



# The VOICE



## Pastor's Message

Greetings from the Land of Lent –

Have you heard about The Holy Land Experience? It's a Biblical theme park where you can walk where Jesus walked, only in Orlando, Florida. Live demonstrations, a huge "all-nation" church, and rare artifacts await you. I heard about it listening to author Kate Bowler talk about her recent book, Everything Happens For A Reason: And Other Lies I've Loved, about how her faith has affected the way she deals with cancer and how her cancer has affected her faith.

Bowler recalls her reaction to being at The Holy Land Experience: "you could watch Jesus' grisly crucifixion at 1 p.m. and then see him resurrected very jubilantly at 3 every day like clockwork. And I remember thinking, wow. We really want to rush to the end, right? Like, we want to rush to the good part."\*

We do often want to skip Lent, Holy Week, and the downer of dealing with mortality – ours or anyone else's. Attendance at Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday services, as any pastor can tell you, reflect this.

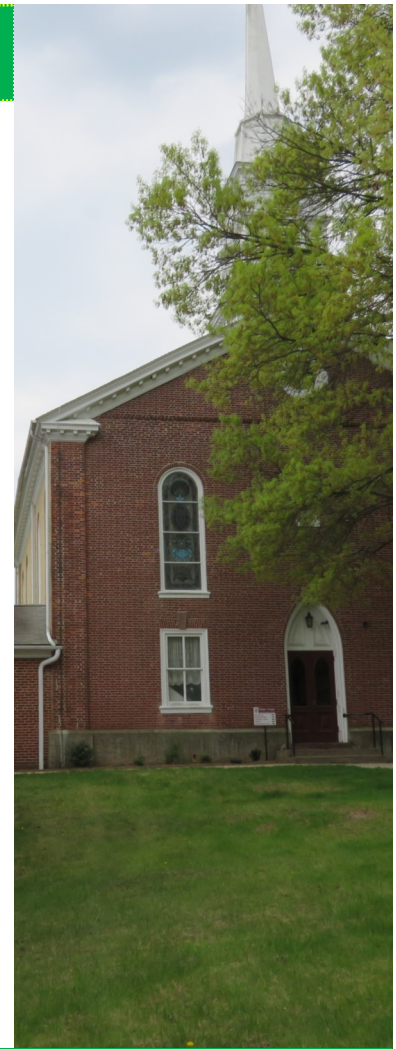
Yet, here we are, smack in the middle of Lent. Holy Week is looming ahead, with Easter a bare glimmer on the horizon.

So let us do what only the church can do, as Bowler says: "The church is historically wonderful at teaching people how to be sad because, as it turns out, life is not always skipped to 3 p.m. with the resurrection."

From Bowler's viewpoint struggling with cancer, allowing someone to be sad is to refrain from platitudes like, "everything's going to work out." Because, in her situation, it is decidedly not working out as she'd hoped. I know many of you have been there, done that. Are there, living this.

The church patterns a season of sadness in Lent so that we can see the Resurrection. Here's how: 1. We see that the Prosperity Gospel is false. The Prosperity Gospel says that if we are a good, God-loving person and pray faithfully, then we will experience health, financial security & happiness.

~continued on page 2



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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Peanut Butter Eggs
- Prayer Vigil
- Cemetery Work Day
- Blood Drive
- Women's Ministries Project
- Easter Lectionary Readings
- Holy Week Services

~continued from page 1

The Prosperity Gospel is what Jesus said “no” to in the 40-day wilderness to the tempter (Satan, the adversary) in Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, and Luke 4:1-13. It is this same 40-day period we mimic in the season of Lent: saying “no” to all that gives us false security. The only sure bet is total trust in God to carry us through, no matter how heavy the cross gets.

When we can get rid of this fake Gospel we don’t have to pretend to have it all together and act like we aren’t devastated when we are.

2. The church is community where we don’t bear our sadness alone. Duh. But seriously, the church community can help simply by being there. We show up for one another. And if we show up revealing our pain in conversation, tears, and prayers, we are trusting one another to help us carry the load.

3. If we can suffer our own pain, scales can fall from our eyes to witness the pain of another. The prophetic record from which Jesus lived and taught constantly reminded everyone that total trust in God is not some rugged individualistic marathon we’re all running. *American Ninja Warrior* is a great TV show but terrible for patterning our faith lives. Jesus taught us about the Good Samaritan – (*yes, even the man with an accent and who doesn’t worship God like I do is my neighbor*). This concept extends to all kinds of situations we find ourselves in: who do we suffer with and have compassion for? According to Jesus, it’s *particularly* those outside our “safe” circle of people who think and act like we do.

4. Finally, the church is community where, owning our individual and collective sadness, one day we wake to new hope, a break-through, the Resurrection of Christ in our midst. If we skipped steps 1-3, the light of Easter dawn may not penetrate; we could not even see any new hope much less experience it in our lives.

In short, Lent breaks us open. It opens our hearts to journey to the heart of Jesus, where lies the source of all compassion. So I say again, “welcome to the Land of Lent.” Instead of “Eastering our way through Lent where we just want to make it joyful” to paraphrase Bowler, we are invited to sit with suffering. Acknowledge the difficulty of our pain and more importantly, our collective dis-ease.\*\*

Only then, together, can we see the dawn of Easter arise to a new hope.

