



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

AUGUST 2020, VOLUME 68—ISSUE 8

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Reverend Troy Hauser Brydon

Never before in my ministry have I asked the “why” question as much as I am now. Why do we do what we do? Why is our ministry shaped the way it is? Often churches plan about the “what.” What kind of ministry do what to have? What time should our children’s ministry meet? What style of worship is best for our community?

While I certainly wish Covid-19 would just go away, I’m finding (along with many other pastors and church workers) that there are many blessings to be found right now. Churches like ours get busy with the day-in, day-out business of ministry. It doesn’t allow a lot of time for reflection or change. It doesn’t create a lot of space for new ideas. This pandemic has called everything into question, and it’s created space for good news in our church.

For example, it used to be pretty easy to bring your children to church, have someone lead them in a Bible story, eat a few cookies while talking to friends, and then go home. That was a nice reality – one we all miss. Yet, we always yearned to equip parents to share these stories and the faith in their own homes, but there wasn’t the space to do so. Now there is that space, and so our ministry to children is pivoting to equipping parents to share the faith with their kids. It’s beautiful to hear stories of how that is happening.

We are continuing to work on the shape of ministry in the fall. My hope is that we’ll have limited, gathered worship resuming in the coming weeks. It does seem, however, prudent to plan almost all activities of the church to be done in small groups and often remotely. This has been the case for almost all meetings of the church since March. This will likely be the case for how much of our church life will be until there’s a solution to this pandemic.

Being socially distant for months has driven home for me how much I yearn for the social connections I have at church. When I run into any of you in the community, I hope you know I’m smiling underneath my mask. One of the “whys” of church is the gift of true community. I hope we don’t take that for granted!

Finally, you may recall that we did a baptism in Lake Michigan last August. Since the pandemic started, we haven’t done any baptisms. We’re considering holding another lake baptism service in late August or early September because it’s possible to have a larger gathering outside. If you are considering baptism for yourself or for a child and would like to know more, please reach out to the church. I’d love to do this if there’s desire and we can arrange the details well.

In Christ,

Pastor Troy



In Our Church

PAGE 2

Church & Pastor Contact Information

Pastor Troy Hauser Brydon:

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

Pastor Kristine Aragon Bruce:

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

Church Office:

616-842-6760,
staff@fpgh.org

Prayer Concerns:

Betty Berg, Carol Folkert,
Karen Fox, Tom Franks, Suzanne
Cooper, Stan Johnson,
Barbara Race, Jim and Sandy Teunis,
and Lynne VanderMeer

Our Sympathy:

to Lynne VanderMeer on the death
of her sister, Jill VanderMeer, on
July 1, 2020.

to the family and friends of Gerry
VanStratt, who passed away on
July 5, 2020.

to Doug and Sally Dunn Doering on
the death of Sally's father, Cornelius
Nebbeling, on July 5, 2020.

to Jane and David Dornbos and
Marc and Kristin (Dornbos) Felt
and families on the death of Jane's
mother, Jennie Timmerman, on
July 16, 2020.

to the friends and family of Carol
Winton, who passed away on
July 23, 2020.

Thank you:

"I would like to express my thanks
for the many cards and kindnesses
that made my 100th birthday such a
memorable occasion."

With love, Virginia Weenink

Thank you:

The family of Hazel Kragt thanks
her church family for all of the
cards and the many ways you have
shown your care since Hazel's
passing on May 20.

When it is safe to gather again, a
memorial service will be held to
celebrate Hazel's life.

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!

Aug. 26 Dorothy Jullie
15603 Grand Point Dr.
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Sept. 11 Jim Teunis
14524 Angelus Circle
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Sept. 19 Sandy Beute
17283 Rosy Mound Lane
Apt. 342
Grand Haven, MI 49417

How to Sign Up for in-Person Worship

When the numbers allow us to
begin worshiping in person, things
will look very different. One major
change is the requirement that you
make a reservation a week in
advance to attend worship.

