



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

APRIL 2020, VOLUME 68—ISSUE 4

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Reverend Troy Hauser Brydon

How quickly life changes! Last month I was writing about all the good stuff coming our way as a congregation. We were preparing the way for Holy Week and Easter. Our biggest disappointment was that so many of us would be away for Easter because it fell at the end of spring break.

And then life changed.

For the good of all, we moved our ministry online. We see each other through the internet. We speak over the phone. We write letters to each other. I can't even begin to explain how much I miss seeing you in person, in worship, and through visits. Almost the entirety of the church's ministry is interpersonal, and COVID-19 has put that to a screeching halt.

Still, we have seen God working in and through the church. I've seen you all caring for each other. I've heard the stories of families learning new ways to share faith with each other. I know I've even met some of you for the first time over the phone as we have been reaching out to the entire congregation. We don't know yet what we will be, but we're praying that God is making us into the church we need to be for each other and for this community.

This issue of *Tidings* will be different than others. Usually we're telling you all that is happening, but right now we don't know what is happening and when it can happen. We've gathered some of your stories of what you're up to in this season. You're going to see a thank you from Joyful Noise because the church has stepped up to take care of our childcare workers in this fearful time.

Your faithfulness in giving has allowed us to continue our mission in a new way. Your staff is working hard from home. We are still supporting mission, particularly focused on the emerging needs of our community. So, thank you for standing with us. It makes a difference. We will keep you posted on how things are faring for the church.

Some final notes for you. First, we'll have to do Easter services remotely because of the Governor's Executive Order. We're dreaming up ways to make this special, so stay tuned. Second, our playground fundraiser (that was set to begin on March 15) is on hold until things find their new normal. Third, we are working on projects in the building to get things in tip-top shape while the building isn't in use.

So, for now, we'll see you online. Don't hesitate to reach out via email or phone. I miss you, and I'm praying for the day when we're all back together.

In Christ,
Pastor Troy



In Our Church

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Church & Pastor Contact Information

Pastor Troy:

616-604-2617,
church: 616-842-6760 x1005,
email: TroyHB@fpgh.org

Pastor Kristine:

616-604-2618,
church: 616-842-6760 x1006,
email: KristineAB@fpgh.org

Church Office:

616-842-6760,
staff@fpgh.org

Prayer Concerns:

Christine Bahl, Tim Bullerdick,
Stan Johnson, June Lindberg,
Cornelius Nebbeling, Barbara Race,
Jim and Sandy Teunis,
Gerry VanStratt, and Carol Winton

Our Sympathy:

to Gail Winters and family on the
death of her father, William Hart, on
March 1, 2020.

to the family of Barb Casemier, who
passed away on February 28, 2020.

to Elaine Matthews on the March 6th
death of her husband, Rev. Dr.
Christian Matthews, who served as
Interim Pastor here from 2004-05.

to Ann Satter and family on the
death of her husband, Marvin Satter,
on March 13, 2020.

to Jay and Juanita Sheridan on the
death of Jay's sister, Jean Dannemiller,
on March 14, 2020.

to Paula Baas and family on the
death of her husband, Gary Baas, on
March 16, 2020.

to Sandy and Tom LeVand on the
death of Sandy's father, Elmer
Brummel, on March 24, 2020.

Thank you:

"I'd like to thank everyone for their
wonderful cards and emails to me
since Chuck passed away. I can feel
the love and support of our FPC
family and it's a big help."

- Nancy Holmes

"I would like to thank everyone for
their cards, calls and prayers during
my recent knee replacement sur-
gery. It's been a challenging process
but I am now recovering well and
am so thankful for our wonderful
church family. I feel very blessed to
have all of you in my life."

- Chris Bussell

Dear Church Family,
Thank you so much for all the cards
and prayers since I have been ill and
had surgery. Special thanks to the
deacons for meals! I have NO pain
since surgery to remove an infected
bone in my foot and am getting a
little stronger each day. I appreciated
the visits from pastors Troy and
Kristine with communion. The birth-
day greetings were wonderful, too! I
hope to join you all in the pews when
we have in-person worship again.

- Casey Nebbeling

Blood Drive April 3

The need is greater than ever.
The gratification is instant.

Give blood.



