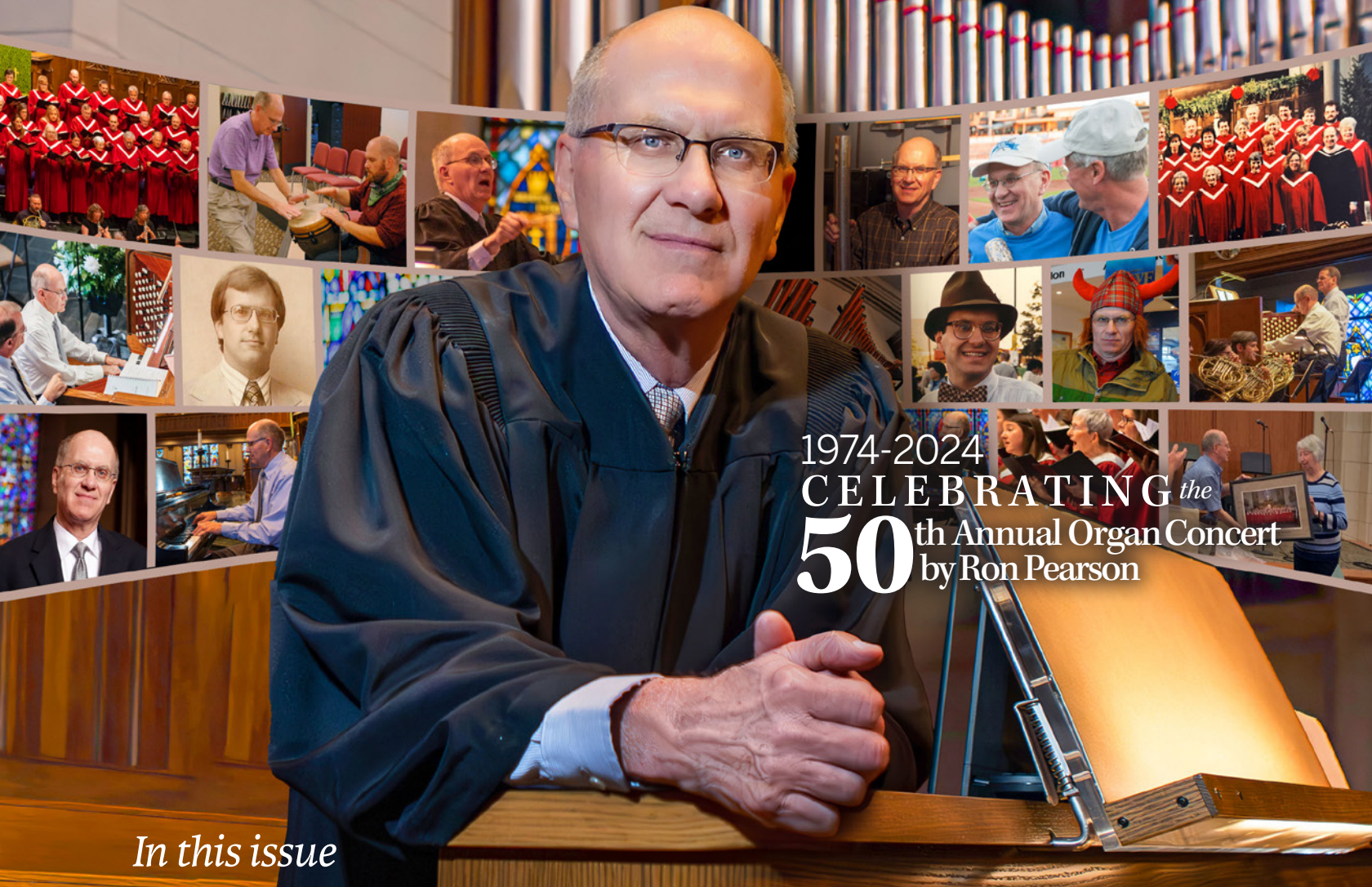


Tidings

VOL. 68, NO. 3 - FALL 2023

 **First 1885
Church**
First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa



1974-2024
CELEBRATING *the*
50th Annual Organ Concert
by Ron Pearson

In this issue



**Dr. Jim Miller's
final letter**

p. 2



**First Church
Tulsa Historian
Mary Anne
Marberry**

p. 6



**A love letter
from the
choir for
Ron Pearson**

p. 10



The fast-flowing river called “Time” Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

By Dr. Jim Miller

Life comes to us in chapters – as they say. And sometimes you can actually hear a chapter rustling by ... the pages of Time turning, the closing of one chapter, the opening of another.

That’s the case for me just now. I may have to wear hearing aids to pick up the voices of children, but I can hear the creaking hinge of Time loud and clear.

And when I look at our three children including David, Courtney and Jonathan, I can see how fast Time moves.

David: When Diane and I arrived in Tulsa in 1992, our firstborn was three years old. Recently we drove to Fort Worth to celebrate David’s 34th birthday and to tour the amazing Fidelity campus where he works. The river of time has rarely seemed more obvious.

Courtney: On Saturday, October 7th, Courtney and her fiancé Austin, will celebrate their wedding in the Sanctuary (don’t forget, you’re invited). They’re entering a whole new chapter of life. Jesus tells us, “For this reason,” he says, “a man shall leave his father and mother (chapter closing) and take to himself a wife (chapter opening).”

Jonathan: A certified flight instructor at Spartan College of Aeronautics (with some 900 hours of flight time), Jonathan is almost ready to close this chapter at Spartan and begin the process of interviewing for work as a commercial pilot. A new chapter, indeed.

As for myself, I saw Time’s silhouette when the doctor told me my biopsy came back positive for prostate cancer. For five months or so, I’ve been undergoing hormone treatment and the side effects have caused intermittent sleep (sometimes on Saturday nights – not good for a preacher!), a bit of foggy thinking and increased my fatigue levels a bit. Radiation begins on September 18.

If you’re going to get cancer, prostate cancer is a good choice, they say. In my case, there’s every reason to be hopeful as we look to the future. But the diagnosis has been helpful in clarifying my sense of call at First Church. In a strange way it’s been a gift to me.

It’s made me more mindful, in John Rutter’s words, “Of the beauty of the earth and the glory of the skies.” It’s deepened my sense of profound gratitude, “For the love which from our birth over and around us lies.” It has spurred me on to sing more robustly, “Lord of all, to Thee we raise, this our grateful hymn of praise!”

To paraphrase Ecclesiastes 3, “For every season there is a time ... a time to begin and a time to end.” When it comes to serving as your pastor, I believe that that time has come. As is the case with many of the happy chapters of our lives, I actually don’t want this chapter to end. But I know it is right. And I know it is time. Or, to put it another way, I believe we’re in sync with God’s perfect timing.

My last Sunday serving as your pastor will be Reformation Day, Sunday, October 29, 2023.

As this chapter of ministry closes for me, I can hardly wait to see what the Lord has just up the road for First Church.

One thing’s for sure, you’re mightily blessed with a dedicated and faithful Session, as well as a gifted and talented pastoral staff. Hutch, James, Wambugu and Julia bring a multiplicity of gifts, a proven example of working well together, and a faithful devotion to the Lord and His work. To them belongs the keen desire to shepherd the flock in fidelity to the gospel, with humility and a deep love.

The congregation is strong, unified, anchored deeply to the apostolic teaching and the historic witness of the Church in both doctrine and ethics.

The FPC staff works hard and laughs a lot, reflecting the heart of service and faithfulness that blesses all of us.

Let me conclude with this. I love you, First Church. I love you corporately as a community of believers and I love you individually.

For 32 years you’ve welcomed the Millers among you, offering your friendship in every conceivable way, putting up with my flaws and mistakes. You’ve lifted us in your prayers, supported us with your persistent

encouragement, met us in times of deep need and embraced us warmly in the very love of Christ.

Thank you for sharing your lives and for offering Diane and me the privilege of a lifetime – to serve with you in this part of the Lord’s vineyard.

Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Now to Him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all we can ask or think, to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus – to all generations, forever and ever.

Amen!



“There is every reason to be hopeful as you look ahead, confident of the Lord’s provision.”

– Dr. Jim Miller





"I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit — fruit that will last."
—John 15:16

"If you love me, keep my commands." —John 14:15

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."
—Matthew 22:37

"Love your neighbor as yourself."
—Matthew 22:39

"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."
—Matthew 16:24

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."
—Matthew 5:16

"Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."
—John 15:12-13

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
—Matthew 28:19-20

Fall 2023 Adult Discipleship offerings

Wednesday Night Downtown

Wednesdays beginning September 13
Dinner at 5:15 p.m.
Adult classes at 6:15 p.m.

