



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

JUNE 2025, VOLUME 73—ISSUE 6

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

Summer is here! Well, mostly. We all know that the warmer temperatures always take a little longer to arrive on the lakeshore, and our schools are in session for a couple more weeks. Still, it's fun to see the leaves on the trees, the barricades going up downtown for outdoor dining, and more people milling about the streets.

In the summer, most of our rhythms change. The days are longer. We take more breaks. We really enjoy the area. In summers past, the ministry of the church also slowed down, but this year we are intentionally trying something different. We want to use the summer change to offer new opportunities to get connected to each other and to Christ.

This effort begins with a *Kick-Off to Summer Bash*, which will be on Wednesday, June 18, starting at 5:00. Our hospitality team has a fun menu planned for an indoor picnic. We'll have a bounce house for the kids (not to mention our nice playgrounds). There will be games inside and outside. There will also be the chance to find new summer connections through activities, classes, and other events. We hope that you'll take advantage of this as way of deepening your faith and of strengthening your relationships to others.

We're also soliciting your questions and wonderings for our *Ask Us Anything* series. We're serious about this. Ask us anything. It could be a hard question you've had about life. It could be something you don't understand about faith. It could be a blend of those two things where life and faith aren't syncing up for you. We've already received some very good (and challenging!) questions, so keep them coming. Also, stay tuned. Some of these will be part of our sermons, but I have a hunch we'll find some other ways to answer your questions online and beyond.



I'm excited the summer is here. I hope you'll join me in making deeper connections this summer. It's going to be a good one.

In Christ,

Pastor Troy

Summer Kick-Off BASH!

Wednesday, June 18
5-7:30 PM

Come enjoy dinner and games to kick-off summer!

Bring a camp chair or blanket to sit on and your water bottle. There will be lots of fun outdoor and indoor games for all ages, and dinner will be served in the church lounge. Invite your friends!

Upcoming Events

- Jun 1** Organ Recital with Rob Hlebnsky
- Jun 11** Ferry Legacy Event
- Jun 16** Playground Playdate at Whistlestop Park
- Jun 18** Kick-Off to Summer Bash
- Jun 20** Feeding America Food Truck
- Jun 23** Volunteering at Love in Action Community Garden
- Jun 24** Hike at Ottawa Sands
- Jun 24** Exvangelicals Book Group Begins
- Jul 2** One Anothering Group Begins
- Jul 16** Youth Dune Rides at Silver Lake
- Jul 21** Playground Playdate at Spring Lake Splash Pad

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 event, scouting or Youth Group activity! 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!

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 Harold and Jan Gelderloos on the death of their brother-in-law, Mike, on May 21.

to Marilyn and Ron Bosch and the Bosch family on the death of Marilyn's mother, Wanda Ferrell, on May 22.

Thank You!

Dear First Pres Family,

Twenty-seven years ago, we lost our son, Jonathan, at the age of 20, to a brain tumor. During those years, First Pres was with us every step of the way. Now, once again, our lives have been turned upside down. And once again, First Pres has been here for us. We would like to thank the Presbyterian Women and EVERYONE for their cards, meals, comforting words, and your much-needed prayers.

With God's blessings to all,
Lee and Pat Elenbaas

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!

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

July 18 Ray Wiersema
1410 S. Ferry Street
Grand Haven, MI 49417

July 22 Flo Andersen
15380 Canary Dr.
Grand Haven, MI 49417

SUMMER HOURS

HAVE BEGUN!

Through Labor Day,
the church office will close
at noon on Fridays.

Tidings article deadline for July issue: June 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.

Feeding America Food Truck Volunteers Needed

Twice a year, First Presbyterian Church sponsors a Feeding America food truck to help meet the growing need for healthy food for those experiencing food insecurity in our community.

Helping hands are always welcome as we distribute food to neighbors in need. Can you lend a hand?

Next Event: Friday, June 20

Time: 9-11:30 a.m.

