



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

JANUARY 2024, VOLUME 72—ISSUE 1

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

Happy New Year! I was just telling other staff this week that I've been writing 2024 on many of my sermons for the past few months, so I must be ready to turn the calendar to another. The simple turning of the calendar offers us the opportunity for resets and new beginnings. In whatever way you are feeling God's calling to be and do differently this year, I hope that you follow through on that. I also hope that you know your pastors and friends at the church can be a part of these positive changes in your life.

February marks seven years of ministry for me at FPGH. That doesn't feel possible, but it's true. Life expectancy in the U. S. is now 77 years, so I have devoted almost 10% of my life to the church already. I have been a pastor for almost 17 years, and because I have transitioned before making it seven years at one church, I have never had a sabbatical. That will change this summer, and I am beyond grateful for that.

The session approved a sabbatical plan for me and the church that begins around Memorial Day and ends around Labor Day this summer. There will be many more details to come on this, but I wanted to offer you the broad strokes at this point. The sabbatical is a period of rest and renewal for me and my family. It gives us a chance to breathe a bit and celebrate what God has done in our ministry. During next summer, we will not be at FPGH, although for parts of the summer we'll be in Grand Haven. We intend to do some traveling to reconnect and have some meaningful experiences together.

The ministry of the church will not hit "pause" while I'm away. In fact, this is a time for renewal for the congregation. There will be an opportunity to read a book on sabbath for the congregation. It's one I plan to read while away. This is also a time for the congregation to redouble its efforts at owning the ministry of the church. (If ministry stops while I'm gone, then I've failed you! In Presbyterian churches, the ministers are the members.) Pastor Kristine and the session have plans in place to ensure that worship, pastoral care, and all the ministry will carry on while I'm on sabbatical.

If you've ever owned rechargeable batteries, you know that, over time, they hold less and less capacity for a charge. There are days when I feel like I'm becoming an old rechargeable battery. The energy and imagination I have for ministry isn't what it used to be. I am so thrilled to have this opportunity for sabbatical because I know it can launch us together into a new, energized season of ministry. I'm ready for it, and I know the church is too.

More will be forthcoming, but on behalf of my family, thank you for this opportunity. It's a blessing.

In Christ,

Pastor Troy

Upcoming Events

- Jan. 7** Youth Group Winter/Spring Kick-off Bowling Party at BAM!
- Jan. 12-14** High School Retreat at Camp Geneva
- Jan. 20** Sabbath Retreat
- Jan. 21** Family Swim Party
- Jan. 26-28** Avalanche Retreat at Camp Geneva (Grades 5 & 6)
- Jan. 28** Congregational Conversation and Annual Meeting
- Jan. 28** Beery & Beery C.A.S. Concert
- Feb. 2** Red Cross Blood Drive
- Feb. 4** New Member Class
- Feb. 11** Uneven Ground Celtic & Irish Music C.A.S. Concert
- Feb. 18** "Christians and Climate Change" Lecture with Kyle Meyaard-Schaap



Sunday, January 28 Congregational Conversation & Annual Meeting 10:00 a.m. in the Lounge

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

The annual meeting is called to elect at-large members of the Nominations Committee and to approve the pastors' Terms of Call.

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: knienhouse@fpgh.org

Prayer Concerns:

Mary & Ron Albrecht, Dick Christy, and Frank Miller

Our Sympathy:

to Betty Jo Enell on the death of her husband, Randy, on December 5, and her brother-in-law, Terry, on November 28. A service for Randy will be held in the summer of 2024.

to Tim and Keli Olson and family on the death of Tim's father, Milton "Bud" Olson, on December 7.

to Diana and Steve Groters on the death of their son-in-law, David Standring, on December 21.

Thank You:

"I am so appreciative of the cards, prayers, calls, and flowers that I received after my accident in October. I am still mending and so glad for your help since I will not be driving anymore. Thank you so much!"

Dar Hollis

"We would like to give a big thank you to all who donated to this year's Giving Tree ministry. The committee is overwhelmed by

your generosity (over \$2700 in gift cards were donated!) You helped spread Christmas cheer to members of the community that are overjoyed to be remembered at Christmas."

Mike Weller,
Giving Tree Ministry Chairperson

Food Pantry Collection

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

Items that are always in need are:

- Boxed pasta & sauce
- Canned chicken/tuna
- Spaghettios/Ravioli
- Chunky soups/stews
- Peanut butter & jelly

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



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!

Feb. 8 Jerry Schoenmaker
17707 Cobblefield Lane
Spring Lake, MI 49456

Feb. 12 Ed Kinkema
1410 S. Ferry, G20
Grand Haven, MI 49417

**Tidings article deadline for
February 2024 issue: January 23, 2024**
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.