Classes featured this fall include:

- **Meaning behind the marquee**
Join the pastors as we explore what it means to be orthodox, reformed and evangelical. These words speak to our identity – who we are and where we come from, but what do they signify? What is it that we are declaring to be true about this community? This fall, we will be considering each of these words, the history and theology that give them meaning, and how they might shape our life together.
- **Seeker's Bible study** – deep dive into the sermon scriptures with Pastor Wambugu.

Monday School

Mondays beginning September 11
Noon; Kirkland Library
An optional lunch is available beforehand.

Rev. Justin Schell teaches on "The Kingdom of God."

Seasons – A Women's Gathering
Second Mondays monthly
Beginning September 11
6:30 p.m.; Stephenson Hall

Join Rev. Julia Metcalf and Sarah Savage for Seasons, a space for women to connect and be transformed by the word and presence of God.

Precept Bible Study
Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m.; E100

Elder Denise Rounds teaches on the Psalms.

Pastor's Study with Dr. Jim Miller
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.; Stephenson Hall
Wednesdays, 11:30 a.m.; E104

Dr. Miller continues his series on Rebecca McLaughlin's book, "Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World's Largest Religion."

Before the Rooster Crows
Saturdays, 8:45 a.m.; E103

Elder Phil Rounds leads Bible study and conversation about the sermon texts for the upcoming Sunday morning worship services.

K Groups
Various times and locations

K Groups are established for Koinonia – holy, covenantal fellowship. K Group gatherings take place in homes across the city and a new study topic will begin in October.

Sunday School

16 adult classes
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.
various classroom locations

Grow in your knowledge of scripture and equip yourself as a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ. Find a full listing of classes at FirstChurchTulsa.org/AdultSundaySchool.

Foundations with Rev. Dan Hutchinson
Sundays, 9:30 a.m.; E104

Rev. Hutchinson is teaching an overview of the Epistles. Whether you are new to reading the Bible or have been studying it for years, you will gain an appreciation and understanding for the New Testament letters.

Dr. Rebecca McLaughlin Guest Speaker

"Four things Christians must reclaim."
Saturday, September 16
6:30 p.m.; Stephenson Hall



Rebecca is the author of many Christian books including "Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World's Largest Religion." This lecture is free and you are invited to stay for a reception in the Atrium beginning at 7:30 p.m.



Seasons – A Women's Gathering



Foundations with Rev. Dan Hutchinson



Seekers Bible Study



Sunday school



K Groups

Jesus calls us to follow Him

By Duff Points

In his letter to the early church in Ephesus, the Apostle Paul encourages "God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus," to live as children of light and find out what pleases the Lord (see Ephesians 5:8-10). This kicks us off to ask some other life altering questions:

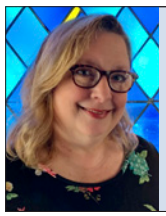
1. Do I want to live as a child of light?
2. Is Jesus calling me to follow him?
3. What must I know, embrace, give up and believe to live as a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ?

Yearning for answers, we launch out on a scriptural treasure hunt through the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life and teachings. We find that Jesus instructs us on how to follow him.

There is so much to learn and explore about the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6); and, yet it doesn't need to be overwhelming.

"We don't have to travel the journey alone; we are called to live in community as the church."
— Duff Points

When we attend a Sunday morning class, or a weekday Bible study, or a home-based K Group, we join brothers and sisters in drawing close to our LORD. We find guidance, companionship, love and support as we each commit to the grand adventure of being a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ.



About the author:
Duff Points is the executive director of Adult Ministries and has worked for First Church for 12 years. Duff considers this role to be a calling from the Lord and finds great joy in serving alongside gifted lay leaders, pastors and colleagues.



Historian by osmosis

Welcome Mary Anne Marberry

By Joan Williams Hoar

“Remember the days of old, think of the generations long ago; ask your father to recount it and your elders to tell you the tale.”

– Deuteronomy 32:7

When Dr. Charles W. Kerr accepted the call to pastor First Presbyterian Church Tulsa in 1900, little did he know that a century and quarter later, a great grandniece would quarry the history he helped create.

“Uncle Charlie,” as Mary Anne called him, would agree with those who acclaim the many

skills Mary Anne brings to her newest position, First Church historian.

Gary Mathews, immediate past Session clerk, expressed it this way, “I first met Mary Anne when she was nominated by the congregation to serve on Session for a term 2019-2021. She was selected to serve as chair of the Worship and Music Committee. I

learned how well she knew the people and history of First Church and could relate that history to the activities of the committee. From redesign of the Sacristy, construction of the new baptismal font, supporting ushers, communion flowers and keeping the Sanctuary (and other worship spaces) organized, these are just some of the things

Mary Anne managed during her term as chair. I have learned from her and enjoyed working with her on Session.”

Ron Pearson, director of Music Ministries, served with Mary Anne on the Worship and Music Committee and echoes many of Gary’s observations. “I had the pleasure of working alongside Mary Anne while she served very effectively as the chair of the Worship and Music Committee. She was always well prepared for meetings, always positive in her leadership style, and she was determined to follow through on major projects that sometimes took longer to complete than anyone expected. She was a steady hand with a committee that works behind the scenes to beautify our worship service, and I am grateful to her for her many years of service in that role. On a lighter note, she will also be remembered for her practice of bringing tasty treats to committee meetings including brownies, cookies, and cheese and crackers; this small but telling gesture endeared Mary Anne to everyone who served with her.”



Mary Anne Marberry giving a description of the Sanctuary stained glass windows.



Mary Anne Marberry and Joan Williams Hoar

Duff Points, executive director of Adult Ministries, sits in the cat bird’s seat and understands Mary Anne’s gifts to the church better than possibly anyone. Duff commented, “I love the thought that someone who grew up in this family of faith at 7th and Boston has stepped into the role of our church historian.

“Mary Anne knows well the history of our church, the pastors, and the many congregants who have gathered here through the years.”

–Duff Points

Each and every week Mary Anne and Tom attend the 11:00 a.m. worship service in the Sanctuary. There is something comforting about seeing their quiet and dedicated presence in worship each Sunday at the same time, in the same pew, in the same section of the Sanctuary. Mary Anne is a faithful servant to Christ and His church. You will find her decorating the Sanctuary with other faithful servants before Christmas and Easter. Or perhaps you will see her repurposing Sunday’s Chancel flowers into beautiful bouquets for those members who are in hospitals or nursing homes.



During the pandemic she served on the First Church COVID-19 Task Force as Worship and Music Committee chair. Mary Anne thought through every single detail of how we could safely serve communion to those attending worship at the church as well as to our members who were worshipping virtually from home. She exhibited such devotion and determination

Joan Hoar retires

“Time for Mary”

By Vicky Simpson Wilcoxon



A self-described “Martha,” **Joan Williams Hoar** was ready to pass along the historian gavel to Mary Anne Marberry, so she could nurture her “Mary” side. Joan is

stepping back from meetings and lengthy “to do lists” to enjoy her role of family matriarch and great grandmother, spend more time with friends and most importantly, focus on her spiritual growth. While we wish Joan well on her “Mary” journey, we must acknowledge the blessings her “Martha” talents brought to History & Archives and the church.

“Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken from her.”

– Luke 10:41-42

During her 15-year tenure in History & Archives, she created initiatives that transformed H&A into a professional program recognized by the Tulsa community and the Presbyterian Historical Society.

Joan served as project coordinator for the Illuminations and Visions of Grace art books in addition to authoring numerous Tidings articles. She established the Docent Ministry that provides guided tours focused

on understanding the role First Church’s art and architecture plays in conveying the Word of God. Joan instituted and led the Heritage Society comprised of second, third and fourth generation members who serve H&A as valuable resources and links to our church history.

The past seven years, Joan served as the Session-appointed First Church Historian. Under her leadership, H&A initiated the Atrium Bible exhibits and 1921 Centennial Exhibit. To H&A committee members, she was a mentor, friend, humorist and inspiration who kept us scurrying to keep up with her constant flow of ideas.

In recognition of her talents, vision and 15-years of dedicated service to History & Archives, Session designated Joan the honor of becoming our first Historian emeritus. Joan, may your “Mary” side enrich your life as your “Martha” side enriched ours.



About the author:
Vicky Simpson Wilcoxon joined First Church in February 2014 and became a History & Archives volunteer soon after. She has served as First Church Archivist since 2016. She formerly served as deacon, elder, Presbyterian Women moderator and church treasurer at First Presbyterian Muskogee.

to ensure that our entire family of faith could partake of the Lord’s Supper. I am confident that she will take this same level of care and commitment to the role of historian.”

