



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

JANUARY 2021, VOLUME 69—ISSUE 1

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Reverend Troy Hauser Brydon

New years bring new beginnings and a chance to reflect upon where we have come from and to look forward to where we are heading. In January, it is the practice of the church membership to review the ministry over the past year through our annual report – both in narrative and financial form. Over the past few years we have done this during a Congregational Conversation, which we held between services in the Lounge. Continuing the mantra of this pandemic – we won't be able to do it that way this year.

Still, your Session wants to make sure you know what has happened over the past year, so we are making a new way for the Congregational Conversation in 2021. Because we cannot hold large gatherings inside, we're moving the conversation to Zoom. We will have the same information at two different meetings, and you're invited to attend one or both of them. These meetings will be on Wednesday, January 20 at 6:00 or Thursday, January 21 at 1:00.

You'll hear from Session members about the ministry in 2020 and our hopes for 2021. There will be time for your questions as well. If you have questions that you would like answered, I'd encourage you to send them in advance to me or Carrie Rivette, the Clerk of Session. We can make sure the appropriate person gets your question and can provide a thoughtful answer to it at the conversation or even direct to you. If you can't attend the meeting, feel free to send in your questions, and we'll respond to them. While we'd prefer that these conversations could happen in person, we want to make sure these conversations can happen to keep the church in step for its ministry in 2021.

Also, Session has called for the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 31, 2021, at 11:30. The purpose of this meeting is to approve the Terms of Call for both Pastor Kristine and me, and, if the way be clear, to elect a deacon to a two-year term. More information will be coming about the format of that meeting as it gets closer – maybe we'll be in the parking lot again! In worship that Sunday, we'll get a chance to ordain and install our elders and deacons. Surely, we'll be doing that in an entirely new manner as well, so stay tuned. If nothing else, we've learned how to be flexible and creative in ministry over the past year!

Finally, as we turn into 2021, know that my prayers join yours as we pray for health, stability, and a return to being together. This is hard, but we are strong. I do look forward to glad reunions when the time is right!

In Christ,
Pastor Troy

Upcoming Events

- Jan. 10** 5-8th Grade Youth Group Resumes
- Jan. 11** 9-12 Grade Youth Group Resumes
- Jan. 20 & 21** Congregational Conversations
- Jan. 31** Annual Congregational Meeting
- Feb. 17** Ash Wednesday
- Feb. 21** First Sunday in Lent



Habitat for Humanity "Unity Build" Project

This year's "unity build" project, (a collaboration of community faith groups working together to construct affordable homes) has reached the drywall phase!

The project is in need of volunteers of all skill levels. Please contact one of the following people for information on how you can help:



- Volunteer Coordinator:
Lynne Balkema, 616-846-1505
- Construction Manager:
Patrick Twa, 616-638-6720

In Our Church

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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:

Brian Anderson, Pam Bullerdick, Anne Guimond, Mark Kelley, Mary Jo Nass, Barb Race, Lisa Stoner, Sandy Teunis and families in our congregation who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have loved ones who are struggling with COVID-19.

Our Sympathy:

to Betty Jo and Randy Enell on the death of Betty Jo's sister, Bonnie Doolittle, on December 2.

to Michelle, Katie, Mike, Kate, Sophia, Emerson and Sawyer Potter on the passing of family members: Michelle's father, on November 30; Michelle's brother on December 1; and Michelle's brother-in-law on December 13.

to Bill and Chris Bussell on the December 11th death of Chris's mother, Mary Jane Meier.

to Bob, Cathie and Andrew Day on the death of Bob's mother on December 15 in Iowa.

to the friends and family of Mary Fullerton on her death on December 18.

to Donna vandenBerg and family on the December 28th death of Donna's husband, Rick vandenBerg.

Congratulations:

to parents Rachel and Ethan Pauwels and first time grandparents Scott and Deb Stanley on the birth of a beautiful baby girl, Eliana Sarine.

to Tim and Jane Stoecker on the birth of their granddaughter, Elliot Hope on December 23.

Thank you:

"Thank you to everyone who sent cards after the death of my sister in December. When I read them I felt the arms of our church family wrapped around me like a warm, cozy blanket. How blessed we are to be a part of this church.