Walking the Lenten journey with you in faith,

Rev. Frances

\*You can read portions of this conversation between Kate Bowler and Terry Gross at <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/02/08/583774624/what-not-to-say-to-the-terminally-ill-everything-happens-for-a-reason>.

\*\*for more on “collective dis-ease” see p. 16 on “Mass-Shootings: The Collective Dis-ease of our time.”

MARCH  
BIRTHDAYS

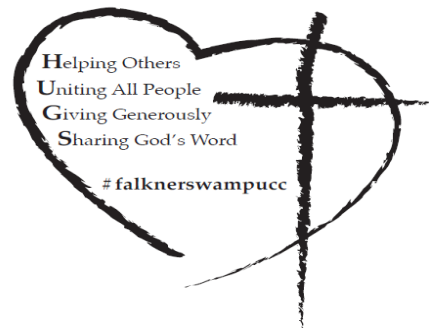
- 3 Bob Erb, Jr.
- 6 Robin Zerr
- 7 Robbie Keebler
- 14 Dennis Garber
- 16 Brenda Semach
- 17 Kim Erb
- 17 Elizabeth Isaacs
- 17 Myrtle Lisko
- 20 Cameron Krause
- 21 Patricia Maurer
- 22 Caleb Brown
- 23 Patrick Brennan
- 26 Jared Goughnour
- 28 Audrey Reinhart
- 29 Derek Hess



**Back by popular demand!**  
**Hymnbook Angels- \$20 each—**  
**see Arlene if interested.**



Need a hug? Give a hug? If you or someone you know could use a little pick me up, please feel free to take one of our “HUGS” bags from the windowsills in the sanctuary or fellowship hall.



The Reaching New People Task Force has a mission statement:

~ *“Making ourselves known by sharing our faith with the community”* ~

We plan to participate in the following community events in Boyertown:

April 21—Coming Out of Hibernation

June 9th—Philadelphia Ave. Street Fair



Hello and Warm Greetings! I hope that you find yourself in a place of peace during this Lenten Season. The past two months have been busy behind the scenes for those of us on the Christian Education Committee. We have found ourselves immersed in many projects that we hope will continue to strengthen the programs that we are offering our children and youth.

-With the aid of Reverend Frances and Susan Mercer we have been reviewing the Sunday school curriculum and goals that we are offering our children during the 9 o'clock hour. We are so thankful for both of their dedication to this program!

-We have been working behind the scenes on purchasing the items we need to get our Youth Fellowship Room underway! We will be able to share more on that next month!

-We kicked-off a new, hands-on Worship Service for our youth, the second and fourth Sundays of every month-Mission Church! Check out our review of that here, in this month's Voice!

I'd like to take a moment to say THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, to everyone that made our first A Taste of Falkner Swamp Crockpot Cook-Off a success! We had 73 people join us, and enjoy all of the absolutely delicious dishes that our chefs prepared! Our youth was able to raise \$491! Most of the money earned will go directly into the Youth Fellowship Room, but we will be tithing 10% of our earnings to The Mustard Seed School in Malawi, and give our children and youth the opportunity to share their blessings with the children that Angela Quashigah works with.

I would like to give my thanks to: All of our chefs! Congratulations to Cailin and Stacey Brennan (1<sup>st</sup> Place), Samantha Mercer (2<sup>nd</sup> Place), and Lydia Brown (3<sup>rd</sup> Place), thank you to Robin Zerr for helping in the kitchen, Becky Comer, Kim Erb, and Barb McDonough for all of their help planning and donations made, The Comers, and David Tyson for helping both financially and with the task of building the electrical cords that were needed, and to all of the helpers that made sure that our electrical system wasn't overburdened (Ron Becker, Bob Erb, Bob Schnaars, and Jim Kooser). Thank you, as always to the entire congregation for the support you show our youth!

Many Blessings,

Laura Brown and the Christian Education Committee-  
Matt Brown, Becky Comer, Kim Erb, Barb McDonough, Susan Mercer, and Luke Schwenk

*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14*



We are starting the peanut butter eggs very soon! The dates are:

March 12, 13, 14, 15

March 19, 20, 21, 22

Mixing will take place in the mornings with Women's Ministries taking the lead. Rolling & dipping will take place from 4—8 PM.

There is a helper sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

There are order forms available so we have some idea how many eggs we need to make. We plan on selling at Freed's on Saturday, March 24th.

Hope you'll come out to support this event, enjoy the fellowship and have fun!

Property  
Committee



The Property Committee has been busy getting estimates on replacing the tile on the Christian Ed steps and landing. We are also getting quotes for stripping and re-waxing the hallway. You may have noticed that the trees by the parking lot and cemetery have been taken down. We are very satisfied with the job.

As always, if you see anything that needs fixing, please inform someone on the Property Committee.

Members: Ron Becker, Bob Erb, Lee Heffner, Rob Krause, Sharon Schnaars, and Chair, Robin Zerr.

