



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

APRIL 2026, VOLUME 74—ISSUE 4

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

We begin April with the most important of Sundays, Easter. Everything about the Christian faith rests on the revolutionary work God in Christ did through the cross and resurrection. Christians are Easter people, and so we gather, worship, and celebrate together this news that is not only good but also transformative.

Over my ministry, I've made it a point to direct our attention to the importance of Holy Week. Knowing and experiencing the stories of Jesus' triumphal entry on Palm Sunday, of his washing the disciples' feet and instructing us to share communion on Maundy Thursday, of walking the painful journey with him to the cross on Good Friday — those all lead to the explosion of joy on Easter. I hope you choose to take that journey with us this year.

I love how we celebrate Easter. I'd never been to a church that flowered a cross, but now it's something I look forward to every year. So, join us for the 7 a.m. Flowering of the Cross service and then stick around for some fellowship. The brass, organ, and Geneva Choir will be primed and ready to go for the 9 a.m. Traditional Service. Same goes for the Gathering Band at 11 a.m.

We Presbyterians aren't the best at inviting others to worship, and I hope we can change that. What we do at First Pres is special, meaningful, and faithful. There are many folks in our community who are discouraged and hurting. Perhaps you know some who need to hear the good news that transforms lives. Invite them to join you for worship. Not only that, be the presence of God's love in their lives beyond Easter Sunday. You can make a difference!

As we move beyond Easter, we'll be doing a lot to wrap up the program year and prepare for the summer and beyond. Both the staff and the Session have been doing the hard work of evaluating our ministries — what is doing well and what is not — as well as discerning how we can expand our reach to those whose lives would be enriched through our church. This is hard, faithful work. Yet, I believe that if it's God's will we're following, God will make a way. I hope you join us in praying for that.

Friends, we boldly follow a crucified and risen Lord! In this world that still suffers from so much heartache and hurt, our faith is what allows us to acknowledge the wrong and work towards the right. It gives us courage to live differently and love deeply. Let's make this Easter about more than festive worship. Together, let us embrace the transformative love of Jesus and live it out in our community.

In Christ,
Pastor Troy

Upcoming Events

- 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
- Apr. 6** Church Office Closed
- Apr. 12** Perugino Quartet CAS Concert
- Apr. 19** 5th-8th Grade Youth Group & High School Small Groups
- Apr. 25** Lakeshore Earth Day Celebration
- Apr. 26** 5th - 12th Grade Bowling at Lucky Strike
- Apr. 28** Created to Create Gathering

New Member/ Inquirers Class Sunday, May 3



Would you like to become a member of FPGH or do you want 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 3, from noon-1:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided, and child care is available upon request.

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

Attending the class does not commit you to membership

Church & Pastor Contact Information

Pastor Troy Hauser Brydon:
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church: 616-842-6760 x1005,
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Pastor Kristine Aragon Bruce:
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Church Office:
616-842-6760, staff@fpgh.org

Prayer Concerns:

Mary & Ron Albrecht, Ron Hunter

Our Sympathy:

to Valerie Porenta and family on the death of her husband, Jim Porenta, on March 13, 2026.

to the family and friends of Betty Whalen, who passed away on March 22, 2026

to Kaarin and Bill Ryan on the death of Kaarin's father, David Anderson, on March 24, 2026

to the family and friends of Dar Hollis, who passed away on March 24. A memorial service for Dar will be held at the church on Wednesday, April 8, at 1 PM.

to Norma Koopman and family on the death of her husband, Don Koopman, on March 27. Don is also the brother-in-law of Kathie and Rob Schwartz.

Thank You:

"It is with a grateful heart and much joy that we can announce that we have returned to our house two weeks shy of one year since the fire.

We are so thankful to God and to the people of FPGH that have listened to our many tales of woe, continually prayed for us, and God who tightly held our hands through these difficult times.

May God bless you ALL,"

- Lee and Pat Elenbaas



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.

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

May 18 Pat Austin
17041 Lloyd's Bayou Dr.
Apt. S
Spring Lake, MI 49456

May 28 Bill Bedford
15409 Winchester Circle
Grand Haven, MI 49417

May 28 Sue McClellan
27785 Dequindre, #323
Madison Heights, MI 48071

2026 Per Capita

Per capita is a fee our church pays for each member to support the mission and ministries of our parent organizations in the PC(USA). For 2026, the per-capita amount is **\$42.42 per member**.