Thank you all very much, and we can't wait to meet again face-to-face."

-Betty Jo and Randy Enell

"Thanks so much to our church family for all your prayers, condolences, love and support that we have received before and since my mom's passing due to COVID-19. It was so hard not to be able to be with her, but she had a lovely long life and we have lots of wonderful memories. We know that she has been reunited with my dad in heaven."

-Chris and Bill Bussell

"Thank you to all who have sent messages of condolence regarding the passing on of my mother. Like us all, she is a spiritual being that had a temporary human experience. Now she has moved on to be with God who is also Spirit. She is enveloped within God who is Love and where there is no reproach, but only healing and reconciliation. We are happy for her and at peace."

-Bob Day and Family



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!

Jan. 1 Beverly Purcell
16216 Mercury Drive
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Jan. 10 Sandy Teunis
1410 S. Ferry, J-4
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Jan. 12 Norma Vyn
1410 S. Ferry, F5
Grand Haven, MI 49417

2021 Per Capita

Per-capita is a charge we pay to the Presbytery each year for every member of our congregation. The amount for this year is \$35.23.

Please prayerfully consider paying the per-capita amount for each person in your family who is a church member. *Thank you!*

for more info on Per Capita, visit:
<https://tinyurl.com/y44nmfze>

Thank You!

The Giving Tree Committee would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who donated gift cards. There were 134 cards collected for a total of \$3,375! This helped to make a very merry Christmas for those in need at Salvation Army, Central High, The People Center and the Women's Resilience Center of Grand Haven.

Your generosity is a blessing to many!



From Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce

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Dear Church Family,

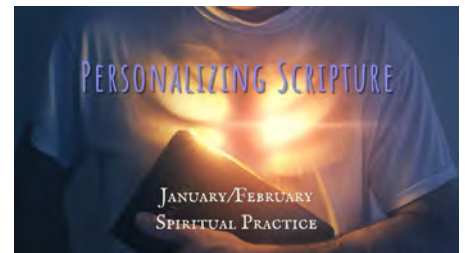
I'm sure you're just as excited as I am to have said "Good-bye and good riddance!" to 2020! While it will be a while before the general population receives the vaccine, the fact that it's been rolled out to health workers is extremely encouraging. Hope is on the horizon! A specific kind of hope anyway. Since true hope can only be found in Jesus Christ, we've had hope all along. As it's a new year and a new beginning I'd encourage you to focus anew on the hope we have in Christ. For this reason I'm excited about the all-church spiritual practice in which the Faith Formation Committee hopes you will participate. What better way to start a new year (especially after the kind of year we all just lived through) grounded in God's word, which will ground us further in Christ's hope?

Beginning January 4 there will be packets available during church office hours (8-4pm, M-F) at the Clinton Street entrance to help you personalize scripture for yourself and others. When personalizing scripture you insert your name into a passage, giving you a prayer that's right out of scripture. For example Psalm 32:7 reads:

*"You are my hiding place;
you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance."*

When personalized Psalm 32:7 will read:

*"You are your name here 's hiding place;
you will protect your name here from trouble
and surround your name here with songs of deliverance."*



We also encourage you each week to insert another person's name into that same passage of scripture and to send them a card (included in the packet) to let them know how you've been praying for them. Each week there will be a different passage of scripture to personalize and to use as a prayer for yourself and others. If you have questions about this spiritual practice feel free to email me: kristineab@fpgh.org or Deb Stanley: dstanley64@gmail.com. We tend to start the New Year with resolutions to get into better shape and in better overall health. Let's not forget, however, our spiritual health as well. While Christ is always with us, if we neglect to spend time in God's Word, prayer, in Christ-centered community, and in serving others in Christ's name, our ability to sense Christ's presence is lessened. So let's start 2021 off right by being grounded in God's word in order to strengthen our awareness of Jesus Christ himself in our midst.

In this Journey of Faith with You,
Pastor Kristine

Faith Formation

"Beloved" - Passages of 1 John

Hal Fitzgerald and Warren Trimble invite you to join them on Zoom on Sunday mornings to explore Bible passages of 1 John related to the 2021 winter sermon series, "Beloved." Classes run from about 9:00 to 9:40 to allow people to attend worship services at 10:00.

