



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

APRIL 2024, VOLUME 72—ISSUE 4

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

Easter 2024 has come and gone, and I hope all of you, in your own way, experienced the hope and joy of what the resurrection means. I truly love the rhythms of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter at our church. As a ministry professional, it can be difficult to engage as a worshipper because I'm often thinking about what's next, where I'm supposed to stand, and what I should say. At this time of year, it all settles into place. Thanks for being a church where you pastor can worship!

It's been over seven years since I arrived in Grand Haven. The time has flown! This church has such a big heart. Your ministry is steadfast. Your care for the Tri-Cities and beyond is clear. While much has changed over the past seven years, the heart of First Presbyterian keeps beating steadfastly. You, the members, make up a great church. I hope you know that, and I hope you embrace that who you are makes our ministry.

It is with gratitude that my attention now turns towards a sabbatical. For over a year the session has been working with me on what this looks like. They approved the plan earlier this year, and now we're getting ready to enact those plans. I've been in ministry as a Presbyterian pastor since 2007. Preceding that I was in seminary for three years, and before that I was a campus minister for a year. So, I've been engaged in ministry since 2003. After 21 years, this is the first time I am taking a sabbatical to rest and renew. I am ready for it. I am excited for a new rhythm for these months. I am eager to hear how the church has engaged in ministry in new ways. I am already looking forward to starting a new chapter of ministry with you this fall.

My sabbatical will last from Memorial Day to Labor Day. During that time, my family and I will be spending more time with each other without the pressure of the next church activity. We'll be visiting family in Pennsylvania and Illinois. We'll be enjoying our home. For much of July we'll be exploring the United Kingdom, both because it's a place we want to share with our children and because I have deep family roots there. Sabbatical is about these new rhythms and experiences, but it is also about rest and renewal, so there will be lots of time built in for that.

Summer is a time for the church to be at rest and renewal. This sabbatical offers a similar reset for the whole church. Many of you will be stepping forward into ministry in this season to help the church flourish. I am encouraging a Big Read from the congregation this summer. Ruth Haley Barton wrote a book called *Embracing Rhythms of Work and Rest*. It's thirteen chapters long, about one chapter for each week I'll be gone. Each chapter offers the opportunity for the reader to reflect and journal on their own life. It's a practice I'll be doing while gone, and it's one I hope you'll do individually, with a friend, or even with your family. It really is a book for all ages and stages of life. I imagine this will bear good fruit for you and for the church!

Session has plans in place for preaching, worship, and caregiving while I'm gone. We have several pastors in our pews who will be assisting Pastor



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Upcoming Events

- Apr. 1** Church Office Closed
- Apr. 9** Community Bible Study Begins
- Apr. 14** Youth Group & Children's Ministries Programming Resumes
- Apr. 17** PW Hanging Flower Basket Orders Due
- Apr. 20** Earth Day Lakeshore Celebration
- Apr. 21** Messiah Sing-Along
- May 5** New Member Class
- May 27** Memorial Day
- June 23** Golf Scramble "Fun" Raiser



Blood Drive April 5

The need is greater than ever.
The gratification is instant.

Give blood.



Our next blood drive:

**Friday, April 5
12:00—5:45 p.m.**

**First Presbyterian Church
redcrossblood.org**

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 Sara Shambarger and her family on the March 10 passing of her husband, George Barfield.

to Jeff and Lola Fuhs on the death of their daughter-in-law, Sarah, on March 13.

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 May 2024 issue: April 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.

PW Hanging Flower Basket Sale

Fuchsia, Begonia, Geranium, or Impatiens—which is your favorite?

The Presbyterian Women are once again selling beautiful hanging baskets just in time for Mother's Day!

Order forms are available at church or may be [downloaded here](#). Orders are due by April 17, and pick up is Friday, May 10, from 11-3 (if you can't make this time, let us know and we will make arrangements).

Baskets are \$20 each and all proceeds support the missions of the Presbyterian Women.



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!

