

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF STILLWATER

2023 ANNUAL REPORT




















h—and this is not from
t no one can boast. For we are
works, which God prepared in

eason of change! You have
and sent blessings with
e shifts of leadership,
ed on ministries of
compassion, reformed Bible study, and glory-filled worship.

During this interim ministry we have spent a lot of the year looking inward at the life of the church and the church building, while always sustaining the ministries within and outside our walls which build up our community of Stillwater and beyond. Our Saturday morning brunch and the Presbyterian Preschool shine with the impact they make in this community! Our children's and youth ministries are building up disciples who are engaged in faith and comfortable in church and with God. My two young girls love Children and Worship, and I know it goes along with the compassion and love that the teachers share with them. The glorious music from our choir, organ, and many additional instrumentalists take me to a stance of worship and awe every Sunday. I have also been amazed to learn of the many outside groups who use our building weekly or monthly as a physically and spiritually safe place to be. Behind the scenes, our deacons, trustees and elders join our staff to keep our church connected, operational, healthy, and joyful through this transitional

gaged in a Growth and Sustainability Survey with
digital surveys. My favorite part of the data that we
responses to the question, —What do you want the
er to know about our church?‖ For me, this reveals
lves and what we value. I want to share some of the
think they may be helpful while you continue to
mulate your identity as you welcome a new pastor in
you read through these answers (found on page 6)
hrough the rest of this report, may you also be given
ture year, as the ministries of compassion,
inclusion, and grace continue to blossom and flourish with new life!

Grace and Peace,





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Session

John Gelder, Clerk
Cathy Fairbanks (Treasurer)

2023
Jean Aresco
Kiah Butcher
Cathy Fairbanks
Rusty Rex
Courtney Savage
Jill Stoutzenberger
Vivyanne Bobo (young adult)

2024
Ken Belanus
Belinda Bruner
Judy Ferrell
Donna Koeppe
Tim Krehbiel
John te Velde

2025
Jenny Bobo
Cathy Conway
Lisa McGaw
Dustin Reavis
David Silver
Kathy Thomas

ADMINISTRATIVE & PROGRAM STAFF



Rev. Kati Collins
Interim Pastor/Head of Staff



Rev. Jenny Wells
Associate Pastor
(January 2023 - July 2023)



Jenna Campbell
Director of Children & Youth Ministry
(January 2023 - June 2023)



Leigh Miller
Coordinator of Children & Youth Ministry
(July 2023 - December 2023)



Sharon Bennett
Pastoral Care Associate
(October 2023- December 2023)



Rev. Verne Arens
Parish Associate
(through December 2023)



Rebecca te Velde
Organist/Director of Music



Magdalena Vinson
Church Administrator



Mary Beth Garoffolo
Finance Assistant



Vickie Foust
Building Supervisor



Cathy Fairbanks
Church Treasurer

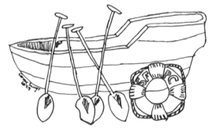
PERSONNEL UPDATE

The Personnel Committee have been moved by the faithfulness and commitment of our leadership and staff this year.

- We received notice from Associate Pastor Jenny Wells that she was accepting another call and celebrated her final Sunday with us on July 30, 2023.
- We hired Sharon Bennett to serve as Temporary Pastoral Care Associate.
- Director of Children and Youth Ministry Jenna Campbell requested and was granted leave from July 1, 2023 until June 30, 2024, three months of which is sabbatical leave.
- We welcomed Leigh Miller as Coordinator for Children & Youth.
- Interim Pastor Rev. Kati Collins agreed to a contract extension.
- We received notice from Verne Arens, Parish Associate, that he is retiring from his position.
- Personnel members conducted annual reviews with all members of the staff this year and are excited to find new ways to support them and all the work they do.
- We were able to secure office volunteers for each day of the week to better assist office staff.
- We were able to review policies this year to better meet the needs of our staff, both now and in the future. We look forward to continuing to work with staff in this new year.

Personnel Committee members: Linda Good (co-chair), Kiah Butcher (co-chair), Jenny Bobo, Lisa McGaw, Rusty Rex

STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE



The Stewardship and Finance Committee greatly appreciates all that you do facilitating God's will through First Presbyterian Church. Your generosity in financial support and willingness to commit time and energy to Church programs is deeply moving. In early October, our stewardship campaign began with The Great Presbyterian Bake-off. More than 20 items were entered in the competition. The campaign built on the theme —All Oars Pulling Together,‖ and produced 117 pledges totaling $592,492. Although substantial, this total is less than the $614,430 necessary to fully meet projected expenditure for 2024. When assembling the 2024 budget, Session listened to the congregation and the Growth and Sustainability Task Force, reducing the 2024 operating budget to $687,095. Projected spending was held in check despite dramatic increases in property and casualty insurance premiums.

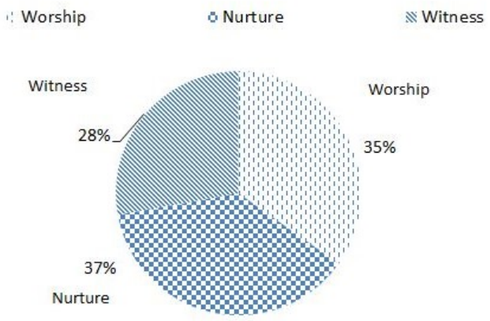
Throughout 2023 FPC received generous monetary gifts from the estates of Jim Gunn, Marilyn Waters, Dan Grischowsky* and Mary Curnett. Session and the Legacy Gifts Group are considering appropriate uses for these funds.

*In December, Session approved the use of funds from the D. Grischkowsky bequest for the planned 2024 overhaul of the HVAC system.

Stewardship/Finance Committee members: Tim Krehbiel (chair), Kiah Butcher, Terri Carver, Cathy Fairbanks (Treasurer), Kati Collins (staff)



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2023 ACTUAL EXPENSES



2023 BUDGETSUMMARY

INCOME	2023 Budget	2023 Actual
Congregational Giving	619,196	629,939
Other Income	42,160	49,457
Carryover/Budget Equity	46,210	46,210
Income Totals:	707,566	725,606
EXPENSES		
Personnel-Pastor	110,588	110,595
Personnel-Associate Pastor	74,986	49,601
Personnel-Director Children & Youth	66,591	59,466
Personnel-Church Administrator	44,807	45,662
Personnel-Office & Finc. Asst.	42,481	43,060
Personnel-Music Staff	45,388	45,350
Personnel-Music Support	11,000	8,838
Personnel-University Support	1,900	1,900
Personnel-Children Ministry Support	9,621	9,471
Personnel-Youth Ministry Support	8,000	10,000*
Personnel-Other Part-time Staff	5,000	9,812**
Personnel-Common Expenses	24,499	22,539
Stewardship, Finance & Session	4,100	2,928
World Mission & Denom. Affairs	32,273	28,717
Worship & Music	8,737	8,900
Communications & Connecting	6,659	6,808
University Ministry	2,500	2,621
Children Ministry	4,990	2,775
Youth Ministry	4,650	4,378
Fellowship & Family Ministry	1,800	1,595
Adult Ministry	2,955	2,373
Common Ed Ministry	1,950	1,577
Office	22,900	21,501
Deacons	21,500	21,244
Trustees	178,448	181,119
Expense Totals:	$738,323	$702,830

*$2000 transferred from Sheerar Endowment Resource Account per Session approval
**includes new Pastoral Care Associate position

Expense Categories

Worship : This includes a portion of clergy and support staff's salary & benefits, a portion of stewardship & finance, office & trustee expenses, and all of music staff's salary & benefits and worship and music expenses.

Nurture : This includes a portion of clergy, UKIRK assistant & support staff's salary and benefits, a portion of stewardship & finance, office and trustee expenses and all of Director of Children and Youth's salary & benefits and educational program expenses.

Witness : This includes a portion of clergy, UKIRK assistant and support staff's salary and benefits, a portion of stewardship & finance, office and trustee expenses and all of mission and Deacon's expenses.