# MARCH 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7 PM Choir	2	3 Community Breakfast 8 -11 AM
4 Communion	5 7 PM Music & Worship	6 9 AM Women's Ministries 7 PM PRC	7 12:30 - 1 PM & 7 - 7:30 PM Lenten Prayer	8 7 PM Choir	9	10 Fellowship Hall Rental
11 PND Meal	12 Peanut Butter Egg Making Begins ~ see page 5 for details	13	14 12:30 - 1 PM & 7 - 7:30 PM Lenten Prayer	15 7 PM Choir	16	17 Cemetery Workday 8 AM- Noon
18 Youth Sunday, Choir Singing	19 7 PM Consistory	20	21 12:30 - 1 PM & 7 - 7:30 PM Lenten Prayer	22 7 PM Choir	23	24 Blood Drive 9 AM—2 PM
25 Palm Sunday	26	27 7 PM Christian Ed	28 12:30 - 1 PM & 7 - 7:30 PM Lenten Prayer	29 7 PM Maundy Thursday Service Prayer Vigil	30	31

## Sundays at Falkner Swamp:

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

**March 4** — Communion

**March 11** — PND Meal

**March 18** — Youth Sunday, Joyful Noise Offering, Choir Singing

**March 24** — Palm Sunday, OGHs Offering

Rev. Frances Hours: (generally) Wednesdays 9:30AM-2PM	Secretary Hours: (generally) Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays 9AM-2PM
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On Easter Sunday, April 1st, we will memorialize our departed loved ones by placing spring flowers in the chancel area of our church. The names will appear in a supplement to the Easter bulletin. This year we have decided to use Wendy's Flowers in Gilbertsville. The cost of the flowers is listed below on the order form with the flower choices that are available this year. Please check the order form carefully and mark your selections. The deadline to order the memorial plants this year is Sunday, **March 18th**. Please take careful note of the deadline—**we cannot honor orders after this date!** Please give your order to the church office.



Name:		<b>PAYMENT INFORMATION</b>						
In Memory of:							check	_____
							Exact cash	_____
		Cash-need change	_____					
Type Plant:	<b>Lilies</b> 4-5 bloom White	<b>Tulips</b> 5 bloom No color choice	<b>Hyacinths</b> 3 bloom Pink	<b>Daffodils</b> 6-8 bloom Yellow	<b>Mums</b> 4 1/2" pot No color choice	<b>Azaleas</b> 6" pot Red		
Cost per:	\$10.00	\$8.00	\$8.00	\$8.00	\$5.00	\$10.00		
How many?								



You will again be able to submit prayer requests for the Prayer Vigil. Those participating in the Prayer Vigil on March 29-30 will be able to say special prayers for your loved ones, church, community and world during this 24-hour period. You can write your prayer request on the strips of paper on the bulletin board in the vestibule and attach them to the heart.

The sign-up sheet for the Prayer Vigil is posted.

Greetings from your Consistory!

Here we are in 2018! Once again your Consistory is meeting! We had our monthly meeting February 19th at 7:00 PM.

After attendance was taken, we offered an opening prayer to God once again to give us the courage to do the work He asks us to do in our community. This is my opening prayer at every meeting. In my opinion, this is what we are supposed to be doing; trying to help ALL people as Jesus commanded. Reverend Frances gave our devotion this month which was especially moving considering the events of the shooting in Florida.

Vicki Fronheiser then passed out the minutes from January's meeting, which we all read and approved. Brenda Semach then passed out the treasurer's report which we reviewed and passed. We had a net loss for the month of \$ 653.49. We had a light January; I'm sure the giving will pick up in the coming months. Christmas can put quite a strain on the family budget; I know it does in our house!

We moved on the Pastor's comments and communiques. Once again, Reverend Frances has been very busy this month; as you can see elsewhere in this issue of the Voice. She continues to be the blessing we all prayed for, and more! Praise God!

The committees then reported in. Property announced that several projects had been completed. We have had several trees taken down around the church. There is a pile of firewood by the back parking lot that is free for the taking to any members of the congregation. Just please check with Robin or me. The furnace had another repair but should now be solid for several years to come. Bids are being sought for the removal of the wax build-up in the Sunday-school wing. Finally, there will be a Cemetery work day on March the 17th. All are invited to come out and help prepare our Cemetery for the Easter season. Our thanks to Robin Zerr and her property team for all of their hard work!

Music and Worship announced that the choir will be singing March 18. Bob Erb will sing at the Maundy Thursday service March 29. And of course, we are preparing for the Easter Services, one at 7:00 a.m. and one at 10:00 a.m. Easter morning.

Visitation as reported by Barb Geary noted that Mary Etta Mest made 7 visits and one long telephone call. She is a tireless representative of Falkner Swamp, doing so much for our church! Thank You, Mary Etta! The Pastoral Relations committee met this month to evaluate the performance of Sharon Sgriccia. who has been here for two years already!! We are all VERY happy with her work, she is another one of the "Angels" God has provided for us here at Falkner Swamp!

The report for Christian Ed was given by Brenda Semach. Susan Mercer has joined the C.E. "team" and has been very helpful putting her experience as a teacher to good use. Brenda also reported about a field trip the confirmands took, along with the confirmation class from St. James UCC in Limerick. They visited Campbell, Ennis and Klotzbach Funeral Home on Sunday, Feb 11. A Mr. Bud Harner answered the young people's questions and gave a tour of the facility. Brenda also reported that the confirmands are working on "Hugs" bags and cards for her "Reaching New People" program. Wow!! Thank you so much to all the team members who are working so hard for our most precious resource, our young people.

