tuesday, September 5th @ 9 AM. They will be making plans for the upcoming year. On October 18th, the group will be travelling to Bird-in-Hand for the show, "Mennonite Girls Can Cook" and a meal to follow. Tickets are \$43. They plan to meet at the church for carpooling. Check with Arlene Umstead or Doris Moser for more information.

### SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 
- 1 Caitlin Becker
  - Kenneth Sell
  - 4 Carol Stevens
  - Frank Straub
  - 5 Marguerite Fronheiser
  - Beverly Ream
  - 6 Linda Scott
  - 13 Jim Kooser
  - Deb Taylor
  - 20 Tamara (Helsel) Alberts
  - 21 Betsy Basile
  - 23 Bob Erb, Sr.
  - Rev. Frances Chester
  - Moyra Goughnour
  - Evelyn Schwen
  - Justin Wentzel
  - 28 Sarah (Schwen) Goughnour

Save the Date!

Nov. 5, 2-4pm

All-church mission activity to benefit our community.

More details to follow in church bulletins and  
announcements.

Greetings once again from your Consistory!

We had our monthly meeting on August 21. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. Attendance was taken, a prayer was said for the work of the Consistory, and Shirley Royer read us a devotional. July's minutes were read and accepted.

We then moved on to our treasurer's report. I am very pleased to announce that Vivian Wentzel, our treasurer, reported that we had a \$ 1,734.46 gain in our monthly checking account balance. Many thanks to all the members of the Congregation who helped make this happen!

Rev. Mary Etta Mest then gave a special presentation concerning a mission opportunity put forward by the new Covenant Association, of which we are a member, after the combining of 3 former Associations took place last spring. Nov 5 is slated to be a day when churches in the Covenant Assoc. come together for a mission project that would be meaningful for their communities. The project time would last 2 hours. There will be 3 to 5 "hub" churches to host this event. Rev. Mest suggested that Falkner Swamp could be a hub and host this event. We are trying to come up with ideas for a project or a mission event. To that end I will be announcing this in church over the next several weeks. If you know of anyone who could use a helping hand around their homes and/or you know of others who would be willing to help those in need, please see me.

We then spoke about correspondence with the church. Reverend Frances brought up again Rev. Jonathan Hauze, the pastor who is helping the family from Romania. She repeated his request for any help we can give this family. To that end, there is now a sign-up sheet on the main bulletin board with a list of needs for this family. Please take a moment to consult this list, and then help these folks as you can.

We moved on to Committee Reports. Property announced that they had received all the quotations they needed for the concrete to be done on the church sidewalks. These work areas are the ones marked by the yellow paint. The contract for the work will be awarded to Greg Gaugler of Stowe, Pa. for \$ 3,110.00. The money for this project is coming out of the funds for the Future of Falkner Swamp. Work will begin in 3-6 weeks.

Property also talked about the "Roofed Enclosure" we are having built over the back steps of the Sunday School wing furnace room. We have 2 quotes in on this job, and are looking for a third. This will also be paid for out of the "Future of Falkner Swamp" account. Thanks again to all of you who have contributed monies to this account; please don't stop supporting this very important fund!

We also talked about staining/coating the floorboards of the Fellowship Room. We now have the formula for the linseed oil/turpentine mixture. We just have to find the time to put it on and then let it dry for a week. Very difficult in such a high-traffic area!

Music and Worship was next. The two big items in the immediate future are 1) the concert on August 27 for Erica Creed, and 2) Rally Day September 10. Rally Day marks a new beginning of the year for our Sunday school classes, both for youth and adults. The Aug. 27 concert marks the end of Mrs. Creed's 3 year "Temporary" position as our choir director. By the time you read this you will have heard all the praise for her, I am sure. She is making the right decision for her family and herself. She has done more for the music program of our church than was ever imagined. We were VERY lucky to have spent time with her. She is one of the many angels God has placed among us here at Falkner Swamp. We all wish her the very best of good fortune!! And we welcome Erin Ahart as Erica's replacement. Yet again, I invite EVERYONE to come out for choir practices, and you'll wonder why you didn't join sooner!

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We had a report from Christian Education's Matt Brown thanking everyone who helped with Vacation Bible School this summer. And he also highlighted Rally Day as the start of the new year's Sunday School Classes. Let me encourage all the congregation to continue to support him and Laura and all the many people who work with our children. They are the future of our church; nothing less.

