



The Banner

First Presbyterian Church
Oak Ridge, Tennessee

November 2023

Inside this issue:

Pastor's note	2
Spotlight	3
Children & youth; Solar panels planned (cont.)	4
Celebration of the Arts	5
Pope Francis asks for more action on climate crisis	6
Pope urges collective action to alter social structures	7
Last but not least	8
Calendar	9

Donate to Morgan-Scott Project to buy kids Christmas gifts

This Sunday (Nov. 12), our annual offering for buying Christmas presents for children from low-income families in Morgan and Scott counties will be collected. FPCOR has long been a supporter of the Morgan-Scott Project for Cooperative Christian Concerns, which was founded in 1972 in Deer Lodge.

The Morgan-Scott Project is devoted to meeting various needs of low-income families in these two counties in rural East Tennessee. They are among the most impoverished counties in our state; nearly 30% of their population falls below the poverty line.

The Morgan-Scott Project has either directly or indirectly sponsored a

school for children with learning disabilities, free tutoring programs, healthcare clinics, libraries, a homeless shelter, thrift stores, a home garden program, a Habitat for Humanity chapter, education and job training programs, legal aid services, emergency aid, disaster relief, home repair services, a program to help pay utility bills, and community centers for children, youth, and the elderly.

The basic premise of this project is to assist those who have lost hope by providing a hand-up instead of a handout. Donations and volunteer resources have come from Baptist, Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, and Presbyterian churches.

Our church has provided financial assistance to the Morgan-Scott Project for many years through generous donations from our members, as well as from the benevolences fund of Session's Social Concerns Committee.

You can donate to this worthwhile nonprofit service organization by (1) writing a check to FPCOR with Morgan-Scott Project on the memo line, or (2) giving online using the QR code on the last page of this issue of *The Banner*.

Remember, this project is spreading the love of Christ through its efforts to protect the dignity, self-respect, and personal worth of the people in need in the two counties.—*Jo Kendrick*

DATES TO NOTE

Nov. 9: Welcome Table

Nov. 11: All-church workday

Thanksgiving lunch Nov. 19; Christmas decorating Nov. 26

All are invited to FPCOR's annual Thanksgiving lunch, which will be served in the fellowship hall on Sunday, Nov. 19, after the 10:30 a.m. worship service.

Turkey, dressing, cranberry sauce, rolls, and drinks will be provided by the Congregational Care and Welcome Committee.

Please bring a vegetable, salad, or dessert dish for 10-12 people to share as we count the many blessings the Lord has given us.

The following week, on Sunday, Nov. 26, after the worship service, the Worship Committee invites all who are available to help decorate the sanctuary for Advent and Christmas.

Solar panels planned for rooftops of Sanctuary & Education buildings

After months of evaluating solar vendors, after a year of data collection and electric meter unraveling, after 'installation of a new heat pump for Early Head Start of Anderson County in our Education Building, and after a major relocation of the church office from the Activities Building to the Sanctuary Building, the FPCOR Session unanimously approved a motion from the Property and

Maintenance Committee and its Solar Evaluation Subcommittee to put solar panels on the rooftops of two of our buildings.

The solar project, separated into two phases, will install about 7 kilowatts (kW) of solar panels on the Education Building, and 12 kW of panels on the Sanctuary Building.

Continued on pg. 4

The Banner

From your pastor



Sharon Youngs, pastor

They say time seems to go by more quickly the older one becomes. I think that may very well be true, given how swiftly 2023 has flown. Here we are in November already when it seems like Easter was only last week!

This month was dubbed Gratitude Month in 2015. I have a hunch it is because Thanksgiving falls on the fourth Thursday. I increasingly appreciate anything that steers us toward acts of gratitude, given what shape the world is in these days. There are reasons aplenty to feel most anything but grateful. The headlines are filled with violent, painful, sorrowful happenings—lots of times to people who simply happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. As a friend of mine says, “That Bible verse, *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all Circumstances*, seems absolutely impossible.”

