



# PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

JULY 2025, VOLUME 73—ISSUE 7

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

**THIS** summer we are focused on making connections with God and with one another. Last month we held a Kick-Off to Summer Bash, and even though the rain forced everything indoors, we had a great time gathering together. At that event we began sign-ups for the many summer connection opportunities.

The invitation is this: How will you make a connection to God and one another this summer? There are book groups and classes. There are nature hikes and playground meetups. You can come to midday organ mini-recitals or help tend to the gardens for Love in Action. You can even join a trivia team.

One of the challenges so many of us face during the school year is that our lives are too full to give any time to something or someone new. Our aim is to take advantage of looser schedules and longer days in the summer, so that we can grow together.

This past spring, we ran three *One Anothering* groups. This is an eight-week group that gives us the opportunity to find a new way to “choose each other in a politically divided world.” As your pastor, I believe that this kind of thing is central to what it means for us to offer an alternative to the clamoring bitterness of the world, particularly around politics.

So, I’m offering another *One Anothering* group this summer. It begins on July 2, and will be on Wednesdays from 5:30-7:00 through August. Having done this once, I can say with confidence, that I found the material helpful and challenging. It helped me see with clarity where I can learn and grow. It taught me a new way of listening. I think this work is so vital that I’m devoting eight summer nights to it. I hope you’ll join me. Sign-ups are in the office, or you can simply reach out to me.

I look forward to all the connections we’ll get to make this summer!

In Christ,

Pastor Troy

## Summer Connections

Summer is a season full of sunshine, rest—and opportunities to stay connected with your church family! We’ve planned a variety of activities for all ages to enjoy —use these links to sign up to join in, or contact the church office: [staff@fpgh.org](mailto:staff@fpgh.org)

- [One Anothering Group](#)
- Playground Meet Ups:
  - [Spring Lake Splash Pad](#), 7/21
  - [Imagination Station](#), 8/18
- Group Hikes:
  - [Hemlock Crossing](#), 7/22
  - [Hoffmaster State Park](#), 8/23
  - [Wed. Weekly Walking Group](#)
- Feast & Fiction:
  - [Old Man on a Bicycle](#), 7/17
  - [Going Postal](#), 8/21
- [Youth Silver Lake Dune Rides](#), 7/16
- [Youth Horseback Riding at Stonybrook Stables](#), 8/9
- [Youth YogaFaith](#): 7/7, 8/4, 8/11, 8/18

## Upcoming Events

- Jul 2** One Anothering Group Begins
- Jul 2** Summer Organ Series with Rob Hlebinsky & Maryanne Beery
- Jul 4** Church Office Closed
- Jul 7** Youth YogaFaith
- Jul 9** No Summer Organ Series
- Jul 9** Youth Sunset Picnic
- Jul 13** Summer Pick Up Choir
- Jul 13** Playdate & Lunch on the Playground for Families with Young Children
- Jul 16** Summer Organ Series with Sarah Simko
- Jul 16** Youth Dune Rides at Silver Lake
- Jul 20** Summer Pick Up Choir
- July 20-26** Montreat Youth Conference
- Jul 21** Playground Playdate at Spring Lake Splash Pad
- Jul 22** Group Hike at Hemlock Crossing County Park
- Jul 23** Summer Organ Series with Peter Kurdziel
- Aug. 2** Coast Guard Cooling Station
- Aug. 4, 11, & 18** Youth YogaFaith
- Aug 9** Youth Horseback Riding at Stony Lake Stables
- Aug 10** Playdate & Lunch on the Playground for Families with Young Children
- Aug 18** Playground Playdate at the Imagination Station

# 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 Jan Gelderloos and family on the death of her husband, Harold Gelderloos, on June 24, 2025

### Congratulations:

to parents Jared & Sydney Bollaert, and big sister Ilya, on the birth of baby boy Luca McClean on May 31.

### Thank You!

Dear First Presbyterian Church,  
Thank you for sponsoring and serving at the food truck today! In 1.25 hours, 141 households including 384 individuals received mushrooms, potatoes, peaches, plums, & more! One hundred twenty nine seniors and 120 children will benefit from this food!

- Love in Action of the Tri-Cities

## 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!

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

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

**Aug 5** Barbara Spring  
1504 Pineridge Drive  
Grand Haven, MI 49417

## The Upper Room Devotionals

*The Upper Room* is a daily devotional booklet published in more than 30 languages and 100 countries around the world. Every day, readers of *The Upper Room* around the world read the same story in many different languages and pray the same prayer together.



The devotionals are published every two months and are available in the church office, lounge and Gathering Area. Help yourself!