Speaking of Reaching New People, this was the next item on our agenda. Brenda Semach, committee chair, reported that in March the committee will be at Freed's Market for the annual Easter Egg hunt. Falkner Swamp will be giving out "Hugs" bags, and of course we will be selling Peanut Butter Eggs. Capitalized for a good reason...THEY ARE DELICIOUS!! In April we will be involved in the Boyertown "Coming Out of Hibernation" celebration. In May we will be a part of the Philadelphia Street fair in Boyertown. I urge EVERY member of the church to really try to attend these events. Reaching out to the community is what we have been commanded to do by Christ; can we do anything less?

So, let us continue to try to get our message out to the people we meet in our everyday lives. Think of the joy we share every Sunday as we come together to worship our Lord and fellowship with each other. Aren't we obliged to share this joy with others? Let us say that one little thing, make that one little invitation, that could change people's lives for the better...forever!

Respectfully,  
Bob Schnaars  
Consistory President



## Doctor John Miller, Early Pioneer

In most cases we know little or nothing of the early pioneers who pushed out from Philadelphia into the wilderness of "Falckner's Schwamm" in the early 1700s. Perhaps a name on a will or an eroding tombstone is all the evidence there is that someone hacked the wilderness away and survived, usually by a life of unremitting toil.

One such early settler of whom we know a bit more is Doctor Johannes Miller, also called "Hanes" Miller, who at the early date of 10 August 1732 purchased from Humphrey Murry and John Budd, Philadelphia, 125 acres of land situated at the junction of the Swamp Creek and Society Run, now called the Scioto Creek and in past times the Goschenhoppen Creek. The price paid was "34 pounds lawful money of Pennsylvania," subject to the quit-rent "thereafter accruing unto the Chief Lord of the Fee thereof." Quit-rent was a hold-over from the medieval era. If an individual bought land, the Crown, or in this case the Pennsylvania Colony, was still obliged to provide defense of that land; so quit-rent was a small annual tax, often only a shilling or two per year per farm. In reality it was seldom paid as there was no mechanism to collect from the delinquents. Although it should be noted that before 1740 Henry Antes did deliver to the government a substantial collection of quit-rent money collected from the surrounding Germanic settlers.

Doctor Miller's Plantation (as farms were called in those days) site was on the northeastern edge of the Stone Hills where, by 1732, copper mines were operating. The deed granted by Murry and Budd retained for themselves, their heirs and assigns, "All the mines and minerals on or within the hereby granted land, with the free liberty of ingress, egress and regress into and out of the same, and to dig the said mines and also all rakes, pitts, levels and to erect any buildings on the said land for the convenience of getting the said mines and minerals." How much copper ore was mined on that site is not known.

The plantation site is approximately where the new Perkiomen Valley Middle School is located along Big Road, Rt. 73.

The *Perkiomen Region*, January, 1931, notes: "The residence of Doctor Miller was widely known, and we find it used twice in Sauer's Germantown newspaper by his neighbors as a guide to their own

homes. On the 19th of February, 1745, Balthasar Heiderich, in an advertisement states that he lives near Hans Miller, in Frederick township—given in German, rather oddly, 'Friedrigs Taunschipp.' Andreas Bayer, in an advertisement in the same paper of 16th January, 1746, gives his place of abode as being in Frederick Township, on the Perkiomen near John Miller—'in Fridrich Taunschip an der Berjamen [surely the strangest spelling of "Perkiomen!"] nahe bey Johannes Miller.' "

As Henry Melchior Muhlenberg organized the scattered Lutheran congregations during the colonial era; so Michael Schlatter, arriving in 1746, strove to organize the scattered German Reformed pastors and people. His commission from the church fathers in Holland directed him to visit the scattered Reformed congregations in Pennsylvania, performing pastoral acts and gathering information, including what they would contribute to the support of ordained ministers, to convene a synod and to seek pastoral calls from any of these congregations.

Rev. Schlatter records the following incident in his journal: "About this time (early in 1747) I was visited by John Miller, Doctor of Medicine, who besought me with tears to come over to him, by holy baptism to incorporate with the church his wife and nine children. He acknowledged



Portrait of Rev. Michael Schlatter

with inward sorrow, that on account of the manifold disorders of the churches, he could not until now induce himself to unite with any congregation; now, however, since he saw that good order was about to be introduced, it was the strong desire of his heart

(See "Miller" on page 4)

(“Miller” continued from page 3)

to join with a properly organized congregation; and accordingly, he is now a consistent and zealous elder, and a prominent pillar of the [Reformed] church at Falkner Schwam. I promised him, if God will, on the 15th of March to come to his house.”