Signing up to attend worship will
happen on a weekly basis, begin-
ning at 9 a.m. on the Monday before
the service. To sign up, call the
church office (616-842-6760) or
send an email to Karen Nienhouse
(knienhouse@fpgh.org). **Reserva-
tions will not be accepted prior
to 9 a.m. on Monday.** Detailed
Sunday morning instructions will be
emailed to all with reservations. If
you don't have a reservation, please
do not show up on Sunday morning
hoping there is space for you.

We can't wait to see you again, but
please be wise in making personal
decisions. If you have health con-
cerns, aren't feeling well, or if you
don't want to wear a mask, please
stay home and worship with us on
Facebook (@FirstPresGH).

Ways to Give

The church is managing its resources carefully, and your generosity will
allow us to be strong in this time and emerge even stronger when this pe-
riod ends.

Until we can again worship together and you can offer your gifts in person,
methods of giving to the church's
ministries 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
4. Text to Give. **Texting FPGH to 73256** will link you to our secure
giving page.

Thank you for your support!

What to Expect for In-Person Worship

Session has approved a plan for a returning to limited in-person worship once local Covid-19 case numbers come down. We will announce the return to gathered worship a week prior to the return. Communication will come via email, Sunday announcements, and through social posts. As a reminder, here are the expectations for those who wish to worship in-person:

- Everyone will be wearing facemasks.
- People will sign-up the week prior to the service (and to begin with, capacity will be limited to 50)
- Seating will be assigned to promote social distancing.
- All worship aids will be on the screen.
- There will be music but no congregational singing.
- There will be no nursery, no children's programming, and no coffee hour.
- Efforts will be made to make all the elements of the service no-contact.



From Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce

Dear Church Family,

I think it's safe to say we're all making plans knowing we'll most likely need to change them or replan at the drop of a hat. As I write this there has yet to be a decision about what school will look like in the fall. Not knowing what is ahead is very anxiety producing for me, as I'm sure you can relate! I, for one, feel like a surfer waiting for the waves to come crashing down, but unsure of when those waves will appear or if I'll even have it in me to ride them. All I've got is my board for comfort. If you've never surfed before there's a rope with a lot of slack that connects your ankle to your board at all times. This is so you'll never be separated from your board in case you're knocked off by a large wave. I'd like to think of Jesus as the surfboard we are all clutching to for dear life as we bob in the waves of the unknown, waiting for the next big wave to arrive. This made me wonder what currently keeps us connected to Jesus in the midst of the waves of anxiety?



Prayer is the first thing that comes to my mind as a way for us to remain connected to Jesus during times of great anxiety. The author Anne Lamott once summed up her prayers as either being "Thank you! Thank you!" or "Help me! Help me!" Perhaps our connection to Jesus could simply be writing or saying a prayer of "Thank you, Lord for _____ or "Dear Lord, please help me with _____." I've personally found it helpful to hold onto the line in the Lord's Prayer: *"Give us this day our daily bread."* Bread that's just for today, not tomorrow, not six months down the road, because to think past today is too overwhelming. I think this is why Jesus taught the disciples, and us, to pray this way - in order to keep us in the moment and not be overwhelmed by the future. Prayers for sustenance for just today also helps us focus on how Christ is present with us in the moment.

Rather than viewing prayer as one more thing to add to your day, think of how you can incorporate it into something you're already doing. A prayer before bed whether it's on your own or with your kids as you're putting them to bed, a prayer before a meal or maybe even during your daily walk? Whatever prayer looks like. I pray that you don't just know, but you *experience* Christ's presence with you *today*.

Grateful to be on this journey of faith with you!

Pastor Kristine

August Spiritual Practice

This month, we are encouraging FPGH to gather with God in prayer. Four prayerful activities will be made available for you to do on your own or with a loved one. We encourage you to pick one day a week to step away from the demands of your daily life and engage in prayerful activity.

Bags containing all four activities will be available for pick up the entire month of August inside the Clinton side entrance. Doors will be open Monday-Thursday from 8 am-4 pm and Fridays 8 am-12 pm



If you feel comfortable please share pictures of your prayer journey using the hashtag #fpghprayer.

