

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:

*~photos from summer happenings
~300th Anniversary events
~Green Team Update*



Welcome, Olivia Veronica Pangrazi, born May 2, held by beaming sis Emilia! Congrats to proud parents Marco & Caitlin Pangrazi and grandparents Ron & Brenda Becker.



Welcome, Elowyn Mary Curran, born June 10, and flanked by big bros Liam and Rhys! Congratulations to proud parents Pat & Heather Curran and to their parents and extended families on Long Island.

Greetings, Falkner Swamp Friends!

Can you sing it? 🎵 “I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together! All who follow Jesus, all around the world! Yes, we’re the church together!”

We’re rounding the corner towards the 300th anniversary, Oct 12, 2025, marking the first Communion of the German Reformed people in colonial America, on Oct 15, 1725. *We are the church* resounds behind those first forty who communed with John Philip Boehm. Beginning with the Dutch Reformed church, the wider church supported, expanded, admonished, and encouraged lay and clergy of the German Reformed faith, one of four branches that make up our United Church of Christ today.

Please take note of how the wider church reverberates across time and distance. Look further in this newsletter for the message we received from a church in St. Louis. Check elsewhere for the invitation from our new Covenant Association Moderator, Rev. Sharon Morris. Some of you will remember her work with Falkner Swamp when she was Assoc. Conference Minister for Search & Call.

Finally, on July 14, delegates of the 35th General Synod voted in favor of the motion to *create the Keystone Conference of the United Church of Christ*. Therefore as of Jan. 1, 2026, the boundaries of all four current PA Conferences will dissolve, and we will be as one. From the PSEC e-mail communication:

..This moment marks the culmination of several years of faithful discernment, courageous conversation, and a shared vision for the future of our ministry in Pennsylvania. Together, we have dared to believe that God is still speaking — and calling us into something new.

As we embrace what God is calling us to, we look forward to giving thanks for where we have come. Note these upcoming dates in honor and celebration:

Sept 13: 9 am – 1 pm, Bake Sale at Freed’s. A sign-up sheet will be in Fellowship Hall for those who wish to donate baked goods.

Sept 20: 1 – 4 pm, *Echoes of Faith: Stories, Tours and Artifacts of our Church*, held at FSUCC. Historical tours, artifact display, and presentations by brothers Dr. Kevin and Dr. David Sterner and by local historian Bob Wood. An ice cream sundae bar will be offered. The Sterner brothers wrote a book about our first pastor, John Philip Boehm, and will have it available for purchase.

October 5: 10 am - Service of the Word and Holy Communion, World Communion Sunday.
11 am – Fellowship Hall, Our children present *Echoes of Faith: A Wax Museum*

October 12: Two Worship services.

10 am – regular Sunday Service followed by a catered lunch for our church family*

1:30 pm – Cake reception for all

3 pm – State-wide celebration, Service of the Word and Holy Communion with guest preacher The Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, UCC General Minister and President.

*T-shirts are in the works for purchase & to wear at the 10 AM service. Details to come!

Our postcards listing these events and church fliers are available in the foyer where we pick up worship orders. Please feel free to take and share, and invite others to our events and celebrations.

In gratitude for your faith,
Rev. Frances

From: Lorin Cope <office@stpauluccstl.org>

To: falknerswamp@comcast.net

Date: 07/04/2025 4:09 PM EDT

Subject: Celebrating Falkner Swamp German Reformed Church of the United Church of Christ

Dear Friends:

Several years ago, I purchased a wooden model of the Falkner Swamp German Reformed Church of the United Church of Christ.

For many years now, St. Paul United Church of Christ in St. Louis, has displayed churches, buildings of Eden, Bangor, and Lancaster Theological Seminaries, and the former office building of the National Setting of the United Church of Christ models around our chancel as a reminder of the family of whom we are a part, in the United Church of Christ across the country.

(Recently in worship), we lifted up the Falkner Swamp United Church of Christ during our time of announcements, in worship and with a note in the bulletin as we displayed your model.

We pray God's rich blessing on the Falkner Swamp German Reformed Church of the United Church of Christ and your ministry. We are grateful to be in fellowship and partnership with you.

