



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:

*~Inclement weather plan
~Going Green for Christmas
~December & January calendars
~ New parament and steeple pictures*



- Dec 7 – Annual Congregational Meeting to vote on 2026 budget
- Dec 14 – Raffle Basket winners announced; Christmas Carol singing led by The Dogs, 1:30 – 2:30 with refreshments to follow.
- Dec 24th – Christmas Eve Service, 7 pm, Carols, Communion & Candles
- Dec 28 – Christmas Gifts
 - Informal service of Christmas hymns and sharing Christmas traditions. Come in “Christmas Comfortable” – PJs count!
 - Do you practice a beloved Christmas tradition? Consider sharing a brief story with your church family. You can step up to the lectern yourself or write them down and Rev. Frances will read it for you.

Dear Falkner Swamp Beloved,

Advent is a season to slow down and wait in watchful patience. Scriptures for these four weeks leading to Christmas point to the practice:

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is already the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone; the day is near. (Romans 13:11-12a)

Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. (Matthew 24:42)

Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. (James 5:7)

Waiting and slowness are not rewarded in our culture, especially this time of year. Busy-ness takes on extra meaning in Advent the way a snowball takes on size rolling downhill. But God has a different idea for us this season. How to tap into God's desire for us to pause and soak in the gifts of watchfulness? Cue Fred Rogers, of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" fame.

In the 2018 documentary, "Won't You Be My Neighbor," one of his co-workers remarked, "Fred used time differently."

The film shows Rogers playing with a child, then cuts to another scene of him feeding his fish. The camera zooms in on Rogers taking out the fish food container, on the food leaving the can, then on the fish wiggling up to eat. In another close-up scene, Rogers takes apart a small instrument, then puts it back together. All in real time and mostly silent.

The studio worker said, "There's a lot of slow space. But there's not a lot of wasted space."

A newspaper article reported on the following incident. Rogers came to a news station for an interview. Unbeknownst to him, one of the station workers brought her preschool daughter to meet him. But when the girl saw the very tall Mr. Rogers coming toward them, she began to cry and hid behind her mother. Rogers spoke to the station manager, "I need to meet with the little girl right away." As the station manager arranged this, Rogers pulled out of his bag a couple of puppets he used on set. Rogers, seated now at eye level with the girl, took his puppets and spoke quietly to her, taking as much time as she needed to be calm. She was finally able to relax finding that the Mr. Rogers behind the TV was the same person who, at first, was a scary tall man pretending to be her TV friend.

How Mr. Rogers used time to care for all living beings guides us this Advent. While we wait, we care mindfully. In the face of anxiety, fear, indeed all the dark emotions, we change plans to sit with them for a while until we can calm them. A waiting, patient, observant stance delivers peace – within us, for others.

Easy? Probably not much of the time. Worth it? Only if we want to receive God's blessings on earth, which is the only place we'll ever recognize them. For earth is the material we are given, from dirt to fish to cherished loved ones.

God's rich blessings to you and on all the precious material around you this Advent.

With you on the journey, Rev. Frances



Going Green for Christmas

Evergreens are a sign of life in the winter and a reminder to pray for the restoration of God's creation. Another type of green is our Green Team's work and hope for our climate. As a small step toward reusing and recycling, we invite you to use festive seasonal mugs that will be available in the kitchen for fellowship time and Christmas with the Dogs. If you have a favorite Christmas mug, perhaps one that holds a treasured memory, feel free to bring it and share its story.

Volunteers will wash the mugs. Simply place them in the designated bin after use so they can be washed and ready to use again.

The Green Team



Join Shenkel UCC on December 21 at 7:00 pm for a meditative service for the Longest Night.
1580 Shenkel Rd, Pottstown, PA 19465



Our Mission Statement for our newest program, Friends Helping Friends, is: "To help other members and friends of Falkner Swamp through occasional difficulties with the help of volunteers composed of other members and friends of Falkner Swamp."

We're available if you need us!

To volunteer, or request assistance, please call Mary Ann Erb at 484-941-4569.



If you are wondering whether or not church will meet due to winter weather conditions, Consistory plans to spread the word in these ways.
There will be no phone chain to call members.

The church is contracting this year with Ivy League Landscaping for snow removal and ice treatment. (Ivy cares for our lawns and cemeteries.) To keep our snow removal costs manageable, we will observe the following in case of inclement weather: Monday-Saturday, the church office and all offices will usually be closed.

A Flocknote will be sent in the event of closure, so be sure you receive Flocknotes via text or email. Contact Sharon in the office at falknerswamp@comcast.net if you need to sign up.

On Sundays, and for Community Breakfast Saturdays, we will clear ice and snow. However, in the case of ongoing weather, breakfasts and worship may be cancelled. Check channel 69 (WFMZ) news for closures.

If you are still unsure, please use your best judgment based on conditions where you are.

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.

Financial Update through October 2025

Total funds available for general use at the end of September:	\$82,871.39
Total Income received in the month of October:	+\$13,105.90
Total Expenses paid in the month of October:	(\$12,498.28)
Total funds available for general use at the end of October:	\$83,479.01

The net financial results from general church activity for the month of October reflected a loss in the general fund of \$1,293.13 (this amount does not include the parsonage rental income).



