



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

MAY 2025, VOLUME 73—ISSUE 5

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

I WANT to start by looking ahead to the summer. I really enjoy how summers in Grand Haven offer not only beautiful weather but a fantastic change of pace from the busyness of the school year. (Yes, I know plenty of us aren't in the schools anymore, but we have to admit that the rhythms of that schedule influence everything!) Summer means our folks flow in and out of town, taking breaks, enjoying the outdoors, and spending time together in the long evenings.

Our worship this summer will offer a chance for you to ask your pastors anything. Yes, anything. To keep it obvious, we're calling this ***Ask Us Anything***. What does this mean? Starting this month, there will be cards in the pews, around the church, and online where you can submit your questions. We'll take your questions and do our best to give our answers in the sermons.



Why do this? I love the interplay between the congregation and its pastors. I think it's great having your questions on our hearts and minds as we go to scripture. It offers us the chance to really hear what you're thinking about and to do our best to connect what we believe with the world around us. So, ask us anything!

We're also aiming for this to be a summer of connections. People often have more time in the summer, and we'd love to help our members share some of that time with each other on hikes, in learning groups, in activities, and so much more. Mark your calendars now for our ***Kick-Off to Summer Bash***, which will be on Wednesday, June 18, at the church. There will be food, games, a bounce house, and more. We'll have information about the many ways you can make connections with others this summer. I know I'm excited about this, and I hope you'll join us.

I'd be remiss if I didn't note that May is a time of endings. We have students finishing high school and college. Congratulations to all of those who have graduated. We'll be celebrating you on the third Sunday of May and hope you plan to join us in worship. Your church is proud of you! I can't wait to hear what's next for you.

In Christ,

Pastor Troy

Upcoming Events

- May 4** New Member Class
- May 4** Messiah Sing-In with St. John's
- May 9** PW Hanging Basket Pick-Up
- May 11** Mother's Day
- May 18** Graduation Sunday
- May 26** Memorial Day (office closed)
- Jun 15** Ferry Legacy Event
- Jun 18** Kick-off to Summer Bash

New Member/ Inquirers Class Sunday, May 4

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



Our next class is Sunday, May 4, from noon-1:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided..

To reserve your spot, contact Kerri Roberts at 616-842-6760 or kr Roberts@fpg h.org

Attending the class does not commit you to membership.

Hello. May!

In Our Church

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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

Our Sympathy:

to the family and friends of Barb Bryant, who passed away on April 12.

to June Ribbink and family on the death of her husband, Ray, on April 20.

to the family and friends of Ray Harz, who passed away on April 21. A memorial service for Ray will be held at Klaassen Family Funeral Home on May 30 at 11 a.m.

Special Note:

A memorial service for Dick and Jane Christy will be held at noon on Saturday, May 10, in the church sanctuary.

Congratulations!

to Michael and Catherine Klaus and big brother Miles on the birth of Sebastian Charles, on April 26.

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!

May 5 Betty Whalen
1338 Colfax Ave.
Grand Haven, MI 49417

May 18 Pat Austin
17041 Lloyds Bayou Dr.
Apt. S
Spring Lake, MI 49456

May 23 Lois Erwin
17046 Lloyd's Bayou Dr.
Apt. 123
Spring Lake, MI 49456

May 28 Bill Bedford
15409 Winchester Cir.
Grand Haven, MI 49417

May 28 Sue McClellan
1450 S. Ferry St. Apt. 228
Grand Haven, MI 49417

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

June 24 Stan Johnson
17046 Lloyds Bayou Dr.
Apt. 215
Spring Lake, MI 49456

Tidings article deadline for June issue: May 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.

PW Hanging Flower Basket Sale

For those who ordered a hanging basket from the Presbyterian Women, pick up is on Friday, May 9, from 11-4 in the church parking lot.



If you're unable to come at this time, your baskets will be placed in the Gathering Area for pickup on Sunday, May 11. If you know in advance that you won't be able to pick up your flowers on Friday, please send an email to s2123@aol.com.

Food Pantry Collection

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

Currently requested items:

- Breakfast cereal
- Canned chicken
- Canned fruit & vegetables
- Pasta sauces & pasta
- Applesauce
- Chunky-style soups
- Mac & cheese

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



Ask Us
Anything!



STAFF@FPGH.ORG

From Pastor Kristine Aragon Bruce

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Dear Church Family,

I've started seeing a spiritual director. If you're not familiar with spiritual directors, they are trained and certified to help people deepen their connection with God. They walk alongside those they guide, helping them discover ways to engage with God more meaningfully—wherever they are in life.

