



PRESBYTERIAN *Tidings*

October 2026, VOLUME 74—ISSUE 10

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN, MI

From Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser Brydon

October begins with World Communion Sunday, where Christians around the world share the Lord's Supper as a sign of Christian unity. It's a beautiful witness that our faith transcends borders, languages, and practices. I am glad to be a part of a church that believes we're part of something far larger than what happens in our little building.

The church's Worship Committee has been hard at work of late on communion-related matters. Our ceramic communion ware is showing its age, and it's time to refresh it. We've partnered with a local potter to replace our platters and chalices. The new pottery is not here yet, but we're excited for you to see it when it arrives. We believe our church will be served well by these new works for the next couple of decades.

There are other changes coming around how we will share in the sacrament of communion that we will roll out in the coming months. We are in the process of finding the best gluten-free bread we can find, and as soon as we've done that, all the bread at communion will be gluten free. This will mean all of us can confidently participate in communion with the whole church.

The Worship Committee also asked the Session to discuss serving communion by intinction at all of our services. The pastors spent time with our elders diving into scripture and historical practices around this so they could have a deeper understanding. The Bible has much to say about communion, particularly that it's something Jesus commands us to do. It does not, however, dictate a particular method for serving communion.

If you're like me, you were raised in a church that passed plates of bread and cups of grape juice down the pews for communion. Did you know that was a 19th-century innovation? The practice of intinction goes back to the fourth century. (Intinction means "dipping into.") There are always considerations to be made for how we can best take communion together. We have grape juice instead of wine so that minors and those who don't want alcohol can participate. We are more mindful these days about our impact on the earth, so eliminating plastic cups helps care for creation. We even consider that passing a tray full of juice cups in our narrow pews is a challenge for some.

Change may be the only constant in life, but I'm also aware that change is hard. We'll get used to this too, and as I always tell the elders serving communion, "The most important thing is that all who desire to take communion have a chance to do so."

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that October is when our attention turns toward generosity. You'll be receiving this year's campaign and pledge cards. Giving is a vital part of how we express our faith, and I hope you can join in the joy of this season by committing financially to our ministry in the coming year.

In Christ,

Pastor Troy

Upcoming Events

- Oct. 2** Red Cross Blood Drive
- Oct. 4** World Communion Special Offering
- Oct. 4** CROP Hunger Walk
- Oct. 9** Mahjong Game Time Begins
- Oct. 13** Monthly Bunko Game Time Begins
- Oct. 18** Come and See Gathering
- Oct. 25** Generosity Sunday Brunch
- Oct. 25** Spooktacular Organ Program, CAS Event
- Oct. 30** Trunk or Treat in the Parking Lot
- Nov. 1** All-Saints Sunday
- Nov. 8** Echoing Air, CAS Concert

Come and See Gathering Sunday, October 18

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 Come and See Gathering!



The gathering is on Sunday, October 18, between worship services from 10-11 AM.

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

Attending the gathering does not commit you to membership.

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

Prayer Concerns:

Mary & Ron Albrecht,
Don Anderson, Sandra Peel

Thank You:

"I would like to thank all of the Deacons, parishioners, choir members, and even some strangers who sent cards of love and encouragement to me. It's been a rough couple of months. Countless trips to ER, urgent care, and my primary care doctor. My electrolytes and especially my sodium levels have gotten off kilter. Thank you so much to First Pres for all of the love and concern! Thank you everyone!

- Ken Jackson

Food Pantry Collection

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

Suggested items include non-perishable food items and school snacks, and household items such as toilet paper and laundry detergent.

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



Belize is coming to Grand Haven!

We are thrilled to welcome Pastors Ed and Dyna Perez to Grand Haven in late October!

Through Koinonia Ministries, they have been our partners in mission for much of the last decade.

They will be with us in worship on Generosity Sunday, October 25th. They've never been to Michigan before, so let's plan to give them a warm welcome!



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 2027. This allows the session to make a faithful and responsible budget.

We hope you will prayerfully consider your strong support for the ministry in 2027. Generosity Sunday will be on October 25, where we will bring our generous pledges together and enjoy a wonderful brunch. Come, join in the fun!

Tidings article deadline for November issue: October 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.



Each month we share birthdays of 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.

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

Blood Drive October 2

Every day, blood donors help patients of all ages: accident and burn victims, heart surgery and organ transplant patients, and those battling cancer. In fact, every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood. Your donation can help save lives. Please use the link below to schedule an appointment today.