Janie Long, our former Parish Visitor, commented about her sister. “As the first born of three girls, she was always the smartest. She excelled in every subject in school and set a high bar that neither Sandi nor I ever came close to. She simply loves to learn. And the more details there are to be uncovered, the better! Church historian is a task she was born to do. Literally. Our parents were both raised at First Presbyterian, our great uncle by marriage was the first pastor. Our family roots are deep in the church. Mary Anne has a passion for history

and will be relentless in uncovering and documenting details that no one else would ever think of. No rock will go unturned if Mary Anne is at the helm as historian!”

When Vicky and I met with Duff and Dr. Miller, we were asked the question, “Do you have anyone else to recommend in case Mary Anne declines?” We were unequivocal in our response. “No, Mary Anne is the person!”

About the author:
Joan Williams Hoar is the First Church Historian Emeritus, an elder and a member since 1978. Joan has traveled the globe, and her education includes Asian Studies at Sophia University in Tokyo and a master’s degree in liberal arts with an emphasis on Japanese print and literature from OU.

Celebrating Ron's 50th

By Dr. Jim Miller



By the time this Tidings edition is published, First Church will be on the brink of an astonishing milestone. Ronald J. Pearson, our wildly talented, much-loved resident-genius on the organ bench, is about to play his 50th Annual Organ Concert surrounded by The University of Tulsa Chamber Orchestra.

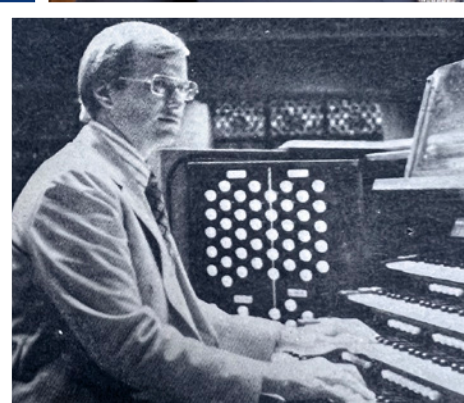
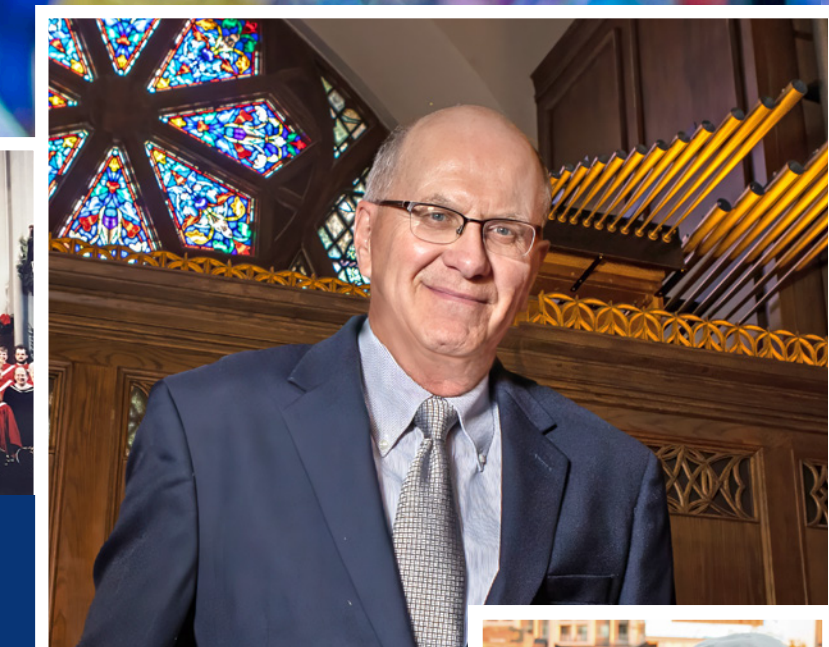
Let me reiterate that ... this is Ron's "50th" annual concert. 50! Half a century. That fact alone is amazing. Ron arrived at First Church in the fall of 1974 and began his time here by bringing the organ to life with a concert, his first annual.

But that's not the greatest milestone we're celebrating in Ron's 50th year.

We're celebrating the gift of heritage ... a mom who taught her son to play hymns at the piano. A dad who took his boy 30 miles to receive organ lessons. We're remembering the hard and tedious work involving ongoing and forever practice. And more practice. And more. We're thankful for the gift of college and university instructors who sharpened talent and shaped a young musician's vision. We marvel at the persistence and faithfulness required to do what Ron has done. And in all of it, we give God thanks for the most beautiful virtue of all, humility gifted to Ron in spades.

And each of these blessings is wrapped, for Ron, in a deep sense of the Lord's mysterious calling upon his life. Ron's driving purpose is obvious to those who know him well ... to lead a congregation in worship with intentionality and a passion for excellence. "Soli Deo Gloria," to the glory of God alone!

But Ron's contributions to our community extend beyond the bench. When the previous FPC choirmaster left in 1995, a search committee was formed, and a national search began for his replacement. I sat on that committee.



I'll never forget the conversation in which Ron suggested that he'd like to put his name in and be considered for that position. "Ron," I said. "I don't know how you could do that with the organ console being off to the side of the choir. How could you possibly lead from there?" And in classic, understated "Ron Pearson form," he quietly responded, "Well, I've thought about that." Is anyone surprised by this? And then he began to describe in detail how he could build a small mini-console, and place it right in front of the choir, drawing upon the main console for its abilities. And lead, while he plays from there.

Ron's an engineer, very talented in working with electrical circuits and organ construction. The fact that he could build a second console and connect it to the main console is amazing, but he takes it all in stride. Over the past 50 years, he's saved First Church tens of thousands of dollars by doing his own organ tuning and periodic maintenance.

After a national search, and several interviews, the FPC Choirmaster Committee selected Ron for the position unanimously. I had no doubt that when Ron was presented to the congregation in his new role, the result would be a sustained standing ovation. And that's exactly what happened. The beautiful article by choir member Carol Elrod in this Tidings edition reflects the love that sits deep in the FPC Choir for Ron as choirmaster, leader and friend.

And, of course, Ron is deeply loved by this congregation and by the larger community of organists and musicians throughout Tulsa. He has become something of the senior statesman of organists in this region, though he would never allow me to say that. But it's the well-known truth.

I couldn't end this without speaking about the Pearson family. Ron's the ultimate family man. I remember sitting on an airplane bound for Houston with Ron as my seat mate. We were headed to three Presbyterian Churches in the city – to meet our counterparts, swap stories, and learn a few things.

On the plane, Ron leaned over and said matter-of-factly, "You know this is the first time I've been away from my family overnight since Katie was born." I must have stared at him without saying a word for five minutes. "How old is Katie?" I finally asked. "Fourteen," Ron said. I remember thinking to myself, "That's a blessed family!"

If Ron had wanted to become a well-known name in the organist world, he could have traveled the country performing concerts throughout the USA and beyond. That's a good path for many, but it held no interest for Ron. He wanted to be home with the family he loves.

Ron and Joanne make quite a dynamic duo in Tulsa. Joanne recently retired after teaching music for some 44 years, receiving the highest teaching award Monte Cassino can give. I've witnessed her impact as a teacher first-hand ... virtually every time I eat with the Pearsons at Charleston's (a Thursday night routine for them), a grown man or woman comes over and says, "Oh, Mrs. Pearson! You were the best music teacher I've ever had!" I'm not making that up.

They've been blessed with a beautiful family who've brought them the greatest of joys: Katie and Revan McQueen, their two grandchildren Joanna and Julian, Mary Beth and Ellen ... what a crew!

Let me close with a reprint of a letter to the editor of the Tulsa World that was published on the advent of Ron's 70th birthday. I thought the wider world needed to know what we within First Church know so well.

TULSA WORLD

May 17, 2020

Letters to the editor usually focus on concerns or problems. But this letter is different. It's simply a letter of joy and gratitude, celebrating the life and service of a most remarkable man in our city – Ronald John Pearson.

May 11 was Ron's 70th birthday. He moved to Tulsa in 1974, and since that time has served as the organist (and later choirmaster) of the downtown First Presbyterian Church.

His ministry continues after 46 years of faithful service. In that time, tens of thousands have gathered in the First Church sanctuary, led into worship at times of great joy and deep sadness, with Ron at the bench.

An expert in his craft as organist and choirmaster, Ron wraps himself in humility, a deep faith and a joyful heart.

As his colleague for almost 30 years, I join many in thanking the Lord for his life, his faithfulness and his friendship.

I hope he continues to serve as organist until he is 125 years old, or longer if he desires! As Ron would say, "Soli Deo Gloria!" To God alone be the glory!

