



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

SEPTEMBER 2023, VOLUME 71—ISSUE 9

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

There really are two beginnings in the year. There's New Year's Day, a time when so many of us make resolutions to set the tone for the coming year. There's also the start of the school year, which is also the start of the church's program year. Like we do for New Year's, I'd like us to consider making some School Year's Resolutions. Why?

The past few years have been hugely disruptive to life. We are all well aware of that. It's my observation, however, that those disruptions took space many of us gave to life together as a faith community and gave it to many other things. Some of this occurred naturally — schedules filled in with other activities. Some of this also is the result of breaking faithful patterns of worship and study that were in place before 2020. As your pastor, one of my chief goals is to keep each of us connected to the gospel, and sometimes that means I have to wave my hands and call for your attention to say, "Hey! We miss you. Remember us? We need you and deeply want to see you live a full life while following Jesus!"

This is one of those seasons where I am doing just that. We miss you. We cannot help shape your faith and the faith of your family when you have little to no connection to the church. I see so many of you out and about in the community — at restaurants, at games, at parks — and I would love the chance to add church back into the matrix of your good, busy lives.

So, what School Year's Resolution will you set this fall? Is it getting to worship in the sanctuary twice a month? Is it gathering with a couple other friends to pray for and encourage one another? Is it finding a new way to serve alongside your church on Sundays or by doing ministry on a committee? Whatever it is, intentionality is the key to making a change. I think it's very important for all of us to take stock of our lives in these days to see how we can better nurture faith in our lives, in our homes, and in our church.

You're a part of this church because you love it. Here's my fear: If we take the church for granted, not only will it keep us from growing in faith personally, but also we will watch something we care about struggle to meet its mission because of inattention. That is a tragedy that is entirely avoidable, and it takes each one of us stepping forward and resolving to tend to our faith individually and together.

So, what will your School Year's Resolution be? See you soon!

In Christ,

Pastor Troy

Upcoming Events

- Sept. 6** Geneva Choir Practice Begins
- Sept. 10** Annual All-Church Picnic
- Sept. 11** Monday Women's Bible Study Resumes
- Sept. 11** Project Ripple Effect Applications Due at Noon
- Sept. 12** Tuesday Morning Bible Study Resumes
- Sept. 13** Carillon Ringers Practice Begins
- Sept. 14** Tuesday Night Men's Group Resumes
- Sept. 17** Sunday Morning Classes and Children & Worship Resume, First Day of Children's Choir
- Sept. 21** Thursday Night Discussion Group Resumes
- Sept. 22** Feeding America Food Truck
- Sept. 29** PW Mum Sale
- Sept. 30** Food & Fellowship Sign Up Deadline
- Oct. 1** World Communion Sunday
- Oct. 1** CROP Hunger Walk
- Oct. 8, 15, 22, & 29** Katharine Hayhoe Series on Climate Change Begins
(see page 5)

Church Directory Update

For those who don't use Realm and would like a paper copy of the church directory, they are now available in the church office.



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, Dick Christy, and Frank Miller

Our Sympathy:

to the friends and family of Phyllis Jonker, who passed away on July 5.

to Nancy Hall on the death of her sister, Marge Kane, on July 26.

to friends and family of Barbara Reed, who passed away on June 2.

to the family and friends of Bill Scott on his passing on August 22.

Congratulations!

to Dick and Jane Christy, who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Sunday, August 6.

to Cathy and Mark Rusco on the birth of granddaughter, Reese Florence, on August 12. Parents are Marshall and Julie Rusco.

Tidings article deadline for October 2023 issue: September 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.

Congratulations!

to Steve & Diana Groters on the birth of a grandson. Parents Brad and Kelsea welcomed their first baby, Emmett, on August 22.

Join a Choir! (you know you want to!)

Choir season is almost here, and we're saving a spot for you!

Carillon Ringers

Starts Wednesday, Sept. 13
at 6:15 p.m.

In the bell room, lower level

Contact Rob:

rhlebins@gmail.com

Geneva Choir

Starts Wednesday, Sept. 6
at 7:30 p.m.

in the sanctuary chancel

Contact Maryanne:

mbeery@fpgh.org



Food & Fellowship

Do you like good food and interesting conversation? Do you like meeting new folks from First Pres or getting to know some familiar faces better? Then Food & Fellowship is for you!

F&F is a series of four casual meals from October to June, with eight people in attendance. Everyone hosts a meal during the year, and brings a dish to pass to the other three meals.

