

VOL. 65 NUMBER 9 · ADVENT 2023

THE AMBASSADOR

A publication of First Presbyterian Church of Stillwater

ADVENT AT FPC

ADVENT I - December 3

9:45 am Sunday School

11:00 am Worship & Communion

Pick up Advent devotionals for all ages

Giving Tree gifts due back today

.....

ADVENT II - December 10

9:45 am Sunday School

11:00 am Service of Lessons & Carols

A Night in Bethlehem

Living Nativity & Meal to-go; 5:30 - 7:00 pm

Drive-thru: begin at the 5th St entrance and
end at the Southeast lawn.

.....

ADVENT III - December 17

9:45 am Sunday School

11:00 am Worship

.....

BLUE CHRISTMAS - December 20

6:30 pm Worship in the Worship Center

.....

ADVENT IV - December 24

9:45 am Christmas Eve Rehearsal

11:00 am Worship

.....

CHRISTMAS EVE NIGHT

4:00 pm Family Service & Communion

11:00 pm Candlelight Service & Communion

.....

This issue:

OFFICE CLOSURES &
YEAR-END GIVING

Page 2

FAIR TRADE STORE
HOLIDAY HOURS

Page 5

ADVENT 2023

Pages 7-9

JANUARY SERIES CHANGES

Page 10

PNC NEWS

Page 13

GIVING TREE

Page 16

The January Ambassador will be an Express issue. Deadline is Thursday, December 28 at 5:00pm. Articles may be submitted to fpchurch1889@stillwaterfpc.org.



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CHURCH OF STILLWATER



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Office Announcements

Church Office Closed Dec. 25 thru Jan. 1

Please be aware that the Church Office will close at 5 pm Friday, December 22 and reopen Tuesday, January 2 at 10 am. All 2023 donations must be hand delivered by 5 pm Friday, December 22 OR postmarked no later than December 31, 2023 except for those placed in the Sunday offering plate on December 24 or December 31, 2023. Any donations not postmarked 2023 must be considered a 2024 contribution by the church. Please plan your end of year charitable contributions accordingly.

New Member Spotlight

We would like to introduce our new members, Ryan, Kate, Simon, and Scarlett Szirmay! The Szirmay family has been visiting Stillwater during the summers since 2018. They moved here from New York in 2022 so Ryan could pursue his masters degree in fire protection and safety engineering, which he completed this past May. Simon enjoys Legos, playing outside, and baking. Scarlett is an avid bike racer and enjoys dressing up in a Spiderman costume. The family's household includes Kate's giant tortoise Sheldon. After many months enjoying their company at the 8:30am service, we are thrilled to officially welcome them as members of our congregation!



Save the Date!!

Soli Deo Gloria Music Presents
The Cimarron Chapter of the American
Guild of Organists in concert at FPC

January 19, 2024 at 7:30pm

An Invitation from Pastor Kati

The story of the Magi holds a certain mystery and direction for us, calling us to observe, ponder and go looking for the presence of God in our world. Over the last decade many people have focused on a Word for the year as a practice to extend this observation of one aspect of our lives throughout the different seasons and passing of time. Christians like us have been calling them Star Words in an effort to make this a more spiritual experience. We choose a word and observe our lives alongside this word, and along the way, we let the word whisper to us guidance from God or lead us to find evidence of God's activity in our lives. Like a star lighting the way, the word leads us to The Word of God and brings the Light of Christ into our everyday experiences.

This year we offer you 3 different ways to choose your word:

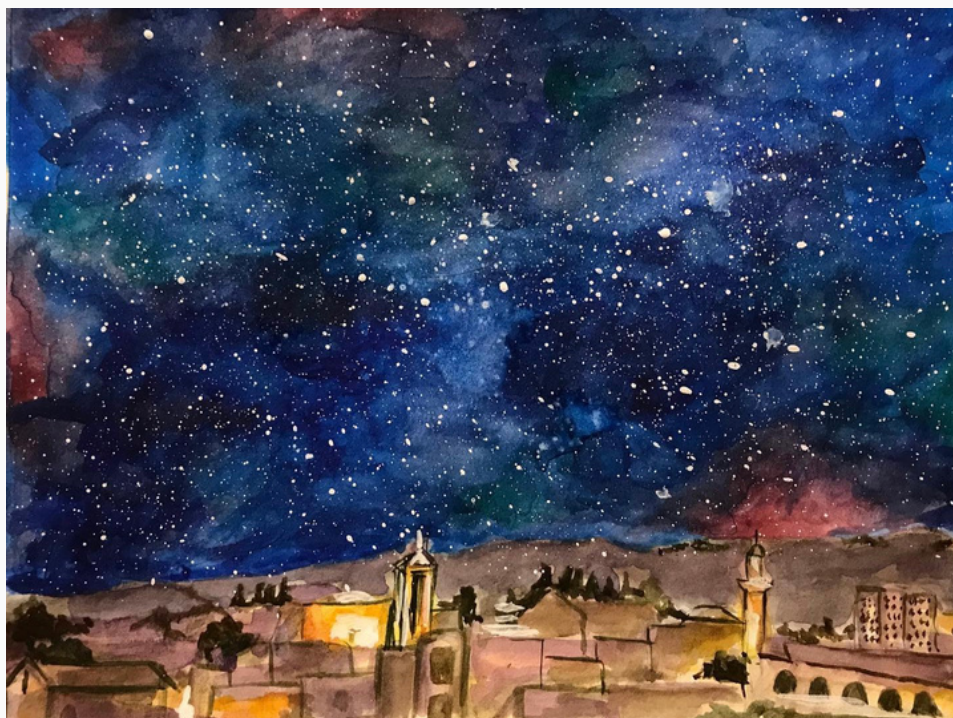
First of all, you may choose from the words we will be using for Advent. You may want to keep watch through your pictures or search Facebook for #AdventWord to see the posts from people all over the world. A StarWord Cloud (see above) has been created for your choice from these words through prayer and meditation.

