



# PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

MARCH 2025, VOLUME 73—ISSUE 3

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

## From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

I have two significant things on my mind as the calendar turns to March. The first is our session's commitment to addressing the divisiveness that is present in our society, particularly in our politics. The session is encouraging members to participate in eight-week small group discussions on a guide put out through the Colossian Forum. It's called *One Anothering: Choosing each other in a politically divided world*.

These gatherings are aimed at shifting our postures by reforming both our mindsets and habits. Over the course of our time, the hope is that we can shift from polarized politics to kingdom politics, from scarcity to abundance, from contempt to love, and so on. Each session begins and ends with worship. There is space for personal and group reflection. There is a deep desire to listen to each other with empathy, honoring the image of God that resides in each and every one of us.

Starting the week of March 10, there will be three separate groups starting, each with eight to twelve participants. (Yes, that means we need you to sign up and commit!) The groups will meet weekly, with one on Mondays from 2:00-3:30, a second on Mondays from 6:00-7:30, and a third on Thursdays from 2:00-3:30. Our hope is that these go so well that we'll hold more of these going forward, trusting that each of us can be transformed to live in a better way for the sake of Christ, kingdom, and our neighbors.

The second thing on my mind is Lent. It's finally here! We prepare to enter Lent with a party — our annual Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner on March 4. This year we'll meet and eat upstairs and have some fun playing all-ages bingo. Ash Wednesday is the following evening, and we'll have a solemn service at 7:00 in the sanctuary. The following Wednesdays of Lent, we'll hold our Taizé services in the Chapel at 6:00. These 30-minute services are a time for peace, quiet, and prayer. They're followed by homemade soup suppers in the Lounge.

We like to engage in a spiritual practice during Lent, and I hope you'll join in these. There will be devotions available at the church and included in the weekly email for your personal reflection. In worship, both on Sundays and Wednesdays, we'll engage in a simple divine reading (*lectio divina*) of the Psalms and Isaiah. As we read these scriptures, we invite you to ask the Spirit to give you one word to dwell on. We'll write these words out, and over time they'll turn into an art installation at the church. We also hope you'll take your words home and continue your conversation with God about them.

As we enter this holy time of year, I pray that you find yourselves renewed in love — love for God and neighbor. The Lord knows we all need that.

In Christ,  
Pastor Troy

## Upcoming Events

- Mar. 2** Youth Sunday
- Mar. 2** Belize Adult Mission Trip Informational Meetings
- Mar. 4** Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner & Game Night
- Mar. 5** Last Class on C.S. Lewis
- Mar. 5** Ash Wednesday Worship Service
- Mar. 9** Daylight Savings Time Begins 
- Mar. 9** C.A.S. Young Organist Concert with Dr. Sarah Simko
- Mar. 12** Taizé Worship Service & Soup Supper
- Mar. 19** Taizé Worship Service & Soup Supper
- Mar. 26** Taizé Worship Service & Soup Supper

## 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
- Chunky-style soups
- Canned chunk chicken
- Pasta sauces & pasta
- Boxes of cereal
- Ketchup & mayonnaise
- Applesauce & canned fruit
- Jelly
- Dish soap & paper towel

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



## 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, Barb & George Bryant

### Our Sympathy:

to the Lynn and Lambourne families on the death of mother and grandmother Barbara Lambourne on February 13.

### Congratulations!

to Steve and Diana Groters on the birth of their great-grandchild, Lily, on January 29.

to Keith and Patti Konarska on the birth of their granddaughter, Eleanor Rose, on February 12.

### Thank you!

"I want to thank everyone at First Presbyterian for the incredible outreach of love and compassion which was expressed to me and my family on the passing of my wife, Margie. Margie LOVED her Presbyterian faith, First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven, and its

members and committees and work, and especially her beloved Pastor Troy.

I want to add a personal thank you to all of the church staff, especially Sally Bryant, Maryanne Beery, Eric Snyder, Caron Farmer and Amanda Dykhouse, for their incredible attention to detail. I will miss you all....every other Sunday. May God bless you, in many special ways."

- Jack Steinmetz

## February YogaFaith Date Changes

For the months of March and April, Chair Yoga and YogaFaith will meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> **Tuesdays** of the month, **March 11 & 25 and April 8 & 22.**

**Chair Yoga is 5:30—6:15 p.m.**  
**YogaFaith is 7:00—7:45 p.m.**

Both classes meet in the chapel, are open to the public, and are donation based.

