



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

JUNE 2023, VOLUME 71—ISSUE 6

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

THIS past month I had the privilege of speaking at an event celebrating our church's Ferry Legacy Society (FLS). The FLS formed shortly before I arrived. It's purpose is to grow legacy planning and giving to First Pres to sustain the church in the future and to provide resources to be the kind of church God will call us to be. The FLS has grown from 14 members in 2016 to 39 today. I am so grateful for their commitment, and I hope you might consider joining too.

My talk focused on the state of the church post-pandemic. Since not everyone was there, I'd like to share those points with you in *The Tidings*. First, blessedly, the church has fared pretty well in terms of membership and finances. While we all would like to see faster growth and deeper engagement, the church does have more members now than when the pandemic hit. On the financial side, the Session and Trustees have been prudent in spending and saving. The congregation has been faithful in giving. We are able to make budget now, but with inflation, we do need to find ways to increase revenues in the future.

Second, we are learning to value digital ministry. We are very fortunate to have Harry Nienhouse and his crew keeping our audio-visual equipment on point. When the pandemic hit, we were already streaming services. Since then we have enhanced how we stream. You all have heard my pleas for returning to church in person, but I also know that our online presence is important to some of our members and has been a vehicle for new folks checking us out. We are looking at more ways to do ministry well online, particularly so our busy folks can engage with the church in times and places that fit into their lives.

Third, our church is blessed by amazing people, many of whom have served in leadership places for decades. Still, it is clear that we have had to rely on too small a pool of aging leaders to keep things humming, particularly over the past three years. The church relies on countless volunteers to operate. Almost one-third of our congregation is over 70 years old, and while many in that age range are still fabulous leaders, we do need to entrust more leadership into people who are younger. This likely means that we have to shift our expectations of what serving the church looks like, particularly because most households have two working adults in them now.

Fourth, we need to learn how to reach out more effectively to young adults. Many in that age range haven't been in a church in a long time, and entering our building for worship would feel like entering a foreign land. The things we take for granted are new to them. Polls show that religiously unaffiliated Americans is now up to 30% of the population. During the

(Continued on page 3)

Upcoming Events

- June 4** Rob Hlebinsky Organ Recital
- June 7** Silver Linings Presentation
- June 25** Sixth Annual Golf Scramble
- June 27** Picnic in the Park (Pottawattomie)
- July 16** Waterfront Worship
- July 16-21** Youth Group Mission Trip



A presentation
by Jane Anderson from
Mosaic Counseling

**HOW TO LIVE WITH PURPOSE
IN YOUR RETIREMENT YEARS**

**Wednesday, June 7
6 p.m.
at FPGH**

**Please RSVP to Pastor Kristine:
KristineAB@fpgh.org**

This event is free
and all are welcome!



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

FPGH Cares:

Please let us know about births, baptisms, hospitalizations and prayer requests. Contact Karen Nienhouse at knienhouse@fpgh.org

Prayer Concerns:

Mary & Ron Albrecht, Joyce Black, Richard Klecka, Dick Christy, Bob Kenrick, and Frank Miller

Our Sympathy:

to Ron and Mary Albrecht on the passing of Mary's brother, David Baron, on April 25.

to Tom, Ficitla & Ryan Braak on the passing of Tom's father, Larry Braak, on May 1.

to Steve VanderWall on the passing of his cousins, Mick Door on May 2, and Jeanne Nietering on May 15.

to Leon Conklin & Brenda Jeisy Conklin on the passing of Leon's mother, Ellen, on May 7.

to Tina & John Ramones on the May 10th passing of John's mom, Sue Ramones.

to Tina VanderWall on the passing of her stepfather, Paul Schipper, on May 11.

to Frank and Karen Miller on the passing of their brother-in-law, Jim Wolfe, on May 17.

Our Sympathy:

to Ken Clark on the passing of his wife, Bea, on May 23.

Congratulations!

to Shane and Rachel Morr on the birth of daughter Rosemary Mia on May 1. Rose is also the new baby sister of Jude Morr.

Robin and Bob Eidson on the birth of their grandson, Hayes Mckinnley, on May 3.

to Pat Rickert, on the birth of her great-granddaughter Violet, on May 31.

Thank You:

"Dear Church Family,

I would like to thank you for the many prayers and notes of encouragement you sent to my parents, John and Margaret Beery, during my dad's illness. Each note meant so much to them and your prayers were felt by our whole family. My dad is home and doing well, gaining strength every day, and enjoying life in the woods where they live. Thank you for being a community that prays and cares for all. You are amazing!

