

THE AMBASSADOR

A publication of First Presbyterian Church of Stillwater

THIS SUNDAY 9:30 - 11:00 a.m.

*Please join us for a
Reception honoring*

Sharon Bennett

Pastoral Care Associate

**Sunday, May 11, 2025
beginning at 9:30 a.m.
in the Hospitality Area**



Sharon Bennett, Pastoral Care Associate, has resigned her position, effective May 29, 2025. She will take a break this summer, then return to the "regular member" rhythms of church life here in the fall.

The Personnel Committee will host a reception honoring Sharon and her service before worship this Sunday, May 11, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in the Hospitality Area, to provide a specific opportunity for people to show their appreciation. Brunch-like refreshments will be provided, as well as a basket for cards/notes to Sharon.

Summer Sips

Join us at 9:45 a.m. in the Hospitality Area each Sunday in June for coffee, lemonade, snacks, and fellowship before worship at 11:00 a.m. Connect with old friends and make new ones over coffee and conversation.

~hosted by the Adult Ministry Committee

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An Option for Contributions to From Strength To Strength

If you would prefer to have your From Strength to Strength gifts sent to FPC through a monthly bank account draft, we have now created that process. Currently, the campaign drafts occur on the 5th of each month. In order to initiate the process for you, the FPC Finance Office will need an email or letter stating the amount you want drafted on the 5th of each month along with your bank routing number and account number. It may be best to provide those numbers in person, rather than via email.

Contact Cathy Fairbanks: cathy.fairbanks@stillwaterfpc.org or Rachel Hearn: rachel.hearn@stillwaterfpc.org to take advantage of this option or for more information.



Opportunities to End Gun Violence with Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

By Danielle Shreve

One of the subjects the Faith and Fellowship Adult Sunday School class studied a year ago was gun violence. The class spent 5 to 6 Sundays studying The Presbyterian Outlook (vol. 205, no. 6, June 2023) magazine feature titled Gun Violence: How people of faith can stop this uniquely American epidemic. (A similar Outlook issue is on the shelves this month – “Nonviolence: Faith-based strategies for justice and peace”.)

Within last summer’s adult study, we learned about Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (PPF). This is a non-profit organization dedicated to uniting Presbyterians committed to nonviolence. Through virtual and in-person programming, PPF facilitates connections among members who share a vision of a transformed world characterized by peace and justice. Embracing a message of hope and reconciliation, PPF works to inspire collective action towards a future where these ideals prevail. More information, including information on the working groups within the PPF, may be found at presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence-prevention.

From the Gun Violence Prevention group, we have learned that every day children, people struggling with mental health, or those in conflict with one another are injured or killed because unwanted guns were available. We have safer communities when weapons are not within reach.

One of their programs that caught our attention was Guns to Gardens Action Circles. Two FPC members, Ann Houston and Danielle Shreve have participated in Guns to Gardens Action Circles this year. An Action Circle prepares people and congregations to discern how to invite your congregation into this ministry, how to properly dismantle a gun, how to promote your event, and how to offer pastoral care to those who bring guns to be dismantled for whatever reason. (Registration to become involved in Action Circle training can be found at presbypeaceprogram.org.)

An in-person training is coming up with the James Atwood Institute for Congregational Courage September 24-27, 2025 at the Massanetta Springs Camp & Conference Center in Harrisonburg, VA. The James Atwood Institute for Congregational Courage is an ecumenical project of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship to equip clergy and lay leaders for gun violence prevention education and action with their congregations. If your Christian faith calls you to help prevent gun violence, please register for the training to gain practical skills, courage and friends for the ministry of GVP with other individuals and congregations.

Session Updates from April 15 and May 4

The Session met on **April 15th, 2025**, a stated meeting. The meeting began with small group discussions of our Growth and Sustainability Report from 2023. Elders reviewed the goals from that time, noted the items that had been achieved, items that were new to them vs. not apparent in our common life any longer, and discussed issues highlighted there but not addressed.

