

NEWSLETTER

FOR MEMBERS & FRIENDS OF FALKNER SWAMP UCC



Dear Falkner Swamp friends,

“Is there anything you want to pray for?” I asked Abby as I was saying good night to her. “We haven’t prayed for a while,” I added.

“For climate change. For the forest fires and floods and high heat,” she responded, immediately. When you were 14, what were you concerned about? I’ll bet you were not concerned about forest fires, high heat and floods that are killing people worldwide and threatening air, water & soil.

Three college grads I know are majors in science. My two nieces and our own Abby K., who will head to a PhD program next week (see inside this newsletter for more.) I don’t know if they were drawn because of climate change, but I do know they represent a great awakening of our younger generation that we must understand our earth and its resources in order to protect all of life.

Historically we have had a rapacious appetite to extract for our engines of commerce and industry. We have fought dozens of wars all over the globe for oil. We protect through laws the titans who bring us gas and coal and oil so we can grow our GDP, to be “number one.”

And those of us in highly industrialized countries – sometimes referred to as “the first world,” have all benefitted with jobs, personal wealth & long life-expectancy. We’ve benefitted at the expense of so-called “third-world countries,” and at the expense of the air, water & soil and thousands of plant and animal species. We are all part of the problem and we must all be part of the solution, as we are able, to heal the earth.

And we are able. In last week’s sermon we focused on: what is God’s to do, and what is ours to do with God working through us? With climate change, ours IS to help heal the earth, with God working through us.

I think about one of the 11 UCC General Synod resolutions I helped pass as a delegate 2 weeks ago, called “Speak for the Trees,” on the rights of nature. All Resolutions are invitations – not dictates – to local churches to live out the gospel. At its heart, this Resolution asks us to change our relationship with nature. Instead of seeing creation as an object from which we pull what we want, creation is a living organism with which we have an ongoing conversation about how we take care of each other.

In Genesis 1 God gives humanity “dominion” over creation. Dominion in the biblical sense is to care for and love something/someone as God does. Thus we have the responsibilities of one who has dominion. We in the church can be the ones who accept such responsibility, and dare to speak for the trees. On this I’ll be contemplating during my sabbath time among the trees, smoky air, and searing sun.

With you on the journey, Rev. Frances



1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10 AM/Worship w/Communion 7 PM/AA Mtg.	Music & Worship 7 PM		Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30	Choir 7 PM		
10 AM/Worship Rev. Jane Kropa preaching 7 PM/AA Mtg.			Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30	Choir 7 PM		
10 AM/Worship Rev. Jane Kropa preaching 7 PM/AA Mtg.				Choir 7 PM		
10 AM/Worship Rev. Deb Timmins preaching 7 PM/AA Mtg.		10 AM Women's Ministries Faith Formation mtg. 6:30 PM	Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30	Rev Frances' office hours 9:30-4:30 Swamp Creek Walk 6 PM Choir 7 PM		Kline Celebration of Life 10 AM
10 AM/Worship 7 PM/AA Mtg.						

Pulpit Supply and Pastoral Coverage Aug 2-22

While Rev. Frances is away the following pastors will offer pulpit supply and pastoral care.

Pulpit Supply

Aug 8 and 15: Rev. Jane Kropa

Aug 22: Rev. Deb Timmins.

Emergency Pastoral Care

Aug 2 – Aug 15 Noon: Rev. Kropa

Contact Rev. Kropa: 1-610-781-3187

(If texting, please put "Falkner Swamp" as first 2 words.)

Aug 15 Noon – Aug 22: Rev. Matt Hoover, Pastor, Church of the Good Shepherd

Contact Rev. Hoover: 1-301-471-0803



“Somebodies” Been Busy!!!



To the busy bees, we notice your handiwork, and we give a shout out of appreciation for:

- The painted railings outside along steps
- The stained rose arbor
- The weeding and new bush to replace a dead one
- A scrubbed clean and newly working toilet off the kitchen
- Pollinators were planted as part of a climate justice grant through the PSEC
- New mulch was laid in the playground area & new swing seats are on the way





Some Highlights from July's Consistory Meeting

Full, approved minutes are on the bulletin board outside the church office.

