



# PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

FEBRUARY 2023, VOLUME 71—ISSUE 2

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

## From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

I have always loved how the Apostle Paul used the human body as a way of describing the church. In 1 Corinthians 12 he writes, “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.” He goes on to write about a body not functioning fully. The foot gets jealous of the hand and decides to opt out of the body. The ear does the same to the eye. If the whole body were feet, would it be a body? Or if it were made up solely of ears, how could it see?

As I look out on the worshipping congregation on Sundays, there are times that I wonder where the body is. I suspect one of the great sadnesses I will have in my entire career as a pastor will be what Covid did to the gathered body of Christ. I see spaces in pews where perhaps you or your friends sat. Where once you would have attended worship on most weeks, now you might go weeks in between coming. It’s been beautiful welcoming new members to the church, but it’s been sad to miss the familiar faces.

Let me stress this to the whole church: it will be a struggle to be fully the kind of church we’d like to be until we begin finding our ways back into worship with more regularity.

Worship serves many purposes. Foremost is that it is our joy to sing, pray, and speak the good news of Jesus together. But worship also is the means by which the Holy Spirit draws us together as a community. There may be weeks that you don’t feel like worshipping, but perhaps the reason you would make your ways to the pews on those weeks is to be present to your family of faith. We need each other. The bonds that are formed in worship simply cannot be replicated online—no matter how well we do it.

So, my dear friends, let us find our way back to church. Let us encourage each other to do so. Let us make plans to dig in to life together once again. Let us be the beautiful body of Christ we can be.

The end of February does bring the beginning of Lent. Mark your calendars for the return of our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner—now with a game night!—on February 21 and for beginning Lent in Worship on Ash Wednesday (February 22). See you soon—at church!



In Christ,  
Pastor Troy

## Upcoming Events

- Feb. 5** New Member Class  
Red Cross Blood Drive
- Feb. 21** Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner & Game Night
- Feb. 22** Ash Wednesday Worship, 6 pm
- Mar. 1** Alma College Choir Concert
- Mar. 5** Youth Sunday  
AGO Young Organist  
C.A.S. Concert
- Mar. 8** Taizé Worship
- Mar. 12** Daylight Savings Time Begins
- Mar. 15** Taizé Worship
- Mar. 22** Taizé Worship
- Mar. 26** Spaghetti Dinner  
Youth Mission Trip Fundraiser
- Mar. 29** Taize Worship
- Apr. 2** Palm Sunday
- Apr. 9** Easter Sunday

## Scholarship Applications

Applications for scholarships to be awarded this spring are now available in the church office, on the youth page of our website ([fpg.org](http://fpg.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**.

## Church & Pastor Contact Information

**Pastor Troy Hauser Brydon:**  
616-604-2617,  
church: 616-842-6760 x1005,  
email: TroyHB@fpggh.org

**Pastor Kristine Aragon Bruce:**  
616-604-2618,  
church: 616-842-6760 x1006,  
email: KristineAB@fpggh.org

**Church Office:**  
616-842-6760, staff@fpggh.org

### Prayer Concerns:

Ron & Mary Albrecht, Larry Braak,  
and Frank Miller

### Our Sympathy:

to Jack Jansma on the passing of his  
brother, Stephen, on December 29.

to the family of Janice Sluka, who  
passed away on January 10.

to Joan Tandler on the passing of  
her husband, Brian Anderson, on  
January 12.

to Don Anderson and family on  
the death of his wife, Charlotte  
Anderson, on January 23.

### Congratulations:

to Tim and Pam Bullerdick on  
the birth of their grandson, Evan  
Leland Zubrickas, on January 6.  
Best wishes to parents Jon and  
Jordan, and big brothers Owen  
and Luke.

to Sydney and Jared Bollaert,  
on the birth of their daughter,  
Iyla James, on January 20.

### Thank You:

"Thank you to everyone who  
prayed for Darell and sent get-well  
notes during the time he was in  
rehab facilities. The prayers and  
notes really meant a lot to both of  
us. He is now doing much better  
with the help of a walker.

