

VOL. 67 NUMBER 1 • FEBRUARY/MARCH 2025

THE AMBASSADOR

A publication of First Presbyterian Church of Stillwater

Lent and Easter @ FPC

Lenten Devotionals for all ages
available in the Narthex display

Ash Wednesday
with imposition of ashes
6:00 p.m. March 5

Palm Sunday
11:00 a.m. April 13

Maundy Thursday
7:00 p.m. April 17

Good Friday
Service of the Office of Tenebrae
7:00 p.m. April 18

Easter Sunday
11:00 a.m. April 20

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First Presbyterian Church Staff

Pastor/Head of Staff
Diane Janssen Hemmen
dianeljh@gmail.com

Pastoral Care Associate
Sharon Bennett
sharon.bennett@stillwaterfpc.org

Director of Children's &
Youth Ministries
Jenna Campbell
jenna.campbell@stillwaterfpc.org

Childcare Coordinator
Erin Lawson
childcare@stillwaterfpc.org

Youth Ministry Assistants
Elijah Ankrom
Haley Brobston

Children's Ministry Assistant
Bekah Bowman

Church Administrator
Magdalena Vinson
magdalena.vinson@stillwaterfpc.org

Finance Assistant
Rachel Hearn
rachel.hearn@stillwaterfpc.org

Interim Choir Director
Dr. Christopher Haygood

Interim Organist
Dr. Lucia Unrau

Preschool Director
Dana Brown
dana@preschool.org

Fellowship Hall Building Supervisor
Vickie Foust

Thank You

To the congregation ~

Thank you to all who attended, either in body or spirit, my retirement reception this past Sunday afternoon and for all your kind words and well wishes! I am so grateful for the many opportunities I've had while working here and for the support extended to me as a member of this faith community. This is a special place and one that I will always treasure. And giving thanks for an amazing Youth Sunday service!! What an impressive group of young people.

Blessings,
Mary Beth Garoffolo



FAITHFUL FAMILIES GATHERING

Sunday, March 30
9:45am, Hospitality Area



Be fed, supported,
connected, inspired.

Faithful Families Gathering

Parents of children and youth are invited to the Hospitality Area on Sunday, March 30th at 9:45 a.m. for a time of food, coffee, and connecting with other parents.

Connect on GroupMe!

Join our NEW GroupMe group for parents and grandparents of children and youth at FPC. This GroupMe space will be a place where we can post things like encouraging words, prayer requests, babysitter needs, if meals are needed for someone, life updates, etc. You can use the GroupMe app or just receive the texts. Find the link to join in the weekly children's and youth ministry email or contact Jenna Campbell.



Join us for a Community Conversation



Caring for Kids

March 13th, 2025

9:00-10:30am

Sunnybrook Christian Church
421 E. Richmond Rd., Stillwater

Gather with churches, nonprofits,
volunteers, and community leaders
to share knowledge, resources,
and services that promote
healthy childhood wellness
and development.



Register TODAY!

Community Conversation

Interested in what resources and services for childhood wellness are currently available in Stillwater? Want to meet others working in those areas? Join Stillwater Cares for a Community Conversation on Thursday, March 13th, from 9-10:30 a.m. at Sunnybrook Christian Church.

Register via the QR code above.

Questions? Reach out via email to:

coordinator@stillwatercares.org

Oklahoma Presbyterians
in Mission Together

**Diapers
to
Depends**
March 2, 2025



Diapers to Depends

The three Oklahoma presbyteries invite you to bring donations of diapers, pullups, and depends on Sunday, March 2nd, as part of a drive that will benefit local organizations. Donations from Stillwater FPC will be taken to Our Daily Bread Food & Resource Center. Look for the donation box in the Narthex this Sunday!