Growth & Sustainability Task Force

The Growth and Sustainability Task Force was established by Session in January 2023. The charge of the Committee was to: *—Make recommendations to session regarding how to make FPC more financially sustainable and survey the congregation to obtain thoughts and feedback on the current state and future vision for the church."*

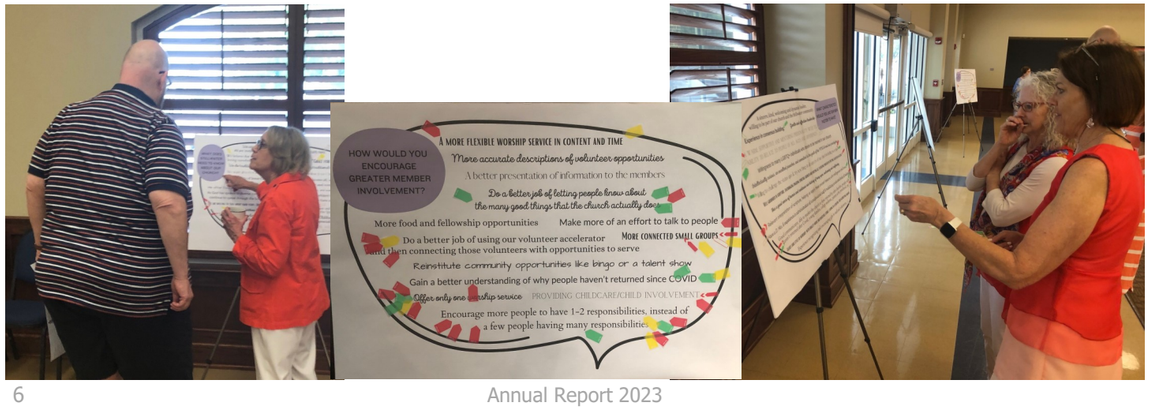
The Task Force met five times between February and June. The following are the primary actions completed:

- Reviewed past budget trends, income sources, and expenditures.
- Participated in the two-day workshop led by Joseph Moore entitled —A Visioning Retreat; The Practice of Discernment on March 3-4, 2023. The workshop was attended by approximately 50 members.
- Summarized the number of groups and organizations that use FPC's facility.
- Developed and deployed a congregational survey to receive congregation input on current state and future vision. Responses were received from 42 members and 15 small group discussions involving 135 people (see a sampling of responses below).
- Summarized responses for each of the seven survey questions and displayed them at the fellowship time prior to the Pentecost service on May 28th. Members provided their additional input. The most selected values of FPC by the congregation were Community, Compassion, Grace, Inclusion, Service, Spiritual Growth.
- Made several recommendations for growth and sustainability of our congregation, programs, and facilities.

Task Force: Larry Caldwell (Trustees), Ed Arquitt (Pastor Nominating Committee), Nate Ingram (Youth), Jim Beckstrom (at-large member), Donna Koeppe (Session), Autumn Cagle (Deacons), Kati Collins (staff)

Anonymous responses from personal surveys and small group gatherings:

- We walk the walk and try to take the love of God into the community. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to participate. You can find a kindred spirit here.
- We are open to all people.
- We are NOT judgmental. You are welcome here.
- That we welcome, accept and marry members of the LGBTQ+ community because of Christ's commandment to love one another.
- That we offer food every Saturday morning to anyone, and everyone is welcome to attend.
- That we celebrate the work of the Spirit in our midst. That all are welcome to worship, study and grow in faith here.
- That we are a safe place that can provide support. All are welcome and will be loved as Jesus has taught us.
- We are a fully inclusive church that respects and loves all. We love God and each other. We are generous with our time, talent and money.
- We are all on a spiritual journey, to _love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and love our neighbor as ourselves.' We do our best to follow spiritual principles on this journey and keep these ideas in our hearts and minds every day.
- We have an outstanding family faith nurture and youth program.
- We are willing to talk about hard issues.
- Questions are welcomed without judgment.
- We have an excellent traditional music program.
- That we are actively reaching out to those in need in Stillwater and beyond. That we are inclusive and genuinely care about all humanity. That we truly welcome all to our community.
- We strive to improve the world at local, national and international levels. We need active energetic people to join us in these efforts.
- History, Location, Preschool, Scouting, Focus on community.
- That we are inclusive and open to those living on the fringes. We have to be better about spreading our openness with our community.
- The community needs to know that we want to be a vital part of solving problems and supporting the marginalized in Stillwater. We are committed to being the feet, hands, and heart of Jesus in a physical and spiritual sense.
- We believe that following Christ means serving others. We want to use our gifts to bless our community. We welcome all to our services and our broader church community.
- We are following the practices of Jesus and caring for all people.
- Accepting. Loving. Learning. ALL are welcome here: LGBTQA1, all ethnicities and races, all levels of faith from doubters to mystics. We accept because we live as Jesus taught, that we are all one in Christ, so we should love everyone.



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE



Communications & Connecting

The Communications and Connecting Committee's mission is to connect visitors, members new and old, and the broader community with our church family here at FPC. In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, our world continues to re-adjust, and the Christian community is no different. Many have fallen out of the habit of connecting with the church in person, and it has been easy to lose track of those we haven't seen in a while. As such, our committee began the year with a desire to reach out to members who had not attended service in 6 to 12 months to let them know they are not forgotten. We sent cards and a gift of tea to about thirty households. If you received one, we hope it brought joy! We continue to think of you and are grateful for the connection you have with our church.

In our mission to connect with new members, we held three First Steps events (see Adult Education for details). This summer, we were excited to order some church tumblers. We offered the tumblers for pay-what-you-want, with a suggested donation of $5. Our hope is that these tumblers can serve as a form of advertising for our church when people take them to school, work, etc. Show off your church pride, and start a conversation!

Our biggest committee news of the year is our merger with the World Missions and Denominational Concerns Committee. In conjunction with the Growth and Sustainability Task Force, Session suggested that our church could benefit from decreasing its number of committees. This may allow for a reduction of budget, and it will also make better use of our volunteer resources by partnering more people together instead of spreading them so thinly among different groups. World Missions invited us to join forces with them, and we unanimously agreed. We are very excited about this decision! In many ways, our two committees complement each other well. Our administrative tasks overlap to some extent. For instance, Communications and Connecting oversees the membership roles, but World Missions is in charge of using that information to provide our congregation's per capita funds to the PC(USA). In addition to that, we feel the missions of our two committees—outreach in the community and support for wider denominational work—go hand in hand. We look forward to uniting the efforts of these two groups to expand the impact of our congregation at home and abroad.
Our church body gained new members this year. We celebrated the confession of faith of six of our confirmands, and we added six new members (and their children) through letter of transfer or reaffirmation of faith. Welcome all! We are so thankful to have you as members of our congregation!

Committee members: Jill Stoutzenberger (chair), Cathy Conway, Kati Collins (staff) and Magdalena Vinson (staff)

Presbyterian Women

PW/Circle met in the Fellowship Hall on the second Wednesday of the month during January-May and September -December for Bible study and fellowship. Associate Pastor Jenny Wells led the women in finishing the 2022-2023 Horizons Bible Study, *—Celebrating Sabbath: Accepting God's Gift of Rest and Delight"* during the months of January-May. Beginning in September Laura Southard led the women in the 2023-2024 Horizons Bible Study, *—Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts".*

In January, PW provided flowers for the communion table in remembrance of the women of the church who had died in 2022. In February PW, along with the congregation, participated in the Fellowship of the Least Coin offering. In May PW provided potato salad for a meal feeding the helpers at Special Olympics which was held at OSU.

Using Allene Brown Funds, PW allotted $1,000 to help with the cost of providing family meals and receptions following funeral and memorial services; and purchased a Vulcan Range for the Fellowship Hall kitchen at a cost of $3,716.

A highlight of 2023 was the presentation to Associate Pastor Jenny Wells as an Honorary Life Member of Presbyterian Women.

