

THE AMBASSADOR

A publication of First Presbyterian Church of Stillwater



Join us at 9:30 a.m. in the Hospitality Area each Sunday in June for lemonade, snacks, and fellowship before worship at 11:00 a.m. Connect with old friends and make new ones over refreshments and conversation. This event is sponsored by our Adult Ministry Committee in conjunction with (and appreciation for!) our regular Sunday coffee by the Deacons.

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Shift in Church Office Hours June 23 - July 3

For the weeks of June 23rd and June 30th, the Church Office will be open reduced hours, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. each weekday. And the Church Office will be closed on Friday, July 4th.

Church Administrator, Magdalena Vinson, will be out of the office Saturday, June 21st through Sunday, July 6th. She will be back in the office on Monday, July 7th.

Summer Nursery Location Change

Due to the renovations taking place in the Preschool this summer, our worship nursery space has moved to the former presbytery office space, Room 101 down the south hall of the first floor, past the Fair Trade Store and the restrooms. The nursery space, for ages 0-4, will be staffed each Sunday morning from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. There are changing tables in both first floor restrooms if parents prefer that option. Both playgrounds will also be closed during these renovations.

Improving Our Preparedness

Throughout the summer, we will be reviewing and rehearsing best practices for emergency situations that might occur at our facility by participating in drills and making announcements in worship. We hope everyone will see both the practicality and potential fun in improving our preparedness!

Dancing Turtle and Block 34 Grand Opening

Now in its 3rd year, Dancing Turtle Arts Festival will be returning to Stillwater July 25-27, 2025! These dates coincide with the grand opening of Block 34 in downtown Stillwater, just east of the Community Center, and this new performance and green space will be the hub of Dancing Turtle activities and events. All ages are invited to this free weekend of arts, music, performances, and more, including a Multi-Faith Sunday Brunch.

For more information on Dancing Turtle, please visit dancingturtle.org. For details on Block 34, visit the City of Stillwater's [website](#). Or strike up a conversation with Jim Beckstrom, Dancing Turtle Executive Director and Chair of the Block 34 Architecture & Development Committee.



Stephen Ministry Changes in Leadership



In this season of endings and beginnings, our Stephen Ministry announces some changes in leadership of our ministry: longtime Stephen Leader Carolyn Caldwell has retired from Stephen Ministry, and Debby Schoenecke has recently completed Stephen Leader Training and was commissioned as a Stephen Leader in worship on Sunday, June 1st. We give thanks to God for both!

Please direct future Stephen Ministry inquiries to Linda Burks (Referrals Coordinator), Kay Stewart or Debby Schoenecke. Carolyn asked that we share the following letter with the congregation as she retires from Stephen Ministry.

Dear FPC friends,

The time has come for me to retire from Stephen Ministry, but I want to thank the congregation for supporting this confidential, one-to-one caring ministry and ask for your prayers and participation in it going forward. In this ministry, one is well-equipped to respond to God's call to love one another.

I have seen first-hand the difference Stephen Ministry can make in the lives of persons experiencing difficult times as well as in the lives of the Stephen Ministers and our congregation. It still amazes me how powerful it is when someone truly listens, is truly present, and embraces another with prayer.

I became a Stephen Minister and Stephen Leader in 1992 at the urging of the Holy Spirit and Barbara Houston. (Both could be very persuasive!) Our ministry was active for a number of years before we paused our ministry. But in 2007, the Holy Spirit was moving again. It worked in the heart of Kay Stewart, who asked me to help her restart Stephen Ministry at FPC. I notice that God keeps using my favorite people to speak to me! It has been my honor and privilege to work with Barbara and Kay as well as Stephen Leaders Pastor Gordon Edwards, Associate Pastor Alex Thornburg, Pastor Leah Hrachovec, Linda Burks, and Linda Good over the years. Now Debby Schoenecke has stepped forward as the Spirit called. Thanks be to God!

Stephen Ministry has given me so much. I am thankful for every Stephen Minister and every Stephen Leader I have had the joy to work with over the years. It has been fulfilling and uplifting work even when difficult. Our spiritual bond continues. Thanks, most of all, to those care receivers who had the courage to share their lives with me and their Stephen Ministers in their most vulnerable times. May God bless you and keep you.

I am grateful. My heart overflows in tears!

Carolyn Caldwell

Thank You from Sharon Bennett

With sincere gratitude, I want to thank everyone for the lovely cards, letters, emails and texts. I really enjoyed my time on staff serving the congregation and I look forward to serving in other ways in the near future.

