



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

MARCH 2021, VOLUME 69—ISSUE 3

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Reverend Troy Hauser Brydon

One year ago, on the second Sunday of March, I experienced one of the strangest Sundays of my life. Word was spreading fast about a new virus that was highly contagious. We held worship basically as normal, except we eliminated greeting each other at the beginning and end of the services. The irony of the Gathering Band closing the service with “Give Us Clean Hands” was not lost on anyone.

By the end of the next week, we made the difficult decision not to have people in the sanctuary. Seven of us were here to lead the congregation in worship entirely online. Thank the Lord that over the past few years we had added a Facebook Live stream, a second camera in the chancel, and adequate equipment to be a church at worship online. Starting that Sunday, we went down to one service at 10:00, and we’ve been doing that one combined service for the last year.

We’ve actually gained some things in this unexpected paradigm shift. I’ve watched many in our congregation build community online who might not have known each other because they attended different services. I know many of you have been worshipping remotely from hundreds of miles away. So, it’s not all bad, but it has been and will remain a high priority for us to have excellent in-person worship along with a growing presence online.

Last month we resumed limited in-person worship with our still combined service, and, friends, let me tell you, it makes a huge difference to have others in the sanctuary. I love hearing people respond to the readings. I love being able to wave at them and smile at them behind my mask. Beginning on March 14, we take another step towards getting our worship a bit more back to normal. That Sunday, we’re splitting the services back up. At 9:00, we’ll have our Traditional Service, and at 11:00, we’ll have our Gathering Service.

This means a few things. First, while our regular precautions are in place, we’ll be able to have twice the number of people in worship over the course of the morning. Second, we’ll be able to focus on what is great about each style of worship more effectively. I know many of us are eager to have a choir back, but that will take time. Many of our choir members are not ready to sing together, even in small groups. Voices will take time to get back into shape. Music still needs to fit the worship. We are working on having some small singing groups in the coming weeks, but this is an area for patience.

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Upcoming Events

Sundays thru April 11

Lent Small Groups, 7 pm

Wednesdays thru March 24

Lent Midweek Meditation, 6 pm

Wednesdays thru April 14

Lent Small Groups, 10:30 am

Thursdays thru April 15

Lent Small Groups, 7 pm

Mar. 14 Return to 2 Worship Services,
Traditional at 9 am
Contemporary at 11 am

Apr. 1 Maundy Thursday Worship, 7 pm

Apr. 2 Good Friday Worship, 7 pm

Apr. 4 Easter

Don't forget to

SPRING

FORWARD

Sunday, March 14



Save the Date!

for the
**4th Annual
Golf Scramble “Fun”Raiser
on Sunday, June 27, 2021!**

All proceeds will go to the
Joyful Noise Playground
Enhancement Fund



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 and Joan Tandler, Betty Berg, Evie Bosman, Larry Braak, Dan Coulier, Stan Johnson, Jean Kocher, Bev Purcell, Lisa Stoner, Sandy Teunis and those in our congregation who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have loved ones who are struggling with COVID-19.

Thank you:

“The family of Joe McCrea would like to extend their gratitude to the staff, congregation and deacons of First Presbyterian Church. We would also like to thank everyone for the cards of encouragement. God is truly magnificent! He continues to show his love through the caring people of this church. You make the world a better place and we will be forever grateful for all you have done by keeping us in your prayers.”

“Thank you for the many cards and calls during my recent health issues and hospitalization. Things are looking up, but recovery will be an ongoing process. Your continued prayers are appreciated.”

-Carol Brouwer

“Thank you church family for all of the prayers, cards, and notes of encouragement after my recent surgery. Thanks especially to Sue Ochs for the beautiful prayer shawl, it brings me comfort and I so appreciate it.”

-Evie Bosman



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!