Update from the Session

Usually Session takes July off, but nothing is usual about 2020! Session met predominantly to evaluate the finances of the church and to discuss how best to support Joyful Noise as it serves our community with lower enrollment. Some items of note include:

- Giving started strong in the pandemic, with a noticeable number of members paying their pledges in full to help the church's cash flow.
- While giving patterns have been upended by the pandemic, giving has slowed noticeably. We are not sure if this is due to the economy, the summer, the inability to have gathered worship, or a combination of all of the above.
- Please continue to support the church as you are able, and the Session thanks the congregation for its ongoing generosity in uncertain times.
- Our Joyful Noise Christian Childcare ministry has been open since early June. Enrollment is starting to increase, and Session is working with Joyful Noise on how to sustain their ministry through this pandemic.

It is our joy to serve Christ as the Session for First Presbyterian Church. Please continue to hold us in your prayers.

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

Tidings article deadline for September 2020 issue: August 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.

New in Children's Ministry!



We will be using the dynamic virtual platform, Seesaw, to offer age-level Bible Friends and Children & Worship. This child-friendly platform encourages interaction so children are not just observers of God's stories, they are participants in worship. We are so excited to show you how we will be using Seesaw to connect and engage together.

Please join us for our parent Seesaw Kick-off meeting on Zoom
Wednesday, August 5 at 7 p.m.

Contact Laura Burns, lburns@fpggh.org, for the Zoom link.

Rootbeer Float Meet & Greet for (incoming) 5th Graders!

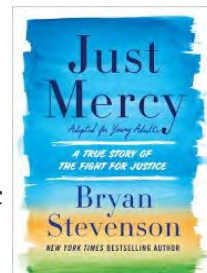
We are so excited to be welcoming new fifth graders into the Youth Group this year! To help make this transition fun, incoming fifth graders are invited to a rootbeer float gathering in the FPGH parking lot on Sunday, August 23 from 6:30-7:30. At this gathering, students will have the opportunity to learn one another's names, meet their youth leaders, and hear about Youth Group from some of our older participants who have volunteered to share their experiences.



Please bring along your own chair, a mask just in case and plan on using the bathroom before you come! The building will be open for emergencies only. These precautions help us to make FPGH a safe environment during this time.

Summer Reading for High School Students

We believe it is important for our young people to contribute to ongoing conversations about systemic racism and injustice in our world.



To better equip students for these conversations, FPGH Youth Ministry will be providing space to read and discuss the Young Adult version of *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson for our incoming 9th through 12th grade students. Bryan Stevenson is the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, which strives to end mass incarceration, wrongful and cruel punishment and protect human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society. **The book discussion will take place on Wednesday, August 12 at 6:30 pm in the memorial garden.** Bring your own chair.

Email Maddie Lambert (mlambert@fpggh.org) to sign up and she will drop off a copy of the book at no cost to you!

Drive-Up Backpack Blessings

FPGH students and teachers are invited to join us in the Clinton Street parking lot on Sunday, August 23, anytime between 1 and 3 pm to be blessed for the school year and receive a "you are loved" button for your backpack (or briefcase).

We ask that you remain in your car and enter through the Franklin side portico driveway to drive up and be blessed outside of the doors of the Clinton Street entrance.

Can't make it? That is okay! We will leave blessed buttons in the Clinton side entrance for pick up starting Monday, August 24. The entrance will be open Monday- Thursday 8 am- 4 pm and Friday 8 am-noon.



Backpack pins from a previous year



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

Sunday Worship:

10:00 a.m. on our Facebook page: @FirstPresGH
or watch the recorded service on our
website: fpgh.org

August 2020

deliver to: (or current resident)



HELP US SPRUCE UP OUR PLAY YARDS!

Are you able to help us reach our fundraising goal by giving a gift of \$500 or \$200 or \$50 or \$2 to help us finish this project?

Session has recently announced that **for every \$1 you give, the Alpha Fund will give \$2**. With your generosity, we will soon have improved play spaces for our children!

Ways to give:

- send a check to the church (508 Franklin Avenue, Grand Haven, MI 49417) specifying “playground,” or
- text FPGH to 73256 and choose “Playground Fundraiser” under the “Fund” drop down menu

Thank you to everyone who has already given!