During 2023 PW gave the following donations for the support of mission and ministry of PW:

Churchwide PW	$400
Synod of the Sun PW	$200
Birthday Offering	$264
Thank Offering	$521
Blanket Sunday	$1,188
Least Coin	$291

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

PW Officers: Mary McKInley, Moderator; Lynda Tyrl, Vice-Moderator; Debby Schoenecke, Recording Secretary; Andrea Arquitt, Treasurer; Rita Breuninger and Rosetta Silver, Hospitality; Nancy Franklin, Yearbook; Corresponding Secretary and Name Tags, Holly Chermack.





Second Mile Sewing

Our year began by making adult bibs and walker bags for the various eldercare places in Stillwater. They are always appreciative of the items we take to them. Later on in the year we were asked by an employee of the SMC Foundation if we would make breast cancer pillows for a doctor who specializes in cancer here at SMC. WE got a heart-shaped pattern that gives comfort when held under the arm of the side where the cancer/breast were removed.

We were also asked by Becky Schlais, who works at Oklahoma Tribal Engagement Partners (OKTEP) to put buttonholes on hats and aprons that are used to help children across the state learn what foods are healthy for their different organs. This is the second time we have done this project and involved 875 buttonholes! ANOTHER project that gave us much satisfaction knowing we were of help in some small way. We also have several members who specialize in knitting and crocheting prayer shawls for anyone who is in need of the comfort these shawls provide. There were 26 beautiful shawls made in 2023.



FELLOWSHIP

- Coordinated First Presbyterian Church's presence at Payne County Pride event and shared information about FPC and an invitation to visit our church.
- Coordinated a fellowship time prior to the worship service for one Sunday in May, June and July with food provided by FPC members based on their birthday month.
- Coordinated with University Ministry Committee to host FPC's 4th Annual Block Party which included live music, grilled hot dogs and hamburgers, a bounce castle and obstacle course and door prizes. The event was open to all with intentional delivery of invitations to our neighbors who live in the community surrounding our church. Huge success with attendance by many church and community members.
- Purchased and prepared chili and macaroni and cheese for people attending A Night in Bethlehem.

Other fellowship opportunities for adults included:

- Faith on Tap: a monthly gathering where participants discuss current events, faith, and other timely topics. In 2023 this group met at Stonecloud Stillwater Patio and Taproom.
- Dine With 9 is a beloved dinner fellowship for anyone interested in expanding their current FPC relationships or meeting new FPC folks. This spring we kicked off the year with our usual schedule of sharing an evening meal once a month, with the final all-group gathering at the Annual Christmas Ball held at James Causley's home in December.

Fellowship & Family Committee members: Donna Koeppe (chair), Jim Beckstrom, Ellen Ingram, Nate Ingram, Danielle Shreve, Kati Collins (staff), Jenny Wells (staff)

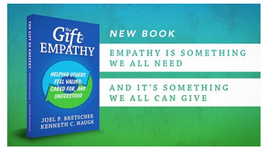
Dine with Nine coordinators: Virginia Charter, Melody Reavis, Courtney Savage

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Stephen Ministers began 2023 with a one-day retreat in January at St. Francis in the Woods. Spiritual director Sharon Bennett (now FPC's Pastoral Care Associate) led us in The Practice of Deep Listening. Throughout the year Stephen Ministers Anne Belanus, Carolyn Caldwell, Ava Osborn, Denise Rex, Debby Schoenecke, and Kay Stewart provided loving care to hurting individuals. Stephen Leaders Linda Burks, Carolyn Caldwell, Linda Good, and Kay Stewart provided twice-monthly continuing education and supervision of our FPC Stephen Ministers and also helped train the new Stephen Ministers in our community during the spring of 2023.







In 2024 we look forward to another retreat in late January, which will be a discussion of the new book —The Gift of Empathy.I We also welcome anyone who believes they might be called to Stephen Ministry to reach out to a Stephen Leader regarding the citywide training scheduled to begin in October of 2024. We especially encourage men who are interested to contact us, as we currently have no male Stephen Ministers at FPC. Men at FPC who wish to receive care are assigned to a Stephen Minister from another participating local congregation. Stephen Ministers go through 20 weeks of training, and then receive continuing education and supervision as they minister to hurting individuals.

Most importantly, throughout the year we encourage anyone who is hurting and interested in receiving the confidential, trained care of a Stephen Minister to let Pastor Kati Collins, Pastoral Care Associate Sharon Bennett, or Stephen Leaders Carolyn Caldwell, Kay Stewart, Linda Burks, or Linda Good know. Stephen Ministers are available and eager to help.



„Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me shall never die." „

MEMBERSHIP

6 confirmands
6 new members
9 deaths
2 baptisms
1 wedding

December 2023 membership 507

IN MEMORIAM

Ann Benson
Charles Drake
Kay Enmeier
*Arthur Harriman**
Jim Gunn
Paul Mullen
Jackie Plaxico
Bill Segall
John Steinbrink
*Rita Titus**
*Kelsey Walker**
Marilyn Waters-Seig

**active non-member/ former member*

MEMBERSHIP MILESTONES BY YEAR

Dewey Clapp (46)
Peggy Gibbs (46)
Kyle King (46)
Denise Rex (46)
Rusty Rex (46)
Carol Trapp (46)
Jim Trapp (46)
Kay Gafford (47)
Ed Stuart (47)
Sandy Stuart (47)
David Silver (48)
Rosetta Silver (48)
Cathy Fairbanks (49)
Steve Fairbanks (49)
Beverly Gumm (49)
Bonny Mullen (49)
Dick Shawley (49)
Cynthia Shawley (49)
Kay Stewart (49)
Connie Stiegler (49)
Barb Henderson (50)
Bob Henderson (50)
Ken McKinley (50)
Mary McKinley (50)
Kirk Mittelstet (50)
Madelyn Mittelstet (50)
Ava Osborn (20)
Lynn Osborn (50)
Karen Culton (51)
Margie Keener (52)
Marvin Keener (52)
Andrea Arquitt (53)
Ed Arquitt (53)
Edwin Koeppe (53)
Allen Murphy (54)
Janna Murphy (54)
Susie Glasscock (55)
Cathy Grove (55)
Pauline Kopecky (55)
Beverly Perkins (55)
Larry Perkins (55)
Suzanne Coyne (56)
Lee Rutledge (56)
Susan Worthington (56)
Rebecca Bair (58)
Rita Breuninger (58)
Rick Dearinger (58)
David Smith (58)
Catsy Gunn (59)
Sydney Reding (59)
Maxine Mulvey (61)
Mary Frye (61)
Judy Jones (63)
Lynda Williams (63)
Allan McCrary (65)
Robert Culton (66)
Evelyn Johnson (67)
Robert Kerns (67)
Marilyn Heath (68)
Anne Thomas (68)
Owen Thomas (68)
Mary Thomas (75)

Worship & Music

FPC Music Ministry

Chancel Choir Highlights

- Rehearsed Wednesdays 7:00-8:15pm from mid-August through early May and sang at most 11am Sunday services as well as for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Christmas Eve 11pm worship.
- Continued the practice of offering anthems at Easter, Reformation, and Lessons and Carols services that included congregational participation.
- Collaborated with OSU student trumpeters Aidan Evano and Omar Martinez and other instrumentalists and vocalists throughout the year.
- Presented a new anthem on Reformation Sunday that was composed in 2023!
- Ministered to one another as we celebrated birthdays, graduations, retirements, and held each other in prayer through life's trials and losses.
- Sang at the memorial service for Bill Segall, husband of Nedra Segall, our beloved Choir Mom.
- Celebrated continued growth in our numbers!

Many of our old green robes and stoles were donated to the Stillwater High School theater department last year, and the remaining ones finally found new homes in November, some to be recycled into new liturgical clothing, and some purchased by an individual as a gift to a choir in the Bahamas!

