

The United Church of Big Rapids

April 20, 2025

Easter Sunday

❖ *You are invited to stand*



... the stone  
had been removed  
from the tomb.

John 20:1, NRSV

Choral Introit

Welcome

Announcements

Prelude

*Praise the King!, by Ruth Elaine Schram*

❖ Call to Worship

Leader: At early dawn, when the light was just emerging and the shadows still long and deep, the earth began to sing a tender and persistent hallelujah.

**People: And the resurrection smelled like death and dirt. Christ, the Power of Love, is risen indeed. Hallelujah!**

Leader: At early dawn, with the salt of tears still crusting their eyes, the women began to sing a grieving and faithful hallelujah.

**People: And the empty tomb sounded like weeping and questions. Christ, the Wounded One, is risen indeed. Hallelujah!**

Leader: At early dawn, when no one could remember the sound of hope or the promise of a new day rising, the world began to sing a fierce and determined hallelujah.

**People: And the rising up tasted like bread and rejoicing. Christ, the Way of Truth and Life, is risen indeed. Hallelujah!**

Leader: At early dawn, as each day brings forth new agonies and injustices, we gather to sing a grateful and liberating hallelujah.

**People: And this Easter feels like protest and praise. Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

❖ Unison Invocation

**Resurrecting God, we meet you in the empty tomb where our griefs and joys, despairs, and hopes intermingle. Through our prayers and praise this Easter day, open our hearts to remember that the power of love and life will overcome every death-dealing force, no matter how pervasive or persuasive. In this troubling and joyful time, dazzle us with good news, Holy Rising Up One, in whose path we follow and name we pray. Amen.**

**Scripture Lesson**

*Old Testament Lesson*

*Isaiah 65:17-25*

- <sup>17</sup> For I am about to create new heavens  
and a new earth;  
the former things shall not be remembered  
or come to mind.
- <sup>18</sup> But be glad and rejoice for ever  
in what I am creating;  
for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy,  
and its people as a delight.
- <sup>19</sup> I will rejoice in Jerusalem,  
and delight in my people;  
no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it,  
or the cry of distress.
- <sup>20</sup> No more shall there be in it  
an infant that lives but a few days,  
or an old person who does not live out a lifetime;  
for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth,  
and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.
- <sup>21</sup> They shall build houses and inhabit them;  
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
- <sup>22</sup> They shall not build and another inhabit;  
they shall not plant and another eat;  
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,  
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
- <sup>23</sup> They shall not labour in vain,  
or bear children for calamity;  
for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD—  
and their descendants as well.
- <sup>24</sup> Before they call I will answer,  
while they are yet speaking I will hear.
- <sup>25</sup> The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,  
the lion shall eat straw like the ox;  
but the serpent—its food shall be dust!  
They shall not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
says the LORD.

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. <sup>2</sup>So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' <sup>3</sup>Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. <sup>4</sup>The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup>He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup>Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, <sup>7</sup>and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup>Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; <sup>9</sup>for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. <sup>10</sup>Then the disciples returned to their homes.

<sup>11</sup> But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; <sup>12</sup>and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. <sup>13</sup>They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' <sup>14</sup>When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup>Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." ' <sup>18</sup>Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Leader: This is what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

### Chancel Choir Anthem

*Alleluia! Christ Is Risen, arr. by Stan Pethel*

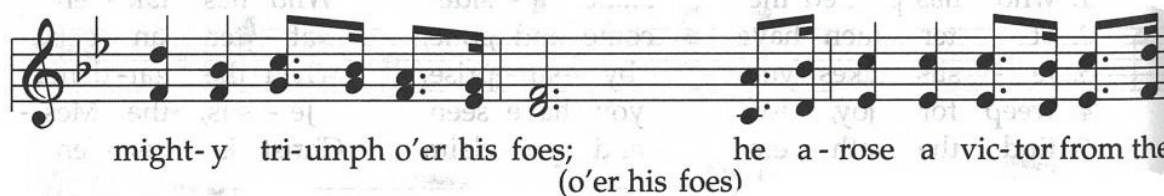
## Christ Arose!



