



The Banner

First Presbyterian Church
Oak Ridge, Tennessee

May 2023

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New Paraments dedicated on Easter

Last month, the worship service on Easter Sunday included the dedication of new quilted Paraments for the sanctuary. Paraments—a Latin word meaning ecclesiastical vestment or decorative hanging—help to enhance a worship space. This new set, white in color for the Easter season, includes a cover for the Communion Table, hangings for the pulpit and lectern, and a stole for the pastor.

In describing the new set, Mimi Tilley, who anchored the effort, says it is a Celtic braid design. “My star word this year is *continuity*. These Paraments are a sewn version of the word because, as is characteristic of Celtic symbols, there is no beginning or ending point in the design.”

Mimi, along with Vivian Jung, shopped for the fabric.

They split up to cover more territory in the fabric store. When they came back together, they each had a shade of fabric that worked well together. Mimi said, “The two shades are woven together in a pattern that represents different things. Some will see fish, some will see crosses, and more.”

First Presbyterian Church’s own Piece for Peace Sisters made the Paraments, which is their third set. They previously designed and quilted the blue-and-purple set we use for the Advent and Lenten seasons, as well as the exquisite mountain scene for Ordinary Time (the Sundays in the liturgical year that are not within

one of the other major seasonal periods).

If tradition continues, these sets of Paraments will enhance FPCOR’s sanctuary for a generation to come.



Work begins on the Welcome Garden mural.



The office renovation continues.



Pentecost Sunday is May 28

Have your red clothes ready to wear on Sunday, May 28, which is the Day of Pentecost this year. It is the one day in the church year when the liturgical color is red. The color symbolizes the Holy Spirit, which plays a central role in the story in Acts 2 that is commonly considered the beginning of the Church. In the story, the disciples were all together

when, among other things, “...tongues as of fire appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.”

May 28 will be a fitting day to invite a friend or neighbor to join you in worship!

The Banner

From your pastor



Sharon Youngs, pastor

“Lots of Americans Are Losing Their Religion. Have You?” is the title of a recent article by *New York Times* opinion writer Jessica Grose. Her article is the first in a series exploring this country’s relationship with religion (Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and more).

Grose’s objective, she says, is “to inject some nuance and specificity into this discussion, since I feel like it can be and sometimes is dominated by partisans who want to argue that the decline in religiosity is either uniformly good or bad for society.”

For herself, while Grose has deep feelings about *being* Jewish, she is neither a regular worshiper nor one who has interest or trust in organized religion. And she is not alone. This year, according to a *Wall Street Journal* and NORC survey, a mere 39 percent of the 1,000 people surveyed said religion was very important to them—a 23 percent decrease since 1998. Disappointing numbers, but not surprising. This downward trend began several years ago and accelerated during the pandemic.

Here is what Grose writes that I keep pondering: “[I am] a little heartsick about not knowing quite how to pass along my ritual and history to my children. I do wonder about what may be lost by not having a community connected by belief, but I’m not quite sure what that is, or if replacing it is possible, or even desirable.” Certainly, her “profound ambivalence” goes hand-in-hand with the downward trend I cited earlier. But what does it mean for us who have “boots on the ground” here at First Presbyterian Church of Oak Ridge, Tenn.? How does it inform who we are and what we do as we seek to “embody Christ’s inclusive love through heart, mind, and service”? I’d love to know your thoughts.

Meanwhile, I’m not sure when Grose’s second article will be published, but you can bet I’ll be watching for it.

FPCOR’s Welcome Table Thursday, May 11, 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.

The Welcome Table, our monthly community meal ministry, will be a sit-down meal in the fellowship hall on May 11, 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. All are invited to come and eat. Groceries will also be available.

If you would like to help, tasks include setting up, cooking, serving meals, and cleaning up. Please let Sharon know if you’re interested: fpcpastor@live.com or 771-7178.

With a grateful heart,
Sharon



Top left: a kiddo models the new pastor’s stole.
Top right: Taylor receives the Sacrament of Baptism.
Bottom pics: more scenes from Easter Sunday



FPC spotlight: Tina Buckles

Tina Buckles, who was recognized by our congregation as a new member on April 23, has held a variety of jobs, ranging from college basketball coach and sport psychologist consultant to Pat Summit's Lady Vols teams to owner of a real estate firm.