Sincerely,
Maryanne Beery

"Thank you so very much for the many cards we received at the death of Leon's mother Ellen Conklin. She was a teacher and a devout Christian. We are sad to see her leave this earth but happy she is now whole and dancing in the presence of her Lord."

-Leon and Brenda Jeisy Conklin

Tidings article deadline for July 2023 issue: June 23, 2023

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

Blood Drive June 2

The need is greater than ever.
The gratification is instant.

Give blood.

12:00—5:45 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church
redcrossblood.org

Food Pantry Collection

Each month the Mission Committee collects non-perishable food and household goods for the Salvation Army food pantry.

Here are some items that are requested this month:

- Canned fruit
- Pancake mix
- Crackers (any kind)
- Peanut butter
- Granola bars
- Paper towels
- Toilet paper

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



Thank you!



Every month, we publish birthdays of members and friends who are no longer able to come to church regularly. Make their day special with a birthday card!

June 18 Bill Scott
1410 S. Ferry Street, #B7
Grand Haven, MI 49417

June 24 Judy Fischer
1410 S. Ferry, #E2
Grand Haven, MI 49417

(From Pastor Troy, continued from page 1)
pandemic, the number of self-professed Christians who never attend church doubled from 17% to 35%! We have work to do! Finally, research shows that younger generations view Christianity very differently from their parents and grandparents. In a book released by the Barna Research Group called *unChristian*, surveys reveal that younger generations like Jesus but have several issues with the church. They view the church as hypocritical, only concerned with salvation, anti-homosexual, sheltered, too political, and judgmental. I would add to that list that people think the church and Christian nationalism are connected,

and this is also repelling people. Now, the good news? I don't think that First Pres fits that perception, but I do think this is an opportunity for us to be bolder in our witness for following Jesus in a way that is gracious, open, loving, and open-minded. So, as we keep ourselves centered on Jesus, let's strive to be the kind of community that our wider community needs.

In Christ,

Pastor Troy

It's Easy to Give!

Thank you for continuing to support the ministries of First Presbyterian Church. Your joyful and enthusiastic support helps our ministries continue!



Here 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
- Text FPGH to 73256

Thank you for your generosity!

From Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce

Dear Church Family,

I want to let you know about an upcoming event that I'm very excited about. On **Wednesday, June 7th at 6 pm in the church lounge, Jane Anderson of Mosaic Counseling will give a presentation called "Silver Linings."** At this event, Jane will explore with those of us in our retirement years, and those of us about to enter our retirement years, how we can still have God-given purpose in our church and in the community.

Jane is a licensed counselor and gave a presentation at our church last year about how to deal with anxiety due to the pandemic. Jane is an engaging speaker who is committed to helping people see how Jesus has uniquely gifted each one of us. This has led her to create a presentation that explores how our journey of growing older coincides with Moses's journey in faith.

Like Moses, our lives are full of unforeseen plot twists. We can't anticipate what life throws at us, and while we can guess what the challenges of growing older will be like we don't truly know what to expect until we are in it. Jane's and my hope is that we are able to discern that while we have less energy as we age we still have so much to offer to the church and the community.

Light refreshments will be served so to help us prepare for this please RSVP to staff@fpg.org or follow this link: <https://tinyurl.com/bkcezzjf>

I really hope you can make it and feel free to invite friends to come along with you!

Grateful for you,

Pastor Kristine



Pastor Kristine and Flat Jesus were spotted hanging out with Joyful Noise kids in our new play areas!

It's for the Kids!

Enter to Win a Brand New Broil King Grill!

Do you want to support Joyful Noise but can't make it to the golf scramble? Or do you just love a good burger but need a new grill? As part of the 6th Annual Golf Scramble "Fun" Raiser, we're giving you the opportunity to win a spectacular Broil King gas grill!

For just \$5 per ticket, you have the chance to win a new Broil King Baron 420 Pro Grill, generously donated by Rycenga Building Center. And to sweeten the deal, we're throwing in a \$25 gift certificate to Frank's Market. The raffle is open to everyone in the FPGH congregation and Joyful Noise family, and you don't need to be present at the golf scramble to win. The grill is on display in the church Gathering Area.



All proceeds from the raffle will benefit the continued enhancements of the newly renovated outdoor play spaces used by the children of Joyful Noise and FPGH. Raffle tickets may be purchased in the church or Joyful Noise offices, or from one of the golf scramble committee members on Sundays. Good luck!!

From the Racial Justice Committee

"Free at Last! Free at Last!"

The iconic words in the title of this article would be recognized by most Americans as well as people around the world. On that bright day on the steps of the Abraham Lincoln Memorial, Martin Luther King, Jr. shared his "dream." For the enslaved people in Texas in 1865 the words could have, and probably were, spoken in earnest. Two years after the Emancipation Proclamation these early Americans discovered that they had been "free people" for over two years.

