

## Oak Leaves

**JULY 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**

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### **Happy July Birthday**

2. Joe English
2. Mary Jane Spencer
3. Winnie Webber
10. Sam Shenk
14. Karen Lehman
17. John Nimmon
24. Mike Fry
29. Gerard denHartog

### **Happy July Anniversary**

1. Rick & Jody Kann
16. Bob & Rausa Roscinski
28. Dan & Sherri Mains

### **Mark Your Calendars For Up Coming Events** (more details to come)

Sunday, **August 16th** is the church picnic at Colonel Denning State Park.

**SPY** in the building June 15th for 6 weeks.

**Thank you** so much for the cards and prayers for us as prayer family for the week. All are appreciated.

*Brian and Karen Lehman*

The **Community Life Committee** would like to thank all those people who contributed handmade crafts, which were given as gifts to those who donated to Neighbors in Christ at the Fountain Festival. Thank you to Rausa Roscinski, who gave earrings, Ann Smith who gave knitted dishcloths, Sally Ann McCrae who crocheted baby blankets, Sally Winder who made placemats & a trivet, and Margie Fry who crocheted dishcloths. Your handmade donations helped to raise \$306 for NIC.

In the Fall, anyone who wants to make a craft of their own to donate or keep is invited to Arts & Crafts at 1st United Presbyterian Church. Time to be announced.

Thank you, Elaine Fry

Thank you Deacons and Elders who sign-up to serve Communion the 1st Sunday of each month. Please use the sign-up sheets on the Hall Table, so we know who is serving. Also, if anyone has an inclination to prepare Communion on Saturday morning, (It doesn't take long with 2 people) contact Elaine Fry, 717-448-5617.

**No Session Speaks this month and Session met after the Oak Leaves went to press!!**

## Oak Leaves



Greetings!

As I write this note, we are only a few weeks away from celebrating 250 years of freedom in our nation. For two and a half centuries Americans have cherished the ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Looking back 50 years to 1976, the bicentennial of our nation, what I remember most are the visits of the tall ships, wearing red, white, and blue tassels at my high school graduation, and hearing Elton John's song "*Philadelphia Freedom*" playing everywhere. Released in 1975, it was originally written as a tribute to tennis star Billie Jean King, who played for the Philadelphia Freedoms tennis team. Yet for many Americans, the song took on a deeper meaning connected to the bicentennial celebration itself.

*"Cause I live and breathe  
this Philadelphia freedom  
From the day that I was born  
I've waved the flag  
Philadelphia freedom took me knee high  
to a man  
gave me peace of mind  
my daddy never had."*

It may simply be nostalgia on my part, but the bicentennial seemed to be a time of greater unity among Americans in the freedom they shared. Perhaps it was because the social unrest of the 1960s had faded and the divisions created by the Vietnam War had largely diminished. Compared to today, people on opposite sides of political and social debates could disagree about policies and politics while still broadly agreeing on what it meant to be an American and that the American ideal of freedom was something worth celebrating.

As Christians, however, we remember that while Christian principles helped shape many of the freedoms we enjoy as a people, our freedom in Christ is even deeper and more enduring.

First, we have been set free from the power of sin and death. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God is redeeming the brokenness in our lives and promises us the hope of eternal life. As Jesus said, "*So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed*" (John 8:36).

Second, we have been freed to love. Christ liberates us from self-centered living so that we may love God and serve our neighbors with sacrificial hearts. As Paul writes, "*For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another*" (Galatians 5:13).

Third, we have been freed to forgive. Because God has forgiven us through grace rather than merit, we are called to extend that same grace to others. "*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you*" (Ephesians 4:32).

Finally, we have been freed from fear. We need not live anxiously about the future, for we trust that God is at work in all things and that God's purposes will ultimately prevail. As Paul reminds us, "*We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose*" (Romans 8:28).

As we celebrate 250 years of the American ideal of freedom, may we also remember and embrace the greater freedom we have received through Jesus Christ. Let us purpose each day to live as people who have been set free to love, forgive, serve, and hope.

*"For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."* (Galatians 5:1)

*Be at Peace,  
Pastor Vern*