



# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF STILLWATER

## 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

# PASTOR LETTER

For me, 2024 has been a year of abundance, and I count myself beyond blessed to have been asked to serve with you in ministry here in Stillwater. The life and work and welcome of this congregation, highlighted on the following pages, bears within it the light of God's love in this congregation and our community.

Barbara Brown Taylor wrote about community recently; well, actually about her beloved guinea fowl: *Psychoanalysis would never work on a guinea hen, because guinea fowl cannot say "I." They can only say "we." Even if you tried to explain individuality to them, they would have no frame of reference, since a lone guinea hen is a dead guinea hen. Through trial and error, they have learned that the only way to survive foxes, coyotes, weasels, skunks, raccoons, hawks, owls, and snakes is to stick together, making an enormous racket if anything the least bit suspicious approaches the moving orb of their community... (When guinea fowl are in full plural mode, predators tend to lose heart in the face of such loud unity, going off in search of something that has not learned to say "we."* ("Guinea Fowl, Plural". Published via Substack, January 21, 2025.)

What I have witnessed at FPC in 2024 - and hope will be true of us in 2025 - is something like that guinea fowl plurality. Let us continue to seek God's presence, God's voice, then lend ourselves and our voices as together we seek to share God's love for all!

~ Diane

## STAFF FOR ALL OR PART OF 2024

- ◇ Rev. Kati Collins  
*Interim Pastor/Head of Staff*  
January 2024-March 2024
- ◇ Rev. Amy Rogers  
*Bridge Pastor*  
March 2024-August 2024
- ◇ The Rev. Dr. Diane Janssen Hemmen  
*Pastor/Head of Staff*  
(started August 2024)
- ◇ Magdalena Vinson  
*Church Administrator*
- ◇ Leigh Miller  
*Coordinator of Children's & Youth Ministry*  
January 2024 - May 2024
- ◇ Jenna Campbell  
*Director of Children's & Youth Ministry*  
(July 2024-December 2024)
- ◇ Sharon Bennett  
*Pastoral Care Associate*
- ◇ Mary Beth Garoffolo  
*Office/Finance Assistant*
- ◇ Rachel Hearn  
*Finance Assistant*  
(started December 2024)
- ◇ Dana Brown  
*Presbyterian Preschool Director*
- ◇ Rebecca te Velde  
*Organist/Director of Music Emerita*  
Retired September 2024
- ◇ Dr. Lucia Unrau  
*Interim Organist*  
(started October 2024)
- ◇ Dr. Christopher Haygood  
*Interim Choir Director*  
(started September 2024)
- ◇ Alex Greene
- ◇ Emily Yost  
*AV Technicians*  
(started June 2024)
- ◇ Brandon Bowman  
*Contemporary Music Coordinator*
- ◇ Elijah Ankrom
- ◇ Haley Brobston  
*Youth Ministry Assistants*
- ◇ Bekah Bowman  
*Children's Ministry Assistant*
- ◇ Erin Lawson  
*Childcare Coordinator*
- ◇ Vickie Foust  
*Building Supervisor*

# PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Pastor Nominating Committee was established in October 2022. The search process began when the PNC members (Ed Arquitt, Casey Campbell, Virginia Charter, Claire Leffingwell, Denise Rex, Tammy Wasson and Tim Schlais) were elected by the congregation. As the chair, I wish to thank each one of them for their hard work; this is a group of outstanding people who prayerfully followed the leadership of the Holy Spirit to bring Diane Janssen Hemmen to our congregation.

During the 20-month process, the PNC received and reviewed over 75 applications and referrals. Many were experienced pastors or associate pastors, but a few were new graduates looking for their first call and ordination. Several candidates had the needed skills and abilities, but a sense of mutual calling of the Spirit was not present. With Diane, that the Spirit was present and at work was felt by both the committee and the candidate. Our wait and perseverance have rewarded the church with a wonderful, skilled candidate. By vote of the congregation on August 4, Diane was called to serve as our minister and with the gratitude of the body, the PNC was dissolved.

Peace be with you, Tim Schlais, PNC Chair

## SESSION AND ITS COMMITTEES/WORKGROUPS

Adult Ministry Committee	Personnel Committee	From Strength To Strength Team
Children's Ministry Committee	Stewardship & Finance Committee	History Project
Communications & Mission Committee	Worship & Music Committee	Team Neurodiversity
Endowment Committee	Youth Ministry Committee	Presbyterian Women
Fellowship & Family Committee		Stephen Ministry
		Scouting America

### SESSION

*Three different ministers served as moderator in 2024  
John Gelder, Clerk (resigned August)  
Kathy Thomas, Clerk & chosen as Cimarron Presbytery  
Commissioner to the General Assembly, Salt Lake City,  
June/July 2024*

#### 2024

*Ken Belanus  
Belinda Bruner  
Judy Ferrell  
Donna Koeppel  
Tim Krehbiel  
John te Velde  
Corinne Savage (youth)*

#### 2025

*Ed Arquitt (elected August to fill unexpired term)  
Jenny Bobo (resigned June)  
Cathy Conway  
Lisa McGaw (resigned June)  
Dustin Reavis  
David Silver  
Barbara Stoecker (elected August to fill unexpired term)  
Kathy Thomas*

#### 2026

*Dustin Charter  
Carolyn Gang (resigned October)  
Ed Noltensmeyer (resigned October)  
Lynn Osborn  
Rusty Rex  
Courtney Savage*

### BOARD OF DEACONS

*Anne Belanus and Terry Shreve,  
Co-Moderators*

#### 2024

*Anne Belanus  
Sharon Bennett  
Mary Beth Garoffolo  
Ava Osborn  
Gerald Stangl  
Ann Watkins (died October 2024)  
Sarah Bennett (youth)*

#### 2025

*Holly Chermack  
Tim Hardin  
Ellen Ingram  
Terry Shreve  
Aaron Stoutzenberger  
Eric Windhausen*

#### 2026

*Terri Carver  
Ann Houston  
Tami Krehbiel  
Christie Millis (died November 2024)  
Debby Schoenecke  
Danielle Shreve*

## STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Annual Giving Commitment for 2025 was intentionally pushed to January 2025 to give space and focus to the From Strength To Strength Capital Campaign in the fall of 2024. As of this printing, the Annual Giving Commitment is underway.

We are also working in support of Session to evaluate ways in which God might be leading us to think in fresh ways about the funding of our life as a community of faith. Conversations in our committee, with our Endowment Committee, and together with Session took place this fall and will be ongoing.

