



# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF STILLWATER

## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



## LETTER FROM KATI

*"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:8-9*

Dear Grace-filled people of FPC,

Thank you for your faithfulness through a season of change! You have welcomed new participants in the life of FPC and sent blessings with those who took new paths in life. During the shifts of leadership, participants, and routines, you stayed focused on ministries of compassion, reformed Bible study, and glory-filled worship.

During this interim ministry we have spent a lot of the year looking inward at the life of the church and the church building, while always sustaining the ministries within and outside our walls which build up our community of Stillwater and beyond. Our Saturday morning brunch and the Presbyterian Preschool shine with the impact they make in this community! Our children's and youth ministries are building up disciples who are engaged in faith and comfortable in church and with God. My two young girls love Children and Worship, and I know it goes along with the compassion and love that the teachers share with them. The glorious music from our choir, organ, and many additional instrumentalists take me to a stance of worship and awe every Sunday. I have also been amazed to learn of the many outside groups who use our building weekly or monthly as a physically and spiritually safe place to be. Behind the scenes, our deacons, trustees and elders join our staff to keep our church connected, operational, healthy, and joyful through this transitional time.

Last spring we engaged in a Growth and Sustainability Survey with small groups and digital surveys. My favorite part of the data that we collected was the responses to the question, "What do you want the people of Stillwater to know about our church?" For me, this reveals how we see ourselves and what we value. I want to share some of the replies because I think they may be helpful while you continue to integrate and formulate your identity as you welcome a new pastor in this new year. As you read through these answers (found on page 6) and as you look through the rest of this report, may you also be given a vision for the future year, as the ministries of compassion, inclusion, and grace continue to blossom and flourish with new life!

Grace and Peace,



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### Session

*John Gelder, Clerk*  
*Cathy Fairbanks (Treasurer)*

#### 2023

*Jean Aresco*  
*Kiah Butcher*  
*Cathy Fairbanks*  
*Rusty Rex*  
*Courtney Savage*  
*Jill Stoutzenberger*  
*Vivyanne Bobo (young adult)*

#### 2024

*Ken Belanus*  
*Belinda Bruner*  
*Judy Ferrell*  
*Donna Koeppe*  
*Tim Krehbiel*  
*John te Velde*

#### 2025

*Jenny Bobo*  
*Cathy Conway*  
*Lisa McGaw*  
*Dustin Reavis*  
*David Silver*  
*Kathy Thomas*

# ADMINISTRATIVE & PROGRAM STAFF



Rev. Kati Collins  
*Interim Pastor/Head of Staff*



Magdalena Vinson  
*Church Administrator*



Rev. Jenny Wells  
*Associate Pastor*  
(January 2023 - July 2023)



Mary Beth Garoffolo  
*Finance Assistant*



Jenna Campbell  
*Director of Children & Youth Ministry*  
(January 2023 - June 2023)



Vickie Foust  
*Building Supervisor*



Leigh Miller  
*Coordinator of Children & Youth Ministry*  
(July 2023 - December 2023)



Cathy Fairbanks  
*Church Treasurer*



Sharon Bennett  
*Pastoral Care Associate*  
(October 2023- December 2023)

## PERSONNEL UPDATE

The Personnel Committee have been moved by the faithfulness and commitment of our leadership and staff this year.

- We received notice from Associate Pastor Jenny Wells that she was accepting another call and celebrated her final Sunday with us on July 30, 2023.
- We hired Sharon Bennett to serve as Temporary Pastoral Care Associate.
- Director of Children and Youth Ministry Jenna Campbell requested and was granted leave from July 1, 2023 until June 30, 2024, three months of which is sabbatical leave.
- We welcomed Leigh Miller as Coordinator for Children & Youth.
- Interim Pastor Rev. Kati Collins agreed to a contract extension.
- We received notice from Verne Arens, Parish Associate, that he is retiring from his position.
- Personnel members conducted annual reviews with all members of the staff this year and are excited to find new ways to support them and all the work they do.
- We were able to secure office volunteers for each day of the week to better assist office staff.
- We were able to review policies this year to better meet the needs of our staff, both now and in the future. We look forward to continuing to work with staff in this new year.