The following requests from Trustees were discussed and approved:

1. **Fellowship Hall Video Renovation.** The existing screens and the operating system are outdated. New signage display screens with an easier to use and update operating system can be purchased and installed for about \$23,500 (this includes a contingency fee to cover and increases due to the pending tariffs). The request is for up to \$25,000 to cover any potential cost adjustments. If purchase can be done prior to tariff/cost adjustments then it is likely that the project may be completed at a lower cost to FPC. After a brief discussion, Ed Arquitt called the question. Rusty Rex seconded the motion. Session agreed to vote immediately. **The request from the committee was approved.**
2. **Landscape Improvements to the South Sanctuary Grounds.** It is proposed to remove the existing plants and shrubs to be replaced with sod. This will allow scaffolding to be set up and used while the tuck point masonry repair is completed in the next few years. After completion of the masonry repair, the area will be evaluated again to see if the grass sod will remain or further landscaping will be done. **The request from the committee was approved.** The two projects will be completed with Capital Campaign funds and volunteer labor as possible.

Old Business:

The shower ministry, if implemented, will result in an overall insurance adjustment of roughly \$500/premium per year. There are no county health requirements that we have not already met. The plan currently is to begin the ministry in June if volunteers are available.

New Business:

Presbytery Meeting, May 13 at First Presbyterian, Stillwater. Session approved hosting the event. Presbytery will collect money for lunch, and we will have it catered.

Session also met after worship in a Called Meeting on **May 4, 2025** to discuss the financial situation for 2026 and to review a recommendation from the Trustees' review of bids for Presbyterian Preschool improvements.

Trustees recommended accepting a bid from Brett McKee which includes the following work:

Cabinets, countertops, etc., in all rooms	67,381.05
Renovation of restroom/add training toilet	19,897.93
Rerouting water lines away from north wall	2,189.58
Total	89,468.56

Work would begin after May 21 with a completion date of July 21, 2025. We will pay for the rerouting of the water lines from the FPC dedicated account for Trustees use, #8750. The preschool will contribute \$30,000 from their COVID-funding. The remaining amount of \$57,278.98 is requested from Capital Campaign funding. **The bid was accepted and project/funding was approved.**



Growing Family Baskets

This spring the FPC Board of Deacons welcomed six new children to God's family, four to parents whose children attend the Presbyterian Preschool, and two for the grandchildren of church members. New parents receive gift baskets of crocheted or knit blankets, flannel blankets, a "Splash!" newsletter subscription for parents, hand-carved name plaque with child's name and date of birth, onesies, cradle cross, framed poem by Belinda Bruner, burp cloths, and items from the Fair Trade Store. A big thank you to Deacon Holly Chermack for assembling and delivering the baskets!

Deacon's Corner

Prayer List

Health

Dorothy Akin
 Ali Aresco
 Betty Bays
 Rita Brueininger
Angie Byte
 Pat Henderson (Cole)
Gary Hollis (Waugh)
 Levi Hunt (Heath)
 Margie Keener
 Margy Knox
 Dorothy Kraemer
 Elodie Reavis (Reavis)
 Margaret & Larry Redburn

Heather Rine (Seals)
 Connie Stiegler
 Bill Tearney
 Lynda Williams

Military

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

Names in italics indicate those with acute needs.
 Plain text indicates chronic/ongoing needs.
 Names in parentheses indicate connection to FPC.

Adult Ministry

May Seasoned Adults

"How Do You Practice Being Spiritual?"

Monday, May 19th in Fellowship Hall

Dinner @ 6:00 p.m., program begins @ 6:30 p.m.

Reservations are due Friday, May 16th (\$10/person, if you are able to pay.)

Join the Rev. Susan Ross for a Seasoned Adults program on spirituality. This program will involve an exploration of a variety of spiritual practices, including practices you may not have been exposed to. Rev. Ross will also lead a conversation around the following questions: What makes something a spiritual practice? And can you just make one up?



Adult Sunday School

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

Faith & Fellowship: this class will continue to meet throughout the summer. All are welcome to join them each Sunday in the Multipurpose Room!