- Apr. 1** Lynne Kinkema
1410 S. Ferry St., J6
Grand Haven, MI 49417
- Apr. 9** Ann Satter (100th B-day!)
1450 S. Ferry #122
Grand Haven, MI 49417
- May 18** Pat Austin
17041 Lloyds Bayou Dr.
Apt. S
Spring Lake, MI 49456
- May 19** Jeanne Wynne-Parry
1410 S. Ferry, G-10
Grand Haven, MI 49417
- May 28** Sue McClellan
1450 S. Ferry, Apt. 228
Grand Haven, MI 49417
- May 29** Betty Whalen
1338 Colfax Ave.
Grand Haven, MI 49417

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
- Canned fruit & applesauce
- Mayonnaise & ketchup
- Skillet meals (Hamburger Helper)
- Baking items
- Dry pasta & pasta sauce
- Dish soap & paper towels

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



New Member/ Inquirers Class Sunday, May 5



Would you like to become a member of FPGH or would you like to find out more about the beliefs and traditions of the Presbyterian Church? You are invited to attend one of our upcoming New Member classes!

Our next new member class is Sunday, May 5, from 12:00-2:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided, and child care is available upon request.

To reserve your spot, contact Kerri Roberts at 616-842-6760 or kroberts@fpgh.org

Attending the class does not commit you to membership.

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Kristine. We have a wonderful staff that love the church and will do well in this season.

More information will be coming your way. For now, keep me and my family in your prayers as we prepare for this significant season. Keep your church in your prayers. And don't be afraid to step forward as well. All our members should have a ministry. I pray you find yours this summer too.

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 devoted significant time to considering a restructuring of the session size and its impact on the ministries and committees.
- We continued our conversation about the public-facing work of the church.
- We approved new Sabbatical Guidelines that are now a part of our Operations Manual.
- We heard a report from the elder commissioners on the March meeting of Lake Michigan Presbytery.
- We began the process of reviewing the membership rolls.

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,

A short devotion I read recently reminded me of the story of how God showed up for the Israelites, but of course in a way no one expected. After God frees the Israelites from slavery in Egypt the Israelites, as a result of their disobedience to God, find themselves wandering in the wilderness. While God could have completely abandoned them God remains with them and guides them through the desolate country.

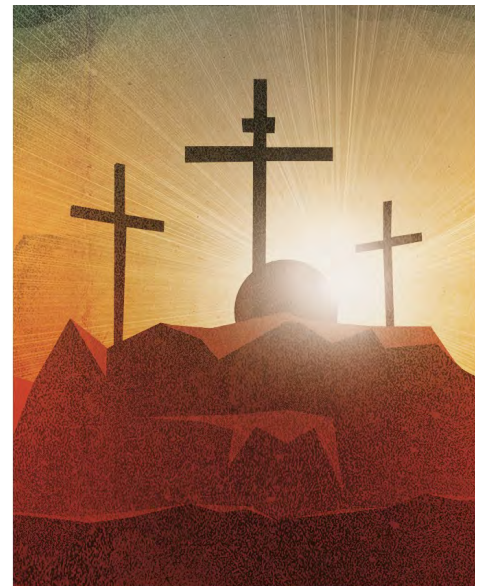
At one point they find themselves attacked by poisonous snakes. After the Israelites cry out to God for help, God instructs Moses to make a snake out of bronze and lift it high on a pole. Not exactly the sign of hope and help the Israelites had asked for. However, when the Israelites looked at the bronze snake they were healed from their snake bites. What a weird story. But

the Bible is full of weird stories. The source of healing God provided was also a reference to their sin and disobedience. They would not have come into contact with poisonous snakes if they had not been in the wilderness. They would not have been in the wilderness if they had not whined to God about missing their life of slavery back in Egypt. I bet you can think of another strange symbol of God's mercy that also points to our sin. (Hint: We just celebrated this on March 31st). That's right...the cross is the ultimate symbol of God's love, mercy and forgiveness for us through Jesus Christ. Crucifixion was only used to execute the worst of criminals. Yet because Jesus was perfectly obedient to the point of accepting death on the cross, our disobedience is covered and forgiven through Christ's perfect obedience. My hope and prayer is that while we are past Easter, we

would continue to be transformed by the power of Christ's death and resurrection.

Grateful for you!