I've been feeling spiritually dry lately. It's been harder for me to engage in my usual spiritual disciplines—my ways of praying and devotionally reading scripture have become stale. While I am a part of a spiritual direction group once a month and am thankful for that group, I needed someone to help me explore, on a more personal level, how I might better spend time with God.

I shared with my spiritual director, Paula, how stale my usual practices had become, and I was grateful for her empathy. Paula shared with me a time in her life when she lacked motivation to pray and that her usual spiritual disciplines were no longer helpful. During that season, she found something simple but

meaningful: each morning, when she let her dog out in the back yard, she would take off her shoes and feel the grass beneath her feet and between her toes. At the same time she quietly prayed: "I am rooted in love." Later, at a meeting with her own spiritual director they commented that she seemed more "grounded." Paula replied: "Funny you should say that...."

Paula's prayer didn't explicitly mention Jesus, but she knew it was directed to him. Practically speaking, it also happened during a task she did daily. After my meeting with Paula, I felt free to simplify my own prayers—just one sentence, like hers—and to pair it with something I already do daily. I'm in a season where taking an hour, let alone a day, to journal or reflect feels nearly impossible. What I landed on was to pray "God is my refuge and my strength" as I do my daily stretching. As I stretch into a downward dog yoga pose and breathe in, I begin praying, "*God is my refuge.*" Then as I exhale into cobra pose, I pray, "*God is my strength.*" After a couple of weeks of doing this I am feeling more

connected to God again.

I tell you this because I know how busy this time of year can be. Often, the first thing that seems to go is intentional time with God. But incorporating a short prayer into something you already do—like walking the dog, gardening, commuting, or doing the dishes can make a meaningful difference. We don't have to rearrange our schedules to spend quality time in prayer with God. Jesus is everywhere and always with us so why not incorporate prayer into what you're already doing? It also doesn't have to be for very long. I stretch for about 10 minutes each day.

My encouragement for you this spring is to find a simple prayer—just a sentence or two—and quietly say it during something you already do. I'm confident that when we do this we'll be better able to see God's presence in our daily lives.

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 devoted the majority of our meeting to visioning, discerning together where we believe God is calling the church to give focused effort in the next few years. This was a substantive and fruitful time, and it is still a work in progress. Stay tuned!
- We updated the Personnel Manual to reflect needed changes in response to the new Earned Sick Time Act legislation.
- We approved all requested distributions related to endowments held at the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation.

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

The Wired Word is Back!

Join us Sundays thru June 15 **in the Rec. Room** for *The Wired Word*, a dynamic class held on Sunday mornings between worship services (10-11 a.m.).

The Wired Word navigates timely current news events using the Bible and Christian commentary. We seek to understand current events and our changing world as believers in Jesus. Stimulating questions guarantee lively discussions in our community!

A discussion topic is emailed to participants every Thursday—reading ahead is encouraged but not required! Request to receive the weekly lesson at staff@fpgh.org. You may also attend on Zoom using this link: <https://bit.ly/3Sgbgc1>

Come be part of the conversation!

Save the Date

All are invited to attend a program and reception
presented by the Ferry Legacy Society
of First Presbyterian Church
Honoring members & friends providing for the church in their estate plans
and welcoming everyone interested in joining
the Ferry Legacy Society

4 PM: Welcome

4:15 PM: Program—Rev. Dr. Riley E. Jensen

4:35 PM: Reception—Beverages & Hors d'oeuvres

JUNE
WEDNESDAY 11 AT 4 PM

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
508 FRANKLIN
GRAND HAVEN, MI 49417

RSVP BY JUNE 5: STAFF@FPGH.ORG OR 616-842-6760

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)

Offered in person and online:
Facebook Live (@FirstPresGH)
YouTube (First Presbyterian Church,
Grand Haven)

Staff and Leadership:

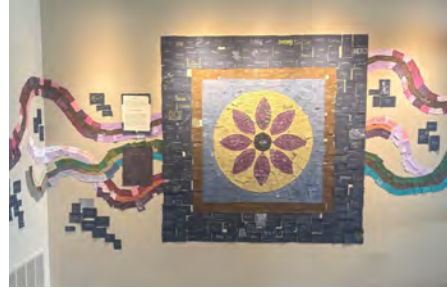
Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon, Senior Pastor
Rev. Kristine Aragon Bruce, Associate Pastor
Maryanne Beery, Director of Music & Fine Arts
Dr. Matt Bruce, Theologian-in-Residence
Sally Bryant, Communications Coordinator
Laura Burns, Children's Ministries Director
Todd Olson, Church Administrator
Marc Felt,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

Heart Words

This Lent our congregation created an art project of our Heart Words.

