

THE Ambassador

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF STILLWATER

NOVEMBER 2026

Walking Together:

THE COURAGE TO BE A CHURCH WHO LISTENS

THIS Issue

A Message from Pastor Peter Olson

Children & Youth Ministry Information

The Giving Tree

Upcoming Winter Events

Financial Report

This past Sunday evening, I joined several Presbyterian pastors from our presbytery for a rather unusual occasion. We gathered in Ponca City for a service dedicating the former First Presbyterian Church building as St. Thomas' Abbey, now under the stewardship of DOSA, an Anglican religious community.

It was a beautiful, curious blend of contemporary music with very high-church service traditions. One moment in particular stands out.

During Communion, I was standing in what became the very front row alongside another pastor from our Presbytery. After we received the sacrament, we both returned to our places and remained standing for the singing as others continued forward to receive their elements as well. We stood through one hymn. Then another. Perhaps even a third. We were singing along, participating as faithfully as we knew how, when my colleague happened to glance behind us. Everyone else was sitting.

Apparently, after receiving the bread and the wine, the entire rest of the congregation of a nearly full sanctuary had quietly returned to their seats, while the two of us up front just kept standing there, blissfully unaware that we were doing something different! The two of us sat down about as quickly as I have ever sat down in my life!

We had a good laugh about it afterward. But the experience also got me thinking.

There we were, surrounded by people who knew the traditions, the movements, and the expectations of their worship. They understood when to stand, when to sit, and what came next. We didn't. Not because we were unwilling to participate, but because we were entering into something that was unfamiliar to us.

And I wonder how often something similar happens in the life of the church. We each bring our own experiences, expectations, and understandings of what church is supposed to look like. We have traditions that feel comfortable, practices that seem natural, and ways of doing things that we may not even realize we have learned.

And then... someone does something differently. A few stand while others sit. What do we say of those who remained standing?

The Apostle Paul reminds us that the church is one body with many members. We do not all bring the same gifts, perspectives, or experiences. And that is not a weakness of the church. It is part of its strength. We lean

THE NEXT AMBASSADOR DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 27, 2026

nto this strength when we listen to one another. And, listening does not mean that we must always agree. Nor does it mean that one person's traditions are less important than another's. It means recognizing that our own experiences are not the only experiences, and that God may have something to teach us through someone who sees things differently.

I suspect that First Presbyterian will continue to have moments when we find ourselves standing while everyone else is sitting. We are a congregation centered around creating a table where truly all are welcome. And we achieve that table by listening to one another deeply. And the wondrous thing is... this becomes practice for what is needed throughout the rest of society. What we learn and practice as church community becomes a tool in our individual tool bags for how we help change society around us away from the finger pointing, condemning efforts that so many invest themselves in and that I have heard such deep concern over again and again.

When those moments come that someone "stands out" as different in their practices, I hope we can meet them with a little humor, a generous spirit, and the courage to both listen with love and speak with love. That's part of how we love our neighbor. And that goes for me too! As we work to figure out who we are as church today, I'm always thankful to sit down with you and hear your thoughts of who we are becoming... to know what is helpful in our journey together and what is not helpful. I won't have all of the answers, but that's ok. Neither did Apostles as they went out and began the work of building the first churches. But I am always glad to have my own world grown a little more by the wisdom of another, and I invite you into the same.

After all, sometimes the first step toward understanding one another is simply realizing that we don't all know when we're supposed to sit down. And that, in itself, can be a gift of recognition. Peace be with you in this messy thing called church. May the divine love of Christ be ever with you as we disciple together.

With love from your pastor's desk,

Pastor Peter Olson

FPC Staff

Pastor Peter Olson
Bridge Pastor/ Head of Staff
pastor.peter@stillwaterfpc.org

Kristyn Yerger
Church Administrator
kristyn.yerger@stillwaterfpc.org

Manny Quiles
Finance Administrator
manny.q@stillwaterfpc.org

Elijah Ankrom
Coordinator of Children's & Youth Ministry
elijah.ankrom@stillwaterfpc.org

Mallory Kizer
Digital Communications Assistant
mallory.kizer@stillwaterfpc.org

Rev. Dr. Gordon Edwards
Pastor Emeritus

Rebecca Te Velde
Organist/Director of Music Emerita

Dr. Ben Kambs
Choir Director

Dr. Lucia Unruh
Keyboardist

Kate Wells
Preschool Director
kate@prespreschool.org

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Ministry

Dates to Note

Nov. 8 - Exploring My Bible for 3rd graders and their parents 9:45 a.m. in the Multipurpose Room
Nov. 8 - PYG
Nov. 15 - Exploring My Bible for 3-5 graders at 9:45 a.m. in the Multipurpose Room
Nov. 22 - Faithful Families Gathering at 9:45 a.m. in the Hospitality Area - parents, grandparents, guardians of our children and youth please come for a time of connection and fellowship!
Nov. 15 - PYG
Nov. 22 & 29 - No PYG (Thanksgiving Break)
Dec. 6 - Children & Worship ends
Dec. 13 - Lessons & Carols service
Dec. 13 - Both children and youth Sunday School end for the semester
Jan. 10 - Children & Worship resumes
Jan. 10 - Children and youth Sunday School resumes.

