



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

June 2026, VOLUME 74—ISSUE 6

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

As our calendars turn to June, there are many good things coming our way.

First, Pastor Kristine will be on sabbatical for the summer. Sabbaticals are such a gift of renewal for pastors, and I invite you to pray for Kristine and her family as they unplug from the daily rhythms of ministry and seek renewal and refreshment. We have good plans in place to support ministry while she's away, and I'm eager to see how God continues to work among us during this season.

This July 4th marks the 250th birthday of our country. It's the semiquincentennial, if you're into big words like I am. To celebrate, the Session has approved having a single worship service at 10 a.m. on July 5th, and Maryanne has been hard at work planning meaningful worship music by American composers. Mark your calendars — and maybe don't stay up too late on July 4th so you can make it to church the next morning!

As we thought about how to celebrate this important milestone, we also wanted to connect it deeply to God's calling for us as a church. That's why I'm excited to share that we'll be focusing on kindness this summer, encouraging one another to be intentional about acts of kindness wherever we are. We're calling this campaign *Kind Haven*, and we'll launch it at our June 17th picnic. The Sunday before, I'll be preaching about the biblical roots of kindness. (Hint: it's about much more than simply being nice.)



Kind Haven is inspired in part by the U.S. of Kindness movement, which encourages people to perform at least 250 acts of kindness in honor of America's 250th birthday. We won't be keeping score, but I do hope you'll join us in helping make our community — and our country — a kinder place. I truly believe small acts of kindness can make a meaningful difference in people's lives. You'll be hearing much more about this in the weeks ahead, and I hope you'll take part.

At the end of every worship service, we say that "We are called to celebrate God's grace as a Christ-centered community of acceptance." The more we learn about the radical love of God, the wider our circles of welcome become.

This year, as I have in the past, I will be one of the clergy participating in the Pride worship service on June 13th at the waterfront stadium. I believe it's important to help extend Christ's welcome to those who have too often felt excluded by churches because of who they are or who they love. The Session is supportive of this ministry and has contributed funding for this year's service. If you'd ever like to talk more about why this matters to me, and the biblical grounding underneath it, I'd be glad to meet with you.

Friends, let's make it a great summer together, sharing God's love through acts of kindness.

In Christ,

Pastor Troy

Upcoming Events

- Jun 5** Feeding America Food Truck
- Jun 5** Red Cross Blood Drive
- Jun 14** LEGO Faith Builders Begins
- Jun 17** Kick-Off to Summer Party
- Jun 22** Playdate at Whistle Stop Playground
- June 24 - June 30** Youth Belize Mission Trip
- Jul 1** Organ Recital with Rob Hlebinsky
- Jul 5** One Worship Service, 10 AM
- Jul 5, 12, & 19** Summer Pick-Up Choir



JULY 5 ONE WORSHIP SERVICE 10 AM

with special music
honoring America at 250



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,
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email: KristineAB@fpgh.org

Church Office:
616-842-6760, staff@fpgh.org

Prayer Concerns:

Mary & Ron Albrecht, Don
Anderson, Sandra Peel

Our Sympathy:

to Sue, Greg, Cody, and Ashley
Borta and on the passing of Sue's
sister, Judi Gray-Ingalls, on April 19.

to Marty and Jan Blanchard and
family on the death of Marty's
mother, Pat Blanchard, on April 30.

to Patti and Keith Konarska on the
death of Patti's brother, Greg
Johnson, on April 30.

to Nancy Hunter and family on the
death of her husband, Ron Hunter,
on May 13.

to the family of Jack Bos, who
passed away on May 29. A
memorial service for Jack will be
held at the church on Monday,
June 8, at 11 AM, with visitation
beginning at 10 AM.

Thank You:

"Thanks for your condolences
on the death of my brother Norm.
I am blessed to belong to a
community that shares each
other's sorrows and joys."

- Linda Gritter



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.

June 24 Stan Johnson
17046 Lloyds Bayou Dr.
Apt. 215
Spring Lake, MI 49456

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
- Toilet Paper
- Mac & Cheese
- Laundry detergent

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



Sunday Morning Fellowship Host Wanted

We're looking
for someone to
take over our
Sunday morning
coffee and
cookie host role!
This important
hospitality ministry helps create a
warm welcome each week. Hours
are approximately 8:00 a.m.-1:00
p.m. on Sundays.



Interested or want to learn more?
Contact Todd Olson at tolson@fpgh.org.

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.