Our next blood drive:

Friday, Oct. 2

11:00—4:15 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church

Schedule your donation at:

redcrossblood.org

Dear Church Family,

As I write this, I'm enjoying one of our last 70-degree days before we settle into a pattern of low to mid-60s. Fall is upon us! And, as usual at this time of year, we are entering our stewardship season.

This is a time to prayerfully consider what each of us can contribute to First Pres in the coming year. Stewardship isn't just about finances, it's also about how we share our time and talents. Do you feel called to lead a new small group, book study or discussion group? Have you wondered what it might be like to volunteer in our children's or youth ministries? Or perhaps you feel called to increase your financial giving. Whatever God has placed on your heart, I encourage you to prayerfully consider how you might respond.

I recognize that in today's economy, any financial commitment can feel like a big ask, and everyone's circumstances are different. Please

know that God doesn't want you or your loved ones to live in financial stress. God desires for all of us to be taken care of, while also calling us to live generously. What might generosity look like for you, within the time and financial resources you have? Perhaps it means increasing your giving or making a commitment to participate in a class or small group. Whatever we offer, stewardship invites us to trust in God's continued care for us and our loved ones.

One of the reasons I came to First Pres was the church's commitment to giving at least 10% of its budget to mission. We strive not just to write checks, but to build meaningful relationships with our mission partners, both locally and abroad. I think of Paul's words in Philippians 4:18: "I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an

acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God" (NIV).

I imagine our mission partners, like Pastors Ed and Dyna of Koinonia Ministries in Orange Walk, Belize, could express similar gratitude for the support they receive from First Pres. The same is true for Mosaic Counseling and Love in Action right here in Grand Haven. I'm proud of our church's commitment to mission and generosity, and that commitment would not be possible without you.

As we begin this season of generosity, I want you to know how deeply grateful I am for your past and continued commitment to being part of what Jesus is already doing in our church, in Grand Haven and beyond!

With Gratitude,
Pastor Kristine

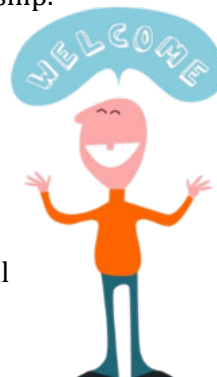
Save the Date: Usher and Greeter Training Sessions

Whether you're an experienced usher or greeter or new to the role, you're invited to join us for an upcoming training session. These gatherings will be an opportunity to review responsibilities, share tips, and help everyone feel comfortable and prepared to welcome people to worship.

Two sessions are planned between services:

- **Sunday, October 18** with Cathy and Mark Rusco, Bill Bussell, and Marge Coffey
- **Sunday, November 8** with Cathy and Mark Rusco and Marge Coffey

Choose the date that works best for you. We appreciate all those who help make First Pres a warm and welcoming place for everyone!



Update from the Session

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

- We approved new members.
- We heard a report about Pastor Kristine's sabbatical.
- We approved serving communion by intinction at both services going forward.
- We heard a report from the September presbytery meeting

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

Game On! Mahjong and Bunko Groups Are Forming

Looking for a fun way to spend an afternoon, meet new people, and enjoy a little friendly competition? Two new game groups are forming at First Presbyterian Church, and everyone is welcome!

- **Bunko** will meet on the second Tuesday of each month from 1–2:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall, beginning October 13.
- **Mahjong** - a group is forming and plans are underway to establish a regular schedule that works for those interested in playing. The next session is scheduled for Friday, October 9, at 1:00 PM.



Never played before? No problem! We'll teach you how to play. Whether you're an experienced player or completely new to the game, come join the fun. Contact Judy Miedema with any questions: miedemajudy@hotmail.com



Created to Create: A Quiet, Creative Time to Refresh and Regenerate

Ready for a peaceful, creative hour to regenerate and refresh? You are invited to Created to Create (CTC). These gatherings meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. October's date is the 27th.

Bring whatever you'd like to spend the time on. Maybe it's carving, reading, puzzle-doing, painting, drawing, coloring, knitting, photography, or working with clay. Attend each month, or drop in as your schedule allows. All are welcome. Snacks are provided.

CTC is held in the church lounge, located on the main floor, across the hall from the church office. The lounge is fully accessible.

For more information, contact Maryanne Beery at mbeery@fpgh.org.

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. Dr. 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
Marc Felt, Gathering Band Leader
Rob Hlebinsky, Organist
Karen Nienhouse, Congregational Care Ministries
Todd Olson, Church Administrator
Sally Segers, Joyful Noise Director
Eric Stromberg, Youth Ministries Coordinator
Lindsay Williams, Office Assistant
Andrew Wolfert, Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant

Tri-Cities Area Habitat for Humanity

Habitat is one of the many local missions that our church supports. This non-profit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry helps families achieve safe, affordable homeownership.