Secondly, you can come to worship on December 31st, when we will offer words to be chosen during communion. After receiving the bread and juice, you will be able to select a card displayed on a table or randomly draw one from a basket.

Finally, if you would like a card by mail or email, please call or email the office, and we will send a star word to you.

As you consider which word to use as a light to your path, here are some words for your prayers:

"Holy Spirit, whisper a word to my heart. Loving Savior, whisper a word to my gut. Curious Creator, whisper a word to my mind."



"Starry Bethlehem" by Rebekah Krevens



From the Organ Bench

THE AMBASSADOR



First Friday Peace Jam

Friday, December 1

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

December Musical Highlights

- 12/3, Advent I: two ancient Christian hymns for Advent, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" and "Creator of the Stars of Night"; organ music of longing and anticipation
- 12/10, Advent II: A Service of Lessons and Carols 10:55am Prelude with Trumpets and Organ, Advent procession with bells, choir anthems and carols, SpiritLink Singers, and congregational hymns and carols with trumpets, flute, and violin
- 12/17, Advent III: Kim Leffingwell, flute and Noah Taylor, cello
- Christmas Eve at 4:00pm: Family-oriented worship with youth instrumentalists and singers, trumpets, flute, cello, guitar; Organ Prelude "A Carol Fantasia" by Alan Bullard
- Christmas Eve at 11:00pm: Choral and instrumental music for the Feast of the Nativity, 10:45pm Instrumental Prelude: "A Potpourri of Carols" for flute, violin, cello, harpsichord and organ, Chancel Choir "Christmas Lullaby" by John Rutter and "In the Bleak Midwinter" by Holst, Soprano soloist Lucy Newlin "O Holy Night" by Adolphe Adam
- 12/31, First Sunday after Christmas: Brett Carver, organist/pianist; Rev. Kati Collins, soloist "Welcome to Our World" by Tim Rice, Organ Postlude on "Go Tell It on the Mountain" arranged by Richard Elliott (organist of the Mormon Tabernacle)

Reformation and All Saints Sundays

THANK YOU, to the Chancel Choir

and all instrumentalists!!

Greg Campbell, bagpipes;

Kim Leffingwell, flute;

Aidan Evano and Omar Martinez, trumpet;

Allison Ringler, French horn

Chancel Choir

The choir is in the midst of final preparations for the December 10 Service of Lessons and Carols, which is the culmination of our fall choir season. After Christmas break, the choir's regular Wednesday rehearsal schedule will resume on January 17, 2024 at 7:00pm in the Westminster Room (choir room).

Christmas Eve Choir

Any and all are invited to join us at 10:00pm in the choir loft to rehearse for "Christ's mass" at 11:00pm. Visiting family members and friends are welcome! FPC's music-rich "midnight" service is unique among Protestant churches in the Stillwater area. It provides us and our community the moving experience of joining the angel choirs in welcoming the Christ child with heart and voice, singing "Silent Night", and "Joy to the World" at midnight and in the first minutes of Christmas morning!

Old Choir Robes Find New Homes!

While many of the old green robes were given to the theater department at Stillwater High School, we still had some hanging around. A few weeks ago a post on Facebook caught the attention of a woman in Conyers, Georgia, who has since claimed all of our leftover green choir robes and matching stoles. She is sending them to a choir in the Bahamas as a Christmas gift!

The remaining liturgical stoles were sent to a woman in North Carolina who recycles old liturgical garments into new ones.

The world is indeed small! And thanks to these folks who can use what we no longer could, we have remained true to our mission and status as an Earth Care Congregation!

Fair Trade Store

The FTS will be open during "Night in Bethlehem" on Sunday, December 10th from 5:30pm to 7:30pm. After you drive through and pick up our chili or mac and cheese, you can park in the parking lot at the corner of 6th and Duck and enter through the Narthex doors. The FTS is right across from the bathrooms in room 103 on the first floor.

All Christmas nativities, decorations, and ornaments will be out for you to see plus coffee, cocoa, chocolate, tea and olive oil. Maybe you want to do some shopping for others on your list, or make a "wish list" for yourself and our elves will pass on the ideas to someone in your family! The FTS also has a wonderful selection of little soapstone hearts and animals, finger puppets, and other little items that are perfect gifts for or from the little ones in your life!