Children's Sunday School

Sundays, 9:45-10:45 a.m. for children 4yrs - 5th grade
Gathering Time: Children are invited to start the Sunday school hour at 9:45am in the Worship Center. Parents can pick up children at 10:45am in the Worship Center.

- Faith Kid-nection Class (Pre-K to Kindergarten)
- SpiritLink (1st-5th graders)

Spiritlink Room Highlight

The Bread of Life Café is where we explore Bible stories through cooking and our sense of taste! In this room, children decorate cookies as nativity characters and then use them to tell the Christmas story, or they might make bread to share as they reflect on the story of the feeding of the 5,000. Taste and see that the Lord is good!

Youth Sunday Morning Classes

Every Sunday, 9:45-10:45am in the Youth Suite
Our Sunday school curriculum is intentionally designed for youth to explore their faith from a variety of perspectives through their years in Youth Sunday School.

PYG (Presbyterian Youth Group)

For ALL 6th-12th graders | Sundays, 5:00-6:30 p.m. in the Youth Suite
PYG is a time for connection, fellowship, discipleship, and living our faith. At PYG, we play, laugh, pray, study scripture, serve, ask big questions, and grow as faithful disciples. Join us!

Pumpkin Palooza

In October we went out to Oh My Gourd Pumpkin patch in Glencoe where we enjoyed getting to be in fellowship with each other. We went on Hayrides, slid down a massive slide, did some pumpkin chuckin, and many other things!













SEPTEMBER 30, 2026

Income/Expense Report

	This Month	Year to Date
Giving	$52,189	$451,477
Other Income	$8,686	$87,451
Total Income (royalties, perpetual pledges, event imcome, etc.)	**$60,875**	**$547,613**
Expenditures	-$67,325	-$510,800
Net	**-$6,450**	**$36,813**

Your giving is important and appreciated. If you have any questions about your giving records or church finances, contact cathy.fairbanks@stillwaterfpc.org. Blessings to each of you.

Fair Trade Store

Our Fair Trade Store would appreciate a volunteer to take the second Sunday of each month on an ongoing basis.Your commitment is only two hours! The FTS opens at 10:30 a.m. and closes at 12:30 p.m. During the church service, you can lock the FTS door, attend service, and then return to the FTS for the after-church shoppers. The FTS is a fun place to work with wonderful folk art and food items, and you will greet and see lots of your fellow church members as they come in to shop.

The FTS is one of our missions, and it helps artisans in third-world countries receive a fair wage for their products. So, when you make a purchase, you are not only getting a unique handmade item, but also helping others around the world to improve their lives.

Boxes are beginning to arrive with new items for the Fair Trade Store. Everything will hopefully be unpacked and in the store by Thanksgiving if not before. If you need duplicate gift items for family or club members, let me show you the companies I order from, and I will be happy to place a special for you. As you know, merchandise in the FTS has a wide price range, so even if you want 20 small items for example, ordering is never a problem. New nativities are ordered as well as popular things like dish towels, crossbody and coin purses, soapstone animals, baby gifts and of course chocolate! Please stop by for a minute either before or after the 11 a.m. service and see what may surprise you!

Interested? Questions? Contact Julie Bills to get connected!

HELP OUR NEIGHBORS WITH THE

Giving Tree

It's that time again! As we approach Christmas, you can join our Giving Tree campaign and purchase gift cards for our community's most vulnerable neighbors.

As an FPC member, you are invited to purchase gift cards for our partners at Payne County Youth Services (for distressed youth), the Mission of Hope (the homeless), Wings of Hope (victims of domestic violence), and the Saville Center (abused children). A total of 130 gift cards have been requested.

Here is how you can help:

- From the Giving Tree display in the Narthex beginning Nov. 8, please take envelopes that identify the agency and retailer where the gift card is requested, and record your name and number of the card in the designated binder.
- Purchase the gift cards – each for $35 – and, if you'd like, write a short note to the unknown recipient to wish them well, in your own words, this holiday season. A blank note card and envelope are provided
- Return the original request card, gift card, and your note – all attached – to a deacon at the Giving Tree station on Sunday mornings of Nov. 15, 22, 29, or Dec. 6 or at the church office during regular business hours.

