



# PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

JUNE, 2024, VOLUME 72—ISSUE 6

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

## From Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce

Dear Church Family,

In the first chapter of Ruth Haley Barton's book *Embracing Rhythms of Sabbath and Rest*, she shares how a bike accident helped her embrace a different rhythm of life. Reading her story sent a chill of conviction down my spine. Like me, she was in her mid-40s on staff at a church full time, while her husband also worked full time and their three daughters were busy with travel sports and other activities. After her accident she reveled in how lucky she was not to have sustained major injuries, allowing her to go back to work after a very short rest. A friend said to her "Since you just got hit by a van on your bike that warrants a day off." It wasn't until she read another author who wrote that when we don't commit to a sabbath, pneumonia, cancer, or other illnesses that stop us in our tracks become our sabbath. This is because we are finally forced into rest.

It wasn't a recent illness that reminded me of the gift of sabbath, but I was still forced to accept a rhythm of rest. In a recent sermon, I mentioned that I, along with my Doctor of Ministry cohort, had the blessing of spending a week at St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, MN. We joined the monks for 10-15 minutes of corporate prayer through words and song in the choir loft of their massive sanctuary four times a day - at 7 a.m., noon, communion at 5, and evening prayer at 7 p.m. It was during these prayer times that I and my DMin (short for Doctor of Ministry not 'demon') friends were forced into sabbath moments. While it took some of us a

while to get used to the liturgy (as not all of us were used to saying pre-written prayers together) I instantly found it comforting, as I needed help praying. I was/am in a season where I need help finding the words to pray. The gift of praying with the monks is that they used several psalms each day to sing or say a prayer. They also didn't just choose the joyful psalms, but boldly had us pray psalms of lament where the author questions God's faithfulness or is honest about how they can't sense God's presence during difficult times. At the end of the week I craved even more time for silence and intentional prayer.

Now that I'm back home, I wish I could say that I'm committed to keeping a sabbath and sabbath moments throughout my day. I'm fighting busy schedules of our kids' last days of school, negotiating who picks up which kid from their spring sport, and my own work schedule. It hasn't been easy and it never will be. I appreciate Haley Barton's description of her journey to keeping a sabbath as a "progression." It takes time to make time for rest and balance. Perhaps you and I could start small with 10 minutes of prayer a day, and then progress to taking a morning or an afternoon a week for intentional prayer during a hike, journaling, or devotionally reading scripture. My prayer for all of us this summer as Pastor Troy is on his sabbatical is that we, too, would progress each day to having a full sabbath.

Grateful for you,  
Pastor Kristine

## Upcoming Events

- June 2** Rob Hlebinsky Recital for Community Artist Series
- June 7** Feeding America Food Truck
- June 7** Red Cross Blood Drive
- June 12** Playground Meet-up at Whistle Stop Playground
- June 13** Youth Family & Friends Whitecaps Game
- June 18** All-Church Picnic at Rycenga Park
- June 22** Summer of Sabbath Book Conversation
- June 23** Golf Scramble "Fun" Raiser
- July 10-17** Youth Belize Mission Trip
- July 10** Playground Meet-up at The Imagination Station
- July 20** Summer of Sabbath Book Conversation
- July 24** Family Hike and Play at Coast Guard Park
- Aug. 13** Hotdogs and Ice Cream on the Church Playground
- Aug. 14** Playground Meet-up at Tanglefoot Splashpad
- Aug. 24** Summer of Sabbath Book Conversation

## SUMMER HOURS HAVE BEGUN!

Through Labor Day,  
the church office will close  
at noon on Fridays.



## 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 and  
Dick Christy

### **Our Sympathy:**

to Ed Buening and the Yonan family on the death of Ed's brother and Becky's uncle, Steve Buening, on May 13.

### **Congratulations!**

to Greg and Vikky Kindt on the birth of their daughter, Isabella Caridad, on May 14, 2024

to Jim Kocher, who recently celebrated his 60<sup>th</sup> ordination anniversary, and to Dale Swihart, who celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> ordination anniversary.

### **Thank You:**

Thank you to all who have sent cards, notes, prayers, and get well wishes regarding my surgery and recovery. It has been very much appreciated!

- Sid Disbrow

### **Tidings article deadline for July 2024 issue: June 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.

## Our Food Truck Mission

Twice a year, First Presbyterian Church sponsors a food truck locally. The need and desire for fresh produce in our area continues to increase.

The food that is distributed varies, with the most recent truck providing potatoes, split peas, raisins, oranges, cottage cheese, apples, milk, and sausage patties. When an organization sponsors a food truck, they pay about 13 cents per pound of food.

The last food truck sponsored by FPGH served 181 households, totaling 513 people, including 137 children, 190 seniors, and 38 veterans. Thank you for helping to fight food insecurity in our community!

Our next sponsorship is on June 7. If you can help distribute food, meet us in the St. Pat's parking lot at 9 a.m. Questions? Contact Mike Weller: mcweller1@hotmail.com

## From the Earth Care Team Gardeners Wanted

Last year we kept you updated on all of the work we were doing (with the help of the Scouts) in the Memorial Garden. We gave the garden a fresh new look, and now we need help maintaining it!