Choral Scholars served as cantors/soloists for all services when the choir was not present, including Sunday 8:30am services and during the summer. As choir section leaders, they supported the volunteers and assisted the director. They also assisted with **SpiritLink Music**. Soprano Amanda Barber (M.Mus.) and tenor Sam Markmiller (B.S.) graduated in May; sopranos Liz Brockman and Ainsley Carmichael and tenor Noah Pool joined us in August. Sam came back to sing with us for the Christmas Eve service!

Brandon Bowman, guitarist and vocalist, led songs or offered solos monthly in worship and assisted with the youth music for Youth Sunday and the Christmas Eve 4pm Family Service. He completed an MS in Educational Leadership degree in December.

Youth musicians, vocalists as well as instrumentalists on cello, clarinet, trumpet, bassoon, and French horn. Additional **instrumental music** throughout the year included bagpipes, flute, cello, violin, trumpet, guitar, and percussion (djembe), often in collaboration with the choir.

***Soli Deo Gloria* Music** featured our Kawai grand piano on November 12 in a spectacular program by students of OSU professors Tom and Heather Lanners, followed by a reception.

Peace Jam flourished in its first full year (begun Oct. 2022), led and hosted by Jim and Nancy Beckstrom. Meeting on the first Friday of every month, this community-wide event invites all ages for a 6pm potluck supper and 6:45-8:30pm music jam session (come and go) in Fellowship Hall.

Bench Buddies – anyone 7 or older can sit at or by the organ console during worship, experiencing the organ and choir up close and gaining a new perspective on worship.

Committee members: Dustin Reavis (chair), Ken Belanus, Nate Ingram, Janet Lawson, Kati Collins (staff), Rebecca te Velde (staff), Jenny Wells (staff)

Music Staff

- ◊ Rebecca te Velde *Director of Music/Organist*
- ◊ Brandon Bowman *Digital & Contemporary Music Coordinator*
- ◊ Amanda Barber (spring) *Choral Scholar*
- ◊ Liz Brockman (fall) *Choral Scholar*
- ◊ MaryEllen Bush *Choral Scholar*
- ◊ Ainsley Carmichael (fall) *Choral Scholar*
- ◊ Megan Flores (spring) *Choral Scholar*
- ◊ Sam Markmiller (fall) *Choral Scholar*
- ◊ Henry Marshall *Choral Scholar*
- ◊ Jack Moffatt *Choral Scholar*
- ◊ Vanessa Washburn *Choral Scholar*











Worship

Worship in 2023 continued our familiar traditions while taking opportunities to try new things and beginning discussions about new ways to worship in our church.

Communion was celebrated at 8:30am services, every 1st Sunday at 11am, and select other services throughout the year. We continued to receive the Sacrament by intinction and added a gluten free station for those who prefer that option. We were able to be blessed in many instances by several congregation members providing the bread for some of our communion celebrations!

We enjoyed the waving of the palms at Palm Sunday, a welcome and joyous Easter complete with a beautiful flowered cross in the narthex, and as always a vibrant and energetic Pentecost Sunday! Our evening services on Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday were inspiring and moving as always. And our church hosted the Holy Week Community Services this year.

During the summer we celebrated and said goodbye to our Associate Pastor Jenny Wells as she accepted a call in Kansas City. Her presence will be missed dearly and we wish her all the best in her new calling!

We began discussions of ways to enjoy various styles of music and worship in our church, which continue into 2024. We made the difficult decision to suspend the 8:30am service but look forward with optimism and determination to welcome it back when our resources are fully renewed in the future. In the meantime, the 11am service has become even more alive with a more full congregation. Additionally, Session approved celebrating communion at many more services at 11am as part of including elements from the 8:30am service in 2024.

World Communion Sunday at the beginning of October with all of the wonderful loaves of bread, Reformation Sunday with the beloved bagpipes, All Saints Sunday with candles lit for loved ones, Advent Sundays including the ever popular Lessons and Carols, taking time in the Blue Christmas service to stop and reflect during the Christmas season, and finally, a full Christmas Eve Sunday with 3 worship services: the morning service, the afternoon Family service with the children of the church recollecting Jesus's birth and Christmas hymns by candlelight, and the late traditional service with choir, communion, and candlelight, and last but not least a very well attended Dec 31st morning service round out the year!





















TRUSTEES

Most of our 2023 efforts addressed critical repair needs of FPC facilities as well as taking a close look at our aging infrastructure and what could be done to repair, replace, or upgrade features to keep our church structure viable and able to serve the needs of the congregation.

The Preschool provided considerable funding ($44,000) to assist with funding several projects including the replacement of the Preschool shed in the courtyard, the replacement of the courtyard sidewalk awning, and replacement of carpeting in the Worship Center and three rooms in the north wing.

An early April wind storm proved the 2022 roof replacements over most of our buildings worked well, but damage to the Sanctuary roof (that was not replaced in 2022) reminded us that it is very much in need of replacement.

Bottle-filling stations were added to three water fountains using funding provided by the Leone List estate gift. Leaf guards were added to all gutters and water damage to the ceiling of the Narthex entrance was repaired.

In mid-September, we were notified by Church Mutual that their insurance coverage would end on January 1, 2024. We quickly convened meetings to interview other providers. The insurance industry in Oklahoma is undergoing readjustments to their business plans and we determined that premiums would be considerably higher than anticipated. After consultation with several providers, we secured a policy from Insurance Board for 2024.

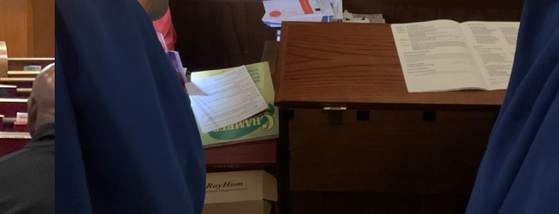
Our struggling HVAC system has long been a focus of efforts to ensure we have adequate heating and cooling throughout the year. During several meetings with our contractor, several modifications and upgrades to the current system were proposed along with improved maintenance plans. An engineer is evaluating the proposals. We hope to have specific recommendations for improvements this winter that can be completed prior to the AC season this summer. Funding for this work will be provided from a monetary gift from the estate of Dan Grischkowsky.

The trustees met with Finance, Endowment, and Legacy committees to discuss capital needs and options to provide funding for them. After a presentation by the trustees, Session approved proceeding with arranging for a line-of-credit loan for short-term needs and to include a presentation and discussion at the January congregation meeting.

Board of Trustees members: Dennis Ferrell (chair), William Cole (vice-chair), Larry Caldwell (secretary), Andrea Arquitt, Virginia Charter (Preschool Board), Billy McCollom, Judy Ferrell (Session Liaison), Kati Collins (staff)







CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRY

We are grateful for the over 33 volunteers who serve faithfully in children's and youth ministry at FPC. The volunteers were honored at the Volunteer Appreciation Brunch in May and gathered for the Leader Launch in August to be equipped and inspired for the year ahead.

Jenna Campbell named APCE Educator of the Year in 2023

In January of 2023, Jenna Campbell, Director of Children & Youth Ministries, was honored as the Association of Partners in Christian Education (APCE's) ENRICH Educator of the Year. This is the highest honor that APCE bestows on a currently serving educator with criteria that include: being a visionary who leads educational ministry into new frontiers and being a formative influence on educational ministry and an advocate for church educators. Jenna was also celebrated here at FPC at a reception directly following the conclusion of worship on Youth Sunday where she was presented, by Youth Ministry Committee chair Rusty Rex, with a bouquet of broccoli and a sash a la Miss America (see photo to right).

FerncliffCamp

The Dwight Mission Board was unable to approve plans for a Summer Camping opportunity (Dwight on the Road) for 2023 so Oklahoma campers again attended a week of camp at Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center outside of Little Rock, AR. 11 of our youth/ children attended and with Jenna Campbell as the adult sponsor.

ChristianParents Project, GenOn

FPC Stillwater was invited to participate with our families in the GenOn Christian Parent Project and we responded with a resounding yes. We believe God is calling us into a new way of being in ministry with the families in our congregation and community, and GenOn's project is supporting us as we figure out how to do this new thing.

