



# PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

AUGUST 2022, VOLUME 70—ISSUE 8

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND

## From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

The Body of Christ gathered outside at the Waterfront Stadium for worship was simply glorious! God blessed us with spectacular weather. We gathered en masse, with over 560 people in attendance. (For comparison, our two indoor services have been averaging less than half of that combined.) We claimed God's promises in the waters of baptism. We sang songs of faith with keyboard and band. We enjoyed several hundred sundaes. It was just one of those days that puts a lot of wind in my sails.



As glorious as that day was, it also made me miss those days where the sanctuary was bustling with all of you. Sure, we've fared reasonably well over the two-plus years of the pandemic, but things are simply not the same without so many members and friends who have slipped away from worship. This church just isn't

what it should be without you gathered with others to hear the good news, to pray with each other, and to share life. I know all of us have reasons for what has kept us away—health, busy schedules, out of the habit, to name a few—but I do really want to say, "Come back! We miss you. We need you. You are vital to the fabric of this community." I'd love to see the joy and energy we had at the waterfront return to 508 Franklin. You're part of that!

August is a time for rest and planning. There are many ongoing opportunities for you to join in, but I also hope that you're finding ways to enjoy the glories of summer here in West Michigan. I invite you to find a new intentionality in your life at home or with others. Perhaps this is a time to take a half day from work and go to the beach with your children. Or perhaps it's a time to invite someone else over for a cookout, but make it someone you'd like to know better. God's blessed us with time. What will we do with it?

This month marks the end of Maddie Lambert's good ministry among us as the Director of Youth and Young Adults. She has done a fine job here for four years and is laying aside her work to finish her studies and make space in her life to discern her calling and to be ready for their baby. My voice joins yours in thanking Maddie for her good ministry. (And thanks to Dylan too for the many ways he has ministered to our youth.)

The search team to find the next Director of Youth has been hard at work, but they have not yet been able to find the person God is calling to this

(Continued on page 3)

## Upcoming Events

**Aug. 2, 5 & 6**

Youth Coast Guard  
Parking Lot Fundraiser

**Aug. 3** Patriotic Flute & Organ Recital

**Aug. 10** Lunch in the Park Gathering

**Aug. 16** Neighborhood Picnic  
at North Beach Park

**Aug. 24** Lunch in the Park Gathering

**Aug 28** Blessing of the Backpacks

**Sept. 11** All-Church Picnic

## Patriotic Flute & Organ Recital August 3

As we celebrate the United States Coast Guard, let Maryanne Beery and Rob Hlebinsky stoke your patriotic spirit with a flute and organ/piano recital!



The concert is free and open to the public, and will be held in our sanctuary on Wednesday, August 3, from 12:15-12:45.

Take a break from the heat and be refreshed and invigorated with your favorite patriotic songs. You can even sing along!

## Coast Guard Parade Cooling Station

When you are downtown for the Coast Guard parade, our building will be open for you to use the restrooms, get a drink of water, or just cool off for a bit!



# 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, Hal Fitzgerald, Sue  
McClellan, Frank & Karen Miller,  
Dan Scanlan, and Marilyn VanderVeen

## Our Sympathy:

to Barb DeWitt on the July 13<sup>th</sup>  
passing of her brother, Kurt  
Wipperfurth.

to Gail and Rob Miner on the death  
of Gail's sister, Judy, on July 14.

to Tim Meyer and family on the  
death of his granddaughter,  
Sonder, on July 24.



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!

**Sept. 7** Suzanne Cooper  
315 Thompson Ave. #6  
West St. Paul, MN 55117

**Sept. 19** Sandy Beute  
1410 S. Ferry, F-10  
Grand Haven, MI 49417

## Food Pantry Collection

Each month the Mission Committee  
collects non-perishable food and  
household goods (like laundry  
detergent and toilet paper) for  
local food pantries. This month our  
donations will be going to the  
Bucs Care Food Pantry at the Grand  
Haven High School.

Special requests are for:

- Pasta & sauces
- Peanut butter & jelly
- Canned fruit & veggies
- Cereal

Please bring any  
donations to the  
designated spot in  
the Gathering Area.