Mar. 3 Heidy Gassman
17500 Whippoorwill Drive
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Mar. 4 Mary Lou Bender
Robbinswood
1125 Robbins Rd. Rm 127
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Mar. 12 Barbara Race
321 Grand Avenue
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Mar. 18 Gary VandenBrand
16118 Fillmore Street
West Olive, MI 49417

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

LENT

Worship

Wednesdays of Lent (February 24-March 24)

Midweek Meditation
Worship Services, 6 pm
online and in person

Maundy Thursday, April 1
Worship Service, 7 pm

Good Friday, April 2
Worship Service, 7 pm

Easter Sunday, April 4
stay tuned for worship schedule

Spiritual Practices & Activities

• Wondering with God

A guided exercise to help connect God's word and Christ's presence to your daily life. Instructions and scripture are posted daily on the church website and Facebook page. Hard copies are also available for pick up at the church.

• Stations of the Cross

Join us in the parking lot to experience significant moments in Jesus' final days. Each station includes scripture to ponder and an activity involving the senses.

- March 28: 1-3 pm
- March 31: 6-8 pm
- April 2: 10 am-noon

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!*

Memorial Service

The family of Rev. Dr. Christian Matthews invites you to join them for a memorial service to honor his life:

**Saturday, March 6, 2021
11:00 a.m.**

To watch live online, go to:
<https://mayflowerchurch.org/matthews/>

Chris served as interim pastor here at FPGH from 2004-05.



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This pandemic has put a lot of stress on all of us. I am grateful that the church has been a place of hope and respite in this challenging time. When you are ready to join us, I look forward to worshipping with you in the sanctuary, and it has been a delight and privilege to be invited in your homes for worship over the last year.

In Christ,

Pastor Troy

It's Easy to Give!

Thank you for continuing to support the ministries of First Presbyterian Church. Your joyful and enthusiastic support helps our ministries continue!

Here some giving options other than the Sunday offering plate:

1. Mail a check or put it in the deposit box at the Clinton entrance
2. Give online through Realm or thru this link:
onrealm.org/FPGH/-/give/now

Thank you!

Make a Reservation for In-Person Worship

Call the church office between Monday at 9 am and Friday at 12 pm to reserve your spot for Sunday Worship. Beginning March 14, we'll be returning to two worship services, Traditional at 9 am and Contemporary at 11 am.

616-842-6760

From Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce

Dear Church Family,

I was ready to write about Easter, but then realized it'll be another four and a half weeks to Easter when you get this. We are currently still in the thick of Lent. Perhaps you're like me and you tend to jump the gun and think too far into the future. I find myself doing that a lot lately because I need something to distract me from the present. I need something to look forward to.

The season of Lent, however, is about having the opposite mentality. Lent is an opportunity to reflect upon *why* Jesus Christ had to go to the cross. It's easy to jump past all of Lent to Christ's resurrection. I'd rather talk about life than impending death. Reflecting upon Christ's own journey to the cross gives more meaning to the cross. Reflecting upon our own need for Christ's victory on the cross likewise gives more meaning to the cross.

I know many of us don't like to think about the reality of our sin. As one person told me at a church I used to serve the Prayer of

Confession was her least favorite part of the service because it was "such a downer." I'm sure I'm not the only pastor who has heard this. We admit our sin, or in other words we admit the times when we've participated in whatever separates us from God. However, we aren't meant to stay there. When we admit or confess our sin it's our pathway to receiving and accepting Jesus Christ's forgiveness and grace. So while we are to reflect upon our sin as a way of preparing for Easter we aren't meant to remain in degrading ourselves for failing to love our spouses, our friends, our kids or our co-workers perfectly. We admit our sin in order to not just receive Christ's forgiveness and grace, but also to allow Christ to show us in what areas of our lives we've failed to believe in his love for us. This is why we try to find love or acceptance anywhere else besides Jesus himself.

In today's *Wondering with God* All Church Devotional, verse 4 from Psalm 34 stuck out to me:

"I sought the Lord and he answered me and delivered me from all of my fears."

Fear is a powerful driving force. Especially when we fear not being worthy of love. I pray during this Lenten season we take the time to reflect more deeply about our fear of not being worthy of love, which leads us to sin or to act in such a way that separates us from God. In taking our fears to God, I pray we experience just how powerful, hopeful and comforting are Christ's actions on the cross. When Jesus was raised from the dead he became victorious not only over physical death, but over a living death where we allow ourselves to believe the lie that we aren't worthy of Christ's love. So Church Family, hear the good news: In Jesus Christ you are forgiven, you are made new and you've been set free from any lies that tell you otherwise.