A Sabbath Retreat Saturday Jan 20

**Are you exhausted from the
meaningful but busy holidays?
Do you desire to begin the year
spending time with God?**

Come and join your church family as we enjoy a day with our Good Shepherd. Your heart will be renewed as we spend time with each other and one of our favorite scriptures, Psalm 23.



*The Good Shepherd leads me, guides me,
and restores my soul. ~ Psalm 23*

**When: Saturday, January 20
9:30-3:00**

**Where: First Presbyterian
Church**

**Cost: \$15 per person
(lunch included)**

Sign up on Sundays with Rev. Michelle Olson between services in the Gathering Area or contact the church office.

Questions? Contact Michelle Olson at michelleols@gmail.com

2024 Per Capita

Per-capita is a charge we pay to the Presbytery each year for every member of our congregation. The amount for 2024 is \$40.05

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

Dear Church Family,

Happy New Year! Now is the time when many of us make New Year's resolutions. Gyms will be more full. More vegetables and fruits will be sold in grocery stores. Many will engage in what is known as "Dry January." Most of us will be fortunate enough to keep our resolutions until the end of February, but to be honest I could never keep mine so I stopped making them! At the same time, however, I like having some kind of a goal or something I'm working toward. Not making resolutions has made it easier for me to continue toward a goal when I've taken a detour. I suppose I've still made a New Year's resolution, I just don't call it that.

Whether or not you make a New Year's resolution, I pray you have grace for yourself when you find yourself doing or not doing something you had set out to do. None of us are perfect and God knows this about us better than anyone else.

Consider making it a goal and/or

New Year's resolution to be more intentional about devotionally studying the Bible. What I mean by that is to read God's word to listen for how Jesus is working in your life. In other words, how can what you've read in God's word apply to your daily life? I've been following a great devotion by Sky Jethani called "With God Daily: Devotionals for people who hate devotions." The title immediately caught me. You can find these devotionals at www.withgoddaily.com. Jethani is a sought after speaker, author, and co-host of the Holy Post Podcast. I highly recommend it! It's a devotion free of Christian cliches and is theologically sound. It's a devotion that has reminded me of Jesus's love for me and others, but also pushes me to think more deeply and critically about what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

In a recent devotion, Jethani writes about Rahab the Gentile prostitute who is included in Jesus's genealogy. She was the one who hid Joshua and the other Israelite spies as they

entered Jericho. She did this because she had heard about God's great deeds to protect the Israelites and how God freed them from slavery in Egypt. We tend to focus on Rahab's profession, but the real focus should be on her faith. Jethani writes: "The dramatic part of Rahab's story isn't her vocation, it's her confession. From the mouth of this non-Israelite woman comes one of the most articulate professions of faith recorded anywhere in the Old Testament, and it stands in stark contrast with the Israelites themselves." He goes on to write: "She (Rahab) reminds us that ultimately it is our allegiance to God, not our labels, that matters most." These devotionals are short yet powerful. And if you miss a day don't despair! Each day is a new day to spend with God.

Glad to be kicking off a new year together,

Pastor Kristine

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 approved the 2024 Operating Budget.
- We called a congregational meeting for Sunday, January 28th, at 10:00 a.m. to elect officers and at-large members of the 2024 Nominations Committee and to approve the pastors' terms of call.
- We approved the 2024 housing allowances for the pastors.
- We approved our 2024 Shared Mission giving to the presbytery.
- We had a discussion about the "public-facing" work of the church. How can we do a better job of being in our community and of inviting others to be a part of our church?
- We updated our Standard Practices document.

We approved Pastor Troy's sabbatical. (Details are in his article.) It is our joy to serve Christ as the Session for FPGH. Please continue to hold us in your prayers.

New Member Class

Sunday, February 4

Would you like to become a member of FPGH or are you interested in finding out more about the Presbyterian Church? You are invited to attend our upcoming New Member class on Sunday, February 4, from 12:30-2:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided.



To reserve your spot, contact Kerri Roberts at 616-842-6760 or kr Roberts@fpg h.org

Attending the class does not commit you to membership.

Missions Supported
by Your Giving

Step Up: Housing Young Adults, Empowering Change, Transforming Lives

Step Up, founded in 2016 in Muskegon, partners with other local



nonprofits to create a wraparound care approach for young women aged 18-24 who have aged out of foster care and are seeking a successful transition to adulthood.