Thank you all so very much!"

- Darell and Phyl Moreland

## 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@fpggh.org

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

### Tidings article deadline for March 2023 issue: February 20, 2023

Submittals, suggestions or comments:  
sbryant@fpggh.org or staff@fpggh.org  
*FPC editorial staff reserves the right to  
accept or decline, edit for length and  
content all submitted material.*

## Thank you Mary!

Since 2018, Mary Switzer has been  
serving us delicious cookies and hot  
coffee on Sunday mornings after the  
worship services. There were a lot  
of things in life that we weren't  
certain of during that time, but we  
always knew we could count on  
Mary for our coffee and cookies on  
Sunday mornings!

Due to health reasons, Mary has  
resigned her position with First  
Pres. In the meantime, Joleigh  
Braman will be stepping in to make  
sure everyone who wants to be is  
fully caffeinated on Sunday mornings.

If you'd like to write a note to Mary  
thanking her for her great  
work, you may send it or  
bring it to the church office  
and we will get it to her.



## 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!



# From Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce

PAGE 3

Dear Church Family,

As I write this we are two weeks into our sermon series on Revelation. When Troy shared at our community Pastors' Prayer group this week that our current sermon series is on Revelation they looked at him like he was one of the six-winged creatures in Revelation chapter 4. Revelation is a book we tend to avoid or at the best overlook. Much less commit a sermon series to it.

When I was a chaplain intern at a mental hospital in New Jersey, my supervisor told all of us interns that if we wanted to do a Bible study it could be on any book of the Bible except Revelation. This is because many of the patients were diagnosed with schizophrenia and the imagery in Revelation could exacerbate hallucinations. I'd add that anyone,

not just those who struggle with mental illness, would find the imagery in Revelation troubling.

I'm excited about our sermon series on Revelation since it's a chance to reclaim a book that has been grossly misinterpreted throughout history. To quote Pastor Troy, "Revelation is a great book about worship." As with all scripture, it's also a beautiful picture of God's grace as well. In order to see this, however, one has to read about the crazy monsters John, the author, describes before understanding what Revelation has to say about God's grace. In addition, Revelation is considered apocalyptic literature, a genre of literature that we are not well acquainted with. It is full of allegory and wild imagery that is not meant to be taken literally. The original audience, the seven churches of Asia, knew not to take John's imagery literally.

That being said, I'd love to dig deeper into Revelation with you. I am leading an hour-long Bible study on Revelation on Mondays from 11:30-12:30. We will work through the book "Breaking the Code" by Dr. Bruce Metzger, a former Princeton Seminary professor and who also led the team of scholars who translated the New Revised Standard translation (NRSV) of the Bible, which is the translation we have in our pews. I encourage you to join this group as all scripture was meant to be read in community. Feel free to contact me if you're interested or have any questions:)

Grateful for you!



Pastor Kristine

## From the Session

### Update from the Session

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

#### Highlights:

- We approved the 2023 Operating Budget.
- We approved the serving of communion by Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce at the Senior Youth Winter Retreat.
- We thanked the Elder Class of 2022 for completing their service: Carroll Bennink, John Heinritz, Mike Johnson, Joan Klaasen, Damon McLaughlin, Amy Miller, and Don Timmer.
- We distributed the 2023 Communion Serving Schedule.

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

### Senior Pastor Sabbatical Planning

This month marks six years of ministry among us for our Senior Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon. When the church called Pastor Troy in 2017, we agreed to follow the presbytery's sabbatical policy, which means 2024 will be the time when the church will give Pastor Troy a sabbatical.

Beyond the policy, a sabbatical is a necessary time for reflection and reimagining of our shared ministry. It is a chance for both the church and the pastor to seek and strengthen God's calling. The Session is working with Pastor Troy to map out what this time looks like, and we're making plans for how this is a renewing time for the church and for the pastor.