Christmas chocolate bars are in several sizes for \$3.00, \$1.00, or \$0.25. Hot chocolate comes in 3 flavors: regular cocoa, dark chocolate, and spicy Mexican. Olé!! Teas come in 6 types, and olive oil is available in \$6.00 (perfect for gift giving) and \$12.00 bottles. Remember to bring cash or your checkbook. (sorry---no credit cards)



UKIRK

It is hard to believe that the fall semester is almost over. Time flies! There are still a few activities before the end of the semester and we would love to see you involved.

- Tuesday, November 28th – cooking class – homemade pizza
- Sunday, December 3rd – lunch out – also receive a finals care package after worship
- Tuesday, December 5th – Bible study and dinner
- Sunday, December 10th – Night in Bethlehem

Good luck on final exams!
Have a relaxing break.

Some UKIRK students will attend the College conference the first week in January. We can't wait to hear all of the great things that are experienced.



Look for posts on Instagram and/or Facebook for January events and dates. Rachel Schlais has been wonderful this fall semester but will not be available on Tuesdays in the spring. Do you or someone you know have a desire to lead our UKIRK group for the spring semester?

Please contact:

- Rachel Schlais (rachel.schlais@gmail.com)
- John teVelde (jrtevelde@gmail.com)
- Lisa McGaw (lmcgaw@me.com)



Prayer Concerns

Lavon Alexander (Howard)
Gary Allen
Amanda
Nick Amidon (Garoffolo)
Shea Arnett (N. Thomas)
Christopher Aupperle (Aupperle)
Baker
The Baker Family
Luz Barber
Betty Bays
Leola Beckstrom (Beckstrom)
Mandy Blackburn
Rose Marie Bligh
Rita Breuninger
Helen Britton
Belinda Bruner
Wayne Cartwright (Koeppe)
Paula Cavett (te Velde)
Nancy Chapa (Fagan)
Allison Christy (Breuninger)
Abby Clapp (Clapp)
Darlene Collyar (Silver)
Andee and Kannon Cooper (Hrachovec)
Heather Davidson
Sara Davies
Matthew Durham (Shawley)
Lori Fagan
Jeanie Findahl
Paula Fitch
Mike Flowers
Nate Franke (Franke)
Joyce Freeman (Osborn)
Mary Frye
Ed Gallegos (Wilkinson)
Lauren Glynn (Stewart)
Keith Good
Halana (Leffingwell)
Ben Harris (Wilkinson/Frohock)
Kendall Harvey (Shaw)
Mary Ann Henley (Henley)
Charla Hilger (Roscoe)
Charity Hitch (Plum)
Carolynne Hopkins
Linda Houck
Sharon Huckleby
Sandy Ives
Patty Jacobs
Paul Dean Jenkins (Nipp)
Brenda Johns (Taylor)
Joey Jones
Ted Joy (Taylor)
Patty Keys
Patsy King

Mary Jane Kirchenbauer (Breuninger)
Margy Knox
Stan Koehn (Good)
Pauline Kopecky
Dottie Kraemer
Karen Krehbiel (Breuninger)
Heather Lanners
Hank Lett
Tracie Lively
Cheryl Lowther
Alyssa Matal (Krehbiel)
Larry McDonald
Stephanie McMillan (Taylor)
Philip Meadows
Steve Miller (Fairbanks)
Tresa Miller (Miller)
Jean Moore (Stangl)
Anne Mullen (Mullen)
Nora Nagaruk (Stangl)
Chancey Nickerson
Michelle Nicholson
Pricilia Nkem
Margaret O'Loughlin (Redburn)
Marek Omast II (Schlais)
Our Service Men & Women (Kraemer)
Frances Phillips (Taylor)
Jean Potts (Bills)
Daniel Powell
Paul Quarles (Bobo)
Tim Rains (Silver)
Lisa Reavis (Stewart)
Larry & Margaret Redburn (McCarley)
Jack Reeves
Sara Roberts (Osborn)
Terry Robinson
Virginia & Olin Rogers (Osborn)
David Schmidly (Shaw)
Karen Shippey (Swim)
Jeffrey Silver
David Smith (Cooper)
Ted Smith
Perry Sneed (Johnson)
Jamie Stephens
Christine Stone (Fairbanks/Cornelius)
Phyllis Taylor & Helen Brake
Pat Tomason
Tyler
Upendo Kids (Shawley)
Nettie Vick
Emily Walker (Walker)
Nelda Wallace (Blosser)
Darrell Warren (Silver)
Jim West
Lynda Williams
Scott Williams

MILITARY MEMBERS

Members & family members of our church family who have been deployed in service to our country:

- Jordan Buterbaugh, Marines (Case)
- Justin Fowler, Navy (Fowler)
- Col. James 'grata' Greenwald, Air Force
- Matt Krehbiel
- 1st Lt. Eric Murphy, Army (Fairbanks)
- Miles Smith, Recruit Division Commander, Department of the Navy (Schlais)
- SGT Bryn JT Williams, Army (Williams)



ADVENT 2023

THE AMBASSADOR

Advent 2023

A NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM

Sunday, December 10, 5:30-7:00pm

You're invited to a special night to reflect on the Christmas story. This event begins with a drive-thru, then park and enjoy the Living Nativity, carol sing, live animals and more!

