

# The Oak Leaves – April 2025

## April 2025

### FIRST UNITED CONTACT INFO

**Pastor:** Vern Gauthier

(717) 385-9526 - [1stuppastor@gmail.com](mailto:1stuppastor@gmail.com)

**Secretary:** Elisabeth Gauthier

8:30-11:30am Office Hours

(717) 776-7525 - [1stupoffice@gmail.com](mailto:1stupoffice@gmail.com)

**Clerk of Session:** Jim Ellingsworth

(717) 609-3102 –

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**Moderator of Deacons:** Sally Ann McCrea

(717)385-4734 [samccrea@gmail.com](mailto:samccrea@gmail.com)

### New phone numbers/emails/ address

Please update the Church Office whenever you have NEW information

Thanks

Elisabeth Gauthier

**717-776-7525**

**[1stupoffice@gmail.com](mailto:1stupoffice@gmail.com)**

### Happy April Birthday

2. April Messenger

3. Steve Burd

13. Sally Canazaro

16. Andrew McCrea

18. Glenn Gilbert

21. Lynette McCulloch

25. Brian Lehman

27. Deb Barrick

### Happy April Anniversary

3. Janet & John Nimmon

6. Dee & Gerard denHartog

8. Michele & Jesus Gomez

21. Elaine & Glenn Gilbert

26. Elisabeth & Pastor Vern Gauthier

26. Carol & Steve Burd

### Help Needed for the Easter Egg Hunt and Family Supper

The annual Easter Egg Hunt is planned for Saturday, April 12 at 4 p.m. For this to be a success, we need help in many different ways. We hope you can find something below that can match your abilities.

1. We need donations of small wrapped candies for 500 plastic eggs. Please bring them to the kitchen by April 6.
2. Help stuff the candy into the eggs after the 10:15 a.m. service on April 6.
3. Help hide the eggs at 2:30 pm on Saturday, April 12.
4. Help guide the kids/parents during the hunt. We need 6 people, 2 for each age group.
5. Help to clean up.
6. Pray that we show God's love to all who participate.

### Sign up sheet on hallway table!

**Notice of Session Action: Due to declining attendance and desiring to be good stewards of our resources, the Session unanimously approved to discontinue the 8:30 am Worship Service effective Sunday, June 1, 2025. The final 8:30am service will be May 25<sup>th</sup>.**

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Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

It is with a deep sense of care and responsibility that I share with you an important decision made by our Session.

After many years of prayer, discussion, and reflection, the Session has unanimously approved the discontinuation of the 8:30 a.m. worship service, effective Sunday, June 1, 2025. May 25<sup>th</sup> is the last service.

This decision was not made lightly, as Session recognizes the impact it will have on those who have faithfully attended this service.

For many years, our early service has provided a place of worship, reflection, and fellowship for a portion of our membership. However, as attendance has declined, we have been called to re-evaluate how we can best use the resources God has entrusted to us as Stewards.

Last year, when the question of pausing the service for the summer arose, the Session decided to continue it with the understanding that if attendance consistently fell below ten congregants, we would revisit the matter.

Throughout July and August 2024, attendance remained below 10 each Sunday. From January to mid-March 2025, only 3 of 13 Sundays saw 10 or more attendees. During this time, the average attendance has been 8.6—down from 11.6 during the same period in 2024. While numbers alone are never the sole factor in such a decision, they do highlight a shift in our congregation's worship habits and needs.

The early service was born out of a different season in our church's life, one in which our overall attendance was nearly 200, and a second service was deemed as necessary to accommodate the congregation. Today, our combined worship services average about 50 attendees, and we believe that gathering together in a single service will strengthen our worship

and fellowship while also making our church more inviting to visitors.

Discontinuing the early service allows us to be better stewards of our resources, including my time as Pastor. Without the additional service, I will have the opportunity to perhaps resume teaching a class, further enriching our discipleship and learning together.

We know that for some, this news will bring sadness. If you have found deep meaning in the 8:30 a.m. service, please know that your faithfulness in worship has been seen and appreciated. The friendships and rhythms of this service have been a source of blessing to many. Change, even when beneficial, can be difficult, and we want to honor the emotions that come with this transition.

At the same time, we are hopeful for what lies ahead. As we come together in one worship service, we pray that our church family will be strengthened in unity, encouragement, and joy. We believe that God is at work among us, guiding us forward in faith and fellowship.

In the coming months, we will take time to celebrate the memories and blessings of the 8:30 a.m. service. We invite you to share your stories, reflections, and gratitude for the ways this service of worship has shaped your faith. Most importantly, we invite you to continue gathering with us in worship, as we seek to glorify God together as one body.

If you have any questions, concerns, or simply wish to talk through your feelings about this change, please know the members of Session and I are here to listen and support you as we walk this path together.

May we trust that God, who has faithfully led us thus far, will continue to guide us into the future with His wisdom, grace, and love.