Feasting on the Word will take a break for the summer and start back in late August.

April Seasoned Adults Wrap-up

April's Seasoned Adults program with Dr. Brett Carver was a big success! Dr. Carver gave an engaging presentation on ancient forms of wheat and how those strains inform modern wheat breeds. To see some of these varieties 'in action', take a look on the south side of the utility box in the Butterfly Garden. There are several (labeled) varieties of wheat growing there.

Children's & Youth Ministry

SpiritLink Room Highlight:

Modern Magi is where we explore Bible stories through science, math, and geography. In Modern Magi, you'll find children connecting with scripture by doing things like science experiments or using the giant world map on the wall.



Children's Ministry Dates to Note

- May 11 – Music Sunday at 9:45am - all classes in the Worship Center; SpiritLink Singers will sing during 11:00am worship
- May 18 - last day of Children's Sunday school until August - one combined class

PRESBYTERIAN • YOUTH • GROUP



- PYG is taking a break for the rest of May.
- Rising 6th graders are welcome to join any and all PYG events this summer! We are excited to welcome you to Presbyterian Youth Group! A summer PYG calendar will be mailed out soon and events will begin in June.

Congratulations

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES!



Vivyanne Bobo

Vivyanne Bobo has attended FPC for 10 years. Her favorite memories at FPC revolve around Presbyterian Youth Group (PYG). She says it's a blast and always so beneficial. Thanks to FPC, Vivy says she's learned so many incredible things about God and herself. At Stillwater High School, Vivy sings in the choir and is involved in theater. Her future plans are to attend the University of Central Oklahoma and major in Music Education.



Sloan Franklin

Sloan Franklin has attended FPC for almost two years. Her favorite memories are the lock-ins (including the cooking challenge at the last one) and the singing competition at the retreat. She will always remember how welcoming and loving everyone was from the beginning. Sloan works at Stillwater Martial Arts, teaching children's classes in addition to taking a women's self-defense/jujitsu class. Sloan's future plans right now include continuing to work at Stillwater Martial Arts, growing and learning the discipline and life skills she'll need as she gets older.

Jack Riley

Jack Riley has attended FPC for 18 years. His favorite memories at FPC are of everything at PYG, especially the lock-ins. He'll never forget the never ending warmth and acceptance he's received from the people of FPC. Jack graduated early and spends his time working, hanging out with friends, and playing the guitar. He plans to attend Oklahoma State University, focusing on either Natural Resource and Environmental Management or Music Industry.



Children's & Youth Ministry News

Farewell to Ministry Assistants

With the end of the spring semester we say thank you to two of our ministry assistants – Haley Ankrom, one of our Youth Ministry Assistants who's served in that role since 2020, and Bekah Bowman, our Children's Ministry Assistant since 2022. Haley and Bekah have made a tremendous impact on children's and youth ministry at FPC and we are grateful for the way they've shared their gifts here. We send Bekah off with our best wishes as she goes on to graduate school at Keele University in the UK. We are glad that we don't have to say goodbye to Haley as she will stay in Stillwater and at FPC while her husband Elijah continues on as our other Youth Ministry Assistant.

Thank you, Haley and Bekah!



Summer Camp for 3rd-12th graders! Oklahoma week at Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center is July 6-11

Ferncliff is a Presbyterian camp and conference center located in Little Rock, AR. Oklahoma presbyteries are planning on the week of July 6-11 to send Oklahoma campers to Ferncliff. We hope to get a great group of FPC children and youth to join other Oklahoma campers at Ferncliff. Use the <http://www.ferncliff.org/Oklahoma> link to register and get the discounted price of \$479/camper (thanks to the Oklahoma presbyteries for offering this discounted price!). If you need to go a week other than July 6-11, contact Jenna for a discount code to get the \$479 price.

Use this additional discount code to get \$100 off for a week of camp (use this code and save!):
fpcstillwater - \$100 off from FPC Stillwater

NOT ALL HEROES
WEAR CAPES

HEROES UNITE

HELP US HONOR OUR CHILDREN'S &
YOUTH MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS!

