



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

MAY 2021, VOLUME 69—ISSUE 5

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Reverend Troy Hauser Brydon

THESE are challenging times we're living in. The pandemic has worn us down. The reckoning of race and violence is constantly on our minds. The partisanship stoked both by politics and media is at a fever pitch. The church sits in the midst of this challenge, tossed this way and that in trying to understand when to speak, when to act, and when to let things go.

I've been meeting regularly with the new Senior Pastor of Westminster Presbyterian in Grand Rapids, the Rev. Lynette Sparks. These meetings are a chance for us to compare notes on the state of ministry and to help our churches be good partners in ministry. They also give me the opportunity to bounce ideas off of another wise soul. We met this past week and talked about how it's our work as pastors to shape *how* people think, not so much to dictate *what* people think. That is, pastors are meant to train their people to think Christianly about the world and the issues of our times, not to tell you exactly what to think on this or that issue.

Hebrews 6:19 gives us this wonderful image, "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." An anchor keeps a boat fixed and secure, but it does not keep the boat from moving this direction or that. The boat can drift right or left, forward or backward, but it is always secured to what will keep it safe. I view Christianity that way, and it is very much our Presbyterian theology and heritage to allow latitude for differences of conviction while staying secure to our one Lord, Jesus.

Beginning this month, our sermons will explore this theme of conviction and differences living together. We're calling the series "Better Together," which I think describes one of the greatest witnesses our church can provide in world where it's easier to find like-minded people to worship with and to break off relationship with those with whom we disagree.

We can be better, and we can be a part of turning around the brokenness of partisanship in our country. We won't ever be perfect at it, but thank God that Jesus is the anchor for our soul! Thank God that we have the tools for reconciliation and forgiveness. I look forward to growing with you in this, as we mature together as Christians, letting the Holy Spirit make us more Christlike.

In Christ,

Pastor Troy



Upcoming Events

- May 2** Youth Sunday
- May 7** PW Flower Pick Up
- May 9** Moxie Strings Concert
- May 16** Graduate Recognition Sunday
- May 23** "Jump into Summer"
Youth Party in the Parking Lot
- Jun 17** Neighborhood Picnic at
Pottawatomie Park
- Jun 27** 4th Annual Golf Scramble
- Jul 14** Neighborhood Picnic at
Spring Lake Central Park
- Aug. 17** Neighborhood Picnic at
North Beach Park
- Sept. 12** All-Church Picnic
at Pottawatomie Park

Register Now!

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

Registration brochures are now available at the Clinton Street church entrance.

All funds raised will go to the Joyful Noise Playground Enhancement Fund.



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:

Alice Akin, Brian Anderson and Joan Tandler, Larry Braak, Dan Coulier, Peggy Leach, Barbara Race, Lisa Stoner, and Sandy Teunis

Our Sympathy:

to Carl and Mary Jo Nass on the death of Carl's brother, Philip, on April 1.

to Jon Hall and family on the death of Jon's wife, Linda, on April 23. A celebration of life will be held for Linda at a later date.

Congratulations!

to Jaclyn and Adam Suchecki on the April 12th birth of their daughter, Margaret James. She joins her big sisters Quinn and Caroline at home. Margaret is also the granddaughter of Marty and Jan Blanchard, and the great-granddaughter of Ruth Suchecki.



Sunday, May 9

Celebration of Life Service for Hazel Kragt

May 20, 2021
2:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church

On her birthday as well as the one-year anniversary of her death, Hazel's family invites you to a service to celebrate her life.

Because of limited capacity, please contact Hazel's daughter, Mary Thorsen, to RSVP: 616-502-3480.



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!

May 28 Sue McClellan
1450 S. Ferry St, Apt. 228
Grand Haven, MI 49417

PW Hanging Basket Flower Pick Up

The Presbyterian Women send out a huge "thank you!" to the members of the congregation! Last year was a banner year for basket sales, and this year was even better!



For those who placed an order, flowers may be picked up in the church parking lot on Friday, May 7, from 11-3. If you are unable to pick up your flowers at that time, please contact Sue Ochs at 231-750-3946 or s2123@aol.com.

