



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

JUNE 2020, VOLUME 68—ISSUE 6

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Reverend Troy Hauser Brydon

When Jesus was questioned about the greatest commandment, he responded this way, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” If I were to boil down everything the church exists to do, it would be based on Jesus’ response. Love God. Love others.

Those two directions of love are guiding us as we consider to be the church in the midst of this pandemic. We love God through our worship, our study, and our prayers. We love others through our kindness, advocacy, and attentive ears. In this time, we are also learning that we love others by doing things that promote their health – wearing our facemasks and limiting how frequently we interact. It’s the most counterintuitive way of showing love, but it’s what we can do in this time.



Session has been praying and discerning how to lead the church in these uncertain times. At our May meeting, Session formed the Covid-19 Response Team (CRT), which is responsible for handling the day-to-day questions that come up as the church seeks to responsibly and faithfully open the building. We are being patient and deliberate in the steps we are taking, and we seek your prayers as we discern what is best. We are listening to civil leaders. We are reviewing scientific articles on the virus and its behavior. We are listening to theologians and church leaders. We are paying attention to our community. To be honest with you, there is so little clarity in this time. Every decision is fraught with more questions. How do we screen for illness? Who is sanitizing rooms? What materials should we use?

So, with all of that buildup, here’s what you should know about where we are as of the end of May.

- **Gatherings of Ten or Fewer**

- We are strongly encouraging small groups, classes, and support groups to continue to meet via Zoom. The next best option is to meet outside with social distance.
- As we begin allowing groups into the building, they will adhere to social distancing, wearing masks, and clear sanitization procedures.

- **Staff**

- Until the stay-at-home orders are lifted, most of the staff will continue to work from home.
- Once they are lifted, we will encourage as much remote work as possible.

- **Youth and Children’s Ministries**

- They are providing many materials for families to use in their homes.
- Youth will continue interpersonal check-ins through Zoom and other safe means.

- **Joyful Noise**

- Our Christian childcare is opening on June 8th on a very limited basis with many new restrictions to keep the children and staff safe. They will be restricted to parts of the building that the rest of the church will not use for the time being.

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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,
Carol Folkert, Karen Fox,
Meghan Heritage, Stan Johnson,
Kris Kelley, Calla Overway,
Barbara Race, Jim and Sandy Teunis,
Gerry VanStratt, and Carol Winton

Our Sympathy:

To the family and friends of Dr. Roy
Olson, who passed away on April 24.

to Christine and Jasen Rademacher
and family on the death of Christine's
grandfather, Donald Kobman, on
April 28.

to Carol Wilhelm on the death of her
father, Warren Uhlemann, on April 29.

to the family and friends of June
Lindberg, who passed away on May 4.

To Nancy and Philip Law and family
on the death of Nancy's mother,
Flo Sluiter, on May 12.

To Mary and Dave Thornsen and
family on the death of Mary's mother,
Hazel Kragt, on May 20.

Thank you:

"Dear Church Family,

I appreciate all the prayers and
concern. The get well cards were
so welcome. I am on the mend and
am grateful for blessings that come
from such a warm and caring Church
connection.

Thank you."

- Kris Kelley

Thank you:

"Dear FPC Family,

What enormous power there is in
letters, cards and notes! They soothe
grief with shared sympathy, uplift
with love and blessings, and remind
us of God's steadfast love and
His promises.

We have been blessed by your care
following the death of Rebecca Dunn
and Carl Doering. Thank you!"

- Sally Dunn, Doug Doering and
Casey Nebbeling

"Dear First Pres. Church & Family,

Thank you all for the many, many
lovely cards and notes. My heart is
full from all the messages of love,
encouragement, good luck, and a ton
of prayers of hope, good recovery,
and support. The last ten days have
been horrific but not without hope. I
have ten days to wait and see if heal-
ing is taking place. If it is healing, we
will proceed without surgery but
without sign of healing they will
need to replace the shoulder.

Keep me in your prayers as all of you
shall be in my prayers.

Agape to all and thank you,"

- Karen Fox (the one armed person)



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!

