

Oak Leaves

January 2026

FIRST UNITED CONTACT INFO

Pastor: Vern Gauthier

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Secretary: Elisabeth Gauthier

8:30-11:30am Office Hours

(717) 776-7525 - 1stupoffice@gmail.com

Clerk of Session: Jim Ellingsworth

(717) 609-3102 – jellingsworth22@gmail.com

Moderator of Deacons: Sally Ann McCrea

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New phone numbers/emails/ address

Please update the Church Office whenever you have **NEW** information

Thanks

Elisabeth Gauthier

717-776-7525

1stupoffice@gmail.com

2025 Financial Statements will be mailed in January 2026.

Questions:- talk to
Elisabeth Gauthier thanks!

I would like to thank Bob Kovanic and the Deacons who represent the full congregation for the care package he brought around the end of last week (December 12, 2025). Also thank you for the prayers of everyone in this rough year.

John Nimmon

Thank you to Our Church Family for the prayers, cards and food that were given to us during our recent "incidents." We appreciate each one of you!

Denny and Nancy McCullough

Thank you all for the donations to the Mitten Tree. A total of **154 items** were delivered to the Salvation Army in Carlisle. Thanks again, Doris Mae Kennedy.

Happy January Birthday

- 4.Pastor Vern
- 10.Shelva Mains
- 16.Denny McCullough
- 21.Doris Mae Kennedy
- 26.Dee denHartog
- 30.Dylan Madorsky

We packed **197** bags of cookies for the Truck Stop Ministry, thanks to all those who helped in any way.

Men's Breakfast
Thursday January 8th 8am
Meet at the Church

Happy January Anniversary

- 3. Bob & Brenda Kovanic

We collected \$495 for the Christmas Joy Offering

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Well, we've done it—made it through another year. For some, it has been a great year! For others, you are simply glad to see the year turn, hoping that the year ahead will be better than the one now ending.

Some of us are greatly anticipating good things we have to look forward to: a wedding, retirement, graduation, a special trip, or a long-awaited reunion. Others of us are facing uncertainty—perhaps about our health or the health of a loved one, or about a challenge looming in the near future. No matter where we find ourselves as we head into a new year, it is good to remember that our God goes before us.

When the people of Israel were traveling through the desert, we are told: *“By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people”* (Exodus 13:21–22). Likewise, Jesus promised his disciples that he would not leave them as orphans but would send the Spirit, who would be the presence of God within them (John 14:16–18), and that he would be with them *“to the very end of the age”* (Matthew 28:20).

I believe these promises of Christ's presence were not only for them, but for us as present-day disciples as well. As Romans 8 reminds us, *“God works everything for the good of those who love him.”*

Just as God went before the people in the desert, he goes before us as well, leading us into the future—whatever it may hold—for us, our families, and our church.

In Psalm 139 we hear these words of comfort and hope: *“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the*

wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.”

In these words, there is great hope. In these promises we can go forward into the New Year knowing that we do not travel alone.

A blessed New Year to you all,

Pastor Vern

New Year's Message
FROM THE PASTOR

Session for 2026

Clerk- Jim Ellingsworth

Moderator- Pastor Vern Gauthier

Hale McCulloch

Lynette McCulloch

Elaine Fry

Mike Fry

Margie Fry

Nancy McCullough

Sherri Mains

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- **APPROVED** Sherri Webber-Mains and Elaine Fry to attend Ruling Elder Communion Training on Saturday, April 11, 2026 from 9:00 am to 12:00 Noon at the Highland United Presbyterian Church in Newport, PA.
- **APPROVED** the request from the BSWA to hold fly tying classes in the Fellowship Hall beginning at 6:30 pm on the following Tuesday dates, weather permitting, of January 27, February 3,10, 17 and March 3, 2026.
- During the Advent Fellowship night on Saturday, December 6th at 6:30 Truck Stop Cookie Packing & Christmas music was enjoyed— The total cookie bags packed was **197** – The Fry family dropped off Cookie bags in Carlisle.
- **APPROVED** the 2026 Session and Congregational Meeting Schedule for 2026 as proposed by Pastor Vern
- **APPROVED** the 2026 Communion and Special Worship Services for 2026 as proposed by Pastor Vern.
- **The ending checking account balance as of 11-30-2025 was \$6,043.91. Income for November was \$21,462.31 and the year-to-date income is \$198,865.89. Expenses for November totaled \$16,369.45 and year to date expenses were 203,939.08.**

- **APPROVED** Martina White's recommendation that Session designate the \$1,000 memorial gift she gave in memory of her parents John and Edie White, for the stained-glass window repair.
- **The Community Thanksgiving Service** was held at First United on November 26th at 7:00 p.m. There were approximately 80 to 85 people in attendance.
- **APPROVED** the sale of our Handbells “as is” to the Newville Church of the Brethren for \$10,000. This includes the bells, tables, table pads storage cases, music stands, music and the cart that holds and transports the bells.
- **APPROVED** the request from Neighbors in Christ to move their household supplies from the downstairs Sunday School room to the Banner storage room upstairs.

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Submitted by Jim Ellingsworth – Clerk of the Session

(DISCLAIMER - "Notes from unofficial minutes and subject to change.")

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Session Speaks

Sherri Webber Mains

By now Christmas is over. The wrapping paper is in the trash, the lights are down, the gifts are put away, and the tree is thrown out or stored. The dark, cold of winter has settled in. The world has forgotten Christmas and is “back to normal”.

Have we Christians “packed away” Christmas, too? After all, isn’t “Jesus the Reason for the Season”? The GOOD news of Christ’s birth is still new every day! Jesus is still Immanuel – God is with us – 2000+ years ago and today.

The bright light of the star summoned the Wise men to see the Savior. The angelic choir and their bright light shown around the shepherds and they hurried to the newborn King. Will we be the people of the light? Will we invite the world to “Come see”? Will we act as the hands and feet of Jesus, serving others with grace and mercy?

I challenge First Church to be the “the light of the world”, the love of Christ, and the servant of all in a world who desperately needs hope! Take the joy of Christmas and live it out every day.

January Activities

January 4th we will Ordain and Install for Session and Deacons.

After worship we will un-decorate the Church. Please stay and help.

Jan. 11th will be after Worship social time.

Jan. 18th stay for a soup lunch. All welcome, see the signup sheet. Thanks!

January 6th 6:30- CLC Meeting

January 7th 6:30 Bible Study

January 8th 8am Men’s Breakfast

January 13th 6:30 Crafts

January 21st 6:30 Bible Study

Please check the Newsletter Calendar for all events and meetings.

Check the Hallway table to sign up for various activities and ways to help.

Thank You.....