## 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/3AOhSJQ>

### Tidings article deadline for April issue: March 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.

## 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 are 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.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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!

- Mar. 2** Annette Whitney  
1450 S. Ferry, Apt. 204  
Grand Haven, MI 49417
- Mar. 3** Heidi Gassman  
17500 Whippoorwill Dr.  
Grand Haven, MI 49417
- Mar. 12** Barbara Race  
321 Grand Avenue  
Grand Haven, MI 49417
- Mar. 18** Gary VandenBrand  
16118 Fillmore St.  
West Olive, MI 49460
- Apr. 9** Ken Ennenga  
507 Leggat St.  
Grand Haven, MI 49417
- Apr. 9** Ann Satter (age 101!)  
1410 S. Ferry Street, A-2  
Grand Haven, MI 49417

## From Pastor Kristine Aragon Bruce

## In Our Church

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Dear Church Family,

I really hope you consider joining a *One Anothering* Small Group. These are groups who will work together toward learning tools in a Christ-centered manner to be better listeners. The goal, while relying on the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, is to learn how to ask good questions in understanding why another sees the world differently than you.

We live in a world where there are books published about why empathy and mercy have become political terms. Frankly, that's ridiculous. Empathy (Galatians 6:2) and mercy (Micah 6:8) are what we are called to show and do by God. What I also love about the *One Anothering* process is that is that the sessions always begin with a practice of centering ourselves on Jesus Christ, as Jesus Christ was the only one who practiced empathy and mercy perfectly.

As I've said before, the goal of these groups is not to convince others to see the world as you do. Rather, the goal is to gain understanding of why others see the world differently. The hope is to understand how

certain viewpoints are formed and how our belief in Jesus and the teachings of scripture influence the conclusions we reach.

Our aim is for people with all sorts of differing perspectives to join one of the small groups. They begin on March 10th and you can choose from three different times: Mondays at 2 p.m. or 7 p.m. and on Thursday at 2 p.m. All groups will meet for 8 weeks for about 90 minutes. Sign ups are in the church office or you can email [staff@fpgh.org](mailto:staff@fpgh.org) to sign up. If you'd like to learn more about *One Anothering* and the ministry of The Colossian Forum who published it, you can do so at [colossianforum.org](http://colossianforum.org).

We truly hope this small group curriculum will help us be more centered on Jesus Christ in our deeply divided world. Again, the goal is not uniformity, but unity in Jesus. As we say at the end of every worship service we *are a Christ-centered community of acceptance*.

Grateful for you,

Pastor Kristine

## Talent and Interest Survey

**Did you know?** It takes **75-100 volunteers** to make an average Sunday happen! From greeters, cookie bakers, and communion servers—every role plays a part in creating a welcoming and meaningful worship experience.

We know life is busy, and signing up for something new can feel like a commitment—but **filling out our Talents & Interests Survey doesn't mean you're signing up for anything!** It just helps us understand where your interests might fit, now or in the future.

So far, **about 20% of our members have completed the survey**—let's see if we can boost that number together! It only takes a few minutes, and you never know—you might discover a new way to connect with your church family.

- **Complete the [online survey here](#).**
- **[Download the survey here](#), complete it, and return it to the church office.**

Thank you for being a part of this wonderful community!

## In Our Church

### Update from the Session

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

#### Report from Session

- We approved receiving four new members to the church.
- We approved our Session Covenant.
- We approved the 2024 statistical report and 2025 session meeting schedule.
- We approved youth assisting with communion on Youth Sunday.
- We elected the officers of the congregation - Tom Franks (President), Tom Wood (Vice President), Randy Abraham (Clerk of Session), and Ann White (Treasurer).
- We held communion training.
- We approved seed money for future sabbaticals from the Alpha Fund.
- We approved funding for the Youth summer trip to Montreat.
- We approved purchasing copies of *One Anothering* for small group study.

It is our joy to serve Christ as the Session for FPGH.

## Scholarship Applications

Applications for scholarships to be awarded this spring are now available in the church office, on the youth page of our website ([fpgh.org](http://fpgh.org)), or downloaded below.



- *James and Lois Hillis Fund* awards scholarships to students going on to any type of post high school education or training.

