

VOL. 66 NUMBER 8 • OCTOBER 2024

THE AMBASSADOR

A publication of First Presbyterian Church of Stillwater



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF STILLWATER

From Strength To Strength

Sunday, November 3rd is
Celebration Sunday and You're Invited!

Join us for worship at 11:00 am as we celebrate All Saints' Day and remember those who have now joined the Church Triumphant.

Following worship, come over to Fellowship Hall for a festive Celebration Luncheon as we remember our past, celebrate our present, and look ahead to what we might become as individuals and a community of faith. As we enjoy a catered buffet lunch, we'll celebrate our saints with a slideshow put together by the History Committee with highlights from the previous century of FPC's presence here in our Sanctuary and this corner of Stillwater.

All are invited and no RSVP is required. Come join us as we celebrate our past, present, and what we might become as we move From Strength To Strength.



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The Advent Ambassador deadline is Wednesday, November 20, at 5:00pm.
Articles may be submitted to fpchurch1889@stillwaterfpc.org.

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Ministry Impact Sunday - October 13



We gathered for worship in Fellowship Hall to celebrate the myriad ways this church impacts the lives of this congregation and the broader community, both secular and sacred. We celebrated ministries such as the Saturday Community Brunch and the Life Skills Classes offered at Mission of Hope along with our church leadership and connections within the wider PC(USA). There was also a Painted Pumpkin Auction featuring pumpkins decorated by our children and youth, the proceeds of which are their campaign contribution and will be presented by them in worship on November 10th. The banners will remain on display in the Sanctuary for the next few weeks and you're invited to take a moment before or after worship on Sunday to read through all the different ways we minister to and with one another and this community.



SEPTEMBER 2024 INCOME/EXPENSE REPORT

	SEPTEMBER	YEAR TO DATE	% OF BUDGET
Giving	\$34,925	\$457,935	73%
Other Income	\$4,620	\$58,130	87%
Total Income	\$39,545	\$516,064	75%
Expenditures	\$83,634	\$556,018	78%
Net	\$(44,089)	\$(39,954)	--

DEC

SAVE THE DATE

8

OFFICER TRAINING



From Strength To Strength

As we continue to engage in this season of discernment and growth, our From Strength To Strength leaders and volunteers have offered our members and friends of the congregation many and creative ways of connecting with the concept of seeking what God wants to do through us and what God might want us to do for our present and future ministries. Together, we have had the privilege of meeting in groups, talking with each other, praying for God's guidance, and thoughtfully reflecting on many of the spiritual components of Christian stewardship. Please feel free to engage the campaign co-chairs, Tim & Becky Schlais and Ava & Lynn Osborn, or with Diane if you have questions regarding or inspired by any of the From Strength To Strength materials. We hope to participate with you in these upcoming events:

- **October 27** -- 21-day devotional distributed and available in the building
- **November 3** -- Celebration Sunday (see front cover)
- **November 10** -- Our Youth and Children present their campaign gift
-- A Call to Prayer for One Another
Special prayer tokens featuring all our members and friends will be distributed in worship AND our labyrinth prayer mat will be available in the worship center all week. (If you can, please remove your shoes when you walk and pray; come by anytime!)
- **November 17** -- Commitment Sunday. Everyone choosing to make a commitment to the special, three-year, above and beyond effort to support FPC ministries through the From Strength To Strength is asked to return their cards on this day. Even if some of you have made a commitment already, there will be an opportunity for all of us to bring forward a reminder of our commitments, both those between us and God and those of more tangible resources of which we desire to make the church aware.
- **December 8** - Campaign fundraising total announced in worship.

Not Just the Usual Pledge Card(s)!

Confused about the relationship of our From Strength To Strength capital campaign to our Annual Stewardship Campaign? We thank you for your engagement and generosity, and invite you to read on!

Because of the timing of our From Strength To Strength campaign, our annual stewardship emphasis to fund the next calendar year's operating budget has been pushed farther into the future. This is allowing us to focus on just one at a time.

As the From Strength To Strength materials suggest, we are asking our members and friends to engage together right now in a season of spiritual and fiscal discernment and to consider an above-and-beyond gift (which could begin this December or/and continue over the next three years).

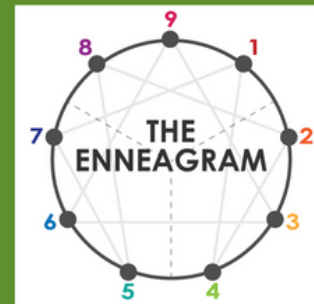
After this campaign season is completed, we will be asked to make our commitments to the day-today ministries of the First Presbyterian Church operating budget through our 2025 pledges. Making special improvements AND funding regular operations are BOTH necessary for God's work to continue through FPC - Stillwater.

