

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:

- *Financial Update through April 2024*
- *Graduation News*
- *Christian Healing mini-retreat*
- *Summer Vacation for staff*

Choir Director/Organist News

Last month we learned that Liz Francisco accepted a choral director position at another church. Her final Sunday with us is June 23. While her tenure with us is brief, our choir has enjoyed working with and learning from her, and our worship services have been filled with uplifting hymns and anthems.

The Music & Worship Committee formed a sub-committee to begin the process of searching for a new choir director and organist. **On June 30 and July 7, following worship, members of the Committee and Rev. Frances will be available at the back tables of Fellowship Hall.** Please get a beverage or snack and join them for conversation about the process and/or to discuss ideas for music in worship.

Dear Falkner Swamp Friends,

Occasionally I read a devotional and am inspired to share with all of you. The following is one of those, based on the parable of the wheat and the weeds. I've been doing a lot of weeding lately. Jesus' words here sometimes stay my hand. But, as we read on, Jesus isn't talking about gardening. I hope this author's invitation to hold the mystery of life meets you with a garden of God's grace.

Author Mary Luti writes for the UCC Daily Devotional. You can sign up for these daily email messages filled with head and heart and soul at: <https://www.ucc.org/daily-devotional/> and scroll down to subscribe.

"It's Complicated" by Mary Luti

"The slaves said to [the householder], 'Do you want us to go and gather the weeds?' But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until the harvest.'" - Matthew 13:28-30 (NRSV, abridged)

I know someone who responds to every tummy ache, horrendous headline, flat tire, financial disaster, and family tragedy with the same preternatural equanimity. This too shall pass. All will be well. Everything happens for a reason. It's as if they have no emotional nerve endings. Even God gets angry, for Pete's sake. Even Jesus wept.

I'm tempted to suggest therapy, but then I consider my own habitual reactions to life's slings and arrows. Sputtering apoplexy, stomping about, blue streaks, middle fingers, catastrophizing, emotional nerve endings smoking hot. The world is poop. People suck. Always have, always will. My acquaintance is an off-the-charts Pollyanna. I'm a veritable doom machine. She's in major denial. So am I. We both could use therapy.

Or conversion. Because human experience is, to put it mildly, complicated. It tells us contradictory truths. People are glorious and good. People are rotten and nasty. Everything will be okay. Nothing ever will. Calm confidence is a rational response to tragedy and pain. Rage is, too. For every downside, there's an up. For every up, a down.

Life is a mysterious admixture of sorrow and joy, upset and serenity, evil and holiness, love and hate, Pollyannas and doom machines, wheat and weeds. The mature person holds it all as one, without rushing to reduce it, simplify it, or judge it. The faithful person makes meaning of it without forcing it to make sense. The holy person lives into the whole mystery as she finds it and leaves the sorting to God.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary Luti is a long time seminary educator and pastor, author of *Teresa of Avila's Way* and numerous articles, and founding member of The Daughters of Abraham, a national network of interfaith women's book groups.



- **June 9** – Bob Schnaars preaching, apostolic Sunday
- **June 16** – Rev. Paul Jones preaching, Rev. Frances vacation
- **June 22** – 9:30 AM – noon ~ What is Christian Healing? A mini-retreat lead by Rev. Frances & Ann, see flier in this newsletter
- **June 23** – Liz Francisco final Sunday; Faith Formation leader recognition
- **June 30** – 5th Sunday, Future of Falkner Swamp offering; M&W, Rev. Frances available after worship



Thank you to our Cleaning Crews! They keep all our church spaces sparkling & fresh. For June, we thank Bob & Sharon Schnaars.

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

Financial Update through April 2024

Update from the budget committee:

Total funds available for general use at the end of March:	\$64,726.49
Total Income received in the month of April:	+ \$12,630.03
Total Expenses paid in the month of April:	- (\$13,399.36)
Total funds available for general use at the end of April:	\$63,957.16

FUNdraising Committee Updates

Our basket raffle raised \$437. We thank all who created and donated the wonderful baskets. We appreciate the support from those who took a chance on winning a basket. The winners are as follows:

Kids & Hefty baskets – Rachael Connolly
Treat Yourself – Lee Comer
Feed the Birds – Bob Erb
The Chosen & Relax – Krause Family
Cinco De Mayo – Jim Fahy
Star Wars – Harrison Robbins
Pampered Chef – Biedeman Family
Garden – Peg Heffner



Movies in the Swamp June 8th @ 8pm Rain Date: June 15th

The FUNdraising Committee would like to kick off a “Movies in the Swamp” summer series with Angels in the Outfield. This will be our way to reach out to the community. Our goal is not necessarily to raise a great deal of money, but to get our church active within the community. This is to get people into our church.

I will ask the attendees with a small survey slip that they can fill out for this to see if they would attend and the next suggestion.

