

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:

*~Upcoming events: Bake Sale, Church Bazaar,
Ladies' Night, Organ Concert
~New Ministry – Friends Helping Friends
~Choir Director Need – please share w/others*

Lent Services

April 6 (Communion)

Saturday, April 12, 1 pm, Easter Egg Hunt for the Children, Rain or Shine!
(Shine - outdoors, Rain - indoors)

April 13, Palm Sunday, Field Ed Student Kelly Johannsen, preaching

Thursday, April 17, Maundy Thursday service, 7 pm, with Communion, Sanctuary

April 20, Easter, 8 am (outdoors, weather permitting), 10 am, Sanctuary,
Communion at both services



Easter flower orders due April 6th – order forms on the table in the church foyer.

Dear Falkner Swamp Siblings in Christ,

The late prophetic pastor Rev. William Sloane Coffin Jr. preached in an Easter sermon, “God knows it continues to look like a Good Friday world. What makes the Good Friday story so devastating is that it is still so shockingly true.”

Craven disciples, fickle followers, and calculating politicians were not new in Jesus’ time and are not a surprise now. What is new today are the massive and abrupt changes taking place in our top levels of government, which cause chaos and disruption for thousands of people across the country. The effects will weaken our society, through lost scientific research and the inability to solve problems with large programs like social security and Medicaid, to name a few. These changes are then championed with gleeful announcements on social media by those who are elected and those who are not. The constitutionality of many of these actions will be challenged to protect the common good, and yet it’s not clear the highest office in the land will be held to the rule of law.

The dissonance of Good Friday is the chasm between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world. Which makes the coming dawn of Easter a brave calling to Christians.

Sister Joan Chittester reminds us what Easter is really all about:

Easter is raw reality. Easter stands in stark witness, not to the meaning of death, but to the meaning of what it is to go on despite death, in the face of death – because of death. To celebrate Easter means to stand in the light of the empty tomb and decide what to do next. Until we come to realize that, we stand to misread the meaning not simply of the Easter gospel but of our own lives. We miss the point. We make Easter an historical event rather than a life-changing commitment. ...

If Jesus is risen, then you and I have no choice but to go into the tomb, put on the leftover garments ourselves, and follow Jesus back to Galilee where the poor cry for food and the sick beg to be taken to the pool and the blind wait for the spittle on their eyes to dry. All the fidelity in the world will not substitute for leaving the tomb and beginning the journey all over again. Today. Every day. Always. ... Yes, Easter is about dazzling light – but only if it shines through us.

With you on the journey,
Rev. Frances



Celebrating 300 years of the German Reformed Church in America
Sunday, Oct 12, 3 pm, Falkner Swamp UCC

UCC General Minister and President, Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, preaching

Our church is celebrating its 300th birthday in 2025! The state-wide UCC Conferences are planning this celebration to mark the 300th anniversary of the first Communion of the German Reformed Church that began forming in “Falkner Schwam” in 1720, which is the origin of our current day Falkner Swamp UCC.

Stay tuned for more details, dates & events!

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.

Tis the season – tax season – and we don't have financials at the time of the printing of this month's newsletter.



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!

Upcoming Special Offerings:

- April 6th – Joyful Noise
 - Joyful Noise Offering is collected via our children passing cans around our sanctuary on the first Sunday of the month, Oct-June. One-half supports the Mustard Seed School in Malawi; one-half supports Operation 143.
- April 13th: Palm Sunday – One Great Hour of Sharing
- April 17th: Maundy Thursday – Church World Service



		1 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 10 AM Women's Ministries mtg. 1 PM Scripture Study	2 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	3 **Rev. Frances' office hours	4	5 Community Breakfast 8 – 11 AM
6 10 AM Worship w/ Communion Joyful Noise 7 PM/AA Mtg.	7 7 PM M & W mtg.	8 Rev. Frances' office hours 9 – 2 PM 1 PM Scripture Study 7 PM Property mtg.	9 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	10 **Rev. Frances' office hours	11	12 Bake Sale @ Freed's Easter Egg Hunt @ 1 PM (rain or shine)
13 10 AM Worship Kelly Johannsen preaching OGHS special offering 11:30 AM Confirmation Class 7 PM/AA Mtg	14	15 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1 PM Scripture Study	16 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	17 **Rev. Frances' office hours Maundy Thursday service @ 7 PM CWS special offering	18 Prayer Vigil	19
20 Easter Sunday 8 AM & 10 AM Worship w/Communion 7 PM/AA Mtg	21 6:30 PM Consistory	22 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1 PM Scripture Study	23 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	24 **Rev. Frances' office hours	25	26 Church Bazaar 8 AM – 1 PM
27 10 AM Worship 7 PM/AA Mtg	28	29 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1 PM Scripture Study	30 Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM			

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, folknerswamp@comcast.net.