Self-Talk

by Rosemary Wahtola Trommer

Because I know in my body
the power of spaciousness,
I command my heart, *Stay open.*
Stay open, I growl,
as it clenches and hardens
and granites and steels,
but my terrified heart
keeps clenching anyway,
tighter and smaller and stuck.
I said, Stay open,
my voice a demand,
as if with intensity
I could force a release.
And the heart curls in,
intent on survival, like a pill bug,
like an armadillo, like a heart
that has learned before
it is not safe to love.
And it hurts to be small.
And it takes so much energy
to clench, that finally
it's exhaustion that helps me
to hear the softer voice
beneath the command,
the quiet voice that arrives
like the slightest of waves, the voice
that arrives like low morning sun,
and the voice enters the clench of me
like gentle rain meeting dry earth,
and it says, *Of course, you're afraid.*
*For now it's enough to remember
the possibility of opening.*

Life-Changing Generosity at FPC

The other day, a four-year old at FPC sought some help with addressing a red-soda spill he had created on the floor. He stayed with the spill to keep others out of it while an adult went to our subscription rag stash in the building for him. He smiled, took the rags, and wiped up the catastrophe in his own four-year old way. After handing back the pinked rags, he said thanks and wandered off toward the group of which he was a part, busy in their fellowship.



Because of over 73 households giving \$1,736,722.09 to From Strength To Strength, with enacted giving to date (first gifts toward those commitments/"First Fruits" or even some gift completions) -- received gifts -- of \$648,053.36 (!!), we will better steward the facility we share with him. (Two projects have been approved by Session to begin utilizing your generosity: the critical component at the heart of our HVAC system, our heat exchanger, will be replaced, likely by Easter, and we have entered into a contract to replace the 70-year-old leathers in our sanctuary organ in two phases, at least one happening in 2025. The Session hopes to approach all three "columns" of our campaign with as equal timeliness and intention as possible. From our campaign guide, those columns were: functional facility updates, six-figure funding of a facility endowment, and specific program and mission projects.)

Because of 117 households standing in day-to-day support of the regular operational costs of being the church in this place by sharing with our Session their intentions to give a collective \$574,136.79 in 2025, we will maintain our commitment to care for the planet with that rag subscription; we will keep the lights on and the temperatures moderate; we will demonstrate patience to young spillers like our friend, showing as well as speaking the love of God to our guests and members alike! -- and so much more.

Will our young guest remember the day he spilled his red soda and some random FPC adult kindly helped him through that small crisis? Let's live out our generosity in deed and in word and even with our finances so that he and so many more -- of all ages -- just like him will!

JANUARY 31, 2025 INCOME/EXPENSE REPORT

	JANUARY	YEAR TO DATE
Giving	\$64,387	\$64,387
Other Income (Royalties, Perpetual Pledges, Event Income, etc)	\$95,129	\$95,129
Total Income	\$159,517	\$159,517
Expenditures	\$79,997	\$79,997
Net	\$79,519	\$79,519

Adult Ministry

March Seasoned Adults

Early Childhood Coalition: How to Build a Better Brain

Monday, March 17th

Dinner @ 6:00 pm, program begins @ 6:45 p.m.

RSVPs are due Friday, March 14

Dr. Amy Hardin, retired pediatrician, will share about the Early Childhood Development Coalition (ECC) and discuss The Basics Learning Network – a national program to improve the life of families and the development of children 0-5 years of age thereby improving school readiness and helping to break the cycle of generational trauma in our community. Stillwater ECC is a backbone organization within the national program.



Adult Sunday School

Sundays, 9:45-10:45 a.m.

Faith & Fellowship: meeting in the Multipurpose Room, this class is currently studying, "Unoffendable: How Just One Change Can Make All of Life Better" by Brant Hansen. Each class session includes a short video followed by discussion. All are welcome to join!

Feasting on the Word meets in the Library (201) and will continue their study of the lectionary readings, the selections from Scripture that we hear each Sunday during worship. Facilitated by Denise Rex.



Little Free Pantry Update

from the Deacons

The cold weather has increased demand on the Free Little Pantry, and the Deacons are asking the congregation to help keep the Pantry well stocked. Most needed items are ready-to-eat snacks, cans with pop tops, canned meats, nut mixes, jerky sticks, and peanut butter. Non-perishable items in original containers only, please. Red Pantry items (tampons, pads, panty liners) are also always needed. You can bring your items directly to the Pantry, or place them in the closet in the Narthex. Thank you!



Our Daily Bread Workday

FPC members served as volunteers at Our Daily Bread during the 3rd Saturday Shopping Day in February. They had a good time helping and chatting with the guests. Watch for information on future workdays on the pole in the Narthex.

New Intergenerational Liturgical Library Coming Soon!

