



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

APRIL 2021, VOLUME 69—ISSUE 4

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Reverend Troy Hauser Brydon

THIS morning I spent time putting together the liturgy for our worship on Holy Week – Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. Last year on Palm Sunday, the seven of us who were leading worship spent the morning doing all of Holy Week in one fell swoop, and then we returned on Easter Sunday – just the seven of us again – to lead the church in worship remotely. Last year’s liturgy had a muted, somber tone to it. There was a section for lament. There was poetry and even a song from the musical *Godspell* based on Psalm 137, which is a poem of exile.

While we are far from through the woods on this pandemic, it was heartening to be making plans for Easter that feel a bit more like we do Easter here at First Pres. We are planning to have four worship service options. We hope this will make room for those who are ready to be here for worship, and, of course, we will continue to stream our services online. We will have our 7:00 Sunrise service. Since that typically has a manageable attendance, we will not take reservations for that service. We will make a seating chart for contact tracing if necessary. The rest of the services on Easter will have required reservations. We will hold two traditional services, one at 8:15 and another at 9:30. We will have the Gathering Service at 11:00. We will continue to be steadfast in our precautions, hoping to balance the need for worship with the ever-changing state of the pandemic.

Following Easter, my mind is turning to the day-by-day ministry of the church. One of the gifts of the Presbyterian Church is that our ministry is driven by the people in the pews. A major mechanism for this lay ministry is our committee structure. We have committee that oversee the vast majority of our ministry. Our committees include Children’s Ministries, Faith Formation, Generosity, Hospitality, Membership and Outreach, Mission, Nominations, Personnel, Trustees, Worship, and Youth. As with so much else in our world, the pandemic has put stress on our committees. Several people who have served faithfully on the committees have decided that the time has come for them to step down, but without our being together, finding new committee members has been a challenge. We need to make sure our committees have enough people serving on them. If we don’t, our ministry suffers.

So, here’s my encouragement to you. If you’ve never served on a committee before, I encourage you to consider doing so. One perk of the pandemic has been that many of our meetings have moved online, which means you can meet from wherever you are! If you’ve “been there, done that” with committees but have stepped away a while ago, then I encourage you to come back into the ministry in this important time. We have the opportunity to

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Upcoming Events

Sundays thru April 11

Lent Small Groups, 7 pm

Wednesdays thru April 14

Lent Small Groups, 10:30 am

Thursdays thru April 15

Lent Small Groups, 7 pm

Apr. 1 Maundy Thursday Worship, 7 pm

Apr. 2 Good Friday Worship, 7 pm

Apr. 4 Easter Worship Services:

7 am—Flowering of the Cross

8:15 am—Traditional Worship

9:30 am—Traditional Worship

11 am—Contemporary Worship

Apr. 20 PW Flower Orders Due

May 2 Youth Sunday

May 7 PW Flower Delivery

Jun 27 4th Annual Golf Scramble

Save the Date!

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

Registration brochures are now available at the Clinton Street church entrance. Register before May 1 for the early bird rate!

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,
Larry Braak, Dan Coulier,
Tom Hammond, Jeff and Lisa Hurley,
Roger Jonas, Jean Kocher, Lisa Stoner,
and Sandy Teunis

Our Sympathy:

to the family and friends of
Barbara Bekins, who passed away
on March 4.

to Kennard and Wendy Creason
and family on the death of Kennard's
mother, Mary Creason, on March 27.

Congratulations!

To Jeff and Kelli Jullie on the birth of
their granddaughter, Madison Juliet,
on March 13, 2021. Proud parents
are Alissa and Wayne Enzenberger,
and excited big brother is Theo.



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 Dr.
Room 31
Spring Lake, MI 49456

Welcome New Members!

In March, we had the great joy of
welcoming new members into the
FPGH family. Here is list of their
names, and a short biography of
some of them. We are excited to
introduce them in person soon!

