



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

MARCH 2026, VOLUME 74—ISSUE 3

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

We are now well on our way into Lent, and I have a confession for you: I've had a hard time engaging in Lent this year. Is a pastor allowed to admit such a failing? I hope so.

Let's call it a danger of professional ministry. I can easily get caught up in shaping spiritual experiences for others that I end up missing out on their benefits myself.

For the past couple of years I've been seeing a spiritual director. When we met in February, he asked how I was approaching Lent. It was interesting that all of my answers focused on all the things the church was doing — Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Taizé services, and so on. But then I was forced to admit that I didn't know how I was approaching this holy season.

I also admitted that I don't like being told what to do. You see, my mother-in-law, who is a lovely person, created a family group text for fourteen people across three generations. On it she announced that she'd like us all to read one chapter of Proverbs a day during Lent. My first response (in my head, of course) was, "Yuck! I don't really like Proverbs." My second was, "I hate group texts."

So, as I was entering Lent, I had no clue what special thing I would do or what thing I would lay aside for the season, and when something was dropped in my lap, my first response was negative.

I was sharing all of this with my spiritual director, and he responded with this: "Troy, I wonder what God is *inviting* you to this season. Maybe that's your prayer for the moment. God, what are you inviting me to in this?"

I still haven't given up anything for Lent. I haven't taken on much either. I did decide that God was inviting me to read Proverbs with the family, which has led to some insightful texts among the adults. For my nephews, it's mostly led to memes.

But I've also found myself with that prayer on my lips several times a day. "God, what are you inviting me to in this?" I'm only getting started, but it at least feels like some traction, which is a blessing.

Perhaps you've felt adrift in this season too. If so, I'd encourage you to add this prayer to your day, "God, what are you inviting me to in this?" I also hope you find some space at church and home to prepare your lives for Easter.

In Christ,
Pastor Troy

Upcoming Events

- Mar. 4** Taizé Worship Service & Soup Supper
- Mar. 8** Daylight Savings Time Begins
- Mar. 8** Family Swim Party
Youth Group & Small Groups
- Mar. 11** Taizé Worship Service & Soup Supper
- Mar. 18** Taizé Worship Service & Soup Supper
- Mar. 22** Youth Community Service Project
- Mar. 23** Created to Create Gathering
- Mar. 25** Taizé Worship Service & Soup Supper
- Mar. 29** Palm Sunday Breakfast
- Mar. 31** Children's Easter Storytime Event
- Apr. 2** Maundy Thursday Worship Service
- Apr. 3** Good Friday Worship Service
- Apr. 5** Easter Worship Services:
7 AM Flowering of the Cross
9 AM Traditional
11 AM Contemporary



Don't forget to "Spring Forward" on March 8 for Daylight Savings Time!

Church & Pastor Contact Information

Pastor Troy Hauser Brydon:
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church: 616-842-6760 x1005,
email: TroyHB@fpgh.org

Pastor Kristine Aragon Bruce:
616-604-2618,
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Church Office:
616-842-6760, staff@fpgh.org

Prayer Concerns:

Mary & Ron Albrecht, Ron Hunter

Our Sympathy:

to Martha Myers and family on the death of her father, Robert Schroeder, on February 23, 2026.

Update from the Session

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

- We refreshed our training on preparing and serving communion.
- We elected commissioners to the March presbytery meeting.
- We elected our congregational officers — Tom Franks (president), Tom Wood (vice president), Ann White (treasurer), and Randy Abraham (clerk).
- We approved youth assisting with communion for Youth Sunday.
- We approved the 2026 communion dates.
- We approved the 2026 Session meeting schedule.
- We approved the Session Covenant.
- We approved the 2025 Annual Statistical Report.
- We approved funding for the Youth mission trip to Belize.

Taizé Soup Suppers

This Lent, we are again holding mid-week Taizé worship services followed by a soup supper.