The word 'liturgy' means "the work of the people." An effort of Team Neurodiversity, our new liturgical library will offer a variety of ways to invite all ages to engage in worship. Sometimes people need stillness and silence. But sometimes people need to move their bodies in order to listen and focus. We recognize and celebrate that stillness and listening are spiritual acts in worship, but so too are dancing like Miriam, singing like Mary, and laughing like Sarah. We can say a quiet Amen to respond to the Spirit's movement, but Jacob stacked rocks and Moses took off his shoes. The liturgical library will make space for a variety of responses in worship, acknowledging that our brains and bodies all have different needs when it comes to focusing, learning, listening, and worshipping.

Items in the liturgical library will be available for self-selection using a beautiful wooden "library" made by Thad Leffingwell and Margaux Melancon which will be placed in the southeast corner of the narthex. This location makes it noticeable and easily accessible by worshipers (and accessible for those in our forthcoming sensory room as well). This library will be filled with neuroaffirming items to engage people of all ages in worship. Some items will be particularly helpful for those who are neurodivergent, but all are welcome to use the items to more fully connect with and engage in worship. The items aren't toys, but are tools for regulating, for sensory input, and for engagement.

Some examples of what our liturgical library will include:

- Moses' tablets - LED drawing tablets (can be used to doodle, draw the Bible story, etc.)
- Noise-cancelling headphones for those who need a noise-dampening aid
- Waters of Baptism - water bubblers for relaxation/soothing/focus
- Ruach Breathing Balls (Ruach is the Hebrew word for breath/spirit)
- Creation Station - colored pencils, crayons, paper, clipboards, pipe cleaners, wiki stix
- Jesus is the Way Labyrinth Tracing - finger labyrinths
- Dance with Miriam - ribbon wands to be used during hymns/music
- Fruit of the Spirit - Nee Doh sensory aids
- Interactive Worship Bulletins

How do we use the liturgical library?

Small bags are available on the liturgical library. Grab a bag and add items that you'd like to use to engage in worship. After worship, return your bag with your items (keeping the items in the bag) to the basket at the base of the library (keep any paper/creations you've made but return other materials). The items in the bags will be cleaned during the week and then added back the library for the next Sunday.

Is this just for children?

No! This is truly an INTERGENERATIONAL library. We realize that the need for movement, creativity, play, delight, and regulation is not limited to children (though they can teach us how to do it!). The items on this liturgical library are open to any age.

**Team
Neurodiversity**

Do You See the Savior?

Seek & Find Devotions for LENT

Lenten Devotionals for All Ages Are Now Available in the Narthex

40 DAYS WITH JESUS
LENT THROUGH THE GOSPELS



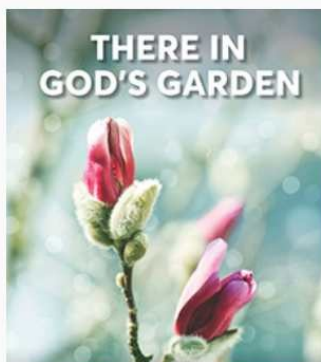
For families with children - *Do You See the Savior?*

The pictures in this book are filled with fun things to look at and hidden objects to find. But there's more here than meets the eye. These pictures, poems and devotions also tell a wonderful story: the story of God's love for God's people. Throughout each of the 40 days of Lent, children read a Bible verse and devotion. Then they look for the special hidden items in the pictures. As Easter approaches, children will be happy to see that our risen Savior lives and works right inside of us. Now they can help other people see the Savior too.

For youth - *40 Days with Jesus: Lent Through the Gospels*

Journey through key moments in Jesus' life and ministry while reading through the Gospels during this Lenten season. Pick up a card with all the daily readings (short and manageable readings!). Jenna will also be sharing the day's scripture reading in the youth GroupMe each morning during Lent.

THERE IN GOD'S GARDEN



For adults

From Luther Seminary, this devotional uses the image of "God's Garden" and "The Tree of Wisdom" to journey through Lent. This is a daily devotion, and features scripture and a reflection each day.

Youth Sunday

Our youth led us in a powerful worship service on Youth Sunday with the theme of "Echo the Story - God's Story, Our Story." As we gathered around campfires, we heard and told stories of God's faithful presence throughout scripture and in our lives. Thanks to the youth for leading us!



PRESBYTERIAN • YOUTH • GROUP



Presbyterian
Youth Group

Children's & Youth Ministry

Children's Sunday School

Sundays, 9:45-10:45 a.m. for ages 4yrs - 5th grade

Gathering Time:

- Children are invited to start the Sunday school hour at 9:45am in the Worship Center. Parents can pick up children at 10:45am in the Worship Center.