The creators at GenOn are currently providing parents and caregivers with support as they grow in their own spiritual lives and parenting skills, and families to deepen their connections to each other and to God. They will roll out these resources over the next few years for us to try out together. Our families who are participating will get to tell them if any of them work to support our families. All that information will be used to improve the resources and help more caregivers and families.

Resources will include:

- ◊ Parenting courses rooted in gentleness and mutuality we see modeled in Jesus' relationships with others
- ◊ A podcast for parents
- ◊ Prayers and spiritual practices for real life
- ◊ Stories for families (biblical, fictional, and nonfictional)
- ◊ Easy activities for families rooted in experiences of awe and wonder
- ◊ Videos for kids that can be processed with adult caregivers
- ◊ Literally whatever you tell us you want :)











Staff

- ◊ Jenna Campbell
  Director of Children & Youth Ministry (January - June)
- ◊ Leigh Miller
  Coordinator of Children & Youth Ministries (July - December)
- ◊ Elijah Ankrom
  Youth Ministry Assistant
- ◊ Haley Brobston
  Youth Ministry Assistant
- ◊ Bekah Bowman
  Children's Ministry Assistant (spring)
- ◊ Ella Parsons
  Children's Ministry Assistant (fall)
- ◊ Erin Lawson
  Childcare Coordinator

NURTURE

Youth

15 youth led the congregation in worship on Youth Sunday with the theme "Following Jesus." The youth inspired the congregation with their powerful Matthew 25 reading and sermons, video on the Following Jesus theme, and both instrumental and vocal music.

They experienced the Holy Week Amazing Race, a challenge that led them through the events of Holy Week. Youth took on leadership roles in the Maundy Thursday service, a beloved tradition here at FPC.

Our 8th and 9th grade Confirmands, six in total, were welcomed into full church membership on Sunday, May 14 and provided insight into their faith journeys with excerpts from their faith statements included in the worship liturgy.

The Senior High Small Group for 10th-12th graders continued to meet weekly at Aspen on Thursday mornings before school for fellowship, devotion, and study of the book, "What Do I Believe About What I Believe?"

Summer PYG programming included fellowship events like Taco Tuesday and Fun at Frios.

During the fall semester, Presbyterian

PRESBYTERIAN • YOUTH • GROUP
PYG

Youth Group studied the theme of "All Are Welcome" PCUSA study Building an Inclusive Church - a Welcoming Toolkit 2.0, and excerpt from The Loss That Means That You No Longer Belong by Angela Williams Gorrell from Presbyterian Outlook. We have also continued to use Faith Practices from The United Church of Christ.

PYG had a Grinch Themed Christmas Party. While the youth had a blast they also collected money to donate to a charity of their choice.

Sunday School

- Middle School: Old Testament Figures using Colaborate and ReForm Ancestors from Augsburg Publishing.
- Senior High: The 3 Big Questions That Shape Your Future

Committee members: Rusty Rex (chair), Belinda Bruner, Mike Melancon, Tim Riley, Eric Savage (fall) Josh Taylor, Jenna Campbell (staff), Leigh Miller (staff)

Children

Bekah Bowman served as the Children's Ministry Assistant in the spring with Ella Parsons filling the position in the fall. Families enjoyed the Children's Ministry Kickoff in August at the Boomer Lake splash pad. Games, popsicles, and an opportunity for fellowship and learning about the year ahead in children's ministry made it a fun evening! Children and Worship continues to be offered during the 11:00am worship service as a sacred space for children's worship and wonder

Milestones

In the fall, two third graders received their Bibles and participated in an Exploring My Bible class with their parents.

Sunday School

Our Pre-K – Kindergarteners in the Faith Kidnection class enjoyed their lessons from the *Walk with Me* curriculum each week. SpiritLink for 1st-5th graders spent the Spring with New Testament Stories about the Disciples and the Feeding of the 5,000 and The Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians. Fall stories were about Moses at the Burning Bush and Wandering Through the Wilderness.

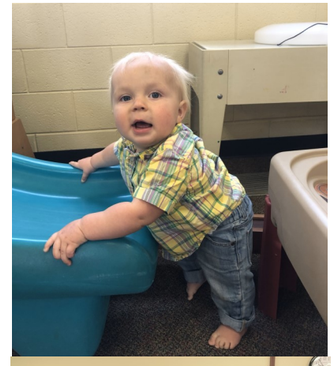
In the Spring of 2023 we had two events in our Sunday School hour

- ◊ **Easter Celebration** with our traditional ladybug release and donation to Heifer International
- ◊ **Ready, Set, Worship!** for 3rd-5th graders to help develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for worship, enabling them to actively engage, participate, and lead in worship.

Nursery

Our little ones in the nursery receive excellent care from our nursery workers and Erin Lawson, Child Care Coordinator. It has been challenging to find and keep good nursery workers so there was a pay increase at the end of the year, approved by the Session, as we sought to attract and retain nursery workers.

Committee members: Courtney Savage (chair) Jean Aresco, Dustin Charter, Melody Reavis, Eric Windhausen, Jenna Campbell (staff), Leigh Miller (staff)







Intergenerational

Summer GiFT

Once again Summer GiFT (Generations in Faith Together) plans had to be changed due to the weather. Last year we had to move inside due to extreme heat and this year a stormy forecast prompted a change of plans. We gathered Friday evening, June 2nd, at Lake McMurtry for dinner, a campfire, songs and energizers, small group time, and planned to end the evening with Vespers as it grew dark. Instead, Mother Nature opened the skies and it poured on us after only a couple hours of fellowship together. There was much laughter and dancing in the rain before we called it a night. Sunday morning we gathered in Fellowship Hall for breakfast and decorating friendship rocks to leave little notes of encouragement for others. Summer GiFT worship was an interactive and creative service involving all attendees with singing, a time for sharing stories of seeing God's work within FPC and in our lives, and the celebration of Communion

Pumpkin Palooza

The Children's Ministry committee planned a fellowship event for the whole church at Oh My Gourd Pumpkin Patch in Glencoe. Over 35 children, youth, and adults (and a couple Presbyterian Preschool families) enjoyed an afternoon of fall fun together with a hayride, pumpkin chunkin', s'mores, corn pit, petting zoo, and more.

A Night in Bethlehem

Over 200 people from FPC and the community enjoyed an evening to reflect on the Christmas story together. As in previous years, the event was outside and had great community involvement. The event included a to-go meal, bags with Christmas activities for children, and a drop off for our Little Free Pantry (overflowing by the end of the night!). Then all viewed our FPC youth in the Living Nativity on the front lawn, complete with hot chocolate and cider. Our Choral Scholars led us in a carol sing during the Living Nativity breaks and the Fair Trade Store was available for shopping. Special thanks to Cathy Fairbanks for sewing new angel costumes.











ADULT MINISTRY

The mission of the Adult Ministry Committee is to support the growth of our congregation and outreach to the community. Several insightful Bible and book studies as well as various topics of interest were offered to the congregation.

The January Series 2023

Thanks to Kent Olson for coordinating the January Series from Calvin College (now Calvin University) for the past 8 years. Participants could gather in person or view at home via live stream.

Sunday Morning Classes

Feasting on the Word

This Bible study, led by Denise Rex, follows the Revised Common Lectionary. The class is on-going and dives deep into Scripture, asking reflective questions and challenging participants to think in a new way.

Faith & Fellowship

Continuing with their model of class participants leading each week, the group's studies included: "Christianity's Family Tree" by Adam Hamilton, "Being Presbyterian in the Bible Belt" by Ted. V. Foote and P. Alex Thornburg, and "If God is Love, Don't Be a Jerk: Finding a Faith That Makes Us Better Humans" by John Pavlovitz.

Lenten Class

"Repairing the Breach", a Bible study of Isaiah 58:12 from One Great Hour of Sharing curriculum led by Associate Pastor Jenny Wells.

Other Class/Group Offerings

Sermon on the Mount: A Beginner's Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven

Using the book by Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, this summer Bible study met for six Wednesdays in June and July. Each gathering began with a shared meal before moving on to the study of Dr. Levine's work and writings.