Tina is a native of Bristol, Tenn. Her father, an engineer, and mother worked for two companies there—Raytheon and Univac, manufacturer of the first commercial digital computer. She received a B.S. degree in physical education and mathematics and an M.S. degree in education from Tennessee Tech. She played varsity volleyball and basketball at the university and then worked as its women's volleyball team coach for three years. She served as the women's varsity basketball coach and health education instructor at Emory & Henry College in Virginia for three years.

While earning a Ph.D. in sport psychology from the University of Tennessee, she worked and traveled with the Lady Vols varsity basketball team as a sport psychologist for three years and then served as consultant with Pat Summit's teams for four additional years.

"From 1983 to 1985 Pat opened her team to me for my doctoral research and dissertation," she said. "I worked with Lady Vols players individually using relaxation techniques and guided imagery. The purpose was to do mental practice sessions with the players so they could practice 'perfectly.' In a *Knoxville News Sentinel* article, Pat gave me credit for the team's success and mentioned me in her first book."

In 1985, Tina started working in real estate and two years later received her broker's license. "I have been a sales manager, broker, and owner of a real estate firm," she said. "I now work as a new construction specialist for Saddlebrook Realty."

Tina enjoys outdoor activities such as walking, hiking, and playing golf. "I am drawn to the ocean and mountains," she said.

After visiting many churches last year in the Knoxville, Maryville, and Oak Ridge area in the hope of finding a church "that would help and support me on my own spiritual journey," she chose our church. "I feel that I have found what I need in the congregation and pastoral leadership at FPC. Whether it is a thought-provoking sermon or just a warm conversation with a member, I leave the church feeling renewed and at peace after every service.

"I love the supportive nature and inclusiveness of the church and members. I love that people are willing to risk and take an active role in the community in the name of justice to fight racism and hatred. I feel I have just barely scratched the surface of what this church is all about and I am truly looking forward to getting to know more of the members.

"I have enjoyed helping with the Welcome Table community meal effort. I want to help and support the church and its missions in any way that I can."



Tina Buckles

Book donations requested for Eagle Scout project

I am a member of Boy Scouts of America Troop 42G, which is chartered by First Presbyterian Church. I am working on my Eagle Scout project. It involves hosting a Family Literacy Night at Linden Elementary School in May. During this event, Linden students will play book-related games and receive some used books as rewards for their attendance. I will be collecting used children's books from April 3 to May 5. I have a collection bin in FPCOR's narthex for any church members and guests willing to donate books for the Family Literacy Night. Or, if you prefer, you can drop them off at the church office.—Ahna Wurm

Children and youth



Youth activities this month

May 7, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.: LAST monthly youth group meeting for this school year

May 21, time TBD: Youth group end-of-year lake party at Peggy Claiborne's house.



The Congregation Care & Welcome Committee hosted a baby shower for Kiersten Ruisard and George Hine after the worship service on Apr. 23.



Ripple effects of Russian invasion of Ukraine discussed in LTAI class

For the second time, more than a year after the Russian invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, Gary Payton spoke on the war and its ripple effects throughout the world to FPCOR's "Let's Talk about It" Sunday morning class. The discussion included the effects on his hometown of Santa Fe, N.M., and Oak Ridge. Gary served as representative of the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, for which he met many times with church partners in Belarus, Poland, Russia, and Ukraine.

He first reviewed the tragic effects on people directly involved in or affected by "this most violent military conflict in Europe since World War II." Estimated number of soldiers killed or wounded in combat: 130,000 Ukrainians and 200,000 Russians, including senior and junior officers, triggering a draft of young Russians. Estimated number of Ukrainian civilians killed: 8,000. Most of the eight million Ukrainian refugees escaping the conflict zone are living in Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Romania. Some 270,000

Ukrainians have temporarily relocated to the United States.