YOU'RE INVITED TO A...

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION RECEPTION

SUN. MAY 18TH • 12:00PM
FPC HOSPITALITY AREA

All are invited to celebrate our children's and youth ministry volunteers at a reception following worship on Sunday, May 18th in the Hospitality Area. These volunteers have made quite an impact this year and we want to celebrate the time and love they've shared with our children and youth.

Scouting America

- In April, **Troop 820** attended camp at Will Rogers where we worked on rank requirements for our new scouts, the Pioneering merit badge, and performed flag retirements from our collection barrels at City Hall and the Court House. Many of our older scouts that will be attending Philmont this summer took a Wilderness First Aid course which will train them how to treat severe injuries in locations where medical help is not readily available. We performed service work for Friends of the Stillwater Library with their book sale and worked on the USDA pollinator beds. For May we are travelling to Black Mesa for camp, volunteering at the Special Olympics Summer Games, and preparing for summer camp in June.
- It has been a busy and rainy April for **Troop 888**. The Scouts went camping at Will Rogers Scout Reservation and they hiked 4 miles in the Keystone Ancient Forest. They worked on map skills and had a fun weekend despite the rain. Two Scouts from the Troop also attended the OA Campout. The Troop also volunteered to help set up the Friends of the Library Book Sale at the Community Center. They each got to take home a book for helping out. 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 Elisabeth Szabo at troop888gbsa@gmail.com.



FAIR TRADE STORE

The Fair Trade Store is stocked with fun gifts for your graduate, favorite teacher, Mom and Dad. Come in and check out all of your options. For the traveler, there are luggage tags, passport covers, and cute shopping bags. There is a nice selection of dopp kits and cosmetic bags in different sizes and fabrics. As always, you will find lots of cute zip purses made of felted wool or Guatemalan fabric to hold money, a gift card, jewelry, or other small treasures. Chocolate is stocked in dark and milk, both plain and flavored with raspberries, sea salt, toffee, coconut, almonds, and orange. The store is open every Sunday morning from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and is located right by the bathroom, sensory room, and name tags. Stop by for a visit! And don't forget--if you can't make a decision, we also sell gift certificates and are open by appointment!

~Julie Bills, volunteer store manager

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Join us at First Presbyterian

Sunday Schedule

9:45 am Sunday School

(last day for children & youth classes is May 18)

11:00 am Worship

Sensory Spaces available for worship:
Sensory Room (south floor by restrooms)
Teen/Adult Sensory Space opens May 25
in the Worship Center

MAY 2025

THE AMBASSADOR

Pentecost Offering

As one of the four Special Offerings of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Pentecost Offering unites us in a church-wide effort to support young people in Christ and inspire them to share their faith, ideas, and unique gifts with the church and the world.

Each year on Pentecost Sunday, we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birthday of the church. The Holy Spirit remains with us still, connecting us with the church of the past, continuing to inspire the church of today, and pointing us to the church of the future. This celebration is marked by receiving the Pentecost Offering which nurtures the faith of those who are the church to come – children, youth, and young adults. Psalm 71 testifies that a foundation of faith established during childhood helps ensure lifelong faith and service. The patterns and lessons established during these formative years continue to bear fruit throughout a person's life. By giving to the Pentecost Offering, our congregation participates in helping children, youth, and young adults grow up to proclaim with the Psalmist, "O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds."

60% of the offering will go to the Presbyterian Mission Agency to support programs for children, youth, and young adults throughout our nation and the world and 40% of the Pentecost Offering remains in our local community to support children and youth in Stillwater.

We are so lucky to have strong youth and children's programs in our denomination and in this congregation; and this is an opportunity for us to support those ministries with our dollars. You can give with a check in one of the offering plates, or you can mail your donation to the church (put Pentecost Offering in the memo line). And you can always give electronically at the church website. We will officially receive the Pentecost Offering on June 1 and June 8, but you may give at any time over the next two months. Thank you for giving generously.