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

Next Event: Friday, June 5

Time: 9-11:00 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



Dear Church Family,

If you're reading this after June 1st, I have already begun my sabbatical. I'm grateful to our session and to you for being a church that recognizes its pastors need time to rest and recharge. In case you didn't hear my sermon yesterday (or May 31st, depending on when you're reading this), I wanted to invite you to join me in a few spiritual practices that I will also be doing during my sabbatical. It would be so nice to know we'd be doing any of the following together, while apart.

Lectio Divina: Divine Reading

Choose a passage of scripture and follow the prompts below. The Psalms of Ascent, Psalms 120–134, are great choices to start with!

Instructions

1. Read or listen to the passage 3 times.
2. After the first reading, just let the words sit with you.
3. After the second reading, circle or underline words or phrases

that stuck out to you.

4. After the third reading, reflect upon what God might be asking you to do.

Suggested Devotions (each devotion only takes 10-15 minutes)

- [Lectio 365 App](#)
- "With God Daily" with Skye Jethani: Devotions for people who hate devotions www.withgoddaily.com
- *For Such a Time as This* by Hanna Reichel

Suggested Books

- *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman
- *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* by Eugene Peterson
- *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer

As part of my sabbatical, like Pastor Troy, I will not be at church for the summer. Technically, I'm not supposed to have any interaction with church members while I'm away. But if we run into each other

while we're out and about, please don't hesitate to say "hi!" We just can't talk shop, i.e., how amazing Pastor Troy's sermon was, because I already know he's a fantastic preacher :) I will miss you this summer! I pray we all return rested and rejuvenated, having spent the summer intentionally reflecting on God's love for us all.

Grateful for you,

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.

In Our Church

Update from the Session

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

- We met with and approved the Confirmation Class for membership.
- We welcomed six others into membership.
- We elected elder commissioners for the June presbytery meeting in Muskegon.
- We approved funding for the Kind Haven campaign.
- We approved financial support for this year's Pride worship service.
- We approved hosting the Soul Box Art Installation in July.
- We approved funding for integrating all our HVAC controllers into one system.
- We approved holding only one service on July 5th.
- We approved four college scholarships from the Hillis Scholarship Fund.

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

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 fourth Thursday of June, July and August at 6 pm in the Fellowship Hall for a potluck supper followed by an animated book discussion.

Our selection for June 25 is *Where the Forest Meets the Stars* by Glendy Vanderah. *Where the Forest Meets the Stars* is a magical realism debut novel about a mysterious, barefoot girl named Ursa who claims to be from the stars and appears at the cabin of a grieving ornithologist, Jo Teale, in rural Illinois. Jo, recovering from cancer, reluctantly takes Ursa in, and together with her reclusive neighbor Gabriel, they form an unlikely bond while trying to uncover Ursa's past and witness her five miracles, exploring themes of love, loss, and healing.

Do you prefer mysteries? Join us on July 23 for *Spider Woman's Daughter* by Anne Hillerman and *Meet Isabel Puddles* by M.V. Byrne on August 27.

Please contact Linda Gritter at lindagritter@gmail.com for more information.

Colors of the Church

Have you ever wondered about why the colors change on things around the church? The church calendar has colors that represent the changing of the church seasons. We change the colors in a number of things around the church to note these seasons. The parament (Name for the cloth on the pulpit), the greeting inside the Act of Friendship pads, the pipe cleaners given to the children as they come in. The colors for the seasons are:

- White for all of the highest holy days: Christmas Tide (Christmas Day through Epiphany) Easter Tide (Easter through Pentecost), Trinity Sunday, All Saints' Day, Christ the King Day
- Purple for Advent and Lent
- Red for Pentecost
- Green for Ordinary time.

During different seasons, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) utilizes Special Offerings to fund national and global ministries. In 2026, the PC(USA) streamlined its system from four traditional offerings down to the three primary churchwide offerings shown below. With this transition, you will note new special offering envelopes in the pews. The same envelope will be used for all three offerings with a place to check which offering you would like to support.



One Great Hour of Sharing

Supporting ministries of compassion through causes addressing hunger, disaster, poverty, climate change, and immigration/migration and refugees.



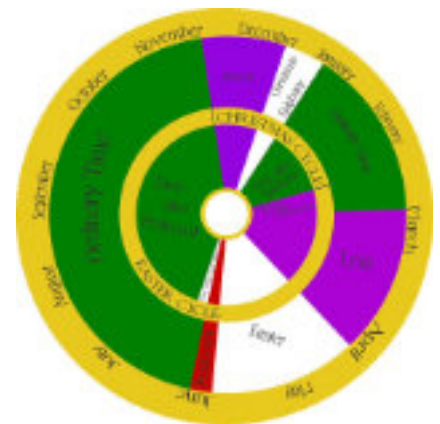
World Communion Offering

Cultivating reconciliation by supporting racial and gender justice, peacemaking efforts, global witness and nurturing ecumenical and interfaith relations.