The energy situation has changed dramatically over the past year, he said. "In early 2022, Russia supplied 50% of the oil and 60% of the gas used by European Union countries. Today Russian gas to EU countries has been reduced by 80%, so Russia is selling gas to Southeast Asian countries at steep discounts. The EU countries have reopened their coal mines, and 70% of the liquefied natural gas produced by the United States is going to Europe."

Despite this increased use of fossil fuels for the short term in response to the war, Gary believes that a ripple effect will be increased motivation by countries committed to climate change mitigation goals to accelerate use of renewable and nuclear energy for power and greatly cut dependence on fossil fuels.

Concerning ripple effects on Americans, Gary mentioned that Santa Fe housing costs almost doubled because nearby Los Alamos National Laboratory was increasing

staff to work on "augmenting and sustaining the nuclear weapons capability of the U.S. military." He added that because New Mexico is the nation's second largest oil- and gas-producing state, it passed its largest budget, which includes funding to provide free lunches for school children and nearly free educations for college students.

In Oak Ridge, ripple effects cited by the LTAI class include higher gasoline prices, visits by relocated Ukrainians to the Free Medical Clinic and Ecumenical Storehouse, a Monday-through-Friday prayer vigil for Ukraine at the International Friendship Bell, and increased government funding for local energy research and defense work. Two ORNL scientists in the class said their Russian colleagues believe the propaganda that Russia's military goal is "to save the poor ethnically Russian people being suppressed by the corrupt Ukrainian government."

—Carolyn Krause



Gary Payton urges FPCOR to support Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, which works with church partners throughout Europe, and the World Central Kitchen, which feeds thousands of people in Ukraine and around the world. Because of the war, some developing countries with food-insecure populations received less corn, wheat, and sunflower oil from Ukraine than they usually import.

Session News

At its called meeting on Apr. 5, the Session:

- examined and received confirmands Taylor Hensley and Willow Tilley as new members of FPCOR by profession of faith, and approved Taylor to receive the Sacrament of Baptism on Apr. 9;
- commended Rebecca ("Buzz") Davenport for her successful completion of this year's confirmation class.

At its monthly stated meeting on Apr. 20, the Session:

- received Tina Buckles into membership by reaffirmation of faith.
- reluctantly removed Mike and Peggy Hilliard from FPCOR's membership rolls upon their joining Westminster Presbyterian Church in Austin, Tex.
- approved the expense to replace a heating and air unit for the Education building.

“Free Medical Clinic patient almost died out of fear of medical debt”



Dale Hadden said that the short-term solution to the health care and medical debt crisis in Tennessee (which ranks 10th in the nation in medical debt) is for the state to expand Medicaid. The long-term solution to the national medical debt crisis, is to establish a Medicare-for-all health insurance system.

Medical debt is a problem unique to the United States because so many Americans lack health insurance, and even insured people can receive surprising medical bills from hospitals and emergency care services. Over 100 million Americans, one in three, struggle with medical debt. Medical debt is the leading cause of two-thirds of American bankruptcies.

Americans with medical debt are less likely to seek needed care for fear of adding to their medical bills, said our own Dale Hadden, nurse practitioner at the Free Medical Clinic (FMC) of Oak Ridge. She recently spoke on the medical debt problem to FPCOR’s “Let’s Talk about It” Sunday morning class.

Dale told of her experience involving an FMC woman patient. Dale had answered a weekend emergency call from the lab that analyzes patients’ blood and other samples. “A critical value in her results was so high that it was astounding to me,” Dale said. “I called the patient, reviewed her circumstances with her, and told her she needed to go

to the hospital immediately.” She replied, “I won’t go to the hospital because I owe it \$3000. I can’t afford to get another medical bill.”

After a lengthy discussion, Dale told her, “You may die if you don’t go to the emergency room now.” When the patient said she was still unwilling to go, Dale told her that FMC volunteers can help her fill out a financial aid form to enable her to receive hospital charity care available from nonprofit hospitals such as Methodist Medical Center of Oak Ridge. Hospital charity care programs provide free or discounted services to eligible patients who are unable to afford their care. Federal law requires that nonprofit hospitals—which account for almost 60% of community hospitals—provide some level of charity care to certain patient groups as a condition of receiving tax-exempt status.