*Committee members: Tim Krehbiel (co-chair), Lynn Osborn (co-chair), Cathy Fairbanks (Treasurer)*

## ENDOWMENT

The Endowment Committee oversaw the management of the endowment funds. Funds are invested with New Covenant Trust Company, a division of the Presbyterian Foundation and are invested consistent with the social witness principles adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA. The total market value of the endowment funds on December 31, 2024 was \$1,887,914.79. In addition to earnings received on our investments, over \$153,197 in gifts were received and added to the following unrestricted and restricted endowment accounts to include: Perpetual Pledges, Darlow Scholarship, Goforth Joy offering, Murphy Preschool, Trustee Special Maintenance, Murphy endowment, and K. Clapp Deacons' Accounts.

Session, families and others were supported by the Endowment Resources during 2024. 7% of restricted funds and 8% of unrestricted funds of the 3-year average market value on September 30 each year were made available to support the church, consistent with the restrictions established for the restricted accounts. This was an increase from 4% per Session request due to financial necessity. Support provided during 2024 included:

- Long-term maintenance of the FPC facilities from the Unrestricted Endowment and the Bullen CM&I Restricted Endowment
- Pledges to the unified church budget from the Perpetual Pledges Endowment
- Presbyterian Woman luncheons, new oven for the Fellowship Hall kitchen from the A Brown PW Endowment
- Christmas Joy Offering and the Giving Tree from the Goforth Joy Offering Endowment and the Joy Smith Giving Tree Endowment

## 2024 YEAR-END FINANCIAL SUMMARY

INCOME	2024 Budget	2024 Actual
Congregational Giving	623,492	622,056
Interest, Royalties Perpetual Pledges, etc	44,160	62,095
Budget Equity from Previous Years	22,776	22,776
<b>Income Totals:</b>	<b>690,428</b>	<b>706,927</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Personnel-Pastor (3 different people)	110,588	121,660
Personnel-Full-Time Staff	190,928	176,389
Personnel-Part-Time Staff	59,321	65,854
Personnel-FICA, Workers Comp	26,793	27,481
Stewardship, Finance & Session	3,650	2,693
Communications & Mission/Outreach	36,562	38,468
Worship & Music	7,787	9,574
University Ministry	2,225	374
Children's Ministry	4,000	2,766
Youth Ministry	3,925	3,654
Fellowship & Family Ministry	668	453
Adult Ministry	2,806	2,403
Common Ed Ministry	2,412	1,832
Office	20,481	22,393
Deacons/Outreach	19,340	17,280
Trustees/Facilities	224,384	230,439
<b>EXPENSE TOTALS:</b>	<b>715,870</b>	<b>723,713</b>
<b>Income minus Expense</b>	<b>(25,442)</b>	<b>(16,786)</b>

- Bethel Cemetery for cemetery maintenance
- The Soli Deo Gloria Music Concert Series from the Joy Smith Music Endowment
- Deacon's crisis assistance from the K. Clapp Deacons' Endowment
- Support for the Presbyterian Preschool Program from the Gumm Preschool, C. Murphy and Darlow Endowments
- The Children and Youth Programs from the Sheerar Child/Youth Endowment
- Support for the Stephen Ministry Program from the Stephen Ministry Endowment
- Medical Debt Relief from the Medical Debt Relief Endowment

*Committee members: David Conway (chair), Tim Hardin (vice-chair), Donna Koeppe, Lynn Osborn, Tim Riley, Tammy Wasson*

# FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN



*"God, what do You want to do through me?"*

This short prayer helped guide FPC through the From Strength To Strength campaign. Our goal was to raise at least \$1.5 million dollars over three years to better-position our church for the future into which God is leading us.

FPC listened, prayed, and responded according to God's direction, and From Strength To Strength succeeded beyond anyone's imagination. As of Announcement Sunday in December, our capital campaign received pledges from 88 giving units totaling \$1,722,316.52.

The children and youth led this campaign with expressions of gratitude to God for our church in October with their first fruits offering of \$910.69. It was a celebration to see the children and youth of this church lead the way for our future.

This campaign has been a coming-home movement for our congregation and how our people and facilities are the anchor that keeps us rooted and grounded in God. The sharing of stories during the Commitment Gatherings in homes was so uplifting and powerful. There were many tears and much laughter from the sharing: it was amazing to see how FPC has touched so many in such powerful ways.

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Personnel Committee which served from January -June 2024 was comprised of Co-Chairs Linda Good and Lisa McGaw, Jenny Bobo, Ed Noltensmeyer, and Rusty Rex. This committee, except for Ed Noltensmeyer, resigned as a result of a 2024 Session action overturning a recommendation from the committee that had been accepted by the 2023 Session. Rusty Rex continued to serve on Session with his other committee. Lisa McGaw provided current Personnel Committee work to Amy Rogers, Bridge Pastor, and Ed Noltensmeyer (resigned October).

The current Personnel Committee began their work in July. They are Cathy Conway (chair), Ed Arquitt, Paula Kendrick, and Jill Stoutzenberger. The committee's work included a personnel budget worksheet review and informational discussion in July with FPC Treasurer Cathy Fairbanks; meetings with Bridge Pastor Amy Rogers and Mary Beth Garoffolo to discuss Mary Beth's retirement plans (end of February 2025); preliminary meetings with Amy re: evaluations of office staff and reviews of their job descriptions; worked on plans to give the thank you card reception for Amy; in July/August, the committee did comparable salary research in recruiting areas for the Director of Music/Organist, pay range and advertising with assistance as needed from Rebecca te Velde, Organist Emerita, who retired in September.

This Committee had the pleasure of meeting our new pastor and head of staff, Rev. Dr. Diane Janssen Hemmen, on August 4<sup>th</sup> and began working immediately with Diane on personnel budget discussions; annual evaluations and job description reviews with all members of the staff; and developed the new job description and hourly pay range for a part time Finance Assistant position for Session's approval in October. This position was filled in November.

The review of the 2016 Personnel policies and procedures has been an ongoing project for the Personnel Committee and Diane. The Personnel Committee has been moved by the faithfulness and commitment of our leadership and staff this year. We are excited about the future of FPC Stillwater and look forward to serving the FPC Staff and the Session in the new year!

The Campaign Leadership Team of around 40 people was amazing and dedicated. The Spirit continues to move within this congregation and campaign. Your generosity joined with others will help FPC deepen our roots and strengthen our worship, programs, and outreach - essential components of our life together in faith for which we utilize our facilities right now and into the future.

The utilization of campaign funds has three primary components:

1. Facilities work: including large projects like the Sanctuary roof, HVAC system upgrades and repairs, and masonry upkeep, as well as projects of smaller scope but real impact such as sound, lighting, and video improvements.
2. Outreach and Programs: including replacement of organ leathers, Fellowship Hall chair and table upgrades, and multiple outreach ideas for Session to consider.
3. Funds For Our Future: a six-figure building maintenance fund for future generations to use for building needs that foster program continuation.

Thank you for your generosity and watch for updates throughout our three-year effort.