Antiracism Learning and Accountability Group

Though no longer meeting monthly, the group continues to share articles and events dealing with racism and members of the group are active within Stillwater Community United.

FirstSteps

This class is coordinated and led by the Communications & Connecting Committee and is an introduction to FPC and the Presbyterian Church (USA) for visitors, newer members, and long-timers who want to learn more. The first was a series of classes in the spring during Sunday school. We are always considering whether different formats or days of the week may work better for our prospective class members, so for our fall session, we held a simpler one-night event on a Tuesday night. But our most fun visitor-oriented event of the year was our church tour in September. Rusty Rex resumed his role as tour guide, and we had several members and visitors accompany us for an exciting and informative tour of the space our church calls home. Afterward, we went to lunch together at Hideaway.

Older Adult Ministries

Seasoned Adults

Seasoned Adults programs resumed this year in April with different leaders. In October, Sharon Bennett took the reins of the program when she joined the staff as Pastoral Care Associate. Programs included presentations on a range of topics and speakers, including: Jim Beckstrom spoke about the Dancing Turtle Festival; Robbin Davis, Director of the Osher Life Long Learning program (OLLI) at OSU gave an overview of the programs they offer; Tristen Beard spoke about the Goodland Academy; Gary & Nancy Simpson spoke about their travels to London; Len Hebert spoke about the History of "Creole and Cajun", and treated us to a delicious meal of red beans and rice. Music was part of the programs as well, as there was a "Hymn Sing" and also a "Making Spirits Bright" Holiday Music program.

Coffee and Conversation

"Coffee and Conversations" were held at Legacy Village, Primrose, and Golden Oaks. Pastor Kati Collins offered Summer Bingo at Primrose as a special activity. Pastoral Care Associate Sharon Bennett delivered prayer shawls made by Second Mile Sewers to some residents in the fall once the weather turned cold. During these meetings, our pastor and staff can visit church members and meet new friends.

Committee members: Jenny Bobo (chair), Linda Burks, Kent Olson, David Silver, Jenny Wells (staff), Sharon Bennett (staff)









UNIVERSITY MINISTRY

In 2023, we:

- Attended College Conference at Montreat, North Carolina
- Met for coffee and prayer on Wednesday mornings with Jenny Wells during spring semester
- Took part in the OSU campus ministry fair and Lights on Stillwater
- Met on Tuesday evenings for Bible study, fellowship and cooking
- Gathered for lunch once per month after worship
- Helped plan and support FPC's Annual Block Party
- Attended Pumpkin Palooza
- Distributed finals exam care packages in May and December to college students

In 2024, we hope:

- To find consistent student leadership for weekly meetings (Rachel will be stepping down)
- To grow our presence on campus at OSU
- To engage OSU faculty and staff with opportunities for fellowship
- To continue our support of students through hospitality, fellowship, and prayer

University Committee: Lisa McGaw (chair), John te Velde, Jesse "J" Jones (UKirk Assistant, January - May), Rachel Schlais (UKirk Assistant September - December), Jenny Wells (staff, January - June)



PRESBYTERIAN PRESCHOOL

Presbyterian Preschool had a great year in 2023. We are currently serving 105 students from 87 different families. We have 17 teachers on staff this year and one very giving volunteer. Dana Brown, director, Dayle Winslow, Kylee Painter, Christiane Boles, Kate Wells, Eden Starke, Candace Gunkel, Evany Romero, Amanda Sanders-Vann, Emily Berry, Carmen Fox, Jaclyn McClary, Autumn Cagle, Donna Stallings, Cathy Meberg, Erin Lawson, and William Cole, preschool volunteer!

Our preschool has benefitted greatly from so much COVID grant money coming in from the government. We have been so fortunate to be able to completely pay the over $6400.00 to replace the carpet in the Worship Center since we do chapel in there twice a week. It is so nice to have carpet that is not fraying and distract kids all through chapel. The preschool also was blessed to be able to pay for half of the replacement of the canopy (over $24,000) that is over the walkway on the courtyard side. It is safe now and we are so thankful for that. We have seen the shed project come to completion this year and we were also happy to contribute ($6400.00) to that endeavor. We were also thrilled to be able fund the replacement of the carpet in the preschool wing at over $5300.00. Two rooms are partially carpeted and my office is carpeted, but it sure needed to be replaced. One classroom's carpet was not even replaced in the renovation in 2011. The preschool also installed permanent musical instruments, pagoda chimes and drums, ($14,000.00), on the North playground to give our children more learning opportunities outside. This also meets the new requirements of our 5 star rating from DHS. We also were able to install 3 operable windows in two of our classrooms that did not have operable windows ($2500.00). The teachers love being able to get some fresh air on days when it is possible to have the windows open.

In October the church hosted Preschool Sunday, where the Preschool families were invited to join us for a blessing of the courtyard and for church. I took this opportunity to host chapel in big church before the children all went out for their regular children and worship in the choir room. It was such a great opportunity for the church to see what chapel looks like when we do it two days a week with our preschoolers that want to attend. The preschool teachers had a fabulous learning opportunity in November. Twelve teachers got to attend the National Association for the Education of Young Children Annual Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. We closed the school for three days and were able to attend 3 days of learning alongside other early childhood professionals from all 50 states and 21 different countries. This was an incredible opportunity for us to learn, grow and come back energized and refreshed.



Dana Brown
Preschool Director

Our school was also the recipient of a $5000.00 grant from the Plains All-American Pipeline Company out of Cushing. We received their Plains Educational Grant. We plan to use this to buy a new climbing structure for the north playground. This playground needs some sprucing up and this will go a long way to improving the playground for our students and children from the church.







BOY SCOUT TROOP 820

Troop 820 had a terrific year in 2023 and we continue to maintain a vigorous outdoor program and frequent community service activities.

This year we had one scout, Matthew Schmidt, complete his Eagle rank. We also had two scouts complete their Eagle projects this year and they are close to completing their Eagle ranks in 2024.

This year's annual Ouachita Trek took place in western Arkansas on the Ozark Highland Trail. Backpacking utilizes different scout skills than on normal weekend camps. These include navigation, trail cooking, gear selection and packing, and coping with weather. Scouts also had a chance to negotiate a trail which had been blocked by a landslide weeks before.

One exciting part of scouting is attending BSA high adventures. This year we had three eligible scouts and one adult attend Philmont in July.

2023 activities included camping in a working salt mine at Stratacea , camping at Lake McMurtry, a visit to the Chickasaw Cultural Center in Sulphur, the Tulsa Zoo and Tulsa Air and Space Museum, and camping at Pawnee Bill Ranch, Will Rogers Scout Reservation, and Camp Williams..

Scout Saxon Shepard was elected to the Order of the Arrow and he completed his Ordeal and Brotherhood in 2023, giving us four members with five more eligible for 2024.

We performed a flag ceremony to dedicate the new flag poles at the Oklahoma Community Credit Union. We also helped with Special Olympics and Relay for Life. Troop 820 joined with other Stillwater scout units to assist the American Legion place and retrieve flags at Fairlawn Cemetery for Memorial Day and worked with Pack 3842 to place wreaths for Wreaths Across America. Other service activities included helping with Backpack Buddies, Elk Lodge Flag Day Ceremony, Stillwater Trash Off, Stillwater Community Singers, and several Eagle projects including Sanborn Lake, Kameoka Trail, and Our Daily Bread.

Troop 820 currently has 17 scouts and 25 registered leaders.



SCOUT TROOP 888

The First Presbyterian Church's generous support continues to provide the sole opportunity for girls in our community to participate in Scouts BSA. The Leaders, Scouts and Families of 888 are grateful and appreciate everything the Church and individual members of the congregation have done and continue to do which contributes to our growth, development and success. Thank You!