## Share Your Harvest!

Throughout the month of August,  
we encourage you to bring in your  
extra fruits and vegetables (or even  
perennial plants) to share on our  
"Harvest Table" located in the  
Gathering Area.

This is a great opportunity to get  
fresh foods and to also share your  
garden abundance. Everyone is  
welcome to contribute and to  
take from the table, but please  
bring your own paper or other  
reusable (not plastic) bags to carry  
your free  
produce home.

Thank you,  
from the Earth  
Care Team.



## Tidings article deadline for September 2022 issue: August 23, 2022

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.*

## Summer Neighborhood Picnic

Please join us at North Beach Park  
for our last neighborhood picnic of  
the summer!

Grab your flip flops and let us treat  
you to a fun dinner at the beach!  
Please RSVP as soon as possible so  
we can be sure to have plenty of  
food available.

### When:

Tuesday, August 16

### Where:

North Beach Park (picnic shelter)  
Ferrysburg

### Time:

6:00-8:00 p.m.

### Bring:

Beach chairs if you'd like

### RSVP:

Follow this link: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8jezv7>  
or call (616-842-6760) or sign up  
in the church office



A big thank you to the golf scramble  
committee, and all those who  
volunteered, sponsored, donated,  
or played golf. Because of your  
generosity and support, we were  
able to raise a little over \$7,000 to  
go toward our playground fund.

The food this year was provided by  
the A&L Food Truck thanks to a  
generous donation from Craig  
Seaver and an anonymous donor.  
The prizes given were greatly  
appreciated and the bag and silent  
auction items were well received.

From the bottom of our hearts,  
THANK YOU, we couldn't have done  
it without you!

## From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

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ministry. I invite you to pray for them, asking God to send the right person at the right time (soon, we hope!). Also know that we're going to have to make some adjustments with how we do ministry. It's going to take many of us to fill Maddie's shoes, and we'll need your help—particularly this fall.

So, let us pray for God's will to be done in our church, particularly in our youth ministry. Let us pray for God's vision to be clear among us as we head towards the fall. And let us find our way back together so that we might be available to be the kind of church God is calling us to be. Hope to see you soon!

In Christ,  
Pastor Troy

## From Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce

Dear Church Family,

I just came back from an amazing week serving alongside some of our youth and their parents in Orange Walk, Belize. In Belize, we worked alongside our mission partners at Koinonia Ministries to help build a playground for older kids, spread gravel to improve the grounds at the Koinonia property (it's a lot harder and hotter than it sounds), and lead Vacation Bible School.

Koinonia Ministries began with a vision God gave to Pastor Ed Perez and his wife, Pastora Dyna. Long story short, Pastors Ed and Dyna took a leap of faith, followed the call God put on their lives, and began to do outreach ministry to children despite having no financial support from their denomination. They now minister to hundreds of kids and their families in Orange Walk and we have the privilege of partnering with them in ministry. In addition, young people are empowered to be leaders at Koinonia and in the community.

Pastors Ed and Dyna engage in ministry just as Jesus Christ did, which is to walk "alongside" others. Whether that is entering a young

person's pain by hearing the stories of their dysfunctional home life or simply listening to their worries about their future. This is what's called relational ministry, where people walk alongside others to let them know they are not alone, and more importantly, that Jesus walks with them. I've heard and seen many ministries and churches convey the importance of relational ministry, but to actually execute it is a different story.

If you were to visit Koinonia Ministries (and I hope you do!) it would be easy to say Christ is more present in Orange Walk, Belize than here in Grand Haven. I found myself slipping into that mindset. But Pastor Ed reminded us that Jesus Christ does not belong to Koinonia Ministries or the nation of Belize. Christ is just as present here in Grand Haven as he is at Koinonia or anywhere else in the world. We just need to have eyes to see him at work.

Another thing that Pastor Ed said that has stuck with me is that if we aren't continuing to share our stories of how we see God at work in our daily lives then our churches will "be full of people who don't

truly know God." My hope and prayer for all of us is that we would have eyes to see God at work and the words to articulate how we experience Jesus Christ with us each and every day. Every evening our team shared where we saw God at work that day. Some shared they saw God in the smiles of the children we worked with that day. Another shared that we were able to get work done despite the scorching heat and humidity. Someone else shared they saw God in an impromptu Uno game with youth from Orange Walk and members of our mission team.

