



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

OCTOBER 2025, VOLUME 73—ISSUE 10

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

I MET with David, my Spiritual Director, this past week. I was reflecting with him on how I have never been a pastor who sits up on Saturday night scrolling through the news just in case I need to scrap my sermon because something happened. Sure, from time to time I've preached because of a current event, but I also deeply believe that the gospel is speaking eternal truths to us that go well beyond our first impression. I've become more rooted in that thought as I rebel against instant *everything* in our culture.

When a public act of violence happens, like the assassinations of Charlie Kirk or Minnesota State Representative Melissa Hortman, our anxiety spikes, and that anxiety surges through communities, including churches. The Rev. Michael Gulker, who is the President of The Colossian Forum, wrote recently about this. In these moments many of us want to jump to public statements and actions, which is understandable. But he reframed this and asks, **What might godly courage require of me right now?**

Courage is a posture we're learning in *One Anothering*. (I'm holding another class over eight weeks in October and November and hope you'll consider joining.) Gulker encourages all of us to do the deeper work inside of calming our own reactivity, of rooting ourselves in God's love rather than fear, and of creating a space where grief and disagreement can coexist without contempt.

He then writes, "From that posture, courage takes many shapes:

- "Courage to Slow Down Before You Speak — In an outrage-driven culture, speed feels virtuous. *Get the post out, take a stand now*. But rushing often trades accuracy and love for signaling and safety. Courage might sound like: 'We're grieving and listening before we respond publicly.' That's not passivity: it's resisting the anxious demand for instant certainty.
- "Courage to Stay Connected Across Difference — Resist the urge to draw a line in the sand. Reach out to the person whose social media post triggered you. Ask a curious question. Stay present with those who see this differently.
- "Courage to Reveal Your Humanity — Share a glimpse of your own wrestling: 'This news stirred anger and fear in me too.' Vulnerability invites trust and lowers defensiveness. It releases you from the pressure to project perfect calm or ideological purity.
- "Courage to Entrust the Larger Story to God — Remember: Christ holds all things together. Entrust your anxiety to Him in prayer. Invite your community to do the same — reminding them that even here, Christ is still at work."

The slow work of one anothering is hard work, but I believe it's worth it and that it's part of the antidote to at least some of what is ailing us these days. I hope you'll join me in learning how to do so.

In Christ,

Pastor Troy

Upcoming Events

- Oct. 1** Visio Divina in the Sanctuary
- Oct. 3** Red Cross Blood Drive
- Oct. 5** Peace & Global Witness Special Offering
- Oct. 5** CROP Walk
- Oct. 8** Visio Divina in the Sanctuary
- Oct. 11** Spiritual Retreat with Michelle Olson
- Oct. 12** Penning & Koperski CAS Concert
- Oct. 15** Visio Divina in the Sanctuary
- Oct. 19** Iona Pilgrimage Interest Meeting
- Oct. 19** Composting Presentation
- Oct. 22** Visio Divina in the Sanctuary
- Oct. 26** Generosity Sunday Breakfast
- Oct. 26** Pumpkin Painting
- Oct. 29** Visio Divina in the Sanctuary
- Oct. 30** Trunk or Treat in the Parking Lot
- Nov. 2** All-Saints Sunday
- Nov. 2** New Member Class
- Nov. 8** GOTAK & Ironwood CAS Concert

VISIO
DIVINA

Wednesdays
at noon
thru Nov. 19
in the Sanctuary



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:

Ken Clark, Mary & Ron Albrecht,
Don Helmus, Beth Maschewske

Our Sympathy:

to Winnie McNergney & family on the passing of her husband, Paul, on September 1.

to Becky and Mark Sanchez & family on the death of Becky's father, Dave Evans, on September 5.

to the family of Ray Wiersema who passed away on September 17.

Thank You:

"Thank you pastors, church staff and community for the loving support during Paul's illness and death. The flowers, food, cards and visits meant a lot to Paul and me. The prayers were felt and helped us through this journey.