### Tidings article deadline for August issue: July 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 the Mission Committee: The Hope Project Self-Care Supplies

Our church supports The Hope Project, which helps women escape sex trafficking. They have asked for our help in stocking the following items for their self-care pantry:

- laundry pods
- dish soap
- body lotion
- 2 box fans
- Cantu brand ethnic hair care
- toilet paper

Throughout the month of July, we will have a collection box in the Gathering Area. Your donation of any of these items would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for helping bring hope and healing to survivors.



## Food Pantry Collection

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

Currently requested items:

- Pancake Syrup
- Jelly
- Boxed dinners, such as Hamburger Helper or other skillet meals
- Chunky-style soups

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,

Summer is finally here! I hope you were able to make it to the Summer Bash held at the church on Wednesday, June 18th. Thanks to our marvelous hospitality team who served a wonderful dinner of homemade sloppy joes, salads, and of course, hot fudge sundaes! People of all ages enjoyed painting and corn hole tournaments together and our youngest members bounced their hearts out in the bouncy house that was in the chapel! That was quite the sight!

Originally, the entire event was supposed to be held outdoors, but Mother Nature had other plans. The staff quickly pivoted and moved all of the set-up indoors. Clara Saunders, our summer family ministries intern, and I quickly came up with extra games for youth to play indoors, as Nine Square in the Air would almost certainly have damaged multiple ceiling tiles.

It was a reminder for me that all of our best laid plans might need to be changed at the last minute. There's only so much in our control. While we had to do a lot of last minute

shuffling, it was still a great night and it was also very fun to see so many Joyful Noise families there as well. For me, the evening was a reminder of how God is still our constant—even when things change and our most detailed plans need to be scrapped. We hoped for a night of fun for our church family to be together, and that still happened!

I also hope you'll take the opportunity to sign up for all of the different ways we can remain connected this summer. From hikes, walking groups, book groups, to play-dates in the park I hope to see as many of us there as possible!

Enjoying time together can be balm for our soul, as it's presently a stressful time in our nation and in the world. We need each other more than ever to remind one another that God is still present and at work. That while there is so much chaos in our world, Christ's peace is still and always available to us. We can't control what is happening in other parts of our nation and the world, but we can still, while relying on the Holy Spirit, do what we can to love God,

our neighbor, and ourselves in our little corner of the world.

One spiritual discipline that has helped me lately is to pray with palms down then with palms up. In my prayer with my palms down, I release to God all that I might be holding onto too tightly. Even the need to see peace in our world. Events such as ICE raids in LA, nationwide protests, and war in Iran. I then pray with my palms up. At this time, I ask God to help me receive from God what I need in that moment, such as Christ's peace, comfort, presence, and reassurance that Jesus is still with me and in all of the chaos of the world. I encourage you to try this method of prayer and that you find it as comforting as I do. Even better is to find someone to pray this prayer with because we need God, and each other, now more than ever.

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 began with worship led by Melisa Overway as she guided us through a mini session of YogaFaith.
- We completed the annual review of the membership rolls.
- We heard an update on Pastor Kristine's Doctor of Ministry project.
- We heard an update from the Youth Director Search Team.

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

### Hot Off the Press!

Good News!

Our updated church directory is ready to go—stop by the church office any-time to pick up your copy.



## From the Earth Care Team Take the Plastic-Free July Challenge!

Plastic-Free July is a global movement that helps millions of people be part of the solution to plastic pollution; so we can have cleaner streets, lakes, oceans, and beautiful communities.



### Did you know:

- 80% of debris floating in our oceans is plastic. Every minute a garbage truck worth of plastic pollution ends up in the ocean.
- Plastic production will increase by 40% in the next 10 years. If we don't do anything about the plastic in our waters, oceans will carry more plastic than fish (by weight) by 2050.

The good news is, anyone can get involved to help reduce plastic waste. You can start out small, or really challenge yourself! For more information and solutions, go to [plasticfreejuly.org](http://plasticfreejuly.org).

Stop by the Plastic Free July table in the Gathering Area during July, sign a weekly pledge, and enter to win a basket of earth-friendly alternatives to single use plastics!

## Win a Prize in the Eco-Summer Challenge!

The Earth Care Team is once again sponsoring the “**Eco-Summer Challenge!**”

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!



We are celebrating Eco-Summer, but being eco-friendly is for all seasons! Let's develop new habits that are good for the earth.

**Congratulations to our June winner, Anne Rowley!**

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



## Ask Us Anything - Tidings Edition



by Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

We have received many good questions for our *Ask Us Anything* series. There are more than we can handle in sermons, so we'll give some brief answers to some questions in *Tidings* this summer. So, here we go!