“On the 17th of March, according to promise, I went the distance of 39 miles to Doctor Miller’s house; and in circumstances of much encouragement, administered the sacrament of holy baptism to his wife and eight children then living... Several hundred persons were assembled on this occasion to witness this solemn service, an occurrence so new among them. It is not easy to describe with what reverence and divine impressiveness this solemn transaction transpired, and how edifying it proved to the spectators and auditors. The mother with her children prostrate upon their knees, made a brief and hasty profession of their faith in the essential principles of religion and in a sincere and reverent manner made the most solemn promise before God and men, that they would faithfully adhere to the Reformed doctrines agreeably to the word of God, whilst the sponsors standing behind them responded with the greatest readiness and heartily, to the questions addressed to them and showed the willingness to assume the care thus devolved upon them.”

Johannes Miller’s estate inventory shows that he was a man of substance. In addition to an ample listing of the usual property, crops, grains, farm and household equipment, Dr. Miller’s estate lists items uncommon in Swamp at the time such as “clock and watch 22. 0. 0. ; (22 pounds. 0. shillings. 0. pence)”;

“2 guns, 1 rifle, 2 pistols, swords, powder horn and pouch 7. 10. 0.”; “21 Doctor Books 5. 0. 0.”; and “33 spiritual books (on religious subjects) 17. 18. 6.” His library of 54 books was perhaps the largest library in the area. Most households may have had a book or two at most At his death at age 54 his estate totaled over 2,000 pounds.

Of his birth, early life, and education we know nothing. It is doubtful that he was a folk-doctor since his estate inventory indicates that he was a man of some relative wealth. Perhaps he learned his medical craft in the old country.

His death was recorded in the Falkner Swamp



*Falkner Swamp UCC Church*

German Reformed Church in these words, “Died Sept. 16, 1755, and was buried September 18, Mr. Johannes Mueller, a deacon in the church, aged 54 years.” Two of his thirteen children, Catharina and Salome, had become members of that church at Easter 1749 with Rev. Mr. Leydich’s (Leidy) first class of catechumens. The next eldest children, Elizabeth and Johannes, were confirmed at Whitsuntide 1751 by the same pastor.

Specifically how Dr. Miller practiced his craft and to whom he administered medicines is not known. At that time there was no university course leading to becoming a doctor of medicine, although most doctors were of the educated class. An aspiring doctor learned the craft by apprenticing to an established doctor. Doctors and apothecary shops were common in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, and medical treatment was available to almost everyone. Very early in colonial Pennsylvania there were stores in Philadelphia devoted to selling medical supplies



*Portrait of Claudius Galen*

bought wholesale from Germany, Holland, and England. Doctors bought, manufactured, and dispensed medicines freely since they were paid for the medicine, not for the visit to the patient.

The “Practitioners of Physic,” as eighteenth century doctors were called, learned their craft in a system that harkened back to the medieval patterns of medical understanding.

For 1200 years medicine had been locked in the Galenic model (Claudius Galen 130-200 A.D.) not because the model worked but because the church demanded it. Body as well as soul were the province of the church, and Galen’s theory was part of established church

(See “Miller” on page 5)

*("Miller" continued from page 4)*

doctrine. To question the Galenic medical books or to dissect a cadaver to understand the body was to invite capital punishment.

Galen held that the body was governed by four humors (fluids): blood, yellow bile, phlegm, and black bile. These humors were mixed and influenced by the four elements (earth, air, fire, and water) and the planets and the moon and what not. Certain medicines had earth quality, some fire quality and so on. Some sickness was thought to be caused by imbalances in the humors; hence, for example, the practice of bleeding to eliminate excess blood which, presumably, was causing the sickness.

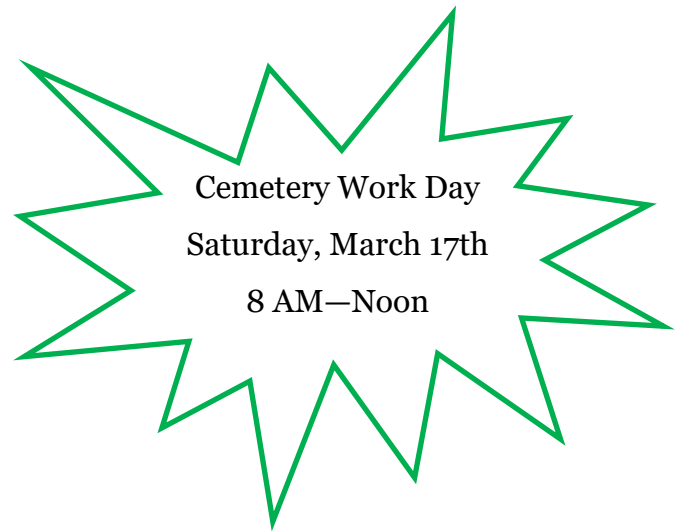
With the Protestant Reformation, doctors gained freedom to begin to put Galen aside and use empirical observation and evidence. And so began the "early modern" era which slowly developed into the medicine of today. Early Pennsylvania doctors such as Dr. Johannes Miller were in that transitional period.

Contemporary with Johannes Miller and living in the same valley were two Schwenkfelder doctors. At age 66, Doctor Melchior Heebner arrived aboard the ship *St. Andrew* in 1734 and lived with his father George Heebner, business partner of Henry Antes. He died in 1738 and is believed to be buried in or near the Antes Cemetery on Colonial Road. When Melchior Heebner died his apprentice, Abraham Wagner, inherited his medical books, supplies, and practice along the Swamp Creek by Antes' Mill.

