

VOL. 64 NUMBER 4 • SUMMER 2022

THE AMBASSADOR

A publication of First Presbyterian Church of Stillwater



Summer GiFT Recap



See page 4 for details

FPC Mission Trip



See page 5 for details

Fall Worship Schedule
begins Sunday, August 21!



This issue:

New Member Spotlight
PAGE 2

Final Letter from Leah
PAGE 3

2nd Quarter Giving
Statements
PAGE 5

Save-the-Dates for
Children's & Youth
Ministries
PAGE 7

Farewell Reception for Leah
PAGE 8

The August Ambassador deadline is Thursday,
August 4 at 5:00pm. Articles may be submitted to
fpchurch1889@stillwaterfpc.org.



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CHURCH OF STILLWATER

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New Member Spotlight

Meet new FPC members Ann & Gene Benson! Both Ann and Gene are retired professional educators and administrators. They come to us by letter of transfer from First United Presbyterian Church in Guthrie, OK.

Ann and Gene love to travel! Ask them about where they might be headed next. They have an RV and have crisscrossed the country numerous times. They will be here in person when in town, and they also enjoy attending church virtually when on the road. Welcome, Ann and Gene!



Staff News

On Sunday, July 10, a congregational meeting was held at the request of Session and Pastor Leah Hrachovec to formally request a vote on recommending that the call between church and pastor be dissolved, with Leah's last day of active service on Sunday, July 24. Leah has accepted a call to be lead pastor/head of staff of Westminster Presbyterian Church in West Chester, PA.

Session has authorized the Personnel Committee to act as a Search Team for an interim pastor to begin as soon after July 24 as possible. They are collecting names of possible candidates from church contacts and denominational supports, and they are already reaching out to these possibilities.

After an interim pastor is in place, the Session will be able to determine, with the help of Presbytery, when the time is right for the Nominating Committee to begin a search for members of a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). A slate of members willing to serve on a PNC to search for a new installed pastor will be presented to the congregation for approval. The work of a PNC includes assessing the strengths and current needs of the congregation and the qualities most desired in a new pastor before any search begins. To learn more about how churches in the PC(USA) call a new pastor, please visit www.stillwaterfpc.org/files/images/call-process.jpg

Letter from Leah

"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you."

-1 Corinthians 16:23

Sometime in Easter season 2007, I preached a little sermon (short, and to just a handful of people) in the pink chapel (now Westminster Room) on the first floor of First Presbyterian Church. Members of the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee were there. The message was based on the gospel writer John's account of the risen Lord's mysterious appearances to the disciples when they had locked themselves behind closed doors after Jesus' crucifixion and death. Suddenly, Jesus stood before the frightened disciples and said, "Peace be with you."

In my sermon then, and to you now, I share a story from a Bible study held long ago by one of my mentors Chuck Campbell. Dr. Campbell once led a Bible study group with inmates of a penitentiary in the state of Georgia. As they were studying John's stories of Jesus' resurrection appearances, one of the men suddenly said loudly, "I know what's happening here!"

Dr. Campbell stopped and said, "Ok. Tell us what you see."

"Well, it's right here, very clear. **Jesus is on the loose!**"

A preaching professor at Columbia Theological Seminary, Dr. Campbell's guiding thesis was that Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection shows forth the beauty, goodness, and creativity of the divine imagination. Jesus is indeed "on the loose," not constrained by our notions of who a Savior should save (or not save), or where the divine grace of God should manifest.

The Spirit of Christ continues to surprise us, and show up in the most unexpected, unlikely places. Christ is made known to us in ordinary things: a simple shared meal, some water in a bowl or cup, the prayer of another. **Before we know it, God is with us.**

May you continue to feel Christ's presence in the most surprising ways and places. I fully trust that God has great things in store for and through the community of faith at First Presbyterian Church in Stillwater, Oklahoma. I will miss you more than I can say in this letter or in what remains of our time together, as my last day of active service as Pastor of FPC is July 24th. **Thank you for extending Christ's grace, peace, love, justice, joy, and presence in my life, in the lives of one another, and in our witness together.** Thanks be to God that Jesus continues to be "on the loose" in our world today.

God be with you 'til we meet again,

Leah

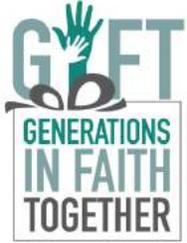
'We have only begun
to imagine the fulness of life.
How could we tire of hope?
- so much is in bud.

- Denise Levertov, "Beginners"



Summer GiFT Moved Indoors, But the Fun Didn't Stop!

Extreme temperatures changed the plans for our Summer GiFT intergenerational gathering that was to take place June 24-26 at Lake McMurry. But the extreme heat didn't stop us! We moved the event inside to the Fellowship Hall and enjoyed a night full of connecting with one another and God through songs, energizers, small group activities (so much laughter!), campfire singoff, and a short vespers service focused on the body of Christ around our indoor campfire. We look forward to being able to do this event next summer out at Lake McMurry! Hope you'll join us!