Andy and Tam Byerly

Tamara and Andy
are "dyed in the
wool" Presbyterians
from birth. Tamara
graduated from
Alma College and
retired as a Senior Financial Analyst
at Merrill Lynch. Andy graduated
from University of Nebraska and
University of Michigan, spending
his career as a Product Development
Manager for GM. Andy has two kids
and a grandson. They both love to
do anything outdoors, and prefer to
have to take an airplane to do it.
They met after a Habitat for Humanity
(Detroit) build and have continued
a relationship with it for some 20
years. Upon retirement they moved
to their lake house in Bellaire, but
couldn't stand the quietness and
moved to West Olive!



Todd and Michelle Olson

Todd, Michelle,
Timothy and Katie
Olson moved from
Oregon to Michigan
in July 2020 to be
closer to family.
Todd works at Community Encom-
pass, a nonprofit in Muskegon.
Michelle is an ordained Presbyterian
pastor and spiritual director, work-
ing part time in spiritual formation
ministry. As a family, we love
spending time in nature and playing
board games. We look forward to
worshipping and serving with FPGH.



Kate Potter

Hello! We are the Potter family.
Mike and Kate plus three awesome
kids Sophia (10), Emerson (7), and
Sawyer (3). Mike and I got married

in the middle of the
pandemic last April,
even driving to
Iowa in order to do
so! The kids attend
school in Grand



Haven - Sophia at White Pines, and
Emerson at Robinson Elementary.
Sawyer is lucky enough to go to
"Momma Kate school" every other
week when the kids are with us!
Mike works in town in the HVAC
industry, and I stay home holding
down the fort. We are so excited to
continue attending and getting
involved at FPGH, Sophia has loved
attending youth group over the past
several months and the boys are
excited to someday get back into
their classes!

Alexis Stark

A Metro Detroit
native, Alexis Stark
found her way to
FPGH by way of
attending Michigan
State University
before moving to West Michigan.
She currently reports for the School
News Network in Grand Rapids and
is a newly published poetry author.
When she's not writing, Alexis can
be found weight lifting, painting,
watching Disney movies, or enjoying
the spectacular views of Lake
Michigan. Additionally, she enthusi-
astically serves as one of the middle
school youth leaders at FPGH. For
more information about her new
book, visit [https://
www.finishinglinepress.com/
product/learning-to-sleep-in-the-
middle-of-the-bed-by-alexis-stark/](https://www.finishinglinepress.com/product/learning-to-sleep-in-the-middle-of-the-bed-by-alexis-stark/).



Other new members include

Kyle and Andrea Nester, Judith
Schoonover, Grant and Linda
Taylor, and Pam Teasley.

we're
glad you're
here!

From Pastor Troy (continued)

In Our Church

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build back our ministry even better, and your experience and wisdom are welcome and needed now! If you'd like to know more about a particular ministry area or where you are most needed, reach out to the pastors or staff, we'll make the right connections to find you a home in the ministry. Let's use this opportunity to strengthen our ministry!

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!

Celebrating Graduates

FPGH is celebrating 12 graduating high school seniors! We are gifting each senior with a journal, and would love to fill them with encouraging words from their church family. Please complete the linked form below and we will print your note and place it in the students' journals!



Please complete this form by Sunday, May 2:

<https://tinyurl.com/273x96rk>

From Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce

Dear Church Family,

Depending on when you get this, Easter is just a few days away or less. I think it's safe to say we are all in need of some Easter joy. We've been traveling a long and hard road for a year now. Many of us recalled what we were doing this time last year when we thought the shut down would only last a few more weeks. The rest is history. Today, however, is a new day and a new Easter season. So my question for you is this: How has the pandemic changed the way you understand the power of Christ's resurrection? Where have you seen new life when you thought for sure it was going to be Good Friday forever?

As some of you may or may not know I have not been gifted with a green thumb. I have a distinct memory of my third grade teacher being thoroughly confused as to why my grass was not growing like every other kids' in my class. It's very difficult to kill grass, yet I apparently have that talent. My bet is that your butterfly seed packet sprouted at least a few lovely greens and began to bloom within a week of planting them. Mine took two weeks to grow one quarter-of-

an-inch fragile shoot. It's by our kitchen sink and every morning I think: "Sorry little sprout that you ended up with me. Your full potential could've been realized elsewhere." On the other hand, just when I thought nothing would grow, a small bit of new life managed to break through. My hope and prayer for you is that you've been able to experience signs of new life, even if it was just a "small bit," this season of Lent and Easter.

