



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

NOVEMBER 2023, VOLUME 71—ISSUE 11

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

AT the beginning of November, I am leading a team of 16 people in mission to Orange Walk, Belize. I have been partnered with Koinonia Ministries for the past decade, and this will be my fifth trip there — my first in four years. This trip is also the third time FPGH has sent a team to Belize, with a fourth trip planned next summer for our youth.

We have several projects on our agenda. First, we are bringing loads of tutoring materials with us. Our team will help train Koinonia's members with tutoring elementary students in math and reading. This plays into the gifts of our team and helps Koinonia in its consistent work with the children and youth of their community. Second, we'll be assisting with some painting and maintenance around their church facility. Third, we'll be working with the children's and youth groups, as we share faith and life together. The centerpiece of these trips is always on building relationships, and we'll have time to do that over meals, riding in the bumpy van to work sites, and serving together.

Pastor Ed Perez has asked me to preach in their Sunday service, which is a tremendous honor. If you want to see your pastor preach in Belize (with Spanish translation!), you can find Koinonia Ministries on Facebook. Search for Koinonia Orange Walk Belize, and I'm sure you'll find them.

I ask that you keep this mission team in your prayers. We'll be there from November 2-8, and these trips are always eye-opening and faith-deepening for their participants. We all come back with new perspectives and deepened faith.

The first Sunday of November is when we mark All Saints. We remember all connected to our congregation who have died over the past year. In a typical year, this roster is 12-15 people, but this year has been a hard one. We will remember over 25 saints who are no longer with us on this side of glory. So, I ask that you pray for those who are still grieving loved ones. I hope you'll be in worship to give thanks with us for all the saints.

Finally, November is a time when we take the posture of gratitude. It culminates with Thanksgiving, a special time with loved ones for sure. What are you grateful for right now? How can you express your gratitude to another? As our annual Generosity Campaign wraps up, I want to express my thanksgiving for you. This congregation is special. You love well. You care well. You are generous. It's a joy and privilege to be a pastor to you.

Thank you for your prayers and your generous spirits.

In Christ,

Pastor Troy

Upcoming Events

- Nov. 2-7** Belize Mission Trip
- Nov. 5** All Saints' Sunday
New Members Class
Rutter Requiem
Daylight Savings Time Ends
- Nov. 7** JN Evergreen Orders Due
- Nov. 10-12**
Confirmation Retreat
- Nov. 12** Holland Bach Society in Worship
- Nov. 12** Grand Rapids Guitar Quartet
C.A.S. Concert
- Nov. 19** Annual Congregational Meeting
- Nov. 23-24** Office Closed for Thanksgiving
- Nov. 26** Advent Decorating
- Nov. 29** Family Advent Night
- Dec. 1** Red Cross Blood Drive
- Dec. 3** PW Christmas Bazaar
- Dec. 14** Heritage Luncheon
- Dec. 21** Service of Light & Hope
- Dec. 24** One Morning Service, 10 a.m.
Christmas Eve:
4 p.m. Children's Impromptu
Christmas Pageant
8 p.m. Lessons & Carols

Christmas Eve Worship Schedule

Sunday, December 24:

10 a.m. Combined Worship

**4 p.m. Children's Impromptu
Christmas Pageant**

8 p.m. Lessons & Carols

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, Dick Christy, and Frank Miller

Our Sympathy:

to the family of Russ DeJonge, who passed away on September 27.

to Barbara Spring and family on the death of her husband, Norm Spring, on September 30.

to Ann Satter on the passing of her sister. We also offer prayers of support to Henni Campbell and Shirley Shuman, Ann's daughters, who lost their aunt.

Special Note:

A celebration of life for Anne Guimond will be held on Saturday, November 25, from 2-4 p.m., in the community room at Wind Drift Condos, 600 Wind Drift Lane, Spring Lake, MI 49456. In lieu of flowers, donations may be given to the Alzheimers Association.

Tidings article deadline for December 2023 issue: November 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.

Youth Group Dinner & Clean-Up

Every Sunday evening, the youth of FPGH share a dinner together during their Youth Group activities.

One of the students' favorite part of the evening is eating dinner provided by members of our congregation. If you would like to provide a meal or help with clean up, we are currently looking for people to sign up to bring dinner for the spring semester (there are also still a few openings for this fall): [Sign Up Genius](#) or <https://bit.ly/46PIPYf>.