Our next blood drive:

Friday, April 3

12:00—5:45 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church

Please note:

*In order to maintain the most hygienic
environment within the church, we are
limiting the amount of space used for the
blood drive. This requires us to have all
blood donors enter the building through
the Franklin Street doors. There is some
street parking on Franklin, but you may
also park in the Clinton Street parking lot
and walk around the building to the main
doors—it's going to be a (relatively)
warm and sunny day!*

*As part of our nation's critical infrastructure,
healthy individuals can still donate blood
in areas that have issued shelter in place
declarations. The Red Cross follows the
highest standards of safety and infection
control, and volunteer donors are the only
source of blood for those in need.*

Happy Birthday!

Every month, we publish birthdays
of our members and friends who
are no longer able to come to church
regularly. Bless their special day
with a card from their church
family!

Apr. 25 Muriel Mersereau
18525 Woodland Ridge
Room 31
Spring Lake, MI 49456

May 10 June Lindberg
16331 Robbins Road
Grand Haven, MI 49417

May 19 Gerry VanStratt
1125 Robbins Road #C-21
Grand Haven, MI 49417

May 28 Sue McClellan
1450 S. Ferry St, Apt. 228
Grand Haven, MI 49417

★HAPPY★
BIRTHDAY!

Scholarship Applications

Applications for
scholarships to
be awarded this
spring are now
available in the
church office or on
the high school page of our website
(www.fpgh.org).



- James and Lois Hillis Fund
awards scholarships to students
going on to any type of post high
school education or training.

Applications are due in the church
office **no later than April 1, 2020.**

From Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce

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Dear Church Family,

Last night in our small group we discussed Psalm 42, which is one of the Psalms of Lament. I love the Psalms because they are full of honest and raw emotions about suffering as well as anger and/or disappointment with God. The Psalmists hold nothing back. They are our permission to be just as honest and real with God, for God desires us to be honest. Besides, God can handle our anger even when it's directed at him. The author of Psalm 42 writes in verse 9: "I say to God my Rock, 'Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?'"

In our group we talked about how comforting it is to know that Jesus

will never forsake us. There are times, however, when we *feel* forsaken. While our feelings are valid they aren't always the truth. Nevertheless, because Jesus cares deeply for each of us, he wants to know what we're feeling. Jesus wants us to name for him what is causing us to suffer, to grieve, or to doubt his presence in the midst of our trials. Notice that in verse 9 while the Psalmist feels forgotten by God, they still talk to God. They also acknowledge what they know to be true about God even if their feelings don't align with that truth. Just in this one verse the author refers to God as "my rock" while also asking God "Why have you forgotten me?" Whatever we are feeling we need to keep talking to

Jesus. Even if we echo the desperate father in Mark chapter 9 who begs Jesus to heal his daughter and cries "Jesus...help my unbelief!" As we begin another week in "Corona Time" I hope we all continue to talk with Jesus and be honest with him about what is weighing heavy on our hearts. Because Jesus loves us, he wants to know what is causing us to lament. While our situation may not change overnight we will be reassured of Christ's presence with us even in the midst of our lamentations.

Grateful to be on this journey of faith with you,

Pastor Kristine

Outreach

Send a Smile to a Resident at a Nursing or Retirement Home!

Currently, area nursing and retirement homes are in "lockdown" to protect residents from the spread of COVID-19. This means that they are unable to allow visitors into the buildings. As the residents are surely missing their families and other visitors, these facilities have asked for help in comforting them during this difficult time.

Simply send a generic "Thinking of You" card/letter to one of the addresses listed below, and they will be distributed to residents.

Grand Pines Assisted Living Center

1410 S. Ferry Street
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Village at the Pines

1450 S. Ferry Street
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Robbinswood Assisted Living Community

1125 Robbins Road
Grand Haven, MI 49417



Children are also encouraged to write or send a drawing!

Tidings article deadline for May 2020 issue: April 20, 2020

Submittals, suggestions or comments: sbryant@fpgh.org or staff@fpgh.org

FPC editorial staff reserves the right to accept or decline, edit for length and content all submitted material.

From Joyful Noise

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A Letter to First Presbyterian Church from Joyful Noise Child Care

Dear Members of the Congregation, Session, and Church Leaders,

This has been an especially trying time for us, particularly as we had to make some difficult decisions regarding temporarily closing Joyful Noise, yet it has also been a humbling one. We have seen our Joyful Noise and First Presbyterian Church community come together to lighten the load and support us as we navigate these uncharted waters.