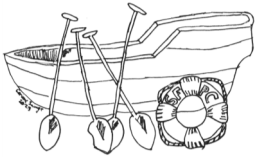
Rev. Verne Arens  
*Parish Associate*  
(through December 2023)



Rebecca te Velde  
*Organist/Director of Music*

Personnel Committee members: Linda Good (co-chair), Kiah Butcher (co-chair), Jenny Bobo, Lisa McGaw, Rusty Rex

STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE



The Stewardship and Finance Committee greatly appreciates all that you do facilitating God’s will through First Presbyterian Church. Your generosity in financial support and willingness to commit time and energy to Church programs is deeply moving. In early October, our stewardship campaign began with The Great Presbyterian Bake-off. More than 20 items were entered in the competition. The campaign built on the theme “All Oars Pulling Together,” and produced 117 pledges totaling \$592,492. Although substantial, this total is less than the \$614,430 necessary to fully meet projected expenditure for 2024. When assembling the 2024 budget, Session listened to the congregation and the Growth and Sustainability Task Force, reducing the 2024 operating budget to \$687,095. Projected spending was held in check despite dramatic increases in property and casualty insurance premiums.

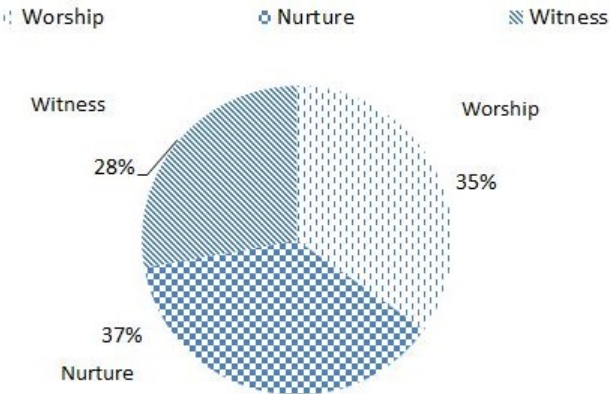
Throughout 2023 FPC received generous monetary gifts from the estates of Jim Gunn, Marilyn Waters, Dan Grischowsky\* and Mary Curnett. Session and the Legacy Gifts Group are considering appropriate uses for these funds.

\*In December, Session approved the use of funds from the D. Grischowsky bequest for the planned 2024 overhaul of the HVAC system.

Stewardship/Finance Committee members: Tim Krehbiel (chair), Kiah Butcher, Terri Carver, Cathy Fairbanks (Treasurer), Kati Collins (staff)



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
2023 ACTUAL EXPENSES



2023 BUDGET SUMMARY

INCOME	2023 Budget	2023 Actual
Congregational Giving	619,196	629,939
Other Income	42,160	49,457
Carryover/Budget Equity	46,210	46,210
Income Totals:	707,566	725,606
EXPENSES		
Personnel-Pastor	110,588	110,595
Personnel-Associate Pastor	74,986	49,601
Personnel-Director Children & Youth	66,591	59,466
Personnel-Church Administrator	44,807	45,662
Personnel-Office & Finc. Asst.	42,481	43,060
Personnel-Music Staff	45,388	45,350
Personnel-Music Support	11,000	8,838
Personnel-University Support	1,900	1,900
Personnel-Children Ministry Support	9,621	9,471
Personnel-Youth Ministry Support	8,000	10,000*
Personnel-Other Part-time Staff	5,000	9,812**
Personnel-Common Expenses	24,499	22,539
Stewardship, Finance & Session	4,100	2,928
World Mission & Denom. Affairs	32,273	28,717
Worship & Music	8,737	8,900
Communications & Connecting	6,659	6,808
University Ministry	2,500	2,621
Children Ministry	4,990	2,775
Youth Ministry	4,650	4,378
Fellowship & Family Ministry	1,800	1,595
Adult Ministry	2,955	2,373
Common Ed Ministry	1,950	1,577
Office	22,900	21,501
Deacons	21,500	21,244
Trustees	178,448	181,119
Expense Totals:	\$738,323	\$702,830

\*\$2000 transferred from Sheerar Endowment Resource Account per Session approval  
\*\*includes new Pastoral Care Associate position

Expense Categories

**Worship :** This includes a portion of clergy and support staff’s salary & benefits, a portion of stewardship & finance, office & trustee expenses, and all of music staff’s salary & benefits and worship and music expenses.