Rev. James D. Miller, Ph.D.
Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Tulsa



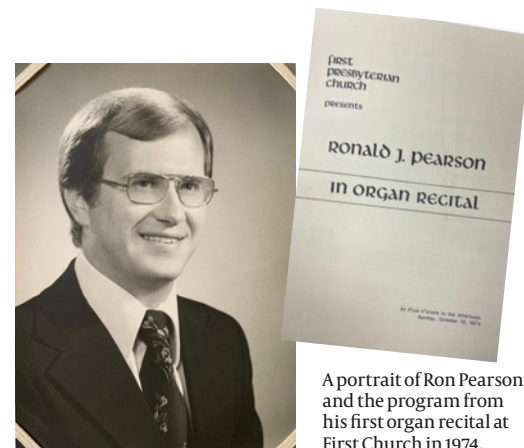
A love letter from the choir

Ron Pearson – the man behind the organ bench

By Carol Elrod

Most of us know **Ron Pearson** as a very gifted organist and musical director, a person of great humility and a devoted family man. But those of us fortunate enough to have sung in the Chancel Choir have been allowed glimpses of him from “behind the organ bench.” There are stories and memories, too numerous to recount, of his decades of service to First Church’s Music Ministry. A few choir members have offered to share some of their favorites.

Sally Stewart, a choir member who predates Ron’s beginnings at First Church, recalls when she and her late husband Bill, had Ron, “A nice young man,” to dinner a few times when he first came to Tulsa in 1974. Their daughter, **Kathy**, was preparing for her piano audition for college admission and played for Ron. He was supportive and encouraging, and Kathy went on to earn her degree, teach piano and is now a valued member of the First Church staff, as well as a colleague to Ron. Sally also shared a time when Ron unexpectedly designated her as his page turner during the postlude. She describes how she nervously stepped down into the organ pit, sat down on the bench, and unknowingly put a foot on one of the big foot pedals. Ron quietly called the situation to her attention. Sally closes with, “Guess what? Ron didn’t ask me to be a page turner ever again!”



A portrait of Ron Pearson and the program from his first organ recital at First Church in 1974.

A sweet memory is shared by longtime choir member, **Judith Land**. “The year that Ron was hired as director of Music Ministries in 1995 was the same year that Ron’s middle daughter and my daughter were in a dance class together. By that time, I had known Ron for many years, so we spent many Monday evenings, during our daughters’ rehearsal time, chatting about life. Ron kept me up to date on his progress through the interview process. One Monday evening, Ron told me he had learned that the Search Committee had recommended him for the directorship. He, of course, was excited about the committee’s decision and the opportunity afforded him. He was a bit anxious, however, about how the choir would respond. I was certain the choir would be happy but my words didn’t do much to assuage his nerves.

Jim Miller came into rehearsal that Wednesday night to tell us of the hiring decision. Ron stepped out into the hall while Jim addressed the choir. When Jim told us Ron was to have ‘interim’ removed from his title and would be the new director of Music Ministries, the choir erupted into cheers and applause. I never asked Ron his thoughts of the choir’s response, but I suspect it brought a tear to the stoic Minnesotan’s eyes.”

In 2016, some months after the passing of Ron’s beloved brother Jim, the First Church Chancel Choir commissioned Ron’s friend, talented organist and composer Michael Bedford, to compose an anthem in Jim’s memory. The piece was entitled, “The New Creation,” and was based upon a favorite Pearson family Scripture – 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NRSV). “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!”

Veteran choir member, **Lewis Taggart**, remembers how choir friend and First Baptist Church organist, Bruce Wilkin, arranged for the choir to meet in secret on a Saturday morning at First Baptist Church to learn the piece. The plan was to perform the piece as a surprise to Ron at the end of the choir’s Spring Concert. As the concert concluded, Dr. Miller stood and invited Michael forward to, “Take the conductor’s baton from Ron.” Ron was taken completely by surprise and did not easily yield the baton. However, under the persuasion of Dr. Miller, Joanne and the choir, he reluctantly took his seat. The choir, conducted by Michael and accompanied by Bruce, then presented

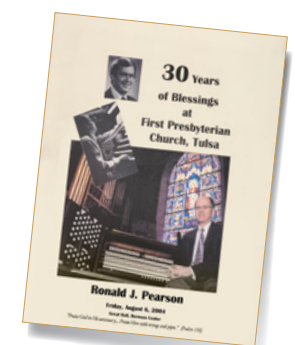


Ron Pearson directing the Chancel Choir in the Sanctuary at the spring 2023 concert.

this offering of love to Ron and his family. The choir learned that evening that we could, in fact, sing with tears in our eyes.

One of my personal favorite memories happened several years ago when Ron was away from choir for a number of weeks due to medical reasons. Summer choir was being masterfully led by **Gretchen Bashforth**. Guest organists graciously sat in on Sundays, but we all really missed Ron, both as our friend and our gifted leader. As our annual Fall Retreat approached, we knew that the best way to honor Ron was by maintaining and carrying forward the tradition of musical excellence at First Church. So, as usual, we gathered in the choir room on a Saturday morning to preview the upcoming Fall Concert material and Sunday anthems. As we worked our way through the material, in walked Ron and Joanne. Most of us had not seen him for weeks, and we were a bit taken aback by his pale coloring and lack of his typical energy. He sat down by the piano and listened as we sang. Shortly before lunch, we noted a bit of foot tapping. Ron joined us for lunch and enjoyed visiting with friends and colleagues. As we resumed rehearsing, he, once again, sat near the piano. Gretchen and Bruce Wilkin, who was our

accompanist that day, led us back into the music. After a few pieces, along with more foot tapping, the maestro could no longer resist being back in the action. Ron got up, “gently nudged” Bruce over on the piano bench and began playing. His color and strength seemed to improve, but the main thing we all noticed was the return of the person we knew and loved. The transformation we saw in that short period of time was heartwarming. Ron was back, in more ways than one. We knew we were missing our dear friend and director, and that it just wasn’t “choir” without him. But what we were very touched to see was that Ron wasn’t Ron without choir, either.



The program cover from Ron’s 30th anniversary celebration at First Church Tulsa in 2004.

Ron is a man of great humor, especially puns. Once engaged, he can pun, and counter-pun, unlike most anyone else. Sometimes, choir rehearsals go down a short-lived rabbit hole when he gets on a roll. But, given that he times rehearsals to allot an exact number of minutes and seconds for each piece, these diversions are usually fairly brief. Ron also is an expert in the theological meanings and the musical histories of most everything we sing, along with deep knowledge of the composers. On the rare occasions when a rehearsal might end a bit early, we often hold our collective breath, because we know we are likely to be educated during those extra minutes. He has also been known to use creative license with musical terms such as "approximento," "bombastissimo" and "infinittissimo," and to encourage us to share his love of languages. We await the day when we will be learning an anthem in Esperanto or Portuguese.

The congregation knows how talented Ron is thanks to his Sunday morning preludes and postludes, as well as his annual concerts. But what people outside the Music Ministry may



Ron Pearson in a 2001 Tulsa World newspaper article.

not fully comprehend is the vast repertoire of music Ron carries around in his head. He can often transition seamlessly from one composition to another, as he demonstrated to the Chancel Choir on a Sunday morning of G.F. Handel's birthday. Ron accompanied us in the singing of "Happy Birthday" to Handel then, without missing a beat, began to play the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah.

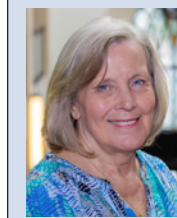
Just like with parents, Ron also has "the look." Things that elicit "the look" might include, obviously, the singing of wrong notes, not cutting off at the right time, singing through a rest, etc. But the sternest look is reserved for the "Okie-fied" pronunciation of certain words, particularly those containing the "ou," such as "shout," "found," "count," etc. While "the look" is rarely directed at one individual, when it is aimed in your general direction, you can't help but wonder ... "is it me?" Needless to say, being on the receiving end is something to be avoided at all costs.

And finally, relatively new choir member, **Laura Stockbridge** shared this beautiful reason why singing in the Chancel Choir is so important to her. "I joined the choir in 2021. The music ministry is, in large part, why we joined First Church. It didn't take long to understand just how talented of a musician Ron is. Being able to watch him play his improvisational postludes from the choir's view is a delight. The congregation doesn't get to see the joyful smiles and occasional smirks that accompany his intense focus.

During choir rehearsals, I appreciate that he often reminds us of the contextual importance of what we are singing and how it will align with other elements of worship. A talented musician will fill a room with beautiful sounds, surely. A talented musician, conducted by the Holy Spirit and playing to honor and praise our God, fills a room with hearts imprinted by the Spirit and changed forever. Ron is the latter. It is an absolute joy to sing under his direction and watch him play."

It is a great privilege to be a part of a Music Ministry led by one with the gifts and talents of Ron Pearson. But it is an even higher honor to be guided by someone with whom we share such admiration and affection.

Congratulations, Ron, and thanks for letting us be part of your journey.



About the author:
Carol Elrod is a longtime member of First Church. She has two grown children, Griffin and Stephanie; a daughter-in-law, Paige; and a precious granddaughter, Bryce. Carol sings with the Chancel Choir, is a member of the Guild of Intercessors, and has served as an Elder and a Deacon.



