

WELCOME

Welcome to Falling Spring Presbyterian Church, a place where the story of Chambersburg quite literally began. For nearly three centuries, this property has stood at the intersection of faith, community, and history. From its earliest days as a frontier settlement to its role in shaping civic life in Chambersburg, Falling Spring has been more than a church—it has been a gathering place, a refuge, and a living witness to the town’s growth.

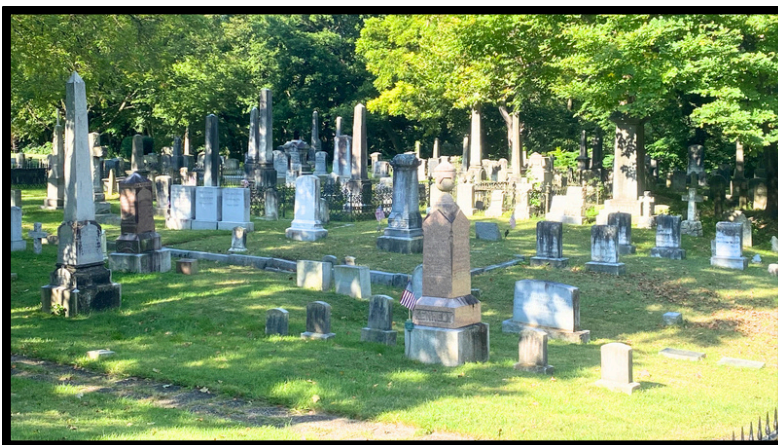


THE FALLING SPRING CEMETARY

The Falling Spring cemetery is one of the oldest burial grounds in Franklin County, with its earliest graves dating to the early 1700s. It reflects the long history of the community that grew around Falling Spring Presbyterian Church and serves as the final resting place for generations of settlers, leaders, and families who shaped Chambersburg and the surrounding region.

As you walk through the cemetery, you will notice a wide variety of gravestone materials, including marble, limestone, slate, granite, brick, and stone. Many of the earliest markers were made from limestone or marble—materials that were commonly used but prone to weathering over time. As a result, some inscriptions have faded, stones have cracked, and several markers are difficult or impossible to read today.

Burial practices during the eighteenth century also differed from modern standards. Graves were often shallower and shaped by the rocky terrain of the Cumberland Valley. Natural forces over time—including erosion, weather, and wildlife—have altered the landscape, contributing to the gradual wear of the cemetery.



The Falling Spring cemetery is also notable for the diversity of individuals buried here. Among them are war veterans, political figures, church pastors, early settlers, and pioneer families such as the Culbertsons, Sloans, and Sharps. The grounds also include burial sites of members of the Delaware Indian community, whose graves were traditionally marked by planted trees rather than stone headstones.

THE GRAVE OF BEN CHAMBERS

At the heart of the Falling Spring cemetery lies the grave of Benjamin Chambers, founder of Chambersburg. A frontiersman, landowner, and entrepreneur, Chambers established a trading post and mill near Falling Spring in the early eighteenth century. His settlement grew steadily and eventually became the town that bears his name.

Benjamin Chambers maintained close ties to Falling Spring Presbyterian Church, one of the earliest Presbyterian congregations west of the Susquehanna River. The church and cemetery served as spiritual and civic centers for the growing community, making this site central to the town's earliest development.

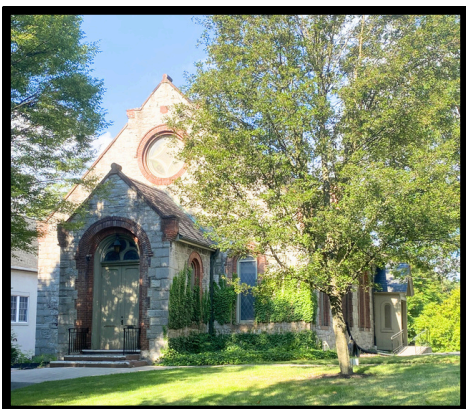


Benjamin Chambers is buried here alongside his wife, with other members of the Chambers family nearby. His sons, James and Benjamin Chambers, both served in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War and are also laid to rest on these grounds.

Also buried in this cemetery is Andrew Buchanan, for whom the local elementary school is named. Buchanan donated the land on which the school was built, further illustrating the deep connection between Falling Spring Church and the civic life of Chambersburg.

THE CHAPEL

Constructed in 1877 from locally sourced stone and brick, the Chapel reflects the craftsmanship and resilience of the Chambersburg community during a period of rebuilding following the Civil War. Originally intended as a temporary structure while the main Sanctuary was reconstructed, the Chapel quickly proved its value as a gathering space and was preserved for continued use.



For many years, the Chapel served as a meeting house where townspeople gathered not only for worship, but also for civic discussions and community events. Its design features high ceilings and thoughtful proportions that create exceptional acoustics—so much so that even an untrained singer can sound remarkable within its walls.

Today, the Chapel remains an active part of church life. It hosts Contemplative Services each Sunday at 8:00 a.m., as well as weddings, special services, and community gatherings, continuing its long tradition as a place of reflection and connection.

THE SANCTUARY

The Sanctuary of Falling Spring Presbyterian Church dates to the 1800s, with its most significant addition completed in the early 1900s to accommodate the massive pipe organ that spans an entire wall of the building. Over the years, this space served multiple purposes. In addition to worship services, it functioned as a meeting house for town councils, debates, and public gatherings—an arrangement that reflected the realities of early community life.



One of the Sanctuary's most distinctive features is the presence of doors at the ends of the pews. These doors are tied to the historic practice of Pew Rent, in which families paid for exclusive rights to a particular pew. Only members of the renting family were permitted to open those pew doors, a system that worked well until the congregation grew and family lines changed. As seating became restricted despite open pews, tensions arose, eventually leading to a split in the congregation. Those who left went on to form Central Presbyterian Church, located just a short distance away.

The Sanctuary also features beautiful stained glass windows, some of which are works of remarkable artistry, and a towering pipe organ whose sound has filled the space for more than a century. Though the bell itself is no longer present, the bell tower mechanisms remain, a reminder of earlier architectural ambitions and debates that once shaped the building's appearance.

THE ROSE RENT: A LIVING TRADITION

One of the most unique aspects of Falling Spring Presbyterian Church is the Rose Rent tradition. Dating back to the original land agreement made by Benjamin Chambers, the Rose Rent symbolizes the church's obligation to use this land for the benefit of the community.

Each year, a single rose is presented to the direct descendants of Benjamin Chambers and placed upon his grave. This simple but powerful gesture serves as a reminder that the church's history is not static—it is a living promise, renewed generation after generation.