On behalf of the Session,

*In Christ,*

*Pastor Vern*

# The Oak Leaves – April 2025

## Highlights of Session Meeting held on March 20, 2025

- **APPROVED** the following 2025 Special Offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing 3/30, 4/6, 4/13, Pentecost 5/25, 6/1, 6/8, Peace & Global Witness 9/21, 9/28, 10/5 and Christmas Joy 12/7, 12/14, 12/21.
- **The ending checking account balance as of 2-28-2025 was \$6,359.03. Income for February was \$11,317.54 and the year to date income is \$29,054.03. Expenses for February totaled \$17,826.04, and year to date expenses were \$32,968.51.**
- **APPROVED** the recommendation of Pastore Vern that First United participate in the BSICC Pulpit Exchange in October.
- **APPROVED** Debby Madden to fill the Pulpit on June 15 and July 20 for vacation time previously approved by Session.
- **APPROVED** to discontinue the 8:30 a.m. service due to a continued decline in attendance, and to be good stewards of our resources, effective Sunday, June 1, 2025.
- **APPROVED** the following individuals be removed from the Roll of Church Membership: Barbara Miller, Matthew Madorsky and Abigal McCrea.
- **APPROVED** the following individuals be moved from the Membership Roll of the Church to the Inactive Church Membership Roll: Thomas Hefflefinger, Heidi Hefflefinger, Christie Katora, Caleb McCulloch, Rosemary McCrea Stover, Terry Over, Arnold Rook, Lucinda Rook, Rebecca (McCrea) Smith, Heather Wingert and Judy Witmer.

Submitted by Jim Ellingsworth – Clerk of the Session

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

**Tax Exempt:-** we have a new form and expiration date. Please check with the Office and get this updated form if you are to purchase anything for the Church.

**Weis:** we have a store credit card. If you need to purchase items for the Church, from the store, see Elisabeth to get the Card.

Thanks.

# The Oak Leaves – April 2025

## Community Life Committee Happenings (CLC)

### April:

**April 1st, Tuesday** - Arts and Crafts night at 6:30pm

**April 12th, Saturday** - Neon Easter Egg Hunt at 4:00pm for the community, including an Egg hunt for three age groups, prize eggs, AND a light dinner for the families

**April 26th, Saturday** - Game night at 6:30

### May:

**May 6th, Tuesday** - Arts and Crafts Night at 6:30

**May 18th, Sunday** - Walk/Hike/Ride on the Rail Trail after the 10:15am Worship service - participants are to bring a bag lunch and the CLC will provide water - Fellowship at the picnic tables after your exercise

**May 31st, Saturday** - Game Night at 6:30pm

### June:

Recognition of Graduates- after church reception - will work with the graduate(s): Ethan Cunningham as to the best date for this event.

Thank you for your support throughout the past year.

## Thanks

Thank you very much for your prayers & kindnesses as we go through our health challenges.

*Mike and Elaine Fry*

## FRIDAYS IN LENT

### BIG SPRING INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL

Join us at Noon for a half hour service followed by lunch. Please see below the congregations who will be leading and the Scriptures. All services will be held at First United Presbyterian, Newville. \$5 is the suggested donation for lunch.

Proceeds of offering will go to Meals on Wheels, PAW Packs, and California/North Carolina Disaster Relief.

**April 4** Big Spring Presbyterian and First United Presbyterian

Obedience/Humanity/Distress: John 19:28-29 ;I thirst

Salvation/Assurance: Luke 23:39-43 ;Surely

I say to you, today you will be with

Me in paradise.

**April 11** Doubling Gap Church of God

John 19:30 ;It is finished Luke 23:44-46

Father, into Your hands I commit my Spirit

Please come and join us.

## One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

begins on 3/30 & continues thru 4/6 & 4/13.

The \$\$\$ we share will be given to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance which will help to restore damage done by the California Wildfires. Our \$\$\$ will also support the Presbyterian Hunger Program and the Self-Development of People. Please give generously in Thanksgiving for our abundant

Blessings. Thank you! 🙏

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See our website at [www.bigspringseniorcenter.weebly.com](http://www.bigspringseniorcenter.weebly.com) for more information. 717-776-4478

**Sit-Down & Grab n Go Lunches:** A hot and a frozen meal is provided to all those 60 and better when ordered and are distributed Monday through Friday between 11:30 a.m. – 12 noon. If you want to come into the Big Spring Senior Center to sit down the meal will be served at 11:30 a.m. All meals are a recommended donation of \$3. If you are 60 and better and want to request a meal (you must come to pick up), please call the senior center. Meals must be reserved one business day by 12 noon prior to pick up.

**T'ai Chi for Arthritis:** Tuesdays at 10 a.m. This class is held at First United Presbyterian Church, 111 W. Big Spring Ave., Newville. Cost is currently \$1 plus donation until further notice. To register, call 717-776-4478.