There are sobering statistics about pastoral burnout. Ninety percent of pastors feel fatigued and worn out on a weekly basis. Seventy percent of pastors say they have lower self-esteem now than when they entered ministry. Eighty percent believe ministry has negatively affected their families.

Our goal is to ensure that we can nurture our pastors so they are in the place spiritually and emotionally to nurture us in mind, body, and spirit.

More information on this sabbatical period will be coming in the near future. The Session is eager to make this a spiritually enriching time for the whole church.

Sincerely,  
Randy Abraham, Clerk of Session

## From the Mission Committee Hand to Hand Ministries

The Hand2Hand Program provides extra food support for the weekends and school holidays for local school-aged children, and has been a ministry of our church for more than 15 years. It is largely funded by donations from individual church members as well as from the Mission Committee, Presbyterian Women and some community organizations. Our program is currently serving 61 students at Mary A. White Elementary and 12 at Lakeshore Middle School. Every week, thirty-one volunteers plan, order, pick up, pack and deliver 10-12 nutritious food items per student each week. Food items include a variety of breakfast, lunch/dinner, and snack options.



Due to a number of factors such as increasing food costs and increasing number of students needing food support, the Hand2Hand fund is in need of additional financial support. If you would like to donate, you can write a check to First Presbyterian Church and designate the Hand2Hand fund on the memo line. We thank you all for the support that you have given or will give to this important ministry of the church.

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer with this program, contact Chris Bussell: 616-846-0487 ([cmb1771@gmail.com](mailto:cmb1771@gmail.com)), Lisa Tobin: 616-402-9870 ([lktgh99@gmail.com](mailto:lktgh99@gmail.com)) or the church office ([staff@fpgh.org](mailto:staff@fpgh.org)).

## Cookie Bakers Wanted!

Do you love the Sunday morning cookies? So do we, and 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 6 times per year.

Contact Kerri Roberts ([kr Roberts@fpgh.org](mailto:kr Roberts@fpgh.org)) if you would like to be added to the schedule.



## 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 are some giving options other than the Sunday offering plate:

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

We will soon be printing a basic picture directory from Realm, our church database tool. We are asking everyone to either upload their own picture into their Realm profile, 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 have a staff member upload your photos, bring them in to the church office, or send them to: [staff@fpgh.org](mailto:staff@fpgh.org).

If you don't have a current photo, contact Karen at 616-402-0188 or [knienhouse@fpgh.org](mailto:knienhouse@fpgh.org) to arrange a time to have your picture taken. We can also come to your home if needed. The sooner we can get your photo, the better.

If you don't have a Realm login, contact the church office and we will send you a link.

## From the Earth Care Committee Talking Climate with Katharine Hayhoe

Katharine Anne Scott Hayhoe is a Canadian atmospheric scientist. In 2021, Hayhoe joined the Nature Conservancy as Chief Scientist.



### Good News

Climate change is affecting food security worldwide. One solution is to grow food closer to where people live. This is already happening in cities like Montreal and Dallas, Texas.

In Montreal, Lufa Farms has built four rooftop greenhouses that supply over 20,000 families every week. They estimate they could feed the entire city if they converted the rooftops of 19 shopping centers into hydroponic greenhouses! And in Texas, an elementary school teacher named Michael Bell grows organic produce on his half-acre plot in the south part of the city that nets him an additional \$120,000 a year.

### Not-So-Good-News

Climate summaries for 2022 were released this week, and it's exactly what scientists expected: not good. Last year was a La Niña year, which should mean cooler temperatures, but it was the 5<sup>th</sup> warmest year on record, and the last 8 years have been the warmest recorded globally.

In 2022 there were 18 billion-plus dollar weather and climate events in the US. That's more than one every three weeks; and it doesn't count the devastating floods in California as climate change supercharges the atmospheric rivers dumping massive amounts of rain on the state.

