



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

FEBRUARY 2024, VOLUME 72—ISSUE 2

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

Lent begins early this year, which means Easter is also on the early side in 2024. What is Lent? It's the season of preparation that leads to Easter. During that time, Christians engage in acts of repentance and often commit to a season of deepening a spiritual discipline (prayer, study, fasting, etc.). The season lasts for forty days, a period of time that does not include Sundays, since every Sunday is meant to be a mini-Easter — a reminder that Christ has conquered the grave in the midst of our journeying with him towards the cross.

So, consider this your invitation to engage deeply with us this Lent. The day before Lent starts, we throw a party. The Hospitality Committee is arranging for a Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner in Fellowship Hall on February 13. The food and the camaraderie is always great! The following day is Ash Wednesday. We'll have a special worship service in the sanctuary at 7 p.m. that includes the imposition of ashes.

On Wednesdays in Lent, we're continuing to hold our Taizé services in the chapel. Those services are at 6:00 p.m. and will be followed by a simple soup supper. I love how these services fill the chapel with prayer and song. I know they are an integral part of my Lenten preparation.

On Sundays throughout Lent, our focus will be on the beatitudes, which are found in Matthew 5:1-12. We'll cover one beatitude each week for most weeks, which means really dwelling in these brief sentences. To help the congregation dwell in each beatitude, we're planning to take time in worship to write collect prayers (pronounced CALL-ect, not coll-ECT). These prayers gather (or really collect) words around a particular theme, in our case a beatitude.

So, come to worship expecting to engage in this activity where we each write our own brief collects based upon the beatitude for the week. We plan to display these prayers (they'll be anonymous) as an art project and to share some of the prayers over social media and in worship.

Why do this? First, we hope it really helps everyone find a way to engage with the Bible more deeply. It will take a little getting used to, but I'm confident that you'll come to like it. Second, this activity will help teach us a new, simple way of praying. I know not everyone is confident in prayer, so this is a chance to help us practice this together.

I'm excited that Lent is almost here. I hope you are too. I look forward to growing with you this Lent.

In Christ,

Pastor Troy

Upcoming Events

- Feb. 2** Red Cross Blood Drive
- Feb. 4** New Member Class
- Feb. 11** Scout Sunday
- Feb. 11** Uneven Ground Celtic & Irish Music C.A.S. Concert
- Feb. 13** Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner & Game Night
- Feb. 14** Ash Wednesday
- Feb. 17** Sabbath Retreat
- Feb. 18** "Christians and Climate Change" Lecture by Kyle Meyaard-Schaap
- Feb. 21** Taizé Worship
- Feb. 28** Taizé Worship
- Mar. 3** Youth Sunday
- Mar. 10** Daylight Savings Time Begins
- Mar. 10** Youth Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser

Scholarship Applications

Applications for scholarships to be awarded this spring are now available in the church office, on the youth page of our website (fpg.org), or downloaded below.



- [James and Lois Hillis Fund](#) awards scholarships to students going on to any type of post high school education or training.

Applications are due in the church office by **April 1, 2024**.

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, Karen Fox, and Frank Miller

Our Sympathy:

to Bob and Sandy Ver Duin on the death of Bob's sister, Ruth McMahon. We also extend condolences to Mike, Melanie, Peter, Lillian & Amelia as well as Rob, Leslie, Sarah & David.

to Dorothy Bennink and family on the death of husband, father, and grandfather, Carroll Bennink, on January 13.

to Carole Groening on the passing of her husband, Wil Groening, on January 20.

Thank You:

"Thank you for the prayers during my recent hospital stay—George and I could feel them. We can't thank you enough."

- Barbara Bryant

Tidings article deadline for March 2024 issue: February 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.

Food Pantry Collection

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

Items that are especially needed now are:

- Pancake mix & syrup
- Breakfast cereals
- Oatmeal/instant oatmeal
- Fruit juice
- Canned fruit
- Shelf-stable milk

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

Mar. 2 Annette Whitney
1450 S. Ferry, Apt. 204
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Mar. 3 Heidi Gassman
17500 Whippoorwill Dr.
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Mar. 12 Barbara Race
321 Grand Avenue
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Mar. 18 Gary VandenBrand
16118 Fillmore St.
West Olive, MI 49460

A Sabbath Retreat Saturday Feb. 17

Are you exhausted by the meaninglessness of the days? Do you struggle to find 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, February 17
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,

Easter is early this year! Lent begins on February 14th (yep, we are having a contemplative and somber service on the day that celebrates love. (More on that later).