Christmas Joy Offering

Supporting causes and ministries that serve God's children, including youth and young adults, leadership development for people of color, and servants of the church in need.



Creation Care Summer

The Earth Care Team invites you to join us this summer as we focus on caring for creation through simple, meaningful activities each month.

June: Green Thumb Month

Gardening is good for the soul. Whether you plant a full garden, start a small herb box, grow tomatoes on a deck, or help a friend or neighbor with their yard or flowers, every little bit helps.

You can also volunteer to help weed the Memorial Garden or church landscaping—and receive a gift certificate as a thank you!

We'd love to see photos of your gardens, yard projects, or volunteer efforts around the church. Send your photos to staff@fpg.org, or bring them to the church office and we'll display them on a bulletin board.



July: Plastic Free July

Plastic-Free July is a global initiative encouraging people to reduce their use of single-use plastics. Throughout the month, we'll share a 31-day guide with simple ideas to help you participate.

If you have extra large cloth shopping bags or large reusable plastic bags, please bring them in and we'll create a bag-sharing station so others can take and reuse them. Stay tuned for more information on Plastic-Free July.

August: Use Less Vehicle Energy

This month, we encourage walking, biking, carpooling, and using public transportation whenever possible.

Consider organizing a biking or hiking trip to enjoy the beauty of our local and state parks and trails while reducing energy use.

September: Community Clean-Up Month

We encourage you to take care of our lakes and beautiful public areas by picking up trash and weeding invasive plants. Here is a link to help identify invasive plants:

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=invasive+weeds+in+michigan+pictures&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>. We would also love for someone to organize a church group to clean up or restore a local area together.

Harvest Table Returns This Summer

Beginning around early July (or sooner if produce is ready!), the Earth Care Team will host a harvest table in the Gathering Area where members can share extra fruits, vegetables, herbs, and plants with one another.

Throughout the summer, please consider sharing photos of your activities. You may bring photos to the church office or email them to be included on the Earth Care Team webpage.

Thank you for helping care for creation with us this summer!

For additional information, contact Michele Smith (616-638-3112) or Ginger Aubrey (810-513-8887).

Kind Haven Campaign

This summer, we're inviting our church family to help make Grand Haven a little kinder through our "Kind Haven" campaign!



Inspired by a national movement encouraging 250 acts of kindness—one for each year of our nation's history—Kind Haven is our local invitation to intentionally spread kindness throughout our community.

Beginning at our Summer Kick-Off Picnic on June 14, we'll be encouraging simple acts of generosity, compassion, hospitality, and care. This isn't about keeping score or counting every act—it's about creating a culture of kindness that reflects God's love in everyday ways.

Watch for more information in worship and upcoming communications as we launch Kind Haven together this summer!



Join us on June 17 from 5:30-7:30 PM as we kick off summer together with food, fun, and fellowship! Enjoy a taco bar (with gluten-free options available), create something special with a community art project, let kids explore musical instruments, and enjoy games like cornhole and nine square in the parking lot.

Let's celebrate the start of summer together!

Seen, Heard, and Supported: Reflections on Our *Unseen* Event for Caregivers

Thank you to everyone who helped make our showing of the documentary *Unseen* such a meaningful event. We were honored to welcome Jess Ronne, founder of The Lucas Project, who shared her powerful documentary highlighting the often unseen challenges of caregiving, and stayed afterward to answer questions from those in attendance.

A special thank you to Becky Steinhauer for bringing the documentary to the attention of the Faith Formation Committee, coordinating many of the details that made the evening successful, providing refreshments, and helping our guests feel welcomed and cared for. Thank you also to Randy Abraham, Matt Aragon-Bruce, Lindsay Williams, Faith Formation Committee members, Harry Nienhouse for sound support, and Rob and Gail Miner for helping provide refreshments.

As a thank you for hosting, Jess generously gifted our church a box of her devotional books, *Caregiving With Grit and Grace*. These devotionals are available in the Gathering Area—please feel free to take one for yourself or share one with a caregiver in your life.



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 (@fpgh)

El Ayudante Update from the Mission Committee

First Presbyterian Church proudly supports El Ayudante in Honduras. Meaning “The Helper” in Spanish, the name perfectly describes the organization's impact. Directors Tristan and Beth Mohagen lead a dedicated staff of nearly 50 people. El Ayudante provides vital community outreach, including latrines and water cisterns for families. Their campus features a clinic providing the only medical and dental services within 30 miles, a learning center for tutoring, and a versatile training center used for marriage counseling, teacher training, and wedding events.