As we listened to the Psalms on Sunday and Isaiah on Wednesday, we wrote down a word that the Holy Spirit brought forward to each of us. These made their way to the artful hands of Maryanne Beery and Eric Snyder, who lovingly assembled them into the shape of a mandala in the Gathering Area.

The installation will be up for the next few weeks, so take some time to prayerfully read the words we shared this Lent.



The Mandala

The mandala is a symbol of the universe in ideal form, and its creation signifies the transformation of a universe of suffering into one of joy. It can also be used as an aid to meditation, helping the meditator envision how to achieve the perfect self.

The word mandala means "circle"

The mandala pattern is used across most religious traditions. It represents wholeness, holiness, and all things encompassed by God.

In Christianity, there are many forms that are evocative of mandalas: the Celtic cross, the halo, the labyrinth, and rose windows are some examples. What a person does with a mandala is personal; it is a chance to slow down, to be quiet, and to call on God's creative energy.

Messiah: A Sing-In with St. John's

Together with the choir of St. John's Episcopal, we are once again looking forward to a special *Messiah* sing-in on Sunday, May 4, at 4 p.m.!



Our Geneva Choir will join voices with the St. Cecilia Choir of St. John's, the Muskegon Community College Singers, and professional soloists who will lead us through this beloved piece of music. Those who attend will be given scores and invited to join in the singing at various times throughout the event.

This year's event will take place at St. John's Episcopal Church, right across the street from First Pres at 524 Washington in Grand Haven. All are welcome!



ROB HLEBINSKY

Organist



Sunday, June 4

4 p.m.

Come and experience an organ recital with Rob Hlebinsky!

The program will feature music from some of your favorite Disney productions, including *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Frozen*!

THIS CONCERT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 508 FRANKLIN, GRAND HAVEN, MI FPGH.ORG

OUR VISION

We are called to celebrate God's grace as a Christ-centered community of acceptance, growing in faith and living as Christ's hands to serve.

OUR MISSION

As members of First Presbyterian Church we will:

- ◆ Provide relevant and engaging worship that nurtures a growing community of faith.
- ◆ Grow our faith by promoting quality educational opportunities to all.
- ◆ Affect people's lives by creating a culture of acceptance, where differences are valued, and connections to one another are fostered in a Christ-centered church.
- ◆ Remain a beacon in our community by building on our rich missional heritage as a church that serves locally, regionally and globally.

Thursday Night Discussion Group

As Lerner and Loewe wrote in *Camelot*, May is a both a lovely and a darling month!

So please join us on Thursday evenings in May for some lovely and thought-provoking discussions about *The Flawed Family of God: Stories about the Imperfect Families in Genesis* by Carolyn B. Helsel and Song-Mi Suzie Park.

As noted in The PC(USA) Product Overview, “The best stories in the book of Genesis involve families. The issues these stories raise—married vs. single life, sibling rivalry, infertility, family relocation, blended families, and the like—are startlingly relevant to families of today.”

Helsel and Park “provide insight into the frayed edges of our family life, but because the authors also find God in the broken places, they bring us profound hope.” Thomas G. Long, Bandy Professor Emeritus of Preaching, Candler School of Theology.

As Sister Sledge sang, “We Are Family.”

Please join us downstairs in Fellowship Hall from 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. on Thursday evenings, as we discuss the messy, relevant, faith-searching families of Genesis—and their ups and downs—and our contemporary family lives.

PC(USA) Special Pentecost Offering

We are the church together! On June 8, we celebrate the birthday of the church and so the **Pentecost Special Offering** connects us with the future of the church. It supports ministries with children, youth and young adults in our community, across the nation and around the world.

- **40% of the your gift will remain here with First Presbyterian Church to support the Hand2Hand Backpack Ministry**, which provides bags of food for the weekend to local elementary and middle school children.
- **25%** goes to the Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) experience which trains and equips young people ages 19-30 in mission at 13 sites in the U.S. and around the world.
- **25%** supports ministries with youth, ages 12-18. One example is the Youth Triennium held every three years at various locations with over 3,000 young people attending. In July this year, they will be in Louisville, KY.
- **10%** supports the “Educate a Child Transform the World” PC(USA) initiative which works to improve education and provide safe havens for children-at-risk.

These younger members of the household of faith are not just the future of the church—they ARE the church—and they are God’s gift to us. When we give to the Pentecost Offering, we join in welcoming, loving, and affirming all children as Jesus does and calls us to do. Special offering envelopes will be in the pews at the end of May and also at the Clinton Street entrance. Another way to give is by texting PENTECOST to 91999.