But that Bible verse has a small detail in it that makes a huge difference: Give thanks in *all* circumstances. Gratitude never calls us to give thanks for anything that is evil or unjust, never for violence, lying, oppression, or suffering. Gratitude simply asks us to look around and find the gifts and grace that accompany our way. At its foundation, gratitude is the place where we find our truest and best selves, because it is there where we are aware of the ongoing presence of God.

To get to that place takes a bit of work on our part. We need to *practice* gratitude—through acts of generosity and kindness, through listening and being with others who are hurting, through taking time for intentional prayer and reflection.

There are lots of ways to practice gratitude here at FPCOR, from giving your financial gifts to visiting a homebound member to sharing a meal with a neighbor at the Welcome Table to singing in the choir. Just let us know what you’d like to do.

As we turn toward Thanksgiving, may our hearts reflect and our hands demonstrate our truest and best selves.

With a grateful heart,
Sharon



Maysie—the occasional office dog



Wordna Agee recently celebrated her 97th birthday.



Young Adult Breakfast Club enjoys chowing down.



When the Saints trio. Peggy Hinkle, Don Spang, and Peggy Terpstra concluded the Nov. 5th service with “When the Saints Go Marching In.”

FPCOR's Welcome Table

Thursday, Nov. 9, 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.

The next dinner of the Welcome Table, our monthly community meal ministry, will be served in the fellowship hall on Thursday, Nov. 9, beginning at 5:00 p.m. To-go dinners will be available between 5:45 and 6:00 p.m., when the meal concludes. All are invited to come, eat, and enjoy the fellowship. Groceries will also be available through FPCOR’s food pantry.

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 (865) 771-7178.

FPCOR Spotlight: Carol Howard

When Carol Howard was recognized as a new member of our church on Oct. 8, she already had been serving as a volunteer for the food pantry that FPCOR runs at the Oak Ridge branch of Roane State Community College. A civil engineer, she said she is “mostly retired from the engineering company my husband and I started 10 years ago after we retired from government.”

She had been the executive director of the South Florida Water Management District. That’s the government agency that ran the South Florida flood control system. It was also the local sponsor with the Army Corps of Engineers for the Everglades Restoration Project.

A native of Massachusetts who was born in Malden, she was raised in Reading by her father, an engineer, and mother, a nurse. Carol received an associate degree in science from Northeastern University, attended Harvard University, and graduated with an S.B. degree in civil engineering from MIT.

She said that she and her husband Bob met through a professional engineering association. She has three children, two stepchildren, and six grandchildren (four grandsons who live in Tampa, Fla., and a granddaughter and grandson who live in Nashville). Her two step-grandsons live in Knoxville.

Both of her daughters live in the Tampa area and each work for a national medical marijuana company, one as the head of compliance and the other as chief operating officer. Her son, who lives in Nashville, was vice president for Citi Group in public finance and now has his own investment company.

Her stepson coordinates technology development for Georgia Tech in Atlanta. Her stepdaughter runs her own architecture firm in Knoxville.

Carol enjoys traveling, reading, gardening, snorkeling, and mostly attending her grandchildren’s activities. “I travel to Florida one week each month to visit my grandchildren in the Tampa area,” she said. “I go every May to St. John Island. I also recently traveled to Maine and stayed in Northeast Harbor.”

Asked about other ways she would like to be involved in our church, she answered, “I like activities that make a difference in the community.”



Carol Ann Howard

SUNDAY CLASSES SCHEDULE THIS MONTH

Early Birds

Studying Daniel (meets in the parlor and via Zoom)

Rise ‘n’ Shine

The group, which is finishing John Bunyan’s classic book *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, gathers in the room (with the comfy chairs!) just inside the main church entrance at 9:00 a.m. every Sunday morning. Coffee, tea, and tasty snacks are provided. Contact Sue Byrne at (865) 318-8856 with questions or to request a copy of the book. See you there!