June 17 Betty Bytwerk
Freedom Village
145 Columbia Ave.
The Inn CH1240A
Holland, MI 49423

June 22 Charlie Davis
Sierra
16216 Mercury, Rm. 2
Grand Haven, MI 49417

June 24 Judy Fischer
313 Robbins Road
Grand Haven, MI 49417



Blood Drive June 5

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

Give blood.



Our next blood drive:

Friday, June 5

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. We are asking blood donors
to 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).

From Rev. Troy Hauser Brydon

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- **Worship**

- We are aware that some churches are beginning in-person worship again. We are sorting through plans of what that looks like for us.
- The presbytery has urged churches not to worship in-person through the end of June.
- Session will be discussing worship at its June meeting.
- We will continue to have livestreaming of worship every Sunday that will be thoughtful and excellent.

Early in June we will be sending a survey via email to the whole church. We'd like your input to help inform our decision making in the weeks to come. Please respond to that survey promptly since the Session meets again on June 8.

Also, I would be remiss if I didn't say "thank you" for your steadfast and strong support of the church. Your generosity and kindness are evident and a reflection of the kind of church we are.

I know we are a church that prays. I welcome your prayers for our discernment. I join you in praying for our leaders and healthcare professionals. I join you in the hope that we will see God move in a mighty way in this difficult time.

In Christ,
Pastor Troy

From Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce

Dear Church Family,

I miss you! I hope we can see one another face to face (even if it's with masks on!) sooner rather than later. Since we just celebrated Pentecost I've been thinking of how the Holy Spirit worked within and through the first church.

There was a whirlwind of transformation within this community! They made sure no one was in want by sharing all they had and even going as far as to sell much of their possessions to support one another. They broke bread in each other's homes, prayed together, and spent time together in fellowship at the Temple. All because of the Holy Spirit. It's important to note that they weren't necessarily worshipping at the Temple, as women weren't allowed inside the sanctuary to worship, and many of the converts were women. The Temple was also a public gathering space with various courtyards and it's in those spaces these men and women who came to believe in Jesus gathered together for fellowship.



Notice that these new converts don't spend all of their time at the Temple, and even if they did it wasn't because it was their place of worship, as they worshipped in each other's homes. It is accurate to say then, that the early church was without a church if one defines the church as merely a building. The early church did not need a building to care for one another and for those in need. The early church did not need a building to pray together. The early church did not need a building for worship. The Holy Spirit did not need a building to unleash its power upon God's people. One of the first things the Holy Spirit did was blow the doors of a building open. What the Holy Spirit needs are people open to God's work in their lives.

Don't get me wrong. I look forward to the day when our church doors reopen and we can once again gather together in person. And while Zoom is a poor substitute for face-to-face interaction I'm grateful it still allows us to "see" one another as we pray together. We still belong to God, and Christ still claims us as his own. The Holy Spirit does not need a building to work in us and through us. The Holy Spirit does need **our** doors to be open in order to work in us and through us to serve others in Christ's name. While this has looked different during Corona time the Holy Spirit is still at work. Based on how you all have cared for one another and reached out to others in the wider community it's more accurate to say that while the doors of First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven have closed, **we've** remained open.

Thank you for being the Church!

Pastor Kristine

From the Mission Committee

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The Mission Committee has been gratefully working to support requests and needs within the community during the national emergency and pandemic of the Corona virus. We continue to respond to the needs of many who are struggling during the crisis and hope the congregation will continue to respond to specific agency requests noted in our church publications and updates.