I'd like to end with that same question. A question that I hope we continually ask ourselves: "Where did you see God today?"

Grateful to be in ministry with you,

Pastor Kristine

## Lunch-in-the-Park Get Togethers

Pack your own lunch and meet us in the park! To help encourage the fellowship we all missed during COVID, we'll be gathering at local parks several times over the summer months. We will start gathering around 11:30, but won't plan on eating our lunches until 12:15. You may stay as long as you wish. The parks have restrooms and picnic tables, but we encourage you



to bring a chair that may be more comfortable. Bring your own lunch and something to drink.

Here are the dates and locations of the remaining get-togethers:

**August 10:** Hemlock Crossing

**August 24:** William Ferry Park

We hope to see you there!



We're excited to announce a new partnership with First Pres and Griffin Elementary School: Kids Hope.

Kids Hope USA mentors spend one hour per week talking, reading, playing, and listening to a child at school. Research shows that by helping a child feel loved and valued, the child can better learn, grow, and succeed.

If you are interested in being a mentor for one student for one hour a week next school year or if you just want more information, please reach out to Jill Osborne at 616-402-0711 or [josborne2318@gmail.com](mailto:josborne2318@gmail.com). Thank you!

## Adopt-a-Beach Clean Up at Ludington State Park

In partnership with the Alliance for the Great Lakes, we invite you to be a part of God's plan in caring for his creation!

Please join us at Ludington State Park for a beach clean up on Saturday, August 13, from 10-noon. We'll meet up at the Beach House (past Big Sable River and to the left). Use this link to sign up and get more information: <https://tinyurl.com/ywt3cvcf>. Bring the whole family and make it a fun family beach day! (Don't forget sunscreen, water, and a hat).

Questions? Contact Abe Overway: [aoverway@springlakeschools.org](mailto:aoverway@springlakeschools.org)

## From the Earth Care Team Our Environment and the PCUSA General Assembly

Earth Care was a big issue for the General Assembly(GA) at their last meeting and action was taken to approve the following recommendations:

**By Consent Agenda:** (where many approvals are taken together with a single vote:)

- **ENV-11** urges protection of the diversity of creation with an emphasis on supporting the work and methods of indigenous people.
- **ENV-5** calls upon the entire PCUSA infrastructure to reduce its carbon footprint by 25% within the next 4 years.

**By discussion and approval in the Plenary Session (where the delegates debate and deliberate):**

- **ENV-2** Approves and recommends a report, "[Investing in a Green Future: a Vision for a Renewed Creation](#)"; commits to a 10-year "turnaround decade" for restoring creation; and directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to make restoring creation (including environmental justice, racial justice, and economic justice) a key priority in its Matthew 25 programming and in its advocacy.
- **ENV-4** establishes the principle that PCUSA travel will result in carbon offset contributions to an existing PCUSA fund, and that the fund will provide support for tree planting and re-forestation.
- **ENV-9** deals with fossil fuel issues, including guidelines for Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) that governs how the PCUSA invests based on environmental criteria, while also recognizing that employment within the fossil fuel industry is necessary for many and that divestment of fossil fuel companies is not to be considered a condemnation of their employment choices.
- **ENV-10** establishes the procedures and practices to implement ENV-9 and other guidelines for MRTI.

To read the full summary, follow this link: <https://tinyurl.com/nh9rue49>



## A Letter from our Mission Co-Workers in South Sudan

Dear Members of First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven,

Warm greetings to you in the name of our Savior! We hope that you are doing well. We want to thank you again for your faithful financial contributions and your prayers for our ministry in South Sudan. We are very grateful for you and your partnership with us in this ministry.

This is a difficult season in South Sudan. Food insecurity has reached crisis levels and there continues to be attacks and insecurity in many regions. The United Nations is no longer providing food aid to people who have been displaced, except in new emergency cases. Inflation is high and the government is months behind in paying salaries for civil servants. Please pray that God gives wisdom, faith, and love to the church here, and enables leaders to minister to people who are suffering. We pray that God brings redemption, hope, and renewed unity out of this time of suffering. We pray often for your church, that God's love and power would shine through you as you seek to minister to hurting people in your community and the world. We are grateful for you and always appreciate hearing from you.