**Nurture :** This includes a portion of clergy, UKIRK assistant & support staff’s salary and benefits, a portion of stewardship & finance, office and trustee expenses and all of Director of Children and Youth’s salary & benefits and educational program expenses.

**Witness :** This includes a portion of clergy, UKIRK assistant and support staff’s salary and benefits, a portion of stewardship & finance, office and trustee expenses and all of mission and Deacon’s expenses.

## Growth & Sustainability Task Force

The Growth and Sustainability Task Force was established by Session in January 2023. The charge of the Committee was to: *"Make recommendations to session regarding how to make FPC more financially sustainable and survey the congregation to obtain thoughts and feedback on the current state and future vision for the church."*

The Task Force met five times between February and June. The following are the primary actions completed:

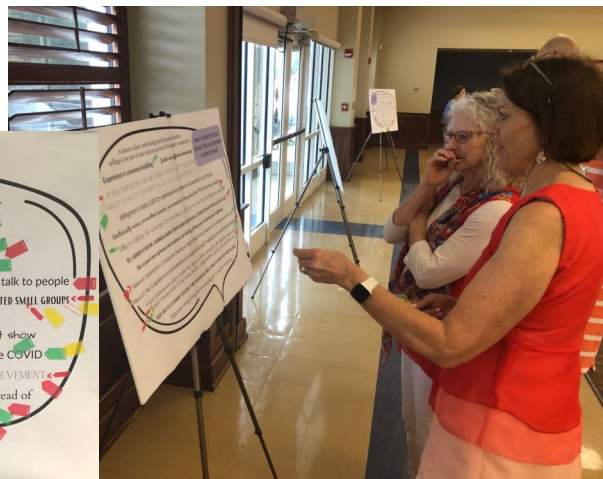
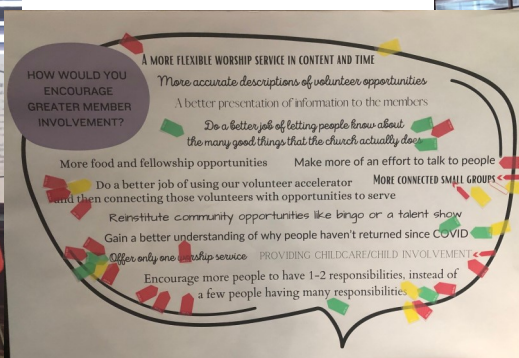
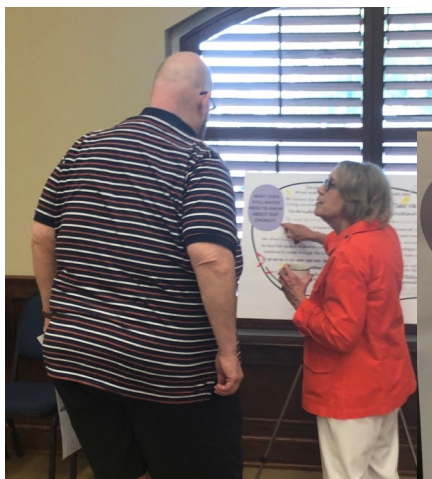
- Reviewed past budget trends, income sources, and expenditures.
- Participated in the two-day workshop led by Joseph Moore entitled "A Visioning Retreat; The Practice of Discernment" on March 3-4, 2023. The workshop was attended by approximately 50 members.
- Summarized the number of groups and organizations that use FPC's facility.
- Developed and deployed a congregational survey to receive congregation input on current state and future vision. Responses were received from 42 members and 15 small group discussions involving 135 people (see a sampling of responses below).
- Summarized responses for each of the seven survey questions and displayed them at the fellowship time prior to the Pentecost service on May 28th. Members provided their additional input. The most selected values of FPC by the congregation were Community, Compassion, Grace, Inclusion, Service, Spiritual Growth.
- Made several recommendations for growth and sustainability of our congregation, programs, and facilities.

