



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

SEPTEMBER 2024, VOLUME 72—ISSUE 9

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

I'm back! Well, almost. After a summer devoted to rest, renewal, and reimagining, I will be in the office for a part of the first week of September. Towards the end of the week I will be traveling to Louisville to participate in the inauguration of Louisville Seminary's new president, Dr. Andrew Pomerville. I am doing so not only as a long-time friend but also as a new member of the seminary's board, continuing the long tradition of our church having an active role in the seminary.

The second Sunday of September brings a familiar start to the fall. **We'll hold one service at 10:00 a.m. and then gather for an all-church picnic.** I expect this will be a time of great community building and of strengthening our faith. That Sunday will be my first back in the pulpit, beginning our fall series titled "Being with Jesus."

From now until Advent, we are asking the congregation to journey through the four gospels with us. For some of us, we have read these wonderful books many times. For others, we have only heard them in fits and starts in worship. So, whether you're a seasoned veteran or you are brand-new to the gospels, I strongly urge you to join us. So, what will we be doing?

We have developed a reading plan that helps us read all four gospels in order this fall — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It takes basically two chapters each day — probably less than ten minutes a day for five days a week. The sermons will focus on one or two texts from the previous week's reading while tracing the life of Jesus and its major themes, leading us from his beginning all the way to the end.

We are providing journals, pens, highlighters, and information about the many ways you can engage with the gospels. We want you not just to read these life-changing words but also to reflect on their meaning for your life. You can do this by yourself, with others in your home, or find a couple of other people to encourage you along the way. (Personally, I'd recommend sharing in this with others. It sparks accountability and deepens our understanding.)

You might be wondering why we're doing this so intentionally. It's because we believe that discipleship is at the heart of Christianity. To be a disciple of Jesus means that we are students of his, learning from him through words and actions. You may recall that I spoke about the three Bs of discipleship all the way back in our January annual meeting — believing, belonging, and becoming. These three concepts are interrelated and all vital to the life of following Jesus. To ask all of us to read the gospels together helps us in all three of these areas, but it especially strengthens us as we *become* more than we were without spending time with Jesus in the gospels.

(Continued on page 3)

Upcoming Events

- Sept. 4** Geneva Choir Practice Begins
- Sept. 6** Feeding America Food Truck Sponsorship
- Sept. 8** Fall Sermon Series "Being with Jesus" Begins
- Sept. 8** One Worship Service at 10 a.m. & All-Church Picnic
- Sept. 15** Children & Worship Resumes
- Sept. 27** PW Mum Sale
- Sept. 29** Shine 34 Stony Lake Stables
- Oct. 6** Peace & Global Witness Special Offering
- Oct. 6** CROP Walk to End Hunger
- Nov. 3** Faure's Requiem with St. John's Episcopal Choir
- Nov. 9** Advent at Home Workshop with Traci Smith

Pastor Troy is back from Sabbatical!

Pastor Troy will be back from Sabbatical on Sunday, September 8, just in time for the all-church picnic!

Please give him a warm welcome back to our church family.



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, Dan Luckey, and Darell Moreland.

Our Sympathy:

to Jim, Kaija, and Carla Kocher, and Jerry Hilger, on the passing of wife and mother, Jean Kocher, on August 12. A memorial service for Jean will be held at FPGH on September 9 at 11 a.m.

to the family of Ed Kinkema, who passed away on August 14. A service for Ed will be held at FPGH on September 7 at 11 a.m.

Congratulations!

to Fred and Carmen Jeisy on celebrating 60 years of marriage on August 15!



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!

Sept. 19 Sandy Beute
1410 S. Ferry, #F-10
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Sept. 29 Ray Harz
Riverside
415 Friant Street
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:

- Canned green beans/peas
- Canned fruit
- Chunky-style soups
- Macaroni & cheese
- Canned tuna and chicken
- Tomato paste & sauce
- Kidney beans

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



Win a Prize in the Eco-Summer Challenge!

You still have a chance to win a prize in the Earth Care Team's "Eco-Summer" Challenge, through the end of September.

If you carpool, walk, or bike to church, complete an "Eco Summer" slip each time and deposit it in the basket in the Gathering Area. On the last Sunday of the month, one name will be drawn to win a prize! The winner will receive a \$25 Dune Dollar gift certificate!

Join a Choir!

Choir season is almost here, and we're saving a spot for you!

