



# The VOICE



## Pastor's Message

April is National Poetry Month. Begun in 1996 by the American Academy of Poets, its proponents claim it to be the largest literary celebration world-wide.

Much of what we carry in our hearts from Scripture is poetry. Psalm 23 anyone? Much of the Hebrew Bible, our Old Testament, is constructed of Hebrew poetry, such as the Psalms, Proverbs, and parts of Genesis. The unique formations aided ancient nonliterate peoples in singing and memorization of their sacred story.

The gifts of poetry continue to weave the story of being human. The beloved Mary Oliver, Pulitzer Prize winner for poetry in 1984, died this past January. In her words, "Poetry is a life-cherishing force. For poems are not words, after all, but fires for the cold, ropes let down to the lost, something as necessary as bread in the pockets of the hungry."

Writing in 1912, English author GK Chesterton offers this reason to include poetry in our reading diet: "I don't deny that there should be priests to remind men that they will one day die. I only say it is necessary to have another kind of priests, called poets, actually to remind men that they are not dead yet."

And from poet Jane Hirshfield, in her book of essays on writing poetry: "The words of poems are not ends, but a means to exploration without limit." (Nine Gates: Entering the Mind of Poetry)

I wonder how poetry -- a means to exploration, a life-cherishing force, and a reminder that there is life yet in what may seem lost -- might engage new generations to tackle our most intractable problems. How might the painstaking, slow work of poetry be generative in a time when technological advances have sped up, narrowed and widened our lives all at the same time?

~continued on page 2



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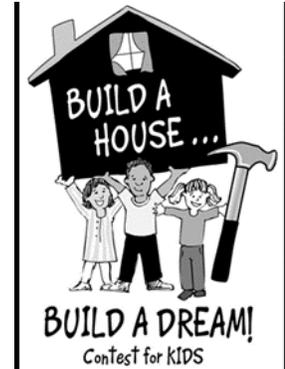
### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- AED Video
- Peanut Butter Egg Dates
- Holy Week
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Prayer Vigil
- April Birthdays
- Ladies Night

~continued from page 1

On March 23, Habitat for Humanity Chester County hosted its 16<sup>th</sup> annual Build A House .. Build a Dream! Contest for Kids. Fifth graders across the county were invited to create and display their “dream house,” with winners chosen after three rounds of judging.

My daughter, and two other classmates from her school, each entered their own creation. Between judging rounds, parents were allowed to peruse the tables. Many kids’ homes featured energy efficiencies such as geothermal heating, solar panels, and wind turbines. Going further, there was a home on Mars, one on stilts high above water and even a home next to a volcano to make use of its heat (and to take care of sewage, as the lava would “melt” the waste!).



In short paragraphs to accompany their design, these 10 and 11 year olds were already thinking about how to live with the effects of climate change and renewable energy sources. As I talked with the classmates’ parents, our school principal joined in.

He mentioned the creativity in the model homes and added that he’d just attended a state-wide conference on what to teach the class of 2040. The class of 2040, *who aren’t even born yet*. In some districts, computer coding is already taught in kindergarten, where 5-year-olds are learning how to code robots to bring attendance sheets to the office.

What does poetry have to do with any of this? I’m not entirely sure, other than to say that, like the creative minds of 5<sup>th</sup> graders herald a future with hope and possibility, the best poetry moves beyond words on a page to capture a vision of realized *shalom*, God’s intent for joyful community filled with mutual caring for one another.

We move through Holy Week toward Easter and the resurrection light also in April. When mere words don’t do justice to these extraordinary events, poetry in prayer, movement, song and ritual may be the generative force for our renewal.

Peace,

Rev. Frances

In case you were wondering, “How can I celebrate national poetry month?” click here for 30 suggestions: <https://www.poets.org/national-poetry-month/30-ways-celebrate-national-poetry-month>. My favorite one to try is Exquisite Corpse. Flag me down if you’re game.