With congregational funds designated to the responsibility of the Mission Committee; generous donations have been made on behalf of the First Presbyterian Church congregation to:

Feed the Heights Kids
Meals on Wheels
Salvation Army

Four Pointes – Senior Center
One Great Hour of Sharing
Supper House

Love In Action
The People Center
United Way Ottawa County/Grand Haven

We have also been able to provide single donations to several important missions First Presbyterian Church supports, helping those significantly affected by the crisis from loss of jobs/income and disruption of their lives:

- **The Hope Project**, a local agency that assists victims of sex trafficking in West Michigan, received funds to assist with their need for counselors, supplies, housing, financial assistance, etc. provided to victims of sex trafficking in our area. They continue to look for volunteer support mentors for their clients during recovery. If you have an interest in assisting in the mentorship mission, please contact one of the Mission Committee members for information.
- **El Ayudante Mission USA (Honduras)** - Our Mission Committee has been active with El Ayudante Mission USA, for six years, supporting them with water filters and latrines for sanitation purposes. Clean water eliminates over 93% of pathogens allowing healthy villagers to return to work and learning classrooms. Most recently our Mission Committee continued its mission services in Honduras with a generous contribution of funds to assist with food and food distribution in the COVID 19 crisis. Our large contribution was celebrated by staff at El Ayudante, allowing them to expand to a second village with their food distributions. Our Christian love and care for those hungry in poverty conditions reaches all the way to Honduras.
- **Koinonia Ministries, Belize** – We continue to build relationships with the people of Koinonia Ministries in Orange Walk Belize. We were able to provide a generous donation to assist with a large food purchase and distribution for the most urgent family needs in and around the community. A portion of the funds will also be used to continue construction of a day care for working parents in Orange Walk and surrounding communities. Children who would normally be home alone and subject to violent crime, kidnapping, and trafficking while parents work will soon have a safe and secure place where they will be cared for and learn from a Christian-based staff. Be sure to go to the First Presbyterian Facebook page (@FirstPresGH) to view a video from Pastor Ed Perez showcasing the progress!

The agencies and missions noted above are just a few of the many our congregation supports. We are abundantly blessed with a generous congregation! Thank you for supporting your Mission Committee members and the work we are entrusted to do.

We will be meeting again on Monday June 15, and welcome your input for discussion!

Thank you,

Pastor Troy Hauser Brydon
Carole DeYoung
Ken Ennenga
Nancy Hunter
Joan Klaasen
Karen Losee Schmidt

Paul McNergney
Gail Miner
Rob Miner
Michelle Potter
Scott Reenders
Donna vandenBerg

Tidings article deadline for July 2020 issue: June 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.

Update from the Session

Our meetings are filled with conversations about ministry during the pandemic. The major action taken in the May meeting involved the formation of the COVID-19 Response Team, which includes your pastors and three elders – Carroll Bennink, Joan Klaasen, and Don Timmer.

The Session appreciates your prayers as it navigates these unfamiliar waters.

Are You Missing Our Worship Services?

If you or another church member you know has not been able to listen to or view the online worship services, please contact the church office at **616-842-6760**.

Someone from the Worship Committee will get back to you to discuss what other alternatives might work for you.

Applause, Applause!



On behalf of the staff and session, a round of applause to all of you who have continued to support our church and ministries during this time of COVID-19. Your support is greatly appreciated and has allowed us to not only continue to provide inspiring worship and virtual meetings, but also continue to support many area organizations who rely on the generosity of our community.

Thank You!

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 period 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!

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 (www.fpgh.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

Free Online Alzheimer's Presentations

Worldwide, 50 million people are living with Alzheimer's and other dementias. Chances are you already know someone who is affected by this disease, or you will sometime down the road. Take advantage of these free online seminars happening this month:

Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body: Tips from the Latest Research, Saturday, June 13, 10-11 a.m.

To register: <https://www.communityresourcefinder.org/ResourceView/Index?id=1876719&profileDefinitionId=93>

Dementia conversations: Driving, Doctor Visits, Legal & Financial Planning, Saturday, June 13, 11-noon

To register: <https://www.communityresourcefinder.org/ResourceView/Index?id=1876738&profileDefinitionId=93>

COVID-19 and Caregiving, Saturday, June 13, 12:30-1:30 p.m.,

To register: <https://www.communityresourcefinder.org/ResourceView/Index?id=1876718&profileDefinitionId=93>

This is a virtual program. An email address must be entered during registration in order for you to receive the details to log in to the program. If you are having trouble registering, please contact the Helpline at 800-272-3900.

Ask Matt!