Blessings, Sharon

Adult Ministry

June Seasoned Adults

This event may be canceled due to low registration: a decision will be made on Friday, June 13th. Please watch your email for updates.

"Solar Under the Sun Update"

Monday, June 16th in Fellowship Hall
Dinner @ 6:00 p.m., program begins @ 6:30 p.m.
Reservations are due Friday, June 13th
(\$10/person, if you are able to pay.)
Reply to the Seasoned Adults email or call the Church Office to add your name to the list.

Join us for Seasoned Adults on Monday, June 16, 2025. Tim Schlais and Dennis Ferrell, both SUTS volunteers, will be speaking about this program that works to bring electricity and eliminate energy poverty in rural communities in the Caribbean, Africa, and parts of eastern Europe via solar power systems. To date, Solar Under the Sun has installed over 170 projects in 7 countries and across three continents. For more information, please visit solarunderthesun.org.

Adult Sunday School

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

The Multipurpose Room class began a new book study on Sunday, June 1. The book is *Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets: 5 Questions to Help You Determine Your Next Move*. The author is Andy Stanley, one of the founders of North Point Community Church in Alpharetta, Georgia, which has grown to be the worldwide Christian organization, North Point Ministries. Stanley believes that "good questions lead to better decisions. And your decisions determine the direction and quality of your life – they create the story of your life. And while nobody plans to complicate their life with bad decisions, far too many people have no plan to make good decisions." Through this book, Stanley hopes to help readers "learn from experience, start integrating questions into every decision they make, and, thus, stop making bad decisions."

Feasting on the Word, which met in the Library, will take a break for the summer and will resume after Labor Day.

Trustee's Updates

- FH HVAC update –the project is near completion. The heat exchanger has been installed but due to supply chain issues, we are waiting for sensors, temperature gauges and variable speed drives to arrive, while we wait to offset the recent rise in seasonal temperatures.
- Preschool renovation – Work began the week of June 9 and is scheduled to complete by July 21; wrapping up in time for the start of school. Priorities include installing a second children's commode, new countertops and more storage and moving water lines away from the north exterior wall to the interior of the rooms to prevent freezing pipes in the winter.
- The southeast landscaping is complete with new sod replacing the previous plants & shrubs resulting in less maintenance and a more visible building with a new, cleaner look.
- The Fellowship Hall Audio/Visual upgrade is almost complete. Three large monitors and two TVs, all ultra-high definition and 4k, were installed, giving us high resolution and bright enough use with full lights. Many thanks to Jim Beckstrom, Alex Greene, and Emily Yost for all their work on this project.



Children's & Youth Ministry

Leader Launch – Save the Date!
Sunday, August 24th – 9:15-10:45 a.m.
in Fellowship Hall

All 2025-2026 children's and youth volunteers are invited to an exciting morning to connect with other volunteers, receive training for the year in specific skills related to neurodiversity, and be inspired by how your role fits into the larger vision and purpose of children's and youth ministry.
 Save the date and join us!



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. 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. For an additional \$100 off from FPC Stillwater, use this code at checkout: fpcstillwater.

Note: There will be no transport to/from Ferncliff provided by the Oklahoma Presbyteries this year. You will need to make your own transportation arrangements for your child(ren).

Children's Ministry Summer Splash!

Join your Children's Ministry Committee for a summer pool party at the Campbell's house on Sunday, July 20th, from 5:00 -7:00 p.m.



The Secret of Contentment

To be the seed and not
 wish to be the flower.
 Or to be the flower and
 not wish to be seed or rain.
 To be the rain and be grateful
 to be the rain. Which
 is to say, to be the self
 and delight in being the self.
 But when I say self, I mean
 to know the self as seed.
 As flower. As rain. When I
 say to know, I mean to
 ever be in wonder.

—Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

Youth Summer Events

youth ministry
SUMMER 2025

JUNE

3	11:30a-12:30p	Taco Tuesday @ Qdoba
10	11:30a-12:30p	Taco Tuesday @ Chipotle
16	11:45a-12:45p	PYG-nic at Couch Park
	12:45-3:30p	Volunteer @ Our Daily Bread
24	7:00-8:00p	Game Night at FPC
29	8:00-10:00p	Dive-In Movie at the Campbell's

JULY

1	11:30a-12:30p	Taco Tuesday @ Fuzzy's
6-11		Summer Camp @ Ferncliff
8	7:00-8:00p	Fun @ Frios
15	11:30a-12:30p	Taco Tuesday @ Thai Loco
22	11:30a-12:30p	Taco Tuesday @ Chipotle
28-31		Presbyterian Youth Triennium (9th - 12th grades)

AUGUST

5	7:00-8:00p	Fun @ Frios
21	7:30-8:30p	Youth Parent Gathering

Save the Date! Sept. 7th - Sunday School resumes & PYG Fall Kickoff

WWW.STILLWATERFPC.ORG/YOUTH



All rising 6th graders through 12th graders are invited to lunch on select Tuesdays this summer. Taco Tuesdays are a great way to connect between travel, camp, and the busyness of summertime. Please bring money for your own meal.