Carol Stevens reported that Mary Etta had made 6 home visits and 1 long telephone call to our members who have been unable to make it to our services. She and Carol do a wonderful job serving people who are prevented from visiting our church for whatever reason.

After the committee reports Reverend Frances introduced the latest subject in our "Shared Ministry" project. To paraphrase this month's question, "What do we want to learn from church, and how do we want to learn it?" This is a great question for ALL of us to think about. While it seems like the youth get a lot out of our education program, the adults, young and old, don't seem to get as much. A suggestion was put forward that we check with the young adults that have gone through our Confirmation program, and see how it is influencing them in their daily lives. A terrific suggestion!

Finally we closed with Lord's Prayer. I want to thank yet again the members of Consistory for the fine job they are all doing. It is sometimes long, tedious work, but in the end it is well worth it, as we are doing God's work. I might add that starting next month we will be seeing who is going off Consistory after their terms. I highly recommend to everyone to "Step Up" and join our Consistory. It is incredibly uplifting; stepping out of your own world and getting involved in a larger mission; that of forwarding the teachings of Jesus Christ.

-Bob Schnaars  
Consistory President



Hello, my name is Erin Ahart. I am a rising senior at Boyertown High School planning to study music in college. I love accompanying and have played the piano for the school choir since 5th grade. I

have also accompanied the high school orchestra, jazz band and played in the pit orchestra for several of Boyertown's musical productions. For the past five years I earned first chair accompanist for the MEBC Berks County Chorus, and 2nd chair accompanist for the PMEA District Choir in 2017.

Mrs. Creed introduced me to Falkner Swamp UCC about a year ago when I filled in for Arlene at one of your Sunday services. I felt very welcomed by the church members and am so thrilled to have the opportunity to be your choir director. I look forward to working with and learning from all of you and gaining more experience teaching and directing. I know I have some very big shoes to fill, but I will do my best to live up to the standard that Mrs. Creed has set.



My name is MaryAnn Gruber. I am the volunteer coordinator for Boyertown Area Multi-Service. Our organization provides resources, services and referrals to meet unfulfilled human and community needs in Southeastern Berks and Northern Montgomery Counties.

The Center at Spring Street affords individuals over the age of 55 with opportunities for recreation, bus trips, art, educational programs, volunteer positions, as well as a hot noon meal and weekly breakfast program. Our membership currently stands at 1,126.

Our Case Management Program offers information, assistance and referrals to individuals and families. For people struggling with utility or fuel bills, we offer energy assistance, as well.

The Community Pantry, which falls under the auspices of our Case Management Program, provides food for households who currently do not have the financial means to meet their nutritional needs.

Our Case Management Clients total 1,616.

Our Meals on Wheels program provides a hot noon meal to homebound and those unable to shop for, or prepare their own food. An additional cold evening meal is also available. Presently we serve 220 clients daily. Last year this amounted to 40,404 total meals delivered.

Transportation to and from The Center at Spring Street as well as various off site activities is provided by bus. Transportation to and from medical appointments is offered by our volunteer.



At the moment, Boyertown Area Multi-Service has need of volunteers for the following:

**Drivers** to transport residents of our community, who have no other means of transportation, to and from medical appointments. The residents are ambulatory and able to get in and out of the car themselves.

**Meals On Wheels** drivers and runners

**Kitchen Helper** (to assist with preparing and packing meals for Meals On Wheels) on Friday mornings from 7:30 to 11:30

**Maintenance Helper** on Friday afternoons, Monday mornings, and sometimes on weekends to set up for rentals of our Center at Spring Street.

**Maintenance Helper** on Friday afternoons and late mornings on Saturday to work on fixing a dance floor.

**Pick up and drop off Helpers** needed to pick up pre-made boxes of baked goods from one of our local supermarkets.

If interested, please call MaryAnn Gruber at 610-367-6957.

If you know of anyone who may be interested in giving a few hours a month to assist with our needs, please have them contact me. Also, if you could please announce our needs at your Sunday Service, or place an announcement in your bulletin, it would be very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

**MaryAnn Gruber**

Volunteer Coordinator

Boyertown Area Multi-Service

200 Spring Street

Boyertown, PA 19512

(610) 367-0957

[MGRUBER@BOYERTOWNAREAMULTI-SERVICE.ORG](mailto:MGRUBER@BOYERTOWNAREAMULTI-SERVICE.ORG)



The All Day VBS was attended by 15 children, both children of members and friends from the community. Many thanks to all who volunteered, donated funds and supplies, loaned us tables and canopies, Robin and the kitchen crew who prepared and served an awesome lunch, and to the entire church for their continued support of the Christian Education program at Falkner Swamp.