### **Why are we using an updated version of the Apostles' Creed in worship? It's different than the one I learned years ago.**

The Worship Committee actually fielded a similar question a few months ago and took time learning the history of the creed and its translations. They had a healthy discussion about which version to use. While they recognize that some prefer the version they have said for much of their lives, the committee decided that using more up-to-date language is in keeping with the way the church has consistently updated and translated its faith into the current time and culture.

Dr. Matt Bruce will actually be leading a class this summer (beginning July 13) on the creeds and confessions, and this will get addressed in more depth then. So, come!

### **We count attendance every week. Does anyone do anything with that information?**

Yes! The Worship Committee looks at attendance figures to begin its meetings. They keep an eye on attendance trends. Interestingly,

when we include online attendees, worship attendance is basically back to where it was before the pandemic. That's great news! The Traditional service has had consistently strong online attendance, but if you're in the pews, you can't see who's with you online! That service is also very directly affected by snowbird travel. Gathering Service attendance has been growing noticeably over the past year, which is exciting! So, if you'd like to stay on top of this, consider joining the Worship Committee!

### **What are your personal thoughts on Pope Leo?**

This is Pastor Troy answering here. To be honest, I haven't given a ton of thought to the new pope. I'm married to a Chicago White Sox fan, so I LOVE that the pope pulls for the team on the south side. But, in sincerity, my hope is that that Pope Leo faithfully leads the Roman Catholic Church in the time God gives him. I love working with my Catholic siblings, and pray for continued growth towards unity among all Christians. I am also pleased that he appears to be continuing along the lines of the ministry of his predecessor, Pope Francis. In my opinion, that's a good thing.

### **How old were the disciples?**

The short answer here is that we really don't know. Given that Jesus was around 30 when he began his public ministry, it is assumed that most were younger than Jesus. Peter was married, so many think he was one of the older disciples, but he could still have been in his late teens and married. Those who were fishermen would have started work as teens, so James and John, for example, could have been that young. A lot of the dating of the

disciples comes from books attributed to them and stories in Scripture that go beyond Jesus' public ministry.

## JOIN THE CHOIR!

### **Singing—It's Basically a Free Health Plan**

Did you know singing is basically a miracle drug? Studies (and choir directors) agree—it can:

1. Reduce stress
2. Improve mood
3. Lower blood pressure
4. Improve breathing
5. Boost immune system
6. Improve sense of rhythm
7. Promote communal bonding
8. Provide comfort
9. Motivate
10. Empower
11. Promote well-being

### **Summer Pick-Up Choir is back!**

Join the voices of our Geneva Choir on **Sundays, July 13 & 20** at 8 a.m. (in the sanctuary) for rehearsal, and then sing for worship at 9 a.m. Try it out—all are welcome!

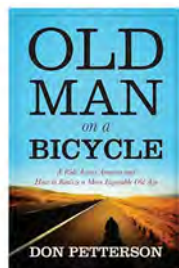
Questions? Contact Maryanne: [mbeery@fpgh.org](mailto:mbeery@fpgh.org)



## Thursday Night Discussion Group

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

Our selection for July 17 is *Old Man on a Bicycle: A Ride across America and How to Realize a More Enjoyable Old Age* by Don Petterson. Per the publisher Outskirts Press, *Old Man on a Bicycle* "relates how [Petterson] prepared for the 3,600-mile journey and what he saw and did during the two months he was on the road. In addition he rebuts the misconception that aging invariably means debilitating decline and, drawing on certain events of his ride, offers research-based advice on how to ease the physical aspects of aging. It's an inspirational account, emphasizing the importance of exercise to physical and mental well-being."



Because this is an older memoir, it may be a bit tricky to find. A few copies are available through MeL Cat. Please consider using your local bookshop, a used bookseller or Bookship.org to purchase a copy.

Please contact Linda Gritter at [lindagritter@gmail.com](mailto:lindagritter@gmail.com) for more information. Check the church calendar or website for our August selection.

## Thank You for Supporting the Pentecost Offering

On June 8, we celebrated Pentecost—the birthday of the Church! This year, your generosity helped us raise nearly \$3,000 through the Pentecost Special Offering.

Just as we express thanks for birthday gifts, we want to thank *you*, our faithful donors. Your giving makes a real difference.

Forty percent of this special offering remains local, and this year our Mission Committee has chosen Hand2Hand Ministry as the recipient of those funds. This incredible program provides bags of food for the weekend for local elementary and middle school students facing food insecurity.

The remaining 60% supports three Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) initiatives focused on education and creating safe, nurturing environments for children and youth at risk.

Your gift is a true celebration of the Spirit at work. Thank you!

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



## FPGH Open as Cooling Center During Grand Parade

We'll be open again this year as a **cooling center** during the Coast Guard Grand Parade on **Saturday, August 2, from 10–2:30**.