Once again, thank you for being a part of the life, work, and witness of FPC!

Save the Date!

Enneagram Journey Check-In and
New Learnings

Coming in winter 2025



Facilitated by Jenna Campbell and Sharon Bennett

Scout Troop 888 Update

- **Scouts BSA Troop 888 by Ilaria Minghetti, Troop Historian.** Troop 888 has had an amazing time this past month. We participated in a parade, camped at a unique Scout ranch, and three of our scouts began a new journey! First, our members marched in the Cherokee Strip Parade in Perry. The annual parade celebrates the founding of the community in 1893. We handed out recruitment fliers and enjoyed the entertainment and exhibitions. Later in the month, we camped at Kerr Scout Ranch at Slippery Falls. We visited the Travertine Nature Center and had lots of fun jumping off the rocks at Little Niagra into the freezing cold water. Finally, three of our scouts were elected by their peers to the Order of the Arrow, which is Scouting's National Honor Society. 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.



The Giving Tree

This year we're changing up the timeline a little to prepare for the Giving Tree. We hope that this will be easier for families to participate, before the busyness of Christmas plans and events of December. Gift cards will be in \$35 increments to Wal-Mart. The Giving Tree will be in the Narthex, and decorated with gift request cards. Please choose a gift request card from the tree, follow the instructions on it, and return the request card along with your purchased Wal-Mart card to the church. Notice that each gift request card also has an attached envelope with a small, blank card. This is for your personal message..." Merry Christmas!", "You are loved.", "You are thought about and prayed for.", etc. **We will be collecting cards after church on Sunday November 10 and 17 with a deadline of November 24.** In this season of Thanksgiving, let us prepare our hearts and minds to be compassionate with, and generous to, those who need that from us. If you have any questions, please contact Jane Hovey or Teresa Ansley: jmhovey@suddenlink.net or tjansley@yahoo.com

Pioneer Pantry

Thanks to your generosity, the Deacons were able to collect \$1,230 in funds to support the Pioneer Pantry. Additionally, over 3 tubs of hygiene items were donated that had been collected during the Tri-Presbytery meeting FPC hosted in June.

Stillwater Public Schools' Pioneer Pantry helps students grades K-12 get the items they need, whether those are hygiene or household products, a haircut, or a coat. Items are provided directly to students, as well as to families, when a need is identified. Thank you for your support of our community through this Deacon ministry!



Behind the Walls: A Trustees' Update

- The cooler weather is making it easier for our HVAC system to heat and cool our spaces. We're still working closely with an engineering company in Tulsa to ensure we recommend to Session very cost-effective options of our HVAC system upgrade to take us into the future.
- If you ever walk or drive north through the alley between Fellowship Hall and the Multipurpose Room, you might have noticed there was an opening in the brick above a door leading out of the MPR that had loose bricks stacked in it. That "hole" used to be a vent for the old version of our HVAC system. It had been closed off by a board behind the vent louvers. For years, the birds loved it and we're certain many generations of hatchlings were raised there. That's all gone now. We had a local contractor use brick we had on hand to fill in the space. Hard to tell where it used to be.
- If any of you are wanting to know more about any of the other issues highlighted in last month's Ambassador, please get in touch with any Trustee and we'll be happy to explain what we're doing or plan to do. There are a lot of "moving parts" and it can be confusing.

Currently serving Trustees: Andrea Arquitt, Jim Beckstrom, Larry Caldwell, William Cole, Dennis Ferrell, and Jim Showalter

Presbyterian Preschool News

Fall is such a beautiful time! Temperatures are finally cooling down. The mums and pumpkins are everywhere. The leaves are beautiful colors (sometimes)!

Our preschool is in full swing at this point. The routines of each classroom are understood. Children are coming to school, playing, learning and having so much fun! Teachers know their kids well by now and they are having so much fun with them. If you ever want to see the hands and feet of Jesus come take a walk through our preschool. I see it everyday as my teachers happily serve the families that bring their children here. I see it in the teachers loving their students like their own every day. Some highlights of the fall semester have been a visit from Stillwater Fire Department and some four-legged furry friends who stopped by including goats and miniature horses.