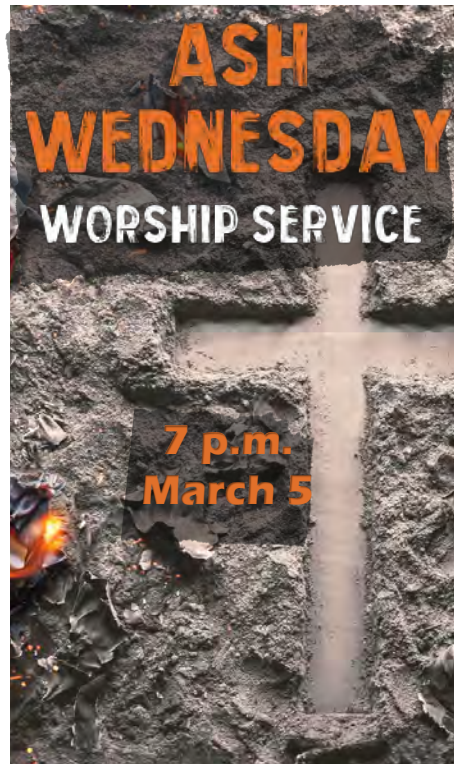
[Applications](#) are due in the church office by **April 1, 2025**.

## Shrove Tuesday Pancakes & Games March 4

Come out for a night of delicious (and free!) food and games for all ages on Shrove Tuesday!

Why do we eat pancakes on Shrove Tuesday? Historically, it was the last chance for a bit of indulgence before 40 days of fasting, and also an opportunity to use up food that couldn't be eaten during Lent. This included eggs, fat and milk, which were made into pancakes and eaten on that day.

Let's all celebrate and indulge together before Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. Dinner starts at 6 p.m. in the church Lounge. All are welcome!



## Lenten Taizé Worship & Soup Suppers

Join us on Wednesdays during Lent for simple, meditative Taizé-style worship services in the chapel, followed by warm and welcoming soup suppers in the church lounge.

To make these gatherings possible, we need volunteers to provide soup and bread each week. We anticipate needing five pots of soup and several loaves of bread per evening. Help is also needed with setup and cleanup to ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience for everyone.

If you'd like to contribute in any way, we'd love your help! Thank you for being part of this meaningful Lenten tradition. Contact Maryanne Beery ([mbeery@fpgh.org](mailto:mbeery@fpgh.org)), or sign up: [Soup Supper Sign Up](#).

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN



508 Franklin Avenue  
Grand Haven, MI 49417  
Phone: 616.842.6760

[www.fpgh.org](http://www.fpgh.org) • [staff@fpgh.org](mailto: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

Sally Bryant, Communications Coordinator

Laura Burns, Children's Ministries Director

Todd Olson, Church Administrator

Marc Felt, Gathering Band Leader

Rob Hlebinsky, Organist

Karen Nienhouse, Congregational Care Ministries

Andrew Wolfert, Administrative Assistant

Kerri Roberts, Office Assistant

Sally Segers, Joyful Noise Director

## Lenten Devotions

Our 2025 church-wide Lenten devotional is *Grieving Change and Loss: The unpredictable, non-linear faith-filled journey toward resurrection*, published by The Presbyterian Outlook.

This devotional was born out of personal experiences of grief, shared by authors Dr. Bobby Hulme-Lippert, Rev. Ginna Bairby and *Outlook* Editor/Publisher Rev. Dr. Teri McDowell Ott. Together, they reflect on how grief manifests in countless ways: the loss of loved ones, friendships, health, innocence, and even the natural world. In a society fragmented by division and loss, grief is a constant companion. Lent, with its 40-day journey to the cross, becomes a sacred space to hold and explore this somber mix of emotions. Each daily reflection, beginning with Ash Wednesday and culminating on Easter Sunday, combines personal reflection, Scripture and prayer.



The devotional will be sent in weekly increments as part of our Weekly Update email newsletter. If you prefer a paper copy, a limited number will be available in the Gathering Area.

## New Study Groups: Learning to Listen and Speak with Grace

We are excited to offer a new study opportunity at FPGH, designed to help us navigate conversations in a politically divided world with grace and understanding. This study, titled *One Anothering: Choosing One Another in a Politically Divided World*, is produced by The Colossians Forum, an organization dedicated to equipping Christians with tools for meaningful and constructive dialogue.

### What to Expect

We will be running three separate groups over the course of eight weeks, starting March 10. Each group will consist of 8-12 participants, and we ask that everyone who signs up commits to attending for the duration of the study. Session has generously purchased the books needed, so all materials will be provided.