*“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”*

*– Helen Keller*

God’s Grace and peace to you,

The Consistory met on Monday March 18th at 7pm.

The Consistory team continues to support the ministries of our church , working together with these committees, Property, Endowment, Kitchen, Visitation, Faith and Formation (formerly Christian Education), Music and Worship , Cemetery , and Reaching New People.



We are discerning on how to keep our church safe. First with the hard work of Christian Ed, headed by Laura Brown, Laura is reworking our safe church policy. Secondly we now have an AED, defibrillator, in the fellowship hall hanging by the first aid kit. My thanks to those who donated the funds to purchase this important machine that may someday save a life. Thirdly a big thank you to Rob Krause and Becky Comer who attended an A.L.I.C.E (alert, lockdown, inform, counter, and evacuate) training provided by the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference. Rob and Becky have brought to our attention some ways to make us aware of ways to protect ourselves. One step going forward is that the choir/Christian Education door will be locked during our worship service.

We, your Consistory team, continue to work together prayerfully and faithfully to lead this wonderful congregation to be disciples to spread God’s love, grace and mercy to our community. Together we can make a difference.

"Teamwork means that we share a common ideal, embrace a common goal. Regardless of our differences, we strive shoulder to shoulder, confident in one another’s faith, trust, and commitment. In the end, teamwork can be summed up in five short words.... We believe in each other."

First Corinthians 16:23-24 *“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.”*

Paul’s prayer is my prayer and may love be with you all in Christ Jesus and may the grace of God, in Jesus Christ, be with you today; in mind, body, and spirit.

God’s Grace and peace be with you,  
Brenda Semach  
Consistory President

## FALKNER SWAMP UCC'S 300TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

*HONOR THE PAST, CELEBRATE THE PRESENT, EMBRACE THE FUTURE*

Our Committee was “snowed out” of our February meeting, but that’s not slowing us down! We have created three subcommittees within our main committee: History, Activities, and Fundraising. As always, we would welcome new committee members to join the fun!

The **History** Subcommittee is busy coming up with ideas for ways to highlight, share, and preserve our long and interesting history here at Falkner Swamp. Please let us know if you have any mementos from our past that you would like to lend or give to the church for the celebration.

The **Activities** Subcommittee has come up with some awesome opportunities for activities and events for the entire congregation to enjoy. Everything is still in the planning stages, but we will keep you informed as plans are solidified. To give you a sneak peak, one example is that plans are in the works for a Family Reunion of Falkner Swamp members and friends (past and present).

The **Fundraising** Subcommittee has also been brainstorming about ways to raise money to fund the projects of the other two subcommittees, and we have come up with many possibilities. To get things started, our first 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary fundraiser will be a bake sale at Freed’s Market on Saturday, April 13, from 8:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. (or until we sell out!). We are asking the congregation for donations of baked goods, to be dropped off at Freed’s between 8:00 – 9:30 a.m. that day. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex.

Please remember to contribute to the “Share Your Memories” and “Share Your Ideas” boxes in the Fellowship room. We’re always looking for more ideas (for all three subcommittees!), and we’d love to hear *your* ideas and memories.

\*Please look for information about our Logo Contest on page 5.

Committee Members: Robin Zerr, Chair; Laura Brown; Rev. Frances Chester; Sue Dickey; Barb Geary; Debbie Gruver; Wayne Gruver; Donna Hoffman; Susan Mercer; Karen Miller; Sharon Schnaars; Kim Shaak; Arlene Umstead.

**PRIZE FOR  
THE WINNER!!**



# **300th Anniversary Logo Contest**

Design an awesome logo for our historic 300th Anniversary, submit to Robin, we'll vote and announce the winner!