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

Love in Action Community Co-Op Grand Opening

Love in Action already provides urgent resources to their neighbors in need, and now they are excited to offer a food co-op.



The co-op offers an authentic grocery shopping experience for local residents struggling to make ends meet. Residents may become members by paying a very low monthly fee, by participating in LIA programs such as budgeting or cooking classes, or by volunteering two hours a month.

You are invited to check out the co-op at the grand opening on Saturday, November 4 from 1-3 p.m. The building is located at 1500 S. Despelder in Grand Haven.

Food Pantry Collection

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

These are some of the items that are requested this month, in order of greatest need:

- Canned fruits & vegetables
- Pancake mix & syrup
- Canned soups
- Pasta noodles & sauce
- Canned tuna/chicken
- Boxed cereals

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



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.

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!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

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!

Nov. 3 Lany Schoenmaker
17707 Cobblefield Lane
Spring Lake, MI 49456

From Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce

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Dear Church Family,

In her book *Grateful*, Diana Butler Bass writes “multiple studies demonstrate connections between well-being (life satisfaction and happiness), physical health, and gratitude. In heart patients who are asymptomatic, researchers found that people who were grateful slept better, were less depressed and tired, and were more self-aware and confident, with lower risks of inflammation. According to one study, gratitude is a dimension of ‘spirituality and/or religious wellness’; it suggests that gratitude interventions might lower the risk of heart disease. ‘It seems that a more grateful heart,’ says researcher Paul Mills, ‘is indeed a more healthy heart.’”

During this Thanksgiving season, I’m also reminded how gratitude not just affects our health, but also deepens our relationship with Jesus Christ. How we live does not earn us God’s love as God has already demonstrated God’s love for us in what Jesus did for us on the cross. Jesus’s death and resurrection made God’s love for us a done deal.

How we *respond* to what Jesus did for us, however, reflects the impact Jesus’s sacrifice has made on our lives. When we respond in gratitude to God for Jesus’s actions on the cross it shows our willingness to be transformed by God’s grace. There are many ways we can respond in gratitude to God. We can thank God in our prayers. Psalm 100 is a great example of a prayer of thanksgiving. We can also respond in gratitude to God by how we show our gratitude for one another. Paul always gave thanks in his letters to those whom God put in his life to encourage and support him.

This Thanksgiving season I hope we are more intentional about giving thanks to God for his love and faithfulness through Jesus Christ. As it states in James 1:17: “Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” I encourage you to share with God your gratitude for the many ways you’ve experienced the love of Christ in your life this Thanksgiving season.

Thankful for you!

:)Pastor Kristine

¹*Diana Butler Bass, Grateful, HarperOne, 2018, pp. 27-28.*

In Our Church

Update from the Session

Stay in the loop about the actions of your Session! Following is a synopsis of the main points of the last Session meeting:

- We had a detailed, first-read of the 2024 Operating Budget proposal.
- We called a Congregational Meeting for Sunday, November 19, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. for the purposes for electing ruling elders, deacons, and at-large Nominations Committee members and for approving the 2024 Terms of Call for our pastors.
- We approved a new member for the Children’s Ministries Committee.
- We approved the 2024 COLA for staff.
- We approved an update to the Standard Practices Manual pertaining to the weekly offering count, as recommended by the annual financial review.
- We approved communion dates for 2024.
- We approved Pastor Troy serving communion at the confirmation retreat.

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

First Pres Composting 101

The Earth Care Team has recently begun composting the waste generated at First Presbyterian Church. Members of the team bring our compost waste to the Ottawa County Sustainability Center (on Comstock) for composting. The county sends the waste collected there to an industrial site in Grand Rapids, where waste materials collected reach a minimum internal temp of 220 degrees! Because of that high temperature, more things can be composted—including bones, chicken skin, fats (like butter and oil), soiled cardboard and paper, plus the usual foods, fruits and veggies we are familiar with!

Here is a quick guide of what can be tossed into our compost containers:

YES

- Non-coated paper plates
- Soiled cardboard food containers: pizza boxes, many take-outs
- Dirty plain napkins and paper towels
- Utensils marked with a compost stamp, wood stir sticks
- Paper cups marked compostable
- Food: meat, bread, snacks, tea bags, fruit, veggies-if it's edible and left-over it's all good! Even old flowers!

NO

- Coated paper plates (shiny, waterproof, colored)
- Coated food boxes or packages
- Napkins with color or decorations
- Plastic utensils
- Most paper cups (they have a thin plastic coating!) - usually "party cups," Bigby, & Starbucks, etc.