SUNDAY, JUNE 29
8:00-10:00 P.M.

dive-in movie

@ the Campbell's house
3602 W Fountain View Ct

Wear your swimsuit!
Bring a towel and a snack to share!

Stillwater FPC Youth Get Ready to Experience Presbyterian Youth Triennium

Five Stillwater FPC youth (Reese Campbell, Sloan Franklin, Corinne Savage, Cooper Wiley, and Kaylen Wiley) and three adults (Haley and Elijah Ankrom and Jenna Campbell) will join our Oklahoma delegation and thousands of other youth from across the nation (and global delegates from across the world!) at this summer's Presbyterian Youth Triennium in Louisville, KY July 28-31. This national Presbyterian youth gathering, held every three years, includes four days of inspiring worship, deep Bible study, and connection and recreation with youth from all over the country.



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, who will be attending Philmont this summer, took a Wilderness First Aid course that trained them 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. In 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 has lots of fun ideas for summer and your garden. Do you need a new bird house for a back yard tree? Or maybe a butterfly house? There is a large selection of wind chimes in different sizes and materials. How about a rain chain? All summer the store will carry your favorite chocolate, tea, and olive oil. Fair Trade tea is refreshing when cold and iced to help cool you off on those hot summer days. Do you need a last-minute birthday, thank you, hostess, anniversary, or "I think you are wonderful" gift? The store always has something for every occasion. The darling Global Baby books are back in stock if you need a wonderful baby gift. The best part of supporting the store is that not only are you getting cool merchandise, but you are also helping support different artisans from around the world. Open Sundays from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. or by appointment with Julie (jbills2007@hotmail.com)

~Julie Bills, volunteer store manager



Team Neurodiversity Term of the Month - June 2025

TOURETTE SYNDROME

Tourette Syndrome is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects children, adolescents and adults. The condition is characterized by sudden, involuntary movements and/or sounds called tics. Tics can range from mild/inconsequential to moderate and severe, and are disabling in some cases. Tourette Syndrome is one type of Tic Disorder. Tics are the primary symptoms of a group of childhood-onset neurological conditions known collectively as Tic Disorders and individually as Tourette Syndrome (TS), Persistent (Chronic) Motor or Vocal Tic Disorder, and Provisional Tic Disorder. These three Tic Disorders are named based on the types of tics present (motor, vocal/phonic, or both) and by the length of time that the tics have been present.

To read an article with more information on Tourette Syndrome, scan the QR code below.

Team Neurodiversity is sharing a term of the month in an effort to educate our congregation on what neurodiversity is, encourage proper terminology and phraseology, debunk outdated and harmful views, and prepare our congregation to be openhearted, educated, and understanding as we hope to welcome more neurodivergent individuals and families into our church.



INSPIRATION

The flame inside you
is nothing but anger,
you haven't really begun
to burn.
Rage is just kindling.
Transmute it into
fiercer sweeter fire,
not by struggling and resistance,
nor by gathering
blood-red grief poppies
with their motherland
of dreams for the dying,
but a plunge beyond hope,
a Way that bursts open
when you water it
with loss.
Let your falling body
strike a spark against
the very darkness.
Meteors do this in
the beauty of annihilation.
Songs, when they are over,
do it in silence.
Prayers do it in ameen, ameen.
And your eyes,
gazing into mine.

– Alfred K. Lamotte, "The Flame Inside" from Strangers and Pilgrims

FPC Sensory Spaces for Worship

Sensory Space for children & their families

A sensory room for those 5th grade and younger is available in the former library space down the 1st floor south hallway next to the restrooms. This space has been carefully designed to minimize overwhelming sensory input and to offer a more controlled environment for those with sensory sensitivities. This room caters to our youngest individuals with sensory processing differences such as autism and ADHD. The space is open every Sunday during worship, and contains a TV with a livestream of the service to aid engagement. As this space is not staffed, please accompany your child while they use the sensory room.

Teen and Adult Sensory Space

The Teen and Adult space may be found in the Worship Center. There you'll find a TV with a livestream of worship, a cart with neuroaffirming items with which to engage, and a few seating options (chairs and floor cushions). This space is available during worship for those who have sensory processing differences such as autism or ADHD and who may find the Sanctuary environment overwhelming.