**APRIL 28TH-SUBMISSIONS DUE  
MAY 19TH-ANNOUNCE WINNER!!**

**Submission must include the following:**

- 300th Anniversary
- Falkner Swamp UCC
- 1720-2020

-And our Slogan: Honor The Past, Celebrate The Present, Embrace The Future



# APRIL 2019

| Sun   | Mon  | Tue                                   | Wed  | Thu  | Fri | Sat  |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|-----|--|
|   | 1<br>Peanut Butter<br>Egg Making<br>Begins ~ see pg. 7<br>for details<br>7 PM<br>Music & Worship | 2                                     | 3<br>12 –1 PM<br>Lenten Prayer<br>7 PM<br>Choir  | 4  | 5   | 6<br>8 AM—11AM<br>Community<br>Breakfast                               |
| 7<br>Communion                                      | 8  | 9<br>10 AM<br>Luke Bible Study        | 10<br>12 –1 PM<br>Lenten Prayer<br>7 PM<br>Choir | 11<br>7 PM<br>Bible Study                                | 12  | 13<br>Freed's Egg<br>Hunt<br>Sell P. B. Eggs<br>@ Freed's<br>Bake Sale |
| 14<br>Palm Sunday<br>Easter Egg<br>Hunt<br>PND Meal | 15<br>7 PM<br>Consistory   | 16<br>6:30 PM<br>Property             | 17<br>12 –1 PM<br>Lenten Prayer<br>7 PM<br>Choir | 18<br>7 PM<br>Maundy Thursday<br>Service<br>Prayer Vigil | 19  | 20   |
| 21<br>Easter<br>Sunday                              | 22   | 23<br>7 PM<br>Christian Ed<br>Meeting | 24<br>7 PM<br>Choir                              | 25<br>7 PM<br>300th<br>Anniversary<br>Meeting            | 26  | 27<br>10 AM<br>AED Video   |
| 28<br>Apostolic<br>Sunday                           | 29<br>7 PM<br>AED Video  | 30                                    |  |  |     |  |

## Sundays at Falkner Swamp:

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

**April 7** — Communion

**April 14**— Palm Sunday, Easter Egg Hunt, One Great Hour of Sharing offering

**April 21** — Easter Sunday ~ 8 AM & 10 AM services, Communion @ both

**April 28** — Mr. Peter Detterline preaching

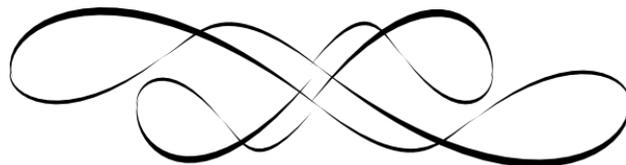
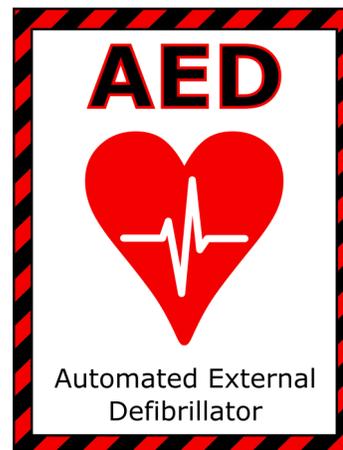
|  |  |
|--|--|
| Rev. Frances<br>Hours:<br>(generally)<br>Mondays, varies<br>Tues & Wed<br>mornings & by<br>appt. | Secretary<br>Hours:<br>(generally)<br>Tuesdays,<br>Wednesdays,<br>Thursdays<br>9AM-2PM |
|--|--|

Interested in learning how to use our new AED (or even just hear more about it)? Brenda Semach plans to show a YouTube video demonstrating how to use it on the following dates:

Saturday, April 27th @ 10AM

Monday, April 29th @ 7PM

Thursday, May 2nd @ 7PM



Peanut Butter Egg Dates:

April 1-4, April 8-11



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, April 13.

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

## Holy Week Services and Opportunities to be in Community:

Wednesday Apr 17, 12-1 pm, quiet prayer time in our sanctuary. Come for as long as you like or the full hour.