Could you or your group provide soup for an evening? We anticipate needing five pots each week. If you can help, please sign up using the link below, on the board in the church lounge, or contact Maryanne Beery (mbeery@fpgh.org). Services begin February 25.

Soup Sign Up

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Each month we share birthdays for members and friends who aren't able to be with us in person. Sending a card or note is a simple way to remind them they're still very much part of our church family.

Mar. 3 Heidi Gassmann
17500 Whippoorwill Dr.
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Mar. 12 Barbara Race
321 Grand Avenue
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Mar. 23 Marge Rasmussen
17887 Hiawatha Drive
Spring Lake, MI 49456

Apr. 9 Ken Ennenga
507 Leggat Street
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Apr. 9 Ann Satter
1410 S. Ferry Street, A-2
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Scholarship Applications

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



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

Applications are due in the church office by April 1, 2026

Food Pantry Collection

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

Some suggested items:

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

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



Tidings article deadline for April issue: March 23, 2026

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,

During this season of Lent, instead of giving something up, I've decided to add something in. That something is the practice of gratitude. According to UCLA Health, research shows that practicing gratitude just 15 minutes a day has positive effects on one's mental health, such as reduced depression and anxiety, improved heart health, and sleep. (<https://www.uclahealth.org/news/article/health-benefits-gratitude>)

In addition, gratitude is a spiritual practice that makes us more aware of God's blessings in our lives. As it states in James 1:17:

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Specifically, I'm thankful for the following about our church:

- Our staff: We laugh a lot and function as a team.
- The love our church has for children and youth.
- Our church's commitment to mission both locally and abroad.
- Both of our worship services are led by gifted musicians willing to share their gifts with us!

- Our elders, who are always open to trying new ministries.
- Our deacons, who are committed to visiting and praying with our homebound members.
- How our entire congregation truly looks out for one another including the staff.

I could go on and on, but I'm allowed one page! I hope, during this Lenten season, you too will find much to be thankful for and become more aware of God's blessings in your life.

Grateful for you!

Pastor Kristine

In Our Church

Taize Worship & Soup Supper

Each Wednesday during Lent, the church offers Taizé-style worship services in the chapel.

Taizé worship centers on simple, repetitive songs, periods of silence, and scripture, creating space for contemplation and prayer. Rooted in ancient Christian traditions, this style of worship invites participants into a sense of stillness and spiritual communion, helping us become more attentive to the presence of God. Each service lasts approximately 30 minutes.



Following the service, everyone is invited to the lounge for a soup supper.

Holy Week Schedule

- March 29** Palm Sunday Brunch
- March 31** Children's Easter Story Event
- April 2** Maundy Thursday Worship Service, 7 pm
- April 3** Good Friday Worship Service, Noon
- April 5** Easter Morning Worship Services:
 - 7 AM Flowering of the Cross
 - 9 AM Traditional
 - 11 AM Contemporary



A LOT CAN HAPPEN IN SEVEN DAYS

Thursday Night Discussion Group

The Thursday Night Discussion Group meets weekly from 7–8:30 PM in Room 16/17 (Please note our new meeting space).

Our book selection from March 5, 2026, through April 30, 2026, is *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World* by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond TuTu, with their co-writer Douglas Abrams. As Abrams notes, “They looked back on their long lives to answer a single burning question: How do we find joy in the face of life’s inevitable suffering?”

Paul writes in Philippians 4:4: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”

Over the course of a week in Dharamsala, India, the Dalai Lama and Archbishop TuTu do indeed rejoice, and this exceptional book invites us to join them on their faith-filled journey.

“Every day is a new opportunity to begin again. Every day is your birthday.” (“The Invitation to Joy,” p. x).

The Thursday Night Discussion Group invites you to celebrate with us!

Please contact Katie Norton for additional information.

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

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. Throughout scripture, we are reminded that caring for our neighbors is at the heart of discipleship: “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these... you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40). Through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) Special Offering, we answer that call.