Pastor Kristine



Community Bible Study

Tuesdays at noon,
Beginning April 9

Note: this group will alternate meeting locations between St. John's Episcopal and First Presbyterian Church, beginning Tuesday, April 9th, @ St John's (across the street from FPGH)

All are invited to a community Bible study led by Fr. Jared Cramer from St. John's Episcopal Church, and Pastors Kristine and Troy from FPGH. The three pastors worked together to write the Bible Study entitled "For Such a Time as This." It is an eleven-week Bible Study which invites participants to engage with Scripture and how the Ottawa County Unifying Coalition statement draws from Scripture. Please visit www.unifyingchristians.com for more information on the statement and the OCUC.

The hope is that participants discover how one's faith in Jesus Christ and being in God's word influences one's civic engagement, especially when it comes to the deeply problematic movement of Christian Nationalism. Everyone is welcome to participate. Also, feel free to bring your lunch.

We hope you can make it and as always invite a friend!

Please contact Pastor Kristine with any questions: kristineab@fpg.org



Grow this Spring!

The Faith Formation Committee invites you to check out these study groups this spring (all groups are beginning new studies in April):

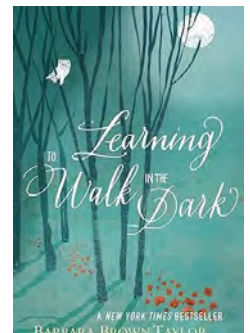
- **Women's Bible Study**, Monday, 1-2:30 p.m.
In His Image: 10 Ways God Calls Us to Reflect Him, by Jen Wilkin
Open to women of all ages
- **Tuesday Bible Study**, 9-10:30 a.m.
A study of the Book of Acts
All are welcome
- **Men's Tuesday Night Bible Study**, 7-8:30 p.m.
Holy Land study by Ray Vanderlaan
Open to men of all ages
- **Thursday Night Book Group**, 7-8:30 p.m.
Learning to Walk in the Dark, by Barbara Brown Taylor
All are welcome



Learning to Walk in the Dark a book by Barbara Brown Taylor

How can we find the light in the dark? You are invited to join the Thursday Night Discussion Group in April to discuss the *New York Times* best-selling book **Learning to Walk in the Dark** by Barbara Brown Taylor. Taylor has been described by Publishers Weekly as "one of those rare people who truly can see the holy in everything." Please come and join us as we learn to walk in the dark together.

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



From the Mission Committee Tri-Cities Habitat for Humanity

Habitat is one of the many local missions that our church supports. It is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry, that is a hand up, not a hand out. Our financial support is currently supporting the building of a new home at 224 N. DeSpelder St. in Grand Haven. This home will give a deserving family an opportunity to have a safe and affordable place to live. Volunteers are needed to assist in all phases of construction to help keep cost down. The hope is to have the home completed before school starts in the fall. If you are interested in volunteering, go to tricitieSHabitat.org or for more info contact Lynne Balkema at 616-846-1505.



Joyful Noise is Celebrating the Month of the Young Child in April

While every day is a celebration of children at Joyful Noise Childcare, April is nationally recognized as the Month of the Young Child. It's a time to revel in the wonder of childhood, and to recognize that the formative years of early childhood (birth to age 8) lay the foundation for children's success in school and later in life. We reflect on how we can better meet the needs of all young children, their families and caregivers, and how we can lift up our early childhood professionals.



One of the ways we do this is by sending our entire Joyful Noise team to the annual MiAEYC (Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children) Conference at the end of April in Grand Rapids. We spend three days immersing ourselves in all things ECE; attending seminars, listening to keynote speakers, cultivating our professional development, gathering new information on best practices in teaching, finding new educational items for the center, and growing together as a team. We leave the conference with enhanced understanding of early childhood education and feeling refreshed, ready to challenge ourselves and bring the best quality care we can offer our community!

If you are wondering how you can support us during the Month of the Young Child, consider donating to our C-Fund (cthepossibilities.org) to help cover the costs of registration for the conference and travel, providing snacks for our staff to bring along on our trip, or praying for our team as we grow professionally and foster a Christ-centered, loving and educational atmosphere at Joyful Noise. You can also help by contributing to the Scholarship Fund which helps support parents who struggle to pay the high cost of childcare (contact Sally Segers, director of Joyful Noise to make a donation: office@joyfulnoise.com).

As always, we thank you for your support! We are so proud to be a part of the First Presbyterian Church family!