Last spring, the preschool was awarded a \$5000.00 grant for a new piece of play equipment on the North playground. We are so thankful to Plains Pipeline out of Cushing for the support of schools offering this grant. In order to put the new equipment in, we had to demolish some sidewalk and then after we got the equipment in, we put some new sidewalk back down. This allowed us to keep our bike path for our little ones. The kids are loving our new equipment! Thanks also to William Cole for building our new playground equipment for us and for designing and laying out our new sidewalk. William along with Dennis Ferrell and Jim Showalter laid our new sod and also replaced pavers in the playground. Thank you!



November Seasoned Adults Gathering

Understanding Handel's Messiah - November 18th

Did you know that the Hallelujah Chorus is not the finale of Handel's Messiah? Composed over a period of two weeks, Messiah follows the prophecy and birth of Jesus, then moves to the crucifixion, and ends with Revelations. A man named Charles Jennens wrote the words (libretto) and was so dissatisfied with Handel's musical setting that it eventually ruined their friendship. What? What could be wrong with Messiah, and how could it have become so popular if it were poorly composed? Learn the background of this great collage of songs and see what Handel has done to make it so moving. This program will make hearing and seeing a production of Messiah more joyful, as if that were possible. Music will be experienced through selected outstanding performances on YouTube. Explained by Dr. Belinda Bruner, who has performed in Messiah at least eight times, this program will undoubtedly usher in the Christmas spirit for all.



Dinner is \$10 and you may sign up by responding to the Seasoned Adult's email or calling the church office. The RSVP deadline is 5:00pm on Friday, November 15th. You may pay online, or at the event via check or cash (correct change only). And, as always, you may attend the program only at no cost - please just RSVP so we can make sure to save you a seat!

Questions? Please contact Sharon Bennett: sharon.bennett@stillwaterfpc.org.

Team Neurodiversity

Team Neurodiversity is a group that has formed to expand the inclusivity and understanding of neurodiversity in our church through accommodations and education so that all people together can experience God's support, love, and grace. So, what is neurodiversity? Neurodiversity is a term used to describe the diversity of people's brains. It is built around the idea that there is no "right" way of thinking, allowing for the inclusion of those who experience different cognitive disorders and diagnoses that may be different from the "norm". The term "neurodivergent" describes people whose brain differences affect how they function cognitively. This means that they have different strengths and challenges from people whose brains don't have these differences. Some neurodivergent conditions include autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, Fragile X, sensory processing disorder, and OCD, among others. The term "neurotypical" refers to people who have brains that function in a similar way to most of their peers.

Neurodiversity celebrates the diversity of all brains, neurodivergent and neurotypical alike. Why is it important to learn about neurodiversity? Learning about neurodiversity is important because it promotes inclusion, fosters empathy, improves communication, and encourages better support systems. It also helps individuals understand their own strengths and advocate for themselves when needed. We are excited to move forward and help make changes that will advocate for all! Watch for more to come soon!

Team Neurodiversity: Bekah Bowman, Amy Hardin, Ashley Kirven-Bobier, Judy Ferrell, Erin Lawson, Kim Leffingwell, Margaux Melancon, Rusty Rex, Phyllis Taylor, Jenna Campbell (staff resource)

Children's & Youth Ministry



Nov. 3 @ 11:00 a.m.

Bible Presentation in Worship

Nov. 10 @ 9:45 a.m.

Parent/3rd grader "Exploring My Bible" class



**EXPLORING
MY BIBLE**

Exploring My Bible Class

November 10 at 9:45 - Multipurpose Room

For 3rd graders AND their
parents/grandparents

Please have 3rd graders bring their Bibles
received in worship on Nov. 3rd for this special
class to discover all the tools their Bible has to
help them study God's word.

Children's Sunday School

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

Gathering Time:

- Children are invited to start the Sunday school hour at 9:45am in the Worship Center. We'll gather and sing together before the children go to their classes. 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:

On Location is where we explore Bible stories through storytelling and drama. In this room, the Bible stories come to life with children dressed as Bible characters (or children tell the stories with puppets) as the stories are retold and explored.



Children & Worship

Three-year-olds through
third graders are

invited to Children & Worship each
Sunday in the Westminster Room
following Time with Children in
worship. Children may follow the
banner and meet the volunteers at
the back of the Sanctuary. This age-
appropriate time of worship includes
singing and signing, prayer, and
seeing and hearing the stories of God.
As we respond to God's love, we also
have a time for children to offer their
coins or talents. Parents may pick up
children in the Westminster Room
following worship.