*Task Force: Larry Caldwell (Trustees), Ed Arquitt (Pastor Nominating Committee), Nate Ingram (Youth), Jim Beckstrom (at-large member), Donna Koeppe (Session), Autumn Cagle (Deacons), Kati Collins (staff)*

Anonymous responses from personal surveys and small group gatherings:

- We walk the walk and try to take the love of God into the community. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to participate. You can find a kindred spirit here.
- We are open to all people.

- We are NOT judgmental. You are welcome here.
- That we welcome, accept and marry members of the LGBTQ+ community because of Christ's commandment to love one another.
- That we offer food every Saturday morning to anyone, and everyone is welcome to attend.
- That we celebrate the work of the Spirit in our midst. That all are welcome to worship, study and grow in faith here.
- That we are a safe place that can provide support. All are welcome and will be loved as Jesus has taught us.
- We are a fully inclusive church that respects and loves all. We love God and each other. We are generous with our time, talent and money.
- We are all on a spiritual journey, to 'love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and love our neighbor as ourselves.' We do our best to follow spiritual principles on this journey and keep these ideas in our hearts and minds every day.
- We have an outstanding family faith nurture and youth program.
- We are willing to talk about hard issues.
- Questions are welcomed without judgment.
- We have an excellent traditional music program.
- That we are actively reaching out to those in need in Stillwater and beyond. That we are inclusive and genuinely care about all humanity. That we truly welcome all to our community.
- We strive to improve the world at local, national and international levels. We need active energetic people to join us in these efforts.
- History, Location, Preschool, Scouting, Focus on community.
- That we are inclusive and open to those living on the fringes. We have to be better about spreading our openness with our community.
- The community needs to know that we want to be a vital part of solving problems and supporting the marginalized in Stillwater. We are committed to being the feet, hands, and heart of Jesus in a physical and spiritual sense.
- We believe that following Christ means serving others. We want to use our gifts to bless our community. We welcome all to our services and our broader church community.
- We are following the practices of Jesus and caring for all people.
- Accepting. Loving. Learning. ALL are welcome here: LGBTQAI, all ethnicities and races, all levels of faith from doubters to mystics. We accept because we live as Jesus taught, that we are all one in Christ, so we should love everyone.



# CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

## Communications & Connecting

The Communications and Connecting Committee's mission is to connect visitors, members new and old, and the broader community with our church family here at FPC. In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, our world continues to re-adjust, and the Christian community is no different. Many have fallen out of the habit of connecting with the church in person, and it has been easy to lose track of those we haven't seen in a while. As such, our committee began the year with a desire to reach out to members who had not attended service in 6 to 12 months to let them know they are not forgotten. We sent cards and a gift of tea to about thirty households. If you received one, we hope it brought joy! We continue to think of you and are grateful for the connection you have with our church.

In our mission to connect with new members, we held three First Steps events (see Adult Education for details). This summer, we were excited to order some church tumblers. We offered the tumblers for pay-what-you-want, with a suggested donation of \$5. Our hope is that these tumblers can serve as a form of advertising for our church when people take them to school, work, etc. Show off your church pride, and start a conversation!

Our biggest committee news of the year is our merger with the World Missions and Denominational Concerns Committee. In conjunction with the Growth and Sustainability Task Force, Session suggested that our church could benefit from decreasing its number of committees. This may allow for a reduction of budget, and it will also make better use of our volunteer resources by partnering more people together instead of spreading them so thinly among different groups. World Missions invited us to join forces with them, and we unanimously agreed. We are very excited about this decision! In many ways, our two committees complement each other well. Our administrative tasks overlap to some extent. For instance, Communications and Connecting oversees the membership roles, but World Missions is in charge of using that information to provide our congregation's per capita funds to the PC(USA). In addition to that, we feel the missions of our two committees—outreach in the community and support for wider denominational work—go hand in hand. We look forward to uniting the efforts of these two groups to expand the impact of our congregation at home and abroad. Our church body gained new members this year. We celebrated the confession of faith of six of our confirmands, and we added six new members (and their children) through letter of transfer or reaffirmation of faith. Welcome all! We are so thankful to have you as members of our congregation!