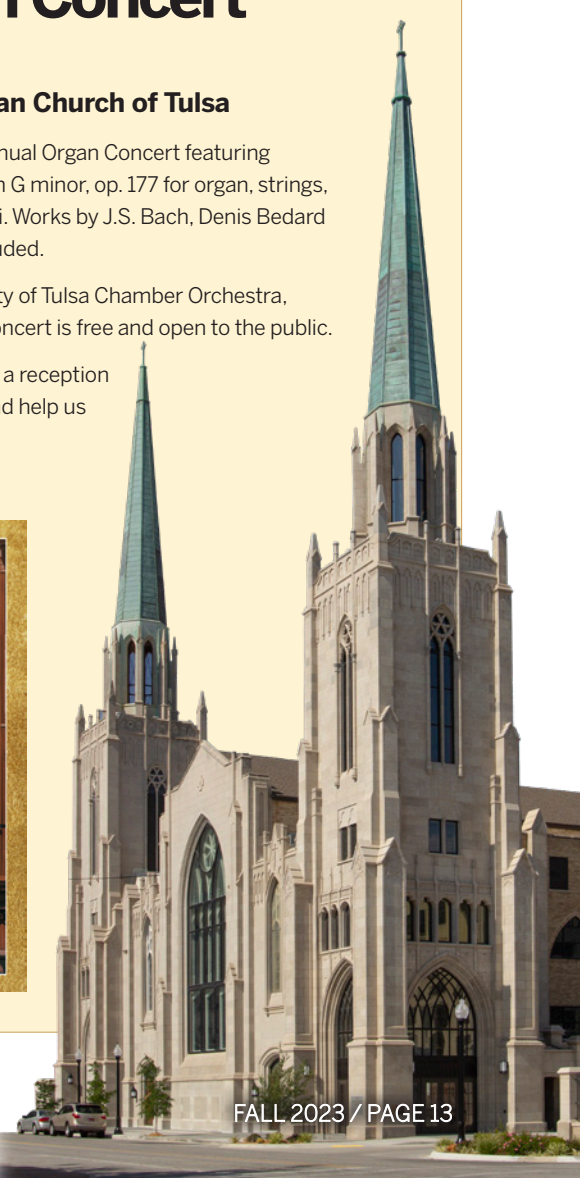
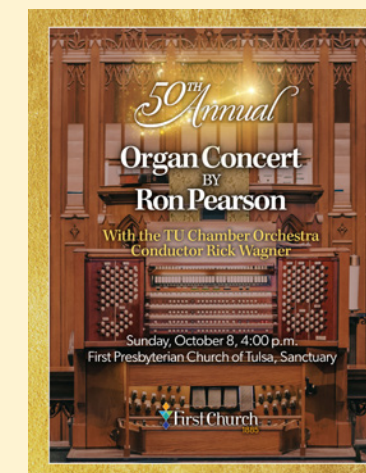
Ron Pearson's 50th Annual Organ Concert

Sunday, October 8, 4 p.m.
Sanctuary, First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa

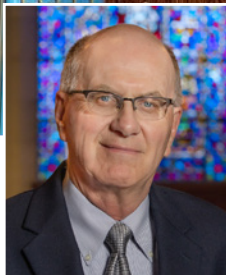
Join us for Ron Pearson's 50th Annual Organ Concert featuring Josef Rheinberger's Concerto no. 2 in G minor, op. 177 for organ, strings, two horns, two trumpets and timpani. Works by J.S. Bach, Denis Bedard and Charles-Marie Widor will be included.

Guest artists include The University of Tulsa Chamber Orchestra, with Rick Wagner conducting. The concert is free and open to the public.

Following the concert there will be a reception in the First Church Atrium. Join us and help us celebrate Ron's 50th.



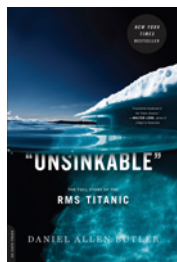
Ron Pearson's Top 10 to read



By Ron Pearson

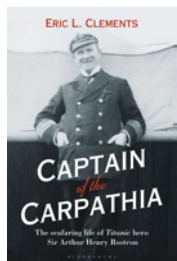
Editor's note: As this is the "Issue of Ron" celebrating his 50th organ concert in 2023, we decided to ask him to tell us about his Top 10 books to read, and we received 18! Some are religious and some are secular. Enjoy these books which give great insight into everything Ron.

I enjoy reading books about specific topics ... great composers of music, pipe organs and their history, United States presidents, the Titanic disaster, Apollo lunar missions, the Kennedy political family, the Shroud of Turin and great cathedrals of the world.



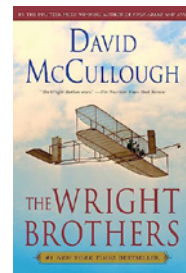
Unsinkable Daniel Allen Butler

Following the great ship from her conception to her fateful collision to the ambitious attempts to salvage her right up to the present day, Daniel Allen Butler draws on 30 years of research to explore the tragedy and its aftermath in remarkable depth and detail.



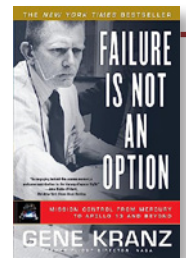
Captain of the Carpathia Eric L. Clements

Captain Arthur Rostron raced the Cunard liner Carpathia to the scene of the sinking Titanic, rescued the 700 survivors of the world's most famous shipwreck and then carried them to safety to New York. This is the first comprehensive biography of Arthur Rostron before, during and after his year as captain of the Carpathia.



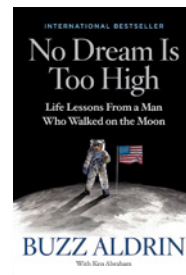
The Wright Brothers David McCullough

The number one New York Times bestseller from David McCullough, two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize, the dramatic story-behind-the-story about the courageous brothers who taught the world how to fly, Wilbur and Orville Wright. He draws on the extensive Wright family papers to profile not only the brothers but their sister, Katharine, without whom things might well have gone differently for them.



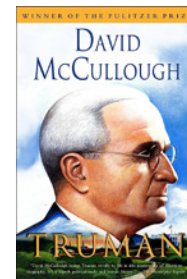
Failure Is Not an Option Gene Kranz

A fascinating firsthand account by a veteran mission controller of one of America's greatest achievements, this author reflects on what has happened to the space program and offers his own bold suggestions about what we ought to be doing in space now.



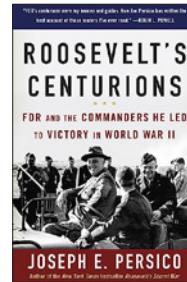
No Dream Is Too High Buzz Aldrin

Beloved American hero Buzz Aldrin reflects on the wisdom, guiding principles, and irreverent anecdotes he's gathered through his event-filled life in this inspiring guide-to-life for the next generation. This book is a new opportunity for Aldrin to connect with the masses of people who recognize his unique place in human history.



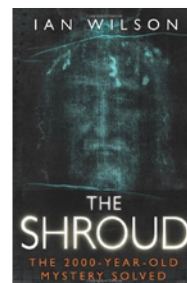
Truman David McCullough

The Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Harry S. Truman, whose presidency included momentous events from the atomic bombing of Japan to the outbreak of the Cold War and the Korean War, told by America's beloved historian. McCullough tells the story of the seemingly ordinary "man from Missouri" who was perhaps the most courageous president in our history.



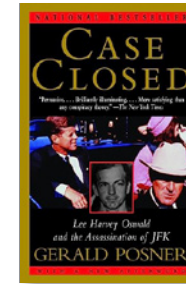
Roosevelt's Centurions Joseph E. Persico

What are the qualities we look for in a commander in chief? In an era of renewed conflict, when Americans are again confronting the questions that FDR faced about the nature and exercise of global power, this read is a timely and revealing examination of what it takes to be a wartime leader in a freewheeling, complicated and tumultuous democracy.



The Shroud Ian Wilson

Two decades after radiocarbon dating declared the Turin Shroud a medieval fake, brand-new historical discoveries strongly suggest that this famous cloth, with its extraordinary photographic imprint, is genuinely Christ's shroud after all. By arguing his case brilliantly and provocatively, Ian Wilson once more throws the matter into the public arena for further debate and controversy.



Case Closed Gerald Posner

This was a New York Times bestseller and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in History. It was also the subject of a double issue of U.S. News and World Report, and featured on programs such as ABC's 20/20, CBS Special Reports and PBS's Frontline. Posner testified before Congress about the findings in his book that Lee Harvey Oswald had, indeed, acted alone in killing JFK.



