

Oak Leaves

AUGUST 2026

FIRST UNITED CONTACT INFO

Pastor: Vern Gauthier

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8:30-11:30am Office Hours

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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

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Join us for our annual **church picnic** at
Colonel Denning State Park **on Sunday,**
August 16. We have reserved the pavilion to
the right of the entrance. There will be a bird
walk for those interested at 9:30am, Worship
at 10:30am, picnic to follow, and BINGO with
AMAZING prizes.

We will provide hot dogs and drinks, but
ask that you bring a place setting and a dish to
share. There are sign-up sheets on the
hallway table. Although you do not need to
sign-up to join us, signing-up will be helpful
to know how much food we may need.

SPY camp was here for 6 weeks, They
averaged 40 children per day and had a great
time.

Happy August Birthday

6. Rick Kann

7. Eric Bear

9. Janet Kuhns

15. Dan Mains

15. John denHartog

15. Karyn Cunningham

18. John Chip Messenger

Happy August Anniversary

6. Hale & Lynette McCulloch

20. Sam & Barb Shenk

Session 2026

Mike Fry

Elaine Fry

Margie Fry

Hale McCulloch

Lynette McCulloch

Nancy McCullough

Sherri Mains

Clerk:- Jim Ellingsworth

Moderator:- Rev. Dr. Vern Gauthier

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Greetings,

As I write this, I can say that, with the exception of a few things in the cellar and the shed, everything has been moved from the Manse to our new home at 327 Big Spring Road.

It has taken a bit longer than we expected because of the excessive heat earlier this month, a death in the family, and the simple reality that Elisabeth and I are twenty-five years older than we were when we first moved here.

Having overcome those obstacles, we are finally settling in. Much of that process has been one of trial and error, discovering what belongs where and what will best fit this new home and the new season of life.

One of the changes I hope comes with my upcoming retirement is having more time to read simply for the joy of reading rather than because I need to prepare for work. Elisabeth suggested creating a reading nook in one corner of our very large living room. It has quickly become one of my favorite places in the house. Nearly every morning I find myself there with a cup of tea and a good book.

It struck me recently while sitting in that reading nook that this move is an opportunity to arrange our lives in a new way. Not entirely new, of course. There is something reassuring about the familiar. Yet there is also something exciting, if at times a little unsettling, about embracing what is new.

Major life events such as moving and retiring naturally invite this kind of reflection. But they also make me wonder about the ordinary days. How do we intentionally arrange our lives so that we are more aware of the new thing God is doing? How do we become more open to the new life God longs to bring into us and through us each day?

In a recent sermon, I mentioned how, in his book *Under The Unpredictable Plant*, the late Presbyterian pastor and author Eugene Peterson reflected on Mark 16:6-7: "He has risen...he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you."

For Peterson, those words transformed not only his understanding of pastoral ministry but also his life as a Christian. He came to anticipate the presence of the risen Christ in every circumstance. Because Jesus had already gone ahead of him, Christ was already present in every conversation, every challenge, every ordinary moment.

That perspective led Peterson to ask himself different questions. Instead of asking, "What should I do?" he learned first to ask, "How is Jesus present here?" and "What has Jesus already been doing?" He sought to become attentive to Christ's grace, forgiveness, and redeeming love, not only within a situation but also in the lives of the people around him. It was less a matter of asking, "What would Jesus do?" and more a matter of discovering, "What is Jesus doing?"

In many ways, our reading nook has become more than simply a comfortable place to enjoy a book. It has reminded me that we can intentionally arrange our lives to notice what matters most. Just as that corner of our living room invites me to read, Peterson's way of seeing invited him to look for the living Christ who has already gone ahead of him. Perhaps that is an invitation for all of us. Each new day offers countless opportunities to ask not only what we should do, but where Christ is already at work, inviting us to join him in the gospel story he is writing in our own lives and in the lives of those we meet.

Be at Peace,

Pastor Vern

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Highlights of Session Meetings held on June 25, 2026 APPROVED the Big Spring Watershed Association (BSWA), request from their President Mark Spicka to reserve Rhoades Hall for use on July 30th in the evening. The purpose of the meeting is as follows: BSWA and some other folks are working with ALLARM of Dickinson College to expand water quality monitoring that we are already doing on Big Spring. ALLARM provides training and proper protocols for a variety of aspects of water quality. Two volunteers in BSWA have been doing monitoring for about 6 years, but we would like to expand the number of locations and volunteers