My favorite Psalm is Psalm 139 which says this in verses 7-12: *"Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. If I say 'surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,' even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you."*

We've had some dark days over the past year, but I hope in the midst of the darkness you've been able to see Christ's light shine brighter still.

With the light of Christ comes new beginnings and new life. A sign of hope that better days and better things are ahead. A light that assures us that it won't always be so dark. I also hope that we've come to know the power of Christ's resurrection more deeply and more personally. After experiencing the darkness, we come to appreciate the light so much more. This is why we go through the rhythm of Lent and Holy Week. In order to truly grasp the power of Christ's resurrection we need to make room to reflect upon the darkness that led Jesus to the cross. The darkness of our sins and the darkness of a broken world that has turned its back on God. The good news is that God did not make us for the darkness and does not want to us to stay there. God gave us God's own self in Christ as our light. He is the light that is both our path and our guide out of the darkness into new life that is only found in Jesus Christ. So say it with me church family: "He has risen! He has risen indeed!" Amen.

Grateful to be on this journey of faith with you,

Pastor Kristine

From the Earth Care Team



April 22 is the 51st celebration of Earth Day. Although this year's local Earth Day Celebration at the Community Center has been cancelled due to COVID-19, our church continues to work on caring for the earth through our worship, education, facilities, and outreach. Although the pandemic has limited our activities, our Earth Care Team (especially Dave Gritter) has been instrumental in getting our church recertified as an **Earth Care Church for 2021**. This is our 3rd year of receiving this certification. We are one of eight Presbyterian churches in Michigan to have it, so be proud of our ever-growing concern for our environment!

As we celebrate the earth this year, there are things you can do to help our environment:

1. **Give up plastics.** People around the world buy 1,000,000 plastic drinking bottles every minute and use up to 5 trillion single-use plastic bags every year. About 9 percent of plastic gets recycled, and around 8,000,000 tons ends up in the ocean every year. Break the cycle by making the effort to use fewer plastics.
2. **Conserve water.** Turn off the water while you are brushing your teeth. Be careful using water in the kitchen to rinse dishes. Shower using less water.
3. **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.** Reuse the backside of paper. Avoid using disposable plates, spoons, glasses, cups, napkins, and straws whenever you can. It all makes a difference.



Earth Day Volunteer Opportunity

Volunteering is a great way to be involved in the restoration of Muskegon Lake. On Sunday, April 25, volunteers will be cleaning up at twelve different locations along the Muskegon Lake watershed.

Follow this link for more information on how to volunteer:

[Muskegon Lake Spring Clean Up](https://tinyurl.com/4w8c4dpx)
<https://tinyurl.com/4w8c4dpx>

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 Coulter, Maintenance Director
Marc Felt, Gathering Band Leader
Rob Hlebnsky, 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 May 2021 issue: April 23, 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:

- Approved an updated Wedding Policy
- Approved a sponsorship for training needed to have Holy Yoga classes in the church, which will begin after training is complete
- Approved updated language for the church's Family and Medical Leave Policy
- Approved proceeding with plans to have an outdoor worship service this summer in the Lynne Sherwood Waterfront Stadium (tentative date is July 18)
- Renewed our Session Covenant
- Reviewed the church's Sexual Misconduct and Child Protection Policies

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

Session Has Updated The Wedding Policy

Well over a year ago the Worship Committee decided it was time to update our wedding policy. It had been quite a while since the church's wedding policy had been updated, and much has changed since the last update. For example, the fees the church charges for weddings had gone well below market rates. The Worship Committee researched what similar-sized churches in our area and recommended fees that are in line with that research. Session has approved that new fee structure, and it is in effect for weddings booked from this point on.

In June 2015 same-sex marriages became legal in Michigan. Around that same time, the PC(USA) amended its constitution to give the freedom of local control to churches on weddings. It has long been the polity of the PC(USA) that pastors have the right of conscience to marry (or not marry) any couple. The Session of the congregation has the responsibility to decide what happens in the church building. As part of this Wedding Policy

update, the Session of First Presbyterian Church has decided to permit same-sex weddings at the church.