All proceeds support the missions of the Presbyterian Women.

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. Traditional at 9 am and Contemporary at 11 am.

616-842-6760

To sign up electronically, there are links on the church website (fpgh.org) and in the Weekly Update email.

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 Love in Action.

Special requests are for:

- Applesauce
- Canned Tuna or Chicken
- Jelly in Plastic Containers
- Peanut Butter

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!



Free Tables!

We are cleaning house and have some tables we would like to clear out. The tables measure 8'x30.'

Please contact the church office at 842-6760. They are free, but you must be able to haul them away on your own.



Dear Church Family,

On April 21st, many let out a collective sigh of relief when the verdict of the Derek Chauvin trial was announced. Many rejoiced that justice was finally served. There are those who mourn the growing distrust of our police force and those who believed Chauvin did what he was trained to do. Regardless of how you feel about the outcome, I would like us as a church to listen to how the African-American community is responding to the verdict. We as Christians are called to listen to those who are hurting and oppressed. This is what Jesus did and he received a lot of backlash for it—even from his own disciples. When he spoke with the woman at the well who belonged to an ethnicity that Israel looked down upon, even she was stupefied that he would take the time to speak with her. The disciples were also aghast at his actions (John 4:7-29). He was criticized for healing a man's shriveled hand on the Sabbath. In doing so Jesus challenged those who believed upholding the law of the Sabbath was more important than saving a life (Matthew 12:9-14). He conveyed the same message when once again on the Sabbath, but this time on the steps of the

synagogue, he healed a crippled woman (Luke 13:10-14). Jesus shared meals with "sinners and tax collectors," the social pariahs of his day (Mark 2: 13-17).

While I can't completely identify with what the African-American community is feeling, as an Asian American and as a person of color, I had a visceral reaction to the murders of the Asian women in Atlanta, as well as to the multitude of other videos of Asian Americans being harassed and/or brutally attacked in recent weeks. In many of those videos I see my family, my Asian-American friends and myself. I can only imagine what a black person experiences every time they see on the news yet another video of a black person roughly treated or even killed at the hands of those who were sworn to serve and protect. I'm not saying that every police officer is racist. There are many good men and women in the police force, who take seriously their oath to protect all people, regardless of their background. What I am saying, however, is that the majority of African Americans are hurting, afraid and exhausted. It is our responsibility as followers of Christ to do what Jesus did: Listen. Care. Empathize. Advocate. To not

be so quick to judge, but to take the time to listen and learn about why our fellow humans are hurting. These are people who Jesus loves and for whom he also gave his life.

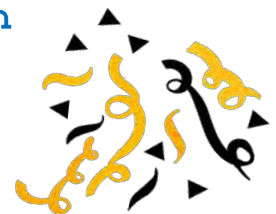
If you're new to the journey of learning and listening to African American voices I'd like to suggest a few books: *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative; and *The Color of Compromise* or *How to Fight Racism* by Jemar Tisby, best-selling author and co-founder of The Witness: A Black Christian Collective. Although he is not African American, I'd also recommend *America's Original Sin* by Jim Wallis, a renowned Christian author, speaker and proud MSU grad. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but this is a good place to start. I'm also always happy to be a conversation partner. Today the church is at a crucial point in history where we will either be remembered for being a witness to the justice of Jesus Christ or being compliant with oppressive powers with our silence. I pray it's the former rather than the latter.

Grateful to be on this journey of faith with you,

Pastor Kristine

IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?

Congratulations to Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon
on earning his
Doctor of Ministry
from Louisville Seminary!



· Congratulations ·

Special Pentecost Offering

“O God from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.” Psalm 71:17

On Pentecost Sunday, May 23, we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit. This celebration is marked by receiving one of the four PC(USA) special offerings. The Pentecost Offering helps nurture the faith of those who are the future of the church—children, youth, and young adults.

