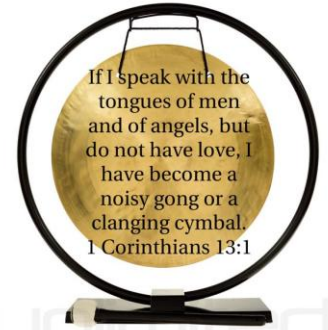


The United Church of Big Rapids
February 2, 2025
Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany
❖ *You are invited to stand*



Choral Introit

Welcome

Announcements

Prelude

He Leadeth Me, O Blessed Thought, by W. A. Mozart

❖ **Call to Worship**

Leader: In a cynical and despairing world, O God, give us a quietly prophetic voice

People: to proclaim your hope.

Leader: In a violent and angry world, O God, give us a quietly prophetic voice

People: to proclaim your peace.

Leader: In a dismissive and disinterested world, O God, give us a quietly prophetic voice

People: to proclaim your compassion.

Leader: In a lonely and inhospitable world, O God, give us a quietly prophetic voice

People: to proclaim your love.

Leader: In a grieving and weeping world, O God, give us a quietly prophetic voice

People: to proclaim your joy.

Leader: May we be so captivated by your hope, O God, that we cannot help but to whisper, to sing, and to enact, the message of your reign which is always coming into our world;

People: and may our quietly prophetic lives be channels of you restoring grace wherever we may go.

❖ **Prayer of Confession**

Merciful God, you speak blessing and compassion into the world. Forgive us for the ways we act with judgement, cruelty, or indifference. We ignore the needs of our neighbors; we resist your call to oppose injustice; we give in to scarcity and fear; we assume the worst about one another. Cleanse us from our faults and release us from their grasp. Show us your loving kindness. Restore our hearts and repair your world, that we may live in Christ's ways. Amen.

❖ **Assurance of Pardon**

Scripture Lessons*Old Testament Lesson (from the New Revised Standard Version Bible)**Psalm 71:1-6*

- ¹ In you, O LORD, I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame.
- ² In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me;
incline your ear to me and save me.
- ³ Be to me a rock of refuge,
a strong fortress, to save me,
for you are my rock and my fortress.
- ⁴ Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of the unjust and cruel.
- ⁵ For you, O Lord, are my hope,
my trust, O LORD, from my youth.
- ⁶ Upon you I have leaned from my birth;
it was you who took me from my mother's womb.
My praise is continually of you.

*Gospel Lesson (from the New Revised Standard Version Bible)**1 Corinthians 13:1-13*

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹ For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰ but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Chancel Choir Anthem

Remember His Love, by Paul Williams

Sermon

Identity Crisis: A Noisy Gong – Rev. Devon Herrell

Sharing of our Joys & Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Choral Amen

Call to Offering

❖ **Offertory**

Offertory on "St. Crispin," by George J. Elvey

❖ **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**

Giver of Good Gifts, may the gifts we give reflect your abundance and generosity. Use our time, talent, and treasure to serve our faith community and the world. May each offering be a seed that will grow, spread, and perfume the atmosphere with faith, hope, and love.

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Lord's Table

The Great Thanksgiving

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to God.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader: Guide us all through the promise of Jesus, your light, who teaches us to pray:

People: 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.

Sharing of the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: Let us pray -

People: Nourishing God, at this table you have refreshed us with your holy gifts of food and drink. Strengthen us for service and send us out to embody your good news of liberation and healing for the sake of the world. In the name of Christ, we pray – Amen.

Hymn Insert

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

Choral Benediction

Postlude

Fanfare in G, by John S. Dixon



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

Book Study – The book study for "*Everything Happens for a Reason: and Other Lies I've Loved*," by Kate Bowler will conclude on January 28th at 7:00 pm in the Parlor. The next study will begin on Sunday, February 16 after worship and will be on the book *Life After Doom*, by Brian D. McLaren. This new book can be purchased on Amazon. If you need assistance in getting a book, please contact the church office.

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 soup as the "food of the month" for February. With the demand, any non-perishable food item is greatly appreciated. The bin in the Narthex is available to accept donations.

REFRESH! REFRESH! REFRESH! - As you come in and out of the church over the next few months you will see painters, floor finishers, carpet layers – all working to refresh the look of our wonderful sanctuary and halls. First in line is painting of the hall leading from the parking lot to the sanctuary along with the entrances at the parking lot and side door. Although it may be a bit distracting, church activities and church services will continue as usual while the look changes. More specific information will be provided soon regarding dates and specific activities.

Arts Opportunities at the United Church! The United Church is hosting two organ concerts as part of the Festival of the Arts. Hae Won Jang, organ instructor at Michigan State University, is performing on our lovely instrument on Tuesday, February 4, at 7 pm. Noah Mallett, who grew up in Big Rapids and is a graduate student at Michigan State University, will perform on Tuesday, February 11, at 7 pm. Please come and support our church and the Festival of the Arts! Both concerts promise to be interesting and rewarding.

AAUW Book Bin – AAUW is holding its annual book sale on April 11 and 12. Funds raised are used for scholarships for non-traditional students. To make the sale a success, books are needed! The bin in the Narthex is waiting for donations – books of all kinds are welcome.

Pub Theology – The next Pub Theology meeting will be on Tuesday, February 18 at 7:00 pm at Crankers. Join the fellowship and conversation! We are aware of the many Festival of the Arts events happening in February and that some may not be available for church activities.

Sign up for Altar Flowers and Hosting Fellowship Time! Our sign-up sheets for altar flowers and fellowship time hosts are a bit empty for January and February. Check the bulletin board to sign up for your choice of Sundays!

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 plans to be 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
December 2024	\$ 21,327.71	\$ 12,232.12
Year-to-Date (Jan-Dec 2024)	\$ 198,525.69	\$ 227,739.88

A few notes on the budget:

- Just a reminder the expenses would be larger if we were paying a full-time pastor
- The December income includes \$1,650 from the Christmas Offering

The choir thought you might like to see the words of their anthem today:

"Remember His Love"

Words by: Paul Williams

Music by: Benjamin Harlan

© 1988 by Triad Music

Remember Jesus' love, remember what He said,
Remember His love as we break the bread;
Remember His love, His dying in our stead,
Remember His love and be fed.

Remember Jesus' love, the crown of thorns He wore,
Remember His love as the cup we pour;
Remember His love, we worship and adore,
Remember His love and be fed.

Remember Jesus' love that led him to the tree;
Remember His love redeeming you and me;
Remember His love setting us free,
Remember His love and be fed.


Remember Jesus' love and be fed.




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
Lead Minister	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	Erin Dumond
Moderator	Marshall Henry
Sound Board	Mike Rinehart
Sanctuary Sound	Wayne McKay
Liturgist	Diane Fleming
Ushers	Paul Challenger, Don Stephen, Julie Kysela
Livestream Team	Amy Buse, Adam Jewell, Aleah Ritzema, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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