**Movement with Mindfulness (evolved from Yoga):** Wednesdays at 8:30a.m. This class is held at First United Presbyterian Church, 111 W. Big Spring Ave., Newville. Yoga is a mind-body practice that combines stretching exercises, controlled breathing, and relaxation. Cost for a 10-week program is \$55 for members of the Big Spring Senior Center, and \$65 for non-members. Registration and payment are due before you start a class. Start dates will be prorated. Call 717-776-4478 to register. **Class instructed by the YMCA – Carlisle.**

**Senior Wellness Exercise Program:** Thursdays at 9 a.m. This class is held at First United Presbyterian Church, 111 W. Big Spring Avenue, Newville. The Senior Center. This program instructed by Cathy Graver, Director of the Big Spring Senior Center will concentrate on strength, balance, coordination, endurance, and flexibility. Keeping to basics exercise will take place standing, sitting and a little dance to music centered on the oldies of the 50's & 60's. Per class charge is \$3 for seniors and \$5 for those 50-59.

## **MORE TO DO WEEKLY: MONDAY:**

**Watercolor Painting Opportunity:** At 1:30 p.m. Do you have an interest in water coloring? It takes space, inspiration, and motivation, and we can help.

Join our friendly group of painters with our instructor, Kathleen Schungel. The cost is \$5 per week to the instructor and \$1 to the Senior Center. During this time, we also offer Coloring for Adults (includes adult coloring books and coloring pencils).

## **TUESDAY:**

**Crafts:** Tuesdays at 9 a.m. on Tuesdays. We could use your help, hands, and ideas. Come and make seasonal and everyday crafts, as well as new friends.

**Jewelry Making Class:** April 8 and 22 at 1:00 p.m., Kathleen Schungel, professional art instructor (retired), will teach the techniques to create a variety of jewelry pieces. Cost is \$5.

## **WEDNESDAY:**

**Tea, Talk & Treats:** Wednesday's at 9:30 a.m. Join us weekly topic of discussion and your favorite cup of tea.

**Bible Study:** Every Wednesday at 1 p.m. Pastor Mike Faust of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church will present the study, "The Cross" by John Stott. Drop-ins are welcome.

## **THURSDAY:**

**Game Day:** Lots of opportunities to play cards and games can be found at the Big Spring Senior Center beginning at 9:30 a.m. through 3:30 p.m. Thursdays. Walk-ins are welcome.

## **SPECIAL ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION:**

**Camp Eder Senior Day Camp:** Wednesday, April 9. Sign up required.

**Lunch Bunch at :** Thursday, April 10 at Walnut Bottom Diner.

**Big Spring Senior Center will be CLOSED on Friday, April 18.**

**Game Night:** Monday, April 21 at 6:30 p.m. at the Senior Center. Snacks to share are always welcome.

**Arundel Mills Mall/Live Casino Trip:** Tuesday, April 22. Sign up required.

**Blood Pressure Check:** Wednesday, April 23 at 12:15 p.m. Judy Heberlig, a retired nurse, volunteers her time to help you keep track of this important health indicator.

**Doubling Gap Day in the Mountain:** Friday, April 25. Sign up required.

# The Oak Leaves – April 2025

Session Speaks  
Hale McCulloch

## A Time of Reflection and Celebration!

Lent is a significant period in the Christian calendar, observed as a time of spiritual preparation leading up to Easter. It spans 40 days (excluding Sundays), beginning on Ash Wednesday and culminating on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday. This season is rooted in scripture (Matthew 4:2) of Jesus' 40 days of fasting and prayer in the wilderness, where he was tempted but remained steadfast. For Christians, Lent is an opportunity for reflection, repentance, and self-discipline, mirroring the trials Jesus endured.

During Lent, Christians often engage in fasting, prayer, and acts of charity to draw closer to God. Many choose to give up certain luxuries or habits as a form of penance and to cultivate a deeper spiritual life. The idea is not simply to deprive oneself, but to focus on spiritual growth and renewal. It's a time to examine one's life, confess sins, and seek forgiveness, aligning oneself with the humility and sacrifice that characterized Jesus' journey.

The culmination of Lent is Easter, the most important celebration in the Christian faith, marking the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. For us, Easter symbolizes victory over sin and death, offering hope for eternal life. After the solemnity and self-reflection of Lent, Easter is a joyful celebration of the resurrection, signifying new beginnings, renewal, and the triumph of light over darkness.

In many Christian communities, the anticipation of Easter builds throughout Lent, making the celebration even more meaningful. Lent prepares the heart, and Easter provides the ultimate reason for hope and rejoicing. This reminds us of the core message of Christianity: through Jesus' death and resurrection, we are offered redemption and the promise of everlasting life.

*Hale McCulloch*

The Property Committee will be having Spring Cleanup on April 12<sup>th</sup> starting at 8 a.m. We will be picking up sticks and branches in preparation for the mowing season as well as putting down mulch. If you're able to lend a hand, the help would be greatly appreciated. Many hands make for light work. Thank you!  
Questions? *Hale McCulloch*