### Group Meeting Times:

- **Mondays:** 2:00–3:30 PM
- **Mondays:** 6:00–7:30 PM
- **Thursdays:** 2:00–3:30 PM

Our hope is that through these sessions, no matter our political perspectives, we will cultivate a new way of sharing life together in the church, our community, and beyond. If you are interested, please sign up and commit to one of the groups.

For more information or to register, please contact the church office, or follow this link: <https://forms.gle/uKRPIi3KcQ8FEruE9>

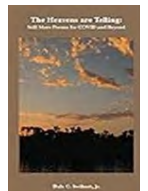
We look forward to learning and growing together!

## Devotionals Available from FPGH Members

Two members of our congregation have published devotionals that offer inspiring reflections for your faith journey.

**A Heart for Jesus: A 40-Day Journey with Our Savior** is a devotional written by Deb Stanley. This book provides short daily reflections, each featuring a passage of scripture and a question to ponder. With ample space for journaling and note-taking, it invites readers to engage deeply with their faith. A limited number of copies are available for free in the church office—be sure to pick one up while supplies last!

Rev. Dale C. Swihart, Jr. has also released his latest book of meditations, **The Heavens are Telling**.



This is his third volume, following *Catching Falling Stars* and *The Power of One*. His newest work continues to offer thoughtful and uplifting spiritual insights. *The Heavens are Telling* is available for purchase at The Bookman or through Amazon.

## Pennies for a Purpose

Do you have extra pennies around your house that you would be willing to donate? A family in our church will double the amount of pennies collected and donate it to the Joyful Noise Scholarship Fund. Not only can you clear out your stash of pennies, but you'll also support families needing a little extra help with childcare tuition!



A large container is located in the Gathering Area to collect your penny donations.

## Thursday Night Discussion Group

On March 6, we will complete our study of *The After Party: Toward Better Christian Politics* by Curtis Chang and Nancy French, as we discuss Chapter 6 and the book's conclusion.

From March 13 through April 10, we will be discussing *Mother Teresa: A Simple Path*, compiled by Lucinda Vardey. As the timely book copy notes, "In *A Simple Path*, Mother Teresa offers guidance to help us on the path to peace and love." "It is only when the love in our hearts is released," says Mother Teresa, "that we will be able to care for others with true joy and altruism."

Please join us downstairs in Fellowship Hall from 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. on Thursday evenings, as we walk the path lit by Mother Teresa's faith-filled commitment and practice "loving our neighbors as ourselves."

Please contact Sally Dunn with any questions.

## PC(USA) Special Offering: One Great Hour of Sharing

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education and opportunity. The three programs supported by the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. Below are several examples of how each program makes a difference to so many:

- **Presbyterian Hunger Program (36% of funds)**
  - ◆ **Asofenix** in Nicaragua implemented a solar refrigeration initiative for fish production.
  - ◆ **Tewa Women United** in Santa Cruz, NM protects the health and safety of Indigenous communities near extractive (e.g. drilling and mining) projects.
  - ◆ **Acrest** in Cameroon distributed stoves and water filters to better the health of 26 communities.
- **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (32% of funds)**
  - ◆ Humanitarian Recovery grants in 27 states (including FL, NC, and CA) and 14 countries
  - ◆ Migration Accompaniment Ministry—Ukrainian refugees in Central Europe
  - ◆ South Sudanese refugees in Egypt and Chad, and others
- **Self-Development of People (32% of funds)**
  - ◆ Today is the Day—urban garden in Detroit
  - ◆ The Small School/Uniting Dreams—Chame, Panama
  - ◆ Payton Homeless and Homeless Veterans Initiative—Payson, AZ

**One Great Hour of Sharing** funds help meet urgent needs addressing sustainable solutions for affected communities. **Love and justice** are at the heart of our Presbyterian tradition. Envelopes for the One Great Hour of Sharing are in the church pews and at the Clinton Street entrance. You may also give online by texting OGHS to 91999.



## Community Artist & Speaker Series

**Young Organist, Dr. Sarah Simko  
March 9, 2025, 4:00 p.m.**

Dr. Sarah Simko is the associate organist and communications coordinator at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Detroit and an adjunct organ instructor at Madonna University. She earned her doctorate from the University of Michigan and a bachelor's from the Eastman School of Music.



Dr. Simko has performed at notable venues including Methuen Memorial Music Hall (MA), St. Paul's Cathedral (Ontario), Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian Church (Detroit), and Hill Auditorium (Ann Arbor).