Ask questions and/or sign up at the F&F table in the Gathering Area on Sundays from now until September 30.

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
- Canned soups/Ravioli/Spaghettios
- Canned chicken
- Canned baked beans
- Pancake mix & syrup
- Pasta Sauce/pasta noodles
- Peanut butter/jelly
- Toilet paper/paper towel
- Laundry detergent and dish soap

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



Cookie Bakers Wanted!

We are always in search of people to bring in cookies for our Sunday morning fellowship time. Please contact Kerri at kroberts@fpgh.org if you can help!



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!

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

Sept. 29 Ray Harz
Riverside
415 Friant Street
Grand Haven, MI 49417

From Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce

PAGE 3

Dear Church Family,

As I write this it is my kids' first day of school. Both are headed to new buildings and for the first time, we don't have a kiddo in elementary school (insert tears here). I had plans last June for how I was going to prepare our kids for their big transitions, Jenson beginning 5th grade at White Pines and Phoebe beginning 7th grade at Lakeshore Middle School. None of those plans panned out. What did happen was that our annual July trip to Seattle was pushed to the week before school as that worked best with my Seattle family's schedules. The result was that the last days of summer were about getting slowly acclimated back into the Eastern Time Zone (I was a zombie at both of my kids' school orientations last week) instead of peaceful moments set aside where I would lead my children in thoughtful times of prayer regarding their hopes for the upcoming school year.

It's the thought that counts, right? I still want to be intentional about helping my kids see Jesus in their midst as they go about their days, but I realize I need to be more realistic about what that looks like.

Jenson has football practice twice a week and Matt is his assistant coach (I may or may not have committed him to this without his permission... follow me for more marriage hacks), Phoebe will most likely join the tennis team and take private violin lessons. We still remain committed to dinner every night as a family, where we will check in about our days and perhaps try to talk about Jesus. My point is we will need to be creative about carving out time as a family to spend time with God, even if it's only 5, 10 maybe even 15 minutes. However, I believe God will still honor that time even if it's not what I envisioned. Our faith journeys rarely go the way we plan, and that's okay!

On a completely different note, an article was published in the Grand Haven Tribune about the Unifying Pastors Coalition Forum that took place on August 17th. If you have a Grand Haven Tribune subscription you can read the article [here](#). I was a panelist for the forum and as I shared with the Session and Pastor Troy, I was there representing *myself*, not First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven. Unfortunately, this was not captured correctly by the

headline of the article: "Church Coalition Calls out Ottawa Impact" as it is not a coalition of churches, but a coalition of pastors, like myself, who don't necessarily represent their congregations. In addition, the first sentence of the article is also incorrect as it begins with the statement "Four faith leaders representing their respective churches of the Ottawa Coalition of United Congregations." I realize and honor that we as a church have not signed the statement released by the Unifying Pastors' Coalition and that not everyone in our congregation shares my views. I regret that this was not communicated correctly in this article. I am grateful that I serve a congregation in which there are various opinions regarding a whole host of issues, but is still committed to unity in Jesus Christ. If you have any questions or concerns I'm more than happy to connect with you.

Warmly,

Pastor Kristine
kristineab@fpgh.org

From the Session

Update from the Session

After a July break, the Session met in August. Here are the highlights.

- The Session completed a review of the Membership Rolls.
- We had a lengthy discussion about the letter from the Ottawa County Coalition of Unifying Congregations, including what role the church as a whole should play in speaking up about civic issues. No action was taken.
- We received the financial report and reviewed the minutes from all committees.
- We approved becoming a partner congregation to Table Dwellers, a new worshipping community that is part of the PC(USA).
- We approved our elder commissioners for the September presbytery meeting.

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

It's time for the annual Presbyterian Women

Fall Mum Sale

Friday, September 29

11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

8" pots of beautiful mum plants in a variety of colors will be sold for \$8.00 each!

All proceeds go to the missions of the Presbyterian Women

The Earth Care Harvest Table

The "Harvest Table" is open for sharing every Sunday during the growing and harvest season!

Bring your excess garden produce to share on the Harvest Table. All items are free for the taking—you do not need to bring something in order to take something. Please bring your own paper or other reusable bags to carry your goodies home. The Harvest Table is sponsored by the Earth Care Team.



Q: Why shouldn't you tell a secret in a garden?
A: Because the potatoes have eyes and the corn has ears!
Q: Why did the cabbage win the race?
A: Because it was ahead!



I was walking down the street and from a window, a pot of herbs fell on my head...I'm alright, it wasn't a big dill.