Housing, mentoring, educational guidance, and life skills training are provided for these young people within a Christian environment. Participants live in community by sharing a common kitchen, dining, and living area while maintaining privacy in their own bedroom. A house manager lives on site to keep the house running smoothly, and the young people meet with a support network of volunteers and community partners. A maternity house is also open for young pregnant women and their infants up to the age of nine months. Recently, Step Up purchased another Muskegon house which will be for young men, hopefully to open in 2024. Participants in the Step Up program meet weekly with a program coordinator to accomplish goals that include education, budgeting, relationships, and a transition plan. Currently, all of the young women are employed and one is taking college classes while another is taking driver's training.

First Presbyterian is partnering with Step Up to share Christ's love with these young adults.

“How to Read the Bible: The Old Testament” with Dr. Matthew Aragon Bruce

Many of us have started more than one New Year with the resolution to read the Bible more (or maybe even *start* reading it!) And many of us, when we open to the Old Testament, have struggled with the dense lists of geologies, commands, and prophecies, let alone all the foreign sounding names, strange traditions, and complicated history. And so, not a few of us have found that by the end of January we've failed at this resolution.

Yet the Old Testament, with its seemingly strange customs, traditions, laws, and history, is the basis of the New Testament church's faith in Jesus Christ. Come join us as we learn how to better read the Old Testament and discover that the Triune God has given it to us to encourage and deepen our faith in Jesus.

Class meets on Sunday mornings, beginning January 14, between worship services (from 10-11) in the Recreation Room on the lower level.

“Christians and Climate Change” A Lecture with Kyle Meyaard-Schaap February 18, 4:00 p.m.

The Earth Care Team and the Faith Formation Committee are pleased to welcome Kyle Meyaard-Schaap to our church for a lecture about Christians and climate change.

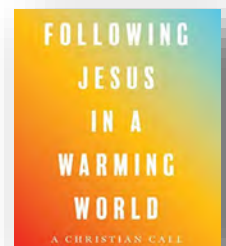
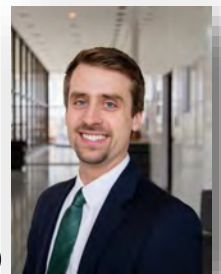
Meyaard-Schaap attended Calvin University where he earned his degree in religious studies. He went on to receive his Master of Divinity degree from Western Theological Seminary, becoming an ordained minister in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. For the last 10 years, he has been working to educate Christians to address the climate crisis and is Vice President of the Evangelical Environmental Network.

Meyaard-Schaap will be speaking at FPGH on Sunday, February 18 at 4 p.m. in the sanctuary, with a light reception to follow. His book, ***Following Jesus in a Warming World: A Christian Call to Climate Action*** will be available for purchase. This lecture is open to the public and we encourage you to bring your friends, family, and neighbors to attend with you.

The Thursday Night Discussion Group Reads *Following Jesus in a Warming World*

You are invited to join the Thursday Night Discussion Group for a study of ***Following Jesus in a Warming World: A Christian Call to Climate Action*** by Kyle Meyaard-Schaap. This is a terrific way to prepare for the lecture by Meyaard-Schaap at our church on February 18.

The group will be reading and discussing this book from January 11 to February 15. The group meets in the Conference Room on Thursdays from 7-8:30 p.m. Please contact Sally Dunn with any questions.



Would You Serve?

FPGH's ministry is run through committees. This is a way of dividing ministry into manageable parts, and it is a way of ensuring that the members are actively owning the ministry of the church. To be the best version of the church we can be requires church members saying "yes" to serving on committees. After the toll the pandemic took on ministry, we are particularly looking for new members of the following committees:

Faith Formation

This committee oversees the education of adults. They are particularly looking for members who are still working age who could offer input on classes or groups that would appeal to younger folks.

Hospitality

This committee plans wonderful

parties that help grow our connections as a church family. If you enjoy holding events with food and like organization, then this is a team for you.



Joyful Noise Board

Our Christian childcare welcomes families and children from all over the community. We can use several new folks who could help advise this ministry and help us develop deepening connections between Joyful Noise and the rest of the church's ministry.



Membership and Outreach

This committee is focused on how we can welcome new folks into our ministry. If you like promotions,

being welcoming, and being a member here, then this is a team for you!

Youth

We have a great ministry to our youth and their families. Many of the long-serving members of this committee have rolled off, and we're looking for new folks who'd love to help shape youth ministry. You do not have to have children or youth at home to be helpful, so consider joining the fun whether your nest is empty or full!



If you'd like to know more about any of these opportunities, please connect with Pastor Troy (troyhb@fpgh.org) or Pastor Kristine (kristineab@fpgh.org).

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
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

Community Artist & Speaker Series

Beery & Beery

Sunday, January 28, 4 p.m.

Classical music siblings have a unique bond, and it's truly a gift to both perform music together and to be able to call these cohorts your closest friends. Michael and Maryanne Beery share the family musical gene, and they each become their musical best when playing together.