- Enter the main FPC parking lot from the 5th street entrance and drive to the south end of Fellowship Hall to receive a to-go meal (chili or mac and cheese).
- Then continue to the covered driveway to:
 - Drop off donations for the Little Free Pantry
 - Shelf-stable food (canned meats, fruits/veggies with easy-open tops, rice, pasta.)
 - Toiletries and baby products
 - Menstrual hygiene products for the Red Pantry
 - Receive a reflections page to use as you view the Living Nativity
 - Receive a children's bag for any children in your vehicle
- Finally, drive to the east side of the church to view the Living Nativity on the southeast front lawn. Fair trade hot chocolate and apple cider will be served, and fair trade items will be available for purchase (cash or check only). Enjoy live animals, as well as a carol sing together every 20 minutes!

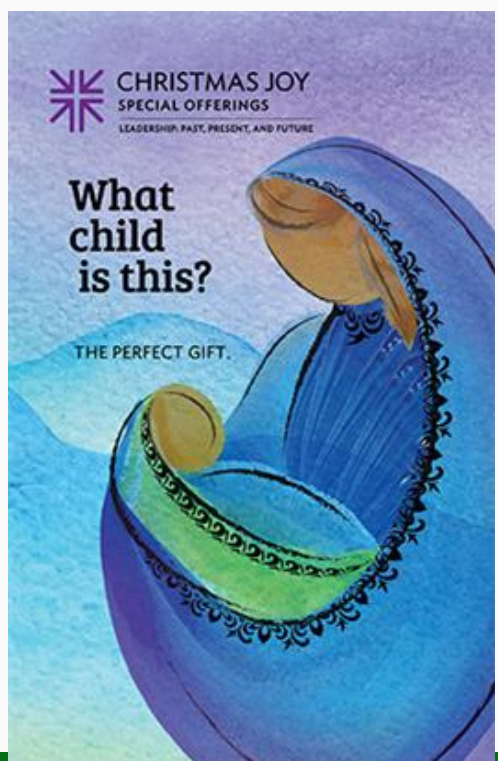


CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING: SUPPORTING OUR PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE LEADERS

The Christmas Joy Offering, which we receive annually during the Season of Advent, honors the faithfulness of current and retired church workers and their families in need. Thanks in part to support from this Offering, church workers can receive critical financial assistance to support them through life's challenging circumstances. These generous actions bear witness to our faithful response to God's charge to love one another as Christ commanded.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) with its historic commitment to higher learning, has long promoted education and leadership development through the establishment and support of Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Our future church leaders of color can receive much-needed assistance while they discover and pursue their professional goals at these schools and colleges. Your gifts allow these ministries to continue – sustaining a tradition Presbyterians have carried out for nearly 140 years.

You may give by putting a check in the offering plate on Sunday or mailing a check to the church office (write Special in the memo line) or at the church website. Thank you for giving generously!



Advent Devotionals for All Ages

Available in the Narthex Display

For families with children of all ages

This year we are inviting families to take part in AdventWord organized by Forward Movement (see below for details) and we have created a Family Advent Calendar that follows the same words from that list.

Families will receive package of Advent cards to follow every day. You can make an Advent Candle Wreath that you can use these cards to decorate. You could use decorative ribbon and paperclips or small clothes pins to create a festive Advent garland or just place them around the house to remind your family to prepare for the coming of the Christ Child. There will also be coloring sheets included for each week of Advent!



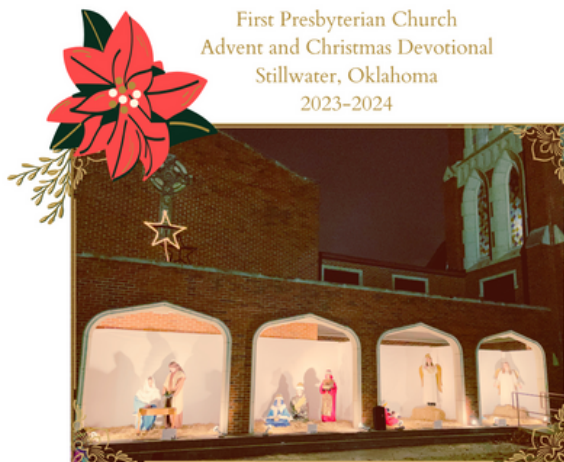
For youth and adults - 'Come, O Come, Emmanuel'

This year's devotional runs from the first day of Advent (Sunday, December 3) through Epiphany (January 6) when the Magi arrived. Through daily readings, you will hear the story of God's love shown in our lives and through this community of First Presbyterian Church with many of the daily devotionals written by members and friends of the church.

