

**The United Church of Big Rapids**

**February 4, 2024**

**Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany**

❖ *You are invited to stand*



**Choral Introit**

**Welcome**

**Announcements**

**Prelude**

❖ **Call to Worship**

Leader: Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The Lord is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.

**People: He gives power to the faint,  
and strengthens the powerless.  
Even youths will faint and be weary,  
and the young will fall exhausted;  
but those who wait for the Lord  
shall renew their strength.**

Leader: What happens when we wait for the Lord?

**People: We shall renew our strength.  
We shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
we shall run and not be weary,  
we shall walk and not faint.**

*Be Thou My Vision, by John S. Dixon*

## You Who Dwell in the Shelter of the Lord

### On Eagle's Wings (Psalm 91)

*Leader or All* G D/F#

1 You who dwell in the shel-ter of the Lord, who a-

G D/F# F

bide in his shad-ow for life, say to the Lord, "My

Dm F Gm Asus A

ref-uge, my rock in whom I trust!"

*Refrain* All D Em

And he will raise you up on ea-gle's wings, bear you on the

A7 D D7/F# G

breath of dawn, make you to shine like the sun,

A Bm F#m Em7 A Dsus D *Fine*

and hold you in the palm of his hand.

*Leader or All* G D/F#

2 The snare of the fowl-er will nev-er cap-ture you, and

G D/F# F

fam-ine will bring you no fear: un-der his wings, your

CREATION AND PROVIDENCE

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of seven staves of music. The lyrics are: 'ref - uge, his faith - ful - ness your shield. 3 You need not fear the ter - ror of the night, nor the ar - row that flies by day; though thou - sands fall a - bout you, near you it shall not come. 4 For to his an - gels he's giv - en a com - mand to guard you in all of your ways; up - on their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot a - gainst a stone.' The chords are: Dm, F, Gm, Asus, A (to Refrain), G (Leader or All), D/F#, F, Dm, F, Gm, Asus, A (to Refrain), G (Leader or All), D/F#, F, Gm7, Am, Gm7, Asus, A (to Refrain).

**Scripture Lesson**

*Epistle Reading (from the Inclusive Bible)*

*1 Corinthians 9:16-23*

<sup>16</sup> Not that I do boast about preaching the Gospel; I am under compulsion and have no choice. I am ruined if I do not preach the Gospel! <sup>17</sup> If I do it willingly, I have my reward; if unwillingly, I am nonetheless entrusted with a charge. <sup>18</sup> What then is my reward? It is simply this: that when preaching, I offer the Gospel free of charge and do not assert the authority the Gospel gives me. <sup>19</sup> Although I am not bound to anyone, I put myself into the service of all so as to win over as many as possible.

<sup>20</sup> To the Jews I became even more Jewish, to win over the Jewish people; even though I am not subject to the Law, I made myself subject to the Law to win those who are subject to the Law. <sup>21</sup> To those who have no law, I was free of the Law, too – though not free from God’s Law, being subject to the Law of Christ – to win those who have no law. <sup>22</sup> To the weak I became weak to win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might save at least some of them. <sup>23</sup> In fact, I do all that I do for the sake of the Gospel in hope of having a share in its blessings.

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

*Gospel Reading (from the Inclusive Bible)*

*Mark 1:29-39*

<sup>29</sup> Upon leaving the synagogue, Jesus entered Simon's and Andrew's house with James and John. <sup>30</sup> Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told Jesus about her. <sup>31</sup> Jesus went over to her, took her by the hand and helped her up, and the fever left her. Then she went about her work.

<sup>32</sup> After sunset, as evening drew on, they brought Jesus all who were ill and possessed by demons. <sup>33</sup> Everyone in the town crowded around the door. <sup>34</sup> Jesus healed many who were sick with different diseases, and cast out many demons. But Jesus would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew who he was.

<sup>35</sup> Rising early the next morning, Jesus went off to a lonely place in the desert and prayed there. <sup>36</sup> Simon and some companions managed to find Jesus <sup>37</sup> and said to him, "Everybody is looking for you!"

<sup>38</sup> Jesus said to them, "Let us move on to the neighboring villages so that I may proclaim the Good News there also. That is what I have come to do." <sup>39</sup> So Jesus went into their synagogues proclaiming the Good News and expelling demons throughout the whole of Galilee.