*Committee members: Jill Stoutzenberger (chair), Cathy Conway, Kati Collins (staff) and Magdalena Vinson (staff)*



## Presbyterian Women

PW/Circle met in the Fellowship Hall on the second Wednesday of the month during January-May and September-December for Bible study and fellowship. Associate Pastor Jenny Wells led the women in finishing the 2022-2023 Horizons Bible Study, *“Celebrating Sabbath: Accepting God’s Gift of Rest and Delight”* during the months of January-May. Beginning in September Laura Southard led the women in the 2023-2024 Horizons Bible Study, *“Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts”*.

In January, PW provided flowers for the communion table in remembrance of the women of the church who had died in 2022. In February PW, along with the congregation, participated in the Fellowship of the Least Coin offering. In May PW provided potato salad for a meal feeding the helpers at Special Olympics which was held at OSU.

Using Allene Brown Funds, PW allotted \$1,000 to help with the cost of providing family meals and receptions following funeral and memorial services; and purchased a Vulcan Range for the Fellowship Hall kitchen at a cost of \$3,716.

A highlight of 2023 was the presentation to Associate Pastor Jenny Wells as an Honorary Life Member of Presbyterian Women.

During 2023 PW gave the following donations for the support of mission and ministry of PW:

Churchwide PW	\$400
Synod of the Sun PW	\$200
Birthday Offering	\$264
Thank Offering	\$521
Blanket Sunday	\$1,188
Least Coin	\$291



*PW Officers: Mary McKinley, Moderator; Lynda Tyrl, Vice-Moderator; Debby Schoenecke, Recording Secretary; Andrea Arquitt, Treasurer; Rita Breuninger and Rosetta Silver, Hospitality; Nancy Franklin, Yearbook; Corresponding Secretary and Name Tags, Holly Chermack.*



## Second Mile Sewing

Our year began by making adult bibs and walker bags for the various eldercare places in Stillwater. They are always appreciative of the items we take to them. Later on in the year we were asked by an employee of the SMC Foundation if we would make breast cancer pillows for a doctor who specializes in cancer here at SMC. WE got a heart-shaped pattern that gives comfort when held under the arm of the side where the cancer/breast were removed.

We were also asked by Becky Schlais, who works at Oklahoma Tribal Engagement Partners (OKTEP) to put buttonholes on hats and aprons that are used to help children across the state learn what foods are healthy for their different organs. This is the second time we have done this project and involved 875 buttonholes! ANOTHER project that gave us much satisfaction knowing we were of help in some small way. We also have several members who specialize in knitting and crocheting prayer shawls for anyone who is in need of the comfort these shawls provide. There were 26 beautiful shawls made in 2023.



## FELLOWSHIP

- Coordinated First Presbyterian Church's presence at Payne County Pride event and shared information about FPC and an invitation to visit our church.
- Coordinated a fellowship time prior to the worship service for one Sunday in May, June and July with food provided by FPC members based on their birthday month.
- Coordinated with University Ministry Committee to host FPC's 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Block Party which included live music, grilled hot dogs and hamburgers, a bounce castle and obstacle course and door prizes. The event was open to all with intentional delivery of invitations to our neighbors who live in the community surrounding our church. Huge success with attendance by many church and community members.
- Purchased and prepared chili and macaroni and cheese for people attending A Night in Bethlehem.