Gratefully,  
Bob and Kristi Rice  
Mission Co-workers, PC(USA)  
Profile and newsletters: <http://pcusa.org/bob-and-kristi-rice>  
Blog: <http://bobandkristi.blogspot.com/>

## First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven



508 Franklin Avenue  
Grand Haven, MI 49417  
Phone: 616.842.6760

[www.fpgh.org](http://www.fpgh.org) • [staff@fpgh.org](mailto:staff@fpgh.org)

Sunday Morning Worship Services  
9 a.m. (Traditional)  
11 a.m. (Contemporary)

Offered in person and online:  
Facebook Live (@FirstPresGH)  
YouTube (First Presbyterian Church, Grand Haven)

### Staff and Leadership:

Rev. Dr. 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  
Kristi Deur, Church Administrator  
Marc Felt, Gathering Band Leader  
Rob Hlebinsky, Organist  
Tommy Langejans, 5th & 6th Grade Ministries Coordinator  
Karen Nienhouse, Congregational Care Ministries  
Tina Ramones, Administrative Assistant  
Kerri Roberts, Office Assistant  
Sally Segers, Joyful Noise Director  
Melissa VerHage, Worship Coordinator & Event Host

## From the Racial Justice Committee

We are living in a time where there doesn't seem like there's a lot to celebrate. Our convictions, our divisions, and our "tribalisms" seem to keep us focused on the bad. We spend a lot of time talking about "our" rights and what "they" should be doing and how the world is falling apart around us. We would be wise to focus on "what is" rather than on "what is wrong."

In his letter to the Colossians Paul reminds them of who they are and calls them to live that out. The church in Colossae was flourishing until false teachers disrupted their growth and confused their theology. This letter was written to help the Colossians "refocus." We live in a world much like that of the Colossian Christians. There's a lot of mixing of views and many self-proclaimed "saviors." Such "saviors" create fears in us about our brothers and sisters and fan the flames of those fears to lead us astray. They want us to believe that Jesus is fine, but we need more to guide our lives. When we find ourselves in a place or with a group that sees Jesus as "important" but not central, we're in the wrong place.

Before ascending into heaven Jesus said to the disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Matthew 28:19. Since God is for all nations, would Jesus really support the belief that immigrants are the root of our nation's problems and should be excluded? Would Jesus endorse the idea that one group of people is superior to the other? I don't think Jesus would.

Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote this letter to the Colossian Christians to let them know, and to let every generation and culture since the first century, know, that Jesus Christ is Lord. Let us love one another out of Christ's love for us all. Let us seek to remove fear and hatred of differences we find among ourselves, and embrace each other in the true spirit of Jesus Christ.

George Barfield, Member of the Racial Justice Committee

## Win a Prize in the Eco-Sunday Challenge!

For the second summer in a row, the Earth Care Team is encouraging you to **ride your bike, walk, or carpool** to church on Sundays. Each time you use one of these methods to get to church, you may enter your name in a drawing at the station that is set up in the Gathering Area.

Winners and prizes will be awarded on the 4th Sunday of each month. Prizes for the contest have been donated by Rock 'n' Road Cycle.



## Feeding America Food Truck

First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven has sponsored a Feeding America Food Truck for many years. The food truck comes to the St. Pat's parking lot two Fridays a month and serves local people experiencing food insecurity. The demand for food has increased recently by as much as 30%. The food is given freely to all, and is donated by companies and businesses with over-stocked items and soon-to-be outdated items. The types of food vary from truck to truck. The local connection to the Feeding America organization is Love in Action.



Members of all ages have participated as volunteers helping to hand out food. It's another example of Christ's hands to serve in our own community. We are already in line for sponsorship dates in June and September for 2023.

FPGH is sponsoring the food truck on September 9, and we are looking for volunteers to help distribute food from 9:30-11 a.m. in the St. Pat's parking lot at Fulton and US-31. Please contact Mike Weller at [mcweller@chartermi.net](mailto:mcweller@chartermi.net) or text 626-402-6109 with questions or to say you'll help.