*Campaign chairs: Ava & Lynn Osborn, Becky & Tim Schlais, Horizons Stewardship Consultant Don Smith*

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES/FACILITIES

2024 could be noted in the future as a turning point for our First Presbyterian Church. It's been a busy year both in terms of facilities problems discovered and repaired as well as ongoing efforts to repair chronic problems inherent in a beloved, aging structure. One of the highlights of the Trustee's year was to participate in discussions of the need for several critical infrastructure projects that helped prompt the capital campaign that will help sustain our facility for generations to come.

In addition to repairs and upgrades in work from 2023, the Trustees discovered water leaks in the HVAC piping in the basement under the west end of the sanctuary. Water was dripping from circulation pipes that carry water from the Fellowship Hall HVAC system for heating and cooling the Sanctuary. The pipes dated from 1951 and were insulated with asbestos. Removal of asbestos is a critical operation mandated by the state to limit exposure. After that was complete, our contractor was able to come in to replace and insulate 160 feet of new pipes. Total cost of this unexpected project was \$52,649. We were without heat in the sanctuary and offices for about 66 days but repairs were successful.

Intermittent repairs of the HVAC system served to focus our efforts to design modifications and upgrades to our existing infrastructure. In January, we were thinking in terms of replacing our cooling tower because it was suffering from corrosion and in need of repairs. The HVAC system was struggling to keep the facilities cooled during the extremely hot summer. Special fans were purchased to help cool offices that were uncomfortably warm. Cyntergy Engineering of Tulsa was contracted to design an upgrade that would carry us forward for the next 15 to 20 years. WorthHydro, Inc. was contracted to install a chemical drip system to assist in "cleaning" the cooling tower and also to conduct monthly monitoring of the system. These efforts resulted in de-scaling the cooling tower and it is now back in good working order.

The decision was made to recommend to Session that we use campaign funds to replace the heat exchanger in the HVAC system that has been clogged with scale for years, rendering it almost ineffective. Its replacement will likely make a considerable improvement to our HVAC dilemma. Further evaluations of the water tower are being delayed until performance of a new heat exchanger can be assessed.

Critical to having proper distribution of heat and cool air is a computerized controller. There are 19 air handlers in our buildings, and event schedules often make it too difficult to manually plan and set proper temperatures. Northwest Controls, Inc. was hired to upgrade the HVAC controller system that allows programming of the 13 "zones" in the facilities so that the rooms only have to be heated or cooled during times when they are typically used, thus minimizing energy requirements when spaces are not occupied.

Unrelated to HVAC issues was the degraded condition of the sanctuary roof. Its replacement was not part of the new shingles for all other buildings a couple years ago and its deterioration mandated we do something sooner than later. We contracted with a company from Oklahoma City to install aluminum shingles. It's a high quality and very good look for our 100+ year old Sanctuary, and based on what we learned, this roof could last as long as 50 years.

Many other projects recognized in the early part of 2024 needing attention were summarized into the discussion of the need for a capital campaign. These projects included, in no particular order, plans for bell tower window renovation, repair sanctuary NE inner wall, fire escape fences, replace FH north wood fence, repair moisture problems on west FH wall, replace carpets, replace chandelier shades in the sanctuary, replace courtyard drain pipe, masonry tuckpointing, landscape renovation, paint fascia boards, replace organ rank's leathers, replace FH tables and chairs, and parking lot caulking and striping. \$200,000 to provide for replacement of part of the 19 aging air handlers was also proposed. The establishment and funding of \$350,000 maintenance endowment was proposed for the campaign as well, to provide a sustainable fund for future maintenance needs.

One of the other critical functions for Sanctuary worship is an audio/visual system that's reliable and able to transmit our services to those at home who may not be able to join us in person. In 2024, we began upgrades to set us on our way to building that system.

Thanks to our Presbyterian Women, the dishwasher in the Hospitality Kitchen was replaced this fall. Also, thanks to a USDA pass-through grant and the work of Andrea Arquitt, Terri Carver, and Magdalena Vinson, a new commercial-grade refrigerator was purchased for the Fellowship Hall kitchen and the use of our Saturday Brunch ministry.

Outside, we removed old shrubbery and plantings and replaced them with grass along the south side of the main building. This has simplified lawn care and allows our property to look more inviting.

One of our missions is the Preschool. Replacement of the walkway awning in the playground, and the addition of insulation above the preschool rooms to prevent freezing weather pipe breaks have been completed.

Trustees have an ambitious agenda but we have the people who can make it happen. With the Lord's blessing, we will have a facility to match our need to serve those who need our help.

*Board members: Dennis Ferrell (chair), William Cole (vice-chair), Larry Caldwell (secretary), Andrea Arquitt, Jim Beckstrom, Judy Ferrell (Session Liaison), Jim Showalter*

# COMMUNICATIONS & MISSION COMMITTEE

The Committee has been active all year in projects and activities that engage with the wider church. We have also continued our local outreach through several opportunities in our own community.

On February 4, our committee hosted Reverend Jan Dus from the Czech Republic in Fellowship Hall for an informal meeting to provide firsthand information about conditions in Ukraine and potential and critical mission needs. Our congregation members have participated in an ongoing partnership with Ponca City First Presbyterian to teach English to children in summer camp in the Czech Republic where Rev. Dus lives and works, and many know him personally. He took up a collection to support his mission work in both Ukraine and the Czech Republic.

We also set the dates for receiving the four special offerings of the Presbyterian Church (USA). We collected and distributed \$3455.57 for Christmas Joy last December, \$3457.82 for One Great Hour of Sharing in March, \$1160.00 for Pentecost in May, and \$1245.00 for Peace and Global Witness in early October.

Solar Under the Sun, one of our primary recipients of funding, held two schools during 2024: one in May in Little Rock, Arkansas and one in October in Fort Worth, Texas. Committee member Steve Fairbanks attended and taught at both. Steve also announced in May that the Honduras Project had been completed and all 76 homes are now set up with solar power thanks to Solar Under the Sun.

The Fair Trade Store continues to offer coffee, chocolate, olive oil, and gift items from developing countries. Early in the year, the Fair Trade Store manager, Julie Bills, visited suppliers in Guatemala and brought back many new ideas

and opportunities for fair trade exchanges. She also shared highlights from her trip with Seasoned Adults.

We formed a subcommittee to update our membership rolls. All members were contacted in at least two ways, and after several months of work, the membership list is much more up to date and accurate. Denise Rex and Mary McKinley worked alongside committee members Julie Bills, Cathy Conway, Jill Stoutzenberger, and Kathy Thomas to complete the work.

We voted in November to fund a trial shower ministry in the spring of 2025, which will be managed by Jill Stoutzenberger and Cathy Conway.