- Winnie and family

"I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to our church family for the love and support shown to me after the passing of my dear wife, Suzie. Your prayers, cards, meals, and kind words have been a great comfort during this difficult time. I am deeply grateful to be part of such a caring community."

With appreciation,
Lee Brink

New Member Class Sunday, November 2

Would you like to become a member of FPGH or just want to know what it means to be a Presbyterian? You are invited to attend our upcoming New Member class!

Join us on **Sunday, November 2, from noon-1:30 p.m.** Lunch will be provided.

To reserve your spot, contact Lindsay Williams at 616-842-6760 or lwilliams@fpgh.org



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

Oct. 9 Jean Mesler
17283 Rosy Mound Lane
Apt. 202
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Oct. 21 Barb Scott
805 S. Despelder, Apt. 16
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Nov. 3 Lany Schoenmaker
17707 Cobblefield Lane
Spring Lake, MI 49456

Nov. 5 Ron Albrecht
2900 Thornhills Ave. SE
Room 25
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Nov. 19 Jerry Erwin
1125 Robbins Road
Apt. C14
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Nov. 26 Mary Albrecht
2900 Thornhills Ave. SE
Room 25
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Thank you Food Truck Volunteers!

Twice a year, First Presbyterian Church sponsors a Feeding America food truck to help address the growing need for healthy food among our neighbors experiencing food insecurity.

The truck we sponsored on September 5 served **191 households—536 individuals in total, including 153 children and 188 seniors.**

Thank you to everyone who volunteered and partnered with others in our community to make this possible. Your hands and hearts made a real difference in combating hunger!

Food Pantry Collection

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

Some suggested items:

- Canned soups and stews
- Canned chicken and tuna
- Canned fruit & applesauce
- Boxed dinners, such as Hamburger Helper
- Boxed cereal
- Granola bars

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



Tidings article deadline for November issue: October 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.

Dear Church Family,

As many of you know, I am working on my Doctor of Ministry, or DMin for short, (pronounced demon, but I promise my degree has nothing to do with demons). For my DMin project, I am writing devotionals for our elders. These devotionals are done as a group in the beginning of our session meetings in addition to weekly devotionals that elders can do on their own time. One devotional I wrote was about how our tradition views scripture. It's been fun and refreshing to dive deeper into our denomination's theology, including our view of scripture.

I recently learned about a document our denomination released in 1982 titled "Presbyterian Understanding and Use of Holy Scripture." This document outlines how our denomination views and understands scripture. I especially appreciated this statement:

Any interpretation of Scripture is wrong that separates or sets in opposition love for God, and love for fellow human being, including both love expressed in individual relations and in human community (social justice). No interpretation of Scripture is correct that leads to or supports contempt for any individual group or persons, either within or outside of the church.

What I love about this statement is that it brings it back to the heart of Jesus' teachings. We are never to lose sight of others as children of God who are also made in God's image. It doesn't matter if they don't speak the same language, hold the same values, or see the world in the same way. This doesn't mean we don't follow Jesus' call to speak for those whose voices have been silenced such as the poor, oppressed and marginalized. But we continue to do so while never losing sight of

the fact that those who are on "the other side" are loved by God and made in God's image.

This statement is also a measurement of whether or not scripture is being weaponized. Historically, scripture has been used to defend heinous acts such as slavery or the abuse of women. If one's reading of scripture leads to an individual or a group being devalued and dehumanized, it's not a correct reading of scripture. **Scripture is faithfully read and applied when it leads all of us to love others better—including those with whom we disagree.** Two things can be true: We can speak the truth of Jesus Christ, which will no doubt offend others, but we are always to do so out of love for Christ and others.

Grateful for you,

Pastor Kristine

Generosity Season Is Here

October is Generosity month!

Soon you'll receive in the mail this year's Generosity appeal along with your pledge card. As the session makes plans for the shape of our ministry next year, it is important to hear from the members and friends of the church about their estimate of giving in 2026. This allows the session to make a faithful and responsible budget.

We hope you will prayerfully consider your strong support for the ministry in 2026. Generosity Sunday will be on October 26, where we will bring our generous pledges together and enjoy a wonderful brunch. Come, join in the fun!