I want to tell you about a girl who only eats plants, but you've probably heard of herbivore.

Feeding America Food Truck Volunteers Needed

With your gifts, the Mission Committee of FPGH has sponsored a food truck to help people in need in our community.

If you are able to come out from 9:00-11:00 a.m. on Friday morning, September 22, your help is needed to distribute food and/or carry it to vehicles.

Please contact Mike Weller if you are able to help out: mcweller1@hotmail.com or 616-402-6109 and then meet us at the food truck that will be parked in St. Pat's parking lot on the corner of US-31 and Fulton.

Children's Little Free Library

Dear FPGH family,

My name is Lillian Ver Duin, and I am a third year Cadette in Girl Scout Troop 4670. I fundraised for, built, painted, and installed a Children's Little Free Library for my Girl Scout Silver Award Project!



The Little Library is on the Fifth Street side of the church by the Memorial Garden. It works like any other little library, you can take books or leave books, only children's books though, so any books for children (birth to 4th grade please)!

If you have a large amount of children's books to donate, please talk to me and we can work out how you can get them to me! This project means so much to me because I love reading and not everyone has access to books so I wanted to provide something for the kids in our community!

Thank you for supporting my Girl Scout Silver Award Project!

K-5 Children's Choir

Each week your child will be encouraged to learn and participate using the tools of melody, rhythm, and creative movement. We will sing and play, engaging multiple learning styles, and eventually bring our music into worship.



Practices will be on Sunday mornings in the choir room from 10:15 -10:45 on these dates:

- September 17
- October 1
- October 8
- October 15
- November 12
- November 19

We will sing in worship on Sunday, December 3 at both services 9 & 11 a.m.

Questions? Contact Maryanne Beery: mbeery@fpg.org

In Our Church

Introducing Table Dwellers

Table Dwellers began with a small group of families meeting in homes and asking the question, “How might God be calling us to join together in the rhythms of discipleship and mission in our lives and in our neighborhoods?” This question led to gatherings in homes focused around fellowship, prayer, and hearing the Word. It also got them working in their neighborhoods on composting, a way for them to serve their neighbors and care for God’s creation. Some members of First Pres are also engaged with Table Dwellers.

First Pres supported Melisa Overway when she became trained as a YogaFaith instructor, a ministry she offers at the church. The Table Dwellers group has committed themselves to helping set up and tear down for these classes as well as helping care for the folks who gather for prayer through YogaFaith.

In August, Table Dwellers celebrated two baptisms in Lake Michigan with families who had no church connection.

The Session committed to partner with Table Dwellers by praying for them, continuing to provide space for YogaFaith, helping them with good financial practices, authorizing the sacraments and maintaining records as required by *The Book of Order*, and meeting with them to share their joys and challenges. We look forward to seeing Table Dwellers flourish and witnessing how God will shape us in this partnership as well.



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, Church Custodian

Sally Bryant, Communications Coordinator

Laura Burns, Children’s Ministries Director

Todd Olson, Church Administrator

Marc Felt, Gathering Band Leader

Rob Hlebinsky, Organist

Amanda Miles, 5th & 6th Grade Ministries Coordinator

Karen Nienhouse, Congregational Care Ministries

Hannah Post, Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries

Tina Ramones, Administrative Assistant

Kerri Roberts, Office Assistant

Sally Segers, Joyful Noise Director

Peace & Global Witness Special Offering

On World Communion Sunday, we worship together at Christ's table celebrating that Christ's peace extends throughout all creation. We celebrate with others in every time and place to commit to building a more just and peaceful world. Through participation in the Peace and Global Witness Offering, our church is extending Christ's peace to nurture reconciliation, confront hopelessness, and thwart division in communities.

- 25% of the gifts received will stay right here to be given to the newly-formed Housing Ministry Collaborative. This ministry helps local families who are facing housing challenges such as electricity or gas shut-offs, eviction, and possible homelessness.
- 25% percent will support peacemaking efforts in Presbyterian mid-council regions.
- 50% supports the work for peace and reconciliation being done by Presbyterians across the globe. Cathy Chang, our mission co-worker in the Philippines whose assignment focuses on human trafficking, is one of these peacemakers.

Through our gifts given to this offering, we shine God's light from our hearts and hands to confront injustice and promote reconciliation. The special offering envelopes will be in the pews and at the Clinton Street entrance in late September, or you can text PCUSAPEACE to 41444 to give.



Project Ripple Effect

Project Ripple Effect needs your help in identifying worthy organizations that could benefit from a little extra funding.