Beethoven - Anguish and Triumph Jan Swafford

This biography of Ludwig van Beethoven peels away layers of legend to get to the living, breathing human being who composed some of the world's most iconic music. Swafford then tracks his subject to Vienna, capital of European music, where Beethoven built his career in the face of critical incomprehension, crippling ill health, romantic rejection and "fate's hammer," his ever-encroaching deafness.

Additional titles

Widor: A Life beyond the Toccata John R. Near

A biography of organist Charles-Marie Widor.

Recollections Marcel Dupre

English translation of organist Marcel Dupre's autobiographical recollections.

The Aeolian Pipe Organ and Its Music Rollin Smith

The story of America's oldest, largest and longest-lived residence organ company.

Out of My Life and Thought Albert Schweitzer

The spiritual odyssey of theologian Albert Schweitzer.

The Indianapolis 500: A Century of Excitement Ralph Kramer

The compelling and entertaining story of the race that has become known as simply, "The greatest spectacle in racing."

First Off the Tee Don van Natta, Jr.

A witty examination into the presidents who play golf and what their game reveals about their personalities.

Scandinavian Humor and Other Myths John Louis Anderson

A sophisticated, loving look at a stoic crowd.

The Three Stooges Scrapbook Jeff Lenburg, Joan Maurer, Greg Lenburg

A researched account of the Stooges' lives and careers.



Members train for pastoral care certification

By Nick McMillan

Teaching Elders, or full-time ministers of word and sacrament, enter the Preparation for Ministry Process to seek First Church's sponsorship and the Presbytery's certification for ministry. This preparation process also provides a way for aspiring commissioned ruling elders to certify and provide pastoral care on a part-time basis. First Church is currently sponsoring two candidates for this role, **Laura Stockbridge** and **Judith Land**. Also sponsored by First Church, **Faith Wambugu** recently completed the process on May 26, 2023. Each candidate has seen God's call revealing itself step by step through the process. Laura's experience has shown her that sometimes a seemingly incidental step will turn out to be an essential part of God's plan in the fullness of time. As she states, "A step doesn't have to be huge. God can do a lot with a little. It is important to be open to the call. God does the rest." Calls may come for a variety of ministries, whether to chaplaincy, leading Sunday school, or preaching. Each of these calls' benefits from the study and training of the Preparation for Ministry Process.



Laura Stockbridge

Laura's call began when she was a delegate to Indian Nations Presbytery and learned that some rural churches had not received communion in two years, and she thought, "Somebody should do something." Later, she remembered, "I'm somebody. I'll do something." Currently working as a landman in the oil and gas industry, Laura enjoys the process of identifying relationships and piecing together genealogies to determine ownership of oil and gas leases. In a similar fashion, she tracks the work of God in her life through the influences and examples of people of faith. At the church in which Laura grew up, the congregation took their baptismal pledge seriously and ensured Laura had a right relationship with God. Through the combined influence of their sayings, beliefs and practices Laura learned from role models and elders at church to practice Christlikeness.

Laura continues this tradition and finds constant inspiration in the Children's ministry at First Church. "The children probably motivate me more than I them," Laura says. For Laura, there is real beauty in the passing of faith from generation to generation.

When pastoral ministry is conducted in an institution other than the church, it is known as chaplaincy. Chaplains serve in institutions such as prisons, schools, hospitals and corporations. **Faith Wambugu** is currently a chaplain at Ascension St. John Hospital and recently has completed the preparation process to obtain the church's blessing in this work. Faith's preparation for ministry came after years of chaplaincy in prisons and hospitals in Kenya and the US. Educated in theology at East University in Kenya and Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa, the biggest hurdle for Faith was not the academic requirements. Rather, it was the requirement for a candidate for commissioned ruling elder to have served on session. Faith learned of this requirement after beginning inquiry into the process and waited in uncertainty as to whether she would ever one day be called to serve. Throughout she prayed for discernment, and Faith affirms there is spiritual growth in waiting.

"The role of chaplain is a voice of the church to the outside and a voice of the outside to the church."
— Faith Wambugu

In her role, she stands alongside others facing difficult situations including terminal illness or the loss of a loved one. "You need to be able to practice discernment," Faith asserts, "to know whether there is not much to say and it's just a matter of being present, or whether a person needs you to look in their eyes and hug them or be with them as they process their grief." Sometimes a person may be struggling with mistakes they have made in life, and Faith describes how chaplains learn how to be present with someone who has caused suffering. At such times Faith works to, "bring consolation to their families and themselves, to connect them with their maker so they can feel forgiven."



Faith Wambugu



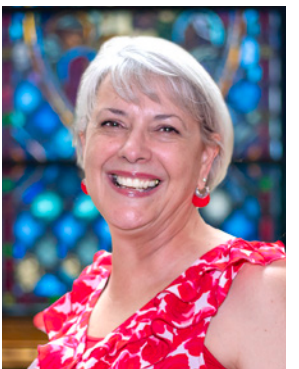
Judith Land delivering a message in the Chapel on July 11, 2023.

Faith participates in a local organization of chaplains who support and mentor each other through this difficult work. She asks for the prayers of the church for continued grace to connect with God in her calling and the work of chaplaincy. There is need for more chaplains and Faith is willing to share guidance in becoming a chaplain with anyone who is interested.

For **Judith Land**, the preparation for ministry process is a way to be available and equipped for whichever ministry God calls her. When leading First Church's Westminster Sunday School in a series of classes on the Kingdom of God, she found that through her study, she was better informed and able to answer people's questions and identify resources for their reference. She also knows more about the process of research in scripture. Formally trained as an accountant, Judith wants things to balance out and know whether following a process will give her the right answer. With scripture, however, interpreting and applying it is not often a uniform process. When she has questions, she collaborates with her fellow congregants for insight and resources for further study.

Working as an accountant during the COVID-19 pandemic, Judith would drive to work, work alongside one other person, and drive home. Throughout, she carried on long conversations with God that encouraged her to see her calling "to tell more people about Jesus." Judith practices active listening as a part of this ministry and engages people in telling their stories so they feel seen and heard. She states, "A lot of people just want to be seen and acknowledged."

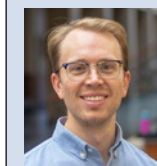
Judith seeks to personally acknowledge others in the manner of Jesus and serves as a friend to the friendless. Living her faith this way, she grows in her dependence on God, affirming that she cannot live like Christ on her own. For Judith, the preparation for ministry process is one step in a lifetime of ongoing work to live the Kingdom of God.



Judith Land

The next article in this "Preparation for Ministry Process" series will feature updates on past completers of the process and their current ministry.

Editor's note: In the "Preparation for ministry" article in the summer 2023 issue about Zack Rivers, his son Logan was listed as 6 years old but is 12. Our apologies.



About the author:
Nick McMillan is a class of 2025 deacon, Exodus high school Sunday School adult leader and co-chair of communion. He enjoys leading small group bible studies with youth and is a frequent participant in the Before the Rooster Crows Bible study. He joined First Church in June 2021 and is grateful for this opportunity to learn more about the preparation process and current candidates.



Laurel Baird leads the children in singing a praise song in Wee Worship.

wee worship

By Jenni Dollahon

It's hard to describe a sweeter sound than that of tiny voices of preschoolers praising the name of the Lord. At First Church, you can hear that joyful noise on Sunday mornings at the 11 a.m. childcare hour, during "Wee Worship."

This dedicated time is more than singing songs about Jesus; it is designed to let children experience corporate worship in an age-appropriate way, in preparation for when they are older and participate in the worship services with their families.



Thea Rogers listening to the Wee Worship Bible story.

Laurel Baird, a volunteer in the Children's Ministry and former associate children's director, began this program in the fall of 2022. She is passionate about engaging the big important Biblical truth with people of all ages and levels of Christian exposure in a way that meets them where they are and hopes that this endeavor will do just that for these preschoolers.



Laurel Baird

Wee Worship is designed for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds. Each group of children rotates into a designated worship space set up with an altar, an open Bible, the appropriate color parament for the liturgical season and a cross on the wall. The children are seated in a semi-circle around the altar, facing the cross, to remind them that Jesus is the focus of our worship. They are then walked through the major parts of a worship service: call to worship, prayer, singing, time of confession, hearing of the Word/sermon and a charge or benediction. The 3 and 4-year-olds also get a brief lesson on the "why" behind certain aspects of the service or the liturgical calendar.

In October they talked about the call to worship, in November they discussed prayer, in December they learned about Advent, etc.

Music typically includes the children's hymn of the month, which is also being taught during Worship 101 to the school aged children, and a rotation of more traditional children's worship songs. The sermon time is a reiteration of the Bible story the children learned that day in Sunday School to reinforce the Biblical truth being taught each week. Laurel will also engage the children with motions or visual aids when telling the story to keep things fresh and fun.