We designated and distributed the following mission funds in 2024:

- \$450 to Covenant Network of Presbyterians
- \$500 to Solar Under the Sun
- \$750 to Our Daily Bread
- \$300 to Church World Services for Cleanup Kits
- \$500 to Presbyterian Hunger Program
- \$1000 to Jed Koball and Chenoa Stock, our mission partners in Peru
- \$500 to Synod Partners for Disaster Relief
- \$1000 to Austin Theological Seminary
- \$1000 to University of the Ozarks
- \$311.25 Presbyterian Disaster Relief

*Committee members: Julie Bills, Cathy Conway, Steve Fairbanks, Jill Stoutzenberger, and Kathy Thomas*

## MEMBERSHIP

*7 new members  
12 deaths  
1 wedding*

*As of December, our 2024 membership is 302.*

## IN MEMORIAM

<i>Gene Benson</i>	<i>Christie Millis</i>
<i>Charles Drake</i>	<i>Jim Plaxico</i>
<i>Charles Feasley</i>	<i>Becky Rohlfing</i>
<i>Mary Frye</i>	<i>Lee Rutledge</i>
<i>Sandra Ives</i>	<i>Ann Watkins</i>
<i>Evelyn Johnson</i>	<i>Tom Williams</i>



*‘Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life.” ‘*

## CELEBRATING LONG-TERM MEMBERS IN YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP

<i>Kay Keys (45)</i>	<i>Sandy Stuart (48)</i>	<i>Bob Henderson (51)</i>	<i>Edwin Koeppe (54)</i>	<i>David Smith (59)</i>
<i>Laura Smith (45)</i>	<i>David Silver (49)</i>	<i>Ken McKinley (51)</i>	<i>Allen Murphy (55)</i>	<i>Catsy Gunn (60)</i>
<i>Ted Smith (45)</i>	<i>Rosetta Silver (49)</i>	<i>Mary McKinley (51)</i>	<i>Janna Murphy (55)</i>	<i>Sydney Reding (60)</i>
<i>Dewey Clapp (47)</i>	<i>Cathy Fairbanks (50)</i>	<i>Kirk Mittelstet (51)</i>	<i>Susie Glasscock (56)</i>	<i>Maxine Mulvey (62)</i>
<i>Peggy Gibbs (47)</i>	<i>Steve Fairbanks (50)</i>	<i>Madelyn Mittelstet (51)</i>	<i>Cathy Grove (56)</i>	<i>Lynda Williams (64)</i>
<i>Kyle King (47)</i>	<i>Beverly Gumm (50)</i>	<i>Ava Osborn (51)</i>	<i>Pauline Kopecky (56)</i>	<i>Allan McCrary (66)</i>
<i>Denise Rex (47)</i>	<i>Bonny Mullen (50)</i>	<i>Lynn Osborn (51)</i>	<i>Larry Perkins (56)</i>	<i>Robert Culton (67)</i>
<i>Rusty Rex (47)</i>	<i>Dick Shawley (50)</i>	<i>Karen Culton (52)</i>	<i>Suzanne Coyne (57)</i>	<i>Marilyn Heath (69)</i>
<i>Carol Trapp (47)</i>	<i>Cynthia Shawley (50)</i>	<i>Margie Keener (53)</i>	<i>Susan Worthington (59)</i>	<i>Anne Thomas (69)</i>
<i>Jim Trapp (47)</i>	<i>Kay Stewart (50)</i>	<i>Marvin Keener (53)</i>	<i>Rebecca Bair (59)</i>	<i>Owen Thomas (69)</i>
<i>Kay Gafford (48)</i>	<i>Connie Stiegler (50)</i>	<i>Andrea Arquitt (54)</i>	<i>Rita Breuninger (59)</i>	<i>Mary Thomas (76)</i>
<i>Ed Stuart (48)</i>	<i>Barb Henderson (51)</i>	<i>Ed Arquitt (54)</i>	<i>Rick Dearing (59)</i>	

## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Presbyterian Women (PW) met in the Fellowship Hall on the second Wednesday of the month during January - May and September - December for Bible Study and fellowship. For the past two years, Laura Southard has led our studies which are developed by the national Presbyterian Women of the PC(USA). In May, we completed "Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts" in May; and, in September, we started "Let Justice Roll Down: God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation" which will carry us to May of 2025.

In January, PW provided flowers for the communions table in remembrance of the women of the church who had died in 2023. In May, PW provided potato salad for the meal feeding the volunteers at Special Olympics held annually at OSU. Along with our congregation, PW collected donations at various times throughout the year for Blanket Sunday, Thank Offering, Birthday Offering and Least Coin Offering which are annual projects.

PW hosted receptions for funerals, a wedding, and music recitals held at First Presbyterian Church of Stillwater. We joyfully hosted a reception for our new pastor—Diane Janssen Hemmen. We also participated in this year's From Strength To Strength Capital Campaign by hosting an Affinity Group Luncheon. But perhaps our biggest undertaking was helping our church host the Oklahoma Tri-Presbytery meeting May 31 - June 1.

By using accumulated PW funds generated from the Allene Brown PW Endowment, the women of the church were able to purchase a much-needed dishwasher for the Hospitality Area which will be used regularly by the church and pre-school. During 2024, 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	\$567
Thank Offering	\$927
Blanket Sunday	\$1,235
Least Coin	\$212.18



**Our Second Mile Sewers** began their year 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. We were also asked again 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 and over 20 prayer shawls were given this year.

*PW Officers: Amy Hardin Moderator; Mary McKinley, Past Moderator; Debby Schoenecke, Recording Secretary; Andrea Arquitt, Treasurer; Rita Breuninger and Rosetta Silver, Hospitality; Holly Chermack, Corresponding Secretary and Name Tags.*

## STEPHEN MINISTRY

Stephen Ministry at FPC continued to provide spiritual and emotional support to persons experiencing life challenges within our church and Stillwater in 2024. Our Stephen Ministers met regularly with care receivers and twice a month for continuing education and supervision. We have walked with people experiencing grief, loneliness, relationship issues, parenting, aging and health concerns. We have also made referrals to other Stephen Ministry congregations in Stillwater and are grateful for these connections.

In April 2024, our group gathered at Carolyn Caldwell's home for our annual retreat to explore empathy using the book *The Gift of Empathy: Helping Others Feel Valued, Cared For, and Understood* by Joe Bretscher and Stephen Ministry founder Kenneth Haugk. It was a good day to strengthen caring skills and our connection to each other. The spiritual bond we share is one of the great joys of being involved in this ministry.

We regretfully bid farewell to Stephen Leader Linda Good as she resigned from Stephen Ministry in May. We are grateful for her leadership and many years of service as a Stephen Minister.