Carillon Ringers

Contact Rob:
rhlebins@gmail.com

Geneva Choir

Starts Wednesday, Sept. 4
at 7:30 p.m.

in the sanctuary chancel

Contact Maryanne:
mbeery@fpgh.org



Feeding America Food Truck Volunteers Needed

With your gifts, the Mission Committee of FPGH has sponsored a food truck to help people experiencing food insecurity in our community.

If you are able to come out from 9:15-11 a.m. on Friday morning, September 6, your help is needed to distribute food and/or carry it to vehicles.

Please contact Mike Weller if you can help: mcweller1@hotmail.com or 616-402-6109, and then meet us at the food truck that will be parked in St. Pat's parking lot on the corner of US-31 and Fulton.



(Continued from page 1)

Particularly in these fraught times where so many feel on edge, angry, confused, or lost, I believe that submitting ourselves to learn from Jesus is *the most important thing* we can do to shine light and love in our homes, schools, workplaces, community, and nation. So, let's join together with purpose this fall as we learn from Jesus and each other.

In Christ,

Pastor Troy

From Pastor Kristine Aragon Bruce

Dear Church Family,

It is a time of transition. Not just in terms of the seasons, but in the life of our church as well. As many of you know, Hannah Post and Jodie LaVercombe resigned from their positions as Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries and as 5th/6th Grade Ministries Coordinator. Both came to this decision independently of each other and both were due to personal circumstances. In addition, Tina Ramones, our longtime Administrative Assistant, who did everything from payroll to managing the technology for all staff (really her title should be "Administrative Assistant *Who Does Everything*") is retiring at the end of the month after 20+ years on our staff. Please join us in thanking Hannah and Jodie on September 1, and we will celebrate Tina after both services on September 29.

Needless to say, there is a lot of change right now, and I want to acknowledge that all change is unsettling. We don't know who God will call next to fill these vacancies. For our staff, it's a process of getting to know new people and relearning what it means to be a team. Pastor Troy shared with me (he's back on September 8th - Yay!) that one thing that he's been convicted of is the need to take things slow during a time of discernment. It takes time to be still, listen for

where God is leading us, and know who God is leading to First Pres. I completely agree—even though this goes against my nature!

In my email letter to the entire congregation, I mentioned that the landscape of youth ministry has changed drastically in the last ten years, just as the landscape in which our youth live has drastically changed. The present model of youth ministry needs to be revamped, but what that looks like depends on the context of each church and town. In a time when there is more pressure than ever for youth to perform well in school, in sports, in music, and many more extracurricular activities, our youth and their families are pressed for time. We need to rethink what it looks like to meet our youth and their families where they're at. Is that on the soccer field? At the theater where our youth are in musicals and plays? Wishing them well at a Science O event? Maybe it's all or none of the above? All I know is that these are questions we have to answer together as a church. As a wise mentor once told me: "Your answer is in the pews."

Stay tuned for opportunities for discussion and input on how we can best minister to our youth and empower them to grow in faith in Jesus Christ so that they can better love and serve their neighbors, as

we are all called to do. I'm confident that God will guide and lead us to create spaces for our youth to grow in and live out their faith in Jesus Christ. It may involve some trial and error, but errors and mistakes are where we grow the most and gain more wisdom. While our staff changes and while our world changes at lightning speed, it's comforting to know that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Jesus is in this and that's how I know it will all be okay.

A BIG "Thank You!" to those who helped in worship and pastoral care during Pastor Troy's sabbatical!

As Presbyterians, we believe in the importance of teams and not just individuals. Without the following people graciously stepping up to help, worship and pastoral care could not have happened: Rev. Dale Swihart, Rev. Michelle Olson, Rev. Brendan McClenahan, Rev. Marcia Wallinga, Dr. Matt Bruce, and Hannah Post. We are so blessed to have such amazing people who were willing to step up in ministry to our entire church and deal with stubborn candles that refuse to light:) Please join me in thanking these amazing folks!

Grateful for you,

Pastor Kristine

Faith Formation Fall Kick-Off

September is the time for a new season of Faith Formation classes. If you have been thinking about joining a new Bible study or small group, now is the perfect time to jump in!

Here is a list of groups to consider:



- Monday Women's Group, 1-2:30 p.m.
Focus of Study this Fall is the *Sermon on the Mount: A Beginner's Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven* video and book by Amy Jill Levine
- Tuesday Bible Study, 9-11 a.m.
This group will be using N. T. Wright's Bible study on Acts.
- Men's Tuesday Night Bible Study, 7 p.m.
- Thursday Morning Breakfast Discussion Group, 7 a.m. at Russ' Restaurant
- Thursday Night Discussion Group, 7 p.m.
The first book of the season is *If God is Love, Don't Be a Jerk*, by John Pavlovitz
- Sunday Morning Wired Word Class, 10 a.m.