Dale said the patient finally agreed to go to the hospital, where she spent five days and received life-saving care. “Her decision was literally a life-changing event that almost didn’t happen because of her

fear of taking on more medical debt.” Dale added that the woman received the hospital charity care, and that more volunteers are needed at FMC to help its debt-burdened patients fill out the 15 pages of paperwork required to get hospital charity care in which the hospital covers the cost.

Dale said that people are reluctant to take on more medical debt because it can damage their credit, making it more difficult for them to secure housing and employment. Also, because uninsured patients must pay the full cost of medical procedures, they may be forced to spend much less on buying food, clothes, and prescription drugs and paying rent, utility bills, and transportation costs.
—Carolyn Krause

Editor’s note: The Presbytery of East Tennessee has set a goal for all its churches, including this congregation, to raise \$25,000 to relieve the medical debts of many East Tennesseans. You will hear more about FPCOR’s goal in the next Banner and in worship services in July.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Let’s Talk About It

May 7: Discussion of *Nuclear Now*, a new movie by Oliver Stone on climate change and nuclear energy

May 14: The Farm Bill, SNAP, and agricultural justice

May 21: How YAVs (Young Adult Volunteers) changed my life, with Sarah Terpstra Hanson and Jed Koball

May 28: Transition towns and Quakers, with Ruah Swennefelt

Early Birds

Studying women in the Bible in May (hybrid—Zoom/parlor)

Rise ‘n’ Shine

Studying I Samuel, with coffee and refreshments (in person, room 6). The class is for all who would like to get to know other members of FPCOR, while enjoying discussion and Bible study.

Our financial snapshot: First quarter of 2023

Through the first quarter of 2023, FPCOR is running a deficit of \$5,881. Historically, we tend to start off the year slowly in terms of both income and expenses, and that is true this year. Our income is significantly lower this year compared to that of last year because we are not realizing any investment income. We also had a few unusually large contributions at the beginning of last year.

Our expenses were less than budgeted. Typically, several of our programs start slowly at the beginning of the year as new Session members take over the reins of their committees, so their expenditures were below their monthly projections for the year. Our staff expenditures were also below the budgeted amount because the coordinator for children and youth ministries position has not been filled and we are not paying for nursery workers currently.

While we don't budget on a monthly basis, the "Budgeted" column below reflects what we might expect if our income and expenses were the same for every month of the year.

	Actual through March 31	Budgeted through March 31
Contributions	82,286	87,500
Other Income	4,809	4,250
Total Income	87,095	91,750
Expenses	92,976	102,597
Surplus/(Deficit)	(5,881)	(10,847)

Pentecost Offering May 28

On Sunday, May 28, we will receive the Pentecost Offering, one of four annual special offerings of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The offering helps the church nationally and locally, encourages and supports its young people, and meets the needs of at-risk children.

Forty percent of this special offering will be retained by First Presbyterian Church to help make an impact in the lives of young people within our own community. The remaining 60% will support children-at-risk, youth, and young adults through ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency of the PC(USA).

According to Psalm 71, a foundation of faith established during childhood helps ensure lifelong faith. Your gifts to the Pentecost Offering will help nurture the faith of those who will make up the church in the years to come.

See <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/pentecost/> for more information.

You can make a gift by check to First Presbyterian Church (with "Pentecost" on the memo line) or online, using the QR code to the right.



**PENTECOST
OFFERING**



Last but not least...



Weekly gatherings

Sundays:

9:00 a.m. Early Birds;
Rise 'n' Shine;
Let's Talk About It

Mondays:

Noon Men's Zoom lunch

Wednesdays:

6:30 p.m. Choir rehearsal



Monthly gatherings

- **Piece for Peace Sisters**, first Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m., room 102, Activities building
- **Brewing Questions**, first Thursdays, 7:00 p.m., via Zoom
- **Conversation on Loss**, fourth Sundays, 1:00 p.m., parlor, Sanctuary building
- **Coffee Chat**, last Mondays, 9:30 a.m., room 6 and via Zoom
- **Young Adult Breakfast Club**, last Saturdays, 9:00 a.m., room 102 kitchen, Activities building

Gene & Rosalyn McKeown-Ice celebrate in St. Augustine, Fla., after finishing their cross-country tandem bike adventure. Photo by Ann Frome, who greeted them on behalf of FPCOR.