When asked what she wanted the children to learn from the program, Laurel said, "My goal for the children is to learn they are a valuable part of the church right now and can engage with Jesus and each other right where they are now; and that as they progress this foundation will allow them to continue connecting and engaging with all the areas of worship in a way

continued...



The Wee Worship space set up with an altar, an open Bible, the appropriate color parament for the liturgical season and a cross on the wall.

that feels meaningful to them at any age. One of the reasons we wanted to start this was to make sure children were not just in childcare at church but were also being disciplined in a way that met their needs." I also asked her what her favorite moments have been so far, and she replied, "My favorite moments are when the lightbulbs in their little hearts and brains click on. When they answer a question so sincerely and when they want to pray ... these children already know so much about our Christian faith and my own heart is encouraged every time they say 'because Jesus loves us' or 'Alleluia Amen' after our prayer of confession. Their faces convey so much! They're also a great cross section of how most adults relate to worship services as well. Not everyone wants to stand and sing, or not everyone wants to pray but others love it."

If you are interested in helping with in the Children's Ministry and seeing these moments for yourself, please contact Sarah Savage at ssavage@firstchurchtulsa.org, or give her a call at 918-301-1011.



About the author:

Jenni Dollahon is a member of the contemporary worship team, wife of B.J. and mother of Rob and Molly. She works part time as an accountant and enjoys singing, reading, Dr. Pepper and Fun Dip. Jenni's favorite fruit of the spirit is joy and she tends to speak in exclamation marks!



To Tonye, with love

By Kathy Wilson

People retire all the time. It's not unusual. What is unusual is someone retiring after working 37.5 years for the same organization. When that someone is Tonye Briscoe and the organization is First Church of Tulsa, that retirement is a very big deal, indeed.

Tonye worked as an executive secretary at Sikes Carpet's plant in Bristow before leaving to care for her children. After 11 years, Tonye decided to re-enter the workforce and joined the staff here as the secretary for Christian Ed. In her interview for the position, she was told that it was a very demanding job. When asked if she thought she could handle it her response was, "I have six kids at home, so I'm pretty sure I can." The position had been open for three months and it was quite a tangle of backed up work. Of course, Tonye handled it all in her efficient way. In 1992, Tonye transferred to the business office and has been the facilities and benefits manager until her retirement in June 2023.

Tonye's strong faith and positive outlook have blessed this church in multiple ways. More than one of the maintenance crew calls her "grandma," and numerous staff members and congregants have been comforted, counseled and inspired by Tonye over the years. Even during her most difficult times, she has consistently demonstrated her complete trust in the Lord.

Tonye has many wonderful memories from her time here at First Church. She shared that once she brought a birthday "cake" to the office for our accounting manager, Steve Howe. As a prank, Tonye had frosted a Styrofoam cake and had it professionally decorated. She laughed as she remembered Steve trying and trying to cut into it until he finally realized that it was a fake. For some reason, Steve has never tried another of Tonye's cakes since then.

Tonye will miss everyone here at First Church very much, but it is time for her to move into the next chapter of her life. Now Tonye is looking forward to devoting more time in service to her own church and spending more time with her family in Alabama, Tennessee and Nebraska. She also plans to do more gardening, quilting and sewing the many memory bears her family has requested her to make out of the shirts of loved ones who have passed away.

Tonye leaves First Church knowing that her position is in good hands with Toni Moseley, who spent a month working in tandem with Tonye for training purposes. Happy retirement, Tonye! We love you!



About the author:

Kathy Wilson has been a member of First Church since joining as a confirmand in 1972 and has been on staff since 2018. One of her responsibilities is coordinating memorial services.



Protecting & preserving Finance and stewardship at First Church

By Elizabeth DeVore

The Bible states in Proverbs 3:9 ESV, "Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce." Deacon **Brandon Evans** says, "Giving back isn't just about writing a check; a large part of being in the body of Christ is the fellowship that comes with serving others in the body of Christ for the purpose to further God's kingdom." Stewardship is an essential part of worship, declaring Jesus as the Lord of our lives and our finances. To give back is an act of thanksgiving and it is crucial to our membership in the body of Christ.

Katie Evans, an active member, says, "On our own, our family either wouldn't know about, or practically speaking, couldn't stretch to give to each of the organizations and ministries First Church partners with. Giving our portion back to the Lord through our church is a blessing because we feel more invested in the goals we see these many organizations working toward. It develops our maturity to honor a commitment made."

"There's something about participating in the Body by giving that makes us feel truly part of the church family."

– Katie Evans

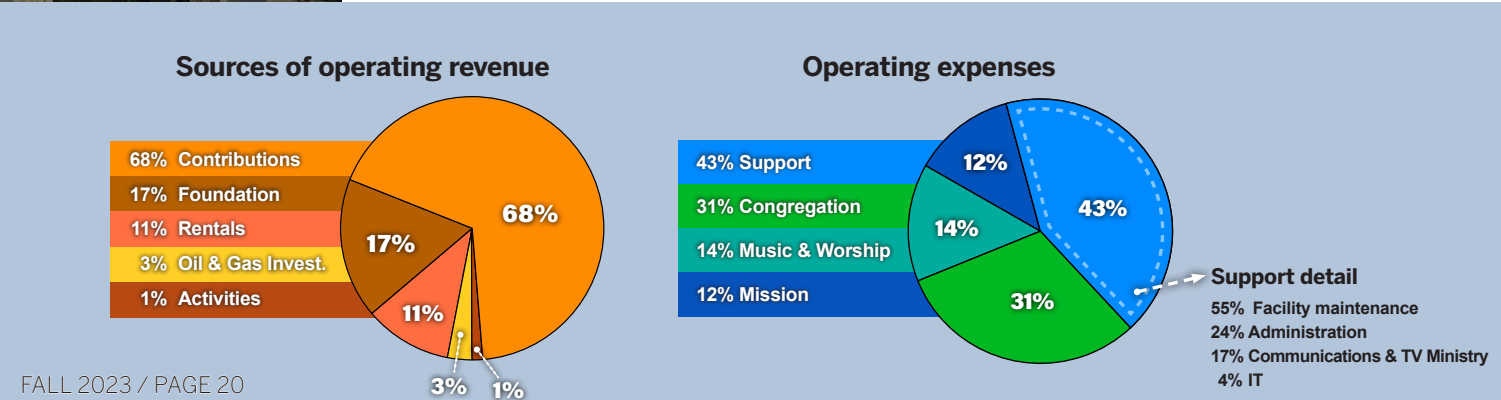
Our gifts go much further beyond the offering plate than many see on a typical Sunday. Your pledges may help support our youth going on mission trips, the organ leading us in worship, Chef Joseph providing our Wednesday Night Downtown dinners, the needs met through Helping Hands, students at Masterwork Academy learning how to play the piano, teams preparing for international missions, children learning Bible verses at AWANA, or support for Hope Is Alive ministries. The list goes on and on with possibilities that have the opportunity to be impacted by your gifts. As seen in the pie chart, there are many areas touched.

By definition, stewardship means the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. Longtime member **Judith Land** expresses, "God has been gracious, kind and generous to me in my life, providing for my every need and granting blessings beyond measure. Because all I have received is from God, I feel compelled to return a portion of that which I have received back to God, through both financial resources and time." We have been given the ultimate gift through Jesus' life, death and resurrection. This grace is freely given so that we may be in right relationship with Christ. In response we can consider how we can give back in gratitude with even the smallest amount. When we surrender our finances to the Lord it is an act of orientating our entire lives toward Him. For active member **Pam Hillis**, she says it's an exercise in faith: "It challenges me to think about what I put my trust in ... money or God's promises."

The finance committee led by **Jim Scheiper** prayerfully helps to manage and steward gifts given. This committee includes members and elders, **Jim Bailey, Elizabeth DeVore, Brett Crane, Jim Eagleton, Rusty Gaddy, Cathy Laird** as well as staff, **Lynn Fesperman, Toni Moseley** and **Steve Howe**. We are about to enter a season of stewardship where you will be asked to fill out a "covenant of giving" card to help the church responsibly plan for the upcoming year. Please prayerfully consider how you will respond to this call.



About the author: Elizabeth DeVore is a lifelong member of First Church Tulsa. She loves being engaged in the body of Christ and growing with her church family. She currently serves as an elder, is involved in Pathfinder middle school ministries and a Young Adult K Group leader.



Jerry McCoy knows God is bigger than we think

By Kelly Kurt Brown

If you want to know more about God, **Jerry McCoy** suggests that you look up.

On a dark night, the unaided eye can see as many as 2,500 stars. There are a hundred billion stars in our galaxy and beyond that, another galaxy with at least a hundred billion stars of its own. There are two hundred billion more galaxies beyond that, he says, each with its own unfathomable dazzle of stars.