- **APPROVED** the donation of an AED and decided to locate the AED in the main Church Hallway near the Church Office. Jeanna shared that the JT Kuhn Memorial Foundation is interested in donating an AED to our church for heart emergencies – Jeanna has a contact with Jen Kuhns and they will arrange and maintain batteries, etc.
- **REAFFIRMED** the email vote on June 3rd to revise the Church Custodian “Employment Agreement” to include the following: 1. Instead of requiring 10-man hours it reads "in accordance with the tasks listed in the job description." Pointing back to the job description means it should take 6-8 hours. This was also added: "They will receive a 1099 for tax purposes." Description for the Church Custodian: 1. Instead of the requirement of 10-man hours it now reads, "The position should take 6–8-man hours a week, preferably Thursday, Friday or Saturday." 2. The compensation now simply reads "The Weekly wage compensation is \$150

per week." What is no longer included is the 10-man hours per week requirement.

3. The personal leave now reads as follows: "In the event that a substitute is required, the Contractor should notify the Personnel Representative as soon as possible. No payment will be made for that week. The Personnel Representative will notify the treasurer." The change here is that the Custodian is no longer responsible for finding her own replacement, but rather the Personnel Committee.

- **APPROVED** the Anti- Discrimination (Racism) Policy as recommended by the Personnel Committee.
- **APPROVED** the Anti-Harassment Policy as recommended by the Personnel Committee
- **APPROVED** the forming of a Sexual Misconduct Response Team as required by the Sexual Misconduct Policy to include the following individuals: Personnel Committee Chairperson, Mike Fry, Pastor, Vernon Gauthier, Ruling Elder, Margie Fry and two Ruling Elder alternates, Nancy McCullough and Hale McCulloch.
- **APPROVED** that Sunday Worship would be held in the Rhoades Fellowship Hall beginning Sunday, July 5th if repairs to the air conditioning system in the Sanctuary cannot be fixed by July 1. Music can be played in the Fellowship Hall but the quality would not be the same as in the Sanctuary. Also, no recording or streaming of the service would be possible unless it would be done by a cell phone using Facebookcont next page...

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- **The ending checking account balance as of 5-31-2026 was \$25,860.64. Income for May was \$29,935.80 and the year-to-date income is \$116,775.44. Expenses for May totaled \$20,178.32 and year to date expenses were \$96,786.30. Interest earned year to date - \$26,732.73.**
- **REAFFIRMED** the email vote taken on May 26th that Debby Madden would provide Pastoral Care while Pastor Vern was on vacation from June 8 through 21 at a rate of \$50 per week or a total of \$100 plus any mileage reimbursement. This is the same per week rate she had when she filled in during for Pastor Vern's Medical Leave
- **APPROVED** to contact the Big Spring Senior Center to inform them of their need of a Church sponsor and no activities can be resumed or continue to be held at the Church until a sponsor can be acquired. The Clerk agreed to write a letter to the Senior Center on behalf of the Session.
- **APPROVED** to amend the Church Usage Policy to read that "any person who is actively engaged in the life and ministry of the Church can be considered a Sponsor. Submitted by Jim Ellingsworth – Clerk of the Session.(DISCLAIMER - "Notes from unofficial minutes and subject to change.")

NEWS FROM THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE

The Property Committee has been very busy lately with numerous repairs and projects. Unfortunately, they are some very expensive items.

- The water heater had to be replaced.

- We had a termite infestation in the old youth area which was taken care of by an exterminator.
- The Youth area flooring had the asbestos tiles removed and vinyl plank was installed downstairs, including the stairwell.
- The Sanctuary Air Conditioner stopped working after 17 years and is beyond repair. We have had 3 different companies come and review the system. Unfortunately, we are still waiting to hear back from all three. As soon as we have the estimates in hand Property will review them and pass our recommendations on to Session.
- The 38 year old air conditioning unit that services the Sunday School classrooms under the Fellowship Hall stopped working and is also beyond repair. We have had one company look at it, but right now the plan is to hold off on replacing it.
So far the Fellowship Hall unit is still working!
- The spigot in the small kitchen sink needed to be replaced after it corroded and "blew its top"! Fortunately the SPY kitchen crew did not get hurt and were able to get the water turned off and the area cleaned up.
- Several people have been diligently working at weeding the flower beds, transplanting the daylilies and hostas, and spreading mulch. The goal is to fill the beds with plants that will spread out and choke out weeds. There is still more to do, but it can wait until it gets cooler!

Some upcoming projects will include having several trees thinned and grass planted in the area to the right of the portico over to the basement stairs. That area is very difficult to keep weeded. It also seems that we have developed several leaks in the roof above the coat rack and office area. A call into the roofing company will be taking place. **Thank you to all for your financial support, special donations, and prayers as we strive to keep our physical church in working order.**