Since October 2024, Kay Stewart, Linda Burks, and Carolyn Caldwell have been helping to lead the city-wide Stephen Ministry training. While none of the 22 trainees are from FPC, it is certainly beneficial to our community to have more trained Stephen Ministers in Stillwater. We encourage FPC members to prayerfully consider joining our next training class. Men are especially needed.

*2024 Stephen Ministers and Leaders: Anne Belanus, Linda Burks, Carolyn Caldwell, Linda Good, Ava Osborn, Denise Rex, . Debby Schoenecke, Kay Stewart*



# WORSHIP & MUSIC COMMITTEE

In 2024, we honored our worship traditions while exploring new approaches and initiating conversations about the future of worship at our church, which will continue into 2025. This was a year where we were blessed to be served by 3 different Heads of Staff!

Session approved celebrating communion at various services in 2024. Communion was celebrated every 1st Sunday, and select other services throughout the year. We continued to receive the Sacrament by intinction and continued to offer gluten-free bread for those who prefer that option. Several congregation members provided the bread for some of our communion celebrations, others helped to serve communion, and ushers. We are grateful for their volunteer service which is integral to our worship experience.

We enjoyed the waving of the palms at Palm Sunday, a beautiful and joyous Easter Sunday, and, as always, a vibrant and energetic Pentecost Sunday! Our evening services on Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday were inspirational cornerstones of the Lenten Season. During the spring we celebrated and said goodbye to our Interim Pastor Kati Collins and her family as they transitioned to a new calling in Columbia, MO. Towards the end of summer we said goodbye to our Bridge Pastor, Amy Rogers, with much gratitude for her compassionate leadership in guiding us through the joys and challenges of transition. And finally, we welcomed our new pastor, Diane with much excitement and optimism for the future!

The year finished with Reformation Sunday with bagpipes and rich history, 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,

Christmas Eve with two worship services: the afternoon family service with the children of the church recollecting Jesus' birth and Christmas hymns by candlelight, and the late traditional service with choir, communion, and candlelight.

We look forward to exploring how we can instill additional meaningful worship elements and opportunities in 2025!

## CHANCEL CHOIR HIGHLIGHTS

- Rehearsed Wednesdays 7:00-8:15pm from mid-August through early May and sang at most Sunday services as well as for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Christmas Eve 11:00 p.m. worship.
- Ministered to one another as we celebrated birthdays, graduations, retirements, and held each other in prayer through life's trials and losses.

## OTHER MUSIC HIGHLIGHTS

- Additional instrumental music throughout the year included bagpipes, flute, clarinet, bassoon, cello, violin, trumpet, guitar, and percussion (djembe), often in collaboration with the choir, and many played by the youth musicians in our church or OSU music students.
- Soli Deo Gloria Music featured our Reuter organ on March 12th for a Lenten noon-hour organ recital with organists Gerry Frank, Brad Newcomb, and Rebecca te Velde, joined by flautist Noah Pool, and our Kawai grand piano on November 17th in a spectacular program by students of OSU professors **Tom and Heather Lanners**, followed by a reception.
- **Rebecca te Velde's Retirement!** Rebecca was named Organist/Director of Music Emerita upon her retirement on September 8,

having marked 33 years as FPC organist on September 1 and 10 years also as Director of Music. She served three pastors, two interim pastors, one bridge pastor, five associate pastors, and six choir directors. During her tenure, there were three major organ renovations/expansions, and purchases of the sanctuary upright piano, the Kawai grand piano in Fellowship Hall, two djembe (drums), a portable keyboard, and new choir robes. She supervised and mentored many Choral Scholars, working to solidify and expand that part of the FPC music ministry, and started the *Soli Deo Gloria* Music concert series.

- **The Peace Jam** continued to flourish, 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 6:00 p.m. potluck supper and 6:45-8:30 p.m. music jam session (come and go) in Fellowship Hall.
- **DoM/Organist Search:** while we pause for a time the work of filling the position, we have been blessed to welcome **Christopher Haygood** as interim choir director, and **Lucia Unrau, Alayna Tolbert, and Paul Pinkosky** as interim organists/pianists! We look forward to their continued service.

*Committee members: Dustin Reavis (chair), Ken Belanus, MaryEllen Bush, Janet Lawson*



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL AGES

## CHILDREN & YOUTH

Children's and Youth Ministry saw lots of change and transition this year but through it all, the Spirit was present and working through our gifted staff and volunteers. Leigh Miller, our Coordinator for Children's and Youth Ministry, served from January to May as Jenna Campbell, Director of Children's and Youth Ministry, finished a leave of absence, living in Carlisle, PA with her family while husband Casey completed his studies at the Army War College. Our staff and volunteers did a tremendous job planning and leading meaningful ministry in Jenna's absence. Jenna returned to full-time work from July to October and was grateful to be back among the children, youth, and volunteers. The Leader Launch in August saw 28 gifted volunteers being equipped and inspired for the year ahead. In mid-October, Jenna began part-time, remote work as she moved to Italy for three months to be with Casey who is on a year-long tour with the US Army. Our volunteers and assistants once again worked hard to ensure the ministries would continue to thrive!

Our children and youth led the way in our From Strength To Strength Capital Campaign by raising money for the campaign through the Painted Pumpkin Auction. They used their unique gifts to paint pumpkins and then congregants bid on those pumpkins to adorn their houses during the fall. Overall, their creativity brought in \$910 to the From Strength To Strength Campaign!

### Ferncliff Camp

Five FPC Stillwater campers travelled by charter bus with 23 other campers from Oklahoma to Ferncliff Camp outside of Little Rock, AR for a week of summer

camp. Jenna Campbell joined them as a sponsor. They enjoyed a week of worship, family group fun, Bible study, swimming, and outdoor activities.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY COMMITTEE

We welcomed Bekah Bowman back as Children's Ministry Assistant in January following her semester abroad. The children's Easter Celebration included children hunting Easter eggs, crafting, and releasing lady bugs.

The Gathering Time at the beginning of Sunday school got a refreshed look this fall for our 4-year-olds through fifth graders. As they entered the Worship Center each Sunday from 9:45-10:00am, they were greeted by a new rug and a backdrop with banners previously used in the Children and Worship space, as well as a basket of snacks to welcome children as they arrive. We also began a Weekly News activity during Gathering Time to celebrate what is happening in the children's lives outside of Sunday and to provide an opportunity to look ahead during the week and take prayer requests.

We kicked off the school year with a taco dinner and water games in the FPC Courtyard which provided families a great opportunity for fellowship. Our Children and Worship program continues to offer a special worship opportunity for children ages 3 to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. 17 volunteers served as storytellers and helpers, guiding the children in a worship experience through storytelling and wondering questions.

The Children's Ministry committee planned a fellowship event at Oh My Gourd Pumpkin Patch in Glencoe.