Grateful for you,

Pastor Kristine

Summer Camp Program

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Dear Families,

With the snow melting a bit, my mind is turning to summer - camp, that is! First Pres has a wonderful Camp Program that underwrites a significant portion of the cost of Christian summer camp for children and youth attending Presbyterian churches.

We have sent the details and application to families previously, but if you do not have the information, please contact Kerri at the church office. The applications are due to the church by the end of March along with proof of camping registration. Don't miss out on this generous offering!

I hope all of our children and youth have a chance to engage with Jesus at camp this summer.

Love, Pastor Troy



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
Tommy Langejans, 5th & 6th Grade Ministries Coordinator
Karen Nienhouse, Congregational Care Ministries
Christina Ramones, Assistant to the Administrator
Kerri Roberts, Office Assistant
Sally Segers, Joyful Noise Director

Tidings article deadline for April 2021 issue: March 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.

Update from the Session

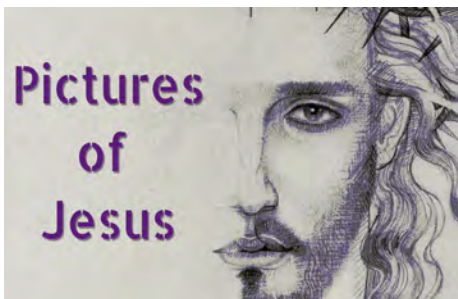
Stay in the loop about the actions of your Session! Following is a synopsis of the main points of the last Session meeting:

Highlights:

- Per our bylaws, we elected our President (Damon McLaughlin) and Secretary (Tom Wood).
- We spent a significant amount of time envisioning what the church needs to be for our members and community as we emerge from the pandemic.
- We approved a policy for COVID-related closures of Joyful Noise, allowing parents not to pay tuition during an extended closure. This is part of our commitment to helping our community in this challenging time.
- We approved at-large members of the Personnel Committee and Pastor Kristine's vacation dates.
- We approved the 2021 communion dates and communion for the Lenten midweek services.
- We discussed an update to the church's wedding policy and tabled it until the next meeting.

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

Pictures of Jesus Lenten Sermon Series



This Lent we're going through a series of texts in worship that we're treating as pictures. Each text is a vivid image of who Jesus is and what he's up to. Every week we'd like you to ask yourself, "How do I picture Jesus? What does this story look like to me?" Then sketch or paint what is in your imagination. It's a new way for you and for us to

understand what the Scripture might just look like to our congregation. It will be beautiful. Perhaps confusing. Perhaps challenging. You are invited to send in your pictures of Jesus to us. Depending on what we receive, perhaps we'll find a way to work them into worship on a weekly basis.

Bike Ministry

The Bike Ministry of Love in Action is preparing for increased requests as we anticipate the return of warmer weather, and donations are needed!

Gently used bikes, bikes for parts and all manner of bike accessories can



be dropped off 24/7 at the garage located at 1118 Colfax St., next to First CRC in Grand Haven.

From the Earth Care Committee

Lent is a time of spiritual preparation characterized by calm, reflection, and moderation. First Presbyterian Church Grand Haven is proud to be a designated Earth Care Congregation within the Presbyterian Church USA. In keeping with the season of Lent, your Earth Care Team is offering the **Tread Lightly for Lent Daily Reflection-Action Calendar** found at: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/tread-lightly-for-lent/>

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse." (Romans 1:20)



Special Offering: One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour of Sharing is the largest way Presbyterians come together every year during Lent to share God's love by becoming, as Isaiah said, "repairers of the breach," joining together to make a better world. The church works alongside people offering hands to help rebuild and prayers to help restore.

Through this special offering we open our doors to become the church with all the people we see outside the doors: those who receive seeds and silos to sustain a future for their children and communities; those whose land and livelihoods are threatened and who now receive legal aid and protection for land that is rightfully theirs; those whose homes and loved ones have been lost to a catastrophic event.

Let's walk outside the doors of First Presbyterian Grand Haven to share Christ's love through gifts to the most vulnerable of God's children in the world. You can find an interactive world map with the OGHs recipients at PCUSA.org/oghsmap. May we be called repairers of the breach and restorers of the streets to live in through ministries of justice, compassion, and joy.