Let’s Talk About It

Nov 12: Keith Akers - Embracing Limits

Nov 19: John Nolt - Animal Ethics

Nov 26: Thanksgiving Break

Children and youth



David Mullins (left) being assisted by Andy Petelka (middle) while Amy Petelka paints (right). Jason Goodman paints the wood around the monkey bars in the background.



David Mullins, Ann Frome, and Cathy and Jason Goodman worked to finish the playground update.



The finished playground



Coming soon — details about holiday happenings!

Solar panels planned for rooftops of Sanctuary & Education buildings (cont.)

Continued from pg. 1

Both systems will be backed by batteries, enabling continued use of solar power after the sun sets to provide lighting, heating, and cooling of the buildings. It is anticipated that, based on our current use patterns, these panels will generate about half of the annual electrical needs for two of our three meters. This gives us room to expand in the future as we gain knowledge and experience.

The two phases combined will reduce the church's emissions of climate-warming carbon dioxide by more than seven tons each year. The panels will also potentially save our church almost \$4000 a year in electrical costs. Although the panels will still be producing electricity long after their 25-30 year

warranted lifetime, they will pay for themselves in about 15 years.

The total cost of both phases is estimated at just over \$100,000. Of that amount, 30% will be covered by the federal Inflation Reduction Act. In addition, we will apply for, and anticipate receiving, a grant from the Appalachian Solar Finance Fund for an additional 20% of the cost. That means our congregation needs to raise a bit over \$50,000. All of our funding for this project will come from donations beyond our normal budgeting. With roughly \$4000 in annual savings generated from \$50,000 in donations, you can think of this as endowing a "solar grant" with a perpetual return on investment of around 8% per year.

To get the ball rolling,

Session has established a Carbon Zero Fund and seeded it with the remaining balance—not quite \$10,000—from the Bricchetto Memorial Fund, whose donor directed that it be used to support educational and environmental projects. Once we raise \$20,000, we will proceed with phase one on the Education Building. After we raise the remaining \$30,000, we will begin the second phase on the Sanctuary Building. We can expect a six-month backlog from the time materials are ordered until the work begins.

To donate to the solar project, write a check to First Presbyterian Church and mark it "Carbon Zero" or "Solar" or pay online. If you're at a loss for how much to give, think of it this way:

Each watt of solar panel installed, including batteries and all the supporting goodies, will cost us about \$2.65. For comparison, a typical television might use about 100 watts for a solar panel cost of \$265. An entire 450-watt solar panel would cost \$1200. How many watts of sunshine do you want to claim?

—Dan Terpstra, co-chair, Property and Maintenance Committee



Solar panels on two FPCOR buildings

First FPCOR art exhibit draws 75 items and big turnout

First Presbyterian Church's first "Celebration of the Arts" event, held on Oct. 29 after the Sunday worship service, was a big hit. Some 30 creative individuals exhibited 75 items, including photographs, paintings, quilts, placemats, poetry, woven items, and woodwork.

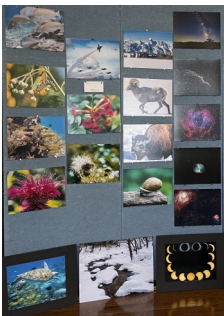
A decorated cake and quilt were raffled off. Lee Morris, who won the cake made and donated by Linda Falls, shared it with attendees eager to eat the tasty slices. Lewis and Phyllis Phillips won the quilt made and donated by Janet Heil.

Patty Barlow, chair of Session's Congregational Care and Welcome Committee, led a group that collected, organized, mounted, and displayed on tables an assortment of works of art.

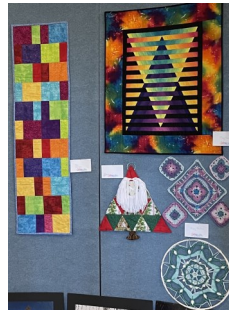
Members of the group included Jo Kendrick, Sally Moyer, Darlene Sanders, Candice Strickler, Mimi Tilley, and Elaine Wilson.