Thursday, April 18, 12 Noon - 12 Noon Friday, Prayer Vigil. Sign up for a slot.

Thursday, April 18, 7 pm, Maundy Thursday service with Communion.

Friday, April 19 - Community events for Good Friday include:

10:15 am Pottstown Community Good Friday Cross-Walk, a one-mile walk beginning at the green between Zion's UCC and Emmanuel Lutheran Church, on Hanover St, with stops along the way to pray for peace and well-being of the community. See flier on bulletin board for more.

12 Noon - Worship service led by various area clergy, Bethel Community Church of Pottstown - 575 North Keim Street - Pottstown

6:30 pm - Worship service at Church of the Good Shepherd

**The Property Committee ordered a new door for the Christian Ed wing, it should be arriving shortly. We held a cemetery work day on March 16 to do some much needed clean up and odd jobs around the church. We will be holding another work day for inside and outside the church on May 18 starting at 8:30 AM. Lunch will be provided.**

**Through a generous donation, we ordered and installed a new cigarette receptacle outside the kitchen door. This should help keep that area a little tidier. We also ordered an AED (defibrillator) for the church (again through generous donations).**

**Ron Becker, Bob Erb, Lee Heffner, Rob Krause, Sharon Schnaars and Robin Zerr**



## PRC COMMITTEE



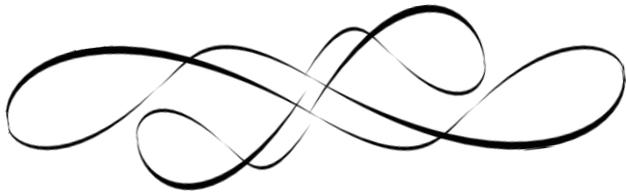
Colossians 3:12

**Paul tells them the key to remain unified is to show compassion and forgiveness toward one another.**

*12 Since you are all set apart by God, made holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with a holy way of life: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.*

The PRC committee is designed to be a safe and confidential place to share any frustrations and struggles, also your joys and ideas. Please reach out to the committee. They can listen and help with a direction for you. We are all here to do God's work in this world together.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brenda Semach, Chair; Bob Erb Sr., Matt Brown





You will again be able to submit prayer requests for the Prayer Vigil. Those participating in the Prayer Vigil on March 18-19 will be able to say special prayers for your loved ones, church, community and world during this 24-hour period. Prayer Vigil forms are available in the vestibule. Please fill out one of the Prayer Request Forms and place in appropriate basket in the vestibule.

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



### **The Dogs of Falkner Swamp**

Now that Bob Erb is on the mend again, following his shoulder surgery in January, the Dogs have been busy rehearsing for their Spring shows.

Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup> is their first “gig” of the year. Rev. Russ Mitman’s church, Parkside UCC, at 505 Main Street, Phoenixville, PA is sponsoring an “Afternoon of Music.” The Dogs, and various other musicians will share all kinds of vocal and instrumental music, sacred and secular beginning at 4 pm. The music will culminate in a light meal beginning at 5:30 pm. This afternoon performance is open to the public, so we hope we’ll have a good representation from Falkner Swamp. There is no need to sign-up, and there is no admission charge. Rev. Mitman has assured us that everyone is welcome for the music and the meal following. The early show time should assure all participants can return home before dark.

Also in April, in that same week, but not open to the public, they will be performing for the Lunch Bunch at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Red Hill, PA.

So far the Dogs have shows in April, May, June and September. We’ll keep you informed of any “public” shows.

**Faithful Giving: Falkner Swamp by the (financial) numbers:**

This financial information is for the month of February.

Total general fund intake and out going is:

General Funds In: \$8,970.91

General Funds Out: \$8,691.23

General Fund Gain for February: \$279.68



Restricted and Other Funds In: \$2,784.25

Restricted and Other Funds Out: \$2,564.07

For more information see Vivian's Treasurer's Report on the bulletin board outside the church office.