Scouts BSA Troop 888 had a spectacular year and has grown by 56%! Once again the Scouts have stepped up to the challenge and earned both the National Outdoor Challenge Award as well as the Journey to Excellence Gold Award. The Scouts worked diligently all year, and earned 21 total ranks and 104 merit badges in 2023!

The troop spent 21 nights camping and provided 454.5 hours of community service. Some of their service activities included cleaning up the FPC playground, helping set up at the Relay for life, helping an FPC church member move, assisting with Cub Pack 3842's Webelos den, making scarves to distribute at the FPC Community Brunch, Fire Prevention work at Camp Tan Da Ko, and building fish habitats.

The Scouts enjoyed outdoor adventures at Sylvia Stapley, Zink Scout Ranch, Chickasaw National Recreation Area, Slippery Falls Scout Reservation, Camp Tan Da Ko, Pikes Peak, and Camp Cris Dobbins. During these events, they formed friendships, practiced outdoor cooking skills, learned numerous outdoor scout skills, practiced the Leave No Trace and Outdoor Code principles, learned good citizenship, developed strong moral character through living the Scout Oath and Law, practiced and demonstrated servant leadership, and made memories to last a lifetime.



CUB PACK 3842

We meet weekly at the church on Monday nights from 6:30 to 7:30pm. Most weeks are for Den Meetings, where we split up by grade to work on age-appropriate activities with full Pack meetings once a month.

Highlights of 2023 included a Pinewood Derby where scouts designed and built their own racecars from a block of wood, campouts at Sylvia Stapley, an Egg Drop with assistance from the Stillwater Fire Department and their ladder truck, summer gatherings at the splash pad and the OSU Botanic Gardens, a fall Pack Campout at Lake McMurtry that included a viewing of the eclipse, and learning about service to country for Veteran's Day from FPC member and retired Naval officer Dennis Ferrell. The year ended with a Christmas Party celebrated with Troops 888 and 820 and a visit from Scouter Claus who brought Lego derby car kits.

Thank you for sponsoring Pack 3842 and making us part of your service to the community.



FAREWELLSAND WELCOMES

In May, Director of Children & Youth Jenna Campbell announced that she would be taking a year's leave of absence, from July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024, while she and her family accompanied her husband Casey Campbell to his prestigious acceptance into the Army War College in Carlisle, PA. Three months of Jenna's time away were to be granted as a sabbatical to be spent developing curriculum. In true Jenna fashion, plans were made, revised, and reworked in partnership with Personnel, Children's, and Youth Committees and with staff input. A job description was created for a part-time Coordinator of Children & Youth Ministry and educator Leigh Miller was hired to serve during Jenna's absence. Leigh began working here at FPC in the middle of June and has ably assisted and guided our Children & Youth Committees during the second half of 2023.

In June, Associate Pastor Jenny Wells gave notice that she had accepted a call to become the new pastor of Central Presbyterian Church in Kansas City, MO. We celebrated Jenny's time with us at a reception on Sunday, July 30, 2023, and sent her off with prayers to her new congregation and pastoral calling.

This summer also brought the long-awaited dedication of the outdoor drinking fountain given in honor of former pastor, the Rev. Dr. Leah Hrachovec. Located on the southeast corner of our Fellowship Hall, this fountain is certified frost-free and provides year-round access to fresh drinking water for all in the community. Fitted with a bottle filler, a regular drinking fountain, and a pet dish, we can live into our calling as a Matthew 25 congregation as we provide a drink to those who are thirsty. Leah and her family were able to be present at the dedication in late June.









ENDOWMENT

The Endowment Committee oversaw the management of the endowment funds. Funds are invested with New Covenant Trust Company, a division of the Presbyterian Foundation and are invested consistent with the social witness principles adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA. The total market value of the endowment funds on December 31, 2023 was $1,887,914.79. In addition to earnings received on our investments, over $13,822 in gifts were received and added to the following restricted endowment accounts: Perpetual Pledges, Darlow Scholarship, Gofourth Joy offering, Murphy Preschool and K. Clapp Deacon's Accounts.

Session, families and many other parties were supported by the Endowment Resources during 2023. (Four percent of the 3-year average market value on September 30 each year is made available to support the church, consistent with the restrictions established for the restricted accounts.) Support provided during 2023 included:

- Long-term maintenance of the FPC facilities from the Unrestricted Endowment and the Bullen CM&I Restricted Endowment
- Pledges to the unified church budget from the Perpetual Pledges Endowment
- Presbyterian Woman luncheons, new oven for the Fellowship Hall kitchen from the A Brown PW Endowment
- Christmas Joy Offering and the Giving Tree from the Goforth Joy Offering Endowment and the Joy Smith Giving Tree Endowment
- Bethel Cemetery for cemetery maintenance
- The Soli Deo Gloria Music Concert Series from the Joy Smith Music Endowment
- Deacon's crisis assistance from the K. Clapp Deacon's Endowment
- Support for the Presbyterian Preschool Program from the Gumm Preschool, C. Murphy and Darlow Endowments
- The Children and Youth Programs from the Sheerar Child/Youth Endowment
- Support for the Stephen Ministry Program from the Stephen Ministry Endowment
- Medical Debt Relief from the Medical Debt Relief Endowment

2023 Committee Members

Arletta Webster (Chair), David Conway, Tim Hardin, Donna Koeppe, Lynn Osborn, Tim Riley

WORLD MISSIONS & DENOMINATIONAL CONCERNS

The committee began the year by planning a spring mission trip with the mission team to Eagle, Colorado over Memorial Day Weekend in May. We and the Mission Team held a fundraising luncheon, and they had a very successful trip.

We set dates for Minutes for Mission for each of the four Special Offerings taken throughout the year, and we sent our annual contribution check of $1000 to University of the Ozarks with Jenny Wells who visited the campus on her way to a conference in February.

In March we took a team to participate in the Great Trash Off to clean up various sites around Stillwater. Our team was assigned to Strickland Park.

We sent $1491.00 to the Christmas Joy offering collected during the last weeks of 2022.

We collected the One Great of Sharing Offering in March and April; the congregation raised $4021.71 in the fish banks and other giving. The Pentecost Offering totaled $1215.00, $486 was sent to Wings of Hope here in Stillwater and $729 went to the PC (USA). We raised $1500.00 for Peace and Global Witness and sent $500 to Mission of Hope locally.

The committee designated and sent the following benevolences in July:

- $500 Solar Under the Sun
- $400 Covenant Network of Presbyterians
- $500 Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
- $500 Presbyterian Hunger Program
- $1,000 to support Jed Koball and Chenoa Stock, our mission partners
- $500 to support the Block Party

As requested, the committee reduced our budget by 15% for 2024. At Pastor Kati's request, we examined our committee activities and compared them with other Session committees to determine if we could combine to strengthen and reduce overlap in missions. We met in July with Communications and Connecting and agreed unanimously to combine our two committees into one called Communications and Missions.

Steve Fairbanks continues to work with Solar Under the Sun and keeps us apprised of this important synod mission, including training schools held each year.

The Fair Trade Store had a great year with lots of sales and goodwill. They are open most Sundays, have a strong presence on Facebook, and can open for special requests. We are grateful for the hard work of Julie Bills and all volunteers who keep the store running.

World Missions & Denominational Concerns Committee Members: Kathy Thomas (chair), Julie Bills, Steve Fairbanks, Carolyn Gang, Ed Noltensmeyer, Jenny Wells (staff through June), Kati Collins (staff July - December). In July we added Cathy Conway and Jill Stoutzenberger when our committees merged.