Lorin Cope, Church Administrator
St. Paul United Church of Christ
3510 Giles Avenue, Saint Louis, Missouri 63116

300th Anniversary Celebration of the First Communion of the German Reformed Church in America

October 12th
@ 1:30 pm
Falkner Swamp UCC
2077 Swamp Pike,
Gilbertsville
w/ Guest Preacher
The Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia
Thompson



October 15th
@ 6:30 pm
each PA UCC
Conference
will hold a communion
service within its boundaries
see website link below

For more information and registration links go to:
psec.org and click on the 300th Anniversary Celebrations slider

Historic online presentations @ 7:00 pm via Zoom

May 27—An Immigration Story: How we got to where we are w/ *Rev. Rick Taylor*

June 24—A Living Theology: Thinking about God in the Reformed Tradition
w/ *Dr. Lee Barrett*

September 25—United and Uniting: How the UCC Makes Room for German
Reformed and Armenian Evangelical Christians w/ *Rev. Dr. Heather Ohaneson*

October 28—Gifts of the Reformed Church Going Forward w/ *Dr. Randall Zachman*

**Coming
this fall...**

*A commemorative book with essays tracing the
development of the German Reformed Church from its
European origins through present day.*

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 May 2025

Total funds available for general use at the end of April:	\$91,110.32
Total Income received in the month of May:	+ \$8,979.38
Total Expenses paid in the month of May:	<u>(\$12,935.69)</u>
Total funds available for general use at the end of May:	\$87,154.01

The net financial results from general church activity for the month of May reflected a loss in the general fund of \$6,006.19 (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!



Community Breakfast

Thank you to everyone who helped with the breakfasts in 2025. Many hands make light work and we have fun too. Hope to see you next year. Thank you so very much, Robin

The total free will offering collected was \$3281. As in years past, the breakfast volunteers voted on where to designate the money:

\$500 donated to Red Hill VFW
\$300 toward our 300th Anniversary celebration
\$2481 toward window repair

The voting options & results were as follows:

Organizations:	Church Needs:	Anniversary:
Red Hill VFW - 11 votes	Window repair – 16 votes	yes – 20 votes
St. Jude's Hospital - 7 votes	Light – 5 votes	no – 8 votes
Salvation Army - 10 votes	Front door – 7 votes	



	Rev. Frances vacation August 2 – 16. For urgent pastoral care while Rev. Frances is on vacation, please contact Rev. Beth Eustis, Pastor, St. James UCC in Limerick, on her cell at 610-457-3603.					1	2 Fellowship Hall rental (Zerr)
3 10 AM Worship w/ Communion Rev. Paul Jones leading worship 7 PM/AA Mtg.	4	5 Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM	6 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	7	8	9 Fellowship Hall Rental (if rain) (Stevens)	
10 10 AM Worship Rev. Paul Jones leading worship 7 PM/AA Mtg	11	12 Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM	13 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	14	15	16	
17 10 AM Worship Apostolic Sunday Susan Mercer leading worship 7 PM/AA Mtg	18 6:30 PM Consistory	19 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM	20 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	21 **Rev. Frances' office hours	22	23	
24 10 AM Worship Summer Movie #3: How to Train Your Dragon (2010, 2025) Backpack Blessing 7 PM/AA Mtg	25 7 PM M & W mtg.	26 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM	27 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	28 **Rev. Frances' office hours	29	30	
31 10 AM Worship Future of F.S. special offering 7 PM/AA Mtg							

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. Our August cleaners are Barb Geary, Becky Comer and Lee Heffner.

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

We hope to have some deep cleaning done around the church by a professional cleaner (windows, floors, etc.). If you would like to donate to this cause, please clearly mark your donation for "cleaning". We've raised \$800 so far and we thank those who have already contributed.



YOU SAY YOU CAN'T SING - We doubt that is true. You sing in your car, in your shower, while working around the house. We know there are some very good singers in our congregation! Our choir is always open to anyone who would like to join us! ***"The woods would be very silent if only the best birds sang"***. Most of your Falkner Swamp choir members cannot read music. We simply learn to follow the notes up and down. Reading music is not required! So...if you are being nudged by the Spirit of God to sing along with your church choir, please feel free to talk to ANY choir member (you know who we are). Note: The choir will be off for the summer - beginning again in mid-August. So, you have time to pray on this and when God whispers "give it a try", you can join us then. Thank you!!!

P.S. The church is still seeking a choir director/piano player. So, if you know of anyone, give them Bob Schnaars' information (Phone: 215-266-9606). Thanks!



Attention Kids & Families!

August 24 - Blessing of the backpacks in worship, and the one who carries it!
Rev. Frances will present Summer Movie #3, *How to Train Your Dragon*, helping us see God's footprints on the big screen. Join us before the first day of school!

Some summer happenings @ Falkner Swamp.