Children and families (including several Presbyterian Preschool families) enjoyed an afternoon of fall fun together. The children enjoyed painting pumpkins for the Painted Pumpkin auction benefiting the From Strength To Strength Campaign.

### Milestones

In the spring, our kindergarteners and 1<sup>st</sup> graders and their grownups participated in the *My Body Belongs to Me* class. In November, we celebrated as three third graders received their Bibles in worship. Their parents/grandparents joined them the following week to learn how to use their new Bibles during the *Exploring My Bible* class.

### Sunday School

Faith Kid-nection, our Pre-K & Kindergarteners class, love the new curriculum they began using this fall. Published by Faith Alive Resources, *Dwell Play* leads children through the big story of God's love. SpiritLink for 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders explored Bible stories through art, cooking, science, technology, storytelling and drama, and video. Spring stories: Love is..., Holy Week & Easter, the Lord is my Shepherd. Fall stories: Abraham & Sarah, the Widow's Offering, Advent & Christmas. We moved to one class of 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders for the fall semester.



## Nursery

Our little ones in the nursery receive excellent care from our nursery workers and Erin Lawson, Child Care Coordinator. We were blessed this year with consistent nursery workers who provided loving care for the youngest among us.

## Christian Parenting Project

FPC continued as a pilot church for the Christian Parenting Project (CPP), run through GenOn Ministries. Families who signed up to be part of the CPP began to receive weekly emails from CPP this year. The emails include support, encouragement, and faith enriching ideas and inspiration and is one way FPC is working toward our goal of supporting and equipping families in their role as primary faith nurturers of their children.

*Committee members: Courtney Savage (chair)  
Dustin Charter, Amy Hardin, Melody Reavis,  
Eric Windhausen*

## YOUTH MINISTRY COMMITTEE

PRESBYTERIAN • YOUTH • GROUP



Our youth group invited Edmond's Santa Fe Presbyterian's youth for a lock-in in January to start the new year in youth ministry, complete with an epic game of sardines! Our youth led us in a powerful Youth Sunday worship service with the theme "All are Welcome" inspired by their studies on radical hospitality from the fall of 2023. Over the summer, the youth connected each week at Taco Tuesday lunches and Fun @ Frios events and enjoyed a pool party at the Campbell's house. This fall, the youth theme at PYG was "God's Story, Our Story". Using Sparkhouse's Echo the Story curriculum, youth spent the fall studying the big story of God's love in scripture.

September saw two big youth events in OKC. Our youth joined others from across the state for the Interfaith Tour, sponsored by the Oklahoma Faith Network. They had the opportunity to

visit a Jewish synagogue, a Hindu temple, and the Islamic Society of Greater Oklahoma City. The next Saturday, our youth joined other Oklahoma Presbyterian youth to serve at the Urban Mission, connected through energizers games, and then had their own time as a PYG group in Bricktown for some fun and group building.

## Senior High Small Group

Our Senior High Small Group enjoyed meeting weekly at Aspen Coffee for three months each semester with deep discussions on the book "What Do I Believe About What I Believe?"

## Sunday School

Spring 2024:

- ◇ 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade: study of the Old Testament using Colaborate and ReForm Ancestors from Augsburg Fortress Publishing
- ◇ 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade: The 3 Big Questions That Shape Your Future

Fall 2024:

- ◇ 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade: study of the New Testament using Colaborate and Reform Ancestors from Augsburg Fortress Publishing
- ◇ 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grade: The Greatest Commandment class: Faith and Sexuality
- ◇ 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade: The 3 Big Questions That Shape Your Future

*Committee members: Rusty Rex (chair),  
Belinda Bruner (spring), Mike Melancon,  
Tim Riley, Corinne Savage, Eric Savage  
Josh Taylor*

## ADULT MINISTRY COMMITTEE

### Sunday Morning Classes

Feasting on the Word

This Bible study, led by Denise Rex, follows the Revised Common Lectionary. The class is on-going and dives deep into Scripture, asking reflective questions and challenging participants to think in a new way.

Faith & Fellowship

Continuing with their model of class participants leading each week, the group's studies included: "The Strange Book of Books" from Theo Academy, "It's Complicated: A Guide to Faithful Decision Making" by Jack Haberer, and "Faith After Doubt" by Brian McLaren

## Other Class/Group Offerings

Antiracism Learning Group

Though no longer meeting monthly, the group continues to share articles and events dealing with racism and members of the group are active within Stillwater Community United and the renovation project at Washington School.

Retreats

A half-day retreat was held at St. Francis of the Woods in Coyle, OK in the spring led by Sharon Bennett and Dr. Belinda Bruner. An overnight women's retreat with the theme, "Reawaken" was held in the fall and led by the Rev. Amy Rogers.



Seasoned Adults

Seasoned Adults programs continued with a variety of programs, including: presentations on a range of topics and speakers, including: Shall We Dance? Race Relations and American Arts by Dr. Belinda Bruner; "Discrimination in the Workplace: Not-So-Obvious Findings from a Sociologist" by Dr. Nick Heiserman; and Dr. Hugh Foley with a presentation on the history of Muscogee (Creek) hymns.



Coffee and Conversation

These gatherings were held at Legacy Village, Primrose, and Golden Oaks, offering staff and members a chance to connect.

*Committee members: Belinda Bruner (chair)  
and Debby Schoenecke*

# INTERGENERATIONAL EVENTS & OUTREACH

## SUMMER GENERATIONS IN FAITH TOGETHER (GIFT)

Summer GiFT looked very different this year! The theme was PSALM: Potluck Service and Local Mission. Sunday, June 30th we gathered for a shared brunch meal followed by an abbreviated worship led by Rev. Amy Rogers. After worship people were invited to choose a mission station to begin their local service journey. We were thrilled to partner with the following agencies: Wings of Hope Family Crisis Center - FPC collected towel and monetary donations to provide to the center; Stillwater Humane Society - Jacqui Savage baked dog biscuits to donate when dogs are adopted, and participants decorated bags to package them; FPC 2nd Mile Sewing - 2nd Mile Sewers helped folks string shoelaces through bags they had sewn that will hold items to provide Warming and Cooling Kits containing various toiletries and other items, to members of our community in need;

Saturday Brunch - the Fellowship Hall kitchen received a much needed scrubbing and clean up thanks to several hard working friends! We also had the opportunity to bake several dozen cookies to be distributed with the Saturday Brunch meal. The Kairos Prison Ministry at Mabel Bassett Women's



Correctional Center received handmade, disposable placemats to provide the facility in hopes of brightening their meal times together. Primrose Retirement Community - Primrose celebrated Christmas in July last summer so participants decorated Christmas cards and attached candy canes for distribution to residents.