Donations of money are also welcome. Make out a check or an online donation to the church for any amount and note that it is for the "Giving Tree," and our deacons will complete the gift card purchase on your behalf.

Any questions? Please get in touch with Dale Ingram at dale.ingram@sbcglobal.net or 405-612-3365.

ADULT & FELLOWSHIP

Ministries

The Adult & Fellowship Ministries Committee (Barbara Stoecker, Danielle Shreve, Ellen Ingram, Dustin Charter, and Sandy Cohlmia) is pleased to let you know what adult study and family fellowship opportunities are available for this coming year.

Adult Sunday School Classes

- **Feasting on the Word:** Led by Denise Rex, this class studies each Sunday's lectionary selections. It meets in the second floor Library, 9:45 - 10:45 a.m, during the school year.
- **Faith & Fellowship:** Participant led, this class studies/discusses books chosen by members of the class. It meets year-round in the Fellowship Hall, 9:45 -10:45. The current study is *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships* by Matthew Vines. The book is available on Amazon in paperback, on Kindle, and as an audiobook. A copy of the book may still be in the library for borrowing.
- **Fellowship Opportunity:** Coffee, tea, hot chocolate and snacks are available in the Hospitality Area every Sunday from 9:45 - 10:45 a.m. Those of you who don't attend a Sunday school class, please join us for some fellowship time with friends. If you are attending a Sunday school class, drop by a little early.

Meditation

FPC's meditation group extends an invitation to anyone interested in participating to join them on Sunday morning, 9:15 - 9:30 a.m, in the Worship Center.

Seasoned Adults

Seasoned Adults will have programs in February, March, and April.
Here is the schedule for programs coming up:

- Thursday, November 19, Meal and Program — Tim Hardin, member of the Stillwater City Council, will discuss and answer questions about current civic issues.
- Tuesday, November 24 — We will gather for a Thanksgiving service followed by a potluck dinner. Watch for more specific information about this event.
- Sunday, December 13 — Night in Bethlehem

Watch for information in First Things, The Ambassador, and the bulletin for more information.

STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Giving Campaign



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

This phrase is the pillar of the From Strength To Strength campaign and continues to be as we move to the last year of the campaign.

One of the things that I have enjoyed most about the campaign is sharing the progress of the campaign and the impact that it is making. We received a glimpse of that impact when the "Minute for Mission" was shared about Cleanup Buckets.

When a natural disaster hits, the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) steps in to provide essential relief and recovery aid to communities in need. One critical way to support these efforts is through Cleanup Buckets. These buckets are filled with cleaning supplies to help families and communities begin the process of recovery after the hurricane and flooding. A donation of $75 fills a bucket.

What a great way to provide hope out of chaos, by our congregation hearing the call to help with this response. The buckets you supported will play a vital role in the next phase of disaster recovery, helping families and communities clean and rebuild their homes. Whether it's scrubbing away mud or removing debris, these buckets are a powerful expression of care and solidarity during times of crisis. I believe that it brings home the message of "God, what do You want to do through me?" Session has approved up to $5,000 as matching funds for this community service initiative and donations are being requested. A date in November will be set to assemble the buckets, so that buckets can be delivered ASAP when disaster hits.

Thank you for inspiring FPC to see what God wants to do through us. Thank you for being part of this campaign and walking with love as we continue the work that your commitments provide.

For those who are interested in the numbers: through September $1,335,581.75 has been received. This is 75.58% of the $1,766,922.09 that was pledged during the campaign.

Hallelujah, God is Good! Over 75% of pledges have been received toward the campaign. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to this campaign in helping FPC deepen our roots and strengthen our programs and facilities for now and into the future as we continue to pray, "God, what do You want to do through me?"

For anyone interested, we encourage you to consider making a gift to the From Strength to Strength campaign and join the momentum supporting the identified campaign priorities of current facility and mission projects and long-term endowment support for facility repairs and maintenance.

Session Notes

Bullet points from Session meetings of September 15, and October 20, 2026
Led by moderator, Rev. Peter Olson, Transitional Pastor and Head of Staff, Session members....