Guests can cool off, grab some water, and use the restrooms. We're looking for volunteers to help welcome folks, give directions, and keep things tidy.

**Perks?** You get to meet some awesome people, get a great, air-conditioned view of the Grand Parade from the church lounge, and even a parking spot in the church lot!

**Sign up here:** <https://tinyurl.com/2kkaxet7> or contact the church office.

## A Midweek Musical Retreat: Summer Organ Series Returns!

Looking for a peaceful midweek break? Join us for our Wednesday Lunchtime Organ Recitals!

Come relax in our cool, inviting sanctuary and enjoy the soaring sounds of our majestic pipe organ, played by talented local musicians. Just look at this lineup!

- July 2: Rob Hlebinsky & Maryanne Beery
- July 16: Sarah Simko
- July 23: Peter Kurdziel

Whether you're escaping the heat or just need a moment of calm, you're warmly invited. Come, listen, and be refreshed.

## Climate Change: Can You Make a Difference?

Hope is the best weapon against climate change. Why? Doesn't that seem too passive for such a pressing issue?

The short answer is: we will not act if we feel we have already lost. It is easy to focus on the negative and feel defeated, especially when it seems to be coming for us from every angle. "In a 2021 survey of 10,000 children and young adults from 10 countries (including the U.S.), 59 percent said they were very or extremely worried about climate change. More than half said they felt sad, anxious, angry, powerless, helpless or guilty. Three-quarters said they think the future

is 'frightening,'" says this article.

"If there were nothing we could do about climate change, being depressed or giving up would be a logical response," says Katharine Hayhoe, chief scientist at the Nature Conservancy and one of the most ardent new climate messengers. "But if we realize that the future is in our hands, that means we can make a difference. That is what our hope is based on."

### 17 Easy and Helpful Things You Can Do at Home:

1. Plant a tree in your yard.
2. Cut back on driving.
3. Volunteer to clean up your community.
4. Recycle items properly.
5. Upcycle items.
6. Compost your food scraps and yard waste.

7. Cut back on product consumption.
8. Shop at second-hand stores.
9. Choose reusable items over single-use plastic.
10. Reduce the amount of paper you print and use.
11. Buy locally-sourced foods.
12. Cut back on eating meat and dairy.
13. Conserve water around the house.
14. Use fewer chemicals in your daily life.
15. Conserve electricity at home.
16. Donate to environmental causes.
17. Encourage others to help save the environment.

*\*This article is an excerpt from a Newsweek US feature titled "Fighting Climate Change with Hope," written by Dr. Katherine Hayhoe, September 1, 2023.*

## Children's Ministries

### Summer Events for Children

#### **Littles Linger Longer Lunch** **Sunday, July 13, noon** **Church Playground**



Families with young children are invited to a playdate and lunch on the playground! We'll be serving pizza and watermelon, with gluten-free options available as well.

#### **Playdate at the Splash Pad** **Monday, July 21, 10:30 a.m.** **Tanglefoot Park Splash Pad**



Bring your own juice or water to drink, and Miss Laura will bring popsicles to share!

#### **Playdate on the Playground** **Monday, August 18, 10:30 a.m.** **Imagination Station, Grand Haven**



Kids and caregivers - come and join Miss Laura for fun, friends and fellowship at the Imagination Station! Pack your own juice or water and Miss Laura will bring a snack to share.

#### **Littles Linger Longer Lunch** **Sunday, August 10, noon**



Another fun playdate on the church playground!

### Walk with Joyful Noise in the Coast Guard Kid's Parade!



Joyful Noise has invited all children to join them Saturday, July 26 to walk in the Coast Guard Kids Parade!

Meet in the church Clinton Street parking lot at **9:30 a.m.** to get parade-ready. Bring your **strollers, bikes, scooters, or wagons**—supplies will be available to help you decorate before we line up. The parade begins at **10:30 a.m.**

Want to pass out candy along the route? Feel free to bring your own stash—or donate some for the group to share! (Candy is totally optional, but always a hit.)

After the parade, stick around for some **cookies and cold water**—a sweet reward for a fun morning!





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)

**July 2025**

*deliver to: (or current resident)*



## YOGaFaITH

**Monday, July 7  
11 a.m. - 12 p.m.  
in the chapel**

Bring a yoga mat if you have one,  
a few will be available if you don't.

*High School  
Events*

for rising 9th graders  
thru graduated seniors

## SUNSET PICNIC

**Wednesday, July 9  
7:30 p.m.**

**Grand Haven State Park, Area 7**

snacks provided - bring a blanket or chair to sit on

Parents are invited to come and help out --  
please contact Clara: [csaunders@fpgh.org](mailto:csaunders@fpgh.org)