## A NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM

A Night in Bethlehem moved back indoors after a four-year run doing it drive-thru style (spurred on by the COVID pandemic in 2020). It was a joy to be back in the Fellowship Hall, gathered around the tables enjoying chili and singing carols again! We had a great participation from our neighbors in the community. All enjoyed the youth dressed up as nativity characters, interacting with the guests ala Disney character dinner style. Chili and mac & cheese was prepared and served by members of the Family & Fellowship Committee. Then all moved to the front lawn to enjoy the Living Nativity presented by our FPC youth while enjoying hot chocolate and cider. The Fair Trade store was open for shopping, and our Little Free Pantry was full from the non-perishable goods donated at the event.



## TEAM NEURODIVERSITY

Team Neurodiversity was formed in Fall 2024 to expand the inclusivity and understanding of neurodiversity in our church through accommodations and education so that all people together can experience God's support, love, and grace. Neurodivergent conditions include autism, ADHD, OCD, Tourette's Syndrome, Sensory Processing Disorder, Fragile X Syndrome, and others.

Team Neurodiversity currently has four major initiatives: a children's low-sensory space in what used to be the library, a teen/adult low-sensory space in the Worship Center, an intergenerational liturgical library that will be housed in the narthex and will provide neuro-affirming tools for individuals of all ages to utilize throughout worship services to regulate, and congregational education pieces to be shared regularly on various aspects of neurodiversity. We hope that these efforts, along with a continued focus on providing intentional inclusivity and acceptance of neurodivergent individuals, will create a more welcoming and supportive church environment for neurodivergent families in our community.

This fall, FPC was awarded a Wonder of Worship grant through Columbia Theological Seminary, funded by the Lilly Endowment. The grant's purpose is to enhance the engagement of children in corporate worship, striving for a more intergenerational practice of worship for all ages and abilities. FPC's particular grant emphasis is on an attentiveness to families with neurodivergent children who find the environment in the Sanctuary overwhelming. The grant will fund two of the initiatives of Team Neurodiversity: the new sensory room and a Liturgical Library.

While currently reporting directly to Session, this Team will be housed under a Session committee once a best-fit determination has been made.

*Team members: Ashley Kirven-Bobier (chair), Bekah Bowman, Judy Ferrell, Amy Hardin, Erin Lawson, Kim Leffingwell, Margaux Melancon, Rusty Rex, Phyllis Taylor.*

## FELLOWSHIP & FAMILY COMMITTEE

- Held the First Annual FPC Chili Cook-Off and Trivia Night in April, bringing together families and members of all ages for an evening of chili tasting and FPC trivia.
- Coordinated FPC's presence at Payne County Pride event and shared information about FPC and an invitation to visit our church.
- 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, while the fall all-group gathering was the Annual Christmas Ball held in December.

*Committee members: Donna Koeppel (chair), Jim Beckstrom, Dustin Charter, Ellen Ingram, Nate Ingram, Danielle Shreve*

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

# SCOUTING AMERICA

## BOY'S TROOP 820



Troop 820 had a terrific year in 2024. We had numerous scouts achieve rank advancement and we continue to maintain a vigorous outdoor program with 11 camps a year and frequent community service activities.

This year we had two scouts, Saxon Shepard and Jonathan Szabo, complete their Eagle rank. Earning Eagle takes hard work and dedication, and we are proud of them for this accomplishment.

## GIRL'S TROOP 888

The First Presbyterian Church's generous support continues to provide the sole opportunity for girls in our community to participate in Scouts BSA. The Leaders, Scouts and Families of 888 are grateful and appreciate everything the Church and individual members of the congregation have done and continue to do which contributes to our growth, development and success. Thank You!

Scouts BSA Troop 888 had a spectacular year and has grown by 28%. That means this troop has grown by 260% since it was formed less than 3 years ago and currently serves 18 youth! Once again the Scouts have stepped up to the challenge and earned both the National Outdoor Challenge Award as well as the Journey to Excellence Gold Award. The Scouts worked diligently all year, and earned 19 total ranks, 72 merit badges and had 3 Scouts

## CUB PACK 3842

We meet weekly at the church on Monday nights from 6:30pm to 7:30pm. Most weeks are for Den Meetings, where we split up by grade to work on age-appropriate activities with full Pack meetings once a month. Highlights of 2024 included a Rainwater Regatta where cubs built their own boats out of pool noodles and toothpicks, the Lego Derby where cubs designed and built their own race cars from lego bricks, campouts at Camp Stapley, an Egg Drop with

This year's annual Ouachita Trek took place in Oklahoma over the first section of the Ouachita trail. Backpacking utilizes different scout skills than on normal weekend camps including navigation, gear selection and packing, and coping with weather. The weather challenge this year was that every night was below freezing.

In February, 820 performed a shakedown hike at McMurtry in preparation for the Ouachita trek. In April we camped at the Great Salt Plains with new scouts who had crossed over from Cub Scouts. In May we returned to Roman Nose State Park. Our July day trip was to the Oklahoma Science Museum and OKC Zoo. Troop 820 scouts decided to attend summer camp at Will Rogers Scout Reservation for the first time in many years.

Over the past several years, Troop 820 has become heavily involved in the Order of the Arrow once again. We currently have 10 OA

and 1 Leader inducted into Order of the Arrow in 2024!

The troop spent 26 nights camping and provided 427 hours of community service. Some of their service activities included cleaning up the helping set up at the Relay for life, making scarves to distribute at the FPC Community Brunch, participating in the FPC Garden work day, assisting with the Stillwater Public Library Friends of the library sale, serving as door greeters at the Stillwater Community Band Holiday Concert, teaching STEAM activities at Spook-O-Ree, and assisting with the FPC Community Brunch.

The Scouts enjoyed outdoor adventures at Sylvia Stapley, backpacking in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, canoeing at Lake McMurtry, exploring Chickasaw National Recreation Area and Slippery

assistance from the Stillwater Fire Department and their ladder truck, a tour of the Stillwater Wastewater facility, and summer gatherings at the splash pad and the OSU Botanic Gardens. Cubs also honored our veterans by placing flags on headstones for Memorial Day, leading the flag ceremony at Will Rogers Elementary on Veteran's Day, and participating in Wreaths Across America. The year ended with a Christmas Party celebrated with Troops 888 and 820 and a visit from

members and have three more eligible for election in February 2025. Our OA activities include Spring and Fall Fellowships and the Winter Encampment.

Troop 820 prides itself on being servant leaders and providing service to the community. We performed a flag ceremony to dedicate the new flag poles at the Oklahoma Community Credit Union. We also volunteered at Relay for Life. Other service activities included helping with Backpack Buddies, and several Eagle projects that benefited the community including Sanborn Lake, Kameoka Trail, and Our Daily Bread.

Troop 820 currently has 17 scouts and 25 registered leaders. We have 4 scouts in the Order of the Arrow and have 5 more that are eligible to be elected in February. Our scouts are learning new skills and making friendships that will last a lifetime.