The celebration of the arts attracted all ages.



Photographs of natural and cosmic phenomena (some taken through a telescope) by Don Spang



Sewing art by Anna Robinson, Meg Tonne, and Mary Mullins



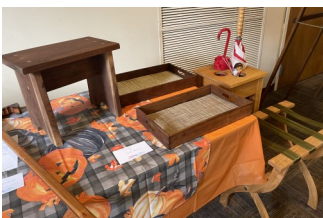
Quilt by Mimi Tilley



Art works for and by Jo Kendrick



Kiersten and her daughter



Woodwork pieces by Lee Morris



Photos on canvas of natural wonders by Dave Mullins



Decorative cake by Linda Fall (won in a raffle by Lee Morris)



Paintings by John Drake and Patty Barlow



Quilts by Candice Strickler



Paintings by Peggy Terpstra



Pho-etry (photo + poem) by Carolyn Krause



SKYLarkings cards by Sharon K. Youngs, placemats made by Anna Robinson, and paintings by Kiersten Ruisard.



Becky Rushton admires quilts by Candice Strickler and Janet Heil.



The Phillips won the raffle quilt created by Janet Heil.



Wooden box made by Steve Layendecker



Halloween painting by Cathy Goodman

Pope Francis asks for more action on climate crisis



Mark Eakin told participants of the Presbyterians for Earth Care webinar that the climate change message of Pope Francis was based on solid scientific evidence. Eakin was impressed by the pope's statement that climate denials forget that the world is experiencing "an unusual acceleration of warming."

Several weeks ago, Pope Francis issued the apostolic exhortation "Laudate Deum," which was addressed "to all people of good will on the climate crisis." The pope sounded frustrated at the world's inability to reduce climate-warming greenhouse gas emissions, which continue to rise despite all the United Nations scientific conferences on the topic that started more than 30 years ago. The pope seemed to imply that at least some of God's children had failed to act as responsible adults.

On Oct. 10, Presbyterians for Earth Care conducted an hour-long webinar on the apostolic exhortation, featuring Bill Brown from Columbia Theological Seminary, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, and Mark Eakin, former coordinator of the Coral Reef Watch of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who helped make the movie *Chasing Coral*.

FPCOR's "Let's Talk about It" class read parts of the apostolic exhortation, watched the webinar, and discussed what they read and heard. Class participants suggested that the tripling of the world's population since the middle of the 20th century may have played more of a role in the climate crisis than the pope allowed in his exhortation.

Eakin spoke in the webinar about how the pope's message was based on solid

science. He was impressed that the pope addressed the certainty of human-caused climate change, climate impacts, global inequality, and solutions. Eakin presented these quotes from the pope.

"No one can ignore the fact that in recent years we have witnessed extreme weather phenomena, frequent periods of unusual heat, drought, and other cries of protest on the part of the earth.

"Every time the global temperature increases by 0.5° C, the intensity and frequency of great rains and floods increase in some areas and severe droughts in others, extreme heat waves in some places and heavy snowfall in others. If it should rise above 2 degrees, the icecaps of Greenland and a large part of Antarctica will melt completely, with immensely grave consequences for everyone.

"The reality is that ... per capita emissions of the richer countries are much greater than those of the poorer ones"—and poorer countries are bearing more drastic effects of climate change without compensation from the richer nations. The pope continued:

"Efforts by households to reduce pollution and waste, and to consume with prudence, are creating a new culture. The mere fact that personal, family, and community habits are changing is contributing to greater concern about the unfulfilled responsibilities of the political sectors and

indignation at the lack of interest shown by the powerful."

