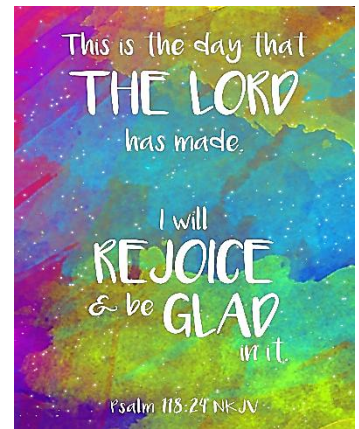


The United Church of Big Rapids
April 27, 2025
Second Sunday of Easter

❖ *You are invited to stand*



Welcome

Announcements

Prelude

How Great Thou Art, arr. Janet Vogt

❖ **Call to Worship**

Leader: Come, all who seek a love that endures.

People: We gather to practice hospitality, to care for the suffering, to love as Christ loves.

Leader: Come, all who long for a faith that is lived out in action.

People: We come to lift our hearts in gratitude, to worship the One who is our help and our strength.

Leader: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Let us worship the Living God!

❖ **Unison Invocation**

Holy and ever-present God, You call us to a life of love, generosity, and courage. In this time of worship, open our hearts to the ways You are still speaking. Stir in us a faith that moves beyond words into action. May our praise rise to You like an offering of thanksgiving, and may we be transformed in Your presence. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

❖ **Hymn #386**

O for a World, tune: Azmon

Scripture Lesson

New Testament Lesson

Acts 5:27-32

²⁷ And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,

²⁸ Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

²⁹ Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

³⁰ The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

³¹ Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance

to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

³² And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 118:14-29

Leader: The LORD is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

People: The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.

Leader: The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

People: I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.

Leader: The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.

People: Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD:

Leader: This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.

People: I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

Leader: The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

People: This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

Leader: This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

People: Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

Leader: Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.

People: God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.

Leader: Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.

People: O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

We Are Witnesses - Rev. Steven K. Naylor

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.

Call to Offering

Offertory

Prepare the Way, arr. Ben Logan

❖ 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

God of abundance, we bring these gifts before You – not just the offerings of our hands, but the offering of our lives. May they be used to extend Your love, to care for the forgotten, to build a world where all are welcome, and all are fed. Bless our giving and our living, that they may reflect Your grace and goodness. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Hymn #420

God of Grace and God of Glory, tune: CWM Rhondda

Benediction

Postlude

All Creatures of Our God and King, arr. Mark Hayes



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

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. The food of the month for May will be canned vegetables. With the demand, any non-perishable food item is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your continued, generous support.

Dump & Run – We will be working with Immanuel Lutheran Church again this year for their annual "Dump & Run" for Ferris students. Students are given several drop-off locations where they can leave items they don't want to take with them when they move out. Items picked up are then sorted by volunteers and delivered to local charities. If you would like to volunteer, please see Frank Hartley. He will have sign-up sheets after worship.

Blue Sunday – The last Sunday in April is recognized throughout the world as Blue Sunday. On this Sunday, we are asked to pray for victims of abuse. Attendees of today's service were provided with a blue ribbon as they entered the sanctuary to wear in recognition of Blue Sunday. We all need to extend our loving hearts and care for these children of God.

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 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 or by visiting our Facebook page: 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. 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.



Blue Sunday Day of Prayer for Abused Children

Pebble in My Shoe

I have a pebble in my shoe
I don't know why it's there
Every step I take it hurts
It's more than I can bear

It came the day my parents left
I've had it for so long
I must be bad to have such luck
I wish I could be strong

I wonder if my family knows
I'm crippled and in pain
I heard that they're not coming back
I guess I am to blame

I looked for help to heal my pain
that holds me back each day
Many work to keep me safe
But still the pebble stayed

Then one day I prayed to God
Are you real and true?
Can you send someone to help?
I think...
I think...
He sent you

**Praying for abused children is like taking
pebbles from their shoes.** J Magee, founder

Blue Sunday Prayer

Lord, thank you for our children,
For them we kneel and pray.

Help us teach them of
your kindness,
of your mercy and your way.

Help us show them of your love,
your strength and safety, too.

Help us show them who you are.
Help us treat them like you do.




**Let's pray, educate ourselves,
and volunteer for the children
of our nation until black and blue
are just colors in their crayon box.**




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. Steven Naylor
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	Randy Vance
Liturgist	Dee Van Horn
Ushers.....	Maxine McKay, Todd Elkins, Paul Challender
Livestream Team.....	Amy Buse, Adam Jewell, Aleah Ritzema, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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