



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

JANUARY 2023, VOLUME 71—ISSUE 1

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

Happy New Year! I am hopeful that 2023 is going to be a great year for First Presbyterian Church, and I invite you in praying for that to be the case. I would be remiss if I didn't comment on how lovely it was to have a relatively normal Advent and Christmas around here. The luncheons and concerts were back. The gift exchanges returned. The staff had an office decorating contest (won by Joleigh Braman, our custodian, for her interactive door in the hallway by the Chapel). Other than the weather not cooperating, we had meaningful, festive, beautiful Christmas Eve services and a cozy Christmas morning worship along with delicious cinnamon rolls. It really felt special around here, so thanks to all who made this possible.

It has become our custom to give the congregation a chance to put its finger on the pulse of the church every January. Please mark your calendars for Sunday, January 22nd at 10:00 for the annual Congregational Conversation. This will take place in the Lounge. There will also be the ability to join that conversation via Zoom, so keep your eyes on your email for that link. At that conversation we will have narrative and financial reports available, and we'll hear ministry updates from our elders. You can ask questions as part of the conversation too. This is your church, so I hope you join us to engage deeply with what's going on.

Additionally, the Session has called a Congregational Meeting for Sunday, January 29th at 10:00 for the purpose of voting on the Terms of Call for your two pastors. The terms have come from the Personnel Committee and the Session, but it is the responsibility of the membership to vote on the terms annually. I anticipate that this will be a short meeting. Our bylaws do not allow this meeting to be hybrid, so you must attend in person to have voice and vote.

Beginning the third Sunday of January and continuing almost until Easter, our Sunday worship will center on the Book of Revelation. I've mentioned that to some of you, and the responses have been as I expected. Some of you have expressed deep interest. Others have commented about how strange that book is.

Others have wondered what it has to do with us today. Let me assure you that this book is interesting, timely, challenging, strange, and so much more. It's a book loaded with allusions to the Hebrew Bible—several hundred, in fact. It's a book filled with imagery that stretches our imagination—the heavenly throne room, beasts, lambs, dragons, and so



Upcoming Events

- Jan. 1** One Worship Service (contemporary style) at 10 am
- Jan. 2** Church Office Closed
- Jan. 8** Children & Worship Resumes
Wired Word Resumes
Youth Group Resumes
- Jan. 13-15** High School Retreat
- Jan. 15** Ruth & Max Bloomquist C.A.S. Concert
- Jan. 22** Congregational Conversation
- Jan. 25** Dr. Esau McCaulley January Series Presentation
- Jan. 27-29** 5th—8th Grade Retreat
- Jan. 29** Annual Congregational Meeting



Sunday, January 22 Congregational Conversation 10:00 a.m. in the Lounge

Hear updates from various areas of ministries, ask questions, and receive the annual report.

Sunday, January 29 Annual Congregational Meeting 10:00 a.m.

Called to elect at-large members of the Nominations Committee and to approve the pastors' Terms of Call.

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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:

Ron & Mary Albrecht, Larry Braak,
and Frank Miller

Our Sympathy:

to the family and friends of Norma
Vyn on her passing on December 4.

to the family and friends of Betty
Berg on her December 5 passing.

to Warren and Karen Trimble on
the death of Karen's mother,
Irene, on December 7.

to Betty Johnson on the death of
her husband, Ken Johnson, on
December 13.

to Jennifer and Duke DeLeeuw
and family on the passing of
Jennifer's father, Charlie Davis,
on Christmas Day.

Congratulations:

to Maddie and Dylan Lambert on
the birth of their healthy baby
daughter, Izzy Auriemma Lambert,
on December 27.

Thank You:

Betty Johnson thanks you all so
much for the support and prayers
during her husband Ken's brief
illness and subsequent death on
December 13. She received so many
cards, phone calls, and support at
Ken's visitation and memorial
service. It has meant so very much
to her and her family.

2023 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 \$39.10.

The per capita rate includes:

- \$9.85 for the Office of the
General Assembly
- \$3.25 for the Synod of
the Covenant
- \$26 for the Presbytery
of Lake Michigan

Please prayerfully consider paying
the per-capita amount for each
person in your family who is a
church member. *Thank you!*

New Members/ Inquirers Classes

Sunday, February 5

Would you like to become a
member of FPGH or do you just
want to find out more about the
beliefs and traditions of the
Presbyterian Church? You are
invited to attend our upcoming
New Member class!

