



Dear Falkner Swamp Beloved,

In the Conclusion of his book, [The Moral Teachings of Jesus: Radical Instruction in the Will of God](#), David Gushee doesn't hold back on what he thinks is the problem with the human condition. He notes that although God created the world and us good, we have done an outstanding job of living upside down. We try to satisfy our physical, emotional, relational and spiritual needs and wind up looking in the wrong places, placing trust in unworthy people, and lying to ourselves about it. What's more, Gushee notes, we teach our children to do this too, so they are prepared to enter the upside-down systems and culture we've created. We even mess up our attempts to follow religion, too.

Gushee prescribes *radical spiritual and moral surgery*. Deeper than “be nice, do good things,” he names a theological vision and spiritual practices that pull together what Jesus taught us:

- God is love, offers love, requires love
- God wants justice, offers justice, requires justice, judges us on the basis of our justice
- God is fiercely sensitive to marginalized persons. ... the last, least, and lost, is where we best meet God in the world.
- God wants people to give their whole – full-complete-true- pure-hearts, selves, souls, and lives to him. This is way beyond rules and obedience. It's devotion. It's submission. It's love.
- God wants people who are humble in heart, mournful over their sins and this screwed up world, hungry for justice, merciful and reconciling.
- God wants people who will secure themselves by trusting in him rather than in foolish human strategies and schemes that are so constantly self-defeating.

Gushee says we need retraining in the practices Jesus taught: like peacemaking, forgiveness, economic simplicity, mercy, and generosity, turning the other cheek, enemy-love, covenant fidelity, truth telling, nonjudgmentalism, Good Samaritanism, standing with the vulnerable, valuing all people the same, leading by serving while not seeking human honor.

Sound impossible? Of course it does, because we are captured by the Upside Down (I see you, *Stranger Things* fans). “The kingdom of God is the name for a world turned right-side up. The church is to be its first expression,” says Gushee.

The church, like other organizations, fights for our attention. Gushee's thoughts prompted me to consider, *where do we place our attention?* News media of all kinds rule in the attention-getting arena. We are the curators of what we hear, see and absorb through TV, radio, TikTok, and YouTube. If we are not consciously choosing, our brain space will be co-opted by the upside-down values of the world.

It's up to each of us to decide if we're willing to be honest about what's gaining most of our attention. It's up to each of us to decide if we're willing to submit to “radical spiritual and moral surgery.” If we do, then Jesus' Way, lived through us, presents an alternative to the upside-down values that are covered in gold to hide the rot underneath.

Gushee warns us: “the effort that we make to turn the world's values upside down are likely to be met with opposition, from all centers of power – family, state, economy, religion, tradition, and culture. We feel that opposition within ourselves, too. We might die in the effort to follow God this radically. But Jesus says this death, if it comes, is better than living falsely before God and hurting others as we get swept into corrupt ways of being.”

Like I said, he doesn't mince words. I'm convicted by them. Are you? If so, let's opt for elective surgery. Let's bless the world by heeding and doing what Jesus taught.

With you on the journey,  
Rev. Frances

## Lent Wrap-Up: Tell Me Something Good

Did you wonder what was written on all those leaves gathered on the Lenten Tree? Throughout Lent we were invited to write responses on paper leaves and hang them on a branch (pictured).

The question posed was: **“What is the Good News your soul longs for?”**

Adults and children added their responses, which are listed below. (Thanks, Sharon Schnaars!)

Do you recognize your own? Can you identify with others?

The question – and our responses – are still relevant. Take a moment and check in: What is the good news your soul longs to hear, today? Trust that God hears your response and will show you what you need.



God hearing what my heart needs & my prayers.

God answering prayers (3)

End of big egos

Children to be happy & free

Democracy

Hope for the sick (1) Hope (1)

No cruelty

Justice (5) Climate Justice (1)

Tolerance

Lead me where I am meant to be

Understanding with partners

To have a more understanding President

Miracle for Donna

That everyone will be saved

Restore relationship (1) Connections (1)

I am a child of God

Comfort & peace for my mom

I miss Kendey

Did I do enough to please You, Lord?

My baby sister

Obedience

Joy (2) More time for joy (1) Joy and God (1)

Nurture / People caring for each other

Lift up my heart

Release (1) Restoration (1)

End war (2)

Abolishment of concentration camps / Release of those detained

Healing for Alexis, Jon, Diane and kids

Forgiveness (2) Ability to accept forgiveness (1)

Deeper Faith

Wisdom in advising

Strength (3)

Healthy bambino & mother

Sunshine / Sunshine Warmth (2)

Empathy

Mercy (1) Mercy on our broken world (1)

Freedom from the past

Thankful for new job

Patience (5) Patience with my family (1)

Creativity

Receive me into your Kingdom

Seeing one another and claiming “brother”

Praying for safe surgery

Good news

I miss Luke

I miss my dog

Kindness (being nice) (3)

Jake’s employment and path to shine

Family

Less stress & worry (3) Less stress – why does everything have to be a “t

Emptying to be filled

Safe trips for my family

Community free of fear

Anime

Health (4) Healing (2) Health & Happiness (1) Wholeness & healing fo

Trust & hope (2)

Wisdom to live generously

Understanding & acceptance

Love (4) A different way to live & love (1) More love – less hate (1)

Truth from those in leadership (2) Smart leadership (1) Leaders to have n  
compassion

Peace & world peace (17) Inner peace (1) Peace in our family (1)

Reconciliation amongst nations

Health, wealth & happiness

Help family

**Be informed**

Keeping you in the loop



The Falkner Swamp Cemetery Committee met on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026 following the worship service. The previously proposed changes and additions to the Cemetery By-Laws were approved unanimously. As a result of these changes, the Cemetery will be increasing the pricing for cemetery plots at the Falkner Swamp UCC Cemetery (adjacent to the New Hanover Fire Company).