Michael studied music at Michigan State University and is Director of Music at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Empire, Michigan. He currently plays Oboe and English Horn in the Traverse Symphony in Traverse City, Michigan, and has held principle Oboe positions with symphonies throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Maryanne received a diploma from the Interlochen Arts Academy, bachelor of music degree from Manchester University, and a master of music degree from Central Michigan University. Her primary flute teachers were Alexander Murray, Joanna Cowan White and Patricia George. She is currently the Director of Music and Fine Arts here at First Presbyterian Church.

The next C.A.S. concert is February 11 at 4 p.m., and features Uneven Ground, a traditional Celtic and Irish music group ready to take you on a unique musical journey.

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

[2023/24 CAS Schedule](#)

The Calvin January Series January 15-February 2

The award-winning January series from Calvin University is once again coming to Second Christian Reformed Church in Grand Haven on the corner of Sheldon and Robbins Road. It begins on January 15 and continues weekdays until February 2, the series will be broadcast from 12:30 to 1:30.

The 2024 lineup includes: Matthew Desmond, who won the Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction; Tim Dalrymple, the President and CEO of Christianity Today; and Tommy Caldwell, who in 2015 National Geographic called "arguably the best all-around rock climber on the planet." For a full list of speakers and topics, visit <https://calvin.edu/january-series/>

In 2024, the January Series lectures will also be available for viewing on one's personal device. To register for these presentations, visit the January Series website at <https://calvin.edu/january-series/>

Stories and Suds: Project Ripple Effect in Action!

Joyful Noise Child Care was one of the many recipients of funds from the Mission Committee's Project Ripple Effect 2023. Some of the money was used to fund "Stories and Suds," an idea intended to keep kids meaningfully occupied while parents are busy with laundry at a local laundromat.

Money was used to purchase the rack and sign shown in the picture. All of the books were donated, along with coloring books, activity books, and crayons. Nantucket Spider donated some single-use packets of laundry detergent sheets. Kids can use the books at the laundromat, take them home to keep, or bring them back and forth. Joyful Noise employees are checking back monthly to tidy the rack and re-stock books and laundry sheets.

With remaining funds, Joyful Noise hopes to expand this program to other local laundromats in the new year!



Family Swim Party at the Spring Lake Aquatic Center

Sunday, January 21
1:00-2:30 p.m.

Pizza and pool party! For kids infant-4th grade and their adults!

Come meet and play with the young families of FPGH.

\$5/person, max. \$15/family

RSVP to Laura Burns, lburns@fpgh.org



Youth Group Updates

We will kick off the year on Sunday, January 7, by meeting at BAM! Entertainment Center in Holland for a Spring kick-off bowling party.



On January 21, we will start a brand new youth group time for our 5th and 6th graders. These students will arrive at church at 4:15 for their game, worship, and lesson. Once

the 7th-12th graders start arriving for youth group, the 5th and 6th graders will join them for some free time and dinner before heading home at 6.

Our High School winter retreat is January 12-14, and the Avalanche retreat for 5th-8th graders is January 26-28, both at Camp Geneva. These retreats are great opportunities for students to step away from the demands of their lives and spend the weekend worshipping together with their youth group. Please be

praying for our students as we experience these weekends together!

Finally, our wonderful 5th/6th Grade Coordinator, Amanda, has finished up her role on staff at FPGH. She has been given a wonderful job opportunity that she just couldn't pass up. We are so grateful for all that Amanda has done for our students in the last few months and we are going to miss her! Fortunately, her family will still be attending FPGH so we don't need to say goodbye!

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 parts 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 looking for people to sign up for the spring semester: [Sign Up Genius](https://bit.ly/46PIPYf) or <https://bit.ly/46PIPYf>.



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



High School Retreat:
Jan. 12-14, Camp Geneva,
\$75

Sign up here: [HSretreat](https://bit.ly/46PIPYf)

5th-8th Grade Retreat:
Jan. 26-28, Camp Geneva,
\$50

Sign up here: [56retreat](https://bit.ly/46PIPYf)

JANUARY

7: Bowling at BAM!

12-14:
High School Retreat at
Camp Geneva

21: Youth Group

26-28:
Avalanche Retreat at
Camp Geneva





**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

January 2024

deliver to: (or current resident)

SUMMER CAMP

It's time to start registering for summer camp!

Did you know that FPGH provides generous financial assistance to children who wish to attend a Christian summer camp?
(...and this is not limited to members of FPGH!)

For details and an application, go to fpgh.org or stop in the church office.
We know this may sound too good to be true, but it really is!! Tell your friends!