Lincoln's "Emancipation Proclamation" in 1863 did not end slavery in the United States. The proclamation only applied to the states in rebellion and was intended as a war measure to encourage enslaved people in those states to "break their chains" and rush to support the Union's efforts to quell the rebellion. Since the proclamation only applied to enslaved people in the confederacy, some even question the legality of it since Lincoln was not the president of those confederate

states. Celebrated as such, the Emancipation Proclamation was the first official effort to free enslaved people in the colonies of America.

On June 19, 1865 — over 2 years after President Lincoln declared all enslaved persons free — Major General Gordon Granger and Union Army troops marched to Galveston, Texas, enforced the Emancipation Proclamation, and freed the last enslaved Black Americans in the United States.

The term "Juneteenth" references the date of the holiday, combining the words "June" and "nineteenth." The term often draws skeptical query from those not familiar with this history and jubilation from those whose ancestors experienced that time. Juneteenth is growing across communities as a day to celebrate official freedom for people who had waited so long.

With the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, Juneteenth in 1865, and the Thirteenth Amendment,

later in 1865, many Americans of African Ancestry were able to shout: "Free at Last! Free at Last! Thank God Almighty we're free at last."

President Joe Biden signed legislation that made Juneteenth a federal holiday in June of 2021. All 50 states and the District of Columbia have designated Juneteenth as a permanent paid and/or legal holiday through legislation or executive action.

Written by George Barfield



Represent the Presbytery of Lake Michigan at the 226th PC(USA) General Assembly!

Applications now are being accepted from individuals interested in serving during the hybrid assembly which will include on-line committee meetings June 25-27, 2024 and in-person plenary meetings June 30-July 4, 2024 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The presbytery plans to elect (2) teaching elder commissioners, (2) ruling elder commissioners and (1) YAAD (Young Adult Advisory Delegate)—plus alternates — during its September 16, 2023 Stated Meeting. To fill out an application, you may follow this link: [GA Commissioner Application](#).

Click on the picture below for a brief video about Utah and the 226th General Assembly. If you have never been to Utah, this might convince you to fill out an application! (You may also type: vimeo.com/730402143 in your search bar).



If you have questions, please contact Bill Bussell at BillBussell@gmail.com or 616-846-0487.

Update from the Session

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

Highlights:

- We spent time working on visioning, thinking about the state of our ministry and about how we might adjust things to be more effective.
- We initiated a review of the membership rolls. Communication has been sent to members who have become disconnected from the congregation.
- We approved wording for the Operations Manual that clarifies the church as a weapons-free zone.
- We approved elder commissioners for the June presbytery meeting.
- The pastors reported that they are helping lead communion with Father Jared Cramer at the June Pride Worship Service.

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

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

Sunday Morning Faith Formation Class with Matt Bruce

Beginning June 4, and throughout the summer, the "How to Read the Bible" group will shift gears a bit and examine how Christian faith (doctrine) impacts the Christian life. All too often the major Christian doctrines seem both unnecessarily complicated, and moreover unimportant, for our day to day lives. Yet the truth of the matter is that the basic tenets of the Christian faith are immanently practical.

We will discuss such issues as: How might the doctrine of the Trinity direct us to love our neighbors – and our enemies! How might our understanding of Jesus' death for our salvation impact what we think about violence and warfare? How might our understanding of the Lord's Supper call us to serve the poor and oppressed?

Class meets in the Rec. Room on the lower level on Sundays between worship services (10-11 a.m.) and is led by Dr. Matt Bruce.

The Harvest Table is Back!

The "Harvest Table" will be open for sharing beginning June 4 and every Sunday during the growing and harvest season!

Bring your early produce and any extra bulbs, seedlings or plants/ roots for spring planting. This is a great opportunity to get fresh foods and new plants for your garden. Please bring your own paper or other reusable bags to carry your goodies home.

Thank you,
from the Earth Care Team

Do You Know the Health Benefits of Singing?

1. Reduces stress
2. Improves mood
3. Lowers blood pressure
4. Improves breathing
5. Reduces perceived pain
6. Boosts immune system
7. Improves sense of rhythm
8. Forges comforting memories
9. Promotes communal bonding
10. Provides comfort
11. Motivates
12. Empowers
13. Promotes well-being



Summer Pick-Up Choir is back!

It's easier than going to the gym and cheaper than a therapist!

Join the voices of our Geneva Choir on Sundays, July 23 & 30 at 8:00 a.m. (in the sanctuary) for rehearsal, and then sing for worship at 9:00 a.m. All are welcome!