After much discussion, it was clear that the Session believes this action is in line with our vision that we are called to be a "Christ-centered community of acceptance." Many words were shared about how LGBTQ persons (and their families) have felt unwelcome at the church in the past, which is something we grieve. The Session wants all who feel called by Christ to feel at home in the church.

Your pastors and Session are aware that there are biblical and theological arguments for and against this move. We have gone through many of those in this process. Some in the congregation will be thrilled with this decision. Others will not be. Still, this is the discernment of the Session of God's will for this church. As Paul wrote to the church in Galatia, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit" (5:25). In that manner, our prayer is that this is another step in welcoming all who would come to the church.

"Direct Your Dollars" to Joyful Noise!

The Joyful Noise Playground Enhancement fund is closing in on earning another \$1,000 from SpartanNash Stores!



It's easy to help "Direct Your Dollars" to Joyful Noise. Every time you shop at any Family Fare Supermarket or D&W Fresh Market, save your receipts. We'll be collecting them in the black box at main entrance to our building, or through direct drop-off in the church or Joyful Noise office!

For every \$150,000 in receipts we collect, we earn a \$1,000 donation from SpartanNash. With your support – and your receipts – we'll be raising money to provide continued enhancements to our new play spaces.

Thanks so much for your directing your dollars" to Joyful Noise Christian Childcare!

(Note: to get credit, we need the whole receipt)

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.

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 pasta like ravioli or mac & cheese**
- **Canned or dry mix potatoes**
- **Pancake mix & syrup**
- **Instant rice**

We are once again collecting these food pantry donations at the church. Please bring donations to the designated spot in the Gathering Area.



Thank you!

FPGH YTD Financial Update

Offerings Received

Year-to-Date:

296,756

Expenditures Paid

Year-to-Date:

241,494

To all who give to support the mission of the church—thank you! You make the ministry go! If you are not a regular giver, please consider becoming one. Not only is it healthy for the church, it is also spiritually healthy for you! Giving online is easy! Just follow this link: <https://tinyurl.com/npjmu8k3> or call (842-6760) We would love to help!

Flat Jesus returns!

Have you seen
him? Flat Jesus is
back in town!

You can pick up your own Flat Jesus in the church Clinton Street entrance. Take him home, color him, and then take photos with him: when you are eating a meal, participating in virtual (or in person!) worship, out in nature, helping with a service project, or enjoying a treat around town.



Post your pictures with the **#fpghflatjesus** or send them to Laura at lburns@fpgh.org. Also, be on the lookout for our FPGH Giant Flat Jesus. God is everywhere!



Jump Into Summer Parking Lot Party

Sunday, May 2

Sunday, May 23 6-8 pm

This year for Youth Sunday things look a bit different. Our students will still be leading worship for the first and second services. But, due to our safety measures, we won't be able to have youth ushers and greeters like we normally do. If you would like to participate in Youth Sunday by leading worship as a reader please sign up in person at Youth Group or by sending an email to Maddie Lambert (mlambert@fpgh.org).

Readers are needed for:

- scripture
- prayers
- welcome/announcements

Readers will be asked to either record their portion to be shown via video or come in and read in person, depending on their role.

All 5-12th graders and their families are invited to our annual "Jump into Summer" party in the Clinton Street parking lot.

We will be enjoying ice cream, popcorn, and fun games. Details to come but for now, make sure you mark **May 23** in your calendars for this fun event!

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**





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

April 2021

deliver to: (or current resident)

PW Hanging Flower Basket Sale

The Presbyterian Women are once again selling
beautiful Hanging Baskets!

If you would like an order form, please contact Sue Ochs
at s2123@aol.com or 231-750-3946,
and she will send you one.

Orders are due by April 20, 2021.



Plants will be delivered to the church parking lot on
Friday, May 7. Pick up is from 11 to 3.

Plants are \$17 each and all the proceeds
support the missions of the Presbyterian Women.