We Need Your Help!

There is always a need for more hands helping us make Sundays special. Are you someone who likes saying "hello" and welcoming people? You'd make a great greeter. Are you someone who likes to help worship go smoothly? You'd make a fabulous usher. Are you someone who loves baking? We could use your help on a cookie team.

Pastor Troy likes to say, "the more you put into something, the more you get out of it," so you're invited to step forward and help make FPGH the friendliest (and tastiest!) church in town.

Could You or Someone You Know Be a Good Deacon?

The Nominations Committee is hard at work discerning who God is calling to serve as deacons. Our deacons lead a wonderful, caring ministry of keeping our homebound members connected to the church through visits, communion, and more. The deacons love what they do, and you may love serving too!

If you have a suggestion for a deacon, let the Nominations Committee know by calling the church office or sending a note to staff@fpg.org.



Light the Way Home A Night to Support Habitat for Humanity

Mark your calendars for **Thursday, October 16**, and join Tri-Cities Area Habitat for Humanity for an evening of fun and fundraising at the **Trillium Event Center** (17246 VanWagoner Road, Spring Lake).

The **Light the Way Home Fundraiser Night** runs from **6:30–9:30 PM** and promises a memorable evening with:

- A delicious dinner (with one drink ticket per guest)
- Cash bar
- Raffles and games
- Live and silent auctions
- Live music to keep the night lively!

Tickets are **\$65 per person** or **\$120 per couple** and include dinner plus one drink ticket each. All proceeds support Tri-Cities Area Habitat for Humanity in their mission to provide safe, affordable housing in our community.

Purchase tickets online at zeffy.com/ticketing/light-the-way-home or call the Habitat office at **616-846-1505**. For questions, contact **Tim Bullerdick** at tpbullerdick@hotmail.com. Come enjoy a wonderful evening while helping to “light the way home” for families in need!

Looking for a Study Bible?

Browse the bookshelves in the Conference Room! You’ll find a variety of excellent study Bibles in several versions (NIV, NRSV, and more), along with collections of in-depth studies.

Borrowing works on the honor system—simply take what you need and return it when you’re finished. And if the Conference Room is open, it’s also a quiet spot to spend time digging deeper into God’s Word.



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

J DeJonge, Director of Youth Ministries

Todd Olson, Church Administrator

Marc Felt, Gathering Band Leader

Rob Hlebinsky, Organist

Karen Nienhouse, Congregational Care Ministries

Sally Segers, Joyful Noise Director

Lindsay Williams, Office Assistant

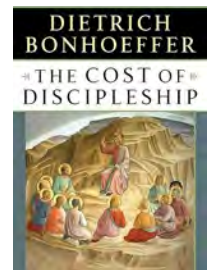
Andrew Wolfert, Bookkeeper/Admin. Assistant

Thursday Night Discussion Group

The Thursday Night Discussion Group meets weekly from 7 –8:30 PM in Fellowship Hall.

The book selection thru October is "Costly Grace: A Contemporary View of Bonhoeffer's The Cost of Discipleship" by Rick Warren. Please join us for a discussion of "the timeless message of Bonhoeffer against the background of today's political upheaval and societal change and what it means to those who claim to follow Christ's teachings."

Please contact Linda Gritter or Katie Norton for more information.



Update from the Session

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

Report from Session

- We continued to share in our part of Pastor Kristine's Doctor of Ministry project.
- We approved a full-time staff sabbatical policy that will become part of our Personnel Policies.
- We approved funding for ongoing updates to the HVAC system.
- We approved funding for an art show to occur later this fall at the church.
- We had extensive discussion around how we can become a more welcoming church.

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

Peace and Global Witness Offering

"Pursue what makes for peace" - Romans 14:19

On World Communion Sunday, October 5, we celebrate our togetherness around the globe at the communion table in God's house. We worship together and are fed from scripture and at Christ's table of peace. Peacemaking is central to the gospel and the mission of the Church. **The Peace and Global Justice Special Offering** helps to shine God's light from our hearts and hands to others.