On solutions and global inequality, the pope, a native of Argentina, wrote, "If we consider that emissions per individual in the United States are about two times greater than those of individuals living in China, and about seven times greater than the average of the poorest countries, we can state that a broad change in the irresponsible lifestyle connected with the Western model would have a significant long-term impact. As a result, along with indispensable political decisions, we would be making progress along the way to genuine care for one another."—Carolyn Krause

Pope urges collective action to alter social structures

FPCOR's "Let's Talk about It" class was impressed by an interpretation of some of Pope Francis' statements on the climate crisis in his recently published apostolic exhortation called *Laudate Deum*. After listening to a webinar on the pope's message arranged by Presbyterians for Earth Care, some class members were struck by the comments of Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, director of the Center for Climate Justice and Faith at the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in California and author of *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation*. An edited summary of her interpretation follows.

"Pope Francis' exhortation is a clarion call to choose life by radically reversing course away from fossil fuel-based and profit-maximizing economies and ways of life. Moreover, this document gives clear directives on how to make this grand redirection."

The pope's letter singles out the United States of America because of our per capita carbon emissions that rank among the highest. He entreats us to act faithfully in response to our lifestyles, social structures, and worldviews. The pope makes clear that lifestyle changes

should not be limited to reducing our individual and institutional carbon footprints.

"We are called to collective action to challenge and transform the systems that drive the climate crisis," Cynthia said. "The theological roots of the necessity for collective action to change social structures goes back to Jesus and the ancient Hebrews. God calls us to love our neighbor as our self. Loving our neighbor means serving our neighbors' well-being. Therefore, we are to practice neighbor love through structural change as well as through interpersonal relationships."

Many civil society groups are creating effective change, Cynthia noted. Activists from different countries support one another and pressure sources of power, including fossil fuel industries, industrial agriculture, banks, and investment firms. She would like to see more people involved in 350.org, Third Act (thirdact.org), and campaigns to divest from fossil fuel producers and keep most fossil fuels in the ground while transitioning to wind and solar energy. By joining any of these groups, you might become part of what she called "maybe the most significant movement in

human history."

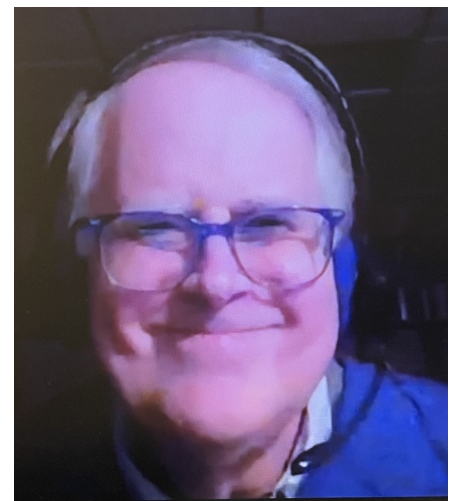
According to Cynthia, Pope Francis warns us against embracing worldviews that inflame the climate crisis. He asks us to reject three assumptions: that unlimited economic growth is preferable; that maximizing short-term profit is morally good even though it requires unrestricted fossil fuel extraction, sacrifices people (e.g., exposes the poor to pollution), and destroys land and waters; and that humans are apart *from* nature rather than a part *of* nature.

"Will we the world's high carbon-emitting people muster the moral and spiritual courage to turn around and fly away from the climate catastrophe and the stupefying economic and racial injustice that accompanies it and soar instead into a world in which all people and ecosystems have life with justice and joy?" To Cynthia, "This is the central moral and spiritual question of our time."

—Carolyn Krause



Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda



William Brown, professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary, read verses from the Bible (Psalm 148, Hosea 4:1-3, Colossians 1:21-23, Joel 2:21-22). The verse from Hosea ("the land mourns, and all who live in it languish") is pessimistic; the verses from Joel ("Do not fear, you animals of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are becoming green; the tree is bearing its fruit, the fig tree and vine are giving their full yield.") radiate hope.

Last but not least...