This is a learning process, so we have posted signs above the trash and compost bins to help. If you still aren't sure where to throw your trash items, it is better to throw them in the regular trash can.

The Earth Care Team purchases special bags for the compost waste, and when the bags are full, they are taken back to the Sustainability Center by an ECT member. It makes their job much easier when they don't have to pick out the non-compostable items from the bags!



**Each person can make a difference in earth care!
Thank you for trying each day!**

Generosity Update

It is stewardship season where we ask each of you to submit an estimate of giving for 2024. Letting the Session know your intention helps us prepare a faithful budget and plan ministry effectively.



Please drop off your pledge card in the office, in the offering plate, or fill out a pledge online at: <https://fpgh.org/estimate-of-giving-for-2024/>.

For questions, please call the office (616-842-6760), or email Todd Olson at tolson@fpgh.org.

Thank you for your generosity!

From the Generosity Committee

Are you 70 1/2 or older with an Individual Retirement Account?

Are you aware of the potential tax benefits of donating to FPGH using a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)?

A QCD is a direct transfer from your IRA to a qualified charity like First Presbyterian Church. QCDs are popular ways of giving because of the possible tax benefits:

- The donation is not included in the donor's adjusted gross income, helping to avoid higher Medicare premiums, increased taxes on Social Security income, and the loss of deductions
- QCDs don't require that you itemize, so donors who use the standard deduction may receive a tax benefit.

Please contact the office at First Pres and your tax advisor to better understand the details of QCDs.

The Giving Tree Christmas Ministry

To help make Christmas brighter for those in need, the Giving Tree Ministry is again asking for donations of gift cards in \$25 denominations starting Sunday, November 26.



These gift cards are most useful from Meijer and Walmart, allowing families/individuals to purchase items of greatest need. Whether that is a gift for a loved one or food to make it through a week of need, your generosity will be greatly appreciated by the recipient.

To increase your donation without spending any more money, you can purchase the gift cards from the Joyful Noise "RaiseRight" program. Forms are available in the Clinton Street entrance. A percentage of

each card purchased will go back to Joyful Noise.

Please help us make the 2023 Giving Tree a beautiful example of God's most precious gift, his son, Jesus Christ.

It's Time to Sparkle!

Do you love decorating for Christmas? We do too, but we need lots of help!

On November 26 at 4 p.m., we'll be breaking out the trees, garlands, lights, and nativity sets and dressing up the church for Advent. It's a big job, but it's a great way to set the tone in preparation for the season ahead. After decorating, we'll enjoy a delicious chili supper (feel free to bring a pot of your special recipe!)

PW Christmas Bazaar Sunday, Dec. 3

Pick up your favorite holiday goodies at the annual PW candy and bake sale!



There will be delicious handmade cookies, muffins, pies, fudge, coffee cakes as well as Chex mix and trail mix. This is also your chance to purchase the PW jewel chip candy!



In addition, there will be home crafted items and gently used Christmas decorations for sale. It's always fun to find something new to spruce up your home for the holidays!

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

Let's Play Dominoes!

Dominoes is a fun game that is easy to learn, and is suitable for all ages. Whether you have never played before or you are a Dominoes expert, please join us on the 4th Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. in the lounge.

Questions? Contact Pat Rickert, 616-558-3335

Cribbage is Fun, Too!

Cribbage is a card game, usually for two players, in which each player tries to form various counting combinations of cards. Each player receives six cards, and the score is kept by moving pegs on a narrow rectangular board. It is considered a relatively easy game to learn.

Even if you don't know how to play, you are invited to join the Cribbage group on the 3rd Thursday of every month in the church lounge at 6:30 p.m. Before you know it, you'll be a Cribbage master!!

Joyful Noise Evergreen Fundraiser

Support the mission and programs of Joyful Noise with a beautiful, fresh, evergreen purchase!

This greenery is fresh, lasts all winter long, and the pinecones and bows add a special touch (this is where FPGH purchases their beautiful wreaths that hang outside the doors at Christmastime).

Wreaths come in 3 sizes:

- 22" for \$28
- 26" for \$33
- 30" for \$40

Swags are \$20, and a 25' garland is \$45

To place an order, you may contact the JN office at 616-847-6600 or office@joyfulnoise.com, or print out [this order form](#) and place your order in the black mailbox in the Joyful Noise entryway. Payment is due on delivery, and checks may be made out to First Presbyterian Church.