I will be setting up our projector on the side of the Christian Ed wing.

We will have a small concession stand with popcorn, snacks, and drinks. We would like to ask for concession donations. We would like to know the exact price on items so we can price them accordingly.

Admission will be free. We will have a donation bucket. Admission will include 1 ticket per person and a popcorn. The ticket stub will be put into a bucket and someone will be entered into the drawing for the ‘movie’ raffle basket. Attendees can purchase additional tickets if they wish at \$1 per ticket.

There will be a sign-up sheet available in the fellowship hall for volunteers and concession donations.

Thanks,
The FUNdraising Committee

P.S. Not all FUNdraisers are financial winners, sometimes they have to be spiritual winners.



2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10 AM Worship w/Communion Joyful Noise 7 PM/AA Mtg.	7 PM M & W mtg.	Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 7 PM FUNdraising mtg.	Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	**Rev. Frances' office hours	PSEC Spring Mtg. June 7-9 State College	Movies in the Swamp 8 PM
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
10 AM Worship Apostolic Sunday Bob Schnaars leading worship 7 PM/AA Mtg.	Rev. Frances Vacation Week – please contact Rev. Ann Few for pastoral emergencies @ 717-468-4981.					
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
10 AM Worship Father's Day Rev. Paul Jones leading worship 7 PM/AA Mtg	7 PM Consistory	Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM	Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM 6 PM Stewardship mtg.	**Rev. Frances' office hours		9AM – 12 PM Healing Prayer mini-retreat
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
10 AM Worship 7 PM/AA Mtg		Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM	Sharon's office hours 9:30 – 1:30 PM	**Rev. Frances' office hours		
30						
10 AM Worship Future of F.S. special offering 7 PM/AA Mtg						

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

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.

The Chosen

No matter where you are at in your journey with Jesus Christ, this TV show is for you!

Imagine you could see the life of **Jesus** through the eyes of the people that walked on earth with him – the disciples, Mary his mother, the Pharisees, the children, those he healed. What would that look like? Now you can experience it! **The Chosen** is the first-ever-multi-season TV show about the life of **Jesus**. Created outside of the Hollywood system, **The Chosen** allows us to see Him through the eyes of those who knew him.

The Chosen stays faithful to the Gospels and at the same time tells us a story that is in between the lines of scripture. This T.V. series brings to life those people that are mentioned in the Bible, using the historical context of life at the time of **Jesus**. The series does not contradict scripture, but instead puts life around it so that we as viewers can imagine, "What was life like with Jesus." It really could have been this way.

We believe that as you encounter of the characters in **The Chosen**, you will build a new curiosity about the life of **Jesus** and those that followed him when he walked the earth. This series, has the potential to give a better understanding of **Jesus** as **God** and man.

Our hope is that as our church encounters the characters in **The Chosen**, we are able to relate to the them, leading us in a closer relationship with **Jesus**, our Lord and Savior. **The Chosen** is a fresh look at the Gospels for those who have been reading the stories for years or for those who are just curious about who **Jesus** is and was.

How to Watch at home

1) Watch for free in the mobile app (from anywhere in the world)! You can get it here: watch.thechosen.tv or search "The Chosen" in your Apple or Android app store. From the app, you can stream to your TV using another device, such as Roku, Apple TV, Fire TV, Android TV, Chromecast, etc.

2) You can borrow the season disc from our church. You will be able to sign the DVD out and take it home for your enjoyment. Please be respectful of others and return or re-sign them out on a weekly basis.



We confirmed
Lucas Krause on
Pentecost Sunday,
May 19th.



Cemetery Report May, 2024

“Left over” work from workday:

1. We still need to replace the broken windows in the block shed at the upper (Falkner Swamp) cemetery. It was decided to replace the glass with plexiglass.
2. The two signs at the upper cemetery detailing the rules are in very bad shape. They actually have “green ‘something’” growing in them. Is there anyone who knows about such things? I don't. We need to take a look at the signs and come up with a plan of action, they definitely don't make a very good impression on visitors.

We also have an old question regarding insurance for Falkner Swamp Cemetery: it seems that the church's insurance policy is supposed to show the Cemetery as a “named” entity on the policy, but Little, Michaels and Kennedy (our insurance company) no longer sends out paper policies, instead choosing to send us a CD showing our policy. Sharon Schnaars has been working on this problem and is trying to get the cemetery listed as a location. We believe that the upper cemetery is 5 acres.

Lastly, we are in need of two or three volunteers to learn how to mark grave sites for burials. Since the 1970s, the ‘job’ has been accomplished by one person at a time. When that person can no longer do the job, someone else steps up, and we stagger on. For the most part this seems to work. But I can tell you that there have been mistakes made.