Since we are presently unable to provide in-person Adult Education programming, Dr. Matt Bruce is offering a revised version of the

"How to Read the Bible" class online.

Simply submit a question about interpreting a specific scripture passage (or any other question you might have about the Bible). Matt will answer one question a week in the Friday Weekly Update email.

Questions can be sent to:

askmattbiblequestions@gmail.com

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

Area nursing and retirement homes are still 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!

Monthly Spiritual Practices

Each month, we will be providing resources for students and their families to engage in a spiritual practice together. This month, we are encouraging the daily practice of centering prayer. This is something we have participated in together during Youth Group this year. It is a time to turn our hearts and minds towards God in silence to listen for the Spirit's guidance each day. Centering stones and instructions for prayer are available in the Clinton Street Vestibule for pick up this month. Doors are open Monday through Thursday 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. We ask that you remain inside the vestibule and not enter the church building. If there is more than one person in the vestibule please wait outside maintaining a distance of six feet from other persons.

Celebrating Confirmation Students

In May, our session enthusiastically voted to approve the confirmation of 8 students into our church family! These students have been working hard since September 2019 to dive deeper in their faith, articulate what they believe, and explore their questions about God. While we are not yet able to hold a worship service to confirm them officially with their confirmation vows, we would love for members to join us in praising God for them with a letter or special gift. Email Maddie Lambert and she will provide you with a name and mailing address. Thank you God for the following students:

- Ava Ransford
- Kyler Cotton
- Emma Becker
- Delaney McMaster
- Clara Saunders
- Emma Skodack
- Griffin Phares
- Kailey Kuhlman

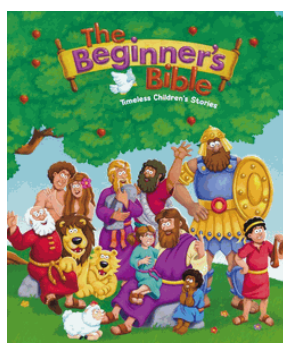


FPGH CONFIRMATION 2020



Stay up to date on all things Youth Ministry by joining our private Facebook group "FPGH Youth" or email Maddie (mlambert@fpgh.org) to make sure you are signed up to receive monthly email updates.

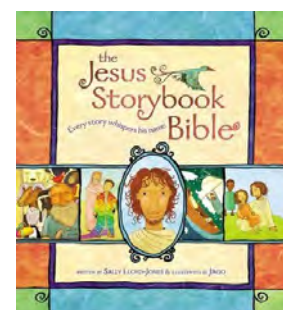
Faith-Based Storytime



While we are socially-distanced, families are diving into time with God together. Each month Laura Burns is mailing* a family-faith story plan. Families are turning storytime into a time to engage with God together.

We encourage you to interact with us on the FPGH Young Families Facebook page. We'd love to see your reading spaces and responses!

*If your child (toddler-4th grade) has not received their packet please contact Laura Burns, lburns@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

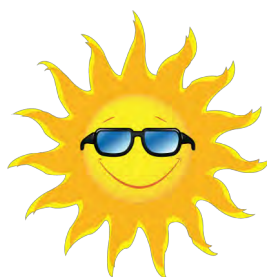
June 2020

deliver to: (or current resident)



Celebrate Summer Bags

We have special bags for kids as we celebrate the beginning of summer! Each bag is filled with summer items that we will use for faith-based fun throughout the summer!



We're hosting a **drive-thru pick-up on Monday, June 8 from 2-4 p.m.**

Please enter off Franklin Street under the Portico and then exit through the Clinton street lot. We are asking families to remain in their cars but we hope to 'see' you at the pick-up! We can't wait to cheer with you as we welcome summer!

Resurrecting Flat Jesus

Flat Jesus returns! Now more than ever we know that Jesus is with us wherever we are!

Pick up your copy of Flat Jesus in the church Clinton Street entrance or download the file to print at home from our website. Color your Flat Jesus then snap a picture with him as he shares activities with you throughout your summer!



Post your photos to your Facebook page and include #fpghflatjesus, or email them to Laura Burns (lburns@fpgh.org).