There are also five Presbyterian Women circles that are always glad to welcome new participants. Circles are a time of Bible study and fellowship and meet once a month at various times. Consider joining one of the circles that fits your schedule:

- Jane Bottje Circle, 10:30 a.m., first Monday of the month, contact Margaret Wiegert: 616-842-7161
- Ferry-White Circle, 10 a.m., first Thursday of the month, contact Pat Elenbaas: 517-290-0625
- Eight Founders Circle, 1 p.m., first Thursday of the month, contact Nita Pellegrom: 616-846-1805
- Albee-Duverney Circle, 7 p.m., first Thursday of the month, contact Lynn VanderMeer: 616-842-7037

Peace & Global Witness Special Offering

This special offering culminates on World Communion Sunday, October 6, and enables us to touch lives far beyond our individual reach. The offering helps encourage our church partners in Ukraine as they struggle against the trauma of war. It supports mission co-workers as they work for peace and reconciliation in countries across the globe. It helps congregations begin to address the growing mental health crisis and the increase in the number of suicides in communities. We give along with our prayers for peace and our work for justice.



- **25%** of the gifts received will be given to Mosaic Counseling in Grand Haven, an organization that eliminates traditional barriers to mental health services, including free counseling for students across 28 Ottawa County Schools.
- **25%** supports peacemaking efforts in Presbyterian mid-council regions.
- **50%** supports the work being done by Presbyterian church partners across the globe. That includes Cathy Chang, our mission co-worker in the Philippines whose assignment focuses on human trafficking.

Visit the website (pcusa.org/peace-global) to learn more. Our gifts sow the seeds of peace across the globe. The special offering envelopes will be in the pews in September, at the Clinton Street entrance, or you may text PCUSAPEACE to 41444.

Youth & Mental Health

Whether it's from stress, anxiety, depression, or thoughts of suicide, the mental health of America's adolescents and teens has grown steadily worse for more than a decade, with the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating the trend. To that point, of the approximate 100 intakes Mosaic Counseling does each week, 80 of them are middle school-aged students.

Is there a young person you know who seems troubled or who you are worried about? In addition to prayer you can call 988, the suicide hotline for information on how to access mental health help in our area. You could also pass along this with love: "text BRAVE to 741741." This crisis site responds quickly with someone they can converse with anonymously via text.

Community Artist & Speaker Series

Tyler Kivel, Pianist
First Presbyterian Church
Sunday, September 15, 4 p.m.

Tyler Kivel is an outstanding pianist who has performed throughout the country at such venues as Chicago Symphony Hall, PianoForte Studios, and Carnegie Hall. Currently, he is a Principal Associate Keyboardist with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. He is also the pianist in the Piano/Organ duo named Dual-Art.



Kivel is originally from Northern Michigan and is now based in Chicago. Aside from practice, Kivel spends copious amounts of time with his beloved pup.

The next C.A.S. event is on October 6, at 4 p.m., and features Acoustic Oasis, two guys who love playing music. They are inspired by the music of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Simon & Garfunkel, Jack Johnson, The Beatles, and Ray LaMontagne.

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

Food & Fellowship

Do you like good food and interesting conversation? Do you like meeting new folks from First Pres or getting to know some familiar faces better? Then Food & Fellowship is for you!

F&F is a series of four casual meals from October to June, with eight people in attendance. Everyone hosts a meal during the year, and brings a dish to pass to the other three meals. These meals are casual and can be breakfast, lunch or dinner! Just good conversation with great people!



Ask questions and/or sign up at the F&F table in the Gathering Area on Sundays from now until mid-September.

2024 PCUSA General Assembly Takes Actions on Environmental Issues

The PCUSA General assembly met this summer and acted on several environmental issues:

Fossil Fuel Divestment

Recognizing the urgency of global warming and struggling to find a faithful way forward, the Assembly at first voted for complete PC(USA) divestment from the fossil fuel industry — then a few hours later, reconsidered and changed course.

In the end, the commissioners supported an amended version of ENV-06, an overture that directs the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), which leads the PC(USA)'s socially responsible investing efforts, to identify the top 10 fossil fuel companies that derive most of their profits from the exploration, development and production of fossil fuels, and to immediately divest from those companies.

How are you being called to use your voice, your money or both when it comes to issues related to the environment?