Please note Since teens and adults will be using the space, we must utilize the rule of three, which is part of our child protection policy, and never be alone with a youth. Invite a third person to join the room or have one person use the Hospitality Area instead.



May Session Updates

The Session of First Presbyterian Church, Stillwater met on May 20 at 5:30 p.m. for its regular stated meeting.

- Session received into membership Alex Greene and Emily Yost by profession of faith. They will be presented to the congregation on June 1.
- Approved a request from the Adult Ministry committee with approval from Family and Fellowship to combine their two committees into one due to overlapping responsibilities.
- Tasked all committees to examine their current activities and responsibilities and come back to Session in a month with a list of items they want to continue and those they prefer to discontinue or pass on to another committee. The purpose is to absorb some of the tasks performed by the Pastoral Care Associate position and to streamline and reduce the current overload on some committees.
- Joyfully approved a motion to remove the word "Interim" from the job titles of our two musicians, Dr. Haygood and Dr. Unrau, as they have agreed to stay in their positions for the foreseeable future.
- Approved a motion from the Nominating Committee to begin the process of reducing the number of Elders and Deacons from 6 per class to 5 per class and to review the Bylaws to bring them into compliance with the Book of Order, naming the Ruling Elders of the Session the Trustees of the Corporation and utilizing a Buildings and Grounds committee of Session to perform the functions of our current Trustees. The congregation will vote on the officer class sizes at a called meeting on Sunday June 1, 2025, and revised Bylaws will be presented to the congregation later this summer or in the fall, prior to a meeting to discuss/vote upon them.
- Jenna Campbell reported that two of the youth and children's assistants, Haley Brobston Ankrom and Bekah Bowman, have completed their work and are now graduated and gone. Elijah Ankrom will continue in the fall as a youth assistant.
- Diane Janssen Hemmen reported that at their stated meeting on May 14, Cimarron Presbytery voted to join Indian Nations and Eastern Presbytery to form one Oklahoma Presbytery. The other two Presbyteries will vote on the motion at a meeting on August 9, 2025.
- Diane also reported that Magdalena Vinson will be on vacation, and in addition to staff's gracious coverage, volunteers are being arranged to fill in for her. We will publicize reduced office hours of 10-3 daily during Magdalena's time away.
- Two motions from the April Stated Session Meeting were reviewed and approved. FPC will change the previous work agreement to allow Jenna Campbell to return to full-time on July 1, 2025 (rather than remain part-time until July 15), adjusting salary only and by the prorated agreement amount. Secondly, if funds are available, FPC will continue utilizing Ministry Assistants for Children and Youth, and if so directed by the Session, the three committees will work with staff to recruit and hire them. (The previous pattern has been one assistant for children and two assistants for youth).
- Approved a request from Cimarron Presbytery to host the February 2026 Tri-Presbytery meeting.
- Next stated meeting Tuesday, June 17, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in the Multipurpose Room.

Submitted by
Kathy Thomas, Clerk of Session

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Join us at First Presbyterian

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11:00 am Worship

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

SUMMER 2025

THE AMBASSADOR

CASA for Kids Chosen for Pentecost Offering

The Pentecost Offering, one of the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s four annual Special Offerings, will be taken June 1 and June 8, but contributions will be accepted through the month of June. This year, Session has designated Payne County CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) for Kids to receive the 40% of the offering that remains in the local community.

CASA recruits, trains, and supports community volunteers who advocate for children involved in the child welfare system. CASA's volunteers provide consistent one on one advocacy by working with families, case workers, and the court to be a voice for children who have been neglected or abused. The volunteer remains with the child until he or she is placed in a safe, permanent home, and the case is closed. Currently there are 110 children in Payne County who need an advocate.

The remainder of the offering will be sent to the Presbyterian Church (USA) and is designated for youth and children's ministries including Triennium, Young Adult Volunteers (YAV), and Child Advocacy/Children at Risk. The Pentecost Offering is a wonderful way to support the faith development of youth who will become the church of the future.

You may give at our website stillwaterfpc.org or by sending a check to First Presbyterian, 524 S. Duncan, Stillwater 74074. Please indicate Special or Pentecost on the memo line.

June teenth Picnic

Family fun with bounce house, hotdogs, music, and more! Please join us for this free event on

Sat. June 21, 2025
Southern Woods Park
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Bring a blanket and/or lawn chairs!

VisitStillwater.org/swocommunityunited

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