- 40% of the offering remains with First Presbyterian Church to support children. This year it will be given to the **Joyful Noise Christian Childcare Scholarship Fund**. The fund helps families pay tuition at the childcare center when an unexpected financial burden or crisis occurs.
- 25% supports ministries with youth ages 12-18. This includes such things as support for the planning of the 2022 Presbyterian Youth Triennium and funding grants for graduating seniors to explore their next steps in faith and vocation.
- 25% supports Young Adult Volunteers experiences. The funds help train and equip volunteers to engage in mission at more than 20 sites in the U.S. and around the world as well as providing funds for retreats, events, and counseling to help young adults discern God’s call.
- 10% supports the “Educate a Child, Transform the World” national initiative affirmed at the 221st PC(USA) General Assembly to improve the quality of public education.



Please support the children and youth of our church by using one of the envelopes provided at the Clinton Street entrance, or text PENTECOST to 91999 or visit pcusa.org/pentecost.

First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven

508 Franklin Avenue
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Phone: 616.842.6760

www.fpgh.org • staff@fpgh.org

Watch Sunday Morning Worship Services

Live on Facebook (@FirstPresGH):

9 a.m. (Traditional)

11 a.m. (Contemporary)

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 June 2021 issue: May 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.

Synod of the Covenant Scholarships Available

Scholarships are available for full- or part-time students enrolled for bachelor's, associate's, or seminary degree candidates. Applicants must be members of a PC(USA) church within the Synod of the Covenant.

Applications are due by the end of May, and more information can be found on the synod's website: <https://synodofthecovenant.org/synod-ministries/grants-and-scholarships/>

Save the Date

We are planning to hold an outdoor worship service in the Lynne Sherwood Waterfront Stadium on Sunday, July 18. This is a great opportunity to worship in this beautiful space, for those who aren't comfortable with indoor worship during the pandemic, and to invite friends and neighbors to see how wonderful it is to be a part of First Presbyterian. The worship service will be followed by Sundaes on Sunday, so come hungry!

Earth Care Team

This month's article deals with the church building and our efforts to reduce its impact on the environment and lower building operating costs. Often, it is not recognized that a Green Building significantly lowers expenses while contributing to a healthier environment for each of us.

We have accomplished a significant number of activities to create a building which has a smaller environmental footprint. Many are listed below.

- We performed a preliminary energy audit to determine where our efforts will produce the greatest benefit.
- Lighting has mostly been changed over to LED lights as these require only one-tenth the amount of electricity as an incandescent bulb and one-half of the CFL.
- We are testing infra-red sensors to replace manual light switches allowing lights to automatically turn off when no one is in the room.
- Rooftop-mounted solar panels have also been investigated and may be an option for us in the future.
- We have adjusted recycling as much as possible and are investigating other services to recycle additional items used within our building.
- You have all recognized the switch to reusable cups for coffee between services. Reusable items are also being utilized by our youth groups.
- Cleaning products utilized within our building are non-toxic.
- A bike rack has been placed outside our south entrance to encourage non-motorized transportation to and from church services and activities.

We will continue working on other areas of our building in the future and hope our members will do the same in their homes.

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 Dr. Matt Bruce's request to be enrolled as an Inquirer in the ordination process through the Presbytery of Lake Michigan
- Approved a Racial Justice subcommittee to Faith Formation that is tasked with encouraging awareness, education, and application of Christ-centered anti-racist principles in our congregation
- Approved several new at-large committee members
- Approved receiving the allowable draw for the Omega Fund from the GHACF

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

Join Our Meal Ministry!

The Meal Ministry is an excellent way to serve others, share your love of God and make a difference in someone's life. Most members who volunteer only need to make one occasional meal for a family in need.

To sign up to bring meals, contact Carrie Ledet: 616-607-2811 or ledetc@westottawa.net.



Neighborhood Picnics are Back!

After a year in hibernation, FPGH Neighborhood Picnics are back! Mark your calendar to meet us in your neighborhood park!

These summer picnics give you a chance to connect with people who live in your neck of the woods! The picnics are at local parks, so kids can run and play together. This is also a great opportunity to get to know members who may attend a different worship service than you typically attend.

Dates and Locations:

Thursday, June 17

Pottawatomie Park
Grand Haven

Wednesday, July 14

Central Park in Spring Lake

Tuesday, August 17

North Beach Park (picnic shelter)
Ferrysburg

Time:

6:00-8:00 p.m.