To what extent the average Dutchman of that day relied on these educated doctors is a bit of a mystery. When sickness struck, I suspect the Dutchmen thought first of herbals from the garden, and next they looked to the folk-healers, later called practitioners of pow-wow. Perhaps as a last resort they might have called for a doctor to visit with his medicines.

— Robert Wood

Copied from the Goschenhoppen Newsletter,  
January 2018. Submitted for the VOICE by Arlene  
Umstead.





We are in need of school supplies for the Easter Baskets that we will be donating to Multi-Service. Suggested items include: pencils, colored pencils, glue, glue sticks, markers, etc. Thank you in advance for any contributions.

Is this your coat? It is black with a blue lining. It has been hanging in fellowship hall for a few months and we plan to donate it if no one claims ownership by the end of March.



Arlene Umstead has some extra plastic and terra cotta pots, and hanging baskets for anyone who could use some. They are various sizes. See Arlene if you would like any or have questions.

## We Would Like to Introduce you to Mission Church!



Mission Church is a new youth program being offered to our children and youth ages 5-18, which is guided by Matthew 22:34-46 and Matthew 25:31-40. Mission Church is an opportunity for all ages of children and youth, with church school teachers, to participate in hands-on projects that help people in the greater community. After the Children's Moment in the sanctuary, children who wish to join Mission Church will go downstairs to the Education Wing. There, adult leaders will provide direction for a project, such as creating place mats for the lunches held at the Senior Center at Boyertown Area Multi-Service, or to assemble take-away snack bags for a homeless shelter, or put together hygiene kits for Church World Service. In this way, children continue their worship by helping to create God's world of love and mercy. Mission Church is planned for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the months September through May, and once a month during the Summer.

Our Expectations for Mission Church are the following:

- All youth have the option to join us downstairs for Mission Church. Maybe you're in worship and feel the peace of quiet worship, and want to stay in the Sanctuary with those who are with you. A different Sunday you may feel called to be the hands and feet of God, and want to join us downstairs for Mission Church. Both choices are okay!
- During Mission Church we ask that all electronics, books, toys, and anything else that might take away from your ability to be present as we praise through outreach, be left upstairs or put away.
- During Mission Church we expect nothing less than loving-kindness towards each other!
- During Mission Church we will be guided by Matthew 22:34-46 and Matthew 25:31-40.

Matthew 22:34-40

*34 When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, 35 and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" 37 He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the greatest and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."*

Matthew 25:31-40

*31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, 33 and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. 34 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 35 for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38 And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? 39 And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' 40 And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'*

Review of Mission Church for January and February 2018:

We spent our first Mission Church Sunday making posters for the Youth Sponsored Crockpot Cookoff, and our second week working on Valentine Decorations to go on the Care Packages that the Women's Ministry made for our Homebound Congregation Members. In February both of our Mission Church Sundays were focused on making 100-150 bookmarks that will be donated to The Boyertown Community Library. We also spent time at the beginning of each Mission Church focusing on Matthew 5:14-16.

Matthew 5:14-16

*14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."*

We are so thankful for the support of the congregation as we embark on this new journey, and we ask that you pray for our youth, our volunteers, and for those whose lives we hope to touch through our missions.

Blessings,

Laura Brown and the Christian Education Committee

Matt Brown, Becky Comer, Kim Erb, Susan Mercer, Barbara McDonough, and Luke Schwenk

## Daily Lectionary Readings through Easter

Monday, February 26, 2018:

Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45; Genesis 21:1-7; Hebrews 1:8-12

Tuesday, February 27, 2018:

Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45; Genesis 22:1-19; Hebrews 11:1-3, 13-19

Wednesday, February 28, 2018:

Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45; Jeremiah 30:12-22; John 12:36-43

Thursday, March 1, 2018:

Psalm 19; Exodus 19:1-9a; 1 Peter 2:4-10

Friday, March 2, 2018:

Psalm 19; Exodus 19:9b-15; Acts 7:30-40

Saturday, March 3, 2018:

Psalm 19; Exodus 19:16-25; Mark 9:2-8

Sunday, March 4, 2018: Third Sunday in Lent

Monday, March 5, 2018:

Psalm 84; 1 Kings 6:1-4, 21-22; 1 Corinthians 3:10-23

Tuesday, March 6, 2018:

Psalm 84; 2 Chronicles 29:1-11, 16-19; Hebrews 9:23-28

Wednesday, March 7, 2018:

Psalm 84; Ezra 6:1-16; Mark 11:15-19

Thursday, March 8, 2018:

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Genesis 9:8-17; Ephesians 1:3-6

Friday, March 9, 2018:

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Daniel 12:5-13; Ephesians 1:7-14

Saturday, March 10, 2018:

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Numbers 20:22-29; John 3:1-13

Sunday, March 11, 2018: Fourth Sunday in Lent

Monday, March 12, 2018:

Psalm 107:1-16; Exodus 15:22-27; Hebrews 3:1-6

Tuesday, March 13, 2018:

Psalm 107:1-16; Numbers 20:1-13; 1 Corinthians 10:6-13

Wednesday, March 14, 2018:

Psalm 107:1-16; Isaiah 60:15-22; John 8:12-20

Thursday, March 15, 2018:

Psalm 51:1-12; Isaiah 30:15-18; Hebrews 4:1-13

Friday, March 16, 2018:

Psalm 51:1-12; Exodus 30:1-10; Hebrews 4:14-5:4

Saturday, March 17, 2018:

Psalm 51:1-12; Habakkuk 3:2-13; John 12:1-11

Sunday, March 18, 2018: Fifth Sunday in Lent

Monday, March 19, 2018:

Psalm 119:9-16; Isaiah 43:8-13; 2 Corinthians 3:4-11

Tuesday, March 20, 2018:

Psalm 119:9-16; Isaiah 44:1-8; Acts 2:14-24

Wednesday, March 21, 2018:

Psalm 119:9-16; Haggai 2:1-9, 20-23; John 12:34-50

Thursday, March 22, 2018:

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Deuteronomy 16:1-8; Philippians 2:1-11

Friday, March 23, 2018:

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Jeremiah 33:1-9; Philippians 2:12-18

Saturday, March 24, 2018:

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Jeremiah 33:10-16; Mark 10:32-34, 46-52

Sunday, March 25, 2018: Liturgy of the Palms

Sunday, March 25, 2018: Liturgy of the Passion

Monday, March 26, 2018: Monday of Holy Week

Tuesday, March 27, 2018: Tuesday of Holy Week

Wednesday, March 28, 2018: Wednesday of Holy Week

Thursday, March 29, 2018: Maundy Thursday

Friday, March 30, 2018: Good Friday

Saturday, March 31, 2018: Holy Saturday

Sunday, April 1, 2018: Easter Vigil

Sunday, April 1, 2018: Resurrection of the Lord

Sunday, April 1, 2018: Easter Evening

Monday, April 2, 2018:

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Genesis 1:1-19; 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

Tuesday, April 3, 2018:

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Genesis 1:20-2:4a; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Wednesday, April 4, 2018:

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Song of Solomon 3:1-11; Mark 16:1-8

Thursday, April 5, 2018:

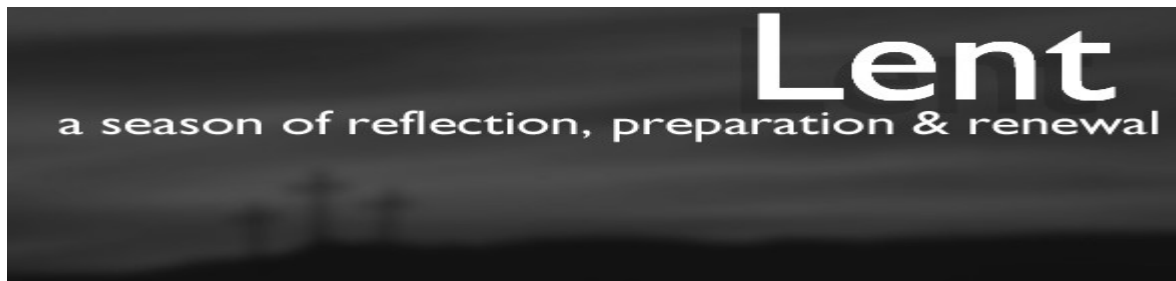
Psalm 133; Daniel 1:1-21; Acts 2:42-47

Friday, April 6, 2018:

Psalm 133; Daniel 2:1-23; Acts 4:23-31

Saturday, April 7, 2018:

Psalm 133; Daniel 2:24-49; John 12:44-50



# SIGN UP

Falkner Swamp is a busy place throughout the month of March. Please be sure to check the bulletin board for various sign up activities!



Better late than never?

Consistory wishes you to know that in case of inclement weather ....

If you are wondering whether or not church will meet, Consistory plans to spread the word in these ways:

- Channel 69 news or WFMZ
- Consistory will kick off the phone chain
- Flocknote – sign up for email or text if you haven't already
- Facebook

Additionally, Laura Brown (volunteer CE director) will decide regarding Church School/Confirmation and will post on Facebook and make calls to teachers/parents.

## Mass-Shootings: The Collective Dis-ease of our time

*Not because we're going to be another statistic about mass shooting in America, but because ... we are going to be the last mass shooting.* -Emma Gonzalez, a senior at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Parkland, FL

*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.* - Martin Luther King Jr.

On February 14 we learned of yet another school shooting. This time 17 dead, 14 teenagers and 3 adults, in Parkland, Florida. The picture seared in my mind is of a woman, crying, and cradling a teenager, also crying. The woman, who had blond hair, had obviously been to church earlier that day. Through her light-colored locks was the unmistakable sign of the cross, in ash.

*From dust you came and to dust you shall return*, I repeated a dozen times to those who gathered for Ash Wednesday service on the night of February 14, after we'd all heard the news from Florida. We all receive these ashes, hear these words, and know that one day, they will come true.

The blond-haired woman, and the young teenager she held, had no expectation that 17 of their classmates and teachers, perhaps this woman's child, would die that day. That the sign on her forehead signaled this truth for 17 on this day, to dust they shall return.

Her cross of ash is ours to bear, for those who claim the title Christian. We are baptized into the **one baptism of Jesus Christ our Lord**; we **pick up our cross as he commanded** (Mark 8:31-38); we are to **weep with those who weep** (Romans 12:15).