Questions? Contact Maryanne: mbeery@fpgh.org

Congrats Scholarship Recipients!

Congratulations to our graduating high school seniors who are the recipients of this year's James and Lois Hillis Scholarship!

To receive the scholarship, applicants must be a participating member of First Presbyterian Church and be pursuing education or training after high school including, but not limited to, two and four-year colleges and technical schools.

This year's scholarship recipients are Emma Becker, Grant Taylor, and Emma Skodack.

Upcoming Community Artist Series Events

Organ Recital: Rob Hlebinsky

June 4, 2023, 4:00 p.m.

Not only is Rob Hlebinsky our outstanding organist, but he is a huge fan of all things Disney and has an incredible repertoire of music from blockbusters like *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Frozen*. Rob is preparing an amazing recital/sing-along for our last Community Artist concert of the season.



Bring the whole family and join us for what will be a lively and entertaining recital! And go-ahead, wear your Mickey costume!

All Community Artist Series events are free and open to the public. All are welcome.

Win a Prize in the Eco-Sunday Challenge!

The Earth Care Team is sponsoring "ECO-Sunday" starting Sunday, June 4.

For the third year in a row, we are encouraging you to **ride your bike, walk, or carpool** to church each Sunday this summer. (We now have two bike racks at the Clinton Street church entrance). Each time you use one of these methods to get to church on Sunday (or anytime during the week) you may enter your name in a drawing at the station that will be set up in the Gathering Area.

Winners and prizes will be awarded on the 4th Sunday of each month. A \$25 Dune Dollars gift certificate will be awarded each month as the prize.

LEGO Faith Builders

Resumes on June 11
4 years-4th grade

Join Miss Laura as we rebuild Bible stories in the Chapel during both services. The children's Bible LEGO creations will be on display all week, so stop by and see the Bible stories with new eyes.



Flat Jesus Returns

Flat Jesus is a fun way to remember that God is everywhere! You can pick up a Flat Jesus at the Children's Ministry Desk. Color your Flat Jesus and then take photos with him throughout your summer--home and away. Post your pictures with the [#fpghflatjesus](https://twitter.com/fpghflatjesus) or send them to Miss Laura at lburns@fpgh.org.

Also, be on the lookout for our FPGH Giant Flat Jesus at church and around town.



Family Fellowship Fun!

In addition to our church picnics this summer, young families will host playdates in parks throughout the tri-cities. Join Miss Laura and other families for this outdoor fun in June:

Playdate in the Park

Wednesday, June 14

10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Whistle Stop Playground,
Spring Lake

Maybe you already know of this perfect pocket-sized playground in Spring Lake, located just off M-104

on the Spring Lake Bike Path. It's a family favorite. Pack your own water or juice and Miss Laura will bring a snack to share.

Hike at Hemlock Crossings

Thursday, June 22

10:30 a.m.-noon

Hemlock Crossings Park,
West Olive

Pack your lunch and bring your walking shoes. We'll meet in front of the Nature Center, and then take a walk together, followed by a picnic lunch. The path is just under a half-mile (and paved if you want to bring a stroller). I love this little loop, it has a small bridge, river lookouts, and winds through the forest. Let's delight in God's creation together.



Woo Hoo!! We Made It!



We have officially made it to the end of the school year! In May, we wrapped up our normal youth group gatherings by discussing the book of Philippians. On our last night of youth group, we enjoyed some fellowship time at Oddside—drinking root beer, eating pizza and playing games. It was a wonderful and relaxing way to end the year!

But then we had the Jump Into Summer Bash where we invited our rising 5th graders to join us! Mad Dogz came out and provided us with some truly exciting hotdogs! It was wonderful to have so many people (students and their families) come out to the event and celebrate the end of another school year and the start of summer!



YOUTH GROUP EVENTS

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

Here is what's happening this month:

June 4: Hangout at Olsons, 6-8 p.m.

June 14: Hangout at the state park, 12-3 p.m.

June 21: Hangout at Dairy Cream, 12-3 p.m.

June 28: Hangout at the state park 12-3 p.m.

For questions feel free to reach out to Hannah Post at HPost@fpgh.org



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

June 2023

deliver to: (or current resident)



 **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Sixth Annual

GOLF SCRAMBLE "FUN" RAISER

Register Today!

at Pigeon Creek Golf Course
Sunday, June 25, 2023

12:30 Registration & Box Lunch
1:30 p.m. Shotgun Start
6:00 p.m. Dinner, Awards, Prizes

Questions? Contact Alishia Terrill: 616-638-1783 or msugal@tds.net
Brochures and registration forms available at the church or download here:
<https://tinyurl.com/yck6c9ek>