



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

MARCH 2024, VOLUME 72—ISSUE 3

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

If you have been worshipping with us in-person or online this Lent, you know that we've devoted time in our services to writing our own collect prayers. This is the first time in my ministry that I've set aside a portion of each Sunday service to such an exercise. I'm glad we've done it. Trying new things stretches us, for sure, but we truly have been writing the "prayers of the people" in this season.

I have the joy of praying through the prayers that you have left in the pews, and I love seeing the personal expressions of faith, hope, and even brutal honesty that are in these brief prayers. It's been one of the clearest glimpses I've had into the faith of the folks in the pews, so thank you for participating and growing with us.

These anonymous prayers are not just making their way before your pastors' eyes. We've been selecting some to use in our midweek Taizé services. We've also started hanging them around the cross in the Gathering Area, with the hope that you might read the prayers of others in your church, find yourself praying along with them, and saying your own "amen" to them. Our hope is that you find your faith deepened not only in the writing of these prayers but also in the sharing of them with the larger community.

With Lent starting so early this year, Holy Week and Easter happen this month. For my time as your pastor, I've encouraged the congregation to engage deeply with Lent and to walk closely with Jesus during Holy Week. Holy Week begins on March 24 with Palm Sunday. We'll have festive services that morning, welcoming Jesus, our coming humble king, on his way into Jerusalem. We mark this Sunday with a brunch between and after services, so come hungry and hopeful.



Holy Week continues with the Maundy Thursday service at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. It's a service that traces the final actions of Jesus before his crucifixion. We'll remember his new commandment that we love one another the way Jesus loves us. We'll wash our hands in remembrance of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. We'll share the Lord's Supper. Then, we'll leave in the confusion and fear of the soldiers arrival to arrest Jesus.



On Good Friday, we'll return to the sanctuary at noon for a brief service. This is a somber, meditative time. We've designed it to have the mood of a sad funeral. I have found it to be one of the most moving services we have.

Easter Sunday brings back the celebration. Our sunrise "flowering of the cross" service begins at 7:00 a.m. with the brass proclaiming that "Jesus Christ is Risen Today!" There will be treats, coffee, and flowers in the

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Upcoming Events

- Mar. 3** Youth Sunday
- Mar. 6** Taizé Worship Service
- Mar. 10** Daylight Savings Time Begins
- Mar. 10** Youth Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser
- Mar. 13** Taizé Worship Service
- Mar. 17** Young Organist C.A.S. Concert
- Mar. 20** Taizé Worship Service
- Mar. 24** Palm Sunday Brunch
- Mar. 28** Maundy Thursday Worship, 7 p.m.
- Mar. 29** Men's Good Friday Breakfast & Worship at S.L. Pres., 7 a.m.
- Mar. 29** Good Friday Worship Service at noon
- Mar. 31** Easter Sunday Worship Services:
7 a.m. Flowering of the Cross
9 a.m. Traditional Worship
11 a.m. Contemporary Worship
- Apr. 1** Church Office Closed

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, and Frank Miller

Congratulations!

To Michele Smith on the birth of her first great-grandchild, Hudson Michael Smith.

Our Sympathy:

to the family of Curt Whiting, who passed away on February 7. He will be remembered at a memorial service on March 11.

to Ann Satter and Shirley Shuman, mother and sister of Henni Campbell, who passed away on February 18. She will also be missed by her daughters and their families.

to Linda Green, Kathy, Janis, Debra, and their families on the death of their mother, Dorothy Miller, on February 19. Dorothy will also be missed by her sisters, Kay McCrea and Elsie Kraai. A memorial service will be held on April 27.

Our Sympathy:

to the family of Shirley Swifney, who passed away on February 27. A celebration of Shirley's life will happen on March 2, from 1-3 in the church lounge.

Thank You:

"Dear friends of First Pres, My family and I would like to thank you all for the wonderful support and love we received when Carroll died so suddenly. We could feel the love and prayers being offered up on our behalf. Thank you so much. First Pres is a wonderful church in so many ways."