Weekly gatherings

Sundays:

8:45 a.m. Let's Talk About It
 9:00 a.m. Early Birds;
 Rise 'n' Shine;
 10:30 a.m. Worship
 11:30 a.m. Refreshments

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, 11:50 a.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

(See weekly emails or call the church office for Zoom links and details.)

Our financial snapshot: Third quarter 2023

Three quarters of the way through the year, FPCOR is running a budget deficit of \$33,248. While this seems like a lot, it is consistent with our projected annual deficit of more than \$43,000. Contributions declined significantly over the summer; however, other sources of income are ahead of projections, so overall our income is on track.

About 95% of the deficit can be attributed to the cost of the completed office renovation and relocation, which was not factored into our 2023 budget. Much of the office relocation expenses have been offset by other areas that have been lower than expected—in particular, unfilled staff positions. The result is that the bottom line is about where we anticipated.

Contributions typically rise during the last quarter of the year. We anticipate that expenses will remain stable so that we should finish somewhat ahead of the projected budget deficit.

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 each month of the year. —*Dave Mullins, church treasurer*

	Actual through September 30	Budgeted through September 30
Contributions	252,859	262,500
Other Income	20,552	12,750
Total Income	273,412	275,250
Expenses	306,660	307,790
Surplus/(Deficit)	(33,243)	(32,540)

November birthdays

11/1 Carolyn Dipboye
 11/3 Peter Bancroft
 11/5 Tiffany Murray
 11/6 Meredith Metcalf
 11/8 Kent Campbell
 11/8 Kathy Carney-Layendecker
 11/8 Frances Drake
 11/11 Elizabeth Andrews
 11/13 Willow Tilley
 11/21 Jessica Long
 11/22 Peggy Claiborne
 11/23 Dennis Smith
 11/24 Sherith Bankston
 11/24 Connor Matthews
 11/25 Wesley Tilley
 11/26 Arlene Crawford
 11/29 Linda Lipinski
 11/30 Esmee Graves
 11/30 Ryan Tilley
 11/30 Tommy Reese

Happy birthday!



Our office manager, Madison, married Sam Green on Oct. 29.

November 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	12:00 p.m. Men's Zoom lunch		1 11:30 a.m. Al Anon 6:30 p.m. Choir rehearsal	2 7:00 p.m. Brewing Questions	3	4
5 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	6 12:00 p.m. Men's Zoom lunch	7 9:30 a.m. Piece for Peace Sisters	8 11:30 a.m. Al Anon 6:30 p.m. Choir rehearsal	9 5:00 p.m. Welcome Table	10	11 9:00 a.m. All- church workday
12 9:00 a.m. Sun. school 9:45 a.m. Choir 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 a.m. Fellowship	13 12:00 p.m. Men's Zoom lunch	14	15 11:30 a.m. Al Anon 6:30 p.m. Choir rehearsal	16 6:30 p.m. Session Meeting	17	18
19 9:00 a.m. Sun. school 9:45 a.m. Choir 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 a.m. Thanksgiving lunch	20 12:00 p.m. Men's Zoom lunch	21 10:00 a.m. Anna's Book Group	22 11:30 a.m. Al Anon	23 Office Closed Thanksgiving Day	24 Office Closed	25
26 9:00 a.m. Sun. school 9:45 a.m. Choir 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 a.m. Decorating for Advent/Christmas	27 9:30 a.m. Coffee Chat 12:00 p.m. Men's Zoom lunch	28	29 11:30 a.m. Al Anon 6:30 p.m. Choir rehearsal	30	1 Dec	2

Looking ahead:

Dec. 14: Welcome Table

Dec. 17: Lessons and Carols

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Service

Dec. 25: Christmas Day— church office closed

Dec. 26: Church office closed

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Oak Ridge, Tennessee

November 2023

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The Banner team: Carolyn Krause,
Madison Green & Sharon Youngs



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**
Oak Ridge, Tennessee

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



give
today