## Thursday Night Group

The Thursday night group is taking a break from its usual theological books and is reading some fiction this summer. Please join us in reading Delia Owen's *Where the Crawdads Sing*. We will meet on Thursday, September 1, at the Miner residence for a discussion on the book. Please contact Linda Gritter at [lindagritter@gmail.com](mailto:lindagritter@gmail.com) for more information or to RSVP.



## 2023 Peacemaking Travel Study Seminars

Cathy Chang, our PC(USA) Mission Co-worker in the Philippines, will be leading a peacemaking travel study seminar February 3-17, 2023. The seminar, called *Philippines and Hong Kong: Root Causes and Current Challenges of Forced Migration and Labor Trafficking*, will include community visits where participants will meet leaders of migrant-serving organizations and hear the testimonies of migrant workers and their families. Special attention will focus on how faith-based communities are assisting in the struggle for justice and human rights. Applications are due by November 5, 2022.



Two other PC(USA) travel study seminars are also planned:

- Puerto Rico: *In the Aftermath of Catastrophe and How the Church is Responding*  
March 13-20, 2023 (applications due November 15, 2022)
- *Native Lands of the American Southwest: The Doctrine of Discovery and Its Legacy Today*  
April 28-May 3, 2023 (applications due December 15, 2022)

Visit [presbyterianmission.org/travelstudy](https://presbyterianmission.org/travelstudy) for costs and sample itineraries, or call the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program at 888-728-7228, ext. 5805.

## Youth Ministries

### Update on our Youth Group Director Search

In recent weeks, the search committee has met with two promising candidates for our youth director position, which included visits to our church and interactions with some of our youth. Although both candidates interviewed well and were very qualified for the position, after much discernment they did not feel called from their current ministries to join the First Pres family. While this was a disappointment to our search committee, we trust that God has just not introduced us to the right candidate yet. Our search continues!

So the team will continue fielding applicants and searching for the right fit with our church. If you know anybody you think may be interested and capable, or even "know people who know people," please pass on the job posting! It can be found at the top of the front page of our church website ([www.fpg.org](http://www.fpg.org)). While job postings are a great way to get the word out, nothing compares with the web of local and regional contacts that our congregation can provide.

Please keep our youth, the search team, and applicants in your prayers. Our next youth director is out there, just waiting to be found!

Faithfully,

Josh VerHage, Courtney Ransford, Andy Becker, Leslie VerDuin,  
Jackson Bosch, Kristine Aragon Bruce

## YOUTH CALENDAR AUGUST

**2,5-6:**

Coast Guard Parking  
Fundraisers

**7:** Maddie Lambert's last Sunday  
in Worship

**16:** All church picnic at North  
Beach Park at 6 p.m.

**17:** Craig's Cruisers in GR

**21:** 5th-12th grade Tie-Dye  
5:30-6:30 p.m. In parking lot  
at FPGH

**28:** Summer Mission Trips recap  
Sunday during worship





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

*Sunday Worship:*

*9 & 11 a.m. in person or live*

*on our Facebook page: @FirstPresGH*

*or YouTube: First Presbyterian Church, Grand Haven*

*or watch the recorded service on our*

*website: [fpgh.org](http://fpgh.org)*

## August 2022

*deliver to: (or current resident)*

## Leaders Make a Difference-We Need YOU!

Your Officer Nominations Committee is hard at work discerning those God is calling to be elders, deacons, and at-large members of the 2022 Nominations Committee. We'd like your help.

- **Deacons**—provide a connection with our members who are sick, homebound, or otherwise unable to come to church. If you are someone who likes to chat, play games, or brighten the day of others, consider becoming a deacon!
- **Elders**—are the servant leaders of the congregation, not only in financial and governing matters, but in matters of love and kindness and justice. Together with pastors, Elders help strengthen and nurture the faith and life of the congregation through their leadership and service.



If you have suggestions for people whom you believe would be great candidates for these positions, or you are interested yourself, please send us these names for consideration. You can do so by calling the church office or sending an email to [staff@fpgh.org](mailto:staff@fpgh.org).

If you receive a call from a member of the Nominations Committee, we ask that you take the time to discern prayerfully if this is the time for you to serve.