The classes will run for seven weeks. For the Zoom meeting link, please contact Hal at hfitz@sbcglobal.net or Warren at warrentrimble@gmail.com.



The Wired Word

This popular Sunday morning class links the latest headlines to appropriate scripture. Participants receive a weekly lesson every Thursday in their e-mail box in order to prepare for Sunday's discussion.

Class meets on Zoom from 9:00-9:50 a.m. before the worship service. Please contact the church office for the Zoom meeting link (616-842-6760) or to request to receive the lesson via email.



A Letter from the Philippines

The light and love of Christ with greetings of hope for the New Year have been sent to First Presbyterian Church from our mission co-workers. They also thank members for the love shared when we pray for them and our help in sustaining them through financial gifts.

This month we share a letter from the husband and wife team of Rev. Cathy Chang and Rev. Juan Lopez, who work in the Philippines as Regional Facilitators for Addressing Migration and Human Trafficking in East Asia:

Greetings from the Philippines!

We pray that you and your families, and the faith community in and around Grand Haven, are keeping safe and healthy in mind, body and spirit. Although this year has been filled with tremendous challenge and hardships due to the pandemic, we're grateful for your commitment to God's mission. Thank you for your financial gift in early September.

Before Thanksgiving, our global partners with the UCC in the Philippines hosted a virtual international solidarity forum. In case you would like to watch it and learn more about what is happening in the Philippines, and specifically with the church leaders, I encourage you to read and watch more at:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/united-church-of-christ-in-the-philippines-asks-for-solidarity-from-international-partners/>

By way of update, we are still here working from home in the Philippines. Our daughter Aurelie is nearly finished with her first quarter of third grade. We had hoped to travel to France for Christmas; however, those plans will need to be postponed. The Philippine government will still not allow foreign nationals to enter the Philippines – so we could leave, but would likely be restricted from re-entering after a vacation outside the Philippines.

Although we already shared this photo that was taken last year, we thought that you might appreciate seeing us and sharing it with the fine folks at First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven.

With the light and love of Christ,

Cathy, Juan and Aurelie



Next month we will share a letter from Rev. Michael and Rachel Ludwig, who work to bring literacy and community health evangelism programs to the people of Niger.

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

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, Congregational Care Ministries

Christina Ramones, Assistant to the Administrator

Kerri Roberts, Office Assistant

Mark Sanchez, Church Host

Sally Segers, Joyful Noise Director

Tidings article deadline for February 2021 issue: January 18, 2021

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.

Generosity Update

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2021 Generosity Campaign Update

Thank you to all who have turned in their 2021 Estimate of Giving. In response to the matching campaign, we have had 126 increased or new pledges for 2021. As of 1/6/21 we have received commitments of \$889,056.

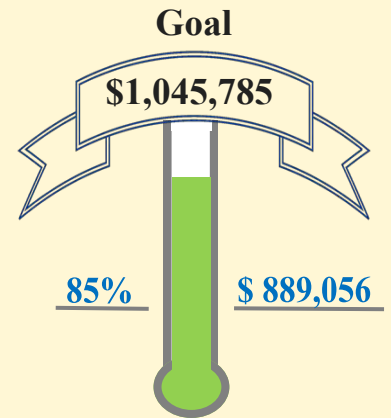
There is still time to let us know that you are planning to support FPGH in 2021. Please give the church office a call, go to our website and complete the online form, or mail your Estimate of Giving to the church office.

Renewing Your Automatic Donations to FPGH

Many who manage their giving electronically may find that their giving term has ended at the end of 2020. If you would like to continue your giving in 2021, there are several convenient options:

- Contact your bank and ask about auto-recurring payments
- Text-to-Give: from your smartphone, text "FPGH" to 73256 and you will receive a link to a secure portal to set up your giving
- Call Tina Ramones in the church office at 616-842-6760 for additional giving options and questions.

Call to Generosity Campaign 2021



From the Worship Committee

December Worship Survey Results

The Worship committee thanks the 133 people who responded to our worship survey. Here is a brief summary of the results and our conclusions.