Location: St. Pat's parking lot
(park in the church lot on Fulton)

Rain or Shine!

Contact **Mike Weller** at:
mcweller1@hotmail.com,
or text/call 616-402-6109



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
- Pasta sauces
- Sloppy Joe sauce
- Taco seasoning packets
- Granola bars
- Laundry & dish soap
- Toilet paper

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



Dear Church Family,

I've been thinking a lot about conflict lately. God is challenging me to see conflict as an invitation to be in a more authentic relationship with others. I used to think I welcomed conflict and saw that as a badge of courage. Turns out, I'm not as courageous as I thought.

What truly takes courage, however, is to really listen to the person with whom you are in conflict *and* to risk sharing how you've been hurt. I say "risk" because it may not be received well, no matter how well you try to articulate it. By this, I mean using "I statements," such as "I felt devalued when you said/did..." etc.

It takes a lot of energy to enter into such challenging conversations. But if we truly care about the person with whom we have tension, view them as a friend we want to keep, *and* as someone who is also made in the image of God, then we can

rely on Christ for the courage to enter into conflict.

In our One Anothering small groups, we spoke about courage. A great definition of courage is to "do it scared." Courage doesn't mean the absence of fear, but to engage with others while afraid. Afraid of how we will be received, how the other may be defensive, the fear of tension, and/or fear of losing the relationship altogether. Those fears are real. God has been convicting me that I can't let those fears stop me, especially if the other person is important to me and that relationship is worth keeping.

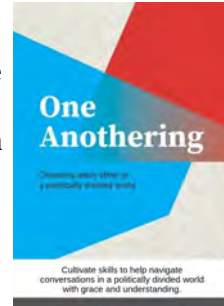
It could also mean that it takes more than one awkward conversation filled with honesty. But when those conversations are

rooted in love—the same love Christ has for each of us, including those we struggle with—conflict can actually draw us closer and deepen our relationships.

But as with all things, we can't do this alone. We need the Holy Spirit to remain calm, to resist the temptation to attack those who have hurt us, and above all to approach others with Christ-like love. I know this is easier said than done, but I hope we all realize that with Christ's help and love, it can indeed be done. And we will be all the better for it.

Grateful for you,

Pastor Kristine
KristineAB@fpg.org



In Our Church

Update from the Session

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

Report from Session

- We welcomed nine people into membership of the church.
- We elected elder commissioners for the June presbytery meeting.
- We approved new members to join the Earth Care Team.
- We approved funding for several major maintenance items including replacing the dishwasher in the downstairs kitchen, updating the electronic door system, replacing the industrial coffee maker, adding water fountains and bottle fill stations upstairs and downstairs, and replacing two rooftop HVAC units.
- We continued our work on refining our vision and goal-setting.

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



Ask Us Anything! Sermon Series

This summer, our pastors are offering you a chance to ask them anything, and they will do their best to answer them in the Sunday sermons.

Look for question cards in the pews or around the church, or you may submit them online using this link:
<https://bit.ly/451SuNs>



ROB HLEBINSKY ORGANIST

**Sunday, June 1
4 p.m.**

Come experience an organ recital with Rob Hlebinsky!

The program will feature music from popular film, TV, and video game music representing the seasons of the year and seasons of life.



THIS CONCERT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 508 FRANKLIN, GRAND HAVEN, MI FPGH.ORG

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
Kerri Roberts, Office Assistant
Clara Saunders, Youth & Family Ministries Intern
Sally Segers, Joyful Noise Director
Andrew Wolfert, Administrative Assistant

From the Earth Care Committee: Beautifying the Church Grounds with Native Plants

Spring has brought new life to the landscaping around the church, thanks to the dedicated efforts of several church staff and congregation members.

Todd Olson and Andrew Wolfert gave our Easter flowers—daffodils and hyacinths—a second life by planting them around the church, adding cheerful bursts of color for all to enjoy.