Would you be willing to help out once a month? We will need help with weeding, dead heading, and doing some minor pruning to keep this peaceful space looking its best.



Please contact Michele Smith to learn more or to volunteer:  
[michelemangel@att.net](mailto:michelemangel@att.net).

## Thursday Night Discussion Group: Feast and Fiction

The Thursday Night Discussion Group is taking a break from their usual theological books and is reading some fiction this summer.

We have selected *These Silent Woods* by Kimi Grant Cunningham - date and location TBA. For more information, please contact Linda Gritter at [lindagritter@gmail.com](mailto:lindagritter@gmail.com)

## Explore the Conference Room Library!

Are you looking for your next book to read? Come and check out the library in the conference room.

You will find a huge variety of Bibles, how-to-lead books, Biblical commentaries and histories, Presbyterian specific publications, and more. There are small group studies that include videos and leader guides as well as individual meditations. A selection of Earth Care publications are free for the taking. There is also a shelf of "fun" books you can take and/or donate to.



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!

**June 24** Judy Fischer  
1725 Port Sheldon St.  
Apt. D111  
Jenison, MI 49428

**June 24** Stan Johnson  
17046 Lloyd's Bayou Dr.  
Apt. 215  
Spring Lake, MI 49456

## 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 instructed the Nominations Committee to seek five elders and had discussions about the long-term strategy related to right-sizing the session and committee structures.
- We met with the Board of Deacons for our annual joint meeting and heard a great report on their ministry.
- We approved elder commissioners for the June presbytery meeting.
- We approved receiving new members.
- We approved funds for an early November conference featuring Traci Smith, author of *Faithful Families*. This event is for the church and wider community.
- We approved funds to complete the Youth mission trip to Belize.

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

## *From the Earth Care Team* God Sends the Church to Share in the Stewardship of Creation

The 226<sup>th</sup> PCUSA General Assembly (GA) is meeting in Salt Lake City starting on June 25.

As a result of a 222<sup>nd</sup> GA's decision, the Book of Order now states "God sends the Church to share in the stewardship of creation, preserving the goodness and glory of the earth God has made." In obedience to that mandate, several items for consideration by this GA have come to its Environmental and Climate Justice Committee. Included are these requests for the GA to act on:

1. Adaption of the Sustainable Peace Pledge
2. Removal of investments in and subsidies for fossil fuels
3. Becoming free from plastic pollution
4. Lithium mining position paper developed by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy; work started in 2022
5. Response regarding environmental policy and corporate engagement mandated by the 225<sup>th</sup> GA
6. Environmental Justice and the Cost of Green Transitions (an informational report)

The FPGH Earth Care team recommends these proposals to you for further study, particularly item (3), since we participate in the Plastic-Free July movement; and item (6), as an excellent statement on how Reformed believers should be thinking about environmental and climate change issues.

All of these proposals and reports can be found at:  
<https://www.pc-biz.org/committee/3000112/business>

## *From the Mission Committee:* The Hope Project

Our church supports The Hope Project, a Christian-based organization located in Muskegon. The mission of The Hope Project is to support the healing of girls and women (and occasionally males) who have survived sex-trafficking and to prevent further cases through mentoring and education.

I personally have had the opportunity to see the counseling in action as a translator. The love and kindness of the therapist involved was amazing. The staff is truly dedicated to helping these victims. Our church supports their work financially and by helping to organize hygiene products and putting them in bags appropriate for either teens or women. We occasionally get asked for help with other tasks as well.

If anyone is interested in being on our church's list to help with the hygiene kits, the occasional other projects, or to be a mentor (ladies only), please contact me at [gaubrey@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gaubrey@sbcglobal.net) or call me (810) 513-8887. If you would like to know more about The Hope Project, check out their website: <https://www.hopeprojectusa.org>

Submitted by Ginger Aubrey





## Exciting News! Session and Trustees Have Approved an Update to the Church Lounge

This summer we will see the church lounge get a refreshing transformation that will happen in stages—first paint, then carpet, and finally furnishings.

In addition to paint and carpet, we will be replacing the valances, chandeliers, and updating the soft furnishings throughout the space. The new space will also include new serving tables for coffee and cookies and new occasional tables to match the serving tables. As part of our process, we conducted a survey of the space to ensure the new design is flexible to support the many uses of the room. Much of the space will be configured similarly as it is today with a new sitting area being added in the northwest corner.

We contracted with a professional designer who provided product recommendations to tie the colors in the space together and to select commercial grade carpet and furniture that will hold up well over time. A small subcommittee made final selections that were then reviewed and approved by both the Trustees and Session.

Most of the existing furnishings in the room will be sold or donated. As part of our process, we consulted with the historical society and while many pieces are period pieces, none have a historical value except for the Ferry Table which we will keep and use in the new space. We acknowledge that our well-loved and well-used furniture may hold a special place in your heart. Please contact Todd Olson if you have an interest in any of the pieces.

## A Summer of Sabbath

*Embracing Rhythms of Work and Rest* by Ruth Haley Barton is on Pastor Troy's "to-do" list while on sabbatical. We are invited to join in as a congregation by reading a chapter a week until we are all together again in September.