**Chancel Choir Anthem**

*Think of Me and Remember, by Joel Raney*

**Sermon**

*Rev. Robert Garrels*

**Sharing of our Joys & Concerns**

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Choral Amen**

**Call to Offering**

**Offertory**

*The Cross of Christ, by Dan R. Edwards*

❖ **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**

**Accept our tithes and offerings as a gift of worship to you. Multiply what we give for the effective growth of your ministry. May Christ dwell in our hearts through faith so that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may have the strength to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. May we be filled with all the fullness of God. Amen.**

❖ **Sacrament of Holy Communion**

*Invitation to the Lord's Table*

Leader: God is with us!

**People: We are not alone!**

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.**

*Words of Institution*

*Prayer of Consecration*

*Sharing of the Elements*

*Prayer of Thanksgiving*

**Thank you, O Christ, for this feast of life.**

**We are fed by your love;**

**We are strengthened by your life.**

**We are sent forth into this world to live into the visions God has laid on our hearts.**

**We are now commissioned to:**

**Feed as we have been fed,**

**Forgive as we have been forgiven,**

**Love as we have been loved.**

**Thanks be to God.**

**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.**

**Hymn #411**

*Arise, Your Light Is Come! Tune: Festal Song*

❖ **Benediction**

**Choral Benediction**

**Postlude**

*Postlude on "Deo Gracias," by Edward Broughton*



The flowers today are given by Mike & Linda Rinehart



**The choir thought you might like to see the words for today's anthem:**

"Think of Me and Remember"  
Words and Music by: Joel Raney  
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Take this wine I pour, take this bread I break.  
Search your heart and remember  
the sacrifice I make.

Come and follow me. I will hold you forever.  
My life I give so you may live.  
Think of me and remember.

When your feet grow tired, and your flesh is weak,  
Think of me and remember  
I am the rest you seek.

Come and follow me, I will hold you forever.  
My life I give, so you may live.  
Think of me and remember.

As you close the day, as you sing and pray,  
search your heart and remember  
the debt I came to pay.

Come and follow me, I will hold you forever.  
My life I give, so you may live.  
Think of me and remember.  
Think of me and remember.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Welcome back** to the United Church today, Rev. Garrels. We appreciate your willingness to help us out this Sunday morning!

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

**Elevator work** continues! The elevator upgrade work is expected to take about 2 more weeks. During that time, there will be NO elevator service in our building. Access via the parking lot is still possible. The doors on the Mill Street side of the church will be unlocked during business hours and on Sunday morning. If you need accommodation, please contact the church office to make arrangements. We appreciate your patience as we get this much-needed, important repair to our elevator.

**Free Income Tax Service Preparation Program** - Well, it is just about that time of year again when we all begin thinking about filing our income tax. The AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Program is back to normal this year, and all returns will be completed in one session. This is a free income tax preparation program designed for taxpayers with low and moderate incomes, with special attention to those who are 60 or older. The program is run entirely by volunteers who will be assisting clients at four (4) centers from February 5 through April 15, 2024. Morton Township Hall, Mecosta; The Salvation Army on Linden Street, Big Rapids; Morton Township Library, Mecosta; and Wheatland Township Library, Remus. (All sites have various days and hours available. To schedule an appointment call RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) at 231-796-4848 Monday through Friday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. For questions, contact Bruce Fredrick at 313-618-4825.

**Book Collection for AAUW Book Sale** - The Big Rapids chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) is collecting gently used books, CDs, and DVDs for its annual book sale. There is a donation bin in the narthex as well as other locations around the county. Please, no textbooks or encyclopedias. The sale will be held Friday, March 22 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturday, March 23 from 9:00 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, 304 Elm Street, Big Rapids. The proceeds will fund scholarships for nontraditional Ferris students. For more information, call 614-282-4396.

**There will be a celebration** of the wedding of Irene and James Strickland who were married on January 1, during Fellowship time in the Parlor on February 18<sup>th</sup>. Irene & James are frequent visitors to our worship services. A card will be available to sign. Marge PUNCHES has additional information.

**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.

**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 2023	\$ 43,492	\$ 11,839
Year-to-Date (Jan-Dec 2023)	\$269,493	\$255,548*


\* This includes \$35,220.92 we received from the Employee Retention Tax Credit Program (ERTC) along with \$33,859 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 Minister .....	Rev. Robert Garrels
Administrative Assistant .....	Julie Cole
Organist .....	Paul Heidemann
Chancel Choir Director .....	Linda Rinehart
Chancel Choir Assistant Director .....	Katie McInnis
Bell Choir Director .....	Judy Tressler
Moderator .....	Marshall Henry
Member in Charge .....	
Sound Board .....	Mike Rinehart
Sanctuary Sound .....	Wayne McKay
Liturgist .....	Susan H. Grant
Ushers .....	Paul Challender, Alice Dean, Melanie Henry
Livestream Team .....	Amy Buse, 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*