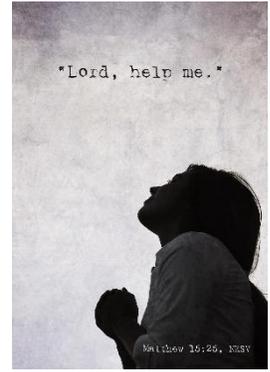


The United Church of Big Rapids

August 20, 2023

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

❖ *You are invited to stand*



Welcome

Announcements

Prelude

Jesus, Lover of My Soul, by Douglas E. Wagner

❖ Call to Worship (©Joan Stott – “The Timeless Psalms”)

Leader: Holy are you, O God of grace and mercy. May all the nations praise you, O God.

People: May all the nations of the earth joyfully sing because God’s justice is supreme!

Leader: May the love that lights up the face of God shine with favor upon us and bless us;

People: teaching us God’s way of living and loving so that we may witness to that love and grace.

Leader: We gather to worship our wise and holy God. We are in awe and revere you for your saving works.

❖ Hymn #324

Open My Eyes That I May See, tune: Open My Eyes

❖ Invocation

Leader: God, the encourager, God, the compassionate, God, the merciful, holy, blessed:

Disturb us. Rouse us from our sleep. Lift us into consciousness of your presence. Change us, move us, mold us for the better; so that, at the sound of your voice, at the call of our name, we will never be the same.

May our worship do this and so much more, in the name of Jesus.

People: Amen.

Scripture Lessons

Gospel Lesson (from the Revised Standard Version)

Matthew 15:10-28

¹⁰ Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, ‘Listen and understand: ¹¹ it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.’ ¹² Then the disciples approached and said to him, ‘Do you know that the Pharisees took offence when they heard what you said?’ ¹³ He answered, ‘Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴ Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.’ ¹⁵ But Peter said to him, ‘Explain this parable to us.’ ¹⁶ Then he said, ‘Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷ Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? ¹⁸ But what comes out of

the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰ These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.'

²¹ Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.' ²³ But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, 'Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.' ²⁴ He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, help me.' ²⁶ He answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' ²⁷ She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed instantly.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Nevertheless, She Persisted - Rev. Devon Herrell

Sharing of our Joys & Concerns

Pastoral Prayer & The 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

Prayer, by Robert Lau

❖ 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**

Gracious God, we offer these gifts to you in hope and trust that they will bring healing and hope where there is need. We give hopefully, praying that through our offering lives will be touched by your love. Open our eyes to see those in need and enliven our hearts that we may be moved to serve and care for all of your children. Strengthen our community of faith, for we are truly grateful to be your people. Amen.

❖ **Hymn**

They'll Know We Are Christians, tune: St. Brendan's

They'll Know We Are Christians

Guitar capo: 1; play Em
Unison

1. We are one in the Spir - it, we are one in the Lord,
 2. We will walk with each oth - er, we will walk hand in hand,
 3. We will work with each oth - er, we will work side by side,
 4. All praise to the Fa - ther. from whom all things come,

we are one in the Spir - it, we are one in the Lord,
 we will walk with each oth - er, we will walk hand in hand,
 we will work with each oth - er, we will work side by side,
 and all praise to Christ Je - sus, God's on - ly Son,

and we pray that all u - ni - ty may one day be re - stored:
 and to - geth - er we'll spread the news that God is in our land:
 and we'll guard each one's dig - ni - ty and save each one's pride:
 and all praise to the Spir - it, who makes us one:

Refrain C G C G Em Am
 And they'll know we are Chris - tians by our love, by our love,

Em Am Bm Em
 yes, they'll know we are Chris - tians by our love.

❖ **Benediction**

Postlude

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms, by Stephen L. Aber



The altar flowers today are given by Jim & Alice Bandstra

in celebration of the marriage of Hannah Dutton & Sam Bandstra, August 12.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome back to the United Church, Rev. Herrell! We're glad to have you here. Thank you for sharing your message with us again.

Give to the Pantry! Project Starburst continues to have a high demand for food. The Mission Commission "Give to the Pantry" program has identified applesauce as the "food of the month". With the demand, any non-perishable food item is also greatly appreciated. The bin in the Narthex is available to accept donations.

School Supplies Needed! *The deadline for bringing in school supplies has been extended through today!* The Mission/Social Action Commission will be collecting school supplies to give to Project Starburst to share with their clients. As you are out and about and see sales of supplies, it is a good time to pick up some for this effort. Donations can be dropped off at the church in the church library or in Canadian Lakes at Coldwell Banker Realty.

Sunday school start date – It's that time! Sunday school classes will start on the first Sunday after Labor Day. Plans are being finalized for multiple classes. If you would like to volunteer to teach on a Sunday, please let Amanda Little, Deb Ducat, or the church office know. Watch for additional details in the next newsletter.

THANK YOU to all the volunteers that help out around the church and don't often get a shout-out. Small maintenance projects, outside work that keep the church looking good, serving as liturgists, hosting coffee hours, serving on commissions and committees, providing altar flowers, and helping with the media team each Sunday. Your efforts are invaluable! Volunteers make our church work, and we are grateful for your service!

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.

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
June 2023	\$ 16,429.35	\$ 6,296.45
Year-to-Date (Jan-June 2023)	\$ 97,992.35	\$172,415.05*

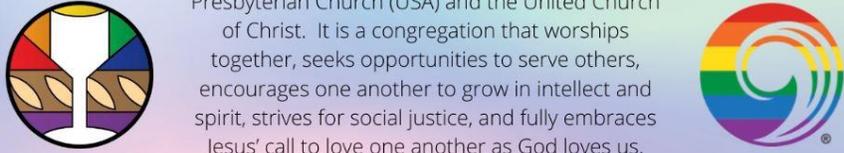
This includes \$35,220.92 we received from the Employee Retention Tax Credit Program (ERTC) along with \$30,919 in donations for the elevator



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
Guest Worship Leader	Rev. Devon Herrell
Administrative Assistant	Julie Cole
Organist	Paul Heidemann
Bell Choir Director	Judy Tressler
Chancel Choir Director	Linda Rinehart
Chancel Choir Assistant Director	Katie McInnis
Moderator	Marshall Henry
Elder in Charge	Roger Vajda
Sound Board	Bruce Fredrick
Sanctuary Sound	Wayne McKay
Liturgist	Dee Van Horn
Ushers	Jane Grzybowski, Don Stephen, Judy Tressler
Livestream Team	Annie Ducat, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

**Permission to use the music in this service obtained from OneLicense with license #A-712368*