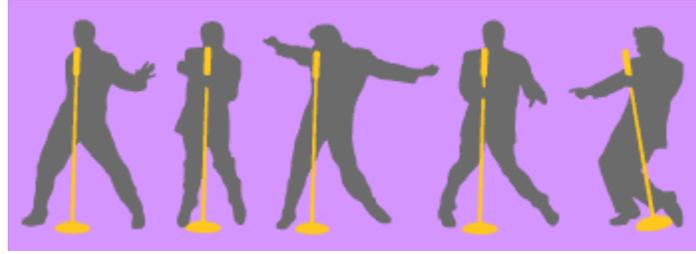
***We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."***

– Winston Churchill

APRIL  
BIRTHDAYS

|    |                 |    |                |
|----|-----------------|----|----------------|
| 6  | Trinity Wentzel | 24 | Megan Becker   |
| 12 | Sarah Taylor    | 24 | Lee Comer      |
| 15 | Dana Tyson      | 28 | Fran Berkowitz |
| 18 | Darryl Isett    | 29 | Becky Comer    |





**Ladies' Night ~ Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>**

**6 PM ~ doors open**

**6:30 PM ~ dinner**

**Entertainment provided by  
Elvis Impersonator, Jeff Krick, Sr.**

**Menu (catered by Women Ministries)**

**\$15/adult, free for children ages 12 & under**



## **CHURCH WORLD SERVICE (CWS)**

### **EMERGENCY CLEANUP BUCKETS**

Falkner Swamp will be putting together Emergency Cleanup Buckets. Our goal is to collect enough money to put together ten buckets. It is estimated that the cost of supplying each bucket is \$75 plus \$3 each processing fee. We feel with careful shopping we can hopefully get the cost down to \$50 plus the \$3 processing fee. Because the list of items is very specific, we are asking for monetary donations for this project. We will also be able to purchase many of the items in bulk cheaper than individually. The list is available if you are interested in seeing it.

On the left bulletin board in the vestibule is a pyramid. Each empty envelope has a dollar amount from \$1 to \$100. There are blank \$ envelopes at the bottom of the pyramid if you want to contribute another amount. If you would like to contribute to this mission, please take an envelope with the amount you wish to contribute, put cash or check (made out to FSUCC) in the envelope and put envelope in wooden box below the bulletin board.

We also will be applying for a \$250 grant but in order to qualify, we need to have put together buckets prior to submitting the application.

If you have any questions, please contact Barb Geary or Becky Comer.

**Money due any time before April 28<sup>th</sup>.**

The month of May is for moms - right? It is a time to celebrate moms and family. So, in addition to the generous food items you give to Boyertown Area Multi-Service through our church - in the month of May - we would like to collect some special items that moms/women need.

Did you know the first disposable absorbent pad used as a diaper was made in 1942? In 1946 Marion Donovan invented the "boater" - a waterproof covering for cloth diapers (the first one she made was from her shower curtain). 15 years later, Pampers were launched by Proctor & Gamble.

Let's help moms out with items they need. Items we don't always think of for Boyertown Area Multi-Service. Let's contribute feminine products, wipes or baby wipes and diapers (sizes 4t and 5t) in addition to the food items you would normally contribute. Sound good? May for moms!

Thank you!  
Sponsored by: Women's Ministries



**PND Meal**  
**Sunday, April 14th**  
**Please sign up!**

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

2077 Swamp Pike  
Gilbertsville, PA 19525

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PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE



**Maundy Thursday —Thursday, April 18th**

12 Noon ~ Prayer Vigil Begins

7 PM - Worship w/ Communion in the sanctuary

**Easter Services – Sunday, April 21st**

8 AM - Sunrise Service with Communion

9 AM- Potluck Breakfast/Craft for Youth

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.

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