

**The United Church of Big Rapids**

**February 11, 2024**

**Last Sunday after the Epiphany**

❖ *You are invited to stand*



**Welcome**

**Announcements**

**Choral Introit**

**Prelude**

*We Sing Your Praises God, by Robert Garrels*

❖ **Call to Worship** *(by Ted Loder)*

Leader: Oh God, let something essential happen to me today

**People: something more than interesting or entertaining or thoughtful.**

Leader: Oh God, let something essential happen to me today

**People: something awesome, something real.**

Leader: Speak to my condition, Lord, and change me somewhere inside where it matters.

**People: Let something happen which is my real self, O God.**

❖ **Hymn #67**

*Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning, tune: Morning Star*

**Psalm Reading** *(from the Revised Standard Version Bible)*

*Psalm 50:1-2*

Leader: The mighty one, God the Lord, speaks and summons the earth

**People: from the rising of the sun to its setting.**

Leader: Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,

**People: God shines forth.**

**Scripture Lesson**

*Hebrew Reading (from the Revised Standard Version Bible)*

*2 Kings 2:1-12*

Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. <sup>2</sup> Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here; for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel.' But Elisha said, 'As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they went down to Bethel. <sup>3</sup> The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?' And he said, 'Yes, I know; keep silent.'

<sup>4</sup> Elijah said to him, 'Elisha, stay here; for the LORD has sent me to Jericho.' But he said, 'As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they came to Jericho. <sup>5</sup> The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?' And he answered, 'Yes, I know; be silent.'

<sup>6</sup> Then Elijah said to him, 'Stay here; for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan.' But he said, 'As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So the two of them went on. <sup>7</sup> Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. <sup>8</sup> Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

<sup>9</sup> When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.' Elisha said, 'Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.' <sup>10</sup> He responded, 'You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.' <sup>11</sup> As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. <sup>12</sup> Elisha kept watching and crying out, 'Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!' But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

*Gospel Lesson*

*Mark 9:2-9*

<sup>2</sup> Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, <sup>3</sup> and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. <sup>4</sup> And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' <sup>6</sup> He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. <sup>7</sup> Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' <sup>8</sup> Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Chancel Choir Anthem**

*The Gift of Love, arr. by Hal Hopson*

**Sermon**

*The Transformers – Rev. Dr. Bruce Roller*

**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.**

### **Choral Amen**

### **Call to Offering**

### **Offertory**

*Lord of the Flowers, by Robert Garrels*

### **❖ 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**

**As we give ourselves and our offerings, we pray, O God, that they may reveal your love in such a way that many will respond. Awaken in us a love for you and for one another that is contagious. Remove from us all apathy, pretension, and greed that we may grow in holiness and compassion, living joyously in communion with you. Amen.**

### **Hymn Insert**

*Lord, the Light of Your Love is Shining, tune: Shine, Jesus, Shine*

Capo 2: (G) (C) (G) (D) (G)  
 A D A E A

1 Lord, the light of your love is shin - ing, in the  
 2 Lord, I come to your awe - some pres - ence, from the  
 3 As we gaze on your king - ly bright-ness, so our

(C) (G) (D) (C) (D)  
 D A E D E

midst of the dark - ness, shin - ing; Je - sus, Light of the  
 shad - ows in - to your ra - diance; by the blood I may  
 fac - es dis - play your like - ness; ev - er chang - ing from

(Bm7) (Em7) (C) (D) (Bm7)  
 C#m7 F#m7 D E C#m7

World, shine up - on us; set us free by the truth you now  
 en - ter your bright-ness. Search me; try me; con - sume all my  
 glo - ry to glo - ry, mir - rored here may our lives tell your

(Em7) (F) (Dsus)(D) (F) (Dsus)(D)  
 F#m7 G Esus E G Esus E

bring us. Shine on me; shine on me.  
 dark - ness. Shine on me; shine on me.  
 sto - ry. Shine on me; shine on me.