Bring:

...a side dish or dessert to share
...bag chairs if desired

If you are not able to attend the picnic in your neighborhood, feel free to drop in to any of the others that fit your schedule.



“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!



Power of One

Dale Swihart has published a second volume of his daily meditations and photographs. The book is called ***Power of One: More Poems for COVID and Beyond.***

The book is currently available, along with his first volume, at The Bookman in Grand Haven. It can also be ordered on Amazon. Signed copies may be secured by contacting Dale at: daleswihart@gmail.com.



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.

If you join us in worship on Sundays, you can offer your gifts in person. Other 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 in the 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!



Pentecost Party!

Pentecost celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit. We often symbolize it with a dove, fire, wind, and dancing! Pentecost is also known as the 'birthday' of the church.

Children's Ministries (toddler-4th grade) is having a Pentecost Party. It will involve dancing, painting, and a treat!

Pick up your party bag from the church on Saturday, May 22 from 10 a.m. - noon, then join us on Zoom on Sunday, May 23 at 10 a.m. for our Pentecost party! Contact Laura Burns (lburns@fpgh.org) for the Zoom link.

Dear FPGH Family-

This month marks a winding down for weekly Youth Group gatherings as we head into summer. This year I have been so inspired by the resilience our students have displayed in this ever-shifting tide. My favorite moments of the past year included belly laughs over Zoom, creative socially-distanced games, and spending time in lament and praise after a year in the pandemic. Though we had to cancel mission trips, the youth were still dedicated to finding other ways to serve the community. Our high school students gathered twice this year to pack food boxes with Love in Action. We were able to serve 324 families in October and 238 families in March with full boxes of food. It was a blessing to provide for others during this tumultuous time.

On Youth Sunday, May 2, you will be invited to watch a slideshow that includes all the ways we have enjoyed coming together to support one another and learning about God this season. I hope you'll tune into worship that morning to see it and to be led beautifully by some of our awesome students.

We are so thankful for our church family and the prayers and support our students have received this year! Stay tuned for exciting summer updates and to learn about all the ways we are going to continue loving God and one another.

Grace and Peace,

Maddie Lambert
Director of Youth &
Young Adult Ministries

Graduation Sunday, May 16

This year, we are celebrating 12 high school seniors in worship on May 16! Please join us in praising God for the following seniors:

Annika J. Hauser Brydon
Ava Bouwman
Carley Wagasky
Clara Snyder
Ellyn Skodack
Griffin Phares

Kailey Grace Kuhlman
Keegan McMaster
Mackenzie Gross
Samantha Ruble
Sean Bennick
Tom Yonan

We are so excited to see how the spirit moves next in these amazing graduates!

If your child is graduating and you have not already sent in their name, a photo, and information about their future plans for the Grad Sunday slide show please email Maddie (mlambert@fpgh.org) no later than Sunday, May 9.

Jump Into Summer Parking Lot Party

Sunday, May 23 6-8 pm

All 5-12th graders and their families are invited to our annual summer parking lot party! We will be playing games, enjoying ice cream, rootbeer floats, and a few other fun snacks.

As we continue to strive to create a safe environment for our events, we are asking that all families who attend do the following:

- Wear a mask the entire time. Place it back over your nose and mouth in between bites of snacks and treats.
- Sign in to the event upon arrival.
- Bring your own chair to sit in as we socialize together.
- Practice good hand washing and sanitizing. We will have sanitizing stations at each activity so our hands are always clean before we touch the supplies.



We are so excited to celebrate the beginning of the summer season together!

In the event of rain: We will announce a rain delay date. Join us in praying for sunny warm weather that day!



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

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

Sunday Worship:

9 & 11 a.m. on our Facebook page: @FirstPresGH

or watch the recorded service on our

website: fpg.org

May 2021

deliver to: (or current resident)

First Presbyterian Church announces a
Community Artist Series *Concert in the Parking Lot*

featuring

THE MOXIE STRINGS



bring your mom!

**Sunday, May 9
4:00 p.m.**



www.themoxiestrings.com

This event is free and open to the public.

All are welcome.

Please bring a chair and wear a mask.