Continuing the effort, Todd Olson and Michele Smith picked up native plants from two locations: the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at Hemlock Crossing and Weesie's in Montague. With help from Ginger Aubrey, Michele helped arrange the plants around the front of the church. These were then planted by the Boy Scouts, creating a beautiful and sustainable landscape that everyone can appreciate.



At the entrance to Joyful Noise, children will be welcomed by a charming mix of wildflowers and strawberries—an inviting and educational touch for our young ones.

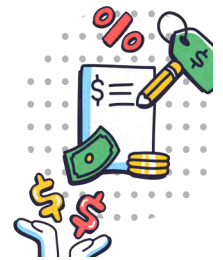
The Earth Care Team is excited to share this native landscaping project with you and hopes it brings joy and a deeper appreciation for God's creation.

Financial Update: January - April

We are now a third of the way through the year, and we wanted to provide an update on the church's finances.

First, thank you for your faithful support of First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven. Through April we have received \$371,500 in revenue toward the General Fund and nearly \$25,000 in special gifts for programs like One Great Hour of Sharing, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and the Joyful Noise Scholarship Fund.

During this same period, our General Fund expenses have been \$409,200. This means that expenses exceed our revenue by about 9%. Some of this is expected as we send some of our mission agencies their gifts early in the year to help equip them for ministry, but there is still about a 5% difference. Our pledged giving at the end of April is also about 10% behind budget, which is more than the current shortfall.



If you are able, would you consider catching up on your pledged giving? Or, if your pledge is made through a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA or as a stock gift, would you consider doing so earlier in the year than you may have in the past?

Thank you for your giving! Should you have questions on your pledge, please call the office at 616-842-6760. You can also check your giving records on Realm, our church's online database.

All are Invited

to attend a program and reception presented by the Ferry Legacy Society of First Presbyterian Church.

The event will honor members and friends providing for the church in their wills and estate plans, and welcome everyone interested in joining the Ferry Legacy Society.

WEDNESDAY **JUNE 11** 4 TO 6 PM

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LOUNGE
508 FRANKLIN AVENUE
GRAND HAVEN

4:00 p.m.	Welcome
4:15 p.m.	Program: "Legacy is Rooted in Generosity," Rev. Dr. Riley E. Jensen
4:35 p.m.	Reception—Beverages & Hors d'oeuvres

Please RSVP to the church office by June 5:
616-842-6760, staff@fpgh.org or register online: <https://bit.ly/4cKCjWj>

Thursday Night Discussion Group

FEAST and FICTION: The Thursday night group is taking a break from our usual theological books and reading some fiction this summer. Please join us on the third Thursday of June, July and August at 6 pm in the Lounge for a potluck supper followed by a book discussion.

Our selection for June 19 is *Virgil Wander* by Leif Enger. As described by Goodreads, *Virgil Wander* is "an enchanting and timeless All-American story that follows the inhabitants of a small Midwestern town, Greenstone, Minnesota, in their quest to revive its flagging heart." Joining them and their town is Virgil Wander, the title character, who survives a car accident, landing in Lake Superior. *Virgil Wander* is a quirky story to be sure, but one that is good and true, telling a heartwarming tale about neighbors helping each other and a community coming together to find itself once again. Leif Enger's "writing is a smooth mix of romanticism and gritty reality, recalling the Old West's greatest cowboy stories" (goodreads.com).



Please contact Linda Gritter at lindagritter@gmail.com for more information. Check the church calendar or website for our July and August selections.

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 with FPGH to support the Hand2Hand 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 young people in mission at 13 sites around the world.
- **25%** supports ministries with youth.
- **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.



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 are in the pews and also at the Clinton Street entrance. You may also give by texting PENTECOST to 91999.

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

Missions Update: Casa de Esperanza

God continues to open doors for students in Honduras through Casa de Esperanza! The organization currently supports six university students who are pursuing degrees in fields such as finance, nursing, agriculture, medicine, and languages. At the boys' home, two students from are diligently preparing for their university entrance exams. Casa de Esperanza is also grateful to offer bilingual education and counseling support to younger students as they navigate challenges and work toward brighter futures.