- Rally Day will be Faith Formation Sunday on Sunday, Sept. 12
- Shed roof at the parsonage needs replaced
- Narrowed the heater quotes down to two companies; awaiting some further info before making final decision
- Sunday School/Sunday's at the Swamp will be held during worship (after the Children's Message)
- An addendum has been added to Erica's contract with a decrease in salary to accurately reflect remuneration for the time required for the current position (at Erica's request)

For full approved minutes see the bulletin board outside the church office.

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

This financial information is for the month of June 2021.

Total general fund intake and outgoing is:
General Funds Income: \$11,752.02
General Funds Expenses: \$36,101.09
General Fund Loss for June: (\$24,349.07)



Restricted Funds Income: \$1,443.00
Restricted Funds Expenses: \$1,149.47

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



Our food pantry bin has started to see some recent donations. Ed & Jane have graciously agreed to again make deliveries to Multi-Service.

Now known as Preston's Food Pantry, visitors to the pantry increased by 112% and they distributed 327,000 lbs. of food in 2020.

Thank you for your support of this ministry!



Ladies' Night ~ Tuesday, Sept. 21st

6 PM ~ doors open

6:30 PM ~ dinner

**Entertainment ~ "Chalk Talk" by
Rev. Gerhart**

\$15/adult, free for children ages 12 & under
payment due by Sept. 12th
to Barb G., Beth, or Olga
Cash only please



We found so much joy during our Crop Walk team walks, that we've decided why not continue to meet for fresh air and fellowship throughout the year? Put on some comfortable walking shoes and join us for a walk. All are welcome! Invite a friend or neighbor! If you have any questions reach out to Laura Brown.

laurakline-brown@hotmail.com

610-657-5266

Thursday, August 26-6pm Swamp Creek Park-3179 Reifsnyder Road, Gilbertsville, PA 19525

Church News to Share

- ❖ We mark the passing into eternal life of Erma Frye. A memorial service was held Wednesday, July 7 at Schumacher & Benner Funeral Home following her death on July 1. Erma is remembered for her many years of involvement with Falkner Swamp, most notably organizing the kitchen meals. Erma with husband Richard, longtime treasurer, raised their 3 children at Falkner Swamp. Erma was buried next to Richard and son Ronald. Please keep son Roger, daughter Ruth, daughter-in-law Patty and Erma's grandchildren in your prayers.
- ❖ Congratulations to Debbie Lord, regular visitor and a new grandma, who wishes to share her joy and ask for prayers. Debbie says, "Everett James Ward, son of Erin Kennedy Ward and Evan Ward, arrived 3 1/2 weeks early just a short time ago. Everett is 5 pounds 13 ounces and 18 inches long."

Debbie added later that Everett was admitted to the NICU in Phoenixville for help with breathing and eating. He is alert and the family is hopeful he will come home within a couple days.

Prayers for his health and strength are appreciated.

- ❖ On Tues. Aug. 3, Abby K. heads off for Pasadena, CA, where she will begin a PhD program at CalTech, in Geological & Planetary Science. Please keep Abby and her mom Karen in your prayers during this transition.



Prayer requests will be kept on the prayer list for 3 weeks.

- Arlene, for recovery (knee) from a recent fall
- Doris, for ongoing health concerns
- Jeff G., Cassandra's brother, for recovery
- Baby Everett, Debbie L.'s newborn grandson
- For victims of the house fire in Douglassville

Please let Rev. Frances know if you'd like to be added, or if another for whom you pray has given you permission to be joined for our collective prayer. You may also email prayers to Sharon at falknerswamp@comcast.net.

Congregational Conversation on July 11

This past Sunday, we held our second Congregational Conversation, focusing on Falkner Swamp moving forward post-COVID. We had lively conversations about what is important to each of us and came up with some great ideas for the future of our congregation.

