Community Support Success Stories From Outreach Care

Swamp's Community Support Fund (previously Mission Outreach) supports Outreach Care, a Quakertown organization that provides local support, guidance, and emergency services for individuals and families who are homeless or at risk. Below is an update that we received from Joanne Cramer, the founder, with success stories that the organization had recently.

Hi Swamp Mennonite Church congregation,

First, we at Outreach Care truly want to thank each one of you for all your support to Outreach Care. We are truly trying to do Our Lord's work, the way He would want us to do it. With your donations it helps us to keep an individual or a family off the street or help with rental assistance and utilities. Each person that calls Outreach Care, even if we cannot financially help them at that time, will receive other resources to help them.

Here are a few clients we are working with now and a few that we have helped and are doing fine now.

1. We have a senior veteran that we have in a motel for now until his efficiency apartment is ready to occupy. We helped him find a suitable place to live. His application is in and we are praying he gets this apartment. He also has an application in to the Grundy House that he is waiting on.

2. There is a couple we have been helping at a local motel that had gotten taken by a scam and lost a lot of money and lost their place that they were living and car. They called Outreach Care. We are working with Area on Aging now with them. They also have a large dog.

3. We're working with a young couple living in the woods here in Quakertown. We are helping them with clothing and food, and we hope to provide a tent soon. The young man told us he is going away to a school for CDL license. We pray it is the truth. She is now looking for work. Bucks County Opportunity Council is also working with this couple.

4. We had a senior woman that has low income contact us because she was homeless. We placed her in a motel for a few weeks until a room in a boarding house opened for her. Area on Aging was working with us on her case. She needed to get into a nursing home. With the help of a case worker at the first nursing home, a very nice nursing home was found for her. I do keep in touch with her. She has no family.

5. This past year, we had a mother with five children contact us. The home she was renting went up for sale. She had a hard time finding a place for her and the children. We placed her in a motel for a month and she found housing in Allentown for her and her children. We worked with Children and Youth.

6. We worked with a family with one teenager. They had lost their home, and the father felt really down. They called us and we helped them with a motel stay and then helped both parents and the teenager find employment. We had given them a few places to look at and they have been living in a nice apartment now. They invited me up to see the apartment. They are so happy that they worked with Outreach Care, they told me that the ways we helped change their lives.

One more thing I'd like to share with you all. We had a family with ten children. We help them at Christmas time with gifts and always with food. They had sent this to Outreach Care: On behalf of the ---------- family, we would like to thank you for thinking about our family. Your help has really touched us in a special way. We would like to share this with you. From the Bible Luke 10:30-37. The last line: And he said, He who showed mercy on him. Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise".

Amen.

Joanne Cramer
Outreach Care/Founder

GROWTH MATTERS
SWAMP MENNONITE CHURCH
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More Than We Ask or Imagine by Pastor Nathan

Ten years ago, we had just finished a process of congregational review leading up to the vote for me to become Lead Pastor. I had already been at Swamp for five years. Pastor Verle announced his plans to retire. The Board asked whether I would consider the Lead Pastor role.

I said yes, but suggested that we look at it like marriage. We had been in a relationship for five years. The church had "popped the question". I had said yes. But before we moved forward, it might be wise to go through "pre-marital counseling".

We took six months, in the beginning of 2016, to discuss who we were as a congregation, where we had come from, and where God was leading us. There were many meaningful conversations, bringing clarity and direction that has carried us through the ups and downs of the past ten years.

We have had additional times of congregational review since then. Every four years, before the end of my term, we engage in a review of our congregation and my ministry. Our Associate Pastors have been on three-year terms, so we have had additional times of review at their term renewals.

After 2016, I realized that with my four-year term and Pastor Tami's three-year term, our congregational reviews would coincide in 2027. I wondered if it would be valuable to engage in another, longer, more intentional congregational review at that point.

Little did I know what the coming ten years would hold. Pastor Tami is no longer with us, along with many others who retired and moved out of the area. Many of you reading this joined our congregation since 2016.

But despite the twists and turns that life has brought us, both Pastor Tracy and I are due for a congregational review in 2027 with a vote on the extension of our terms in the fall of 2028.

Over the past year, the Board has discussed what it could look like to review who we are and discern together where God is leading us into the future. I am assembling a Vision Discernment Team that will be praying and planning this fall. The goal is not just to "have more meetings". Instead, we will plan engaging times of worship, prayer, fellowship, and study that allow us to test and approve God's will, with confidence.

But this will only work with you! In order for us to discern together, we all need to participate. Your voice is important. Your prayers matter. Your wisdom is needed.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Summer ViBeS reaching new Heights

More highlights inside!

Church Board Highlights

Dan opened the meeting with a devotional from Philippians 1:12 and 2 Timothy 2:8–12. He encouraged the board by reminding everyone that God can bring good out of difficult situations.