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!



Fastnacht Social - February 13, 2026

7 - 9 PM

More details to come!



❖ **Sunday, December 7 after worship – Annual Congregational Meeting**

There are 3 votes planned for this meeting.

The Congregation is asked to vote:


1. To amend the Constitution and By-Laws, Article 13, Page 9, Property, to include the following language due to the dissolution of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference:

Should Falkner Swamp in the future dissolve as a nonprofit organization, the allowable, remaining assets, after meeting any outstanding debts, will be donated in the following ways: 50% to be donated to the **Keystone** Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the UCC and 50% to be donated to registered nonprofit charities to be determined by membership at the time.

2. To accept an amendment to the current 25% Benevolence designation from endowment repay to Future of Falkner Swamp. Benevolence giving is currently 75% OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) and 25% endowment repay. The Endowment Committee has approved forgiving the loan to the church. Therefore, at their November 2025 meeting, Consistory approved this 25% be designated for the Future of Falkner Swamp fund.

3. To approve the 2026 budget.



	1	2 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1PM Scripture Study	3 Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM	4 **Rev. Frances' office hours 7 PM FUNdraising mtg.	5	6
7 10 AM Worship w/ Communion Congregational Meeting 7 PM/AA Mtg.	8	9 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1PM Scripture Study	10 Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM	11 **Rev. Frances' office hours	12	13
14 10 AM Worship Basket Raffle drawing Christmas Carols w/The Dogs 1:30PM 7 PM/AA Mtg	15 6:30 PM Consistory	16 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1PM Scripture Study	17 Sharon's office hours 9 - 2 PM	18 **Rev. Frances' office hours	19	20
21 10 AM Worship Away in a Manger children's Nativity play 7 PM/AA Mtg	22 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM	23 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – ? 1PM Scripture Study	24 Christmas Eve Service @ 7PM Carols, Communion & Candles Bethany & Christmas Fund special offerings	25 	26	27
28 10 AM Worship Joyful Noise special offering Christmas tradition stories, PJ Sunday 7 PM/AA Mtg	29	30	31	<div>Church office closed this week. Rev. Frances vacation, Dec 29 – Jan 4.</div>		

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.

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

JANUARY

				1 <i>Happy New Year</i> ***2026***	2	3
4 10 AM Worship w/ Communion Rev. Frances vacation, Rev. Ann Few pulpit supply 7 PM/AA Mtg.	5 7 PM M & W mtg.	6 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 10 AM Women's Ministries 1PM Scripture Study	7 Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM	8 **Rev. Frances' office hours	9	10
11 10 AM Worship Baptism of Christ Sunday 300 th Ann. Comm. wrap-up mtg. in Conference Rm. Following worship 7 PM/AA Mtg	12	13 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1PM Scripture Study	14 Sharon's office hours 9 - 2 PM	15 **Rev. Frances' office hours	16	17
18 10 AM Worship Cemetery mtg. following worship 7 PM/AA Mtg	19 6:30 PM Consistory	20 Rev. Frances & Sharon's office hours 9 – 2 PM 1PM Scripture Study	21 Sharon's office hours 9 - 2 PM	22 **Rev. Frances' office hours	23	24
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Thank you to our Cleaning Crews! They keep all our church spaces sparkling & fresh. Our December cleaners are Carol Stevens, Linda & Ken Sell, and Ellen Whitfield.

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



The biggest thank you for the overwhelming support of the Women's Ministries Winter Holiday Sale. To date they have raised over \$900. This far exceeded their expectations and enables them to support ministries our of church and community!



Community Breakfast

Community Breakfast 2025 (and 2026)

Thank you to everyone who helped with the breakfasts this year. We couldn't have done it without you. The total free will offering collected was **\$2,481.**

With the Kitchen Committee's decisive vote, a fund has been created for repairing a/o replacing church windows with this offering. This would include the windows in the kitchen and the fellowship room, as well as any other windows in our building that aren't in the best of shape. This will be an on-going project to build up enough money to accomplish our aim.

The Kitchen Committee invites your participation to help make our building better. If you have any questions, please speak to Robin Zerr, or any member of the Kitchen Committee.

Our 2026 breakfasts will be the first Saturdays of February – May. Many helpers make the work much lighter (and we have some great fellowship time).

New Advent Paraments

We were blessed to dedicate new Advent paraments on the first Sunday of Advent, quilted and sewn by Peggy Straub. The paraments tell the Christmas story, beginning with the angel (lectern), the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem (altar), and the guiding star (pulpit) that leads them as well as the magi. On Christmas Eve, we will place the manger parament on the pulpit to accompany the star.

These beautiful new cloths will remain through Epiphany Sunday, which is January 4.



Steeple raising completed on Tuesday, Nov 25!
We will dedicate our new steeple once our bell is able to be rung,
stay tuned for the date.



A couple follow-up comments from Marcus:

"Did you notice that the white of the church trim is the exact shade of the white on the steeple? That never happens!"

"Drive over to the township building and look back across the field. The steeple sits atop the church building like a neatly proportioned exclamation mark proclaiming the Good News."

There is a Google Drive with photos and videos about the steeple journey. If you have anything to add, please email Sharon (falknerswamp@comcast.net) and she will share the link.