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



Ladies Night 2025

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

5:30 PM ~ doors open

6:00 PM ~ dinner, door prizes to follow

Featuring: *Marian and Friends*

Ventriloquist

Menu (catered by Women's Ministries)

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

Cash only to Judy Miller ~ due by May 4th

Please note: All (men, women, children) are invited to enjoy the entertainment portion of the evening as guests of Women's Ministries. Join us in the sanctuary for fun & laughs @ 7PM on May 13th. Any questions, please see a member of Women's Ministries.



Organ Concert to Benefit our 300th Anniversary
Saturday, May 31, 4 pm, Falkner Swamp
sanctuary
Vince Ryan, Organist



Thank you to our Cleaning Crews! They keep all our church spaces sparkling & fresh. For April we thank 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



Choir Director Needed

Small church seeking choir director/ piano player. We may be small, but we have an enthusiastic choir who love to sing to the Lord! We are looking for someone who can give us 3-4 hours a week (rehearsal and some Sunday morning worship services). If you are looking for some extra income with only having to devote a few hours a week, we might be the job you are looking for!

Please give us a call to discuss at
610-323-4053
Falkner Swamp UCC, Gilbertsville, PA

You can also contact Music & Worship Chair, Bob Schnaars @ 215-266-9606 or rdschnaars@comcast.net.



Cemetery Committee Update

The Falkner Swamp Cemetery Committee approved the revisions made to their Cemetery Bylaws at their March 16, 2025 meeting. The Changes in personnel are: Cameron Krause has resigned from the committee.

Kevin and Stacey Brennan are in charge of marking the lots for burials a/o markers. Rob Erb is helping with the marking of the lots when Kevin and Stacey are unavailable. Sharon Schnaars has taken on the position of Treasurer for the cemetery. Mary Ann Erb is now Secretary and Acting President. There are three Lot Managers: Kevin Brennan, Bob Erb and Rob Erb. There are three Trustees: Sue Dickey, Mary Ann Erb and Sharon Schnaars.

APRIL IS NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

“Poetry has consistently been the language of the people. When we are trying to communicate our best shared common humanity, poetry is the rhetoric that encapsulates it the best: there’s something magical about it that’s humble, hopeful, but also wounded enough to remind us of a past we’ve stepped from and a future we want to move to.” - *Amanda Gorman, 2/9/25. Gorman was the National Youth Poet Laureate in 2017 and the youngest inaugural poet, on Jan. 20, 2021 at the age of 22.*

G.K. Chesterton (1874–1936)
The Donkey

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born;

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

Chesterton captures Palm Sunday from the perspective of the donkey that Jesus rode.

Lenten Worship 2025

Our Lent series is called “Everything (in) Between,” following some of the more well-known stories and parables in Luke’s gospel.

From the creators of this thoughtful series from Sanctified Art:

Beginning with Jesus setting his face toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:51), the series flows through several familiar stories—the Good Samaritan, the fruitless fig tree, the Lost Sheep, Zacchaeus, and more. Many of these stories are well-known in both sacred and secular imagination, carrying cultural relevance and lore. For example, The “Good Samaritan” title alone could reference a hospital, a charitable organization, a type of law, or a good deed. Perhaps you grew up singing “Zacchaeus was a wee little man” in Sunday School. So many of these scriptures hold significance in pop culture, church history, politics, and everything in between.

Each weekly sub-theme explores two supposed binaries, like “faith & works” or “rest & growth,” or “grief & hope.” We often consider these ideas to be opposing. However, as we explore these concepts within the scriptures, we find nuance and complexity. We find that these dichotomies are false. We might begin to see a full spectrum instead of black and white. We might find that God is present in between.

And so, this season, we invite you to look beyond black and white binaries and easy answers. We encourage you to notice the dichotomies that define our lives, but also imagine where God might be meeting us beyond the categories we create.

Confirmation Schedule

Sundays, 11:30-1pm, April 13, May 4, and two more dates to be determined

Sunday June 8 is Pentecost and the Rite of Confirmation

Thank you all for donating \$504 to the Church World Service Clean Up buckets! Becky was able to buy all the supplies needed, and Archie and Lydia will assemble them after church on March 30. These buckets are always in demand as they are sent from central locations across the US and globe to help people clean out their homes after disasters such as floods and earthquakes.





BAKE SALE

The FUNdraising Team is planning a bake sale at Freed's for Saturday, April 12, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. We held a bake sale last year on the same weekend and were very successful thanks to everyone's delicious donations, so we hope to make it an annual fundraiser.

There are two sign-up sheets in the Fellowship Room for the bake sale: one to volunteer to bake, and one to volunteer to help at the sale. Please let us know if you can contribute your baking talents and/or time.