You may have grown up in a tradition that did not observe Lent. Lent comes from the Old English word *lencten* which means "Spring Season," which is also the meaning of the Dutch word *lente*. Christians have observed Lent for centuries and it's meant to be a time of remembering and observing why Jesus chose to give his life for all. It's meant to be a somber time when we reflect on our brokenness and our sin, but it's also meant to end in celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter morning.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which this year falls on Valentine's day. A somber Ash Wednesday service would not be a good idea for those who want to experience a

romantic evening (especially a first date), but it is still a time to observe love, specifically the love God has for us. God created us out of love, and out of love God desires to be in a relationship with us and desires us to be whole. We see the love of God most clearly in what Jesus said and did culminating in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. As Jesus told the disciples in John 15:13: "*No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.*"

I'd encourage you this Lenten season to find ways to reflect on the love God has for us and what that has to do with Christ's death and resurrection. One way to do this is to pray using scripture. We will have opportunities to write prayers together in worship during our next sermon series on the Beatitudes (Matthew chapter 5). This may be awkward for some at first, but the hope is that you will feel more comfortable writing prayers in your own words. I also promise

your prayers won't be graded:) God doesn't expect our prayers to be Shakespeare, but God does desire them to be honest and sincere, even if it means being honest about our disappointment with or doubts about God. God can handle it. God just wants to hear from us because that's what it means to have communion (a.k.a. to be in a relationship with God. Jesus desires to know what it is we are really thinking and feeling. When we are honest with Jesus we will have a better understanding of God's love that resulted in Jesus going to the cross for us. My prayer this Lenten season is that we would develop a more real and authentic faith by sharing with Christ our real and authentic selves.

Grateful for you!

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 spent most of the meeting continuing the conversation on the public-facing work of the church, both promotions and connecting well to those not part of the church.
- We approved new members for the Faith Formation Committee.
- We approved the Mission Committee's request to receive the Mission Fund distribution from the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation, as well as their allocation of \$15,000 towards the next Habitat Unity Build.

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 kroberts@fpgh.org

Attending the class does not commit you to membership.

Hand to Hand Ministries

The Hand2Hand Program provides extra food support for the weekends and school holidays for local school-aged children, and has been a ministry of our church for more than 15 years. It is largely funded by donations from individual church members as well as from the Mission Committee, Presbyterian Women and some community organizations.



Every week, volunteers plan, order, pick up, pack and deliver 10-12 nutritious food items per student each week. Food items include a variety of breakfast, lunch/dinner, and snack options.

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

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer with this program, contact Julie Kremer or the church office (staff@fpgh.org).

Cookie Bakers Wanted!

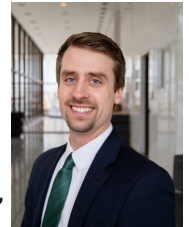
We are always in search of people to bring in cookies for our Sunday morning fellowship time. Please contact Kerri at kr Roberts@fpgh.org if you can help!



“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.



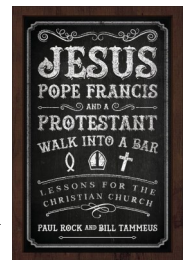
Meyaard-Schaap will be speaking at FPGH on Sunday, February 18 at 4 p.m. in the sanctuary, with a light reception to follow. His book, *Following Jesus in a Warming World: A Christian Call to Climate Action* will be available for purchase. This lecture is open to the public and we encourage you to bring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

Jesus, Pope Francis, and a Protestant Walk Into a Bar: Lessons for the Christian Church

You are invited to join the Thursday Night Discussion Group for the last few weeks of discussion of the book *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.

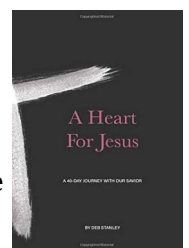
Beginning February 22 and running through March 21, the group will be reading and discussing *Jesus, Pope Francis, and a Protestant Walk into a Bar: Lessons for the Christian Church* by Paul Rock and Bill Tammeus. Please come and join us to see what happens next!

The group meets in the Conference Room on Thursdays from 7-8:30 p.m. Please contact Sally Dunn with any questions.



Lenten Devotions

Our 2024 church-wide Lenten devotion will be *A Heart for Jesus: A 40-Day Journey with Our Savior*, written by our very own Deb Stanley! The book consists of short daily devotionals that include a passage of scripture and a question to ponder with plenty of space to journal or jot down notes. A limited number of hard copies will be available in the office beginning Sunday, February 11. A digital version will also be included each week in the church's Weekly Update email (so subscribe if you haven't already!). The book is also available for purchase from Amazon and The Bookman.



Questions? Please email Matt Bruce at mbruce@fpgh.org.

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:

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
Jodie LaVercombe, 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

Community Artist & Speaker Series

**Uneven Ground
Traditional Celtic Band
Sunday, February 11, 4 p.m.**

Uneven Ground from Muskegon, Michigan, combines their traditional Celtic and Irish music with vocals and instrumentals to escort you on a unique musical journey. Grounded in the roots of traditional Irish music, Uneven Ground presents a unique blend of songs molded from hundreds of pub and folk tunes from around the Celtic region. By teaching the history of Celtic music, mixed with their nonsensical humor, each performance offers you an escape from your busy life.