A note of thanks from an RSCC Brain Food recipient to Mariella Akers, sister of our own Paul Akers

Hi Ms. Akers,

I just want to thank you for all the hard work you do to bring this incredible resource to our school. You and your team, and everyone involved with this, have my most sincere gratitude, and I know many share these sentiments.

I have been dealing with family issues that have been overwhelming at times, leaving me struggling to keep up with school—this leaves me with very little time to work. I do DoorDash and Instacart when I can, but my time has been extremely limited lately.

Brain Food is *incredible* and has helped ease a great deal of the burden and anxiety I had been feeling about finances. I can't thank you all enough. Please share with anyone you'd like.

May birthdays

- 5/2 Megan Stone
- 5/3 Pat Clark
- 5/3 Ann Johnson
- 5/5 Richard Long
- 5/9 Dean Eyman
- 5/13 Jacob Woosley
- 5/13 Rebekah Young
- 5/15 Carl Lyster
- 5/18 Phyllis Phillips
- 5/23 Brian Hoppestead
- 5/24 Jeri Duke
- 5/25 Teresa Myrick
- 5/27 Julia Cantrell
- 5/27 Janet Heil
- 5/28 Chuck Hadden
- 5/28 Melissa Haynes
- 5/28 Shirley Sauls
- 5/29 Peggy Terpstra
- 5/30 Irene Darko
- 5/31 Elaine Wilson

Happy birthday!

May anniversaries

- 5/1 Doug & Valerie Allen
- 5/8 Bob & Teresa Fulcher
- 5/10 Connor & Marjorie Matthews
- 5/15 Wendy & Eric Myers
- 5/16 Randy & Tammy Pietrzak
- 5/20 Sharon & William Becker
- 5/20 David & Mary Mullins
- 5/23 Donald Spong & Janet Swift

Congratulations!

May 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
9:00 a.m. Sun. school 9:45 a.m. Choir 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 a.m. Fellowship	May 1 12:00 p.m. Men's Zoom lunch	2 9:30 a.m. Piece for Peace Sisters	3 11:30 a.m. Al Anon	4 7:00 p.m. Brewing Questions	5	6 12:00 p.m. Youth Pride
7 9:00 a.m. Sun. school 9:45 a.m. Choir 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 a.m. Fellowship 11:45 a.m. Church Life & Witness Team	8 12:00 p.m. Men's Zoom lunch	9	10 11:30 a.m. Al Anon 6:30 p.m. Choir rehearsal	11 5:00 p.m. Welcome Table	12	13 Fred Haywood 1:30 p.m. interment (FPC Mem'l Garden) 2:00 p.m. service (FPC sanctuary)
14 9:00 a.m. Sun. school 9:45 a.m. Choir 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 a.m. Fellowship	15 12:00 p.m. Men's Zoom lunch	16 10:00 a.m. Anna's Book Group	17 11:30 a.m. Al Anon 6:30 p.m. Choir rehearsal	18 6:30 p.m. Session Meeting	19	20
21 9:00 a.m. Sun. school 9:45 a.m. Choir 10:30 a.m. Worship (Dave Mullins, preacher) 11:30 a.m. Fellowship	22 9:30 a.m. Coffee Chat 12:00 p.m. Men's Zoom lunch	23	24 11:30 a.m. Al Anon 6:30 p.m. Choir rehearsal	25	26	27 9:00 a.m. Young Adult Breakfast Club
230 9:00 a.m. Sun. school 9:45 a.m. Choir 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 a.m. Fellowship 11:50 a.m. Conversation on Loss	29 OFFICE CLOSED 12:00 p.m. Men's Zoom lunch	30	31 11:30 a.m. Al Anon 6:30 p.m. Choir rehearsal			

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Oak Ridge, Tennessee

May 2023

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**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**
Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Embodying Christ's inclusive love through heart, mind, and service



give
today