We hold classes quarterly, and the
next class is Sunday, February 5,
from 12:30-2:00 p.m. Lunch will
be provided.

To reserve your spot, contact
Kerri Roberts at 616-842-6760 or
kroberts@fpgh.org

*Child care is available upon request.
Attending the class does not commit
you to membership.*

Tidings article deadline for February 2023 issue: January 23, 2023

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.*

The Giving Tree Christmas Ministry

Thank you to
everyone who so
generously gave to
The Giving Tree
Christmas Ministry,
and to the crew who
helped make this season's gift card
collection such a success!



This year we were able to donate
126 gift cards, for a total of \$3,150.
Each recipient at [Step Up](#) received
3 cards, and each recipient at [The
Hope Project](#) received 2 cards. The
remaining 30 gift cards were given
to [Love in Action](#) for
distribution to families in need.

Thank you again for making Christ-
mas brighter for so many in need in
our community.

Food Pantry Collection

Each month the Mission Committee
collects non-perishable food and
household goods (like laundry
soap and toilet paper) for local
food pantries.

Always needed items include:

- Peanut butter & jelly
- Mac & cheese
- Canned fruit
- Canned pasta (i.e. Spaghetti-O's)
- Pancake mix & syrup
- Hot cereal
- Hamburger Helper

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

Thank you!



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much more. I'm calling the series *Stranger Things*, and my hope is that we can walk together through the "upside-down" that is the Book of Revelation so that we might really see what's going on and what it means to us today. Additionally, Dr. Matt Bruce will be leading a class on Sundays that will dig even more deeply into this material. So, come!

In Christ,
Pastor Troy

Update from the Session

Following is a synopsis of the main points of the last Session meeting:

Highlights:

- Called a Congregational Meeting for Sunday, January 29 at 10:00 to vote on pastoral terms of call.
- Approved the 2023 housing allowances for the pastors.
- Received more information on the financial outlook for 2022 and decided to vote on the 2023 operating budget in our January meeting.
- Heard a report from the December presbytery meeting including the installation of the Rev. Chrissy Westbury as the Associate Presbyterian, approval of the 2023 budget, the dissolution of Mt. Hope Presbyterian Church, and the completion of the Camp Greenwood Administrative Commission.

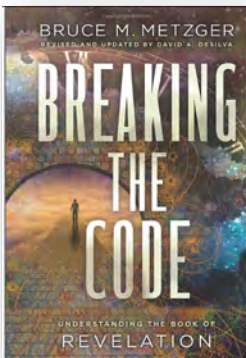
It is our joy to serve Christ as the Session for FPGH. Please continue to hold us in your prayers.

From Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce

Dear Church Family,

Our first Sermon series for 2023 will be based on the book of Revelation. The title of this sermon series is "Revelation: Stranger Things." Historically there has been a lot of misinterpretation about this book due to its wild imagery of fire and monsters. In actuality, this is an encouraging account of why we worship God and the promise of how Jesus Christ will make all things new and right when he returns.

We are encouraging folks to join a small group and together work through the book *Breaking the Code* by biblical scholar Bruce Metzger. You can find out more about the book [here](#). This



is a highly accessible Bible Study on Revelation and will pair nicely with the sermon series. Small groups can meet according to their schedule, but the hope is that they will meet weekly for about 4-6 weeks or until Easter, which is when this sermon series will end.

As with all scripture, we were meant to read the Bible together so I hope you will consider taking a leap of faith by joining a small group in order to dig deeper into God's word. I always like to say that Jesus had his own small group with the disciples. Jesus, as the son of God and God himself, did not do ministry or life in general on his own. We tend to make our faith so personal that we don't share our experiences with God with anyone else—even those who are closest to us. While we are all called to be in an individual relationship with God, we were created to be in Christ-centered

relationships. Small groups help cultivate Christ-centered relationships. If you are interested in leading or joining a small group I would love to talk with you! You don't have to be a Biblical scholar or theologian to lead a small group. You just have to be good about leading a discussion and making sure it's a comfortable and safe space for people to share and ask questions. I, of course, would be happy to chat with you about how to do just that.

As we start 2023, I pray that we would all consider experiencing a Christ-centered community in a new way through joining a small group.

Grateful to be on this faith journey with you!

:) Pastor Kristine

Calvin University January Series Presentation by Dr. Esau McCaulley January 25, 2023

The Calvin University January Series will start soon, featuring 15 days of respected speakers and scholars on important issues of the day in order to inspire cultural renewal and make us better global citizens in God's world.