Faith Kid-nection Class (Pre-K to Kindergarten)

SpiritLink (1st-5th graders)

SpiritLink Room Highlight:

Scrolls & Scribes is where we explore Bible stories through digital technology. In this room, children might explore the Bible story by making a video of the story with the iPads, create a song of the Bible theme with a music app, or create a card on the computer to deliver to someone who is sick!

For ALL 6th-12th graders

Sunday evenings

March

- 2 - PYG Out to Lunch, 12:00 - 1:30pm
- 9 - PYG Bowling @ Frontier Lanes (5 - 6:30pm)
- 16 - No PYG
- 23 - No PYG
- 30 - PYG (5:00 - 6:30pm)

**OKLAHOMA WEEK AT FERNCLEIFF
SUMMER CAMP**

July 6-11, 2025

\$479/camper

✓ For Entering 3rd Graders - 12th Graders

Learn More & Register at
www.ferncliff.org/oklahoma

Join us for summer camp at Ferncliff Camp & Conference Center in Little Rock, AR. There will be transportation provided by the Oklahoma presbyteries. FPC Stillwater will be providing an additional scholarship for our campers. An amount and registration code to use will be advertised in early March.



Communion Milestone

Four of our 3rd-5th graders gathered on a Saturday in February for an afternoon of bread baking, grape stomping, and exploring and reflecting on communion.



PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH TRIENNium

July 28-31, 2025

Louisville, KY

(Oklahoma delegation will travel late
on July 27th and back early August 1st)

A national Presbyterian youth conference for **rising 9th graders**
through **graduated high school seniors**. 4 days of powerful
WORSHIP, SMALL GROUPS, WORKSHOPS, and FUN!

\$300/participant (+ \$20 if 18 years old). Note: FPC is paying
\$200/participant, making it only \$100 for you!

Registration deadline: March 1

Registration link:

<https://forms.gle/qGLhNHdDy7u6XfeJA>

Payment link: eokpresbytery.org (click Give Now)

Conference information: presbyterianyouthtriennium.org



IN MEMORIUM

Beverly Perkins

Joined First Presbyterian Church
October 20, 1968
Entered the Church Triumphant
January 3, 2025

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

Prayer List

Health

Dorothy Akin
Ali Aresco
Betty Bays
Rita Brueininger
Levi Hunt (Heath)
Margie Keener
Margy Knox
Dorothy Kraemer
Elodie Reavis (Reavis)
Margaret & Larry
Redburn
Heather Rine (Seals)
Bill & Shirley Tearney
Larrie Dawn Vaverka
Lynda Williams

Military

Dan Brooks
Casey Campbell
Justin Fowler
Matt Krehbiel
Miles Smith
Bryn Williams

First Friday Peace Jam March 7



6 PM Potluck Supper, 7-8:30 PM Music Jam

This is for all ages – invite friends, bring the kids, and come and go as you like. We provide maracas, triangles, djembe, tambourines, and a keyboard for anyone to play. Bring a little food to share, then play, sing, or just listen and tap your feet! You'll meet some wonderful musicians from the community, too!

Questions? Jim Beckstrom: james@beckstromgroup.com

Names in italics indicate those with acute needs.
Plain text indicates chronic/ongoing needs.

Session Summaries from December, January, and February

December:

- Session approved a request from Kim Leffingwell to use the Fellowship Hall for a parents' dinner while children are at the annual "Night to Shine" event on February 7th.
- Session approved a request from a women's parking lot exercise group to use our music room when the weather is inclement. Amy Hardin and Lisa McGaw will oversee its use.
- Several bequests and gifts were received and designated to specific projects, From Strength To Strength projects, or endowments.
- Session committed to a balanced budget for 2025 using funds from budget equity of previous years (if any remains after balancing 2024) and/or the Texas Presbyterian Foundation mutual funds, once final annual giving numbers were received in January.
- Session addressed concerns about the music program and staffing.

January:

- Stated Clerk and Treasurer each elected, and committee assignments were approved
- Gary and Angie Byte were received as new members upon affirmation of faith.
- Session approved placement of the Team Neurodiversity Intergenerational "Liturgical Library" of resources in the Narthex
- Session approved Communion dates and home communion by deacons for 2025 and Minutes for Mission for the four Special Offerings
- Session approved an organ repair contract with a timeline for completion and a five-year warranty on the work.
- Session approved changing the dates of all Stated Session Meetings to the third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. for the calendar year 2025.