Jesus gave us the greatest commandment: **“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.”**<sup>38</sup> **This is the greatest and first commandment.**<sup>39</sup> **And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’** (Matt. 22:37-39)

If ever we needed clarification of who is our neighbor, the seas of anguished mourners at yet another mass shooting and the brave gathering of #NeverAgain teenagers, cut through any confusion.

There is no one thing that needs to be done to resist and expunge the evil that is a mass shooting. There are a multitude of things that must happen, and people of faith are on the frontline of seeing this through.

Top on the list: see one another not as an “NRA nut-job” or “snowflake lib” but recognize that we are people with histories and opinions, who are capable and want to see children NOT getting killed. We are all children of God.

That said, I would add to the list to expose the lie that *any* additional gun laws are an attack on the Second Amendment. Fearmongering of this sort must be countered by Christian people everywhere. The possibility that President Trump will support federal legislation moving the legal age to 21 from 18 to purchase a semi-automatic rifle such as the AR-15 that was used in the Feb 14 shooting is a step in the right direction.

Another item is to insist on resources -- people and money -- to create much more robust mental health services across the board in community health centers and schools. This means federal money into mental health support and not just empty resolutions that force states to come up with the funds on their own.

There is one wrong thing to do, and that is to go back to our routines to leave this to others to figure out.

I exhort you to educate yourself. Don't just rely on one TV station or paper or radio news show. Get out of your own echo chamber and listen to all sides. By all means read Facebook feeds and watch YouTube videos but remember these are mostly opinions.

Then do something with what you've learned: share it with a friend. Write a letter, email, or call your local state representatives or House Rep or Senator. Continue to pray. Then listen -- how is God asking you to be a part of saving future lives?

If you are a reader, and have access to the internet, see if you can find these articles on your search engine, ones I find fascinating and helpful:

Malcolm Gladwell's "How School Shootings Spread" in the New Yorker, October 19, 2015

"What Explains U.S. Mass Shootings," NY Times, 11/7/2017

David Brooks' Op-Ed, "Respect First, Then Gun Control" NY Times 2/19/2018

I can also provide hard copies, just let me know.

Let's have continuing conversation among our congregation to hear one another and support action so that Emma Gonzalez's words can come true.

To our Lenten journey facing this collective dis-ease,  
-Rev. Frances



*Opening Prayer For the Colorado State House in the Aftermath of a Tragedy February 15, 2018*

Our God and God of all people,

God of the Rich and God of the poor.

God of the teacher and God of the student.

God of the families who wait in horror.

God of the dispatcher who hears screams of terror from under bloodied desks.

God of the first responder who bravely creeps through ravaged hallways.

God of the doctor who treats the wounded.

God of the rabbi, pastor, imam or priest who seeks words of comfort but comes up empty.

God of the young boy who sees his classmates die in front of him.

God of the weeping, raging, inconsolable mother who screams at the sight of her child's lifeless body.

God of the shattered communities torn apart by senseless violence.

God of the legislators paralyzed by fear, partisanship, money and undue influence.

God of the Right.

God of the Left.

God who hears our prayers.

God who does not answer.

On this tragic day when we confront the aftermath of the 18th School shooting in our nation on the 46th day of this year, I do not feel like praying.

Our prayers have not stopped the bullets.

Our prayers have changed nothing.

Once again, a disturbed man with easy access to guns has squinted through the sights of a weapon, aimed, squeezed a trigger and taken out his depraved anger, pain and frustration on innocents: pure souls. Students and teachers. Brothers and sisters. Mothers and fathers- cut down in an instant by the power of hatred and technology.

We are guilty, O God.

We are guilty of inaction.

We are guilty of complacency.

We are guilty of allowing ourselves to be paralyzed by politics.

The blood of our children cries out from the ground.

The blood of police officers cut down in the line of duty flows through our streets.

I do not appeal to You on this terrible morning to change us. We can only do that ourselves.

Our enemies do not come only from far away places.

The monsters we fear live among us.

May those in this room who have the power to make change find the courage to seek a pathway to sanity and hope.

May we hold ourselves and our leaders accountable.

Only then will our prayers be worthy of an answer.

Amen.

Rabbi Joe Black



## *Community Breakfast*

Many thanks to everyone who helped with the February breakfast. You did a great job! Our next scheduled breakfasts are March 3, April 7, and May 5. Join us by either helping or eating. Tell your friends about the breakfast.



Our "Souper" Bowl food collection totaled 204.5 pounds! The Eagles need to be in the Super Bowl every year. Even though we're still trying to figure out who put a couple cans in the Patriots' basket.



A great time was had by all at our Annual Fastnacht Social. Thank you to everyone who came out and especially to our "talent."



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

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PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE



**MAUNDY  
THURSDAY**

## Maundy Thursday —Thursday, March 29th

12 Noon ~ Prayer Vigil Begins

7 PM - Worship w/ Communion in the sanctuary



## Easter Services – Sunday, April 1st

7 AM - Sunrise Service with Communion

8 AM- Potluck Breakfast

9 AM - Children's Sunday School with Egg Hunt

10 AM -Worship with Communion

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.