



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

NOVEMBER 2024, VOLUME 72—ISSUE 11

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

For the past couple of years, I saw this time coming, and now it is finally here. Our beloved Tina Ramones is retiring after working for our church for over 22 years. Tina has been a huge blessing to this congregation and has a remarkable history here.

Rick Snyder was still the pastor when she began back in 2002. The church hired Tina after she had worked for Carlon Meter for 24 years, with some of that time devoted to doing FPGH's Trustees' Minutes because her boss, Bill McAlister, was chair of the trustees. Tina has worked with six Church Administrators in that time. Her job has also changed over the years. She was hired as the Church Secretary, a title she had changed almost immediately upon her arrival. She has been the Assistant to the Church Administrator and now her title includes Technology Specialist.

Words are inadequate to express the impact Tina has had on this church and its staff. I'm pretty sure she's tried her hand at almost everything here except for writing a sermon or directing the choir. She has been a "glue" person for the staff, helping all of us work well together and being a kind voice when things were a challenge. Tina would tell you that she has loved that she can use her wide expertise to help the church, but I know she'd also tell you that her favorite part of working here has been the people. Folks come to the office and beeline for Tina because they know Tina can help them. The staff would agree too. Tina is such a great person and has been wonderful as a co-worker.

So, I hope you'll help us celebrate Tina as she retires. We will honor her retirement on Sunday, November 10, in worship and at coffee hour. There are blank cards at the church, and we'd love for you to leave Tina a note of gratitude. You can also mail cards to the church. Thank you for helping us honor Tina's ministry!

In related news, the session has hired Andrew Wolfert to serve in this role. Andrew has been onboarding for the past couple of weeks under Tina's tutelage, and we are grateful that he is with us. Andrew comes to us with experience managing the office side of his wife's chiropractic business, and he is settling in very well. Please stop by and meet Andrew when you can.

Finally, I've been looking for an opportunity to share in greater detail about my sabbatical. That will happen between services on Sunday, November 3 in the Rec Room in place of the How to Read the Bible class. I hope you'll join me for that. It was a blessing to have a sabbatical, and it's been a joy reflecting on that to share with you. See you there.

In Christ,

Pastor Troy

Upcoming Events

- Nov. 3** Daylight Savings Time Ends
- Nov. 3** All Saints' Sunday
- Nov. 3** New Member Class
- Nov. 3** Faure's Requiem with St. John's Episcopal Choir
- Nov. 7** JN Evergreen Orders Due
- Nov. 9** Advent at Home Workshop with Traci Smith
- Nov. 22** Memorial Service for Bill Blessing
- Nov. 24 & Dec. 1** Boy Scout Wreath Sale
- Nov. 28 & 29** Church Office Closed for Thanksgiving
- Dec. 1** Hanging of the Greens, 4 p.m.
- Dec. 6** Red Cross Blood Drive
- Dec. 8** PW Christmas Bazaar
- Dec. 19** Heritage Luncheon
- Dec. 22** Christmas Service of Light and Hope
- Dec. 23** **Christmas Carols & Cookies, 4:30 p.m.** Family-Friendly Christmas Eve Service
- Dec. 24** **Christmas Eve Services:**
4 p.m. The Gathering Contemporary Service
9 p.m. Traditional Service of Lessons & Carols
- Dec. 25-26** Church Office Closed for Christmas
- Dec. 29** One Worship Service, 10 a.m.
- Jan. 1** Happy New Year! Church Office Closed

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

Our Sympathy:

to Bill and Chris Bussell on the death of Bill's brother, Tom, on September 27.

to Mike, Nicole, Alli, Nolan, and Samantha Ruble on the passing of Mike's father, David, on October 1.

to Jill Osborne and family on the October 7 death of Jill's father, Mark VanderMeulen.

to Dick Christy on the October 9 passing of his wife, Jane Christy.

to Kitty Blessing and family on the passing of her husband, Bill Blessing, on October 12. A memorial service for Bill will be held at FPGH on November 22 at 2 p.m.

Thank you!

"What a wonderful, caring and loving community of believers we have here at First Presbyterian! Thank you to everybody who prayed for Mary Jane and who sent her get well and thinking of

you cards, made phone calls or delivered meals following her recent surgery. We are truly blessed and overwhelmed by the support! It certainly made her day!

- Ron and Mary Jane Mass

"Following the untimely death of my brother Tom, we received many expressions of condolences and prayers. These gave me much comfort as well as appreciation for our church family. Thank you."

- Bill and Chris Bussell



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!