Our financial support is helping build two new homes in Ferrysburg, giving two deserving

families the opportunity to have a safe, affordable place to call home.

Volunteers will soon be needed to assist in keeping costs low, and no building skills are necessary!

You can also support Habitat financially by attending the Light the Way Home Gala on November 12, from 6:30-9:30 p.m., at Trillium Events in Spring Lake. The evening includes dinner, music, a cash bar, a

live auction, and a 50/50 raffle. Tickets are available at tricitieshabitat.org under the "events" tab.

If you have questions or would like more information, contact info@tricitieshabitat.org, call 616-846-1505, or reach out to Tim Bullerdick at 616-402-8793.

Sustainability Practices to Care for Our Precious Earth

There are many ways we can care for the earth, from reducing waste and recycling to composting and making more sustainable choices. Here are some local resources and simple steps you can take to make a difference.

Shop Sustainably

Rosewood Provisions, located at 106 N. 7th St. in Grand Haven, is a zero-waste refillery where customers can bring their own reusable containers to fill with bulk household and personal care products, including soaps, detergents, oils and dry goods. Products are sold by weight, helping reduce single-use plastic packaging. The store also offers recycled paper products and encourages sustainable living.

Recycle Responsibly

First Grand Haven Christian Reformed Church Recycling Ministry, located at 516 S. Ferry St. in Grand Haven, accepts recyclable materials year-round, including electronics with a cord, battery or motor; scrap metals such as steel, copper, brass and aluminum, in any condition; and

Michigan returnable bottles and cans. Televisions and computer monitors are not accepted.

Love in Action, at 326 N. Ferry St. in Grand Haven, and International Aid, Inc., at 17011 Hickory St. in Spring Lake, do accept computers for recycling.

Turn Food Scraps into Compost

Composting transforms food scraps and other organic waste into nutrient-rich material that improves soil health. Food waste from Joyful Noise Christian Childcare and First Presbyterian Church is composted. The church also uses compostable plates, paper towels, napkins, utensils and cups, which are collected in special bags and sent to a composting facility. Compostable bags for home use are also available in sandwich, quart and gallon sizes.

Grand Haven residents can also take advantage of the composting site on Harbor Island, which accepts food scraps, yard waste, and dead trees and shrubs.

Explore Local Recycling and Waste Disposal Resources

Environmental Sustainability Centers offer local residents a variety of recycling and waste-

disposal services through the Department of Public Health. The three centers serving our area are:

- **Grand Haven:** 16850 Comstock
- **Holland:** 14053 Quincy St.,
- **Muskegon:** visit the [Muskegon County website](http://MuskegonCounty.org) for location information

These centers offer collection services for household recyclables, hazardous waste, compost, electronics and scrap metal, small-business and farm waste, and medical waste and sharps. Collection days and hours vary by location and material.

Small Actions, Lasting Impact

Caring for the earth doesn't have to be complicated. Every time we reuse a container, recycle an item, compost food scraps or make a more sustainable choice, we help conserve resources and reduce waste. Together, our everyday actions can make a meaningful difference in caring for the earth and preserving it for future generations.



Thursday Night Discussion Group

The Thursday Night Discussion Group meets weekly in October at 7 p.m. in lower level rooms 16/17 - except for October 8, when the group will meet at 5 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. The group continues its discussion of *Blue Like Jazz* by Donald Miller through October 22. Our next selection from October 29 - December 17 is *Surprised by Hope* (2018 edition), by N. T. Wright. In this groundbreaking work of Christian theology, renowned Bible scholar, Anglican bishop, and bestselling author N. T. Wright argues that Christians have often misunderstood the Bible's message about heaven and what happens after we die.

Please contact Linda Gritter or Katie Norton for more information.

Learning to Pray Sundays in October 10-11 AM

What is prayer? It's a big question, with all kinds of answers. During the four Sundays in October, Rev. Michelle Olson will invite us to explore some different prayer practices and discover what prayer might look like for each of us.

Each gathering will include teaching from Michelle followed by time for prayer. Since we all have different comfort levels with praying, you'll have the option to pray with a small group or spend the time in quiet, personal prayer.

Come explore, practice, and discover new ways of praying.



World Communion Sunday Special Offering

On World Communion Sunday, October 4, Christians around the world will be celebrating our unity in Christ and remembering Micah's call to "love kindness."