We invite you to prayerfully consider paying the per-capita amount for each member of your household. Thank you for your faithfulness and generosity.

For more information about per capita, visit:
<https://pcusa.org/resources/financial-information/capita>

PW Hanging Flower Basket Sale

The Presbyterian Women are once again offering gorgeous 11" hanging baskets to add some spring color to your porch!



- **Order Deadline:** April 16
- **Cost:** \$20 per basket
Order forms are available at church or can be [downloaded here](#).
- **Pickup:** Friday, May 8, from 11 AM – 3 PM (Need a different time? Let us know, and we'll arrange it!)

Proceeds support the missions of Presbyterian Women.

Thank You Palm Sunday Breakfast Helpers!

The Hospitality Committee extends a sincere thank you to everyone who volunteered for our Palm Sunday Breakfast! Whether you helped to serve, clean up, or assisted wherever needed, your time and energy made the morning a wonderful success.

A special thank you goes to Sue Ochs for beautifully decorating the church lounge, which added a joyous touch to the morning.

We are grateful for each of you and the spirit of service you bring to our church community.

—The Hospitality Committee

Dear Church Family,

A short devotion I read recently reminded me of the story of how God showed up for the Israelites, but of course in a way no one expected. After God freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, the Israelites, as a result of their disobedience to God, found themselves wandering in the wilderness. While God could have completely abandoned them, God remained with them and guided them through the desolate country.

At one point they found themselves attacked by poisonous snakes. After the Israelites cried out to God for help, God instructed Moses to make a snake out of bronze and lift it high on a pole. Not exactly the sign of

hope and help the Israelites had asked for. However, when the Israelites looked at the bronze snake they were healed from their snake bites. What a weird story. But the Bible is full of weird stories. The source of healing God provided was also a reference to their sin and disobedience. They would not have come into contact with poisonous snakes if they had not been in the wilderness. They would not have been in the wilderness if they had not whined to God about missing their life of slavery back in Egypt.

I bet you can think of another strange symbol of God's mercy that also points to our sin. Hint: We focus on this symbol at Easter. That's right...the cross is the ultimate

symbol of God's love, mercy and forgiveness for us through Jesus Christ. Crucifixion was only used to execute the worst of criminals. Yet because Jesus was perfectly obedient to the point of accepting death on the cross, our disobedience is covered and forgiven through Christ's perfect obedience. My hope and prayer is that we would continue to be transformed by the power of Christ's death and resurrection well beyond Easter. He is Risen!

Grateful for you!

Pastor Kristine

In Our Church

Update from the Session

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

- We approved receiving the regular disbursements from funds held at the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation.
- We approved new committee members.
- We approved funding to cover pastoral needs during Pastor Kristine's sabbatical.
- We received training from Erika Mariglia on spiritual trauma, including ways we as a church can care for those who have experienced it and to be mindful that our ministry does not cause it.

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

A Note from Pastor Kristine

Dear Church Family,

The session approved a sabbatical plan for me and the church from June 1st until August 24th. There will be many more details to come on this, but I wanted to offer you the broad strokes at this point. The sabbatical is a period of rest and renewal for my family and me. It gives us a chance to breathe a bit and celebrate what God has done in our ministry.

During the summer, we will not be at FPGH, although for parts of the summer, we'll be in Grand Haven. We intend to do some traveling to reconnect and have some meaningful experiences together. On behalf of my family, I want to thank the church and the Session for allowing me this period of rest and rejuvenation. I feel very blessed!

Grateful,
Pastor Kristine



A pastoral sabbatical is an extended, intentional season of rest and renewal taken after several years of ministry. Unlike a short-term vacation, it is a structured time for spiritual, mental, and physical rejuvenation. Pastors step away from daily responsibilities to reconnect with God and family, and may spend time reading, learning, traveling, or engaging in creative pursuits—all with the goal of returning refreshed for continued service.

Thursday Night Discussion Group

The Thursday Night Discussion Group meets weekly from 7–8:30 PM in Room 16/17.

Our book selection from March 2, 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.

Hand 2 Hand Ministries from the Mission Committee

Our Hand 2 Hand teams have been busy preparing and delivering bags of food every week this school year for Duneside Discovery Center at Mary A. White and Lakeshore Middle School. In previous years we have packed 70-80 bags, but with the closing of Mary A. White and the opening of the Young Fives and pre-school in that building, our numbers are down. Our volunteers currently pack 39 bags and deliver them to both the Middle School and Duneside. Our program was able to assist students and families during the months of November and December, during the long government shutdown, by providing extra food to help alleviate some of the burden for our families. This was done by adding additional food items to each bag each week and providing “bonus booster bags” the week before Christmas break.