- **25%** will stay here locally to be given to the Ed and Nancy Hanenburg Children's Advocacy Center in Holland MI. The CAC provides child-centered prevention advocacy, and team intervention in investigation, assessment, and treatment of child sexual abuse.
- **25%** supports regional efforts for hope and healing in Lake Michigan Presbytery and the Synod of the Covenant.
- **50%** supports work for peace and reconciliation being done by Presbyterians across the globe as they work to confront systems of injustice and promote reconciliation.

Offering envelopes for this Special Offering are in the pews and at the Clinton St. entrance.

Tri-Cities 51st Crop Walk to End Hunger

We need you! Join us for the CROP Walk to stand in solidarity with millions who walk daily for food and water. Bring your kids, dogs, and friends for a **1-mile family walk** or a **5K**. A generous donor in our community has agreed to **match donations dollar for dollar**.



When:

Sunday, October 5

Registration at 1:30 pm

Walk begins at 2:00pm

Where:

Ferrysburg Community Church

17785 Mohawk Drive

(Just off Dogwood by Leppinks)

What:

25% of the money raised is distributed to local food pantries, including The People Center, Love in Action, and the Salvation Army. The remainder is sent to Church World Service, an ecumenical international relief agency that provides food, medical care, and disaster relief to people in 35 countries.

How:

Contribute on Sunday mornings thru October 5. Checks should be made out to **CWS**. You may also go to the Tri-Cities CROP Walk website: <https://tinyurl.com/ghcropwalk> and donate there.

Community Artist & Speaker Series

Penning & Koperski October 12, 2025, 4:00 p.m.

Join soprano Diane Penning and her son, composer/pianist Henry Koperski, for an unforgettable performance celebrating the timeless melodies of the Great American Songbook—beloved standards, Broadway favorites, and more. Both classically trained and internationally experienced, this dynamic duo brings warmth, charm, and exceptional artistry to every note.



Henry will also share selections from his new album, *Spring Water*. Between Diane's soaring symphonic vocals and Henry's acclaimed collaborations with stars like Alan Cumming and Kristin Chenoweth, this concert promises to be a heartfelt and homegrown musical experience.

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

Composting Presentation at First Presbyterian Sunday, October 19



A special presentation on composting will be held on Sunday, October 19, at 4:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

Greg Mankowski, Master Composter with Organicycle, will share his knowledge about the benefits of composting and how it works. Organicycle is the West Michigan company that transforms organic waste into nutrient-rich soil, including the composting of First Presbyterian's food and yard waste.

The event is sponsored by the church's Earth Care Team and is free and open to the public. All are welcome to learn practical ways to reduce waste and support a healthier environment.

Fall YogaFaith Schedule

As we move into the fall season, we invite you to take time to nurture your body, mind, and spirit through YogaFaith. Classes will meet on adjusted dates this fall due to vacations and holidays. Please mark your calendars for the following Wednesdays: **October 16 & 23, November 13 & 20, and December 4 & 18.**

Each evening offers two opportunities to participate:

- **Chair Yoga at 5:00 PM** – a gentle practice suitable for all levels, focused on mobility and relaxation.
- **Yoga at 7:00 PM** – a traditional practice combining movement, breath, and faith.

Both classes meet in the chapel and are donation-based.

Pilgrimage to Iona

You are invited to spend a week on the Isle of Iona, Scotland.

Why: Think of a pilgrimage to Iona “not as an escape, but as a way for people to be renewed with open eyes, so they can return to their lives with refreshed sight and a deeper connection to the Divine and the Earth.” - John Philip Newell

When: September 10-19, 2026

How: By plane, train, two ferries, and a bus

What: We will follow the rhythms that are set for those joining the Iona community life, which includes:

- Breakfast
- 30 Minute Task Team (simple jobs in the kitchen, sweeping, etc.)
- 9AM Worship
- Lunch
- **Time & Space** to rest, read, do art, explore the Island. We will connect as a group a few times as well.
- Dinner
- 9PM Worship
- We may be walking 3-5 miles a day, some of those miles being rugged terrain on the Island.