Confirmation



Organ concert

New members Rev. Paul Jones
(& wife Louise in picture frame)



Backpacks for Multi-Service



Our Mission Statement for our newest program, Friends Helping Friends, is: “To help other members and friends of Falkner Swamp through occasional difficulties with the help of volunteers composed of other members and friends of Falkner Swamp.”

Falkner Swamp UCC does not sponsor these activities, therefore **Friends Helping Friends** is **NOT** a sanctioned Falkner Swamp UCC group. What does this mean? It is a disclaimer; we are proclaiming to all that this group, while being composed of and for the members and friends of Falkner Swamp church, are only volunteers and **NOT** professionals. Anyone helping or accepting help, acknowledges that we are volunteers and absolve us of any and all liability. The services being performed are for the benefit of our church community and no compensation or tipping is permitted due to insurance regulations. **WHY?** If we allow compensation or tipping, we are no longer volunteers, but are considered professionals. As volunteers we are absolved from any and all liability both the volunteers and Falkner Swamp UCC; if we receive compensation the law considers us professionals.

Our volunteers are giving of their time and talents freely to help those in our church community who require assistance from time to time with various tasks. Some of the tasks that the volunteers are willing to perform include: providing occasional meals, shop for groceries, go to the post office or pharmacy, transportation to medical appointments, writing/addressing cards, painting, minor computer issues, gardening, moving stuff, organizing/reorganizing shelves or closets, and other small projects around the house.

If you have a request or job that isn't on our list ... PLEASE ASK! We'll do our very best to help!

To volunteer, or request assistance, please call Mary Ann Erb at 484-941-4569.

Kindness Matters: one kind word or act can change someone's entire day.



Starting now...Tissues party
(sponsored by Women's Ministries)

A collection to benefit our local schools. We plan to divide the boxes between an elementary school in both the Boyertown and Pottstown School Districts. This will be ongoing through the month of August.

Please place your tissues in the box in Fellowship Hall.

Planning ahead ~ our annual Operation 143 food collection will begin in September. A list of requested items will be available.
Stay tuned.

Do You Want to Sing for the Fall Meeting of the Covenant Association?

A word Rev. Sharon Morris, Moderator, Covenant Assoc, from the Weekly Covenant Newsletter....

..... I'm excited about the Covenant Association and the opportunities for the future. For our Fall Association meeting, I hope to form a combined choir of church musicians and choirs to help transform the event into a vibrant worship service. We'll incorporate necessary business items into the service, presenting them in ways that honor God and highlight our work in Christ, rather than as standard reports.

I hope you might get excited about this also. If you're interested in providing music (organist, pianist, choir, etc.), please contact me. We also need someone to lead a joint choir—this person would select and distribute music to participating churches and lead a rehearsal at 2 p.m. before the meeting.

Covenant is seeking a Vice Moderator who must be a lay church member with strong leadership skills, willing to serve alongside me for 1.5 years and then as moderator for an additional 2 years. If interested, please let me know.

PLEASE pray and think about the possibilities and the amazing future God has in store for us. Email me at revsmorris@gmail.com and let me hear from you!

Sharon Morris, Moderator
Covenant Association



Sharon Schnaars is looking for someone who might know the best/proper way to cut/trim the bushes around the church - holly bushes and rose bushes specifically. And, who is able to help with the project. The rose bushes are not looking good at all, but the holly bushes are healthy. All bushes need to be cut back quite a bit, so Sharon is looking for help and advice. Thank you!

Green Team Update



Pollinator Garden

The pollinator garden continues to grow and thrive. Monarch butterfly eggs were spotted on the swamp milkweed plants and we hope to see caterpillars soon. Jim continues to work on innovative rain barrel and irrigation projects. Our fall project will be to thin out the plants because they have grown well beyond the boundaries that we anticipated!

bumblebee on Swamp Milkweed



native plants Joe Pye weed in the back
and Swamp Milkweed
(Monarch butterfly host plant) in the front



Plastics Recycling

Thank you to everyone who participated in our plastic recycling program by depositing items in the bin in the narthex. You helped keep plastic out of the landfill so it could be repurposed into useful products.

We no longer have access to our drop off location, so our on site program is discontinued for now. Please continue to participate on your own. Nearby collection box locations are:

- Redner's Market
- Weis Market
- Giant
- Wegman's
- Freed's Market
- Ocean State Job Lot (Pottstown)

In addition, we encourage you to adopt and/or continue practices that reduce our use of plastic so that future generations may continue to enjoy the beauty of this earth.