1. Welcomed **Rod and Kathryn Jensen** to FPC membership by Letter of Transfer from the First United Methodist Church of Pawnee, OK;
2. Noted a positive balance of $36,813 in the church operating budget as of September 30, 2026;
3. Learned with regret of the death of long-time member, **Lori Fagan**;
4. Agreed to postpone the initiation of the "Congregational Listening Circles" until mid-January 2027;
5. Heard the average cost of creating a complete Presbyterian Disaster Assistance "emergency bucket" is $72.00. Voted to create at least 25 such buckets. Donations are welcome;
6. Were updated on the status of the Trustee-led campus security camera surveillance project;
7. Learned the November 19, 2026 Seasoned Adults program will be presented by former member and Stillwater City councilor, **Tim Hardin**; his topic will include an update on city infrastructure project and other initiatives;
8. Were informed the Adult and Fellowship Ministries committee will host a pot-luck dinner in Fellowship Hall on Tuesday, November 24 beginning with a brief service of Thanksgiving at 6:00 pm;
9. Were reminded Elijah Ankrom is now the full-time "Special Ministries Coordinator" which includes all things children, youth and Seasoned Adults programming;
10. Were asked to submit names of potential candidates for elective office positions to the Nominating Committee headed by Elder Dustin Charter.

Presbyterian Women

November is a special time of thanksgiving for Presbyterian Women. We will gather for fellowship and our regular monthly study on Wednesday, November 11, at 9:30 a.m., or on Sunday, November 15, at 5:00 p.m. After the Wednesday study, we will share a meal in the fellowship hall around 11:45 a.m. on November 11. Those attending the Sunday evening study are warmly encouraged to join the Wednesday group for the meal and morning study as well.

During the meal, we will discuss and collect the Thank Offering. Begun in 1888, this offering provides much-needed financial assistance to worthwhile programs outside the ongoing General Assembly mission support. Each year, the Creative Ministries Offering Committee carefully and prayerfully selects domestic and international projects that address crucial needs related to health, education, economic development, and the needs of women and children. Forty percent (40%) of the offering supports hospitals and community health programs that give priority to the neediest members of God's community. The remaining sixty percent (60%) supports new, creative ideas for mission. Through these projects, Thank Offering recipients find real solutions to the needs of their communities.

Scouts

Pack 3842:



We wrapped up August with our annual Open House, welcoming new families and introducing them to all the fun and adventure Scouting has to offer!

In September, our Scouts celebrated America's 250th birthday by working towards the America 250 patch. Activities included creating patriotic banners, planting seeds, and even putting on our very own indoor parade! Scouts also worked on the fundamentals of Scouting, learning the Scout Oath and Scout Law while building a strong foundation for the year ahead.

October brought even more hands-on adventures! Scouts enjoyed their fall campout at Sylvia Stapley Campgrounds, where they prepared their own meals and put together a campfire program. Later in the month, Scouts visited OSU's Geology Department to learn about different types of rocks, while our Arrow of Light (AOL) Scouts took a deeper dive into first aid, practicing CPR and learning different bandaging techniques.

Pack 3842 meets on Mondays at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. If you know a child in Kindergarten through 5th grade who might be interested in joining Cub Scouts, please contact Pake Wing at pack3842@gmail.com. We would love to welcome them!

Troop 888:



Recently, Troop 888 has participated in many activities to celebrate the spooky season. Julianna Perteet recalled that some of her favorite events included Spook O Ree and the Relay for Life. At Spook O Ree, which she described as “awesome”, members ran the craft station where they assisted cub scouts in creating neckerchief slides and spooky buckets. On Saturday night of that campout, they were a part of the spook trail where they got to scare cubs! Additionally, Julianna highlighted that Relay for Life was also “really fun”. They served by setting up the luminaries and cleaning up. During the eerie season, Troop 888 would like to remind everyone to have fun, but most importantly, to stay safe! There's no tricks here in Troop 888- only treats!!

First Presbyterian Church

524 S. Duncan
Stillwater, OK 74074
405-372-5580
www.stillwaterfpc.org

Worship at FPC

9:45-10:45 a.m. Sunday school classes for all ages

11 a.m. Worship Service

Sign up for our Newsletter!

First Things, our weekly newsletter, will keep you up to date on everything going on in our congregation. Events, Sermon links and more!

Want to add to The Ambassador?

Send articles to mallory.kizer@stillwaterfpc.org

THE Ambassador HIGHLIGHTS

A Message from Pastor Peter Olson

Children & Youth Ministry Information

The Giving Tree

Upcoming Winter Events

Financial report

THE NEXT AMBASSADOR DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 27, 2026

OUR Purpose

The Ambassador is a little piece of church brought right to you! We know that life doesn't always make it easy to be with us in person or keep up with everything FPC is doing, and that's exactly why this newsletter exists. Our goal is to keep every member of our church family in the loop on events, announcements, and the everyday blessings happening in our community, so you always feel connected, cared for, and part of something bigger.