Though the number of bags that we provide is reduced, we feel this is still a worthy mission, and we appreciate very much both the work of our volunteers and the donors to this project. We appreciate the wonderful leadership and dedication of Chris Bussell, Julie Kremer, Lisa Tobin, and Tina VanderWall.



Food Pantry Collection

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

Some suggested items:

- Canned chunk chicken or tuna
- Boxes of cereal
- Granola Bars
- Applesauce & canned fruit
- Peanut butter
- Laundry detergent

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



From the Mission Committee: Recovery Court Gatherings

Recovery Court is an adult drug treatment program of the 20th Judicial Circuit Court of Ottawa County for individuals working to overcome addiction to drugs and alcohol. Participants move through a rigorous five-phase program designed to help them develop the skills and support needed for lasting recovery.

Every two weeks, participants appear before the judge and then come to First Presbyterian Church for a “Gathering.” Volunteers from our church and from St. Pat’s provide food and a welcoming place to spend time together in a non-judgmental setting. Volunteers share conversation, offer encouragement, and walk alongside participants as they continue their journey toward recovery.



Our Power, Our Planet

That's the theme for the **56th Annual Earth Day** which is **April 22**. The local **19th Annual Earth Day Lakeshore Celebration** will be held at our church on **Saturday, April 25** from 12-4pm **with the parade starting at noon**. Please plan to stop by!

Most people enjoy a vacation that includes being by the ocean, but did you know that some 11 million metric tons of plastic enter our oceans each year—that's equivalent to at least one dump truck per minute. This Earth Day, we must recognize that one of the biggest threats to our planet is plastic pollution. Plastic pollution is incredibly harmful to marine life. Conservatively, [at least 2,141 marine species encounter plastic pollution in their natural environments](#), and the vast majority of these species that have been studied have been found to experience negative effects due to plastic. Plastics can also have harmful impacts on people as each of us might ingest up to a credit card's worth of plastic weekly through food and water. While it's practically impossible to eliminate plastic from modern life, there are a number of steps you can take right now to cut back.

Do: Drink tap water.

Don't: Rely on [bottled water](#).

Do: Heat food in or on the stove, or by microwaving in glass.

Don't: Microwave in plastic.

Do: Buy and store food in glass, silicone, or foil.

Don't: Store food in plastic, especially plastic that has chemicals.

Do: Eat fresh food as much as possible.

Don't: Rely on processed food wrapped in plastic.

Do: Vacuum regularly.

Don't: Allow household surfaces to get dusty. The dust in your house could be loaded with microplastics and chemicals that are found in plastic, such as phthalates).

Do: Work with your community.

Don't: Assume your impact is limited to what you do in your personal life.

Sources: World Wildlife Fund's plan for [No Plastic in Nature](#) by [Daniel Håbesland](#), By [Kevin Loria](#), Senior Health & Food Reporter for Consumer Reports.

Additionally, we need to **reduce the amount of plastic we use** in the first place by deciding to buy less plastic and seek alternative options. One option is a newer concept of **Refillery stores, or "refilleries,"** which are zero-waste, eco-friendly shops where customers bring their own containers to fill up on personal care and household goods like shampoo, laundry detergent, soap, and cleaners. They aim to reduce single-use plastic pollution by selling products in bulk, charging by weight rather than pre-packaged units. There are two "refilleries" in our area: **Rosewood Provisions**, located at 106 N 7th Street, Grand Haven, MI and **[Fill]anthropie**, located at 175 W Clay Ave, Muskegon, MI.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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 \(First Presbyterian Church, Grand Haven\)](#)



Blood Drive April 10

Did you know one blood donation has the possibility of saving up to three lives?
Be a hero—give blood!



Our next blood drive:
Friday, April 10
11:00—5:00 p.m.
First Presbyterian Church

Walk-ins are always welcome,
or schedule your donation at:
redcrossblood.org

Community Artist & Speaker Series

Perugino String Quartet
April 12, 2026, 4:00 p.m.

Join us for an afternoon of exceptional music with the Perugino String Quartet, a Grand Rapids-based ensemble dedicated to sharing the beauty of chamber music across Michigan. Featuring members of the Grand Rapids Symphony—violinists Eric Tanner and Christopher Martin, violist Barbara Corbató, and cellist Stacey Bosman Tanner—the quartet brings a remarkable blend of technical precision and expressive artistry to the stage.