*Refrain* (G) (D) (Em) (C) (G) (Am7) (C) (D7) (C) (D)  
 A E F#m D A Bm7 D E7 D E

Shine, Je - sus, shine; fill this land with the Fa - ther's glo - ry.

(G) (D) (Em) (C) (G) (Am) (Am/G) (F) (D7sus)(D7)  
 A E F#m D A Bm Bm/A G E7sus E7

Blaze, Spir - it, blaze; set our hearts on fire.

(G) (D) (Em) (C) (G) (Am7) (C) (D7) (C) (D)  
 A E F#m D A Bm7 D E7 D E

Flow, riv - er, flow; flood the na - tions with grace and mer - cy.

(G) (D) (Em) (C) (G) (Am) (D7) (G)  
 A E F#m D A Bm E7 A

Send forth your word, Lord, and let there be light.

❖ **Benediction**

**Choral Benediction**

**Postlude**

*Create In Us, by Robert Garrels*



The altar flowers are given today by Linda & Mike Rinehart.



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

“The Gift of Love”

Arranged by: Hal H. Hopson

Paraphrasing from 1 Corinthians 13

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Though I may speak with bravest fire,  
and have the gift to all inspire,  
And have not love; my words are vain,  
as sounding brass, and hopeless gain.

Though I may give all I possess,  
and striving so my love profess,  
But not be giv'n by love within,  
The profit soon turns strangely thin.

Come, spirit, come, our hearts control.  
Our spirits long to be made whole.  
Let inward love guide every deed.  
By this we worship and are freed.  
Amen. Amen. Amen.



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Welcome back** to the United Church, Rev. Dr. Bruce Roller! We're glad to have you here. Thank you for sharing your message with us. We are also thankful for Rev. Bob Garrels who is playing the piano for us today!

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

**Ash Wednesday Services** - We are invited to join with St. Andrew's Episcopal Church and/or the First United Methodist Church for their Ash Wednesday (2/14) services to begin the season of Lent. Service at St. Andrew's is at noon. The Third Avenue United Methodist Church (226 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave) will be at 7:00 pm. You can find more information on their respective websites or Facebook pages.

**Lenten Devotional Available** – "*The Sanctuary for Lent 2024*," by Abigail Browka is our selected devotional booklet for Lent. Copies will be sent electronically to those on the newsletter list. Limited printed copies are available in the narthex. If you would like a printed copy, please contact the church office.

**Elevator work** continues! The elevator upgrade work is nearing completion. There is currently 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. Services will be offered at 4 locations in the county. 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.

**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 and James are frequent visitors to our worship services. A card will be available to sign. Marge Panches has additional information.

**Office coverage February 12-13** – *Julie will be out of the office on Monday and Tuesday* next week but will be in on Wednesday and Thursday. As always, you may contact the office at any time via email, [secretary@unitedchurchbr.org](mailto:secretary@unitedchurchbr.org) or you can call **231-527-9567** and leave a message. All emails and messages will be answered on a timely basis. 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 \$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 Minister .....	Rev. Dr. Bruce Roller
Administrative Assistant .....	Julie Cole
Organist .....	Paul Heidemann
Guest Accompanist.....	Rev. Robert Garrels
Chancel Choir Director .....	Linda Rinehart
Chancel Choir Assistant Director.....	Katie McInnis
Nursery Care Supervisor.....	Amanda Little
Bell Choir Director.....	Judy Tressler
Moderator.....	Marshall Henry
Member in Charge.....	Marshall Henry
Sound Board .....	Bruce Fredrick
Sanctuary Sound .....	Wayne McKay
Liturgist .....	Dee Van Horn
Ushers.....	Maxine McKay, Marilyn Loken, Maryanne Don Stephen
Fellowship Hour Hosts .....	Megan & Roger Vajda
Livestream Team.....	Amy Buse, Annie Ducat, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors .....	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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