The Faith Formation Committee will be hosting a time of conversation about the book on the following Saturdays: June 22, July 20, and August 24, from 9-10 a.m. in the church lounge. We'll provide a treat, and you may bring your morning beverage of choice.

*Embracing Rhythms of Work and Rest* is available in hardcover, audio, and Kindle; and locally at the Bookman as well as on Amazon.

Come and be a part of the discussion!

## Win a Prize in the Eco-Summer Challenge!

The Earth Care Team is again sponsoring an "Eco-Summer" Challenge, starting in June and continuing through September.

If you carpool, walk, bike, or scooter to church any day of the week, complete an "Eco Summer" slip each time and deposit it in the jar in the Gathering Area. On the last Sunday of the month, one name will be drawn from the jar to win a prize! The winner will receive a \$25 Dune Dollar gift certificate that can be spent at multiple places in the Grand Haven area.

We are celebrating Eco-Summer, but being eco-friendly is for all seasons! Let's develop new habits that are good for the earth.

An advertisement for an organ recital. It features a photo of Rob Hlebinsky, an organist, in a suit standing next to an organ. The text includes: "A COMMUNITY Artist and Speaker SERIES", "ROB HLEBINSKY Organist", "Sunday, June 2 4 p.m.", "Come experience an organ recital with Rob Hlebinsky!", "Rob's program will feature music from Interstellar, Pirates of the Caribbean, Wicked, and much more!", "THIS CONCERT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC", and "FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 503 FRANKLIN, GRAND HAVEN, MI FPGH.ORG".

A COMMUNITY Artist and Speaker SERIES

### ROB HLEBINSKY

Organist

**Sunday, June 2**  
**4 p.m.**

Come experience an organ recital with Rob Hlebinsky!

Rob's program will feature music from Interstellar, Pirates of the Caribbean, Wicked, and much more!

THIS CONCERT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 503 FRANKLIN, GRAND HAVEN, MI FPGH.ORG

## Children's Ministries Summer Events



**LEGO Faith Builders resumes on June 9**

**4 years-4th grade**

Join Miss Laura as we rebuild Bible stories in the Chapel during both services. We will display the Bible LEGO creations all week - stop by and see the Bible stories with new eyes!

### Join the LEGO Faith Builders Team

We are still looking for LEGO Team Members, it is *easy and fun!*

Do you love creativity and imagination? Come join us as we recreate the Bible stories using LEGOS! We need building assistants. The time commitment is approximately one Sunday per month during the service of your choice. Help children with their recreations and build your own! It's a mutual blessing to all involved. Please reach out to Laura Burns [lburns@fpg.org](mailto:lburns@fpg.org) for more information.



### Playdate in the Park

**Wednesday, June 12, 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.**

**Whistle Stop Playground, Spring Lake**



Maybe you already know of this perfect pocket-sized playground in Spring Lake, located just off the M-104 on the Spring Lake Bike Path. It's a family favorite! Join us for our first in a series of summer playdates. Pack your own water or juice and Miss Laura will bring a snack to share.

### Flat Jesus Returns

A fun way to remember that God is everywhere. You can pick up a Flat Jesus at the Children's Ministry desk. Color your Flat Jesus and then take photos with him throughout your summer—home and away. Post your pictures with the [#fpghflatjesus](https://twitter.com/fpghflatjesus) or send them to Miss Laura at [lburns@fpg.org](mailto:lburns@fpg.org). Also, be on the lookout for our FPGH Giant Flat Jesus at church and around town.



## Youth Ministries

Join Us for Fun Summer Events!

On June 13, our youth group will be heading to a White Caps game! Youth and their families and friends are invited to attend this fun evening at the ballpark! It costs \$10 per person which includes a ticket and a voucher for a hotdog and soda. We will have a carpool leaving from church or you can meet us there. Let us know if you're coming by signing up: <https://tinyurl.com/5n8x9ytz>

On June 26, we will be taking students to Craig's Cruisers from 6-8 p.m. for some mini-golf and pizza! The mini-golf and pizza are on us, but if students want to play arcade games, they should bring extra money. Please sign up so we know if your student is coming! <https://tinyurl.com/bdhes44v>



## Joyful Noise

*Planning Ahead:*  
**Walk with Joyful Noise in the Coast Guard Kid's Parade!**

It's never too early to start planning, especially when it comes to the Coast Guard parades!

Meet us in the FPGH Clinton Street parking lot on Saturday, July 27, at 9:30 a.m. to decorate your strollers, bikes, scooters or wagons! Then we will join the parade at 10:30! You are invited to bring candy to pass out if you would like, but it is not required.





**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](http://fpgh.org)

**June 2024**

*deliver to: (or current resident)*

**June 18**  
**All-Church**  
**Picnic**  
at Rycenga Park  
6 p.m.

*Sign up Now!*

You are encouraged to bring your own reusable place settings

This event is free and all food is provided. To help with planning, please RSVP: <https://forms.gle/Ci9EftNaugkkdmYi7> or sign up in the church office.