The board discussed the change from sending delegates to MCUSA Convention and Mosaic Assembly to participating in LMC events. LMC holds a Leadership Assembly each fall and an Assembly every two years that is open to everyone. These gatherings do not include delegates or business sessions. The board decided that the vice-chair will attend the Leadership Assembly each year. The congregation will be informed about the biannual Assembly, but no official congregational representative will be appointed. Next year, the board will discuss adding a travel stipend to the budget to help cover the cost of attending the biannual Assembly.

Isaac Longacre shared a report from the recent safety committee meeting. The committee recommended placing maps in Sunday School classrooms, the nursery, and the basement showing exits, fire extinguishers, fire alarms, the AED, and first aid kits. Ushers will review emergency procedures once a year. The current fire evacuation plan uses the side parking lot as the primary meeting location and the back field as a backup. The board suggested adding this information to the Child Safety Policy so it can be reviewed each year with children's ministry volunteers. The committee also recommended locking the back doors and the front office entrance by 10:15 a.m. on Sunday mornings. After discussion, they decided that security cameras are not needed at this time. The board approved all of the recommendations and thanked Isaac for the committee's work.

The board continued discussing the difference between the church by-laws and the church covenant regarding new member requirements. After further review, Laura, Dan, and Nathan recommended waiting until the church's 2027 visioning process before making any changes. The board recognized that current membership practices do not fully match the wording in the by-laws or covenant but agreed to continue with the current practice and revisit the topic next year.

Laura reviewed the Church Board members whose terms end this year. Jay Geissinger is willing to serve another term. Jim Landis has declined another term. Brandon Longacre and Laura Rush have reached their term limits. Because more than half of the board terms are ending at the same time, the board discussed ways to better stagger future terms. They decided to fill only two positions this year (the vice-chair position and one at-large position) and will recommend a by-law change at the December member meeting to help spread out future terms and limit the number of new board members added in one year. The board also approved the 2026 board discernment timeline:

- August 30 – Nominations open
- September 13 – Nominations close
- September 20 – Candidate list shared with the congregation
- September 22–25 – Candidate interviews
- October 4 – Final candidates announced
- October 18 – Congregational vote
- November 1 or 8 – Installation of new board members

The board approved the trustees' proposal to replace the church water fountains because they are no longer working properly.

Pastor Nathan presented a recommendation from the Congregational Care Team to increase the church's Christian counseling assistance from $300 to $400 per person each year because of rising counseling costs. The board approved the change. Anonymous assistance remains available to church members as needed through Pastor Nathan.

Pastor Nathan also asked for feedback on this year's sermon series, which has included more topical messages alongside expository preaching. The board expressed support for the current balance and noted the positive response from the congregation.

Brandon closed the meeting in prayer.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 17, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

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Trustee Update by Ken Longacre

Hopefully everyone has already noticed, but we recently installed two new water drinking fountains, which also have water bottle filling stations. Some aluminum flashing was blown off the facia around the stain glass window in the last big windstorm. Russ Haas has replaced the missing pieces. You also may have noticed a few bright blue pickleball courts painted on our parking lot. There is a lot of fun happening on those courts during 'Summer Vibes' nights. The cost to paint those courts was donated, so it did not cost Swamp members anything. There are no big projects on the horizon right now, but something always seems to pop up unexpectedly.

As always, if you see anything that needs Trustee attention, let any Trustee know. They are Ken Longacre, Brian Rush, Terry Landis, Will Sadler, and Dane Landes.

Swamp Youth Group Fall Events

Wednesday, September 16
Fellowship Meal & Clubs begins
Meal at 6:00 pm – Clubs at 6:30 pm

Sunday, September 20
Youth Breakfast – 7:30 am @ John's Plain & Fancy

Friday, September 25
Game Night @ Swamp from 6:30 pm-9:00 pm

Saturday, October 10
Youth Benefit Dinner & Auction @ Swamp
Benefit Dinner at 5:30 pm – Auction at 7:15 pm

Sunday, October 18
Youth Breakfast – 7:30 am (location TBD)

Saturday, October 24
Urban Air in Trexlertown
Dropoff @ Swamp at 6:00 pm – Pickup @ Swamp at 10:30 pm

Saturday, November 14
Youth Mystery Dinner (time TBD)

Wednesday, November 25
Thanksgiving Eve Service (No Youth Group)

Sunday, December 20
Youth Breakfast – 7:30 am (location TBD)

Wednesday, December 30
Youth Christmas Party @ Swamp (time TBD)

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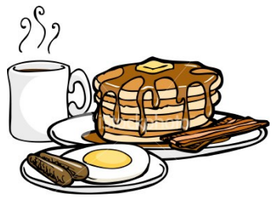
Fellowship Meal & Clubs are held the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 6:00 pm
Youth Group is held Wednesdays at 6:30 pm



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