The committee will be accepting Project Ripple Effect application forms until noon on September 11, at which point all the projects will be reviewed by the Mission Committee. Forms and directions are available in the church office (you may also [download one here](#)). Completed forms should be returned to the office as early as possible. Requests of up to \$1,000 are being considered.

Please help us to help others.
Your Mission Committee

Thank You!

Thank you so much for all of the school supplies you all so generously donated! We were able to share over 5,000 items with local school children and teachers!



CROP Walk to End Hunger

Team FPGH needs you! You can make a difference locally and globally by supporting the 2023 Crop Walk to eliminate hunger.



When:

Sunday, October 1
Registration opens at 1:30
Walk begins at 2:00 p.m.

Where:

St. Paul's UCC
1401 Griffin Street
Grand Haven, MI 49417

How to Participate:

- Walk the 1 mile or 5k route with others in our community
- Support a walker with a generous donation (look for a CROP Walk table in the Gathering Area in late September)
- Give a donation to the team envelope in the church office (checks written to CWS/CROP)
- Pray for the CROP Walk and the poor and hungry
- Use the online donation option: <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2023/event/grandhavenmi>

Help show our love and caring to neighbors around the block and around the world. Every step and every donation helps end hunger!

Did you know... FPGH Composts!

We are always looking for ways to reduce waste, and our latest efforts involve composting!

In addition to coffee grounds and food waste, we are now using compostable plates, cups and utensils when washable versions are not available. Compost trash bins are clearly marked—thank you for helping us be green!

Sabbath in the Suburbs Book Group September 27-November 15

As we enter a new school year, what are your school year resolutions? One of Laura's is to live more intentionally. Is there a way to be proactive and not just reactive to our schedules? Journey with Laura through the book *Sabbath in the Suburbs*.

The book chronicles a busy family's commitment to a one-year practice of Sabbath-keeping—living into Sabbath time in spite of all the chaos. Jesus didn't wait until the his healing was complete, he made time to be with God in the middle of messy life! Contact Laura, lburns@fpgh.org for more information and a copy of the book.



Bridge Ceremony for 5th Grade

There is a lot going on in the life of our church on September 10. On that Sunday we will have one worship service at 10 a.m. At that service, we will have our 5th Grade Bridge ceremony where students will bid farewell to their time in Children in Worship and move into youth group and worshipping with the rest of the congregation. **If your 5th graders plan on participating in this service, please reach out to Amanda Miles (amiles@fpgh.org).**

Immediately following church on the 10th, please join us for an all-church picnic at Pottawatomie Park! This is a great way for our whole church to celebrate the end of summer and look forward to our fall programming.

Summer Wrap Up/Fall Kick-Off!

Summer is officially over, but there is so much to look back on from this season to be grateful for! This summer we went on a mission trip to Harrisburg, PA where we were given the opportunity to interact with the community in a lot of different and meaningful ways. Our Summer Hangout events were a lot of fun and great opportunities for us to get to know our rising 5th graders and introduce them to all of the fun that they can look forward to at youth group this year.



Now that summer has reached its end, we can look forward to fall kick-off! Mark your calendars for September 17 for our Kickball Kick-off! We will meet at Mercury Park in Grand Haven for a few rounds of kickball, 9-square, and pizza. The following week we will be back in the newly updated Fellowship Hall for our normal youth group gatherings.

YOUTH GROUP EVENTS

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

A typical schedule looks like this:

- 5:30—game
- 5:50—dinner
- 6:20—worship
- 6:30—Bible-based discussion (5th & 6th grades with Amanda, 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

Youth Group Dinner & Clean-Up

Having families and other members of our congregation provide dinner and help us with the dishes is such a blessing for our students and leaders. If you would like to provide a meal or help with clean up this semester, you can sign up [here](#).

You may also contact Hannah Post to sign up: HPost@fpgh.org or 616-842-6760.



SEPTEMBER

- 10:** 5th/6th Grade Bridge Service
All-Church Picnic
- 17:** Youth Group Kick-off
- 24:** Youth Group



Remember to pick up a "YOUTH" Bingo board at the Family Ministries desk, complete as many Y-O-U-T-H lines as you can and turn it in by September 17!

You will win a prize for each line completed!



**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

September 2023

deliver to: (or current resident)

**all church
PICNIC**

Sunday, September 10

- 10 a.m. combined worship service at church
- Picnic at Pottawatomie Park immediately following worship

New This Year: Adults/Kids Cornhole Tournaments!!