Your generosity makes this life-changing work possible! To support students through education and discipleship, visit casaofhope.com/donate.

Thank you for being part of this mission!

From the Mission Committee Sacred Suds Volunteers Wanted

Sacred Suds is an organization in Muskegon that offers shower facilities, clothing, and daily food for local residents. Volunteers are currently needed for the following positions:

Operations Support:

- Schedule volunteers and train as necessary
- Advise leaders of issues preventing adequate services

Purchasing and Support:

- Purchase hygiene products, towels, and organize clothing
- Coordinate support for daily food service, showers, washers, and office needs.

If interested, contact staff@fpgh.org

Opportunities to Stay Connected this Summer

LIA Community Garden **Mondays Beginning June 23** **1-3 PM**

Join with others from First Pres and the community on Mondays throughout the growing season. Produce raised goes to those facing food insecurity in our community. Grace Gardens is located on the grounds of Church of the Nazarene at 1620 S. Beechtree in Grand Haven. Contact Pastor Kristine to sign up: KristineAB@fpgh.org

One Anothering Book Group **Wednesdays at 5:30 PM** **Beginning July 2**

Subtitled "Choosing one another in a politically divided world," this discussion group is devoted to helping Christians learn a new way of listening and speaking about things they care deeply about.

The group will run for 8 weeks and is led by Pastor Troy. Contact the church office to sign up: staff@fpgh.org



The Exvangelicals Book Group **Tuesdays Beginning June 24** **2-3:30 PM**

Join Pastor Kristine for a book group exploring why many who grew up in evangelical churches are now leaving the movement. Our session sees this as a demographic that could potentially find a home at FPGH, and this book offers a great way to learn more. To sign up, contact Pastor Kristine KristineAB@fpgh.org

Summer Connections Hike **Tuesday, June 24** **Ottawa Sands** **5:30 PM**

We have planned several nature hikes at local parks this summer. Our first hike will be at Ottawa Sands located at 18280 North Shore Drive in Ferrysburg.

Bring your own sack dinner, then we'll join together for a flat, stroller-friendly hike around the lake.

Youth & Children's Ministries

Children's Ministries Summer Events

LEGO Faith Builders resumes on June 8

4 years-4th grade

Join Miss Laura as we rebuild Bible stories in the Chapel on Sundays during both worship services. We will display the Bible LEGO creations all week - stop by and see the Bible stories with new eyes!

Want to join the LEGO Faith Builders Team? Talk to Laura Burns lburns@fpgh.org or stop by the Children's Ministries desk.

Playground Meet-Up Mondays

June 16, 10 a.m.—Whistle Stop Playground, Spring Lake

July 21, 10 a.m.—Spring Lake Splash Pad

August 18, 10 a.m.—Grand Haven Imagination Station

Meet Our Youth & Family Ministries Summer Intern, Clara Saunders!

Clara Saunders serves as the Youth and Family Ministries Intern, where she helps plan faith-building and fellowship activities for students in grades 5–12. Her role focuses on nurturing spiritual growth and fostering meaningful relationships through a variety of engagement and service opportunities with youth and families.

Clara is entering her sophomore year at the University of Michigan, where she plans to major in psychology. In her free time, she enjoys staying active—whether it's with the Michigan Club Soccer team, playing pickleball, hiking, or golfing. Clara has been attending First Pres with her family since she was three years old!

To get in touch, reach out to staff@fpgh.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

June 2025

deliver to: (or current resident)



for all
ages!

Summer Kick-Off BASH!

Wednesday, June 18
5-7:30

OUTSIDE:

- Bounce House
- Nine Square
- Lots of Outdoor Games
for Every Age!

INSIDE:

- Dinner
- Board Games



Come and explore
all the fun ways
to stay in touch
this summer!



IN THE CHURCH AND PARKING LOT AT FIRST PRES!