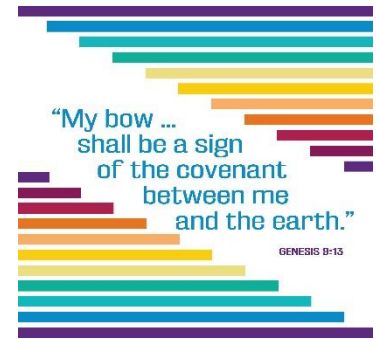


The United Church of Big Rapids

February 18, 2024

The First Sunday in Lent

❖ *You are invited to stand*



Choral Introit

Welcome

Announcements

Prelude

Morning Has Broken, arr. by T. Smith

❖ Call to Worship

Leader: We gather to experience God's amazing love for us – for all.

People: Love finds us in the most extreme circumstances,

Leader: the most far-flung places.

People: Love finds us when we are all alone

Leader: And love seeks us when we are lonely in a crowd.

People: We open ourselves to receive the light of love – from whatever source –

Leader: Love that banishes our fears, love that liberates and secures us,

People: Love that will not let us go!

❖ Hymn #85

What Wondrous Love Is This, tune: Wondrous Love

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

Psalm 25:1-10

Leader: To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

**People: O my God, in you I trust;
do not let me be put to shame;
do not let my enemies exult over me.**

Leader: Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

**People: Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths.**

Leader: Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.

**People: Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.**

Leader: Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for your goodness' sake, O LORD!

**People: Good and upright is the Lord;
Therefore he instructs sinners in the way.**

Leader: He leads the humble in what is right,
And teaches the humble his way.

**People: All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,
For those who keep his covenant and his decrees.**

Scripture Lesson

Hebrew Reading (from the Revised Standard Version Bible)

Genesis 9:8-17

⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹ As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰ and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. ¹¹ I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.' ¹² God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³ I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶ When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.' ¹⁷ God said to Noah, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.'

Gospel Lesson

Mark 1:9-15

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

¹² And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵ and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Chancel Choir Anthem

All That Lasts, by J. Martin & D. Angerman

Sermon

The Love of My Life – 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

My Lord What a Morning, Spiritual arr. by T. Smith

❖ 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 #384

O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go, tune: St. Margaret

❖ Benediction

Choral Benediction

Postlude

Postlude in C, by Christian Cappelen



The altar flowers are given today by Marge Panches
in celebration of the marriage of James & Irene Strickland.



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

"All That Lasts"

Words and Music by: Joseph Martin and David Angerman

©1998 by Malcolm Music and Harold Flammer Music

Like the mist of early morning, like a feather in the wind,
Like the gentle snow of winter, like the stars at evening's end,
Like the seasons in their turning, like the dew upon the grass,
Like an ember slowly burning, all of life shall surely pass.
Like an ember slowly burning, life shall pass.

Our life is like a vapor, a sweet and fading dream,
And all of human labor is a soon forgotten theme.
Yet the peace we share together, the bond no one can sever,
The song that lasts forever is love.

Like the fading glow of autumn, like the glory of the dawn,
Like the sound of children's laughter which all too soon is gone,
Like the echo in a canyon, like the waves upon the shore;
When this life on earth is over, surely there is something more.
Surely when this life is over, there is more.

Our life is like a vapor, a sweet and fading dream,
And all of human labor is a soon forgotten theme.
Yet the peace we share together, the bond no one can sever,
The song that lasts forever is love.

Yet the peace we share together, the bond no one can sever,
The song that lasts forever is love.
The song that lasts forever is love.

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 also welcome Ginny Kerwin who is accompanying us today in Paul's absence. Thank you, Ginny.

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 after worship. Irene and James are frequent visitors to our worship services. A card is available to sign. Congratulations Irene and James, our best wishes to you!

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.

Lenten Devotional Available – "*The Sanctuary for Lent 2024*," by Abigail Browka is our selected devotional booklet for Lent. Copies Have been sent electronically to those on the newsletter list. 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.

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 proceeds from the sale in March will fund scholarships for nontraditional Ferris students. For more information, call 614-282-4396.

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
January 2024	\$ 5,892	\$ 7,790
Year-to-Date (Jan-Jan 2024)	\$ 5,892	\$ 7,790




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.....	Ginny Kerwin
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.....	Bruce Fredrick
Sound Board	Trish McHugh
Sanctuary Sound	Wayne McKay
Liturgist	Kari Clark
Ushers.....	Jane Grzybowski, Paul Challender, Don Olree
Fellowship Hour Hosts	Marge Panches
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*