STAFF SERVES LARGER CHURCH

Rev. Kati Collins

- Doctorate of Ministry Studies, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX
  - Dissertation: Holy Mother, the intersections of Motherhood and Ministry
  - Contextual Study at Mission Waco, Texas
- Presbyterian Foundation, Leadership Gathering participant, Fort Worth, TX
- New Covenant Trust Company, participant in coaching on Legacy Giving
- Taskforce for the joining of Oklahoma Presbyteries, Cimarron Presbytery

Sharon Bennett

- Faculty for HeartPaths Spiritual Direction Training Program
- Co-leading "The New Spiritual Exercises: In the Spirit of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin" for HeartPaths
- Spiritual Companion
- Member of Stillwater Community United

Leigh Miller

- Dwight Mission Board Member
- Chair and founding team member of a new Oklahoma Youth Council, working on developing a Presbyterian Youth Council of Oklahoma that will sponsor and organize youth ministry retreats and programing opportunities across Presbytery boundaries in the state of Oklahoma.
- Past President of South-Central Regions of APCE
- Served on a Synod of the Sun Committee as an educator representative. This committee held presbytery listening sessions and made recommendations to the PNC for new Synod Executive.

Rebecca te Velde

- Composed commissioned organ pieces/anthems for the Southwest Region Convention of the American Guild of Organists, the centennial worship celebration of University United Methodist Church in Tulsa, OK, and the 2023 *Oxford Book of Organ Music by Women Composers.*
- Co-editor of the *Oxford Hymn Settings for Organists* series.
- Secretary of the Cimarron chapter of the American Guild of Organists.
- Performs in AGO and ecumenical community recitals and concerts.

Local Mission

Mission of Hope Life Skills

Classes led by First Presbyterian members are taught each month to clients of Mission of Hope, a shelter for those experiencing homelessness. Topics included: Getting and Keeping a Job, Legal Issues, Health and Wellness, and Visioning for Your Future. The classes connect Mission of Hope residents to First Presbyterian Church, offer useful information and inspiration, and help Mission of Hope fulfill grant-funding obligations. Deacons also provide support with deliveries of food and holiday donations at various times during the year.

Our Daily Bread

Volunteers from FPC worked three Saturdays in 2023 at Our Daily Bread, providing assistance to shoppers and helping restock shelves. Deacons sponsored a session on Homelessness in March and a staff person from ODB discussed the challenges faced by unhoused persons in Stillwater and how ODB assists with referrals for housing. He also shared with us about the recently expanded garden at ODB and the variety of fresh produce it provides.

Little Free Pantry

Our free pantry continues to be stocked by members and shopped regularly by members of our community.

Saturday Community Brunch

2023 marked the first full year that the Saturday Brunch was in person since 2019. Weekly averages for the brunch were between 34 and 47 in-person meals, 20 to 30 to-go containers and 3-5 kids' bags. This year also marked a big increase in food prices which prompted Deacons to move funds to support this vital ministry. We thank those of you serving as Team Leaders and all other volunteers for your work helping feed the hungry. You are a great part of our efforts as a Matthew 25 church!

Sock Ministry

This year, the Sock Ministry distributed 1500 pairs of socks. Socks are purchased from Deacons' funds or provided through the Salvation Army. Warm, dry, comfortable feet are essential to well-being. This is a ministry that helps fulfill our Matthew 25 calling to clothe those who need clothes.

Yearbook/School Supplies

In 2023, deacons approved permanent funding for binders for middle school students with financial need. We provided 20 high quality binders for counselors to distribute.

Giving Tree

Members of the congregation generously fulfilled The Giving Tree's goal of providing 155 gift cards to agencies in the community. Central Oklahoma Community Action Agency received 20 gift cards, Department of Human Services, Adult Protective Service-20 cards, Mission of Hope-40 cards, Payne Country Youth Services-30 cards, and Wings of Hope-40 cards. In addition, 5 gift cards were given to the FPC office, for needs presented at the church. An excess of $113 was collected, as some members contributed cash, which will be available for future Giving Tree programs.

Compassionate Meals

This year, the Deacons provided a family meal and/or reception for six memorial/funeral services for the families of Louise Bellatti, Ann Benson, Jim Gunn, Paul Mullen, Bill Segal, and Marilyn Waters-Seig. In addition, we provided food for several members needing support during an illness or after surgery.

Bipolar Support Group Meal

This ministry was restarted in October, after having been suspended due to COVID restrictions. A meal is provided once each month to members of the Depression and Bi-polar Support Alliance (DBSA). The entrée, salad, bread, and dessert for each meal are provided by Deacons. A Deacon also hosts the meal and shares in the meal with the group members. Supporting the work of this group by providing food and sharing in fellowship is one way that our church's heart goes out to the community.

Stillwater Pioneer Pantry

Stillwater Pioneer Pantry: This is our fifth year partnering with the Pioneer Pantry to assist homeless and home-insecure students in Stillwater from PreK-12th at all 10 school sites. Through fundraising activities in January and August, we were gratified to donate 4 tubs of clothing/basic hygiene items and $1955 in Walmart gift cards. All of these items were delivered to the School Nurse at the Stillwater High School, who then distributes them to students as needed.

Homebound Ministry

Deacons and other volunteers were busy in 2023 visiting our members in hospitals, residential care facilities, and in their homes. Every week we hand-delivered large print bulletins to 16-18 homebound members. We sent well over 100 Valentines, get well, sympathy and Thanksgiving cards. We delivered Easter lilies and poinsettias to 70+ members who are homebound or had suffered a loss/illness in 2023. We also provided in home communion to those who requested it.

Growing Families Ministry

This year, Deacons approved giving new family baskets to our pre-school families. We had three new babies in November. They were welcomed with a soft blanket, a framed, personalized poem, items from the Fair Trade store, Splash! Newsletter for parents, and a hand carved plaque with the child's name and date of birth.

Board of Deacons

Anne Belanus, Co-Moderator
Joshua Butcher, Co-Moderator

2023

Joshua Butcher
Autumn Cagle
Gary Holland
Betsy Showalter
Janet Waugh
Stan Waugh
Ella Parsons (young adult)

2024

Anne Belanus
Sharon Bennett
Mary Beth Garoffolo
Ava Osborn
Gerald Stangl
Ann Watkins

2025

Holly Chermack
Tim Hardin
Ellen Ingram
Terry Shreve
Aaron Stoutzenberger
Eric Windhausen

Community Use of FPCSpace

Many local groups use space at FPC for their weekly or monthly meetings, helping make our facilities truly part of the wider community.

AA
AlAnon
American Guild of Organists
Birth Connections of Stillwater Parent Support Group
Daughters of the American Revolution
Depression and Bi-polar Support Alliance
Grief Groups
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
OSU American Sign Language Club
OSU Parkinson's Exercise Group, Loud Crowd, and Nutrition Programs
Relay for Life
Resilience Payne County Board
TOPS
Victim's Impact Panel
Boy Scout Troop 820, Troop 888, and Cub Pack 3842





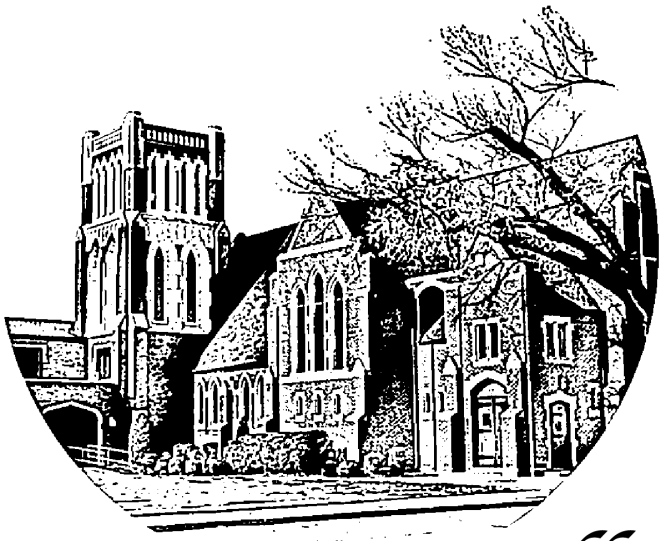










Grace For All

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First Presbyterian Church Celebrates the Love and Grace of God by:

Growing through Bible Study, Prayer, and Worship,

Reaching Out to Serve,

Accepting questions,

Connecting people to Jesus Christ, One Another, and the World, and

Embracing All.

We gratefully respond as a part of the holy universal Church. Thanks be to God!

We are a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF STILLWATER

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