This offering supports ministries that respond to disaster, alleviate hunger and poverty, care for creation amid climate change, and walk alongside immigrants, migrants, and refugees. Together, these efforts provide relief in moments of crisis and build sustainable solutions that restore dignity, stability, and hope.

As a people shaped by Christ’s love and committed to justice, we give not simply out of generosity, but out of faith.

Offering envelopes will be available in the pews and at the Clinton Street entrance through Easter. You may also give electronically by texting OGHS to 91999 or by visiting pcusa.org/oghs.



Created to Create Monthly Gathering

This winter and spring, we are opening the church lounge for a quiet hour of artistic practice from 6:30–7:30 PM on the fourth Tuesday of each month. The gathering this month will take place on March 24.

Bring your journal, sketchpad, needlework, or other portable projects and join us for a relaxed, creative space. This is a chance to make time for whatever your artistic inclinations may be—no experience required. Please bring your own supplies.

Each gathering will begin with a brief reading or devotion exploring the connection between creativity and faith.

Here are some photos from the February gathering:



Join Us for a Special Storytime

Tuesday, March 31
5:15 p.m.

Are you looking for a family-friendly way to share the true meaning of Easter? Join us for a special Easter Storytime with guest reader Miss Bev from Joyful Noise!

We'll begin in the Sanctuary with some joyful songs, then, Miss Bev will share a special Easter story. After that, we invite you to the Lounge for lemonade and cookies.

This event is designed for young children and their special adults, but everyone is welcome! We hope you'll join us for this heartwarming celebration of the true meaning of Easter.

Cookie Bakers for Children's Special Easter Storytime Wanted

Do you love to bake? We are looking for a few bakers to make 2 dozen homemade nut-free cookies for our special Easter Storytime. You may drop your cookies off at church on or before March 31.

To sign up, contact Laura Burns, lburns@fpgh.org or use this Easter Cookie Sign-up link: [Easter Storytime Cookies](#)



MARCH YOUTH SCHEDULE

March 8

5th - 8th Grade	Youth Group, 12:30, Fellowship Hall
High School	Small Groups, 12:30, Room 16/17
Young Families	Swim Party, 1-3, Spring Lake Aquatic Ctr.

March 22

5th - 12th Grades	Community Service Project: Blanket making for kids in the hospital (no sewing involved - anyone can do this!)
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Contact Eric Stromberg with any questions: 248-704-2026

Family Swim Party

Sunday, March 8
1-3 PM

Make a splash with us at our Family Swim Party on Sunday, March 8, from 1:00–3:00 p.m.! This afternoon of swimming and play is open to children from infants through 4th grade, along with their parents and caregivers.

This is a family event—children must be accompanied by an adult—and it's a great chance to enjoy time together in a fun, active setting. Whether your kids love the water or are just getting comfortable splashing around, there's something for everyone.

Space is limited to 90 total participants (swimmers and non-swimmers), so please be sure to RSVP early with total number of people attending in your family. A completed waiver is required for each family; printed copies are available at the children's check-in desk.

We hope you'll join us for a fun afternoon in the pool!

[RSVP Here](#)
[Aquatic Center Waiver](#)

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[Applications](#) are due in the church office by April 1, 2026.



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

508 Franklin Avenue
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616-842-6760

Sunday Worship:

9 & 11 a.m. in person or live

on our Facebook page: @FirstPresGH

or YouTube: First Presbyterian Church, Grand Haven

or watch the recorded service on our

website: fpgh.org

March 2026

deliver to: (or current resident)

Celebrate the Resurrection of our Savior!



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

To make a dedication, complete the form below and return it to the church office (or drop it in the offering plate) by Palm Sunday, March 29. After Easter, the flowers will be shared with those who are homebound or in the hospital.

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

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

Name: _____

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

Name: _____

GIVEN BY: _____

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