- Nov. 3** Lany Schoenmaker
17707 Cobblefield Lane
Spring Lake, MI 49456
- Nov. 5** Ron Albrecht
2900 Thornhills Ave. SE
Room 25
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
- Nov. 19** Jerry Erwin
17046 Lloyds Bayou Dr.
Apt. 411
Spring Lake, MI 49456
- Nov. 22** Barbara Bryant
15035 155th Ave.
Grand Haven, MI 49417
- Nov. 26** Mary Albrecht
2900 Thornhills Ave. SE
Room 25
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Tidings article deadline for December issue: November 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.

Volunteers Needed!

At FPGH, we thrive on the generosity, warmth, and support of our members. As we continue to grow and welcome newcomers, we need help to make each Sunday a welcoming and memorable experience. Whether you're comfortable greeting, ushering, reading, or baking, there's a place for you to serve!

Positions Needed:

- **Ushers** – Help guide attendees, assist with seating, and provide a welcoming presence.
- **Greeters** – Create a warm first impression as people enter the building, answer any questions and offer a friendly smile.
- **Scripture Readers** – Share the Word with the congregation during worship.
- **Cookie Bakers** – Delight everyone with delicious homemade treats, fostering fellowship after the service.

Interested in Volunteering?

If you'd like to join in any of these roles, please reach out to Kerri Roberts at kroberts@fpgh.org. Your help would be a blessing to our church community!

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 fruit & applesauce
- Macaroni & cheese
- Instant oatmeal
- Granola bars
- Ketchup & mayonnaise
- Chunky-style soups
- Laundry soap and dish soap
- Toilet paper & paper towel

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

From Pastor Kristine Aragon Bruce

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Dear Church Family,

I want to share the latest update on our Youth Ministry transition. First and foremost, I want to extend a heartfelt *thank you* to our incredible youth leaders: Josh VerHage, Jared Bollaert, Cathie Day, Tammy Kuhlman, and our senior high students, Maya Overway and Naomi Force, who have been leading our 5th and 6th graders alongside other dedicated adults. We are truly blessed to have a community of leaders committed to creating a space for our youth to grow in their faith in Jesus Christ.

I also want to recognize the invaluable support of our Youth Committee members, who have been instrumental during this period of transition: elders Courtney Ransford and Karen Losee, as well as Tim Tiefenbach, Kristin Felt, and Jessica Hauser-Brydon.

The Youth Committee has approved the formation of a *Renovation Team*, a group of parents representing the full range of our youth, from 5th to 12th grades. Although I am awaiting a few more confirmations before

sharing the team members, I am excited to announce that the Renovation Team will kick off its work in November. Together, they will help shape a new vision statement and short-term goals for our ministry, drawing from the valuable feedback gathered from recent listening groups with parents and students. This work will guide us as we identify what we need in a youth director and what adjustments will enhance our youth ministry.

By December, the Renovation Team also aims to finalize a revised youth director job description, which will then be reviewed by our Personnel Committee and session. We plan to form a search team in December and officially post the position in January, pending session approval. One theme that emerged from the recent parent listening groups is the challenge many parents face in discussing faith with their children amid the demands of busy schedules. Between work, extracurricular activities, school obligations, and the everyday joys (and battles) of parenting—like convincing our kids that wearing shorts in freezing

weather may not be the best choice (yes, I may be speaking from personal experience!)—it can be difficult to find the time to talk about faith.

To help build these conversations, we encourage families to take 5–10 minutes each day in the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving to share one thing they're grateful for. James 1:17 reminds us that "every good and perfect gift comes from above," and recognizing these gifts—whether big or small—can be a meaningful way to connect with God. This practice can be as simple as a brief moment in the car, at the dinner table, or before bed.

Whether you have kids at home or not, I invite you to join in this practice of gratitude. I am deeply grateful for the commitment our church has shown to our youth, and I want to thank *you* for being part of this community.

With gratitude,

Pastor Kristine

From the Session

Update from the Session

Here are the highlights of last month's session meeting:

Report from Session

- Along with the Presbytery of Lake Michigan, the session approved commissioning Bob Day as a ruling elder to serve in the Ottawa and Muskegon County jails.
- The session called a meeting of the congregation for Sunday, November 17, at 10:00 for the purpose of electing ruling elders, deacons, and at-large Nominations Committee members.
- The session approved having a single worship service on Sunday, December 29th, at 10:00.
- The session approved \$15,000 from the Alpha Funds disbursement to support the Mission Committee's Project Ripple Effect.
- The session approved funds to cover the costs of the Traci Smith event on November 9.
- The session approved \$10,000 from the Alpha Funds disbursement to serve as a match for individual gifts to support Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

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

The Giving Tree Christmas Ministry

To help make Christmas brighter for those in need, the Giving Tree Ministry is again asking for donations of gift cards in \$25 denominations starting Sunday, November 24.