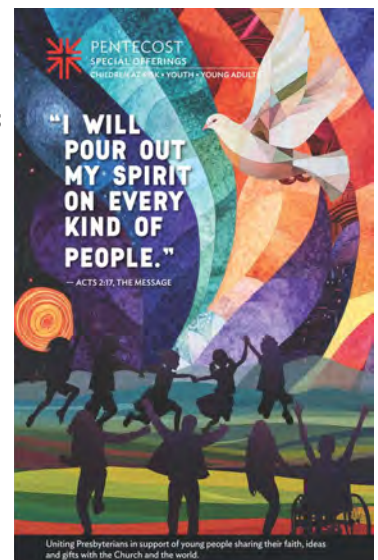
For more information on the Pentecost Special Offering, go to:
<https://pcusa.org/special-offerings/pentecost-offering>

Win a Prize in the Eco-Summer Challenge!

The Earth Care Team is sponsoring “**Eco-Summer**” starting May 25!

You can participate by walking, riding a bike, taking Harbor Transit, sharing a ride and/or carpooling to church during the challenge. This includes any meeting, discussion group, volunteer activity, music rehearsal, CAS, scouting or Youth group activities! Sign and date a participation note, drop it in the collection tin and you’re registered for the monthly drawing to win \$25 in Dune Dollars!

Challenge yourself and your family to carpool, bike, or walk to non-church activities this summer as well, and develop a new habit of earth-friendly transportation!



From the Earth Care Committee: Small Steps Toward Better Stewardship!

First Presbyterian Church is proud to be one of only 14 Earth Care Congregations in Michigan, certified through the PC(USA) since 2019. This designation recognizes our ongoing commitment to care for God's creation through action in worship, education, facilities, and outreach.

In worship, we've incorporated Earth Care themes into services like Waterfront Worship. We refreshed the Memorial Garden with help from the Boy Scouts, creating a natural space for reflection. Educationally, we've hosted guest speakers, shared a video series on faith and climate, and provided resources in our library and *Tidings* newsletters.

Our facilities reflect our values: we've switched to LED lighting, added bike racks and a repair station, and developed strong recycling and composting programs. We also use reusable or biodegradable materials at church events and gatherings whenever possible.

Outreach efforts have included Plastic-Free July, hosting a harvest table for produce sharing, opening our doors during the Coast Guard parade as a cooling station, sponsoring an annual Eco-Summer program to encourage people to ride their bikes, walk, or carpool, helping encourage recycling at our summer picnics, helping with removal of invasive species at local parks, as well as helping to clean up local rivers and lakes.

In 2025, we plan to continue these efforts with Eco-Summer (beginning May 25), more *Tidings* articles, Earth Day events, Coast Guard cooling station, adding new members, Plastic-Free July, welcoming a guest speaker on creation care, and establishing relationships with other local environmental groups. We believe every church has a role in protecting God's Earth so it can flourish and be here to enjoy for generations to come.



Celebrate Our Graduates on Senior Sunday – May 18!

Join us in worship on Sunday, May 18, as we celebrate and honor our graduating seniors! Whether they are completing high school, college, or postgraduate studies, we want to recognize their hard work and achievements.



If you have a graduate in your family, please share their name, a photo, the school they are graduating from, and what their plans are after graduation, whether that is work, trade school, college, graduate school, or something else!

Send this information to Sally Bryant at sbryant@fpgh.org by **May 9** so we can include them in our graduate slideshow.

Let's come together to support and bless our graduates as they embark on their next journey!

Youth Director Search Update

While we have not yet met the person who God is calling to serve as our next Youth Director, the search team continues to work 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 connect potential candidates to Tim Tiefenbach, the moderator of the search team, or to Pastor Kristine at staff@fpgh.org.

Please pray for endurance and encouragement for the search team!

Thank you!

The Youth Director Search Team:

Tim Tiefenbach, Karen Losee, Naomi Force, Christine Radamacher, Melissa Kutsche, Ryan Goldman, Alexis Stark, Aaron Portenga, and Pastor Kristine





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

May 2025

deliver to: (or current resident)

FPGH.ORG

We're searching
for a great
YOUTH MINISTRIES
DIRECTOR

Lead, Inspire, Grow! – Become Our Next Youth Director!

We are looking for someone who is passionate about guiding young people in their faith journey and inspiring the next generation to live out their faith. If this is you, or you know someone like this, go to fpgh.org for a full job description and find out how to apply!