Their performances span beloved classical masterworks and bold contemporary pieces, each delivered with clarity, warmth, and musical finesse. Deeply rooted in the local arts community and beloved by audiences, the Perugino String Quartet has become one of Michigan's premier chamber ensembles.

Join us as we celebrate the gift of outstanding live music right here in our community.

Community Artist Events are free and open to the public. All are welcome.

Thank You!

At this month's Generosity Committee meeting we thought about how many members of our church step forward to make ministry possible. We simply wanted to say, "Thank you!" to all of you. From ushers and greeters to musicians and children's helpers — you make ministry happen. There are people giving their time and talents to our church almost every day of the week. So, thank you!

Last year we conducted a congregation-wide Talent and Interest Survey. If you didn't complete it or if something has changed for you, we hope that you will complete it now. Knowing what interests you helps the church know how to best connect your passions to the ministry.



Please take a few minutes to complete your survey using this link:
<https://forms.gle/qyq8a8U86YrD2xNE6>

Thank you for being an important part of our church community and for the many ways you serve.

Thursday Morning Discussion Group

Are you an early riser who enjoys meaningful conversation and digging deeper into scripture? If so, we invite you to join our **Thursday Morning Discussion Group!**

When: Every Thursday at 7:00 AM
Where: Russ' Restaurant

This weekly gathering is a relaxed and welcoming opportunity to explore the scripture passages that will be the focus of the upcoming Sunday sermon. Together, we'll reflect on the text, share insights, and engage in thoughtful discussion. Whether you're a seasoned Bible scholar or just starting to explore your faith, you'll find a supportive community eager to learn and grow alongside you.



No need to RSVP—just show up with your Bible, a curious mind, and a heart ready to connect. Questions? Contact Michelle Potter: potterm0519@gmail.com.

Created to Create Monthly Gathering

This 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 April 28.

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. All are welcome.

APRIL YOUTH SCHEDULE

April 19

5th - 8th Grade
High School

Youth Group, 12:30, Fellowship Hall
Small Groups, 12:30, Room 16/17



April 26

5th - 12th Grades

Bowling at Lucky Strike (more details coming soon!)

Text or Call Eric Stromberg with any questions: 248-704-2026

Easter Word Search

Find and circle the words related to Easter

ANGEL
BIBLE
CHRIST
CHURCH
CROSS
FAITH
GLORY
GOD
GOSPEL
HEAVEN
HOLY
JESUS
LAMB
MIRACLE
PALM
PASSION
PRAYER
RISEN
SAVIOR
WORSHIP

F	C	N	W	W	B	R	X	M	G	Y	T	D	K	T
T	J	H	O	L	Y	I	W	K	I	L	T	A	U	P
S	R	L	R	L	E	S	O	P	P	R	O	Q	Z	A
Y	K	A	S	C	J	E	J	A	S	J	A	R	L	L
F	L	M	H	P	T	N	J	S	F	W	N	C	Y	M
T	N	B	I	H	G	W	C	S	I	J	S	M	L	O
N	Q	F	P	J	B	U	G	I	H	C	C	T	D	E
H	E	A	V	E	N	I	G	O	H	H	R	V	D	F
X	E	X	P	S	F	G	B	N	K	R	O	P	P	A
P	O	S	Y	U	X	C	O	L	P	I	S	M	Y	N
W	F	A	T	S	J	R	H	S	E	S	S	T	L	G
E	M	V	A	R	O	U	I	U	P	T	Y	M	W	E
M	G	I	S	F	A	I	T	H	R	E	Q	F	F	L
V	O	O	P	R	A	Y	E	R	Q	C	L	E	T	A
X	D	R	Y	V	P	P	S	S	U	J	H	R	R	A



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

April 2026

deliver to: (or current resident)

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

19TH ANNUAL

SATURDAY, APRIL 25TH 1:00P-4:00P

**@ FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
508 FRANKLIN AVE. GRAND HAVEN**

JOIN THE GREEN MARCH

STARTS AT 12:00PM
MEET AT THE OTTAWA COUNTY
COURTHOUSE PARKING LOT
114 WASHINGTON AVE

**THIS FAMILY-FRIENDLY FREE EVENT
IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE EARTH DAY LAKESHORE COMMITTEE**

LOCAL VENDORS, KIDS ACTIVITIES, EV EXPO, & SUSTAINABILITY RESOURCES!