With about 80% of the respondents always or usually watching our streaming worship service, the most highly appreciated parts of the service were the sermon, the prayers, and the announcements. The offertory and singing were the least liked parts. The divide between those who like the contemporary and those who like the traditional service was clear in the responses and the written comments. The worship committee had a long discussion about the results, and hopes to take action to improve the online worship experience while honoring that there are varied ways to worship our great God.

The committee and the Pastors have no intention of continuing with a single blended service once normal worship resumes. We will also be considering resuming two services in the short term when small groups of in-person worshippers are again permitted. You

may also notice recent efforts to include more frequent use of the elements of traditional worship, such as visible font, table, and pulpit into the service.

We recognize that singing at home during the online service is difficult, and we have tried to support this with more of the service participants miked for the songs. However, singing remains one of the more dangerous ways of spreading the virus, so we are restricting the number of singers for both contemporary and traditional songs.

Although the offertory is not well appreciated, we want to keep it as part of the service, since it represents our response of gratitude to being forgiven and hearing the gospel. Please recognize that those performing during the offertory are stand-ins for you, the congregation, in offering thanks. We are trying to be more diverse in our presentations during the offertory, and will be making more use of recordings of the choir from pre-pandemic services. While we must worship primarily online, we will continue to hone the service to make it worshipful, reverent, and engaging.

Thank you for your input.

From Session

Update from the Session

Stay in the loop about the actions of your Session! Following is a synopsis of the main points of the last Session meeting:

Highlights:

- We approved the 2021 Operating Budget.
- We heard a report from the December Presbytery meeting. The presbytery has elected a search committee to its next executive presbyter/stated clerk and associate presbyter. The presbytery also approved its budget.
- We discussed the possibilities for Christmas Eve services and decided it was best not to allow in-person worship until the community spread of the pandemic is lower.
- We made plans for the 2021 Congregational Conversation.
- We approved our 2021 Session meeting dates.

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

From the Presbytery

Compassion, Peace & Justice Ministry

The Compassion, Peace & Justice (CPJ) ministry of the PCUSA engages with Presbyterians and partners across the U.S. and internationally to address injustice, advocate for peace, assist and accompany people and communities impacted by poverty, violence and disasters, and support work to eradicate racism, white supremacy and oppression of all kinds.

Committed to “the whole gospel for the whole person,” our programs follow the concern of Jesus for vulnerable and oppressed communities and seek to honor God’s love for all creation. We respond to General Assembly referrals and equip the church to act compassionately and prophetically in these challenging times. We do this through accompaniment, advocacy, grant-making and community-centered development that is guided by global humanitarian standards.

The Compassion, Peace & Justice (CPJ) ministry engages with Presbyterians and partners across the U.S. and internationally to:

End poverty and hunger as we:

- Assist and accompany vulnerable communities working to improve their lives
- Support education, training and capacity-building programs
- Work for long-term solutions to systemic poverty and injustice
- Listen to, amplify the voices of partners, and join in action toward these goals

Restore communities impacted by disaster as we:

- Partner with communities affected by disasters, environmental degradation and systemic racism
- Provide training, disaster preparedness and capacity-building programs for mid councils, partners and responders
- Mitigate the impact of disasters and their underlying causes

Promote peace and transform cultures of violence as we:

- Educate, advocate and respond to domestic and international conflicts
- Provide opportunities to learn about peacemaking initiatives, and to accompany impacted communities
- Address structural racism, white supremacy, misogyny and violence; and work for human rights and dignity
- Encourage the study and practice of nonviolence
- Confront the epidemic of gun violence

Promote solidarity with people as we:

- Amplify the voices of those whom society marginalizes and stand with communities as they defend their rights
- Challenge systems of oppression, discrimination and abuse
- Partner with those who seek livable wages and just labor practices
- Engage with partners working with refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers, citizens returning from incarceration, and people impacted by trafficking or forced labor

Promote solidarity with creation as we:

- Work toward environmental justice, creation care, sustainable living, appropriate technologies and climate justice
- Support food and farm systems that restore God’s creation
- Challenge systems that put profit ahead of health, safety and environment
- Honor and respond to the leadership of frontline communities experiencing environmental degradation and/or environmental racism
- Articulate and advocate for a just transition toward an equitable and sustainable economy

In Our Church

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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.fpg.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, 2021.**



From the Mission Committee Food Pantry Collection

Each month, the Mission Committee collects non-perishable food and household goods for different local food pantries. This month’s donations will go to The Salvation Army.