February:

- Ratified two electronic votes – to allow Reverend Jan Dus to collect donations at Seasoned Adults meeting and to allow the Cantamus Choir and Concert Chorale of OSU to give a concert in the Sanctuary on April 19 and rehearse for two afternoons prior to the event.
- Session authorized Diane to reach out to Wishes for Water, an OSU nonprofit, to accept their request to speak in a Sunday School class or at another group meeting on their well-digging mission in Zimbabwe.
- Tim Schlais agreed to be the Session liaison to Trustees.
- Session approved a request from Worship and Music to put out a donation basket at all Soli Deo Gloria events in 2025 to be deposited in the Joy Smith Dedicated Account.
- Session also approved a request from Worship and Music to offer wine as an option at Communion.
- CPR and AED training will be offered on February 22 and March 6.
- Session approved collecting "Diapers and Depends" for a Presbytery mission project.
- Session approved advertising Stillwater Cares Caring for Kids meeting on March 13 from 9-10:30 a.m. at Sunnybrook Christian Church.

The next Stated Session Meeting will be March 18 at 5:30 pm in the Multipurpose Room.

Scouting America

- Troop 820** has recently attended our council's Klondike Derby at Williams Scout Reservation near Fairview. In preparation for this, the scouts built two carts which were used to travel between stations where they competed in scout skill demonstrations. We also held Order of the Arrow elections this month where three more scouts were elected into the OA. Upon completing their Ordeal, they will be members of the OA bringing our number of members to 13. Our upcoming activities include a shakedown hike to prepare for our Ouachita Trek which will take place in the Buffalo River area of Arkansas. We will have two crews backpacking this year. One crew will consist of our Philmont scouts and adults and the other will be the remainder of the troop. This activity is important for troop cohesion as scouts practice skills they have learned and overcome challenges as a team. Other future activities include climbing and wilderness survival at Will Rogers, a trip to Black Mesa, summer camp at Kerr Scout Ranch at Slippery Falls, and service work at the Special Olympics summer games. For those that don't know, Cimarron Council merged with Last Frontier last month and we are now part of that council.
- Troop 888** has had a hectic schedule of events and activities recently. In December, six scouts went to the OA Winter Encampment. We did cold weather camping and took part in a Spam cooking challenge. We also had a Christmas lock-in. We went to the community band concert, made scarves for those in need, and did the camping Merit Badge. In January, 11 scouts took a trip to the aquarium. Everyone learned a lot and had lots of fun! In February, there was a Congregational Dinner. We prepared food, set up tables and chairs, and provided baked goods. Later in February, seven scouts camped at Stapley and did orienteering around Boomer Lake. We had lots of fun, and after, we all got drinks from Sonic to celebrate our hard work. If you would like to keep up with Troop 888's scouting journey, feel free to visit our Facebook page: BSA Troop 888 Stillwater OK. If you know a girl aged 11-17 years old who is interested in joining us, please contact our Scoutmaster Melissa Huber at troop888gbsa@gmail.com.



First Presbyterian Church
524 S. Duncan St.
Stillwater, OK 74074
405-372-5580
www.stillwaterfpc.org

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Join us at First Presbyterian

Sunday Schedule

9:45 am Sunday School

11:00 am Worship

Midweek Prayer

Thursdays 12:00pm via Zoom

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2024

THE AMBASSADOR



Soli Deo Gloria

Rebecca Groom te Velde Organ & Harpsichord Recital



Assisted by
Noah Pool, Flautist

Sunday, March 23, 2025
3:00 p.m.
in the Sanctuary



Everyone is invited to this free hour-long concert! Rebecca te Velde is Organist/Director of Music Emerita of FPC Stillwater; Noah Pool is Adjunct Instructor of Flute at Oklahoma State University and an FPC Choral Scholar. This recital will feature solo organ music (including hymn tune settings by Becky and by her father, Lester H. Groom), music for flute and organ, flute and harpsichord, and solo harpsichord.

Soli Deo Gloria ("To God Alone Be the Glory") concerts are funded through the Joy Smith Endowment and donations will be accepted at the recital. A reception will follow in the Hospitality Area.