A digital version of this devotional will be available for download in the Advent Email Special going out on November 28th

Come, O Come, Emmanuel

First Presbyterian Church
Advent and Christmas Devotional
Stillwater, Oklahoma
2023-2024



AdventWord

DECEMBER 3-25 2023

3	WIND	15	HASTEN
4	HIDDEN	16	BEGIN
5	PRESENCE	17	SPIRIT
6	PEACE	18	REPAIR
7	GRACE	19	GIVE
8	WATCH	20	DREAM
9	AWAKE	21	LAUGHTER
10	GLORY	22	QUENCH
11	HERALD	23	PONDER
12	VALLEY	24	COVENANT
13	TRUTH	25	LIGHT
14	PATIENCE		

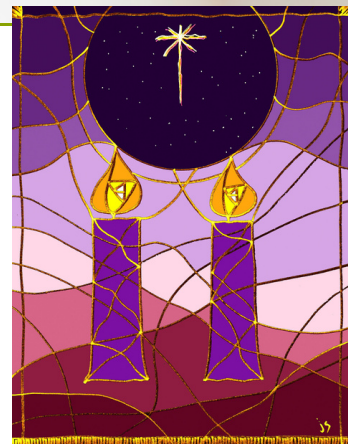
adventword.org



For everyone - AdventWord - a social media offering

Organized by Forward Movement, each year a single word is chosen from the Sunday Lectionary readings for each day during the season of Advent. If you choose, you can subscribe online at adventword.org and receive a daily meditation and visual image inspired by the day's word. You are invited to share your own personal reflections, photos, art, poetry, or other creative expression on your social media profiles and tag #AdventWord and #fpc_stillwater to share with your FPC family and the wider community. You are invited to use these words to help you slow down and take a moment or two for reflection each day during what is often a hectic time. This can be a great devotional activity for your whole family - a wonderful way to see the world through the eyes of your kids, grandkids, or elders in your life.

Advent 2023: Highlights



Return Giving Tree gift cards - Dec. 3rd

Gift cards purchased from the Giving Tree are due back to the church on Sunday, December 3rd. Please see the back page of this Ambassador for more details.

Service of Lessons & Carols - Dec. 10th

Worship at 11:00 am including anthems and solos from the Chancel Choir, congregational carols, and the traditional Scripture readings telling the history of Jesus' family and preparing us for his birth.

Blue Christmas Candlelight Service - Dec. 20th

This special worship service makes space for a somber celebration of God's gift. We come together in the darkness of the season and pray for peace in our hearts and in our world. We will offer our losses in prayer as swaddling cloths for the savior and take comfort during our waiting for Jesus to come. Poetry and music will carry our prayers to God, the creator of the universe, maker of all that is seen and unseen. This service will be on Wednesday, December 20th, at 6:30pm in the Worship Center.

4th Sunday in Advent Worship on Dec. 24th at 11:00am

Join us for worship on this fourth Sunday of Advent as we make final preparations for the Celebration of the Nativity that evening at our Christmas Eve services.

Christmas Eve Rehearsal - Dec. 24th

Children ages 3years-5th grade wishing to take part in the telling of the Christmas story at the Christmas Eve 4:00pm service are asked to attend a **rehearsal at 2:45pm in the Sanctuary on Sunday, Dec. 24th**. Sign up in the weekly children's ministry email or speak with Leigh Miller.

Christmas Eve Family Service - Dec. 24th at 4:00pm

All are invited to this family-friendly service which includes Christmas carols, an interactive telling of the Christmas story, Communion, and candle-lighting. Join us as we raise a joyful noise to celebrate the Incarnation. Youth musicians who are playing for the service are asked to arrive at 3:30pm for a rehearsal.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - Dec. 24th at 11:00pm

Join us for our traditional candlelight service with Communion and choir and a special musical prelude beginning at 10:45pm.

Praying with Holy Images

This Advent, you are invited to practice an ancient form of Christian Prayer known as Visio Divina. Translated as "sacred seeing" it is a practice where we allow our hearts and imaginations to enter into a sacred image, in silence, to see what God might have to say to us. These images will be from the Christmas Story, some of which were created long ago, while others are more contemporary and reflect different points of perspective of the arrival of Jesus. Images will be displayed in the Worship Center area starting Dec 3rd, and simple guidelines will be available. You are welcome to come to view the images anytime the Worship Center is not in use. Please Contact Sharon Bennett, Pastoral Care Associate with any questions at sharon.bennett@stillwaterfpc.org.



Image credit: Indigenous Mother and Child (North American) by Fr. John Giuliani

Adult Education & Fellowship



We are excited to host a fun and festive Seasoned Adults program in December. Our guest will be Holly Tichenor who is an accomplished piano teacher and performer. She, along with a couple of her students will play a variety of Christmas music, ranging from Classical Christmas to "The Grinch". There are even rumors of a special guest that might make an appearance! Also, dig out that ugly Christmas sweater, we will have an informal "Ugliest Christmas Sweater Contest". Look for more details and an RSVP email later in December.

Seasoned Adults

Monday, December 18,
6:00pm dinner,
and 6:45pm program
in Fellowship Hall

Adult Sunday School Classes Sundays @ 9:45am

- "Feasting on the Word" - led by Denise Rex, this class follows the Revised Common Lectionary (the Scripture readings we hear on Sunday mornings) and meets in the Upper Room (south end of 2nd floor).
- Faith & Fellowship is a class for adults of all ages and meets in the Multipurpose Room on Sunday mornings. Our current study is "If God Is Love, Don't Be a Jerk: Finding a Faith That Makes Us Better Humans" by John Pavlovitz. This study will run through February. For more information, contact Tim Hardin at cthphd@gmail.com or 502-262-5405.