A note about the baked goods: Pies, small loaves of bread, 8" or 9" cakes, 6- and 8-packs of cupcakes, and chocolate chip cookies seem to be big sellers; last year we had an abundance of individual cupcakes, so please limit those.

If you have any questions, please see Karen Miller.
Thank you so much!



BAZAAR UPDATE

First, the FUNdraising Team offers a heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who volunteered to work at the Bazaar – we appreciate you! Another huge THANK YOU to everyone who has donated items for us to sell. The response has been fantastic!

The Bazaar is scheduled for Saturday, April 26. We're asking volunteers to arrive at 7:00 a.m., and will be open to the public from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The event is rain or shine.

We have posted a flyer on the church's main Facebook page – please share to your personal page, and any local groups that you belong to. If you would like hard copies to display at any local businesses, please see a member of FUNdraising and we'll get the flyer to you.

Here are the categories of donations:

- Holiday
- Sewing/Crafts/Art/Décor
- Books/CDs/Vinyl/DVDs/
- Toys/Games/Sports
- Garden/Outdoor Items/Tools
- Kitchen/Household
- Clothing
- Small Furniture

If you have any questions about whether we'll accept a particular donation, please ask a member of the FUNdraising Team. We would appreciate having the bulk of the donations at church by the end of March. The collection room is downstairs in the Sunday School wing (follow the green signs). If you need assistance getting your donations downstairs, we're happy to help!

If you would prefer to sell your own items, we are renting 10' x 10' spaces outside. The cost is \$10 for just the space, or \$15 for the space with a table. We have Registration forms available for this.

We will be selling donuts and hot beverages for breakfast, then also selling lunch items (hot dogs, chips, cold beverages).

Feel free to talk to any member of the committee if you have any questions about volunteering and/or donating. We are very excited about this event and so grateful for everyone's help! Thank you!!

The FUNdraising Committee

Rob Krause (Chair), Larry Ercolino, Jim Fahy, Patty Fritz, Wayne Gruver, Cassandra Krause, Karen Miller

FRIENDS HELPING FRIENDS – A NEW MINISTRY AT FALKNER SWAMP

By Mary Ann Erb



DO YOU HAVE A NEED?

Have you ever thought, *"I wish I knew someone who could help me with ...? It's not especially hard, I just can't do it by myself anymore."* It's critical to know that each of us is not alone — to feel the strength of being part of a church family that cares deeply for each of our members and friends. That not only wishes each other well, but says we'd like to **help** you if we can!

Do you need a picture hung? ...help cleaning out the refrigerator? ...help with shopping? ...have things you've wanted to take to Goodwill, or Liberty Thrift, or ... just need some help with carrying items out to a vehicle which will then take it away for you? Do YOU personally need transportation for shopping or an appointment?

Please call Mary Ann Erb at 484-941-4569 to place a request. We are hoping to put together a list of "tasks a/o jobs" that need doing; and a list of "those who are able to help" with various tasks or jobs. Please call Mary Ann between 1 and 5 p.m. on weekdays. If you get the answering machine, please leave your name and phone number, a good time to have your call returned and state your need briefly. If you feel more comfortable just leaving your name and phone number, we can discuss your need when I call you back.

CAN YOU HELP?

There is an old Beatles' song with the refrain, "I get by with a little help from my friends." Can you be one of those friends?

Do you have some free time where you can lend a hand? We are "making a list and checking it twice" to help some of our family and friends at Falkner Swamp live their lives a little easier.

Can you hang pictures? ...help clean out a refrigerator or freezer? ...take someone to the grocery store, drug store, shopping, or an appointment? ...move some furniture? ...empty out a closet or switch things from a high shelf to somewhere it will be easier to access? ... change a lightbulb?

Can you spare some time to assist someone who just can't do "it" by themselves anymore? Would you make yourself available for an hour or two a week? ...or a month? ...occasionally, but not on a steady basis? ...maybe, but only on a certain day, or during certain hours?

We're not asking for a lifetime commitment, but your assistance could be a lifeline to someone who needs occasional help and doesn't know where to turn to ask for that help.

We don't want to post a list and have people calling with their requests, for some, that's just too "public." Our idea is to have one contact person (Mary Ann Erb) who (hopefully) can make contact with those who have a need and those who can help.

This is a new venture. The idea was presented to the Consistory and received the approval with "yes, please." Now, we'd like to try to do our best to be the "friend" that someone needs.

If you would be willing to participate in this new endeavor, please call Mary Ann Erb at 484-941-4569, and leave your name and a contact number, with a good time for your call to be returned if we don't make person-to-person contact immediately. And thank you for being a good Samaritan.