Other fellowship opportunities for adults included:

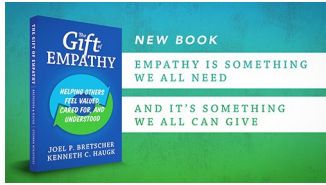
- Faith on Tap: a monthly gathering where participants discuss current events, faith, and other timely topics. In 2023 this group met at Stonecloud Stillwater Patio and Taproom.
- Dine With 9 is a beloved dinner fellowship for anyone interested in expanding their current FPC relationships or meeting new FPC folks. This spring we kicked off the year with our usual schedule of sharing an evening meal once a month, with the final all-group gathering at the Annual Christmas Ball held at James Causley's home in December.

*Fellowship & Family Committee members: Donna Koepp (chair), Jim Beckstrom, Ellen Ingram, Nate Ingram, Danielle Shreve, Kati Collins (staff), Jenny Wells (staff)*

*Dine with Nine coordinators: Virginia Charter, Melody Reavis, Courtney Savage*

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Stephen Ministers began 2023 with a one-day retreat in January at St. Francis in the Woods. Spiritual director Sharon Bennett (now FPC’s Pastoral Care Associate) led us in The Practice of Deep Listening. Throughout the year Stephen Ministers Anne Belanus, Carolyn Caldwell, Ava Osborn, Denise Rex, Debby Schoenecke, and Kay Stewart provided loving care to hurting individuals. Stephen Leaders Linda Burks, Carolyn Caldwell, Linda Good, and Kay Stewart provided twice-monthly continuing education and supervision of our FPC Stephen Ministers and also helped train the new Stephen Ministers in our community during the spring of 2023.



In 2024 we look forward to another retreat in late January, which will be a discussion of the new book “The Gift of Empathy.” We also welcome anyone who believes they might be called to Stephen Ministry to reach out to a Stephen Leader regarding the citywide training scheduled to begin in October of 2024. We especially encourage men who are interested to contact us, as we currently have no male Stephen Ministers at FPC. Men at FPC who wish to receive care are assigned to a Stephen Minister from another participating local congregation. Stephen Ministers go through 20 weeks of training, and then receive continuing education and supervision as they minister to hurting individuals.

Most importantly, throughout the year we encourage anyone who is hurting and interested in receiving the confidential, trained care of a Stephen Minister to let Pastor Kati Collins, Pastoral Care Associate Sharon Bennett, or Stephen Leaders Carolyn Caldwell, Kay Stewart, Linda Burks, or Linda Good know. Stephen Ministers are available and eager to help.



*‘Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me shall never die.” ‘*



MEMBERSHIP

- 6 confirmands
- 6 new members
- 9 deaths
- 2 baptisms
- 1 wedding

December 2023 membership 507

IN MEMORIAM

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Ann Benson       | Bill Segall         |
| Charles Drake    | John Steinbrink     |
| Kay Enmeier      | Rita Titus*         |
| Arthur Harriman* | Kelsey Walker*      |
| Jim Gunn         | Marilyn Waters-Seig |
| Paul Mullen      |                     |
| Jackie Plaxico   |                     |

*\*active non-member/  
former member*

MEMBERSHIP MILESTONES BY YEAR

Dewey Clapp (46)	Beverly Gumm (49)	Karen Culton (51)	Lee Rutledge (56)	Evelyn Johnson (67)
Peggy Gibbs (46)	Bonny Mullen (49)	Margie Keener (52)	Susan Worthington (56)	Robert Kerns (67)
Kyle King (46)	Dick Shawley (49)	Marvin Keener (52)	Rebecca Bair (58)	Marilyn Heath (68)
Denise Rex (46)	Cynthia Shawley (49)	Andrea Arquitt (53)	Rita Breuninger (58)	Anne Thomas (68)
Rusty Rex (46)	Kay Stewart (49)	Ed Arquitt (53)	Rick Dearing (58)	Owen Thomas (68)
Carol Trapp (46)	Connie Stiegler (49)	Edwin Koeppe (53)	David Smith (58)	Mary Thomas (75)
Jim Trapp (46)	Barb Henderson (50)	Allen Murphy (54)	Catsy Gunn (59)	
Kay Gafford (47)	Bob Henderson (50)	Janna Murphy (54)	Sydney Reding (59)	
Ed Stuart (47)	Ken McKinley (50)	Susie Glasscock (55)	Maxine Mulvey (61)	
Sandy Stuart (47)	Mary McKinley (50)	Cathy Grove (55)	Mary Frye (61)	
David Silver (48)	Kirk Mittelstet (50)	Pauline Kopecky (55)	Judy Jones (63)	
Rosetta Silver (48)	Madelyn Mittelstet (50)	Beverly Perkins (55)	Lynda Williams (63)	
Cathy Fairbanks (49)	Ava Osborn (20)	Larry Perkins (55)	Allan McCrary (65)	
Steve Fairbanks (49)	Lynn Osborn (50)	Suzanne Coyne (56)	Robert Culton (66)	