This year the January Series will look a little different at FPC. Due to a variety of reasons including greater flexibility in watching live or watching later in the day, a sharp decrease in the number of in-person program attendees, and changes in volunteer and paid staffing availability, the decision has been made for FPC to not serve as a remote viewing host site in 2024. However, staff are in conversation with Calvin College in regards to simple ways we can still engage with one another on the topics raised in the talks slated for January. Stay tuned for more information to come in the January Express Ambassador, your Sunday bulletins (after Christmas), and other communications on what this reimagined January Series at FPC will look like.

If you want a sneak peek at the lineup for 2024, please visit www.calvin.edu/january for details.

Faith on Tap

Meet at Stonecloud Brewery (917 S. Husband St.) at 7:30pm on the first Thursday of the month (December 7, January 4) Stonecloud does not serve food and you are welcome to bring your dinner or snacks.



Children's & Youth Ministry



Calling All Characters!



Do you have a kiddo who would like to be a character in the Nativity during the 4:00pm Family Service on Christmas Eve? Mark your calendars now for a nativity character rehearsal on December 24 at 2:45pm in the Sanctuary and look for the character signup in a Children & Youth Parent Email in December! Questions? Contact Coordinator of Children & Youth Leigh Miller or Children's Ministry Chair Courtney Savage for more information.

SpiritLink Singers

Our SpiritLink Singers will sing in worship during the 11:00 am worship service on Sunday, December 10th!

Both Children's and Youth Sunday school classes will end for the semester on Sunday, December 10th and resume on Sunday, January 14th.



Children & Worship

- December 10 - last Children & Worship for 2023
- January 14 - Children & Worship resumes

PRESBYTERIAN • YOUTH • GROUP



Presbyterian
Youth Group

For ALL 6th-12th graders

Sunday evenings

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!

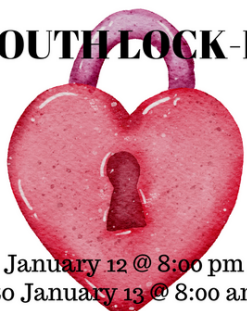
December

- 3 - PYG Christmas Party (5:00 - 7:00pm)
- 10 - A Night in Bethlehem (5:30-7:00pm)
- 17 - No PYG
- 24 - No PYG

January

- 7 - PYG Game Night & Theme Recap (5:00-6:30pm)
- 12-13 - PYG Lock-IN
- 14 - No PYG

YOUTH LOCK-IN



January 12 @ 8:00 pm
to January 13 @ 8:00 am



Congratulations!

Many congratulations to our Youth Ministry Assistants, Elijah Ankrom and Haley Brobston on their recent engagement!!



Stewardship Update

We gratefully thank the 104 households who have responded to God's call returning pledges totaling 91% of the funding necessary for FPC operations in 2024.

Why did they do it? Here, in their own words, are some of the answers:

"To support our children and the community. We give to ensure FPC Stillwater is here for the future."

"I give to serve Jesus alongside my chosen family."

"Pledging helps us embrace the spiritual discipline of regular giving."

"To help spread the love of Jesus by supporting the FPC missions."

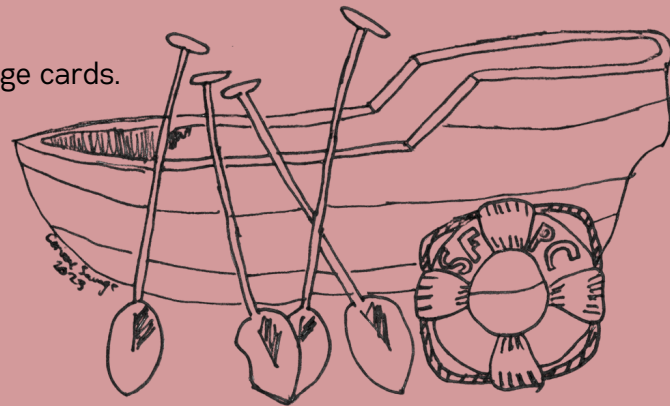
Please join your resources with those who have already returned pledge cards.

Session lays plans for the coming year based on the outcome of our Stewardship campaign.

"Let's pick up the stroke rate and sprint to the finish."

Your Stewardship Committee

-Tim Krehbiel, Terri Carver, and Cathy Fairbanks



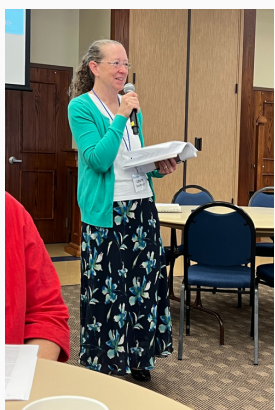
PW News



PW/Circle will meet Wednesday, December 13, at 10:00 am in Fellowship Hall. Laura Southard will lead the Bible Study, *Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts, Lesson Four: Mary and Martha Encounter Jesus*. Following the lesson, the women will participate in the Fellowship of the Least Coin "noisy offering" which brings about connection, comfort, reconciliation, peace and justice throughout the world through grants given to projects, scholarships, and relief effort that have been supported by prayers and least coins. In 1956, when Shanti Solomon envisioned this prayer movement, she saw it as global and ecumenical, rooted in the pursuit of wholeness for all people.