As part of VBS, we collected 42 lbs. of household and personal care items for Multi-Service! These items were collected from August 5—20 and were delivered to Multi-Service on the 23rd.

**Back-to-School Blessing**

by the Rev. Marilyn E. Thornton

Bless my paper and my pen.  
 Guide my spirit deep within.  
 Help me think and help me play,  
 This whole school year, day by day.  
 As I move from class to class,  
 Guide my footsteps; clear my path.  
 Keep my tongue to speak your words.  
 Let your will for me be heard.  
 In every subject high or low,  
 May God's excellence be shown!  
 Keep me strong to reach the prize,  
 To grow in grace, becoming wise.  
 Whether far from home or near,  
 May I hold God's precepts dear.  
 To do my best at every task;  
 For this blessing, I do ask.  
 Help my family be a part  
 As I lift my mind and heart.  
 As I study, work, and pray,  
 Be with them throughout the day.  
 Of whom much is given, much is required.  
 May learning be your greatest desire!

JOIN US FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL THIS YEAR AS WE  
 DIG EVEN DEEPER INTO THE LIFE OF JESUS!



Sunday School-  
 Every Sunday at 9am

Warm Greetings,

I'd like to share the words of Paul from Galatians, Chapter 3, Verse 28.

*<sup>28</sup> There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.*

As some of you might know Matt, the kids, and I went on a family camping trip to Charlottesville, Virginia in July. While we were there we fell in love with the area: beautiful farmland, the majestic Blue Ridge Mountains, the artistic downtown area. During our trip we visited a lot of local parks, a children's museum, and a community pool, that were all filled with local children. The day we spent at the pool, Lydia, being the social butterfly that she is, had made a group of friends that she hung out with all day. Kids are really good at that. Making friends quick, kindness without question. In the wake of the upheaval in Charlottesville, and in our country this past week, this is where my heart went, to the children. These children that my children played along with. The fear they must be feeling, the questioning, and the inability to fully grasp what is happening in their community. The anger and hatred of adults is heard in the hearts of innocent children.

I put myself into the shoes of these families. Only a month ago my family walked happily across the same road that last weekend a car barreled down murdering a woman roughly the same age as me. There has been a call to send words of encouragement and love to the children of Charlottesville through the #dearyoungperson campaign. The following are the words of the organizers of this program.

On August 11 & 12, 2017, Charlottesville was the site of an awful demonstration of hate. In the aftermath, many are filled with anger, frustration, sadness and confusion, including our kids. Pictures of violence and bigotry cannot be the last images embedded into the hearts of our children. **WE** have the power to direct the long-term narrative. **WE** can decide what we want to feed into our youth. Let's sow seeds of love and tolerance.

We ask that you join us in our **#DearYoungPerson** campaign. Please send words of love and encouragement to the youth of Charlottesville through picture postcards. Let them know that they are valuable, strong, intelligent and have the ability to change the world! Postcards can be mailed to **P.O. Box 814, Charlottesville, VA 22902**. All of the agencies listed below will deliver your cards to our kids. You can send one card or several. It's impossible to show too much love and support.

Visit our [Facebook page](#) to share the campaign with friends and family. Thank you for reminding them that love always wins!

I close all of my correspondence with the words of Matthew 19:14.

*<sup>14</sup> but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."*

I pray that as we have been called to enter into faith and our relationship with Jesus with childlike wonder, that we too can enter into friendships and our relationships with one another with the same childlike ease and love. Making friends quick, kindness without question.

May the Love of Jesus be with you today and everyday,  
Laura Brown  
Director of Christian Education



**Falkner Swamp U. C. C.**

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PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE



## September 10th

- ◆ 9 AM ~ light snack and craft as Sunday School begins
- ◆ 10 AM– 11:15 AM ~ Worship with Commission of Church School teachers  
Visioning and Dreaming: An Interactive Chat with Rev. Frances  
Communion
- ◆ 11:30 AM ~ PND Meal

Falkner Swamp's mission is to be a place of Welcome to All of God's children. To be a place of spiritual retreat for all who seek to know the loving Still Speaking God using the scriptures found in the Holy Bible, the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and utilizing modern interpretations and resources to make the word alive and well in the age we are in.

~From "Constitution & Bylaws," September 29, 2013