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

## Just Because ...

The price of eggs has been skyrocketing, but did you know there are plenty of substitutes that can help you achieve delicious results in your baking? Here are two top-rated replacements:



- **Water, Oil, and Baking Powder Replacement:**

2 tablespoons water +  
2 teaspoons baking powder +  
1 teaspoon vegetable oil  
= 1 large egg

- **Carbonated Water Replacement:**

1/4 cup carbonated water  
= 1 large egg

Next time you're baking and need an egg alternative, give these methods a try—you might just find a new favorite!

## Youth Director Search Update

The search team has been working hard on recruiting and interviewing candidates. You can help by telling everyone and anyone you know about this open position! The wider the pool of candidates the more likely we will meet the person that God is calling to First Pres to minister to our students! Feel free to refer potential candidates to Tim Tiefenbach, the moderator of the search team, or to Pastor Kristine at [staff@fpgh.org](mailto:staff@fpgh.org).

## Youth Conference at Montreat!

Calling all rising 9th graders through graduating HS seniors! We'd love to take you to the youth conference at Montreat Retreat Center in Montreat, NC, July 20-26th. Cost is \$300 per student, but please know scholarships are available as well as discounts for families sending more than one student. This will be a week of fellowship, worship, fun outdoor activities, and an opportunity to serve in the local community. You can find out more about the conference at <https://montreat.org/>. **Sign up deadline is March 23rd.** Questions? Please reach out to Pastor Kristine at [kristineab@fpgh.org](mailto:kristineab@fpgh.org).

## Upcoming Youth Events

2: Youth Sunday

9: 5th/6th Gathering during 11 a.m. service

9: Youth Group

23: Last Youth Group of the Year

July 20-26:

Youth Conference at Montreat

*From the Earth Care Committee:*

## Small Steps Toward Better Stewardship!

As we approach the Lenten season, we are reminded of two things, Jesus's sacrifice and God's love. We also are reminded that God loves the Earth and that perhaps there are things we can give up to better use the resources God has given us. Even simple things would help, like using one paper towel instead of two, or reusing a piece of aluminum foil that is still clean, or not using sandwich bags when a small container that can be washed and reused will do.

We need to be watchful and creative in finding ways to reuse, recycle, and reduce. For example, during the removal of the Christmas decorations this year at the church, there were a number of poinsettia plants left. Instead of throwing them into a plastic bag to put into the trash and thus into the landfill, one of our members suggested that we compost the plants and soil by removing the pots and stakes, and the pots and stakes were then recycled. As Easter approaches, perhaps we can do the same with our Easter flowers, or better yet, select ones that can be replanted outdoors. With a little rethinking, we can come up with solutions that will help us preserve God's earth, even if they are small steps.



## Support Joyful Noise and Celebrate National Reading Month!

At First Presbyterian Church, we are blessed to have Joyful Noise as part of our ministry, providing a nurturing environment for young children to learn and grow. As we move into March, there are a couple of ways you can help support their classrooms!

### Donations Needed

Joyful Noise is in need of **disinfectant wipes** and **paper roll towels** to help keep their space clean and safe for the little ones. If you're able to donate, your generosity would be greatly appreciated!



### Celebrate National Reading Month



March is **National Reading Month**, a time to encourage a love of books and storytelling in young children. While we already have guest readers lined up, we welcome donations of **toddler and preschool-age books** for our classrooms. If you'd like to contribute, this is a wonderful way to share the joy of reading with the next generation.

Donations can be dropped off at Joyful Noise or the church office. Thank you for your support in making a difference for our young learners!



**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)

**March 2025**

*deliver to: (or current resident)*

## Celebrate the Resurrection of our Savior!



Your Easter flower dedications make it possible to decorate the sanctuary with beautiful spring flowers for the Easter worship services.

To make a dedication, complete the form below and return it to the church office (or drop it in the offering plate) by Palm Sunday, April 13. After Easter, the flowers will be shared with those who are homebound or in the hospital.

Please print the name of each person you wish to honor, along with your name and contact information. Suggested donation is \$15 for each dedication.

DEDICATION 1 Please check one: \_\_\_ in celebration of \_\_\_ in honor of \_\_\_ in memory of

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

DEDICATION 2 Please check one: \_\_\_ in celebration of \_\_\_ in honor of \_\_\_ in memory of

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

GIVEN BY: \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to:** First Presbyterian Church, with memo notation "Easter Dedication"