First and foremost, we are incredibly grateful for the support of our FPC family. Pastors Troy and Kristine have been vital throughout these past few weeks; with their guidance and direction, they have wrapped their arms around us and made this experience much easier to bear. To know that the church is willing to help our Joyful Noise staff financially to get us through this period is overwhelming. We feel so blessed to be a part of such a giving and compassionate church community.

Many of our Joyful Noise parents have also stepped in to help our teachers by offering to continue paying tuition while we are closed, sending donations, or even just offering words of support and gratitude. It is our hope that we can help them through this challenging time as well, by staying connected even though we cannot physically care for their children. Our teachers and staff have been communicating with families by phone, email, sending letters and cards in the mail, and blogging. We've set up a parent/teacher Facebook group, where they've been sharing daily routines and activities to help parents give their children a sense of normalcy, virtual story times, updates on classroom pets, etc.

And finally, we'd like to extend our thanks to you, the congregation, for giving us a home at First Presbyterian Church and in your hearts. Joyful Noise has always felt the love you've encompassed us with, and we feel it now more than ever. Together we will weather the storm, and when it passes, we look forward to reopening and serving the children and our community stronger than ever before.

In Christ's Love,

Sally Segers



Joyful Noise
Christian Childcare
www.JoyfulNoiseKids.com

From the Mission Committee

Special Offering: One Great Hour of Sharing

Each year through One Great Hour of Sharing, Presbyterians live out our calling to be Matthew 25 churches. We extend shelter to those who have no place to stay, offer compassion to those who have pain—be it physical, emotional, or spiritual—and we set a table with God for those who lack access to enough food to eat. Isaiah 58 calls us to care for the hungry, the weak, and the vulnerable. Working together we become the household of God.

Each gift to this special offering helps to improve the lives of people in challenging situations through three impactful programs:

- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (presbyterianmission.org/pda) - receives 32% of funds raised
- Presbyterian Hunger Program (presbyterianmission.org/hunger) - receives 36% of funds raised
- Self-Development of People (presbyterianmission.org/sdop) - receives 32% of funds raised

Look at the interactive world map with OGHS recipients at pcusa.org/oghsmap, and then please join others in our congregation with a gift to the One Great Hour of Sharing.

For more information or to give, go to <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/make-a-gift/gift-info/oghs/> or text SHARING to 56512 to learn more about how your gift to One Great Hour of Sharing makes a difference.



PW Hanging Basket Flower Sale

The Presbyterian Women are once again taking prepaid orders for a variety of beautiful 11" hanging baskets.



If you would like an order form, please send an email to Sue Ochs at s2123@aol.com, or call her at 231-750-3946.

Flowers will be here on May 8. We will keep in touch on how to take delivery of your orders!

All proceeds support the missions of the Presbyterian Women.

Noontime Zoom Prayer Group every Tuesday & Thursday

Take a few moments out of your day to check in and pray with others. During this unsettling time we need prayer and each other more than ever!

Zoom is easy to use and you can also phone into a meeting.

Interested?

Contact **Carrie Rivette:**
(crivette@sbcglobal.net) or
Pastor Kristine:
(kristineab@fpgh.org)

This is open to everyone!

Staying Connected

We are committed to staying connected with our church family!

We are currently "calling through the directory" to check on each and every one of you. If you have a need, please reach out to us and we will find a way to help as we are able.

On Sunday mornings join us for live worship at 10 a.m. on Facebook (@FirstPresGH). The recorded video is available on the website (fpgh.org) later in the day.

Pastors Troy and Kristine have also been recording "daily reflections" on Facebook to encourage us and keep our spirits up. Those reflections are also posted on our website.

Our phones continue to be answered, so don't hesitate to call us: 616-842-6760.

Our Mission Continues

In spite of social distancing, the important work of First Presbyterian continues! While we find new ways to connect spiritually, we also encourage your continued financial support. Although you can't place your envelope in the offering plate each Sunday, other methods of ensuring that your gifts reach the church include:

1. Mailing a check (508 Franklin, Grand Haven, MI 49417)
2. Giving online through Realm or by following this link: <https://onrealm.org/FPGH/-/give/now>
3. Dropping off your check to the new deposit box located inside the first set of doors on Clinton Street

Our budget is built around your willingness to be strong supporters of what God is doing through us. Our ministries continue to move forward because of the faithful giving of our members and friends during these difficult times.