PRESBYTERIAN • YOUTH • GROUP



**Presbyterian
Youth Group**

For ALL 6th-12th graders

Sundays, 5:00-6:30 pm in the Youth Suite.
PYG is a time for connection, fellowship, discipleship,
and living our faith. At PYG, we play, laugh, pray,
study scripture, serve, ask big questions, and grow as
faithful disciples.

Join us at PYG every Sunday night from the end of
October and all of November - 5:00-6:30pm

Youth Sunday School

Sundays in the Youth Suite.

9:45-10:45am

For all 6th-12th graders

Our Sunday school curriculum is intentionally
designed for youth to explore their faith from a
variety of perspectives through their teen years.

Children's & Youth Highlights

All About Pumpkins!

Children and families (Presbyterian Preschool families too!) had a great afternoon at the Oh My Gourd pumpkin patch on October 6th. Among the fall fun, they painted pumpkins that were then auctioned off on October 13th after worship. The generosity their creativity inspired all went to support the From Strength to Strength campaign. Thanks to all who donated so generously to the Painted Pumpkin Auction. We were overwhelmed by the response...well over \$800 was raised! The children and youth will be presenting the proceeds from the auction to the campaign in worship on November 10th!



Interfaith Youth Tour and Youth Connect

Our Youth had a busy September! On Sept. 22, they participated in Oklahoma Faith Network's Interfaith Youth Tour in OKC. They visited a Jewish synagogue, Islamic mosque, and a Hindu temple. Ask our youth about the increased understanding and appreciation they gained through this experience!

Then, on Sept. 28, they gathered with 30 other Presbyterian youth and adults from across the state for a day of service and fellowship. They served at the Urban Mission, bagging up groceries for their clients and learning more about their ministries. Then they played games, did energizers, and had a mission reflection at First Presbyterian Church in OKC. It was a great day of connecting with youth across the state! We ended the day with some connection and group building with our own PYG group - mini golf and ice cream in Bricktown!

October Session Highlights

At its stated meeting on October 8, our Session approved minutes of recent Congregational and Session meetings in addition to receiving correspondence highlighting the stalwart and longstanding financial support of our Presbyterian Women's organization, the Treasurer's report (featuring a September shortfall of \$44,000 connected to some quarterly larger expenses and lower monthly income), and a written update from our Trustees. Also, per their representative's report, Session approved a request from the Deacons to request donations again this year for our Stillwater "Giving Tree" in support of the clients of The Saville Center, our local DHS, Mission of Hope, Wings of Hope, and Payne County Youth Services. In coordination with other activities, the Session asked that this program begin the first Monday in November.

Reports of the Session Committees and Special Projects began with discussion about some confusion in the congregation regarding the From Strength To Strength capital campaign and the annual campaign. Announcements will be made the next two Sundays to try to clarify that the capital campaign is simply our current focus and that it does not eliminate the need for annual giving. The campaign messaging has attempted to convey that any generous gifts to From Strength To Strength would be above and beyond annual giving; the intention had been to allow folks to focus separately on each opportunity for giving. The evening also included an update about the leadership of our children and youth in participation in From Strength To Strength, including their "Painted Pumpkin Auction" to raise money they can contribute to it, which was celebrated by the council.

Committees with written reports which did not require action were invited to provide any verbal updates necessary.

The Stewardship and Finance committee reported that our initial draft budget, including projected giving for 2025 at 2024 levels and projected expenses from and for all committees, boards, and building expenses, featured a \$140,000 shortfall and that they would coordinate efforts to evaluate all areas of expense and produce another draft for our next month's meeting. The 2025 PC(USA) per capita contribution amounts are now also known and will be included.

The Nominating committee had been apprised of a resignation from the Deacon Board and reported that they had found a person willing to fill that unexpired term. The Communications and Mission committee presented and Session accepted by common consent the September membership report. The Director of Music/Organist search committee reported that four applications of interest/potential were received and the group will be able to move ahead with three possibilities.

The report from the Personnel Committee included two action items for the council: (1) Session approved closing the Associate Pastor position and (2) a revised job description for our Finance Assistant as a part time position, its pay rate, and an advertisement for the position to begin circulating this month were also approved.

Our Neurodiversity Team updated the body about their efforts to advance our FPC welcome of and efforts to increase our understanding of and ministry with neurodiverse members and friends in our community. The next step toward being more neuro-affirming at FPC would be two-fold: increasing our understanding throughout the congregation and providing space that is more low-sensory to be able -- actually and in-person -- to welcome more people. Session approved relocating the current library to the second floor room 201, rehoming any unneeded items including furniture and books, and adjusting that space on the first floor to accommodate low-sensory needs on Sundays. The team will continue to provide monthly reports to Session as our efforts proceed.