Jerry McCoy has been a physics professor at the University of Tulsa for 30 years.

To consider the enormity, the sophistication and robustness of the universe, the University of Tulsa physics professor of 30 years turns to his training – as a scientist AND a man of faith.

"Looking at what God has made and inferring what He must be like to have made that, the conclusion is that He's way bigger than you have ever given Him credit for being," McCoy says.

At First Church, McCoy has taught a class called, "God is A LOT Bigger Than You Think!" He is working on a book by the same name, with the subtitle "The Story Science Tells."

While some see a split between science and faith, McCoy sees a bridge, "a direct line" from the physical world to Jesus. He points to Colossians 1 NIV: "For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible ..."

"I realized that through science, I was getting a front row seat to the grandeur of God," he says.

The son of a nuclear physicist, McCoy loved the scientific world and by age 6, he was asking his dad for pairs of numbers to plot. His family attended church but didn't make it a priority. At 17, however, his experience at a stadium revival led him to give his life to Jesus. "I really did become a new creature," the 66-year-old says.

A year later, in a darkened lab as a TU student, McCoy had an epiphany while conducting a classic second-year physics assignment, the Young's Double Slit Experiment. In an undulating pattern that offered scientific proof to the wave character of light, he couldn't help but see God's hand at work.

"I remember thinking, 'God did that! God did that! He dreamed it up. He made it happen. He's amazing!'"

– Jerry McCoy

"That was my first instance of drawing a direct line between the physical world and our unseen God."

Scientific methods are the best way to reveal truths about the physical world, McCoy says. But when it comes to the truth of God's existence, using science "would be like taking a bag of hammers to clean windows. It's the wrong tool," he says. "God leaves no smoking gun. He is the master of requiring faith."

"The bottom line that I get to is He is worthy of all our unabashed, unrestricted worship and our trust," McCoy says. "A God as big as He is can do anything."



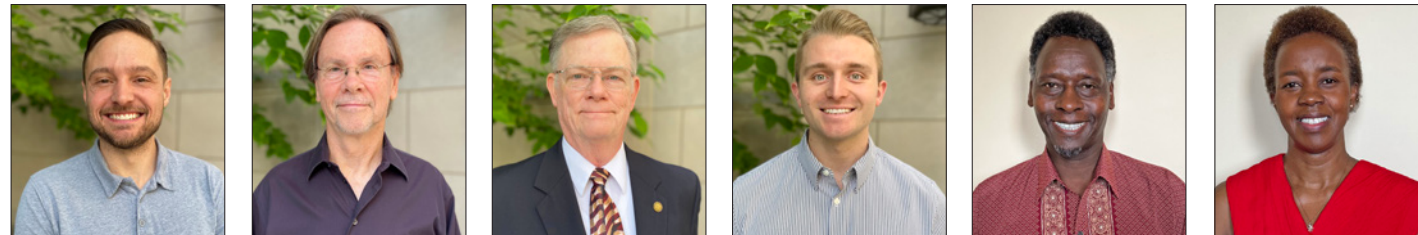
About the author: Kelly, husband Mark and their sons, Lucas and Jonas, are longtime regulars at the 8:30 a.m. service. You might spot her Wednesday nights in the Powerhouse playing dodgeball with the youth. She's also an enthusiastic and unofficial promoter of the church's Ignatian Spiritual Exercises.

Parish Register

Welcome new members June 2023



Dr. Deborah "Deb" Beeson Dr. Robert "Bob" Bruce Jan Bruce Tara Brumble Patricia Gross Jenna Grosso



Sam Grosso Ron Hull Michael Kauskey Taylor Law Francis Njau Mathea Ruth Njau



Nick Njau Trency Njau Esther Mbaka Dennis Koori Mugambi Alice Nakimbugwe Dennis Powon



Eric Sandefur Patricia "Paddy" Sandefur Julia "Judy" Start

Ready for the next steps to membership?

Inquirers Class

Join us for our next Inquirers' Class. For more information, contact **Patricia Hall**, director of new member outreach at 918-301-1028 or email phall@firstchurchtulsa.org.

Welcome new staff members



Toni Moseley
Facilities and
Benefits Coordinator

Elizabeth Donelson
Kitchen Assistant

The joy of new life! We welcome:

Jonah Nathaniel Sloup, Jr., son of **Adrianna & Jonah Sloup**, was born May 18
Callum Christopher Bruce Baird, son of **Laurel & Eric Baird**, was born on July 7
Asa Mark Smith, son of **Sarah & Alex Smith**, was born on July 16

The celebration of Christian marriage

Tony Miller & Teresa Getchell were married on May 6
Caitlin Russell & Nick Conetta were married on June 10
Morgan Wilson & James Williams were married on July 8

With gratitude for the resurrection

Cheryl Hawkins, a member since 1999, died on April 21
David Morgan, a member since 1938, died on May 7
Marsue Gent, a member since 1960, died on May 18
Linda McGee, a member since 2001, died on June 2
Patricia Wheeler, a member since 1965, died on June 30

Parish Register

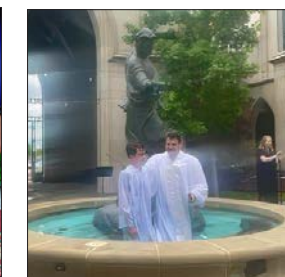
Baptisms



Georgia Burke Moore Charlotte Sutton Powers Callan Dean Crowe Nora Ann Schneberger Jonah Nathaniel Sloup



Jarrett Kamande, Joshua Nsereko,
David Masaku and Carol Gitau.



Michael Shelton



Maxwell Sullivan

Jayden Lombardo-Grosso
and Sage N. Grosso.

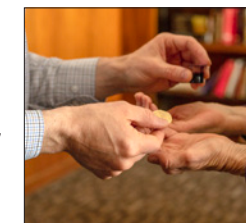
Baptized but not pictured: Ife Aruna and Morgan McIntosh.

The sacrament of baptism

Georgia Burke Moore, daughter of Paige & Keith Moore, was baptized on April 23
Ife Aruna, daughter of Tina & Alao Aruna, was baptized on April 30
Carol Gitau, daughter of Loise Gitau & Peter Kagari, was baptized on April 30
Jarrett Kamande, son of Lucy & Peter Kamande, was baptized on April 30
David Masaku, son of Grace & Urbanus Masaku, was baptized on April 30
Morgan McIntosh, son of Breana & Jacob McIntosh, was baptized on April 30
Joshua Nsereko, son of Deborah & Eddie Nsereko, was baptized on April 30
Charlotte Sutton Powers, daughter of Carly & Barrett Powers, was baptized on May 14
Callan Dean Crowe, son of Paige & JJ Crowe, was baptized on May 14
Michael J. Shelton, son of Grace & John Shelton, was baptized on May 14
Nora Ann Schneberger, daughter of Bonnie & Adam Schneberger, was baptized on May 21
Maxwell P. Sullivan, son of Rhiannon & Edward Sullivan, was baptized on June 4
Jayden Lombardo-Grosso, son of Jenna & Sam Grosso, was baptized on June 18
Sage N. Grosso, son of Jenna & Sam Grosso, was baptized on June 18
Jonah Nathaniel Sloup, son of Adrianna & Jonah Sloup, was baptized on July 16

Pastoral care

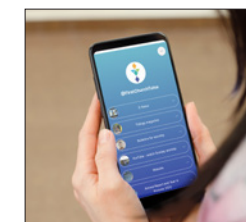
For pastoral needs, prayer requests, important family news or a change in contact information, please call 918-584-4701 or email **Kathy Wilson** at kwilson@firstchurchtulsa.org.



To directly request prayer by the **Guild of Intercessors**, call **Paula Peterson** at 918-296-5548 or text 918-688-2163.

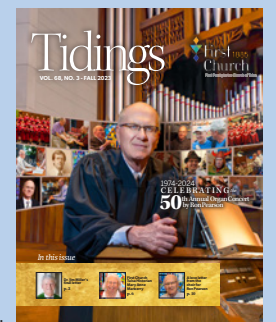
First Church Tulsa online resources

Find all links at:
[Linktr.ee/FirstChurchTulsa](https://linktr.ee/FirstChurchTulsa)



Tidings: The Holy Spirit at work in and through the members of the First Presbyterian Church

Tidings is a quarterly publication of First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa, 709 South Boston Avenue, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74119. Read past issues of Tidings on our website at FirstChurchTulsa.org/Tidings. If you would like to write an article or take photos for the magazine, please contact Louann Buhlinger at lbuhlinger@FirstChurchTulsa.org or call 918-301-1032.




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In gratitude to our Heavenly Father for the gift of Dr. James D. Miller. We are thankful for his steadfast dedication to First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa from 1992 - 2023.

Well done, good & faithful servant.



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