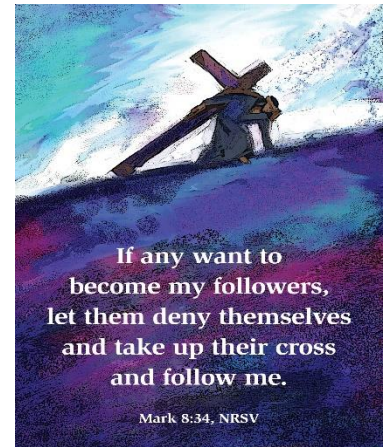


**The United Church of Big Rapids**

**February 25, 2024**

**The Second Sunday in Lent**

❖ *You are invited to stand*



**Welcome**

**Announcements**

**Prelude**

*Search Me, O God, by James Southbridge*

❖ **Call to Worship**

Leader: As we gather this morning to worship,

**People: May our praise for all that God has done resound within and beyond these walls.**

Leader: In faith, we place our hope in God,

**People: who promises that the poor shall eat and be satisfied, and justice and peace will embrace present and future generations.**

Leader: Therefore, in thanksgiving for all that God has done,

**People: We commit our lives and our love to proclaiming the message of God's gracious and liberating acts.**

## 576 I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

1. I have de-cid-ed to fol-low Je-sus, I have de-  
 2. The world be-hind me, the cross be-fore me, the world be-  
 3. Though none go with me, I still will fol-low, though none go  
 4. Will you de-cide now to fol-low Je-sus? Will you de-

cid-ed to fol-low Je-sus, I have de-cid-ed to fol-low  
 hind me, the cross be-fore me, the world be-hind me, the cross be-  
 with me, I still will fol-low, though none go with me, I still will  
 cide now to fol-low Je-sus? Will you de-cide now to fol-low

Je - sus— no turn-ing back, no turn-ing back.  
 fore me— no turn-ing back, no turn-ing back.  
 fol - low— no turn-ing back, no turn-ing back.  
 Je - sus?— no turn-ing back, no turn-ing back.

**Psalm Reading** *(from the Revised Standard Version Bible)**Psalm 22:23-31*

Leader: You who fear the Lord, praise him!  
 All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!  
 Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!

**People: For he has not despised or scorned  
 the suffering of the afflicted one;  
 he has not hidden his face from him  
 but has listened to his cry for help.**

Leader: From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly;  
before those who fear you I will fulfill my vows.

**People: The poor will eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek the Lord will praise him—  
may your hearts live forever!**

Leader: All the ends of the earth  
will remember and turn to the Lord,  
and all the families of the nations  
will bow down before him,

**People: for dominion belongs to the Lord  
and he rules over the nations.**

Leader: All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;

**People: all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—  
those who cannot keep themselves alive.**

Leader: Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the Lord.

**People: They will proclaim his righteousness,  
declaring to a people yet unborn:  
He has done it!**

## Scripture Lesson

*Gospel Reading (from the New Revised Standard Version Bible)*

*Mark 8:31-38*

<sup>31</sup> Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup> But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

<sup>34</sup> He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. <sup>36</sup> For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? <sup>37</sup> Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? <sup>38</sup> Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## Sermon

*The Power of Curiosity - 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

*No, Not One, by Lani 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

**Redeeming Lord, we find it extremely difficult to deny ourselves. Our relationships and our future aspirations often seem absent of glorifying your holy name. We deceive ourselves into equating good works with faithful discipleship. Today we are reminded that we are called to bridge the gap between casual commitment and true discipleship. We give this offering as a way to move toward closer discipleship with you. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

#### Hymn #343

*Called as Partners in Christ's Service, tune: Beecher*

#### ❖ Benediction

#### Postlude

*O God, Thou Faithful God, by Johann Gottfried Walther*



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



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

**Prayer requests** – please keep Diane Fleming and her family in your prayers. Diane's father, Milton Lazear, passed away in Delaware at the age of 94. Our thoughts and prayers are with you, Diane! Also, continued healing prayers for Marshall Henry after his surgery earlier this week.

**The elevator work has been completed!** Thank you for your understanding and patience over the past 5 weeks as our elevator was upgraded. It's great to have the elevator back in service 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 *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. The food of the month for March will be *mashed potato pouches or boxes*.

**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.

**"These Days" devotional** books are available for the months of April – June in the narthex.

**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](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
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. Devon Herrell
Administrative Assistant .....	Julie Cole
Organist .....	Paul Heidemann
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 .....	Roger Vajda
Sound Board .....	Randy Vance
Sanctuary Sound .....	Wayne McKay
Liturgist .....	Jim Bandstra
Ushers .....	Jane Grzybowski, Maxine McKay, Maryanne Heidemann
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*