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

How to Read the Bible God, the Bible, and Gender: Church Leaders and God-Talk

Beginning the Sunday after Easter, April 7, the How to Read the Bible group will, by popular request, begin discussing the interrelated themes of gender and 1) leadership in the church and 2) how we talk about God. Why for example do we have women pastors in the PC(USA) when the Bible has such statements as: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent" (1 Tim. 2.11)? Do we reject such verses or pretend they aren't there? Of course not! So how do we understand them as Presbyterians? Related to this is the question of how should we talk about God? The Bible often refers to God as "he," yet God does not have a body and therefore is neither male nor female, at least in the sense that we normally think of gender. Moreover, many people today struggle to refer to God as their "Father" or to think of God as male because of difficult experiences in the church, harmful relationships, and even abuse. How can we both stay faithful to the historic Christian faith and worship the God we love, while also speaking of God in ways that invite all people into a loving relationship with the God who loves us?

How to Read the Bible meets in the Rec. Room on Sunday mornings after the 9:00 service. Please contact Matt Aragon Bruce with any questions: mbruce@fpg.org

Community Artist & Speaker Series

The Messiah Sing-Along With the Combined Choirs of St. John's Episcopal Church & First Presbyterian Church Sunday, April 21, 4 p.m.

Together with the choir of our neighbor, St. John's Episcopal, we are once again looking forward to a special *Messiah* sing-along on Sunday, April 21, at 4:00 p.m! Our Geneva Choir will join voices with the St. Cecilia Choir of St. John's and will lead us through this beloved piece of music. Those who attend will be given scores and invited to join in the singing at various times throughout the performance.

The next C.A.S. event is on May 5, at 4 p.m., and features Westbound Situation, a quartet that blends the precision of classical chamber music, the rhythmic drive of bluegrass, and the colorful expression of jazz into a new style of chamber music—chambergrass.

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

[2023/24 CAS Schedule](#)



From the Earth Care Team Earth Day Lakeshore Celebration

Our church is once again participating in the Earth Day Lakeshore Celebration!

The celebration will happen at the Central Park Place (formerly known as the Community Center) on Saturday, April 20, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. The purpose of the celebration is to celebrate our wonderful earth!



Numerous local and state organizations and local businesses will be present to share information and resources on how to be a better steward of our lakeshore and planet! There will be exhibits showcasing our parks, the Sierra Club, electric vehicles, composting basics, sustainable products, along with various activities for children and music from the Prevailing Winds Community Band. GVSU professor Larry Burns will be sharing information about the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) that attacks our native hemlocks, and the Earth Care Team of FPGH will be there sharing how our church has been working to reduce its carbon footprint and environmental impact.

We hope you will come see us and enjoy the Earth Day Celebration!



Children's Ministries

New Storybook Series with Miss Laura

April 14-May 19
Sunday Mornings
10:15-10:45 a.m.
in Room 5



Join Miss Laura for a special 6-week storytime series on Sunday mornings. These hand-selected books focus on creation care -- caring for the earth and one another. Come and make new friends and discover some new stories together--you're sure to find some you'll love!



April 14: [Apple and Magnolia](#)

April 21: [My Friend Earth](#)

April 28: [I love you, Blue](#)

May 5: [Sidney, The Lonely Cloud](#)

May 12: [Forest: Finn and Skip's Rainforest Adventure](#)

May 19: [The Good for Nothing Tree](#)



Youth Ministries

Youth Ministries Update



The Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser was last month on March 10. It was a great event and we are so grateful for everyone who attended the dinner! We hope you had a good time and a great meal! And a huge thank you to all of the volunteers we had to help make the event happen. To the parents and youth leaders, the Belize team, and the students who wanted to support the fundraiser, you are amazing and we couldn't have done it without you!

APRIL

14: Youth Group

21: Youth Group

28: 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: fpgh.org

April 2024

deliver to: (or current resident)



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Seventh Annual

GOLF SCRAMBLE "FUN" RAISER



Register
Today!

at Chase Hammond
Sunday, June 23, 2024

12:30 Registration & Box Lunch
2:00 p.m. Shotgun Start
6:30 p.m. Dinner, Awards, Prizes

Registration brochures are available in the church office, or you may [download one here](#).

All proceeds will benefit Joyful Noise Christian Childcare