Falls Scout Reservation, archery at Will Rogers Scout Reservation, exploring Garden of the Gods (Colorado), the United States Air Force Academy, and Camp Cris Dobbins. During these events, they formed friendships, practiced outdoor cooking skills, learned numerous outdoor scout skills, practiced the Leave No Trace and Outdoor Code principles, learned good citizenship, developed strong moral character through living the Scout Oath and Law, practiced and demonstrated servant leadership, and made memories to last a lifetime.

Scouter Claus who brought pinewood derby car kits. Thank you for sponsoring Pack 3842 and making us part of your service to the community.



# DEACONS

## OUTREACH AND CONGREGATIONAL CARE

### Mission of Hope Life Skills

The Deacons continued offering monthly Life Skills Classes to clients at Mission of Hope. Current Deacons and other volunteers led the classes. The highlight this year was changing from a lecture type presentation to a more interactive discussion among the participants. The goal is to foster relationships between our members and those experiencing homelessness.

### Our Daily Bread

Volunteers from FPC worked two Saturdays in 2024 at Our Daily Bread, providing assistance to shoppers and helping restock shelves. Deacons also allocated \$2000 from benevolence funds to support ODB's mission of feeding those who are hungry, an important component of our Matthew 25 mission.

### Little Free Pantry

This year, we replaced our first pantry with a new one, designed and built by Aaron Stoutzenberger and approved by the Trustees. The new design is elevated. The pantry continues to be stocked by members and shopped regularly by members of our community.



### Sock Ministry

This year, the Sock Ministry distributed 1200 pairs of socks. Socks are purchased from Deacons' funds or provided through the Salvation Army. Warm, dry, comfortable feet are essential to well-being. This is a ministry that helps fulfill our Matthew 25 calling to clothe those who need clothes.

### School Supplies

In 2024, deacons provided 20 high quality binders for school counselors to distribute to middle school students in need.

### Giving Tree

This year we were able to provide 152 individuals with gift cards. 97 gift cards were purchased by church members and the remaining 55 were purchased with donated funds. The local agencies that we helped are the Department of Human Services-20 cards, Mission of Hope-39 cards, Payne County Youth Services-30 cards, The Seville Center-20 cards and Wings of Hope-40 cards. The church office was provided 3 gift cards to help those who contact us directly.

### Saturday Community Brunch

Saturday Brunch provides a hot nutritious meal to anyone in the community faced with food insecurity or simply looking to interact and connect with others in the community.

During 2024, volunteers prepared and served 2376 meals, sent home 1170 take-out meals, and distributed 210 bags filled with healthy snacks for children. We



receive generous weekly bread donations from Panera Bread and prepare peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and package bags of bread for guests to take home. We utilize resources from the Oklahoma Regional Food Bank, to help offset the rising cost of food.

### Homebound Ministry

Deacons and other volunteers were busy in 2024 visiting our members in hospitals, residential care facilities, and in their homes. We delivered large print bulletins to members who requested them. We sent well over 100 cards throughout the year. Easter lilies and poinsettias were delivered to 70+ members who were homebound or who had lost a family member in 2024. We also provided home communion upon request.

### Bipolar Support Group Meal

Each month Deacons provide a meal for the members of the Bipolar Support Group. This ministry help connect this community to our community.

### Compassionate Meals

This year, the Deacons provided a family meal and/or reception for memorial/funeral services. In addition, we provided food for several members needing support during an illness or after surgery.

### Stillwater Pioneer Pantry

Donations to the Pioneer Pantry assist homeless and home-insecure students at all 10 Stillwater Public School sites. This year we were able to donate four tubs of clothing/basic hygiene items and \$1955 in Walmart gift cards.

### Growing Families Ministry

This year, Deacons welcomed 7 babies to First Presbyterian Pre-School. We gave new family baskets to their families. They were welcomed with a soft blanket, a framed, personalized poem, items from the Fair Trade store, Splash! newsletter for parents, and a hand carved plaque with the child's name and date of birth.



### REGULAR COMMUNITY USE OF FPC SPACE

Many local groups use space at FPC for their weekly or monthly meetings, helping make our facilities truly part of the wider community.

AA

ALAnon

American Guild of Organists

Birth Connections of Stillwater Parent Support Group

Daughters of the American Revolution

Depression and Bi-polar Support Alliance

Grief Groups

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

OSU American Sign Language Club

OSU Parkinson's Exercise Group, Loud Crowd, and Nutrition Programs

Relay for Life

Resilience Payne County Board

Victim's Impact Panel

Scout Troops 820 and 888

and Cub Pack 3842

# PRESBYTERIAN PRESCHOOL

It has been another great year here at Presbyterian Preschool. This year we are serving 89 children from 84 different families at our school. Our teachers love on our families and children so well. They treat the students like their own children. They are the hands and feet of Jesus to these families at our school. This year we have 19 teachers plus one director on staff. Kylee Painter, Dayle Winslow, Christiane Boles, Kate Wells, Eden Starke, Tallie Mullon, Candace Gunkel, Jadyn Barefoot, Amanda Sanders-Vann, Jaclyn McClary, Carmen Fox, Emily Berry, Autumn Cagle, Donna Stallings, Cathy Meberg, Erin Lawson, Samantha Beckstrom, Lori Rossier, Brayden Bruner, and Dana Brown, Director.

This summer, we were able to get our new Cedar Works playground structure installed on the North playground. William Cole built it for us and that helped cut the cost of the new equipment.

We received a \$5000 grant for the piece of equipment from Plains Pipeline in November, 2023. The new equipment needed to be put where we had an existing sidewalk so we ended up demolishing some sidewalk and building back a new one along the fence on the North. The kids love this sidewalk for a bike or scooter pathway.



Each year we try and have several opportunities to bring parents into the building. In 2024, Dr. Amy Hardin provided two workshops for teachers and parents: 'the No Hit Zone' and

'Building a Better Brain'. We have parents join us for a school wide picnic in September. In October, the classes host Breakfast with your Buddies. In November we invite parents to join us for our Thanksgiving Feasts. Then in December, parents are welcomed to the building for our Christmas Caroling Party. One of our favorite activities each year is when the oldest three classes go to the Sanctuary for the telling of the Christmas story by church staff and for Ms. Becky to teach us about the organ.



## LIFE AT FPC IN 2024





# Grace For All

Created by Causley Productions

First Presbyterian Church Celebrates the Love and Grace of God by:

**G**rowing through Bible Study, Prayer, and Worship,

**R**eaching Out to Serve,

**A**ccepting questions,

**C**onnecting people to Jesus Christ, One Another, and the World, and

**E**mbracing All.

We gratefully respond as a part of the holy universal Church. Thanks be to God!

We are a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



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