A meeting to share details and answer questions will be held on October 19, 12:15 pm, in Fellowship Hall. If you are interested, please be in touch with Maryanne Beery mbeery@fpgh.org



Youth Ministries

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Youth Group: Faith, Friends, and Fall Fun

Fall is here, and our youth ministry is off to a great start! High schoolers are meeting in small groups, and middle schoolers are gathering for fun afternoons of games, faith, and connection.

Here's what's coming up:

- **Sunday, October 5**—Service Project: Filling Boo Bags for Christian Neighbors, a ministry providing basic necessities to people in need
- **Sunday, October 12**— Regular Youth Group & Small Groups
- **Sunday, October 19**— Regular Youth Group & Small Groups
- **Sunday, October 26**— Regular Youth Group & Small Groups
- **Sunday, November 2**—Halloween Party at Holland UCC

We'd love your help providing snacks and drinks for youth group! You can sign up here: [Youth Group Snacks Signup](#).

Thanks for your continued support and prayers for our youth! For further details on any event, contact Youth Ministries Director, J DeJonge: idejonge@fpgh.org

Youth Group

All 5th–12th grade students (and their friends!) are invited to be part of Youth Group on Sunday afternoons.

- **Middle School (5th–8th grade):**
12:30–2:00 p.m.
lunch provided
- **High School (9th–12th grade):**
3:00–4:30 p.m. —
snacks and drinks included

Come for fun, faith and food—you won't want to miss it!

Children's Ministries

Join us for Pumpkin Painting!

Sunday, October 26
Noon

On Generosity Sunday, all kids and youth are invited to pick out their very own pumpkin, paint it, decorate it, and take it home!

We'll provide the pumpkins and all the art supplies—you just bring your creativity and imagination!



Joyful Noise Child Care Needs

Joyful Noise Child Care is grateful for our church family's support of this ministry to children and families. As the classrooms get busy, supplies are used quickly—and they could use your help restocking!

Current needs include:

- Tissues
- White copy paper
- 9-or 6-inch plain white paper plates
- Sandwich, quart, and gallon-size Ziploc/freezer bags
- 3 oz. Dixie cups
- Lysol or Clorox wipes
- Paper towel rolls

Donations can be dropped off at the church or Joyful Noise office. Every contribution helps us care for the children in a safe and nurturing environment—thank you for your generosity!



Get ready for a not-so-spooky night of treats and fun!

Thursday, Oct. 30
5:30–6:30 PM
in the parking lot

All are welcome to join us for trunk or treating, or decorate your vehicle's trunk and pass out candy*!

Contact Sally Segers:
office@joyfulnoisekids.com
or Laura Burns:
lburns@fpgh.org
if you would like to help!



**candy should be individually wrapped and peanut-free*



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

October 2025

deliver to: (or current resident)



A Spiritual Retreat Saturday, October 11

**Are you feeling caught in the onslaught of life
and need a moment to rest?
Join us as we intentionally stop to sit
at the feet of Jesus.**

Slow down and be with God in a way that
renews your heart and soul. We will be guided
through the time with some brief teachings,
optional creative exercises and a balance of
alone and group time for reflection and sharing.

Come and be refreshed.

**When: Saturday, October 11
9:30 AM—3:00 PM**

**Where: First Presbyterian Church
Cost: \$15 per person (lunch included)**

To sign up, contact the church office
(staff@fpgh.org) or go online:
<http://bit.ly/3KyGbQh>

Choosing One Another in a Politically Divided World

We are excited to offer another session of
this small group study designed to help us
navigate conversations in a politically
divided world with grace and understanding.
The study is titled *Choosing One Another in
a Politically Divided World*. This session will
be led by Pastor Troy Hauser Brydon.

What to Expect

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. We look forward to learning
and growing together!

**Class will run for 8 Tuesdays,
beginning October 7
5:30 - 7 PM
in the church lounge**

**Contact the church office to sign up,
or go online: <http://bit.ly/3KtESCc>**