In November the women participated in the Thank Offering with a collection of \$521.00. Received in the fall each year it gives women a tangible way to express their gratitude for the special blessings in their lives. Thank Offering Grants range from \$5,000 to \$50,000. At least 40% of the offering funds health ministries. Since 1988, Presbyterian Women have granted more than \$27 million to nearly 1,700 different projects worldwide through the Thank Offering.

All women and guests are welcome! If you have any questions about PW/Circle please contact Mary McKinley, Moderator, at 405-377-4367.



An Update from Your Pastor Nominating Committee

Over the last year, the Pastor Nominating Committee has diligently evaluated candidates to serve as our next Head of Staff. The process has been overwhelmingly successful, with numerous candidates matching with and applying for our opening. Through thoughtful consideration and discernment, we narrowed the candidate pool down to three exceptionally qualified candidates with whom we had deep conversations and hosted one for an in-person interview a few weeks ago.

Following those conversations, one candidate withdrew from consideration due to family issues. A second candidate also withdrew but did not provide specific reasons for discontinuing the process. We hosted the third candidate for an in-person interview in Stillwater and, following that visit, the PNC unanimously agreed to extend an offer to this individual. After careful consideration, the candidate decided that they are feeling called to ministry outside the church and declined our offer.

The PNC is reviewing our processes, gathering feedback from the three former candidates, and determining next steps. At this time, we are not engaged in any conversations with candidates, and we expect the Advent season to slow the search process until early 2024.

We understand there may be unease and apprehension, but we ask for your patience. If you have specific questions or concerns for the PNC, please contact a member of the committee directly.

Stillwater First Presbyterian PNC

Tim Schlais – Chair, Ed Arquitt, Casey Campbell, Virginia Charter, Claire Leffingwell, Denise Rex, Tammy Wasson



As in past years, we will decorate the church with poinsettias for the Christmas season. If you would like to help with the purchase of these, please fill out the form below and return it with payment in the offering plate or the Church Office by **Monday, December 11.**

1) Please **PRINT** below EXACTLY as you would like it to appear in the bulletin (December 17 & 24):

To the Glory of God and the Christmas season, today's flowers are given by

_____ (your name(s) as you want it printed)

(choose one) ☐ in memory of ☐ in celebration of ☐ in honor of

(name, event, etc.) _____

2) Include your payment marked "Poinsettia." (Make checks payable to "First Presbyterian Church")

of poinsettias _____ x \$12.50/each = \$ _____ total enclosed ☐ Check ☐ Cash

Your Name: _____

3) Please check one:

☐ I/We will take a poinsettia(s) home after the December **24**, 11:00 pm service.

☐ Please use my contribution to purchase poinsettias for the Sanctuary that will be distributed to members by the Deacons at Christmas. I understand that any remaining money beyond what is needed for distribution will be used for the *Christmas Joy Offering*.



Session

Clerk: John Gelder
email: john_gelder@me.com

Treasurer: Cathy Fairbanks
email: cathy.fairbanks@stillwaterfpc.org

Adult Ministry:

Jenny Bobo (chair)
David Silver

Worship & Music:

Dustin Reavis (chair)
Ken Belanus

Children's Ministry:

Courtney Savage (chair)
Jean Aresco

Youth Ministry:

Rusty Rex (chair)
Vivyanne Bobo
Belinda Bruner

Communications & Missions:

Jill Stoutzenberger
(co-chair)
Kathy Thomas (co-chair)
Cathy Conway

Trustee Liaison:

Judy Ferrell

Personnel:

Kiah Butcher (co-chair)
Jenny Bobo
Lisa McGaw

Fellowship & Family:

Donna Koeppe (chair)

Stewardship & Finance:

Kiah Butcher (co-chair)
Tim Krehbiel (co-chair)
Cathy Fairbanks

Endowment Liaison:

Donna Koeppe

Nominating Committee:

Cathy Conway (chair)
Kathy Thomas

UKIRK (University):

Lisa McGaw (chair)
John te Velde

Session Summary

The Session met on November 14th, with Pastor Kati moderating and Kathy Thomas acting as clerk. Highlights include