Sincerely,
Dorothy Bennink and family

"Dear All,

It was a great comfort to me and my family to hear from so many of you during Henni's illness and after her passing. Thank you for the many cards. A special 'thank you' to Pastor Troy and Pastor Kristine for their visits to Henni and me. It is a great comfort to me to be part of this family of God.

The Lord's blessings to all of you,"
Ann Satter, Stefanie, Graham, Drew, & Gavin Passey, and Jen & Jason Edwards

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!*

Tidings article deadline for April 2024 issue: March 22, 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 this month are:

- Pancake mix & syrup
- Breakfast cereals
- Instant oatmeal
- Skillet meals (Hamburger Helper)
- Canned beef or chicken
- Dry pasta & pasta sauce
- Dish & laundry soap

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!

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

Apr. 9 Ann Satter (100th B-day!)
1450 S. Ferry #122
Grand Haven, MI 49417

(Continued from page 1)

Lounge prior to the service.

We'll hold our traditional service at 9:00 with brass, organ, and choir.

At 11:00 the Gathering Service will happen, with more rejoicing in the resurrection.

I hope you not only make a point to worship, but also I hope that you will invite others to join you in worship. It's a joyful time to be together. All are welcome!

In Christ,

Pastor Troy



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 voted to receive new members and make other requested changes to the membership rolls.
- We approved the annual church statistical report, 2024 session meeting schedule, and covenant.
- We elected our officers — Randy Abraham (clerk), Ann White (treasurer), Tom Franks (president), and Tom Wood (vice president).
- We continued our visioning process about how we are actively reaching out to folks in our community who are not a part of our church.
- We approved wording for the Operations Manual for managing the Koinonia Ministries Fund.
- We elected elder commissioners for the March presbytery meeting.

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

From Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce

Dear Church Family,

There's been a lot of loss within our congregation. It has been a tough past few months losing longtime members and friends. We walk into the sanctuary and wonder why so and so isn't in their usual pew. Then it then hits us that it's because they are no longer with us and grief hits us like a brick. Dealing with loss and death sheds a different perspective on Lent.

When I first became a Christian in high school the cross was explained to me as what God had to do for our sins through Jesus Christ. This is of course true. However, after experiencing loss in my personal life and officiating funerals for so many, the impact of Christ's resurrection for me has expanded.

We are reminded in Revelation 21 that when Christ returns "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning

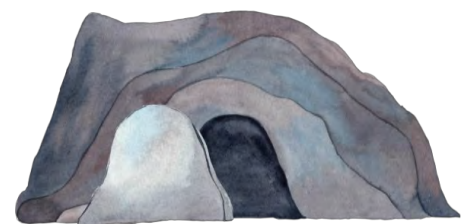
and crying and pain will be no more." Through Christ's resurrection, we have hope for new beginnings in this life *and* the next. Jesus's victory over death gives us hope that extends beyond this life. This makes me even more thankful for God's decision to go to the cross as Jesus Christ. Sin and death were never a part of God's plan for us. God mourns for and with us when we lose people we love.

I hold onto and share this hope with the families I walk with who have lost loved ones. In conquering death, Jesus not only promises new life but that he "will be with us always," Matthew 28:20. Jesus is with us when we mourn and grieve. We may not always feel his presence, but our feelings are fleeting while Jesus is not. As a pastor, I deeply feel the pain of those experiencing the loss of a loved one. In comforting them with the hope of Christ's resurrection, I too am

comforted. Christ's resurrection brings comfort to those who have died and to those who grieve them. I hope and pray that this makes Easter all the more hopeful and joyous even if we are grieving. As I tend to say every Sunday morning, the light of Christ can never be extinguished - no matter how dark things may be around or within us. All because Christ has promised to never leave or forsake us. In this life and the next.

Grateful for you!

Pastor Kristine



HE IS NOT HERE: FOR HE IS RISEN.

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 the remaining evenings (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> Thank you!



The Christmas Easter People

by Katie Norton

Who are you, Christmas Easter People?
Present here.
Present now.
Present later.

Does Christ appear to you here?
Is He present here?
Present now?
Present later?