These gift cards are most useful from Meijer and Walmart, allowing families/individuals to purchase items of greatest need. Whether that is a gift for a loved one or food to make it through a week of need, your generosity will be greatly appreciated by the receiver. To increase your donation without spending any more money, you can purchase the gift cards from the Joyful Noise "RaiseRight" program. Forms will be available in the Clinton Street entrance around mid-November. A percentage of each card purchased will go back to Joyful Noise.



Walking Backwards to Christmas

The Thursday Night Discussion Group has selected *Walking Backwards to Christmas* by Stephen Cottrell as the next book for discussion. *Walking Backwards to Christmas* starts at the end of the story, with Jesus' presentation to Anna and Simeon at the temple, and moves backwards through Herod's slaughter of the innocents, the wise men's visit, Jesus' birth in a stable, Mary's pregnancy, and finally to the much-earlier hopes and dreams of Isaiah and Moses.

Please join us in Fellowship Hall at 7 p.m. on Thursdays, November 7 thru December 12. Contact Linda Gritter for more information:
lindagritter@gmail.com.

From the Mission Committee Reach the Forgotten Jail Ministry

Reach the Forgotten (RTF), has been a mission outreach program of First Presbyterian for almost two years. RTF is the largest county jail ministry in the U.S., and serves 33 county jails in Michigan, including Ottawa County. Each county has a lead chaplain and larger counties have an associate chaplain as well. Statewide, there are over 1,000 volunteers who work alongside the chaplains doing direct service work with inmates or providing support outside of the jail.

Through First Presbyterian's mission donation, RTF has offered God's love to thousands of inmates, produced training videos (one in our chapel with two members being filmed!), published an addiction/incarceration handbook and is working on expansion into two more county jails. The congregation and youth group have supported RTF through generous donations at Christmastime and by beautifully decorating Christmas cards with encouraging scripture for the gift bags that are delivered at Christmas. THANK YOU for your heartfelt generosity which has blessed individuals who are often "forgotten."

The Ottawa County Jail Ministry experienced an unexpected loss this spring when our chaplain, Cal Alderink, suddenly passed away. We have just been assigned an interim chaplain, Darrell Delaney, and prayers for his transition into the Ottawa County jail are appreciated.

There are several ways to support the important ministry of RTF, if you are interested in learning more, please contact Moni Franks at 616-285-2889.

Taking Tea at Christmastime

In other countries there is a wonderful tradition of "taking tea" several times a day. Tradition dictates that all work is momentarily set aside so individuals can simply enjoy the company of those they are with at the time.

In "25 Days of Taking Tea at Christmastime: Creating Moments of Comfort and Joy," suggestions are interwoven with ways to take tea during the Christmas season, when we are often so busy with shopping, gift wrapping, baking, and other preparations, that we neglect to make connections with the important people in our lives.

As you read the book and use the corresponding journal pages, you will discover ways to carve out time in your day to create moments with the important people in your life. The greatest gift we can offer is our presence to those we love and are called to serve.

"25 Days of Taking Tea at Christmastime" can be found at The Bookman or by using the link below.

If you purchase a book, will you please let Deb Stanley know? She would love to sign your copy and thank you!

<https://a.co/d/fEqYWH3>

Community Artist & Speaker Series

**Boardwalk Brass of Grand Haven
November 10, 2024, 4:00 p.m.**

This 12-piece ensemble boasts some of the finest brass musicians in West Michigan and offers a wide variety of traditional and contemporary brass band music. Along with a flair for entertaining and engaging their audiences, the BBGH takes great pride in presenting interesting and challenging programs at a high level of performance and musicianship. Boardwalk Brass is led by Director of Music Vince Browand.



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

From the Earth Care Committee Beautifying the Church Grounds

Did you enjoy some quiet time in the beautiful memorial garden this spring or summer? With excellent support from Scoutmaster Josh VerHage and Boy Scout Troop 246, the Earth Care Team worked to prepare the memorial garden for spring and recently closed it down for winter. A special thank you also goes to Kristi Yonkers, who cared for the roses along the chapel wall this summer.

Over the winter, the Earth Care Team will identify bare areas around the church to determine ideal native plants for enhancing these spaces. Come spring, selected plants will be introduced to beautify the grounds.