Mission Trip Recap

First Presbyterian Church's Mission Team spent a week at the Goodland Academy in Hugo, OK at the end of May. Their goal was to complete restoration work on the outer walls of the chapel building. The team reports that their work was a great success, as they were able to complete everything with the exception of rebuilding the ramp that leads up to the entryway of the building. With thanksgiving for the support of members and friends of First Presbyterian Church, the staff of the Goodland Academy, and the students supported by the school, the mission team hopes to return to complete the project this fall.



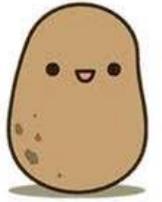
2nd Quarter Giving Statements

Second Quarter 2021 Giving Statements were recently sent to church members by email (if we have your current email address) or by US Mail. If you did not receive your statement, please contact Mary Beth Garoffolo, Office and Finance Assistant, at 405-372-5580 or marybeth.garoffolo@stillwaterfpc.org and I will send it to you.

If you received a paper statement and would like to change to receiving it by email OR if you want to change from email to receiving a paper statement in the US mail, please let me know that as well.

Thanks so much to everyone for your generous and constant financial support of FPC. We truly could not do it without you!!

Worship News



Chancel Choir

The **Chancel Choir** is on summer hiatus except for July 24, when we will gather at 10:00 a.m. in the choir loft to rehearse and sing for Pastor Leah's final service with us. Regular rehearsals will resume on Weds., Aug. 24 at 7:00 p.m. in the Westminster Room (choir room).

August 21st - Open Loft Sunday

Come and join the choir's leadership of congregational singing! You are invited to join us in the choir loft at 10:15 a.m. as we prepare the hymns and responses for that day's worship. No experience is necessary, only a desire to add your voice to our sung praise and prayer. There's not a better seat in God's house! If you have never sung in a choir before, or if you have, this is a perfect time to join our choir family for the morning. But beware: you may find yourself hooked!

"Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs." (Ps. 100)

Becky's Bench Buddies

Beginning Aug. 7, anyone aged 7 and up is invited to join Becky at the organ for a worship service. Please contact Becky if you or your child or grandchild would like to do this: (405) 762-6212, Rebecca.tevelde@stillwaterfpc.org. We'll make a plan for a specific Sunday and service. I look forward to sharing worship with you at the organ!

Two's Company on the Organ Bench!

Fall Worship Schedule begins Sunday, August 21!

- Worship and Communion @ 8:30 am
- Sunday School Classes for all ages @ 9:45 am
- Worship @ 11:00 am



July/August Preaching & Music Schedule

July

- 17 - Leah Hrachovec, Rebecca te Velde
- 24 - Leah Hrachovec, Rebecca te Velde
- 31 - Jenny Hardin, Brett Carver

August

- 7 - Jenny Hardin, Rebecca te Velde
- 14 - Phyllis Taylor, Rebecca te Velde
- 21 - Jenny Hardin, Rebecca te Velde
- 28 - Verne Arens, Rebecca te Velde



Children's & Youth Ministries

PYG Calendar

July

- 20 - Tulsa Trip (8:30a-5:00p)
- 26 - Taco Tuesday @ Thai Loco (11:30a-12:30p)

August

- 2 - Fun @ Frios Gourmet Pops (7:00-8:00p)
- 18 - Youth Parent Gathering at Berry Creek Clubhouse (7:30-8:30p)
- 21 - PYG Kickoff @ FPC (5:00-7:00p)
- 28 - PYG (5:00-6:30p)



All Children's and Youth Ministry Volunteers:

Join us for the

LEADER LAUNCH

Sunday, August 14

9:15-10:45 a.m.

Fellowship Hall

Leader Launch - Sunday, August 14th

For all volunteers working in children's and youth ministry for the 2022-2023 school year.

Come and be inspired and equipped for service, connect with fellow volunteers, and of course the chance to win some gift cards!



Children & Worship Videos

Children and Worship in-person will resume on August 21st. Over the summer, short, wonder-filled worship videos are available at www.fpcfaithfulfamilies.com/children-and-worship



TULSA TRIP

Wed. July 20th | 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.



Youth Tulsa Trip Wednesday July 20

Our youth will travel to Tulsa for a day of fun and learning. They'll visit the Gathering Place in the morning and the Greenwood Rising Black Wall St. History Center in the afternoon.

Save the Date!

PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH GROUP KICKOFF
SUN. AUG. 21 5:00-7:00PM

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY KICKOFF
SAT. AUG. 27 6:30PM
BOOMER SPLASH PAD

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Worship at First Presbyterian

Sunday Worship Schedule

9:45 am Faith and Fellowship Class

11:00 am Hybrid Worship Service

KSPI Radio (94.3FM/780AM)

Facebook.com/StillwaterFPC

www.stillwaterfpc.org/listenlive

Midweek Prayer

Wednesdays 12:10pm via Zoom



SAVE THE DATE!
SATURDAY JULY 23

*A Celebration of the
Ministry of Leah Hrachovec*

3:00 - 5:00 pm
Come and Go Reception
With a program honoring Leah at 4:00 pm
in the FPC Fellowship Hall

Game Night
at First Presbyterian Church

Thursday, July 28
6:00 - 8:00 pm
in the Fellowship Hall*

**Join us for the 2022 Fellowship and Family
Game Night! Bring a board game or card
game to share, if you like, or just come grab
a seat at a table and join in.
All ages are welcome!**