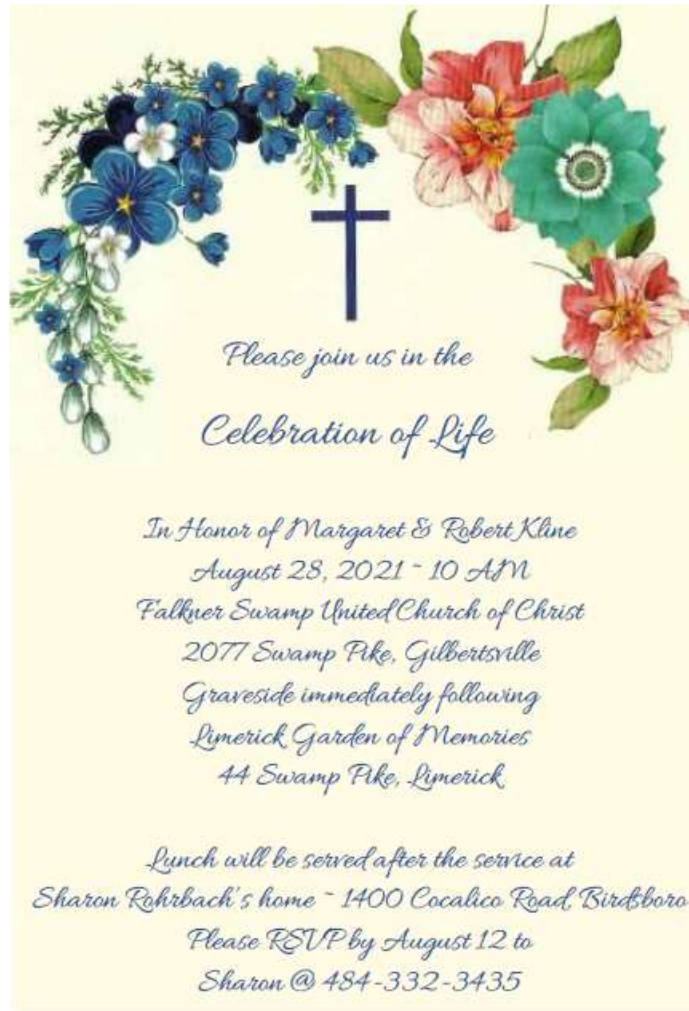
The first question was: ***What do you look forward to at church?*** We all agreed that we look forward to seeing our church family again—not just “seeing” each other, but actually being together, worshipping together, and having fellowship in a variety of forms. We are looking forward to starting the Community Breakfast again, singing, sharing our prayers, and “resetting” for the new week. One member said: “I know Rev. Frances will say that ‘one thing’ in her message that gives me food for thought, or provides me that boost to ‘hang in there’ and continue to hope and appreciate life.” We also look forward to learning something new during Susan’s Children’s Chat. Another member noted that it seems more important than ever to not take things for granted in the life of our church.

Our second question was: ***Imagine that the church has all the resources it needs. What do you most want to experience at church?*** All three groups had great ideas about growing Falkner Swamp’s ministry and increasing our impact in our local community. Ideas included trying to grow our Community Breakfast, helping the hungry and the homeless, hosting a Mother’s Day banquet, concentrating on youth ministry, finding ways to make our facility more appealing to families/kids, restarting our bell choir, and building a labyrinth. We would also like to participate in mission trips, whether they are local, national, or international. So many great thoughts and lots of enthusiasm about sharing the gifts we have as a congregation with new people, while also taking care of ourselves and growing our faith.

The last question was: ***Now imagine you are an astronaut floating above planet Earth. All the churches twinkle from space. What does the Falkner Swamp “twinkle” say?*** Overwhelmingly, we would like to be welcoming to all people; we would also like to be known as “The Music Church.” We came up with some pretty great “marquee” ideas:

- Come join our family!
- Love shines bright here!
- There is love in our house!
- We’ll keep the light on for you!
- Walk-ins welcome!
- All are welcome – “All” means YOU!

Our next conversation date is TBD (to be determined), but watch the newsletter and listen for announcements so you can be part of it.



The office plans to print copies of the church directory in the next few weeks. If you have any contact updates, please let Sharon know.

Thank you!