



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

JANUARY 2025, VOLUME 73—ISSUE 1

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

I am still basking in the afterglow of a wonderful series of services that led to Christmas. After so many years of disruptions, this is the first Christmas Eve where it seemed like everything lined up for us to worship joyfully together. I hope that you found your way to worship with us in the season, whether in person or online. We curated services aimed at a broad range of folks this year. We had a service specifically designed for young children and their families. We had a service for those who needed quiet and comfort. We had a reimagined service where we could hear the Christmas story with fresh ears. We closed with the familiar Lessons and Carols. Each in their own way made my heart sing.

Our calendars have now turned to another year. After focusing intently on the four gospels this fall, I want to turn our attention to the Old Testament, particularly looking at some of the “Greatest Hits of the Bible.” There are so many stories that are crucial to understanding our faith. I suspect that many of us grew up hearing them in Sunday School or when reading a children’s Bible with our family. I still have flannel graph images seared into my brain from my childhood, so we’re planning to bring those back for the next several weeks.

For this series, we’ll dive into Moses and the Burning Bush, the Parting of the Red Sea, Balaam’s Donkey, Deborah, Samson, Ruth, and many others. If you want to dig deeper into these stories, I’d encourage you to check out the How to Read the Bible class led by Dr. Matt Bruce, which happens at 10:00 on Sundays.

The last Sunday of January will be a congregational meeting (for the purposes of approval the pastors’ terms of call and electing at-large Nominations Committee members) and a time to look at the Annual Report. This meeting is a good chance for us to take stock of our blessings as a church, to see where we could improve, and to open ourselves to the opportunities before us. It will be in the Lounge between services, and I hope you will be there. The church is at its strongest when its members engage in the ministry and step forward to serve. This is a strong church, but there’s always room for growth!

As we begin another year of ministry together, I invite you to join me in praying for our church. In our prayers, let us ask God to reveal clearly the way forward. Let us seek to know how we can serve our neighbors through the church. Let us seek to grow deeply in faith, hope, and love. Here’s to 2025 being a great year of ministry together!

In Christ,
Pastor Troy

Upcoming Events

- Jan. 5** Advent Decoration Clean-Up
- Jan. 9** Memorial Service for Virginia Weenink
- Jan. 12** Robin Connell & Friends C.A.S. Concert
- Jan. 25** Memorial Service for Lynne Kinkema
- Jan. 26** Congregational Conversation & Annual Meeting
- Feb. 2** New Member Class
- Feb. 7** Red Cross Blood Drive

Project Ripple Effect

Project Ripple Effect is seeking nominations for charitable organizations that could use a little extra financial support.

This year, we’ve increased our commitment to \$15,000 for deserving projects. Let us know about organizations that might benefit from this program! Applications are available at the church, or you may [download one here](#). The deadline to submit applications is January 12.



Annual Meeting January 26 10:00 a.m. in the Lounge

The annual meeting is called to elect at-large members of the Nominations Committee and to approve the pastors’ Terms of Call.

You will also hear ministry updates, have a chance to ask questions, and receive the annual report.

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,
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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

Our Sympathy:

to the family and friends of Dick Christy, who passed away on Dec. 6. A combined memorial service for Dick and Jane will be held sometime in the spring.

to Betty Johnson and family on the death of her great grandson, Izekial, on December 6.

to Frank and Becky Steinhauer on the death of Frank's stepmother, Donna, on December 16.

to the family and friends of Lynne Kinkema, who passed away on December 22. A memorial service for Lynne will be held here at FPGH on January 25 at 11 a.m.

To Judith Schoonover and John Weenink and families on the death of their mother, Virginia Weenink, on December 23. A memorial service for Virginia will be held here at FPGH on January 9 at 11 a.m.

Thank you!

"Thank you to my church family for brightening my days with your prayers, cards and support during my recent back surgery and recovery. I am doing well and am glad to be back in worship with you."

- Ruth Suchecki

"Thank you for all the wonderful meals, cards, love, and especially hugs, during my recent journey during Bill's illness and death. My family and I appreciated the outpouring of love. I can't thank you enough. You are all special souls."

- Kitty Blessing



Every month, we publish the birthdays of members and friends who are no longer able to come to church regularly. Make their day special with a birthday card!

Jan. 8

Mary Fox
18029 Wildwood Springs Pkwy
Spring Lake, MI 49456

2025 Per Capita

Per-capita is a charge we pay to the Presbytery each year for every member of our congregation. The amount for 2025 is \$42.00.

Please prayerfully consider paying the per-capita amount for each person in your family who is a church member. *Thank you!*

For more info on Per Capita, visit: <http://bit.ly/3AOhSJO>

Church Directory Update

We're excited to announce that an updated church directory will be available in early 2025! If you'd like to update your photo or make changes to your address, phone number, or other contact information, please contact Karen at knienhouse@fpgh.org or 616-402-0188.