1. Low in the grave he lay, Je-sus my Sav-ior, wait-ing the com-ing day,
2. Vain - ly they watch his bed, Je-sus my Sav-ior; vain-ly they seal the dead,
3. Death can-not keep its prey, Je-sus my Sav-ior; he tore the bars a - way,



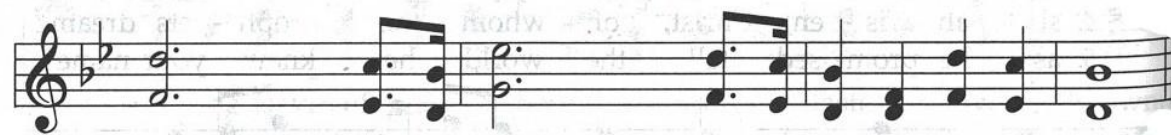
Je - sus my Lord! Up from the grave he a - rose, (he a-rose) with a



might-y tri-umph o'er his foes; he a - rose a vic-tor from the (o'er his foes)



dark do-main, and he lives for - ev - er, with his saints to reign. He a -



rose! He a - rose! Hal - le - lu - jah! Christ a - rose!  
(he a-rose) (he a-rose)

## Sharing of our Joys & Concerns

### Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer

**Our Father/Creator, who is in heaven, hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom/kin\_dom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom/kin\_dom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Choral Amen**

**Call to Offering**

**Offertory**

*I Sing the Power of God, by Penny Rodriguez*

❖ **Doxology**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God for all that love has done;  
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.

❖ **Prayer of Dedication**

**Risen Christ, as we celebrate the miracle of your resurrection, we offer these gifts in thanksgiving for the new life you have given us. Just as Mary Magdalene found hope in the empty tomb, may these offerings be used to bring light and new beginnings to those in need. We seek to carry the message of your victory over death, bringing renewal, joy, and hope to all. Amen.**

**Hymn #122**

*Thine Is the Glory, tune: Judas Maccasbeus*

**Benediction**

**Choral Benediction**

**Postlude**

*Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above, by Lloyd Larson*



**Welcome to our visitors today!** We're glad you chose to worship with us! Please be sure to sign the attendance sheet with your name and email/address in the pew in front of you. We like to keep up with those that visit us.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Pub Theology** – Join in the lively discussion at Pub Theology, Tuesday, April 22, beginning at 7:00 pm at Crankers. All are welcome!

**The Ferris Concert Choir** (featuring Linda Rinehart & Randy Vance, and conducted by Katie McInnis) is this Wednesday, April 23 at 7:30 pm in Williams Auditorium. The concert is free, and will be so much fun! Please join us if you can, and spread the word to support our United Church musicians and our Ferris community!

**Give to the Pantry!** Project Starburst continues to have a high demand for food. The Mission Commission's "Give to the Pantry" program has identified baking mixes (cookies, muffins, cakes) as the "food of the month" for April. With the demand, any non-perishable food item is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your continued, generous support.

**Meijer "Simply Give"** – The Meijer Simply Give program has selected Project Starburst as the recipient of funds collected from now through June 28. During this time, donations are matched by Meijer one to one. A double match day is scheduled for June 14. You may purchase Simply Give cards at the local Meijer store, or find them in the narthex after March 30. You may also give your donation directly to Diane Long at Project Starburst to turn in on the double match day.

**Contacting the church office** - You may contact the office at any time via email, [secretary@unitedchurchbr.org](mailto:secretary@unitedchurchbr.org) or you can call **231-527-9567** between 9:00 am and 1:00 pm, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday with questions or concerns. This phone number also accepts messages outside of regular business hours. You can also mail the office at 120 S. State Street, Big Rapids, MI 49307. You can also find information about our church on our website: [www.unitedchurchbr.org](http://www.unitedchurchbr.org) or by visiting our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/UnitedBigRapids](http://www.facebook.com/UnitedBigRapids).

**Pastor Devon's contact information** – If you need to contact Pastor Devon, you may contact her by phone for pastoral care needs at 231-629-2302. You may also reach out via email: [devonherrell@gmail.com](mailto:devonherrell@gmail.com). Pastor Devon does have another full-time job, so in-person meeting time is limited. She is generally in the office on Thursdays from 9:00 am – 11:45 am. You may contact the church office to set up an appointment.