Single Use Plastics

The General assembly also passed a recommendation to avoid single use plastic materials. The following statements were included:

- Encourage all of us as Presbyterians to commit to changing from a disposable culture to a reusable, sustainable one.
- Encourage education within our congregations and in our communities to advocate for alternatives to single use plastics, through mitigation efforts and campaigns or by supporting local and state bans on single use plastics
- Reduce the use of single-use plastics and packaging.

How are you changing your own practices to commit to a reusable/sustainable culture?

It's time for the annual Presbyterian Women



Fall Mum Sale

Friday, September 27
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

8" pots of beautiful mum plants in a variety of colors will be sold for \$8.00 each!

Plants not sold on Friday will be available to purchase in the Gathering Area on Sunday, Sept. 29

All proceeds go to the missions of the Presbyterian Women

Love in Action Free Clinic Women's Health Event

A Special Day to Care for Women in the Community



Saturday, October 19
326 N. Ferry, Grand Haven
9 a.m.—2:30 p.m.

Are you or do you know a woman who is uninsured or underinsured? Come to the Women's Health Event on Saturday, October 19, at the LIA Free Clinic for the following care:

- Gynecology Exams & Testing
 - Breast Exams
- Mammogram Referrals
- Hormone Information
 - Treats & More!

Each person scheduled will receive a Meijer/Walmart gift card!

Call and ask for Emalee—space is limited!
616-846-2701

CROP Walk to End Hunger

Team FPGH needs you! You can make a difference locally and globally by supporting the 2024 Crop Walk to eliminate hunger. Twenty five percent of the money raised goes to local programs helping to fight hunger, including Love in Action, The People Center, and the Salvation Army. This year, a generous donor has agreed to match every \$50 raised, up to \$30,000.

When:

Sunday, October 6
Registration opens at 1:30
Walk begins at 2:00 p.m.
Free t-shirts will be available before the walk

Where:

Church of the Dunes
717 Sheldon Road
Grand Haven, MI 49417

How to Participate:

- Walk the 1 mile or 5k route with others in our community. FPGH team captain, Carole DeYoung, has donation envelopes available.
- Give a donation to the FPGH team by donating to: crophungerwalk.org/grandhavenmi
- A donation envelope will also be located in the church office.
- After the walk, enjoy family fun with games, art projects, and refreshments.

Help show our love and caring to neighbors around the block and around the world. Every step and every donation helps end hunger!

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)

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 Hlebnsky, Organist
Karen Nienhouse, Congregational Care Ministries
Tina Ramones, Administrative Assistant
Kerri Roberts, Office Assistant
Sally Segers, Joyful Noise Director



Children and Worship: Story Tellers & Assistants Needed

Our Sunday morning programming resumes on September 15, and we are looking for people who would love to work with the children of FPGH! We currently have room on our team at all age levels:

- 9 a.m. Young 5-4th grade: Assistants and Storytellers
- 11 a.m. Y5-2nd Grade: Storytellers/3rd -4th grade: Assistants

Looking for people who have a peaceful presence, love of children, and a desire to learn more about faith. The time commitment is approximately once a month, with flexible scheduling for travel and life events. Contact Laura Burns, lburns@fpgh.org if you would like to learn more about the team. You do not have to have children in the program to volunteer!



Shine34 Stony Lake Stables Trip

Sunday, September, 29
2-4 p.m.

Shine34 is a fellowship group designed especially for our 3rd & 4th grade students.

It's time for our annual trip to Stony Lake Stables. It's a favorite of many! We are inviting you to bring one special adult with you. If you have a 3rd or 4th grade student, contact Laura Burns, lburns@fpgh.org details and information on how to sign up.



Free Advent Workshop with Traci Smith

We are so excited to welcome ordained Presbyterian minister and author Traci Smith to our church on November 9 to lead an Advent at Home Workshop! This is a free event for parents, caregivers, grandparents, aunts/uncles, and will be open to the community! All attendees will get a free copy of her book *Faithful Families for Advent & Christmas!!* **Mark your calendars for 10a.m.-noon on Saturday morning, November 9** and watch for more details to come!

Youth Ministries



Let's Go to a Whitecaps Game!

The church has been given some free tickets, parking passes, and food vouchers for a Whitecaps game on Saturday, September 7, and we'd like for you to go!



There are a limited number of tickets available, so if you are interested, please contact Pastor Kristine at KristineAB@fpgh.org.



**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

September 2024

deliver to: (or current resident)

Please RSVP:

- in the church office
- by email: staff@fpgh.org
- or scan the QR code below



all church PICNIC

Sunday, September 8

- 10 a.m. combined worship service at church
- Picnic at Pottawatomie Park immediately following worship

Bring your friends and/or family - all are welcome (...and it's free!)