You're welcome to provide a photo you already have, or we'd be happy to take a new one for you in the church's A/V studio.



New Members Class Sunday, February 2



Would you like to become a member of FPGH or do you want to know more about the beliefs and traditions of the Presbyterian Church? You are invited to attend our upcoming New Member class!

Classes are held quarterly, and the next class is Sunday, February 2 from 12:30-2:00 p.m. A light lunch will be provided.

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

Child care is available upon request. Attending the class does not commit you to membership.

Tidings article deadline for February issue: January 23, 2025

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.

From Pastor Kristine Aragon Bruce

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Dear Church Family,

Here's an update on what is happening with the revision of our youth ministry and the search for our next Director of Youth Ministries. In the December Tidings article the new mission statement of our youth ministry was shared: *With God's help, we seek to build a Christ-centered community of acceptance that seeks to serve others.*

Alongside the new mission statement, the Renovation Team, with valuable input from parents, youth group volunteers and Youth Committee members, identified several key goals. The top goal established is to provide more opportunities for service, allowing our youth to actively live out their faith while building relationships with one another. The hope is that the new mission statement and goals will empower the new Director of Youth Ministries to focus their time and energy on guiding both youth volunteers and the youth themselves to a deeper understanding of Jesus' love for them and for others.

The position will be posted very soon. Feel free to tell anyone and everyone you know about this position! You never know—someone you know may know the person God is calling to be our next Director of Youth Ministries.

The search team is comprised of Youth Elders Tim Tiefenbach and Karen Losee, Student Representative Naomi Force, Personnel Representative Ryan Goldman, and members Melissa Kutsche, Christine Rademacher, Aaron Portenga, Alexis Stark, and myself. I am grateful for these individuals who are willing to step up and serve in this capacity.

Youth Group will continue to meet the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month. Due to the difficulty of finding volunteers to make dinner for our youth, the Youth Committee decided to provide substantial snacks instead. Think cheese, deli cuts, crackers and dip. We'll still play fun games and have great discussions in our small groups. Let Pastor Kristine know if you'd like to donate any snacks! That

being said the **time of youth group has shifted to 6-7:30 pm**. This will allow youth to have dinner with their families as well as time to foster meaningful conversations and relationships among our youth.

Also, I want to thank the secret angel who cleaned our popcorn machine! The youth leaders and I have a love/hate relationship with that machine. We love that the youth love the popcorn, but none of us, including the kids, love cleaning it.

Please continue to keep our search for the next Director of Youth Ministries in your prayers. We are prepared for this to be a thoughtful and deliberate process. It's crucial to find the right person for this role, as selecting the wrong fit would not benefit the candidate or our church. Thank you for your ongoing support and prayers!

Grateful for you,

Pastor Kristine
KristineAB@fpgh.org

In Our Church

Update from the Session

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

Report from Session

- We approved the 2025 Operating Budget and the 2025 Joyful Noise budget.
- We called a meeting of the congregation for January 26, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. for the purposes of approving the pastors' terms of call and of electing at-large members to the 2025 Nominations Committee.
- We approved the pastors' housing allowances.
- We approved receiving the 2025 Mission Fund distribution from the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation.
- We approved the 2025 Communion Schedule.

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

Blood Drive Feb. 7

There continues to be a critical need for blood products to ensure patient care.



Our next blood drive:

Friday, Feb. 7,

12:00—5:45 p.m.

**First Presbyterian Church
Schedule your donation at:**

redcrossblood.org

Thursday Morning Breakfast Group

Are you an early riser who enjoys meaningful conversation and digging deeper into scripture? If so, we invite you to join the Thursday morning discussion group!

The group meets every Thursday at 7 a.m. at Russ' Restaurant. Together, we'll reflect on the scripture passages that will be the focus of the upcoming Sunday's sermon. You'll find a supportive community eager to learn and grow alongside you. Join us!

Food Pantry Collection

Each month the Mission Committee collects food and household goods for the Salvation Army food pantry.

Currently requested items:

- Canned beef stew & ravioli
- Boxed pasta & sauces
- Ketchup & mayonnaise
- Canned kidney beans
- Peanut butter & jelly
- Chunky-style soups
- Laundry soap

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

The Bible's Greatest Hits: Old Testament Edition Sunday Morning Class

This spring, our Sunday morning Faith Formation class series will align with the sermon series running from January 5 to March 2, exploring *The Bible's Greatest Hits: Old Testament Edition*.

Join us as we dive deeper into some of the most captivating and beloved stories from Scripture, including:

- The Call of Moses
- The Crossing of the Red Sea
- The Giving of the Ten Commandments
- Balaam's Donkey
- Joshua and the Spies
- The inspiring tales of Deborah, Gideon, Samson, and Ruth

Don't miss this opportunity to connect with these timeless stories in a fresh and meaningful way! Class is led by Dr. Matt Bruce and meets in the Recreation Room between worship services (10-11 a.m.).