Of particular interest is Dr. Esau McCaulley's presentation on Wednesday, January 25: What is African American Biblical Interpretation and Why Does the Whole Church Need It. The Racial Justice Committee at First Presbyterian Church invites you to join us at Second Christian Reformed Church on the corner of Robbins and Sheldon for the 12:30 p.m. live simulcast, then return to a discussion in the lounge at First Presbyterian to be led by our resident theologian Matt Bruce. This event is open to the public, so please invite a friend or family member to join you.

Dr. McCaulley is an associate professor of the New Testament at Wheaton College and theologian-in-residence at Progressive Baptist Church, an historic black congregation in Chicago. He is a contributing opinion writer for The New York Times. His writings have also appeared in The Atlantic, Washington Post and Christianity Today. If you wish to order his book "Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope," contact The Bookman (616-846-3520) or order through Amazon. More information on Dr. McCaulley and the January series may be found by following this link and scrolling down to January 25: [Calvin University January Series](#).

To RSVP or if you need further information, please contact:

Jane Stoepker (janestoepker@icloud.com); or

Sue VandenBosch (s.vandenbosch@att.net).

Cookie Bakers Wanted!

Do you love to bake? We are always looking for more people to add to our Sunday cookie baker schedule!

Bakers are asked to bring a few dozen cookies approximately 4 times per year.

Contact Kerri Roberts (kroberts@fpg.org) if you would like to be added to the schedule.



From the Mission Committee A Caring and Generous Church

Our mission contributions have been blessed by generous giving from a church with many Christians desiring to offer support when others hurt. As a result, the Mission Committee has expanded in recent years to serve additional world mission needs as well as increasing contributions locally. Also, our church is fortunate to have committed Mission Committee members who get involved frequently with their missions as volunteers working beyond just obtaining a monthly reports. Hands and hearts to serve are truly the active discipleship we see in our mission efforts.

Paul McNergney

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:

- Mail a check or put it in the deposit box at the Clinton entrance
- Give online through Realm or thru this link: onrealm.org/FPGH/-/give/now
- Text FPGH to 73256



Thank you!

We (Still) Want Your Photos!

As we commit to reconnecting with each other after being apart for so long, we realize the importance of a church directory. There are also many new faces in our congregation, and a directory helps us to connect names to faces.

Although Realm, the church database tool, can be used as an online directory, there are those in our congregation who prefer to use a printed directory. For that reason we will be printing out a basic picture directory from Realm in the next couple of months. We are asking everyone to either upload their own picture or to submit a picture for the church staff to upload for you. It is most helpful to us if you can submit two pictures. One should be a picture of yourself where your face is clearly shown. The second should be a family picture of you together with those in your household, if applicable. These pictures can be taken anywhere—at home, on vacation, or even at church. We just want to see your face!



To upload a photo yourself:

- Open Realm on your computer (onrealm.org). Contact staff@fpgh.org if you need login information.
- Go to your profile and place your cursor so it hovers over the existing photo or default graphic. Click on the image of the pencil that appears
- Browse to select your new photo, and upload it.

You may also send your photo via email (staff@fpgh.org) or bring in the photo you would like to use and the church staff can upload it for you.

If you don't have a current photo, contact Karen at knienhouse@fpgh.org or 616-402-0188 and we can arrange a time on a Sunday morning or during the week to take your picture. We can also come to your home if needed. The sooner we can get your photo, the better. *Thank you!*

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 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
Dr. Matt Bruce, Theologian-in-Residence
Joleigh Braman, Custodian
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
Hannah Post, Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries
Tina Ramones, Financial Administrator & IT Specialist
Kerri Roberts, Office Assistant
Sally Segers, Joyful Noise Director

Are You in the Medical Field?

The church is looking for individuals who have a background and/or training in First Aid, CPR, and management of a critical incident.

On occasion, we have had incidents that have warranted help from congregation members and varying degrees of medical intervention.

We would like to generate a roster of those in our congregation who are willing/able to help during these incidents that leadership, ushers, greeters can call on for support. This may include Sunday services, onsite meetings, or church-wide and community events we sponsor.

