

# NEWSLETTER

FOR MEMBERS & FRIENDS OF FALKNER SWAMP UCC



## ***See inside for:***

- *Consistory highlights*
- *Financial matters*

As a reminder, we stream live every Sunday, 10 AM, on Facebook. Contrary to popular belief, you don't need a Facebook account to watch. Here's how to access it: Type: facebook.com/falknerswampucc in your computer browser. Scroll past the opening screen that asks for a log in. The livestream should be the first, and you can keep scrolling to see past videos. They look like boxes with a triangle in the middle.



*Prayer requests will be kept on the prayer list for 3 weeks.  
Please contact Rev. Frances if the prayer request should be extended.*

- Caitlin & Jordan, for Caitlin's pregnancy and the unborn baby
- Bob Bridegam, following a car accident in the winter and for his friend who is still recovering; and for his father who suffered a stroke.
- for Lynne, (Jim Kooser's mother) upon the passing of her husband John on Monday 5/3, that she is held in the peace that passes all understanding during this time of grief and mourning.
- Suzanne, Rev. Frances' college friend who was on our prayer list, died in hospice with family surrounding her on May 9. Rev. Frances is grateful for your kind words and prayers.
- Paul and Louise Jones, as Louise fights infections in skilled nursing at the Highlands in Wyomissing.
- Debbie Lord and her family tested negative from COVID and all are regaining strength and health; Debbie appreciates our prayers.
- Evelyn Schwenk, as she undergoes cancer treatments, and for her family, as they care for and support her.
- the family of Raymond, Arlene's neighbor, who passed away this week

Dear Beloved at Falkner Swamp,

On Wednesday morning it was my turn for the morning school carpool. After I dropped off the kids, I turned on the radio. "19 children and 2 teachers were gunned down at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas...." As I continued listening, tears streamed down my face. Anguish, rage, and fear coalesced as the words of Psalm 13 arose: "How long, O Lord, how long?" This is the second-most deadly school shooting in the nation, behind Sandy Hook nearly 10 years ago.

If you were in church on Sunday, or watched the livestream, you heard my prayer for the families of those who were gunned down in Buffalo, Milwaukee, and at a church in California. I admitted to the deep hurt I feel over our country's love of weapons, and I asked for help to live with that pain. I finished: "...wrap your arms around....so many people who die from violence in cities, in the countryside, by accidents. Give us courage to *do something*." I remember trying hard not to cry.

I believe God is answering my prayers, for how to live with this pain. Because I am led lately to consider my own complicity in our nation's love affair with guns and violence. I think of the movies we've consumed & glorified over the years (Rambo and Terminator series come to mind, now the Marvel/DC Comics networks of movies) and the single-shooter video games that showed up in my son's life and that of his peers. We want to blame an industry and yet who are they selling to? All of us, who want to be entertained and delighted, and search for ever more exciting offerings. I am as guilty as the next person. So, I begin with confession. I confess, O God, my own glorification of violence in how I consume entertainment. I confess my delight in instant gratification of fantasy that shuts me off from the pain of the world.

Peter W. Marty, then Editor of The Christian Century, wrote in an editorial dated Feb 23, 2018: "The death-by-gun crisis in America is not just a political issue. It's a spiritual issue of the highest order." He expressed his own sadness over the lack of will to break the grip of the NRA over politicians' support of sensible gun control laws.

Referencing Exodus 32 when the wandering Israelites, grown weary and fearful, cast a golden calf to worship, Marty concluded: "We're in golden calf country here, elevating a loyalty to the gun over a fidelity to God's desire for abundant life. More than a hunting or safety device, the gun has become an object of reverence. We bow in devotion at its altar. "Sacred stuff resides in that wooden stock and blued steel," onetime NRA president Charlton Heston said. And when a gun becomes an idol, it demands loyalty even if it regularly disappoints. Like other small g gods that offer false consolation, a gun's guarantee of ultimate safety and security is a myth."

I'm not stopping my tears now. I am in lament. Over my own blind allegiance to the golden calf of violence for entertainment, my blindness to how one's right to own as many guns as we want end up disproportionately hurting Black communities, and how I have given up advocating for sensible gun control.

I'm not stopping my tears now. I am listening to those tears for how I will act. Action includes prayer. It includes making different entertainment choices. It includes picking up my pen and telephone to let legislators know how important universal gun checks are as *one, but a very important part* of a broader effort to curb gun violence.

And in Confession we receive an Assurance of Grace, I hear Jesus' words on the cross, as he hung between two others convicted of crimes against the state: "Forgive them, Lord, for they know not what they do."

With you on the journey, Rev. Frances



			<b>1</b> Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM  Choir 7 PM	<b>2</b>  **Rev. Frances' office hours	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> Pentecost Sunday 10 AM/Worship/ Communion Steeple Mtg. after worship 7 PM/AA Mtg.	<b>6</b> Music & Worship Meeting 7 PM	<b>7</b>  **Rev. Frances' & Sharon's office hours 9 – 12 PM	<b>8</b> Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	<b>9</b>  **Rev. Frances' office hours 1 -2 PM Pastoral Visitation Meeting	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> 10 AM/Worship  7 PM/AA Mtg.	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>  **Rev. Frances' & Sharon's office hours 9 – 12 PM	<b>15</b> Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	<b>16</b>  **Rev. Frances' office hours	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> 10 AM/Worship  7 PM/AA Mtg.	<b>20</b> Consistory Meeting 7 PM	<b>21</b>  **Rev. Frances' & Sharon's office hours 9 – 12 PM	<b>22</b> Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	<b>23</b>  Rev. Frances' vacation 5/23 – 5/26	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Leaders' Retreat
<b>26</b> 10 AM/Worship  7 PM/AA Mtg.	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>  **Rev. Frances' & Sharon's office hours 9 – 12 PM	<b>29</b> Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	<b>30</b>  **Rev. Frances' office hours		

\*\* Times vary, please call or text for an appointment: 484-995-2705.



### **Some Highlights from May's Consistory Meeting**

- Full, approved minutes are on the bulletin board outside the church office.
- a small group from Consistory is reviewing our church Constitution. They've asked for each committee/ministry to complete a questionnaire as part of their review.
  - Steeple meetings - May 22 (for questions with Bob S.) & June 5 (Marcus Brandt attending)
  - June 25<sup>th</sup> – next Leader's Retreat

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

This financial information is for the month of April 2022.

Total general fund intake and outgoing is:  
General Funds Income: \$10,705.66  
General Funds Expenses: \$13,420.91  
General Fund Loss for month: (\$2,715.25)

Restricted Funds Income: \$1,763.50  
Restricted Funds Expenses: \$1,445.50



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