**Financial Information** – The Governing Board and Treasurer are sharing this data monthly with you. If you have questions, contact Amy Buse, Treasurer, or a member of the Governing Board.

	Expenditures	Income
March 2025	\$ 22,438.35	\$ 35,630.37
Year-to-Date (Jan-Mar 2025)	\$ 63,152.00 *	\$ 85,664.31

\*The March income includes a \$23,000 donation from an estate.

**The choir thought you would like to read the words to their anthem today:**

"Alleluia! Christ is Risen"  
Words by: Christopher Wordsworth  
Arranged by: Stan Pethel  
Incorporating Beethoven's "Ode to Joy"  
© 2008 Abingdon Press

Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to heaven and voices raise:  
Sing to God a hymn of gladness; sing to God a hymn of praise.  
Christ, who on the cross as savior, for the world's salvation bled,  
Jesus Christ, the King of glory, now is risen from the dead.

Now the iron bars are broken, Christ from death to life is born,  
glorious life, and life immortal, on this holy Easter morn.  
Christ has triumphed, and we conquer by his mighty enterprise.  
We with him to life eternal by his resurrection rise.

Alleluia! He comes in victory. Alleluia! Praise his majesty.

Christ has risen, we are risen! Shed upon us heavenly grace,  
rain and dew and gleams of glory from the brightness of his face;  
that we, with our hearts in heaven, here on earth may fruitful be,  
and by angel hands be gathered, and be ever, Lord, with thee.

Alleluia! He comes in victory. Alleluia! Praise his majesty.

Christ is risen! Sing alleluia!



## Easter Flower Dedications

John & Carlene Gahrs, in memory of our parents and daughter, Julie.

Jim & Carolyn Chipman, in memory of our parents, James & Ruth Chipman and Robert & Elinor Griffith.

Diane Fleming

Susan H. Grant, in memory of A. Donald Grant and in honor of my United Church family.

Bill & Nancy Peters, in memory of our family.

Wayne & Maxine McKay, in memory of our parents, Claude & Zylida McKay and James & Thelma Eddy.

Chuck & Kay Achterhof, in memory of Shawn Achterhof.

Mary Olszewski

Amy Buse, in honor of my mother, Mary Ryman.

Jerena Keys & Kathleen Keys

Barb Johnson, in memory of Newell Johnson, and in honor of Julie, Trenton, Cindee & Steve.

Don Olree, in memory of Joan Olree.

Paul Challender, in memory of Mother.

Kurt & Maureen Somsel,, in honor of our four children: Kayla, Luke, Jack, and Nick.

Jim and Alice Bandstra, in memory of our friend, Betty Stolarek.









## The United Church of Big Rapids

Our vision is to honor all children of God through following the way of Jesus Christ.

Our mission is to celebrate all creation as an active presence in our community, engaging in transformational worship and nurturing families and relationships, as we cultivate Jesus' justice and love.



The United Church of Big Rapids is a union of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Church of Christ. It is a congregation that worships together, seeks opportunities to serve others, encourages one another to grow in intellect and spirit, strives for social justice, and fully embraces Jesus' call to love one another as God loves us.



Because we believe God's whole creation is good, blessed, and sacred, we are an open and affirming community of faith. We celebrate persons of all races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, family structures, faith backgrounds, abilities, and economic circumstances.

As valued members of this congregation all persons are invited to equally participate in the full life of the church - worship, sacraments, ministry, fellowship, leadership, responsibilities, sorrows, blessings, and the continued presence of Jesus Christ.



Ministers .....	The Body of Christ
Worship Lead.....	Rev. Devon Herrell
Administrative Assistant .....	Julie Cole
Organist .....	Paul Heidemann
Chancel Choir Director .....	Linda Rinehart
Chancel Choir Assistant Director.....	Katie McInnis
Bell Choir Director.....	Judy Tressler
Custodian .....	Larry Carnes
Nursery Attendant .....	Michell Kamptner
Moderator.....	Marshall Henry
Sanctuary Sound .....	Wayne McKay
Sound Board .....	Mike Rinehart
Liturgist .....	Kari Clark
Ushers.....	Jane Grzybowski, Don Stephen, Paul Challender
Livestream Team.....	Amy Buse, Adam Jewell, Aleah Ritzema, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors .....	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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