Gifts to the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering are distributed as follows:

- 32% to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
- 36% to the Presbyterian Hunger Program
- 32% to the Presbyterian Self Development of People program

One Great Hour of Sharing envelopes may be found in the church Clinton Street entryway.

Joyful Noise Has Openings!

Do you know of anyone searching for quality childcare or before/after school care in Grand Haven? We have openings in our **3's, 4's and School-Age classrooms!**



At Joyful Noise, we offer:

- Caring and educated staff
- Strict adherence to health and safety guidelines
- a beautiful downtown location, spacious facilities with new on-site playgrounds
- Age-appropriate daily preschool curriculum
- Meals and "specials" classes included in tuition
- DHS payments accepted

Please help us spread the word! For more information, go to the Joyful Noise website: www.joyfulnoisekids.com, or call 616-847-6600.

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, 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 People Center.

Special requests are for:

- **Applesauce**
- **Spaghetti Sauce**
- **Spaghetti Noodles**
- **Canned pasta like ravioli or mac & cheese**
- **Pancake mix**
- **Syrup**

Please bring donations directly to The People Center at 307 E. Exchange in Spring Lake.

Items may be placed in the donation box on the porch on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9-3.



Experience Lent with Children's Ministries

Children and Worship Lenten Series on Zoom

Sunday Mornings at 11:15 a.m. Six weeks of Lent. Six pieces of the puzzle. What will they make? Come find out during our Children & Worship Lenten series.



Join us on Sundays as we listen, wonder, and respond to Lenten stories as we journey toward Easter together.

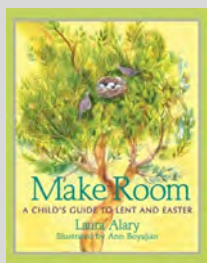
Contact Laura Burns, lburns@fpg.org, for the Zoom Link and more information.

Make Room: A Child's Guide to Lent and Easter

by Laura Alary

Each Sunday during Lent we will read and wonder through the beautiful book, *Make Room*.

Discover how we will get our hearts and homes ready for Easter. As a community we will journey to Easter together.



Youth Group Update

Return to in person Youth Group beginning Sunday, March 7th and Monday, March 8th

Now that schools have been back to in-person learning for some time, we are so excited to announce that we will be returning to in-person Youth Group Meetings beginning the week of Sunday, March 7. Guidelines from the fall season will again be in place, so please be on the lookout for those in your email and on social media to re-familiarize yourselves with them prior to arriving for in-person meetings.

For students who are not comfortable being in person for Youth Group at this time, please contact Maddie Lambert (mlambert@fpg.org) and she will email you a Zoom link to join that way. Our number one priority is the safety and well-being of one another.

All 7th & 8th Graders are Invited for Hot Chocolate and Games in the Parking Lot!



Come on out on Wednesday, March 10, from 7-8 p.m. for fun in the church parking lot!

Please come wearing a mask, dress to be outside and bring your own chair. We will be enjoying hot chocolate and checking in with one another.

Upcoming Special Events:

5-8th Grade Game Night: Sunday, March 7 during Youth Group (6:15-7:30). Come dressed to play games outside and ready to run around.

9-12th Grade Bob Ross Paint Night: Monday, March 8 during Youth Group (6:30-8:00 pm). Supplies will be provided. For students who feel more comfortable joining us virtually, supplies are available for pick up in the Clinton Side church entrance.

Family Photo Challenge

Each Tuesday of Lent we will be posting a Family Photo Lent challenge to our FPGH Youth and FPGH Young Family Facebook Pages. Each challenge will ask you to take a picture of your family engaging in one of the Lent activities or various other prompts. For every prompt your family submits to the challenge, you will be entered into a raffle for the chance to win a fun prize.



Attention Graduates!

Every year we celebrate our FPGH graduates with a slide show and blessing in Worship! This year, we will be blessing our graduates on Sunday, May 16. If you know someone who is graduating from high school, college, or any other form of upper education please email Maddie (mlambert@fpg.org) with the following information:

- First and last name
- Where graduating from
- Future plans
- A recent photo



**DUE SUNDAY,
MAY 9**



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

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: fpg.org

March 2021

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, March 28**. 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"