

Oak Leaves

December 2025

FIRST UNITED CONTACT INFO

Pastor: Vern Gauthier

(717) 385-9526 - 1stuppastor@gmail.com

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

(717)385-4734 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

Happy December Birthday

16. Hope Glesner

17. Carol Burd

21. Mary Rook (101)

29. Bob Roscinski

Happy December Anniversary

11. Deb & Amos Barrick

***Mitten Tree is up. We need hats, mittens,
gloves, & scarves for all ages. Place items on
the tree. Deadline is December 7th.***

Thank You.

Please check hallway table for sign up
sheets, cards and other helpful info.

Thank you church family for your caring
support throughout the years from when we
were a young couple, parents, and as we are
aging. Nothing can take the place of kind,
considerate and welcoming friends and family.

We appreciate your blessings, prayers,
meaningful messages and for celebrating with
us at our 50th Wedding Anniversary Party.

Thank you and Blessings,

Mike and Elaine Fry

2026 Offering Envelopes will be on the
hallway table. If you do not get envelopes and
would like them, talk to
Elisabeth Gauthier. Thanks

***Advent Reading Materials and Poinsettia
order forms are on the hallway table.***

Christmas Joy Offering

The Christmas Joy Offering provides funds to
support current and retired church workers and
Presbyterian-related schools and colleges. It
supports the Assistance Program of the Board
of Pensions for those in need and provides
leadership development and education at
schools and colleges that serve communities
of color. You will have the opportunity to
contribute on

December 7, 14 and 21.

Thank you for your generosity.

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Stirring Toward Christmas

In some homes in the UK, the last Sunday before Advent is known as “*Stir Up Sunday*.”

Why? Because the 1662 Book of Common Prayer Book begins that day’s Collect (A prayer close to the start of the worship service) with the words: “*Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people...*” asking that God would rouse sleepy spiritual lives and give believers the energy to do good.

Victorian families heard “*Stir up...*” in church and thought, “*Ah yes—time to stir up the Christmas pudding!*” So they went home and did just that, mixing fruit, flour, spices, and enough brandy to give the pudding (and their spirits) a festive kick.

Each family member took a turn stirring the pudding from east to west, recalling the journey of the Magi. It was part prayer and part family tradition, with everyone in the household joining in. God stirred hearts, families stirred pudding, and the whole household entered Advent with spoons raised like a liturgical procession.

Now, most Americans do not make Christmas pudding. We are busy preheating ovens for cookies, assembling gift lists, and pretending that Advent calendars containing food or treats were not meant to be emptied in one sitting. But the collect still speaks to us. As Advent arrives, we need God to stir us up—not into frantic seasonal chaos, but into holy anticipation. We need our lives mixed with hope, peace, joy, and love; blended with patience; folded gently with mercy; and seasoned with a longing for Christ’s coming. Advent is not about rushing—it’s about readiness. God is preparing some thing in

us, the way a long-simmering recipe deepens and develops its flavor.

So even if the closest you’ll get to Christmas pudding is seeing it on a British baking show, let the ancient prayer be your cue:

Ask God to stir up your spirit as Christ draws near.

Let the Spirit mix into your life the good and gracious things that make room for the Savior.

And unlike Christmas pudding, you do not have to hide in a cupboard for three to four weeks to mature. God is glad to begin that work in you right now.

A Blessed Advent and a Joyous Christmas to you and yours.

Pastor Vern

Here is the full Collect traditionally used on Stir Up Sunday (the Last Sunday before Advent) from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer:

**Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord,
the wills of thy faithful people;
that they, plenteously bringing forth the
fruit of good works,
may of thee be plenteously rewarded;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

For those interested here is a recipe for Stir Up Sunday from the Falmouth Hotel in the UK:
<https://falmouthhotel.co.uk/blog/stir-up-sunday-christmas-pudding-recipe/>

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See our website at www.bigspringseniorcenter.weebly.com for more information.

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 pro-rated. Call 717-776-4478 to register. **Class instructed by the YMCA – Carlisle.**

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: TBD: Kathleen Schungel, professional art instructor (retired), will teach the techniques to create a variety of jewelry pieces. Cost is \$5. Please call for dates.

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. with Pastor Don Snyder of Doubling Gap Church of God. 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: UPCOMING EVENTS:

DECEMBER:

Monday's, December 1, 8, 22, 29

Friday, December 5 – Holidays at Mt. Hope – Dinner Theatre – Waiting List

Friday, December 5 – Closed – Trip

Thursday, December 11 – Christmas Luncheon at 1st United Presbyterian Church – Center is closed

Monday, December 15 – Master Gardener Holiday Arrangements Workshop – Waiting List

Thursday, December 18 – Cookie Exchange

Tuesday, December 23 – Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

Wednesday, December 24 – Closing at Noon

Thursday and Friday, December 25 & 26 – (Center is closed)

Wednesday, December 31 – Closing at Noon

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Session Speaks by Elaine Fry

Fifty Year Relationships

Have we really been married 50 years? How can that be? Have I been a member of First United Presbyterian Church for 50 years? I remember when people like Goldie and Alta Marie Jumper were honored for being 50 plus members of 1st United. I never thought that would apply to me. Think about any relationship that you have had that is 50 years or plus.

Healthy relationships are primarily based on agape love (The highest form of love, it is sacrificial, unconditional and divinely inspired) and philia love (Brotherly love or friendship, a deep affection and fondness between friends). Do you think a marriage or any relationship is similar to church membership and our relationship to Christ?