- Capital Needs--The Trustees have been gathering bids for repair and installment of a new sanctuary roof and substantial repairs to our geothermal heating and cooling units. Support was voiced for a capital campaign pending followup with Trustees about the breadth of the needs. Attendees voiced the need for clear goals and communication of a campaign, and the use of a consultant was discussed.
- PNC report--Tim Schlais encouraged the Session to decide about the Associate Pastor position, relaying that candidates declined the position because of the uncertainty. Candidates want us to be more definitive about future plans. Therefore, the Session approved the following motion:
 - The Session resolved not to fill the Associate Pastor position in 2024, and re-evaluate the position in 2024. (Note: the position is not in the current budget.) The three professional positions, Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, and Director of Family and Youth, will be evaluated by Personnel to determine the needs of the church and adjust positions accordingly.
- Endowment requests were approved to send gifts as have been received to the New Covenant Trust Company Endowment. Funds as allocated for resource accounts were also approved.
- Personnel Policy changes and additions were approved:
 - a. Extension and modifications done to Pastor Kati's Contract, allowing 60 day notice for a transition of leadership.
 - b. Revisions to the existing Professional & Work Expenses Policy - Approved
 - c. Revisions to the Sabbatical Guidelines (now Sabbatical Policy) - Approved.
 - d. New policy for Credit Card Assignment & Usage - Approved.
- Stewardship and Finance shared that as of 11/14 we had 104 pledges with \$557,000 pledged, leaving 20 people who have pledged previously but not this year.
- \$45 was collected for the Saturday Brunch.

Next stated meeting Tuesday, December 12th at 5:30pm in Fellowship Hall. This meeting will include the examination of new officers.

Monthly Income / Expense Report

	November	Year to Date	% of Budget
Giving	\$ 67,754.14	\$ 534,660.21	86.4
Other Income	\$ 9,489.14	\$ 81,850.71	92.6
Total Income	\$ 77,243.28	\$ 616,510.91	87.1
Expenditures	\$ 50,028.07	\$ 597,005.86	80.9
Net	\$ 27,215.21	\$ 19,505.06	

Scout Updates

- Over the past month, **Troop 820** participated in the council Spook O Ree at Williams Scout Reservation near Fairview. This gave most of our scouts an opportunity to visit a council camp for the first time and to interact with Cub Scouts from western Oklahoma as they built and staffed a spook trail. In November, we hosted a Cub O Ree for Stillwater Webelo & Arrow of Light cub scouts giving them a chance to experience and ask questions about Scouts BSA troops before crossing over this spring. Upcoming activities include the Stillwater Christmas parade, Wreaths Across America, Order of the Arrow winter encampment and OA Banquet.
- Scouts BSA Troop 888** continues to flourish. The addition of 3 new members brings Troop 888 up to 14 members! Our most recent camp out at Camp Tan Da Ko was wildly successful with 6 Scouts working on cooking skills, 2 Scouts completing their Totin' Chip, a joyful conservation project that included singing songs from the musical Hamilton while clearing fallen trees lying on power pole guy lines, as well as other advancement completions and countless memories made. Our Scouts also recently helped lead the color guard for the Veteran's assembly at Stillwater Middle School, and our Senior Patrol Leader had the privilege of participating in the 1st Annual Outstanding Citizens Dinner honoring former OSU President V. Burns Hargis. If you'd 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 age 11-17 who is interested in joining us, please contact Melissa Huber at troop888gbsa@gmail.com.
- Pack 3842** held their Veteran's Day Meeting on November 13th. Mr. Dennis Ferrell joined as guest speaker and told us about his service as a pilot. He brought two of his helmets and flight uniforms for the kids to try on. Ms. Vanessa Seward with the DAR and Stillwater Wreaths Across America also spoke with the scouts about the upcoming Wreaths Across America project. She encouraged the scouts to participate and demonstrated how the wreaths were to be displayed. If you know of any boy or girl in grades K-5 who may be interested in Cub Scouting, please contact Brandon and Ruth Spencer at pack3842@gmail.com. Fall is a great time to get to know the Pack.



BEHIND THE WALLS: A TRUSTEES UPDATE

Trustees are actively pursuing solutions for a variety of problems. We're waiting to hear from three companies on an insurance policy to make sure we're financially protected. Our HVAC system has suffered deterioration over the years but steps are being taken to define the repair costs and install upgrades where needed. With 19 air handler units providing heat and air conditioning year-round, it's been a real challenge. Billy McCollum and his crew have installed new carpet in several rooms (check out how beautiful the Worship Center now looks with its sparkling new carpet!). We're also studying how to finance future projects such as sanctuary roof replacement and a long list of needed upgrades and repairs.

And some good news! We've noticed that there are fewer leaks since we re-shingled the Fellowship Hall, preschool and administrative offices.

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Worship at First Presbyterian

Sunday Worship Schedule

9:45 am Sunday School
11:00 am Hybrid Worship Service

Midweek Prayer

Wednesdays 12:10pm via Zoom

Office Closures

Thanksgiving: 11/23 & 11/24
Christmas: 12/25-1/2/24

THE AMBASSADOR

ADVENT 2023



Time for the Giving Tree!



The Giving Tree is up in the Narthex! To support this outreach ministry simply select gift request cards from the Giving Tree, purchase the gift cards, and return them to the church. This year each request card also has a blank card and small envelope attached. You are invited to write a short note on the card and place both it and the purchased gift card inside the envelope (still attached to the request card) when you return your card to the church.

Please purchase gift cards and return them to the church by **Sunday, December 3rd**. Deacons will be in the Narthex to receive your purchases and help you with record keeping on Sunday, November 26th and Sunday, December 3rd before and after the 11:00 am worship service. As Advent approaches, 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
Teresa Ansley (tjansley@yahoo.com) or
Jane Hovey (jmhovey@suddenlink.net)