Figuratively named after the Irish slip jig 'On the Rocky Road to Dublin,' the group has become one of the most exciting traditional/folk Celtic bands to emerge on the scene today.

The next C.A.S. concert is March 17, at 4 p.m., and features organist Nico Tjoelker.

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

[2023/24 CAS Schedule](#)

Tall Vases Needed!

The deacons are in need of tall vases for their Sunday flower deliveries. If you have any that you can part with, please bring them to the church office. Thank you!



From the Earth Care Team Help Us Preserve God's Magnificent Earth!

The PC(USA) has been encouraging all Presbyterian churches to become Earth Care congregations for over ten years. The Earth Care Team has been educating our congregation on the importance of recycling since FPGH became an Earth Care congregation five years ago.

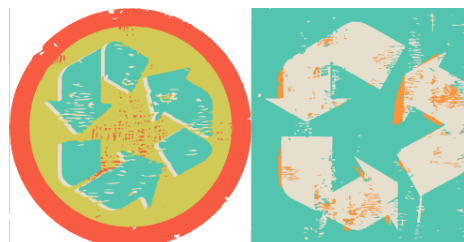
Committee member Bob Day arranged an expansion of our recycling program with Republic Services, without an increase in cost. Our church now has a complete pick-up of all types of recycling items. All areas of our

church are participating in recycling, including Joyful Noise, which has been active in recycling for many years.

The Earth Care Committee has provided recycling/compost/trash containers to use in Fellowship Hall which allows people to divide up their waste and put it in the appropriate bins. Our most recent recycling effort involves a three-compartment Rubbermaid recycle container for the lounge. One compartment collects all items to be recycled and picked up by Republic, one compartment collects things that cannot be recycled and will go to a landfill, and the last compartment is for composting.

The material in the composting bin will be taken to Grand Haven's composting site located just north of the Third Street bridge on Harbor Island, which is free to all Grand Haven residents (finished compost is also available to take free of charge).

We can help preserve God's beautiful and magnificent Earth for future generations by recycling and composting whenever we can.



Children's & Youth Ministries

Children and Worship (in Worship)!

Children and Worship is coming to the Sanctuary on February 4th!

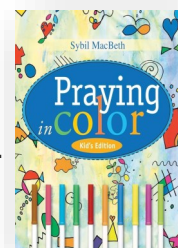
Laura Burns and Becky Yonan will be sharing two stories during each worship service that Sunday: *The Good Shepherd and the Lost Sheep* and *The Lord's Table*. Have you ever wondered what Children's Worship Centers are like? Do you want to experience Scripture in a new way? Plan to join us on Sunday, February 4th, and bring your holy imagination and open heart!



Praying in Color for Lent

During Lent, we'll be writing (and drawing!) our own prayers.

Children's Ministries will be gifting all families a copy of *Praying in Color for Kids* by Sybil MacBeth. Writing, doodling, drawing, and coloring can all be forms of prayer--and it's not just for kids!



It is our hope that we, as a church family, will enter into a deeper conversation and relationship with God this Lenten Season.

Youth Group Updates

Our youth group had a very busy January! We kicked off the semester with a bowling party at BAM! in Holland, welcomed a new 5th/6th grade coordinator (Jodie LaVercombe), began a new 5th/6th grade youth group time, and had a great time at the Avalanche Retreat (5th-8th grade). Unfortunately, we had to postpone



Jodie LaVercombe

our High School retreat due to the bad weather. Luckily, we were able to reschedule to the end of February!

For the next few weeks, our 5th/6th grade students will be learning about different spiritual practices and learning how they can implement these practices into their lives. The 7th-12th graders will be looking at Jesus' "I Am" statements throughout the book of John. We will be diving into what they mean and how they still apply to our relationship with Jesus today.

FEBRUARY

- 4: Youth Group
- 11: No Youth Group (Go Chiefs!)
- 18 & 25: Youth Group
- 23-25: Rescheduled High School Retreat at Camp Geneva

AVALANCHE

Retreat Photos
Camp Geneva, January 25-27





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

February 2024

deliver to: (or current resident)


**Shrove Tuesday
Pancake Dinner
& Game Night**
Tuesday, February 13
6 p.m.



After dinner, join us for a
game night, with fun games for
people of all ages!

Note: we are looking for servers,
pancake flippers, and people to help
clean up for this event. Please contact
Kim Goldman if you can help!

Ash Wednesday Worship Service



7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, February 14

Lenten Taizé Worship & Soup Dinners

During Lent, we are again offering a Taizé—style worship service on Wednesday evenings at 6 p.m. in the chapel, followed by a soup supper in the church lounge. The services are quiet and contemplative in nature, and last around 30 minutes.

Would you be willing to provide a pot of soup, a loaf of bread, or help set up or clean up on any of these evenings (February 21, 28, March 6, 13, and 20)? We anticipate needing 5 soups for each night. To sign up, please contact the church office or use this Sign Up Genius link: <http://tinyurl.com/4chnk8zr>