In April, El Ayudante completed a new classroom in a community where 70 children previously shared a single room. Thanks to the advocacy of the late Paul McNergney, this building was completed. Students can now split into two classrooms across their six grades. To honor his legacy, the Mohagens dedicated a plaque on the building that reads:

In gratitude and in memory of Paul McNergney

We honor Paul for his faithful service as a defender of projects that bring hope. Guided by his faith in Jesus and his compassion for others, this building stands as a testimony to a life dedicated to service for the Kingdom of God.

El Ayudante is deeply thankful for the partnership Paul created with First Presbyterian Church and looks forward to continuing the vital work he started.



Music

America at 250: A Musical Celebration

Join us as we celebrate America's 250th anniversary with two special musical events featuring beloved patriotic favorites and iconic American works.

On Wednesday, July 1 at 12:15 p.m., our organist, Rob Hlebinsky, will present a patriotic organ recital featuring classic tunes such as America the Beautiful and My Country, 'Tis of Thee, along with stirring Sousa marches and other well-loved American music. Audience participation is encouraged—so be ready to sing along!

Then, join us for worship on Sunday, July 5 at 10:00 a.m. for a special musical celebration featuring a brass ensemble performing Fanfare for the Common Man by Aaron Copland, Carrie Ledet singing Simple Song from Mass by Leonard Bernstein, and, of course, a rousing rendition of Stars and Stripes Forever.

Come celebrate our nation's 250th birthday through music that inspires, remembers, and brings us together.



Summer Pick Up Choir

Do you love to sing? Join our Summer Pick-Up Choir!

We're inviting singers of all ages and experience levels to join us on July 5, 12, and 19. Rehearsal begins at 8:00 a.m. in the sanctuary, followed by singing during the 9:00 a.m. worship service. Come for one Sunday or all three—everyone is welcome!

Contact Maryanne Beery for more details (mbeery@fpgh.org).

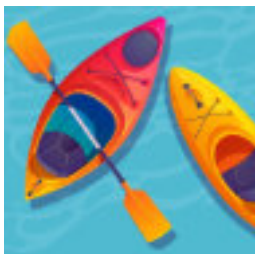
Please note: On July 5, our worship service will begin at 10:00 a.m., with rehearsal at 9:00 a.m. Join us as we celebrate America's semiquincentennial with patriotic music, including selections by Aaron Copland.

Children & Youth

Youth Summer Activity Nights

We're excited to stay connected all summer long! Students entering 5th–8th grade are invited to weekly summer activity nights on Wednesday evenings from 6:30–8:00 p.m.

In addition, we will be planning several special events throughout the summer that bring together all youth (5th–12th grades) for shared activities and connection. These will include dune rides, pickleball, high ropes, paddleboarding and kayaking, as well as a community service and art night.



Throughout the season, we'll gather for games, outdoor adventures, creative activities, and opportunities to build friendships and stay connected. Be sure to check the Family Ministries Bulletin Board soon for the full schedule of activities.

Questions? Contact Clara Saunders at csaunders@fpgh.org or Eric Stromberg at erics@fpgh.org.

Summer Cover-to-Cover Reading Challenge!

This summer, families are invited to take part in our Cover-to-Cover Reading Challenge! We're encouraging families to read through all the stories in their children's Bible together—creating opportunities to grow in faith, ask questions, and spend meaningful time together along the way. There will even be prizes for participating! Watch for more details as we kick off this summer challenge.

Summer Events for Children & Their Caregivers

Playdates on the Playground

Kids and caregivers are invited for our first playground playdate of the summer! Bring your own juice or water to drink, and Miss Laura will bring a treat to share!

- **Monday, June 22, 10:30 a.m.**
Whistlestop Playground
102 W. Savidge, Spring Lake
- **Monday, July 20, 10:30 a.m.**
Tanglefoot Park Splash Pad,
Spring Lake
- **Monday, August 17, 10:30 a.m.**
Imagination Station, Grand Haven

Little's Linger Longer Lunches
Sundays, July 12 & August 8
@Noon on the Church Playground
Families with young children are invited to a playdate and lunch on the playground!



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 2026

deliver to: (or current resident)

A large, empty dashed-line rectangular box intended for a recipient's address.

June 17, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

**KICK-OFF TO
SUMMER
PICNIC
at First Pres!**

Food • Games and Activities • Bounce House

No RSVP necessary

IT'S FREE!

BRING YOUR FRIENDS!

The poster is decorated with vibrant illustrations of summer items: watermelon slices, strawberries, lemons, oranges, pink popsicles, green monstera leaves, and small yellow and pink flowers. A cheerful watermelon character with arms and legs is at the bottom right, holding a sign that says "IT'S FREE!" and another that says "BRING YOUR FRIENDS!".