Does Christ appear to you
In presents gaily wrapped?
Do red ribbons and green bows—and
perhaps purple ones—tell his story?
Do chocolate cream eggs—and
Easter baskets?
Present now?
Present later?

Is each one of us
Sometimes a Christmas Easter person?
Sometimes present?
Present now?
Present later?

(Inspired by a discussion of Christmas/Easter people at a Faith Formation Committee meeting).

Lenten Devotions

Our 2024 church-wide Lenten devotion is *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 digital version is included in the church's Weekly Update email, as well as on the church website (fpg.org). You may also purchase the book on Amazon or at The Bookman.



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

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 as they read and discuss *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. (Note: class will not meet on Maundy Thursday, March 28).

Thinking ahead, just in case you want to order our next book now: during April, we will be reading and discussing *Learning to Walk in the Dark* by Barbara Brown Taylor.

Your Mission Funds are Far Reaching

I imagine most members are familiar with the local missions our church has supported for decades. However, you may not be familiar with how our mission funds also go to World Missions reaching so many who have desperate needs.

World Missions which have received help for years from our church include; Belize, Haiti, Philippines, South Sudan and Honduras. Faithful Christians in these countries may risk their lives in order to serve their Lord, and certainly live with hunger and put themselves at risk in order to carry out Jesus's calling. Gail Miner is the Mission Committee Chair and can introduce you to the committee member involved with each of these World Missions. We have current information on conditions and sacrifices those international workers face while providing their loving services, and will share these stories as you desire.

Please check fpg.org under Missions for additional information on all the missions we support.

Mission Committee

Following Jesus in a Warming World: A Summary

On February 18, members of the Faith Formation Committee and the Earth Care Team welcomed the Rev. Kyle Meyaard-Schaap to lead a discussion on climate change. Meyaard Schaap, who wrote *Following Jesus In A Warming World: A Christian Call to Climate Action* presented a clear and inspiring message that in a warming world, climate action is Christian discipleship. He stressed these four points:

1. It's real.
2. It's us.
3. It's bad.
4. Experts agree.

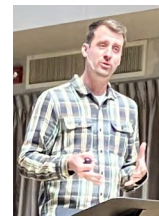
But there's hope.

Meyaard-Schaap taught the audience that an effective way to be advocates

in the fight against climate change is by calling Congress. During the meeting all participants were encouraged to take out their phones and make a call to their state representatives. These are the instructions given for making an effective call:

- Call (202) 224-3121. When the switchboard answers give them the name of your representative and/or senators. You will be connected to their office.
- He suggested this script: "My name isand I am a constituent from..... As a Christian I take Jesus seriously when he tells us our greatest responsibilities are to love God

and to love our neighbors. And I believe that acting to address climate change is a chance to do better." Then urge the senator/representative to do everything he/she can to address the challenges of climate change.



One other suggestion from the Earth Care Team is for church members to buy personal copies of the book because there are useful Appendices with

specific actions that can be taken by individuals to reduce global warming. Three copies of the books are available to borrow on the bookshelves in the church Conference Room.

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

Joyful Noise: Caring for the Community's Most Valuable Treasure

At the end of a conversation during a recent meeting Pastor Troy mentioned the church should provide "... meaningful, tangible service to our community." As you know there is no more direct access to a community's heart than through its children.

Joyful Noise provides safe, Christian care for kids, which directly serves this Christian outreach. As one parent commented, "My family is forever grateful for the care provided by Joyful Noise. The loving, safe, supportive environment gave our daughter a confident head start in school and life, and it gave us peace of mind that the one most precious to us was being cared for and loved when she was away from us, just as we would."

With Joyful Noise, our church has one of the most valuable outreaches in the Tri-Cities community. If you would like to be a part of caring for our kids, you can contact Joyful Noise to make a donation to their scholarship program, which allows for child care to continue when a family experiences a financial emergency. You may also scan the QR codes to the right to purchase needed items for the center.

Submitted by Paul McNergney



If you would like to support learning at Joyful Noise, please consider using our Amazon Wishlist QR Codes to purchase items for our center, classrooms, or specials! You can even have items shipped directly to Joyful Noise at 508 Franklin, Grand Haven, MI 49417. Thank you!