### What You Can Do

Each year, Katharine adopts two new climate-friendly habits. Last year, she swapped out her dishwasher and laundry detergent for plastic-free, plant-based products. She also started a newsletter and a Tik-Tok account (because talking about climate is the most important thing we can do!). This year, she moved; so she sold her solar panels to the new homeowners and signed up for a 100% green power plan instead. There's probably one where you live. In Texas, wind and solar save a lot of money: \$20 million a day, across the state! Katharine is going to buy a fully electric car replacement this year.

What are your New Year's resolutions? How can they help you live out your values and start conversations about climate with people in your life?

## 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  
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.



## Ash Wednesday Worship Service



6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday, February 21

## Lenten Taizé Soup Dinners

The Lenten season is quickly approaching, and this year we are bringing back soup suppers after the Wednesday night Taizé worship services! We know there are some great soup makers out there and we are looking for you!



Please contact Sara Shambarger at [sara.shambarger1012@gmail.com](mailto:sara.shambarger1012@gmail.com) if you are able to provide a pot of soup or loaf of bread on March 8, 15, 22, or 29. We anticipate needing 4-5 soups for each evening.

*Thank you!*

## Save the Date!

Wednesday, March 1  
7 p.m.  
First Presbyterian Church



**The Alma College Choir has added FPGH to their spring concert tour! Invite your friends and family for an evening of beautiful choral music.**

### 2022/23 Season

## Community Artist & Speaker Series of FPGH March 19, 4 p.m.

As the Director of Sacred Music at Our Lady of the Lake in Holland, Michigan, Audrey oversees and directs the sacred music at all parish liturgies. She leads the OLL choirs, rehearses with cantors and instrumentalists, and helps with the musical planning for weddings and funerals.

Audrey works with school cantors for the Corpus Christi Catholic School weekly Mass and teaches on topics related to sacred music.

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



## January Youth Retreats

Last month we had our two youth retreats. We started with the High School retreat to Camp Geneva. We spent the weekend playing games, eating snacks and getting to know each other on a deeper level. During our sessions, we talked about how we are God's Beloved Sons and Daughters. We used the book *Life of the Beloved* by Henri Nouwen as the framework for our sessions. In our lives, there are always moments where we are being Taken (Chosen), Blessed, Broken, and Given for the sake of the world. God is moving in all of those areas, and claiming those things is part of knowing that we are the Beloved.

January 27-29 we had our Middle School retreat at Camp Geneva! This is a retreat that is planned and programmed by Geneva. We went sledding, climbed the rock wall, played 9-Square, played games and drank frappuccinos. Lots and lots of frappuccinos. During our sessions and small group times we talked about a few different questions: "What is my identity, where do I fit in, and what is my purpose?" The main takeaways from the weekend is that our identity is first and foremost in Christ, we ALWAYS fit in at youth group, and our purpose is to share the love of Christ with others.

Both weekends were amazing and I am so excited to see how the experience will shape the faith lives of our students!

## 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

### What's Happening in February

- Feb. 5: Normal Youth Group
- Feb. 12: No Youth Group
- Feb. 19: Movie Night
- Feb. 26: Normal Youth Group

For questions feel free to reach out to Hannah Post at [HPost@fpg.org](mailto:HPost@fpg.org)

## Fellowship Events

Mark Your Calendars!

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner & Game Night

Tuesday, February 21

6 p.m. in the Church Lounge

The Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner is back and better than ever!

**What makes it better? The dinner is FREE, and nobody has to watch the church staff dance!**



After dinner, instead of a talent show, we'll have a game night, with games for people of all ages. Please plan to join us for this fun, intergenerational event!



**FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH**

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)

**February 2023**

*deliver to: (or current resident)*

**Your donation**

to **Hand2Hand**

delivers hope to students  
who are experiencing food  
insecurity over the weekend  
and on extended school breaks.

If you would like to donate,  
you can write a check to  
First Presbyterian Church and  
designate the Hand2Hand fund  
on the memo line.



**What about  
the weekend?**

Hand2Hand provides  
food for kids facing  
weekend hunger  
in West Michigan.



**hand2hand**<sup>®</sup>  
because a hungry child hurts