The World Communion Offering supports ministries of racial justice, peacemaking, humanitarian aid, and interfaith relations around the world. In 2026, PC(U.S.A.) congregations will receive this offering for the first time, helping bring welcome, justice, and hope to communities worldwide.

Offering envelopes are available in the pews and at the Clinton Street entrance. You may also give at pcusa.org/give/wco or text GIVEWCO to 41444. Thank you for sharing God's love!

Spooky Sounds and Baroque Beauty: Two Upcoming Community Artist Series Concerts

The Community Artist Series at First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven has two exciting concerts coming up this fall, offering something for music lovers of all ages.

- **Spooktacular Organ Recital**
Sunday, October 25, at 4:00 p.m.

Get into the Halloween spirit with an afternoon of spooky, fun, and spectacular music! Join Rob Hlebinsky and other artists from the Grand Rapids Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, as well as talented local musicians for a frightfully entertaining program of classical favorites, popular tunes, Broadway hits, and plenty of musical surprises.

- **Echoing Air**
Sunday, November 8, at 4:00 p.m.

Enjoy an afternoon of beautiful music with Echoing Air, a chamber ensemble specializing in vocal music and Baroque instruments, particularly from the English Baroque period. Known for its distinctive combination of countertenors, recorders, and basso continuo, the ensemble performs music spanning centuries, from the Medieval era to the present day. Inspired by the Henry Purcell song "Hark, the Echoing Air," the ensemble tours nationally, bringing its unique sound to concert audiences across the country.

Both concerts are part of First Presbyterian Church's Community Artist Series and are free and open to the public. All are welcome to enjoy these wonderful musical experiences!



A Little Love from Home

Do you have a college student away at school? The FPGH Youth Group would love to send them a little love from home in the form of a care package!

If you have a college student, please send their mailing address to Eric Stromberg at erics@fpgh.org by October 9 so we can brighten their day with a special surprise.

We know a little encouragement from home can go a long way, and we'd love to let our college students know they're being thought of and missed!



Join us for the CROP Walk

Walk with us on Sunday, October 3, in support of those facing hunger locally and around the world.

Sunday, October 3
1:30 p.m. at
First Grand Haven CRC
(next to the GH Christian School)
516 South Ferry Street
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Special incentives: Gifts are matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$30,000, plus a \$25 donation for every walker who signs in!

Twenty-five percent of funds raised supports Love in Action, The Salvation Army, and The People Center, with the remainder benefiting Church World Service. To learn more or to donate online, visit the CROP Walk website:

[2026 CROP Walk](https://www.cropwalk.org/)

Help Feed Our Youth!

Help fuel our 5th–12th graders by providing a homecooked lunch during Youth Group!

Meals are needed for 20 people and can be as simple or creative as you'd like. Sign up on your own or team up with a friend to make it easier.

Not sure what to serve? Have questions about reimbursement? Contact Eric at erics@fpgh.org.

Thank you for helping feed and care for our youth!

Dates still open are the following Sundays: Oct. 18, Nov. 15, and Dec. 6 & 13. You may sign up using this link:

<https://takethemameal.com/ZTWJ8324>, or use the QR code below:



Join Us for Pumpkin Painting!

Sunday, October 25
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!



Trunk or Treat
at **JOYFUL NOISE** + **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
Christian Childcare GRAND HAVEN, MI

We'd love to invite you to participate by decorating your vehicle's trunk, dressing up and passing out candy! If you can't make it, but still want to help, you can donate individually-wrapped candy or treats (peanut-free) or small trinkets. Please contact Sally Segers at office@joyfulnoisekids.com if you are interested in helping!

Friday, October 30th
5:30-6:30 p.m.

*Setup will begin by or before 5 p.m.

All are welcome!

Illustration of a blue car with a decorated trunk, pumpkins, and children in costumes.



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

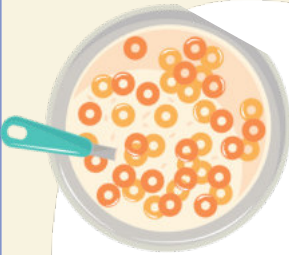
or YouTube: First Presbyterian Church, Grand Haven

or watch the recorded service on our

website: fpgh.org

October 2026

deliver to: (or current resident)



Save the Date



Generosity Sunday
October 25, 2026

Join us for brunch after both worship services as we celebrate the generosity that sustains our church and makes our shared ministry possible.

Together, we're giving thanks for the ways we grow in faith, serve others, and share God's love in the year ahead!