Special requests are for:

- **Canned Chicken**
- **Canned Tuna**
- **Beef Stew**
- **Chili**
- **Hamburger or Tuna Helper**

Please bring donations directly to the Salvation Army at 310 N. DeSpelder in Grand Haven.

Thank you!





Children and Worship continues on Zoom

We had such joy and success connecting on Zoom in December that we are going to continue it in the new year until we can be in person again!

Join Ms. Laura for Children and Worship Sunday mornings at 11:15 a.m. We sing, sign, listen, wonder, create and pray together. Contact Laura Burns (lburns@fpgh.org) for more details and the Zoom link.

Youth Group Updates

For the 2021 winter/spring schedule, Youth Group will continue meeting on Sunday (5-8th grade) and Monday (9-12th grade) nights on Zoom. We recognize that we worship alongside students who have a large variety of needs, and that not all of those needs get met through Zoom. We also, however, value the safety of our students, their families and the Grand Haven community and believe the best way to live into that value is to continue meeting virtually. We are so thankful for the ways in which our families have supported us as we make decisions for the group, and are very excited to continue to learn about God and one another this year. We will update you as things change. Join our Facebook group "FPGH Youth" and make sure you are receiving monthly "Youth Happenings" emails for your up-to-the-minute announcements.

Please read the descriptions below for what our students will be learning about this year! Youth Group begins the week of January 10 and ends the week of June 6.

5-8th Grade, Sunday nights from 6:15-7:30 pm

The Gospel of John

Our 5-8th grade students are invited to read the Gospel of John together. This season, we meet 18 times together and there are 21 chapters of John. So, we won't finish all of it together. But we will get through lots of it! The Gospel of John contains a well known verse, memorized by lots of Christians because of its beautiful reminder. That verse is John 3:16-17: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life. God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him." Each week, we are going to start by saying one of these verses aloud together. By the end of our time together this winter/spring- I bet you will have memorized it too! Students will also be invited to respond to the Word creatively each week. If any students are in need of a Bible or resources to write, color and draw please email Maddie at mlambert@fpgh.org.

9-12th Grade, Monday nights from 6:30-8:00 pm

Revelation

Many people believe that Revelation is one of the toughest books of the Bible. It is often avoided because of this. Though it is difficult, it is also a text that vividly and beautifully shows readers Christ's longings for his faithful followers. We will not be reading all 22 chapters during our time together. But we will read a large chunk of this tricky and rewarding text together. As is always the case, students are encouraged to approach this opportunity knowing that all of us are learners. It is okay to be confused or even frustrated with the stories inside the Bible, just as it is okay to be excited and joyful. We will be taking Revelation slowly- so there will be lots of room for questions. Students will also be invited to creatively respond to the Word each week using methods we learned together in the Fall. If any students are in need of a Bible, or resources to write, color and draw please email Maddie at mlambert@fpgh.org.



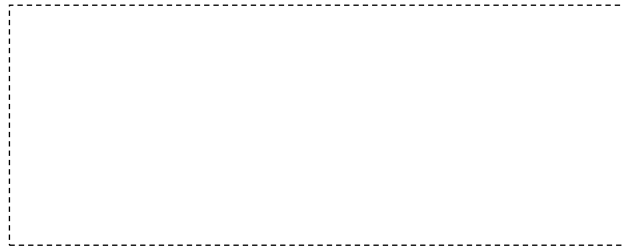
508 Franklin Avenue
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616-842-6760

Sunday Worship:

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

January 2021

deliver to: (or current resident)



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS
FOR
CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATIONS**

January 20
6:00 p.m.

January 21
1:00 p.m.

Ask questions and hear updates from various areas of ministries.
Meetings will take place on Zoom. (Stay tuned for how to receive the meeting links)



and the
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, January 31
at 11:30 a.m.

(likely in the parking lot)

for the purpose of electing at-large members of the Nominations Committee
and to approve the pastors' Terms of Call