Orders are due November 9. Delivery date is November 27.



The Bach Society is Coming to Town

The Holland Bach Society is coming to the First Pres 9 a.m. worship service on Sunday, November 12, and you are warmly invited to experience the beauty of Bach's most famous compositions!

The Holland Bach Society was developed in 2021 to raise an awareness of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and to partner with local congregations in bringing these musically and theologically rich compositions to their existing worship services. This year, the Holland Bach Society will be presenting Bach's cantata *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben* along with selections from Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, his *Violin Concerto No. 2*, majestic organ music, and more.

This will be a special morning of worship with some of the finest musicians from the West Michigan area. Come join us and bring a friend!

2023/24 Season

FPGH Community Artist & Speaker Series

Grand Rapids Guitar Quartet Sunday, November 12, 4 p.m.

The Grand Rapids Guitar Quartet is comprised of four award winning guitarists who currently make their homes in the West Michigan area, Andrew Bergeron, David Martin, Brian Morris and Kyle Thompson. For the past sixteen years they have received an overwhelmingly positive response from audiences at their sold out performances at colleges, universities, art centers, chamber music series and community concert series. The quartet presents a variety of masterworks, Latin music, and original compositions, along with entertaining, informative and often humorous explanations about the music.



The next C.A.S. concert is "The Orchestra and the Organ: Sounds of the Season," featuring Shoreline Community Orchestra and Rob Hlebinsky.

All of the C.A.S. events are free and open to the public.

Family Advent Night

Wednesday, November 29

6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Infants-4th Grade and Their Families

Join us for Family Advent night!

You'll be crafting your very own set of 24 ornaments that correlate with the Jesus Storybook Bible. Then at home, you'll follow the reading plan of one story a day, from December 1-24. After reading the story together, you'll hang your ornament representing that story.



Following this pathway of 10-minute bedtime stories, you'll see God's one big story arc like never before. God loves us with a "never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love."

To help us with planning, please RSVP to Laura lburns@fpgh.org. We'll supply everything you need (adults may wish to bring a pair of their own adult-sized scissors).

I hope you'll join us for family Advent Night and a hot chocolate gratitude bar.



November Nuggets

This month, our confirmation students will be going on a retreat to Camp Geneva. While it is a great time to work through a lot of our class information, it is an even better time for us to build relationships with one another. The retreat is November 10-12 so please be praying for our confirmation class that weekend!

On November 19 we will have our annual Friendsgiving celebration at youth group. Students are invited to bring a dish to share around a very traditional Thanksgiving meal of chicken nuggets and french fries! While we spend some time eating and reflecting on things we're grateful for, we'll start to decorate for the Christmas season.

Opportunities for 5th/6th Graders

On November 19, Amanda will be offering another 5th/6th grade workshop during both Sunday services. This month we will discuss the sermon scripture and note-taking and participate in an activity.



The 5th/6th graders are also invited to attend an advent service project night on November 29. We will be making no-sew tie fleece blankets that will be donated to children at Devos to spread love, hope, joy, and peace to those who are ill.



WINTER RETREATS

High School Retreat:

Jan. 12-14, Camp Geneva, \$75

Sign up here: [HSretreat](#)

5th-8th Grade Retreat:

Jan. 26-28, Camp Geneva, \$50

Sign up here: [56retreat](#)

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

NOVEMBER

- 5: Youth Group
- 12: Advent Canvas Painting
- 19: 5th/6th Worship Workshop (Why We Light the Candle)
Friendsgiving!
- 26: No Youth Group





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: fpggh.org

November 2023

deliver to: (or current resident)

Christmas Flower Dedications



Your flower dedication contributions make it possible to decorate the Sanctuary, Gathering Area and Lounge with the beautiful flowers and greenery of Christmas.

Anyone wishing to make a dedication to be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin may do so by completing the form below and returning it by Friday, December 15, to the church office or by dropping it in the Sunday offering plate. You may also submit your dedication and payment through Realm, our church information software program.

Please print the name of each person you wish to honor, along with your name and telephone number. Feel free to use additional forms as necessary. Suggested donation: \$15/per dedication.

DEDICATION 1. Please check one: in celebration in honor in memory of:

NAME: _____

DEDICATION 2. Please check one: in celebration in honor in memory of:

NAME: _____

GIVEN BY: _____

PHONE/EMAIL: _____

Make check payable to: First Presbyterian Church, with memo notation: "Christmas dedication"