First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven

508 Franklin Avenue
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Phone: 616.842.6760

www.fpgh.org • staff@fpgh.org

Sunday Morning Worship Service:
Watch live on Facebook at 10 a.m.
(@FirstPresGH), or watch the video recording
on our website (wwwfpgh.org)

Staff and Leadership:

Rev. Troy Hauser Brydon, Senior Pastor
Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce, Associate Pastor
Rob Andersen, Worship Assistant
Maryanne Beery, Director of Music & Fine Arts
Sally Bryant, Communications Coordinator
Laura Burns, Children's Ministries Director
Dan Coulier, Maintenance Director
Marc Felt, Gathering Band Leader
Rob Hlebinsky, Organist
Kelli Jullie, Church Administrator
Maddie Lambert, Youth & Young Adult Ministries Director
Karen Nienhouse, Membership Services
Christina Ramones, Assistant to the Administrator
Mark Sanchez, Church Host
Sally Segers, Joyful Noise Director

We have heard so many stories of how many of us are experiencing and observing God's love and grace in this season. Take a moment and read these stories and let the goodness settle upon your spirit and bring you comfort.



There is this story about a recent occurrence and was relayed to me about a friend of mine.

My friend, this young lady, 27, had witnessed an older gentleman caring a bag of groceries that had ripped. She called over and offered an extra bag she had with her and help if he needed it. He told her that she was so nice that she made his Christmas card list. Her husband heard her and smiled. I'm sure he was so proud of his partner. She said that the man warmed her heart and made her feel good that she had done something extra for someone.

God works in special ways, especially in times such as these. God is good and will see us through.

- Bill Bolthouse



I am noticing families spending more time together now that all non-essential activities have been cancelled. Scott and I have been spending time outdoors, enjoying God's creation. Friends and I are also taking advantage of our unexpected free time and making time for walks. In the past, it was often difficult to find a common time for us to walk, but now we have plenty of opportunities. What a gift as we spend precious time together! Our friendships are being renewed and strengthened.

I'm discovering a new empathy for those who are isolated. I am thank-

ful for an opportunity to minister to them by sending cards and making phone calls. I am also being more diligent in keeping in touch with our families in PA and MD, checking up on them more frequently, and reaching out through cards and phone calls. I realize how much of life I take for granted. Meeting with others whenever we choose is a precious gift.

This season gives us pause to reflect and give thanks that God is always with us. His love and presence are our only constants. My faith is becoming stronger in this season of quiet and rest. I find myself frequently asking God how I can best serve Him and my neighbors, something I need to be better at on a daily basis. I love the creative ways others are serving people in our communities and beyond. My fervent prayer is that the lessons we are learning will become a permanent part of our lives once this crisis has passed.

- Deb Stanley



While walking my dog yesterday there was a caravan of cars along the road. As they passed by me, I noticed not only signs of positive thoughts like "stay healthy" and "be safe" on the windows of these cars, but also the people inside waving and smiling at me. They were accompanied by two police cars. This gave me a sense of hope and faith in the good that people can do. It was very uplifting.

Thank you for letting me share.

Nancy Friedgen/Miss Nancy(4's Room, Joyful Noise)



In this time of "corona hygiene": My Dad taught all his kids and grand-kids the proper way to wash our hands (like a surgeon) using this song from his childhood.

*I wash my hands this morning
I wash them clean and bright.
I wash my hands for Jesus to
work for him til night.
Little feet be careful where you
take me to,
Everything for Jesus only let
me do.*

Its a good alternative to *Happy Birthday* but only my Dad remembers the tune!

Sally Dunn



Calling people from our church family to "check in" has been so heart-warming. The response has been overwhelmingly appreciative of a call from church. The wonderful outlook of people I talked to has been a blessing to me personally.

One story in particular I would like to share is one of my calls to a "shut-in." We spoke for a bit, she said she was doing ok, had people who were checking in on her, etc. Then she mentioned that she felt she could do something, like make some calls. Then she would feel useful. I emailed her a list, she made the calls and reported back to me. She told me that the first call she made was to a lady from church she didn't know and they ended up talking for 35 minutes. She said they had the most wonderful conversation, as the person had traveled extensively in her mission work. They exchanged phone numbers and I am sure will talk again. Is that too awesome or what?