The October Ambassador
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Worship at First Presbyterian

Sunday Worship Schedule

9:45 am Sunday School for all ages
11:00 am Worship Service
(in-person, on KSPI, on Youtube Live)

Midweek Prayer

Thursdays 12:00pm via Zoom

THE AMBASSADOR

OCTOBER 2024

Sunday, November 17 – 3:00 pm
First Presbyterian Church of Stillwater, OK
Fellowship Hall

Piano Studio Recital

The students of
Heather & Tom Lanners

OSU Greenwood School of Music
Piano Faculty

Soli Deo Gloria

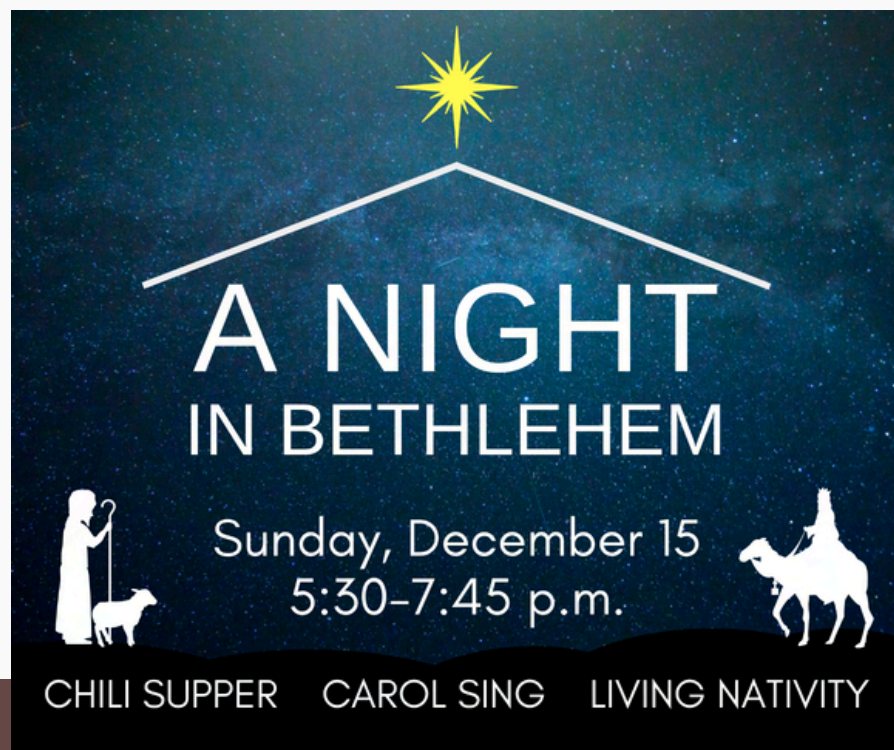
Free Admission; a Freewill Offering goes to FPC's Joy Smith Music Endowment
to support Soli Deo Gloria music events

You're invited to the fall Soli Deo Gloria concert featuring piano students from the studios of Professors Heather and Tom Lanners of the OSU Greenwood School of Music. All are welcome, so bring a friend or two along for an afternoon of beautiful piano music!

THE AMBASSADOR

Night in Bethlehem – Returning Indoors! Save the Date!

Join us in the Fellowship Hall for a Chili Supper and Carol Sing as children enjoy a visit from the nativity characters, a craft, and an opportunity to take pictures at a photo booth with the nativity characters. Then everyone will head over to the front lawn to view the Living Nativity. Look for more details in the Advent Ambassador and your First Things weekly email.

A poster for the event 'A Night in Bethlehem'. It features a dark blue background with a white outline of a house roof. Above the roof is a bright yellow star. The title 'A NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM' is written in large white capital letters. Below the title, the date and time 'Sunday, December 15 5:30-7:45 p.m.' are written in white. On the left, there is a white silhouette of a shepherd with a staff and a sheep. On the right, there is a white silhouette of a person riding a camel. At the bottom, the text 'CHILI SUPPER CAROL SING LIVING NATIVITY' is written in white capital letters.

A NIGHT
IN BETHLEHEM

Sunday, December 15
5:30-7:45 p.m.

CHILI SUPPER CAROL SING LIVING NATIVITY