We warmly invite anyone in our church family who is interested in assisting with maintaining the memorial garden and new plantings to please reach out to Todd Olson at tolsen@fpg.org or call 616-842-6760.



FPGH Composts!

The church, along with Joyful Noise, began a new composting program in October! Organicycle of Grand Rapids services restaurants, schools and businesses in West Michigan, and meets all the Health Department requirements necessary for Joyful Noise Christian Childcare. Organicycle operates an industrial composting site so meat, fish, fats, processed foods as well as yard waste and more can be composted! Be on the lookout for containers labeled "compost" in Fellowship Hall and the church lounge.

It is exciting to add this responsible and cost effective program to our Certified Earth Care Congregation program. For questions, please contact the ECT. If you have a chance, check out Organicycle .org—it's a really interesting company and you'll learn a lot!

Fauré's Requiem Nov. 3, 4 p.m.

The combined choirs of First Presbyterian and St. John's Episcopal Churches in Grand Haven look forward to presenting Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem* on All Saints' Sunday, November 3, at 4 pm.

Fauré composed his best-known work, *Requiem*, in 1887, "purely," as he said, "for the pleasure of it." In an interview in 1902, Fauré commented: "It has been said that my *Requiem* does not express the fear of death, and someone has called it a lullaby of death. But it is thus that I see death: a happy deliverance, an aspiration towards happiness above, rather than as a painful experience." His *Requiem* is about peaceful acceptance and release, and the music is serene, elevating, and comforting; almost entirely gentle in spirit.

The event will be held at First Presbyterian Church and is free, open to the public, and all are welcome to attend.

Hanging of the Greens December 1



Do you love decorating for Christmas? We do too, but we need lots of help!

The Worship Committee invites you to join us in getting the church ready for Advent. On **Sunday, December 1**, we'll gather at 4:00 to transform the church for the season. This is always a fun all-ages welcome event that sets the tone for the season. We plan to have homemade soup on hand as we wrap up the decorating. Save the date, and join us!

PW Christmas Bazaar Sunday, Dec. 8

Indulge in the season's best treats and treasures at the annual PW baked goods and craft sale! Be sure to stop in the lounge on Sunday, December 8, after each worship service to check out the selection!

As always, the sale will feature a delicious spread of homemade cookies, muffins, pies, fudge, coffee cakes, and snack mixes—including both Chex and trail mix varieties. Don't miss the beloved PW Jewel Chip candy, a true holiday classic!

In addition to our delightful treats, we're excited to offer a selection of home-crafted gifts, including crocheted animals and gnomes, handmade bracelets, beautifully quilted items, and colorful dish towels. Find something special to bring home or give as a thoughtful gift for the holidays.



Stop by to discover festive goodies and unique items that will add a little sparkle to your holiday season.

Joyful Noise Evergreen Fundraiser

Support the mission and programs of Joyful Noise with a beautiful, fresh, evergreen purchase!



This greenery is fresh, lasts all winter long, and the pinecones and bows add a special touch (this is where FPGH purchases their beautiful wreaths that hang outside the doors at Christmastime).

Wreaths come in 3 sizes:

22" for \$28

26" for \$33

30" for \$40

Swags are \$20, and a 25' garland is \$48.

To place an order, you may contact the JN office at 616-847-6600 or office@joyfulnoise.com, or print out this [order form](#) and place your order in the black mailbox in the Joyful Noise entryway. Payment is due on delivery, and checks may be made out to First Presbyterian Church.

**Orders are due November 7.
Delivery date is November 26.**

Project Ripple Effect

Project Ripple Effect is back and ready to make an even greater impact! We will be seeking nominations for charitable organizations that could use a little extra financial support. Last year, FPGH's mission committee provided one-time grants to 17 out of 21 applicants, distributing a total of \$10,020 to support causes like food programs, school construction, and building handicap carts.

This year, we've increased our commitment to \$15,000 for deserving projects. Start thinking about organizations that might benefit from this program, and keep an eye out for updates on when and where to pick up a Project Ripple Effect application form.

2024 CROP Walk Results

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the 50th annual Tri-Cities CROP Hunger Walk. With



the help of First Presbyterian's team along with 17 other church teams and 19 business partners, we raised a record \$57,000! These funds will support local food pantries at The People Center, Love in Action, the Salvation Army, as well as Church World Service, whose mission is to feed the hungry and help those in need. In fact, CWS is on the ground right now aiding hurricane victims.