- Karen Nienhouse

I am seeing glimpses of God here in Arizona as I take my daily walks. Our rental is in one of the very early sections of Sun City where the lots are large. The entire neighborhood has beautiful desert landscaping. I'm seeing blossoms coming out on the cactus so prevalent here. It makes me give thanks that God created rebirth all around us.

- Marge Coffey



This past week Pastor Kristine asked if I would call some of our members. I talked with two sweet ladies. The first lady (who I will call Catherine) was lonely and we talked for 45 minutes. She is 80 and living alone in an adult living apartment. We discovered we have a lot in common. She shared some personal things and I like to think our conversation was helpful for her. It was certainly meaningful for me. The other woman (who I will call Betty) was over 90 and also living alone. It took three calls before she answered (as my number was not familiar to her). Being isolated she is lonely, but she has lots of things to occupy her time, among them reading (which we had in common). She talked about her life and that she thinks she is dying. After asking if she had seen a doctor (which she had) I just accepted what she was saying. She is at peace with this and says she is ready to go. I was so touched that she shared this with me, a total stranger. What a sacred thing, to believe you are not for this world much longer and to be ready to meet Jesus. After hanging up I couldn't help the tears from falling.

I will be praying for my two new friends and calling them each week.

Also:

George and I have been making masks that are so in need. This is a way you can make a difference. Either sign up to make masks, or donate

[https://
www.aha.org/100millionmasks](https://www.aha.org/100millionmasks)



-Sara Shambarger



We live in a senior community and are both part of the elderly group in the news every day. We are doing our best by calling residents in our building to see if they have any needs like groceries, medications, etc.

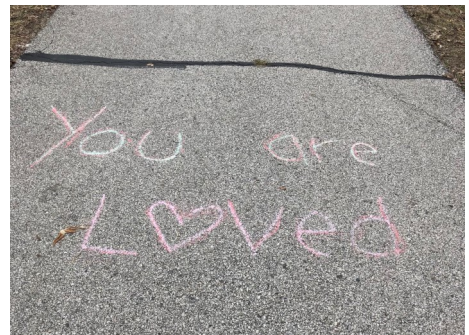
We are not looking in the rear view mirror, but forward for better days.

Pray without ceasing and be safe.
Grace & Peace.

- Ken and Bea Clark



And sometimes pictures say it all:

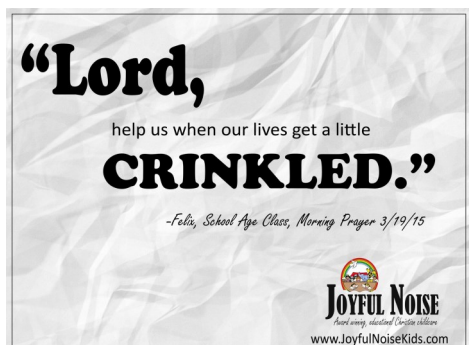


Nancy Levenburg came across this lovely message on the bike path last week,

... and Scott Reenders took this picture of these adorable children holding up a message to the residents of Grand Pines, who are not able to go out or have visitors at this time.



And finally, Sally Segers sent in this special prayer from Felix VerHage, who prayed it in 2015, but which seems especially appropriate now:





508 Franklin Avenue
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616-842-6760

Sunday Worship Hours:
Online on Facebook at 10:00 a.m.
@FirstPresGH

*If you are unable to watch the service live
on Sunday morning, watch the recording
on our website (www.fpgh.org)*

April 2020

deliver to: (or current resident)

Celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord!



Your Easter flower dedications make it possible to decorate the sanctuary and to purchase flowers for the Easter worship services.

Anyone who wishes to make a dedication may do so by completing the form below and returning it to the church office (or drop it in the offering plate) by **Palm Sunday, April 5**. After Easter, the flowers will be shared with those who are home-bound or hospitalized.

Please print the name of each person you wish to honor, along with your name and telephone number. Suggested donation: \$12 for each dedication.

DEDICATION 1. Please check one: _____ in celebration _____ in honor _____ in memory of:

NAME: _____

DEDICATION 2. Please check one: _____ in celebration _____ in honor _____ in memory of:

NAME: _____

GIVEN BY: _____ Phone: _____

Make checks payable to: First Presbyterian Church, with memo notation: "Easter dedication"