Community Artist & Speaker Series

Nicholas Tjoelker
AGO Young Organist
Sunday, March 17, 4 p.m.

Nicholas Tjoelker is an award-winning Australian-American organist known for Baroque interpretation and is trained in the Anglican sacred music tradition. Nico is studying a Doctor of Musical Arts in organ at University of Notre Dame with Professor Kola Owolabi. He recently completed a Master of Music in organ at Yale University with Professor James O'Donnell, former organist and choirmaster of Westminster Abbey, London. At Yale, Nico served as Director of Music at Berkeley Divinity School. He was also the senior organ scholar at Trinity Episcopal Church on the Green in New Haven, Connecticut, where he served under Director of Music Walden Moore and assisted in the direction of the church's adult and children's choirs.



The next C.A.S. event is a *Messiah* sing-along with the choirs of FPGH and St. John's Episcopal on April 21, at 4 p.m.

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



Outreach

PC(USA) Special Offering—One Great Hour of Sharing

Sometimes it seems like the gaps in our world are only widening. Hundreds of millions of people lack access to food sources, clean water, sanitation, and education. It can be a lot to process. But we are called to come together in faith to bridge those gaps through the One Great Hour of Sharing. Now in its 75th year, this special offering is the single largest way Presbyterians come together to work for a better world by supporting three lifesaving programs:

- **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA)** - works alongside communities as they recover and find hope after the devastation of natural or human-caused disasters in the U.S. and around the world, and provides support for refugees from places like Ukraine and Afghanistan
- **Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP)** - addresses systemic causes of poverty so all may be fed, cares for creation by planting trees in Nigeria and other places around the world, works to alleviate hunger by supporting partners such as Food Depot to Health, which empowers people to grow, produce, harvest, and prepare healthful foods
- **Self-Development of People (SDOP)** - invests in communities responding to oppression, poverty, and injustice, and supports economic entrepreneurs including chicken farmers, bakers, and honey producers in places like Nicaragua

We can become agents of healing and hope, repair and restoration through our giving. Envelopes for the **One Great Hour of Sharing** are in the church pews and at the Clinton Street entrance. You may also give online by texting OGHS to 91999.

Youth Ministries

Youth Spaghetti Fundraiser Sunday, March 10 5:15 p.m.

This month is our annual Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser!



This year our students will be raising money for the service project that our Belize team will be doing while in Orange Walk this summer. Pastor Ed and Pastora Dyna have added some guest rooms above their home to house groups that come to visit. Our goal is to continue some of those renovations while we are there.

The Spaghetti Dinner is a great way for our students to interact with and serve the members of our congregation and their friends and families as we prepare for our time with our friends in Orange Walk, Belize!

The Spaghetti Dinner is on March 10 in the Lounge. Doors open at 5 p.m. and we will start serving food at 5:15 p.m. If you would like to attend, please register ahead of time (instructions at right). The suggested donation is \$10 per person or \$25 for groups of 3 or more. We hope to see you there!

Register Now for the Youth Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser!

For planning purposes, please register for the dinner ahead of time. You may sign up in the Gathering Area on Sundays, or by using one of the methods below:

Venmo:

@FirstPresGH

Description: Youth Spaghetti Dinner

Realm:



MARCH

4: Youth Sunday, Youth Group

10: Spaghetti Dinner

17: Youth Group

24: Youth Group



**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

March 2024

deliver to: (or current resident)

CELEBRATE THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD!



Your Easter flower dedications make it possible to decorate the sanctuary and to purchase flowers for the Easter worship services.

Anyone who wishes to make a dedication may do so by completing the form below and returning it to the church office (or drop it in the offering plate) by **Palm Sunday, March 24**. After Easter, the flowers will be shared with those who are home-bound or hospitalized.

Please print the name of each person you wish to honor, along with your name and telephone number. Suggested donation: \$15 for each 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: _____

Make checks payable to: First Presbyterian Church, with memo notation: "Easter dedication"