# WORSHIP & MUSIC

## FPC Music Ministry

### Chancel Choir Highlights

- Rehearsed Wednesdays 7:00-8:15pm from mid-August through early May and sang at most 11am Sunday services as well as for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Christmas Eve 11pm worship.
- Continued the practice of offering anthems at Easter, Reformation, and Lessons and Carols services that included congregational participation.
- Collaborated with OSU student trumpeters Aidan Evano and Omar Martinez and other instrumentalists and vocalists throughout the year.
- Presented a new anthem on Reformation Sunday that was composed in 2023!
- Ministered to one another as we celebrated birthdays, graduations, retirements, and held each other in prayer through life's trials and losses.
- Sang at the memorial service for Bill Segall, husband of Nedra Segall, our beloved Choir Mom.
- Celebrated continued growth in our numbers!

Many of our old green robes and stoles were donated to the Stillwater High School theater department last year, and the remaining ones finally found new homes in November, some to be recycled into new liturgical clothing, and some purchased by an individual as a gift to a choir in the Bahamas!

**Choral Scholars** served as cantors/soloists for all services when the choir was not present, including Sunday 8:30am services and during the summer. As choir section leaders, they supported the volunteers and assisted the director. They also assisted with **SpiritLink Music**. Soprano Amanda Barber (M.Mus.) and tenor Sam Markmiller (B.S.) graduated in May; sopranos Liz Brockman and Ainsley Carmichael and tenor Noah Pool joined us in August. Sam came back to sing with us for the Christmas Eve service!

**Brandon Bowman**, guitarist and vocalist, led songs or offered solos monthly in worship and assisted with the youth music for Youth Sunday and the Christmas Eve 4pm Family Service. He completed an MS in Educational Leadership degree in December.

**Youth musicians**, vocalists as well as instrumentalists on cello, clarinet, trumpet, bassoon, and French horn. Additional **instrumental music** throughout the year included bagpipes, flute, cello, violin, trumpet, guitar, and percussion (djembe), often in collaboration with the choir.

**Soli Deo Gloria Music** featured our Kawai grand piano on November 12 in a spectacular program by students of OSU professors Tom and Heather Lanners, followed by a reception.

**Peace Jam** flourished in its first full year (begun Oct. 2022), led and hosted by Jim and Nancy Beckstrom. Meeting on the first Friday of every month, this community-wide event invites all ages for a 6pm potluck supper and 6:45-8:30pm music jam session (come and go) in Fellowship Hall.

**Bench Buddies** – anyone 7 or older can sit at or by the organ console during worship, experiencing the organ and choir up close and gaining a new perspective on worship.

*Committee members: Dustin Reavis (chair), Ken Belanus, Nate Ingram, Janet Lawson, Kati Collins (staff), Rebecca te Velde (staff), Jenny Wells (staff)*

## Music Staff

- ◇ Rebecca te Velde *Director of Music/Organist*
- ◇ Brandon Bowman *Digital & Contemporary Music Coordinator*
- ◇ Amanda Barber (spring) *Choral Scholar*
- ◇ Liz Brockman (fall) *Choral Scholar*
- ◇ MaryEllen Bush *Choral Scholar*
- ◇ Ainsley Carmichael (fall) *Choral Scholar*
- ◇ Megan Flores (spring) *Choral Scholar*
- ◇ Sam Markmiller (fall) *Choral Scholar*
- ◇ Henry Marshall *Choral Scholar*
- ◇ Jack Moffatt *Choral Scholar*
- ◇ Vanessa Washburn *Choral Scholar*





## WORSHIP

Worship in 2023 continued our familiar traditions while taking opportunities to try new things and beginning discussions about new ways to worship in our church. Communion was celebrated at 8:30am services, every 1st Sunday at 11am, and select other services throughout the year. We continued to receive the Sacrament by intinction and added a gluten free station for those who prefer that option. We were able to be blessed in many instances by several congregation members providing the bread for some of our communion celebrations!