Thank You from The Giving Tree Christmas Ministry



We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to the Giving Tree Ministry this Christmas. Thanks to your incredible generosity, we donated over **\$3,500 in gift cards** to Step Up, Love in Action, and the LIA Housing Ministry Collaborative. Your kindness made a meaningful impact on these organizations and the individuals they serve.

A special note of gratitude to those who purchased gift cards through the Joyful Noise "RaiseRight" program. Your support not only benefited the Giving Tree Ministry but also added nearly **\$100 in rebates** to the Joyful Noise scholarship fund—effortlessly supporting their mission to nurture young hearts and minds.

Thursday Night Discussion Group

Looking for a meaningful way to connect with others and deepen your faith? The **Thursday Night Discussion Group** is the perfect opportunity to explore impactful ideas from renowned authors while engaging in thoughtful, supportive conversations with others.

From **January 16 through February 27**, we'll be diving into *The After Party: Toward Better Christian Politics* by Curtis Chang and Nancy French. This insightful book, described by Google Books as helping us "reframe our political identity away from the 'what' of political positions and toward the 'how' of being centered on Jesus," promises to spark engaging discussions and fresh perspectives.

Please join us downstairs in Fellowship Hall on **Thursday evenings from 7-8:30 p.m.** for a stimulating, faith-filled discussion. Sometimes, there are cookies--the edible kind! Questions? Contact Sally Dunn—we'd love to see you there!

From the Earth Care Team

Earth-Friendly Resolutions for 2025!

January is here and it's time again to make resolutions for the new year. Let's consider the earth that God gave us and take care of our home.

Start with an activity which will save you money as well as saving energy. Consumers Energy offers customers a free whole-home energy audit and will provide free product upgrades. Visit this link to schedule your audit: <https://homeanalysis-consumersenergy.com/>

Next, let's consider how to use less plastic. Plastics don't disappear; they degrade into harmful microplastics that affect nearly all living organisms, including us. To reduce plastic use, consider these steps:

- Use stainless steel reusable water bottles instead of plastic.
- Place groceries in reusable bags and not the grocery store plastic bags.
- When traveling use reusable or compostable utensils and plates.

Become pesticide free in your yard and home. Pesticides for insects will also kill butterflies and bees. Do an internet search on "pesticide free insect control" for ways to control insects without pesticide.

Shop local and organic whenever possible. Shopping local helps your neighbors, and shopping organic helps you and your health by eliminating additives and chemicals.

Recycle as much of your throw-away items as possible. Glass, paper, cardboard, metal cans, and plastic bottles are all recyclable.

If you have a vegetable or decorative garden, begin composting to gain new fertile soil to add to your gardens. There are many online articles to help you learn to compost.

Community Artist & Speaker Series

Robin Connell & Friends

January 12, 2025, 4:00 p.m.

Originally from Detroit, jazz pianist-singer Robin Connell honed her craft in New York City, at places such as The Waldorf-Astoria, bringing the sophistication of The Great American Songbook to life in her own charming and inimitable way. She skillfully selects repertoire appropriate for various engagements - whether it be setting an atmosphere for a private event or captivating audiences with her artful arrangements and vocals. Visit robinconnell.com for more information.



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

Youth Ministries

Youth Director Search

We're about to start the search for our next director of youth ministries! The position will be posted in the next couple of weeks. Tell everyone you know about this position—it's the best way to get the word out!

Our search committee is comprised of Youth Elders Tim Tiefenbach and Karen Losee, Student Representative Naomi Force, Personnel Representative Ryan Goldman, and members Melissa Kutsche, Christine Rademacher, Aaron Portenga, Alexis Stark, and Pastor Kristine Aragon Bruce.

5th/6th Grade Worship Gathering

Hey, 5th and 6th graders! Come join the fun as we chat about all things worship, make new friends, and hang out together. Led by the awesome Kristin Felt, this is the perfect chance to learn, share, and grow in a relaxed, fun setting.



Mark your calendar—it's happening every 2nd Sunday of the month! Got questions? Reach out to Pastor Kristine at KristineAB@fpg.org.

January

12: 5th/6th Worship Gathering
12: Youth Group
26: Youth Group

Please Note: Youth Group currently meets the **2nd & 4th Sundays of the month from 6-7:30 p.m.**

YOUTH GROUP NOTES

We've made a change! Instead of serving dinner at youth group, we'll now be offering substantial snacks. This adjustment allows students to enjoy dinner with their families beforehand.

If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Kristine: KristineAB@fpg.org.



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

January 2025

deliver to: (or current resident)



SUMMER CAMP

It's time to start registering for summer camp!

Did you know that FPGH provides generous financial assistance to children who wish to attend a Christian summer camp?
(...and this is not limited to members of FPGH!)

For details and an application, go to fpgh.org or stop in the church office.
If you are reading this online, you may download the forms from the following links:
[Informational Letter](#) [Camp Project Application](#)