According to the Bible, it is. John 13:34, states that “A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another.”(NIV)

This quote was lovingly colored by Ann Smith on Dick and Ann’s anniversary card to us. (Who by the way just celebrated their 67th Wedding Anniversary! Wow!)

When Mike and I married 50 years ago, November 22, 1975, it naturally followed that I became a member of 1st United Presbyterian Church in Newville. This was Mike’s family’s church since his birth. So in February, 2026, I will become a 50 year member of this church. How is that possible?

As you know any relationship with a person changes over time. Since the church is made up of people, our relationship with the church is forever changing.

As you read the words printed below which were on 2 of our 50 year anniversary cards, ask

yourself, “Does this apply to God, my church membership or any relationship I have with people either without or within marriage?

50 years of marriage...just think of what that means-

50 years of talking, laughing, sharing hopes and dreams...

50 years of growing closer, understanding, trusting,

Working little (or big) problems out, changing and adjusting.

50 years of helping, caring, facing life together,

Standing by each other through the best and worst weather...

Isaiah 62:5 compares marriage with God’s relationship with the church, “For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.”(NIV)

Ephesians 5:25, says, “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” Our relationship with anyone not just in marriages is like our relationship to Christ and the church. It’s not always an easy ride, it takes commitment, tenacity, patience, persistence and perseverance to stay with a friendship, a marriage or church membership. Things don’t necessarily go as planned.

We all know and like the words of what love really is as written in 1 Corinthians 13. Read this for your devotions someday or for many days. Let the words sink in. I will end with the verse from 1 Corinthians 13:13 which was on the cover of our bulletin for our wedding service. “So Faith, Hope, Love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is Love.”

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THIS AND THAT

December 3rd and 17th at 6:30pm Calling all Women: We will be offering the wildly popular “The Chosen: Season 4” video series in the Choir room. If you haven’t ever joined us, please consider attending for fellowship, Biblical engagement and prayer time. Please see Sherri Webber-Mains or April Messenger with questions. See you on the 3rd This Ladies Bible Study meets every other Wednesday.

Christmas Activities

December 6th at 6:30 Advent Fellowship night. Truck Stop Cookie Packing and snacks & singing Carols.

Mitten tree: We need hats, mittens, gloves & scarves for all ages. Deadline is **December 7th**.

December 14th after church Fellowship.

December 21st at 2:00pm Christmas Caroling. Meet at Church where we will carpool.

December 24th 7pm Christmas Eve Worship.

Session for 2025

Clerk- Jim Ellingsworth
Moderator- Pastor Vern Gauthier
Hale McCulloch
Lynette McCulloch
Elaine Fry
Mike Fry
Margie Fry
Nancy McCullough
Sherri Mains

Calendar Events

Dec.1- 6:30pm CLC
Dec. 3- 6:30pm Bible Study
Dec. 4- 8am Men’s Breakfast
Dec. 9- 6:30pm Crafters
Dec 10- 6:30pm COM

Please see the Oakleaves Calendar for all other church events.

Thanks
ElisabethG.

Dickinson Presbyterian Church

Sunday December 14th at 7pm

Project Share Concert

Come and join us

All are Welcome!

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Highlights of Session Meetings held on November 20, 2025

APPROVAL was given to the 2025 Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes held on Sunday, November 9, 2025.

- **APPROVED** to reaffirmed the passage of the email vote which passed 7-0, the Presbytery's request to use our building to host Boundary Training on February 24th (6:30-8:30 p.m.) and February 25th (9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.).

- Session **APPROVED** the 2026 Special Offering Information/Dates –

Super Bowl of Caring – February 8th
(Monetary donations to fund Ground beef purchased for the Food Bank)

One Great Hour of Sharing: March 15,
22, 29th World Wide Communion
Offering: September 27th, October 4th

Christmas Joy Offering: December 6,
13, 20th

- Stained Glass (newly updated) – Cumberland Stained Glass began work on the windows Monday (11/17) and the 2 side window repairs are now completed.
- **The ending checking account balance as of 10-31-2025 was \$610.86. Income for October was \$11,720.05 and the year to date income is \$177,403.58. Expenses for October totaled \$23,274.03 and year to date expenses were \$186,669.69.**

- As shown in the above financial summary giving for October was down between \$5,000 to \$6,000. No concern for panic yet but the giving for November and December will be monitored to determine if funds will need to be transferred from our savings or checking reserve accounts.
- **APPROVED** to transfer the following funds to the General Checking account: Cavanaugh Memorial (\$230), Falk Memorial Fund (\$350) and Nimmon Memorial Fund (\$25).
- **APPROVED** the use of the Rhoades Fellowship Hall for the Lenten Luncheons to be held on the 6 Fridays during Lent from February 20 to March 27. A discussion was held in regards to an inquiry from Pastor Hess, if First United had any interest in selling some or all of our handbells, tables, music and accessories to the Newville Church of the Brethren. Many pros and cons were shared. No general agreement was reached and the discussion will be continued after prayer and discernment by the Session at the December meeting. In the meantime, representatives from the Church of the Brethren will be invited to take a look at the handbells under the supervision of Ted Krocheski if he agrees to help in this process.
- **APPROVED** starting with the preparation and distribution of the January 2026 “OAKLEAVES” that the information (Newsletter) from the Big Spring Senior Center will not be part of the “OAKLEAVES.” submitted by Jim Ellingsworth – Clerk of the Session(DISCLAIMER - "Notes from unofficial minutes and subject to change.")

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