We enjoyed the waving of the palms at Palm Sunday, a welcome and joyous Easter complete with a beautiful flowered cross in the narthex, and as always a vibrant and energetic Pentecost Sunday! Our evening services on Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday were inspiring and moving as always. And our church hosted the Holy Week Community Services this year.

During the summer we celebrated and said goodbye to our Associate Pastor Jenny Wells as she accepted a call in Kansas City. Her presence will be missed dearly and we wish her all the best in her new calling!

We began discussions of ways to enjoy various styles of

music and worship in our church, which continue into 2024. We made the difficult decision to suspend the 8:30am service but look forward with optimism and determination to welcome it back when our resources are fully renewed in the future. In the meantime, the 11am service has become even more alive with a more full congregation. Additionally, Session approved celebrating communion at many more services at 11am as part of including elements from the 8:30am service in 2024.

World Communion Sunday at the beginning of October with all of the wonderful loaves of bread, Reformation Sunday with the beloved bagpipes, All Saints Sunday with candles lit for loved ones, Advent Sundays including the ever popular Lessons and Carols, taking time in the Blue Christmas service to stop and reflect during the Christmas season, and finally, a full Christmas Eve Sunday with 3 worship services: the morning service, the afternoon Family service with the children of the church recollecting Jesus's birth and Christmas hymns by candlelight, and the late traditional service with choir, communion, and candlelight, and last but not least a very well attended Dec 31st morning service round out the year!





## TRUSTEES

Most of our 2023 efforts addressed critical repair needs of FPC facilities as well as taking a close look at our aging infrastructure and what could be done to repair, replace, or upgrade features to keep our church structure viable and able to serve the needs of the congregation.

The Preschool provided considerable funding (\$44,000) to assist with funding several projects including the replacement of the Preschool shed in the courtyard, the replacement of the courtyard sidewalk awning, and replacement of carpeting in the Worship Center and three rooms in the north wing.

An early April wind storm proved the 2022 roof replacements over most of our buildings worked well, but damage to the Sanctuary roof (that was not replaced in 2022) reminded us that it is very much in need of replacement.

Bottle-filling stations were added to three water fountains using funding provided by the Leone List estate gift. Leaf guards were added to all gutters and water damage to the ceiling of the Narthex entrance was repaired.

In mid-September, we were notified by Church Mutual that their insurance coverage would end on January 1, 2024. We quickly convened meetings to interview other providers. The insurance industry in Oklahoma is undergoing readjustments to their business plans and we determined that premiums would be considerably higher than anticipated. After consultation with several providers, we secured a policy from Insurance Board for 2024.

Our struggling HVAC system has long been a focus of efforts to ensure we have adequate heating and cooling throughout the year. During several meetings with our contractor, several modifications and upgrades to the current system were proposed along with improved maintenance plans. An engineer is evaluating the proposals. We hope to have specific recommendations for improvements this winter that can be completed prior to the AC season this summer. Funding for this work will be provided from a monetary gift from the estate of Dan Grischkowsky.

The trustees met with Finance, Endowment, and Legacy committees to discuss capital needs and options to provide funding for them. After a presentation by the trustees, Session approved proceeding with arranging for a line-of-credit loan for short-term needs and to include a presentation and discussion at the January congregation meeting.

*Board of Trustees members: Dennis Ferrell (chair), William Cole (vice-chair), Larry Caldwell (secretary), Andrea Arquitt, Virginia Charter (Preschool Board), Billy McCollom, Judy Ferrell (Session Liaison), Kati Collins (staff)*