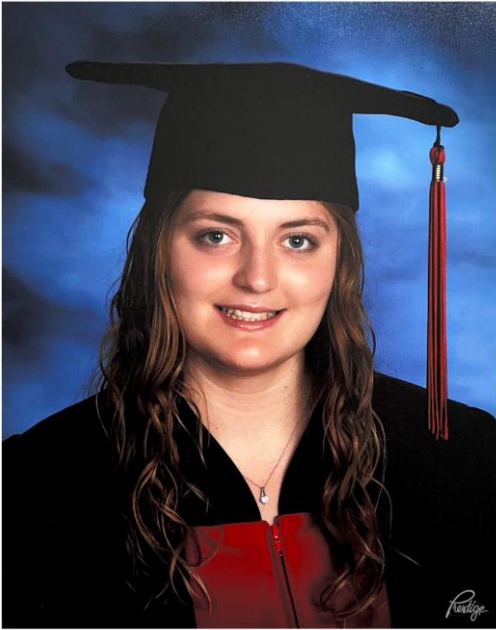
On three occasions that I know of, when Pottstown Burial Vault probed the ground before digging, the site has been “occupied.” This is very disconcerting to the families, and to the cemetery, resulting in last-minute changes. On another occasion a hole was dug in a plot owned by another family and found by a combination of three separate “oops” events, very thankfully in time to correct the mistake. This time there were two sets of families involved, a cemetery committee member who was trying to help, but was never trained, the funeral home and PBV. The point I'm trying to make is this job requires two or three trained people to accomplish the marking of grave plots for Pottstown Burial Vault to prepare for the deceased.

At the present time, I am the sole “marker of the graves” and I admit I'm getting a bit old to want to be called out whenever the task requires. Since my husband and I are retired, we are away a good bit of the time, and my health recently leaves a lot to be desired. We have a second person who is trained but who is not able to do it currently. Todd Stevens has volunteered to take on the training, so he has a better understanding of the job's needs, and I thank him for being willing to try. I am the first to admit it's not a job everyone can do. But it is important to have more people trained. No family wants to hear, “your relative can't be buried when you planned because there's no one available to mark the grave site”.

If you think you might be interested, please let us know. You can speak to Rev. Frances, Karen Miller, or myself Mary Ann Erb. I will definitely be available to answer any questions and be happy to give you “on the job training.” Please!...and Thank You.

Mary Ann Erb for the Cemetery Committee

Congratulations!



As Maggie Brennan graduates from Boyertown Area High School, she shares the following:
I plan to attend Millersville University; however, I am undecided. I am interested in Social Sciences and possibly working in the government or with the law. Leaving high school is bittersweet, but I am so excited to start a new journey!

HAVE GRADUATION NEWS TO SHARE?

Our church would love to spread the word! Please send in your details (pictures are a plus) and what you are planning or considering as your next step. We'll print in the July/August issue.

Most importantly, our church family will keep you in prayer as you continue your life journey.



Check out our revamped website:

<https://falknerswamp.org/>

Member Diane Weller worked with church secretary Sharon to learn how to update the website. She has revised the layout and uploaded new language, provided by Rev. Frances and faith formation leaders Becky and Susan. Sharon will continue to update the calendar and upload the newsletter.

Websites are often the first “visit” for people when looking for a church. Take a look. If you have any remarks or thoughts, please share them with Diane, Sharon in the office, or Rev. Frances.

Diane had no idea how to work with websites before she updated ours. She saw a need, decided to learn a new skill, and our church is the better for it. Thank you, Diane!



HAVE YOU WONDERED.....

**WHAT IS
CHRISTIAN
HEALING?
(AND WHAT IT IS NOT?)**

SATURDAY JUNE 22

9:30-NOON

Falkner Swamp UCC

Join Revs Frances Chester & Ann
Few for a morning mini-retreat to
explore healing prayer.

Our time will include ice breakers in a
large group, discussion, song and
prayer, and small groups.

Come at 9:15 for fellowship with
snacks and coffee or tea.

This event is open to all so bring a
friend or neighbor.

**Why don't all our
prayers for healing
get answered ?**

Falkner Swamp UCC
2077 Swamp Pike
Gilbertsville, PA 19525

Questions? Please Contact
Rev. Frances Chester,
pastorfalknerswamp@comcast.net
or call the church office
at 610-323 -4053.



Rev. Frances Away:

- June 8 -15 (June 16 Apostolic Sunday, Rev. Paul Jones preaching)
- Wed July 17-Tues July 23 (July 21, Rev. Paul Jones preaching)
- Aug 3- Aug 10 (Aug 4 Rev. Tyson Frey preaching and serving Holy Communion)
- Aug 11 Apostolic Sunday, (lay preacher if possible)

Sharon Away:

- July 5 - July 14



The Women's Marine Corp put new American flags on the graves of our veterans in both cemeteries in honor of Memorial Day.

THANK YOU
SO MUCH
YOU ARE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED!

Thank you to all who helped with the four Community Breakfasts this year.
We collected \$2943 overall!