If you have a background in a medical field, are certified in First Aid and/or CPR and would be willing to be called upon in an incident requiring medical help, please contact the church office with the following information:

- your name
- your qualification (profession or past profession)
- current level of certification in First Aid/CPR
- the worship service you usually attend

Your name will be placed on a roster for our leadership, greeter, usher, and office team to reference in case of emergency.



2022/23 Season

Community Artist & Speaker Series of FPGH January 15, 4 p.m.

Don't miss this chance to see these musical local legends! Celebrating over 45 years of making music together, Ruth's award winning abilities as a songwriter and singer are accented by Max's harmony and touch on the upright bass. With influences of folk, bluegrass, and country, they have created a heart touching, audience pleasing acoustic Americana that is all their own. Ruth's trademark rich alto is unmistakable, and her songs evoke images and emotions common to us all.



The concert will start at 4 p.m. in the church sanctuary. All C.A.S. events are free and open to the public.

From the Earth Care Committee

Have You Visited the Memorial Garden Lately?

The Earth Care Committee was honored to inherit the task of caring for and beautifying the Memorial Garden. We developed a layout to revitalize garden, and shared it with an established gardener. The proposal was approved by the Trustees in the fall, and we enlisted Boy Scout Troop 246 to help us with the hard work. The scouts, who meet at the church and are led by Josh Verhage, along with their parents, prepared the garden by weeding, clearing out dead plants, trimming, and transplanting. The Boy Scouts will earn community service hours for working hard and doing an excellent job on this project.

This spring we will trim and weed, then add native plants that are animal resistant. We want the Memorial Garden to be a place that church members and area community residents may go to relax, reflect, read, and pray. The garden is located along the west end of the church grounds.



See What's In Store for Youth Group in 2023!

The start of a new year brings so much to look forward to in youth ministry!

We are back for our first night of the semester with a bonfire, and of course there will be smores and hot chocolate! Shortly after we kick off the Winter/Spring semester, we will head out to Camp Geneva for the High School retreat (Jan 13-15) and the Middle School Avalanche retreat (Jan 27-29). In March we will have our Youth Sunday church services and the Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser will make its grand return!

We are so excited to get started with all of our youth activities again and see how God is going to work in the lives of our students!

Dates:

Jan 8: Bonfire @ Hollemans

Jan 13-15: HS Retreat (no youth group on 15th)

Jan 22: Normal youth group

Jan 27-29: MS Retreat (no youth group on 29th)

Scholarship Applications

Applications for scholarships to be awarded this spring are now available in the church office, on the youth page of our website (fpgh.org), or downloaded below.

- [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 by **April 3, 2023.**



High School Retreat January 13-15 Cost: \$70

9th-12th graders are invited to our High School winter retreat at Camp Geneva!

[Sign up now](#)—Deadline is Jan. 5!

YOUTH GROUP

All students (and their friends!) in 5th-12th grade are invited to join us for Youth Group on Sunday nights.

A typical schedule looks like this:

5:30—game

5:50—dinner

6:20—worship

6:30—Bible-based discussion

(5th & 6th grades with Tommy, all others with Hannah)

6:45-7:15—small group discussions

For questions feel free to reach out to Hannah Post at

HPost@fpgh.org



Avalanche Retreat January 27-29 Cost \$50

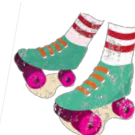
5th-8th graders do not want to miss this unforgettable weekend at Camp Geneva!

[Sign up now](#)—Deadline is Jan. 18

Send Miss Laura a Get-Well Card!

Oops! Even though she's a really good roller skater, sometimes accidents happen!

Miss Laura would love to know you are thinking of her and saying prayers for her broken wrist to heal quickly. You can bring cards to the Family Ministries desk or the church office.



CHILDREN IN WORSHIP RESUMES JANUARY 8!

Children will be dismissed from worship even though this is a Communion Sunday



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

January 2023

deliver to: (or current resident)

Meal Volunteers Wanted!

We are so thankful for everyone who provided Youth Group meals in the Fall of 2022!

If you are looking for a way to serve our students, please consider signing up to provide dinner on a Sunday evening. As one previous volunteer said, "This was such a fun and easy way to serve our kids!" We encourage meal providers to prepare dinner for 40 students (signing up with a partner makes this easier to handle). We will provide beverages, cups, plates and silverware.

Please sign up on our [SignUpGenius page:](https://tinyurl.com/y6d7yzsa)
<https://tinyurl.com/y6d7yzsa>

Please contact Hannah Post (hpost@fpgh.org)
with questions.

Thank you!