Over 50 years, our local walk has raised over \$1.37 million, reaching countless people facing hunger locally and globally. Thank you for being part of this inspiring mission to "be the good" in our community.

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:

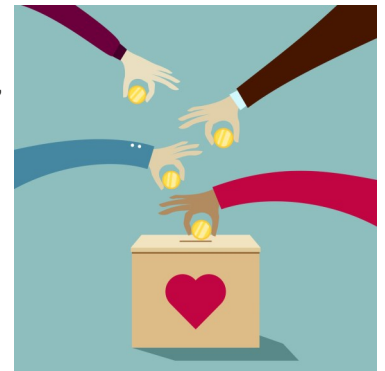
Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon, Senior Pastor
Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce, Associate Pastor
Maryanne Beery, Director of Music & Fine Arts
Dr. Matt Bruce, Theologian-in-Residence
Joleigh Braman, Church Custodian
Sally Bryant, Communications Coordinator
Laura Burns, Children's Ministries Director
Todd Olson, Church Administrator
Marc Felt, Gathering Band Leader
Rob Hlebnsky, Organist
Karen Nienhouse, Congregational Care Ministries
Andrew Wolfert, Administrative Assistant
Kerri Roberts, Office Assistant
Sally Segers, Joyful Noise Director

Pledge Giving Update 3rd Quarter YTD

Thank you for your continued support of First Presbyterian Church's mission and ministry! As of September, our year-to-date pledge income stands at \$658,986, which is short of our budgeted \$730,155 by \$71,169. In total, revenue is at \$825,025, leaving a gap of \$79,505 against a budget of \$904,530. While some variation in pledges is normal, this year's shortfall is a bit larger than anticipated.

If you're able, please review your pledge estimate and aim to complete it by year's end. Third-quarter giving statements were sent out the week of October 21, providing an up-to-date look at your contributions. We understand that personal circumstances may have shifted, making it difficult to meet initial pledges. If that's the case, please reach out to Todd Olson at tolson@fpg.org or (616) 842-6760 to discuss any changes in your giving, as it is helpful for the planning of our ministries.

Every gift, no matter the size, strengthens our church's work, and we're grateful for your partnership.



Let's Celebrate Tina! Sunday, November 10

After 22 years of dedicated service to First Presbyterian Church, Tina Ramones is retiring. Tina has now completed her final full week in the office, though you may still see her around occasionally in November as she assists in the transition to her successor.



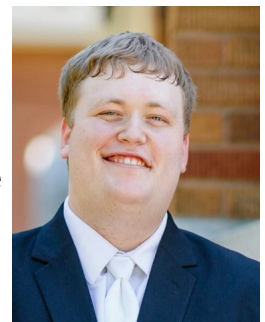
We invite you to join us on Sunday, November 10th, between services, for a cake reception to officially express our gratitude to Tina for her many years of care and commitment to our congregation. We're also pleased to introduce Andrew Wolfert, who will be stepping into this role with our church family.

On November 3rd, blank cards will be available in the Gathering Area for anyone who would like to take a moment to write a note of thanks to Tina. Let's celebrate her remarkable journey with us and show our appreciation for her faithful service.

Meet Andrew!

Andrew Wolfert is excited to join the team as the new administrative assistant at First Presbyterian Church. Originally from Zeeland, MI, Andrew grew up on a dairy farm and, before starting at FPGH, worked as a practice coordinator at Connect Chiropractic in Allendale.

He and his wife, Blair, met in 2010 and have been happily married since 2018. In his free time, Andrew enjoys wood-working and exploring new hiking trails with their dog, Buddy. Both he and Blair look forward to becoming part of the First Presbyterian Church community.



Feel free to stop by the office anytime—he'd love to say hello!

Youth Ministries

November Youth Group Dates

Currently, Youth Group (grades 5-12) meets the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month, from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

In November, we will meet on the 10th for a "normal" Youth Group evening, and on November 24 we will celebrate "Friendsgiving!"





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: fjgh.org

November 2024

deliver to: (or current resident)

Christmas Flower Dedications



Your flower dedication contributions make it possible to decorate the Sanctuary, Gathering Area and Lounge with the beautiful flowers and greenery of Christmas.

Anyone wishing to make a dedication to be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin may do so by completing the form below and returning it by Sunday, December 15, to the church office or by dropping it in the Sunday offering plate.

Please print the name of each person you wish to honor, along with your name and telephone number. Feel free to use additional forms as necessary. Suggested donation: \$15/per 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/EMAIL: _____

Make check payable to: First Presbyterian Church, with memo notation: "Christmas dedication"