If any of the members or friends of Falkner Swamp want to purchase a plot, or would like information on purchasing a plot, we will hold the old price for the month of May, 2026. This price hold is available only to current members or friends of Falkner Swamp UCC. Please call Mary Ann Erb (484-941-4569) for details.

## CHANGE OF DATE

### PROPERTY and CEMETERY WORK DAY, SATURDAY, MAY 16

8 AM to 12 NOON

LUNCH will be provided in Fellowship Room at 12 NOON

OUTSIDE: Sturdy shoes or boots are suggested; work gloves; bring small gardening tools, shovels, heavy-duty rakes, wheel-barrows. Pry bar and a few shovels are available in Cemetery Shed. There are tombstones that need straightening, old flags to be gathered, weeds need to be pulled from church gardens, and graves need to be filled and topped off in preparation for grass seed.



I am forever grateful for the kindness of this congregation. It was such a joy to read all the words of thanks and appreciation from everyone as I celebrate 10 years with you. It is truly my pleasure to work alongside you at Falkner Swamp.

Thank you, *Sharon*

## 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 March 2026

Total funds available for general use at the end of February:	<b>\$82,637.28</b>
Total Income received in the month of March:	<b>+\$23,265.14</b>
Total Expenses paid in the month of March:	<b>(\$17,301.91)</b>
Total funds available for general use at the end of March:	<b>\$88,600.51</b>

The net financial results from general church activity for the month of March reflected a gain in the general fund of \$3,562.61 (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!

### Special worship services in May:

#### Sunday May 24 – Pentecost Sunday

- Celebrates the “birth” of the church, when the Holy Spirit lit upon a mass of people praying together (Acts 2:1-21).
- Wear red in honor of the Holy Spirit, often depicted as a dove (baptism) and as a fire flame (Acts)

#### Sunday May 31 – Celebrating Faith Formation

- Older church school children will receive a Bible
- Honoring our three high school graduates (see their photos and plans elsewhere in newsletter)

					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 8 – 11 AM Community Breakfast
<b>3</b> <b>10 AM Worship w/Communion</b>  7 PM/AA Mtg.	<b>4</b>  7 PM M & W mtg.	<b>5</b> Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM  10AM Women's Ministries  1PM Scripture Study	<b>6</b>  Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM	<b>7</b>  **Rev. Frances' office hours	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> <b>10 AM Worship</b>  7 PM/AA Mtg	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Rev. Frances & Sharon' office hours 9 – 11 AM  1PM Scripture Study  Ladies Night @ 6:30 PM	<b>13</b>  Sharon's office hours 9 - 2 PM	<b>14</b>  **Rev. Frances' office hours	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 8 AM - noon  <b>Property &amp; Cemetery Workday</b>
<b>17</b> <b>10 AM Worship</b>  7 PM/AA Mtg	<b>18</b>  6:30 PM Consistory	<b>19</b> Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM	<b>20</b>  Sharon's office hours 9 - 2 PM	<b>21</b>  **Rev. Frances' office hours	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> <b>Pentecost 10 AM Worship</b> Strengthen the Church special offering Joyful Noise 7 PM/AA Mtg	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM	<b>27</b>  Sharon's office hours 9 - 2 PM	<b>28</b>  **Rev. Frances' office hours	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> <b>10 AM Worship</b> Celebrating Faith Formation Future of F.S. special offering  7 PM/AA Mtg	<div data-bbox="386 1843 1175 1990" data-label="Text" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>Please send any newsletter submissions by 9 AM on the final Tuesday of each month (except December &amp; July when they are double month editions), to the church office, <a href="mailto:falknerswamp@comcast.net">falknerswamp@comcast.net</a>.</p> </div>					

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



We are in need of volunteer cleaners for the month of May. If you are able to help, please see Becky.

Women's Ministries  
invites you to their  
annual Ladies Night.



*Somewhere over the  
rainbow - there's a  
Ladies Night!*

**Tuesday, May 12, 2026**

6:00 PM ~ dinner (doors open & 5:30 PM)

\$15/adult, \$5/child ages 6 – 12, free for children ages 5 & under

Cash only to Judy Miller or Beth Reese ~ due by May 3<sup>rd</sup>

Entertainment, "A Visit with Betsy Ross",  
in the sanctuary at 7:00 PM.



Our Women's Ministries group donated 10 beautiful and overflowing Easter baskets to Multi-Service this year. Thank you for your support of this ministry that enables the women to reach out to various organizations in our community.

## Congratulations to .... Graduating High School Seniors

During worship on May 31, we will recognize and pray for our graduating seniors as they each embark on their next life adventure. Congratulations, Elijah, Abby, and Finn!



**Elijah Brown, BASH 2026.** Elijah will be attending Susquehanna University this fall as a member of the Class of 2030. He plans to study writing and continue playing french horn. He is grateful to have received an academic scholarship for merit in writing.



**Abby Chester, Great Valley HS 2026.** Abby will attend Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA, and plans to major in law and minor in archaeology. She also looks forward to dancing with college clubs.



**Finn McDonough, BASH 2026.** Finn will attend Penn State – University Park in the fall to study business. Of course, he can still be found in the kitchen at Spunktown Tavern preparing meals and saving money until then.