

**The United Church of Big Rapids**  
**February 23, 2025**  
**Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany**

❖ *You are invited to stand*



**Welcome**

**Announcements**

**Prelude**

*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling, by John Zundel, arr. by Jan Sanborn*

❖ **Call to Worship**

Leader: Blessings to God who gives hope in the darkness of our lives.

**People: Blessings to Jesus Christ, who reveals love unto the world.**

Leader: Blessings to the Holy Spirit, empowering us to be a light to others.

**People: Blessings, honor, and glory to God, today and forever.**

❖ **Unison Invocation**

**Gracious God, move among us this day. Gather us as one people ready for your presence. Inspire us with your goodness that we might offer you our fullest praise. Empower our faith with the love of Christ, that we too will be those who bring good news to the poor and release to the captives. Fill us with your Spirit so that we shall love others as you love us. Amen.**

❖ **Hymn #335**

*Though I May Speak, tune: O Waly Waly*

**Psalm Reading**

*Psalm 37:3-11*

Leader: Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for God

**People: Commit your way to the Lord; trust in God to act**

Leader: Refrain from anger and forsake vindictiveness

**People: For the wicked shall be cut off,**

Leader: But those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.

**People: Yet a little while, and the wicked shall be no more.**

Leader: They will not be there.

**People: But the meek shall inherit the land.**

## Scripture Lesson

### Gospel Lesson

Luke 6:27-35

<sup>27</sup> "To you who hear me, I say: love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you. <sup>29</sup> When they slap you on one cheek, turn and give them the other; when they take your coat, let them have your shirt as well. <sup>30</sup> Give to all who beg from you. When someone takes what is yours, don't demand it back.

<sup>31</sup> "Do to other what you would have them do to you. <sup>32</sup> If you love those who love you, what credit does that do you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> If you do good only to those who do good to you, what credit does that do you? Even 'sinners' do as much. <sup>34</sup> If you lend to those you expect to repay you, what credit does that do you? Even 'sinners' lend to other 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. <sup>35</sup> Love your enemies and do good to them. Lend without expecting repayment, and your reward will be great. You'll rightly be called children of the Most High, since God is good even to the ungrateful and the wicked.

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

### Sermon

*"Happierness" – Rev. David Wheeler*

### Hymn #282

*If Thou but Trust in God to Guide Thee, tune: Wer nur den lieben Gott*

### 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

*Pie Jesu from Requiem, Op. 48, by Gabriel Faure*

❖ **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**

**Gracious God, receive these gifts that they may do great things, caring things, loving things in your Church. May they also bring a right spirit to our hearts as faith, hope, and love in generosity abounds. Amen.**

❖ **Hymn #538**

*Lord, Dismiss Us with Thy Blessing, tune: Sicilians Mariners*

**Benediction**

**Postlude**

*Promised Land, Traditional American Melody, arr. by Jan Sanborn*



**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.



The altar flowers today are given by Julie Kysela  
in memory of our mother, Sonia Kysela. Happy heavenly birthday!



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Welcome Rev. David Wheeler** – Welcome back to The United Church, Rev. Wheeler! We are glad you have joined us to lead worship today! Thank you also to Ginny Kerwin for sharing her talents with us at the piano!

**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.

**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.

**AARP Tax Program Ready to Serve Mecosta County Residents** – There is an AARP program in Mecosta County that can help prepare your taxes. This program is designed for taxpayers with low to moderate incomes, with special attention to those aged 60 and older. The program is run entirely by volunteers who assist clients at four centers from February 10 through April 15. Appointments are usually scheduled for one and a quarter hour and can be completed in a timely manner if the taxpayer brings all the paperwork required to prepare the return. Appointments can be scheduled by calling the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). They have a NEW number for tax scheduling – 231-349-0842 which accepts phone calls and texts.

**Chocolate bar sales** – Wayne McKay will again be assisting the 7<sup>th</sup> graders from Kelloggsville Public Schools in their quest to raise money for a day trip to Chicago. Wayne will be selling candy bars for \$1 on March 2. You may also pre-order a full box of 60 assorted flavored candy bars for \$60. Contact Wayne at 231-250-3691 or [wemckay@charter.net](mailto:wemckay@charter.net).

**Project Starburst's Annual "Souper Supper"** is coming Wednesday, March 19 from 11:00 am – 3:00 pm at Three Girls Bakery. We are looking for sponsors. Forms are on the table in the narthex. Alice Bandstra and Dee Van Horn will have tickets.

**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. You can also find information about our church on our website: [www.unitedchurchbr.org](http://www.unitedchurchbr.org) or by visiting our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/UnitedBigRapids](http://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](mailto: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
January 2025	\$ 29,211.76	\$ 22,812.39
Year-to-Date (Jan-Jan 2025)	\$ 29,211.76	\$ 22,812.39


\*The expenses include the downpayment for the painting project of \$18,000




## 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. David Wheeler
Administrative Assistant .....	Julie Cole
Organist .....	Paul Heidemann
Guest Accompanist.....	Ginny Kerwin
Chancel Choir Director .....	Linda Rinehart
Chancel Choir Assistant Director .....	Katie McInnis
Bell Choir Director.....	Judy Tressler
Custodian .....	Erin Dumond
Nursery Attendant .....	Michell Kamptner
Fellowship Hosts.....	Mike & Linda Rinehart, Don Stephen
Moderator.....	Marshall Henry
Sound Board .....	Randy Vance
Liturgist .....	Susan H. Grant
Ushers.....	Jane Grzybowski, Maxine McKay, 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*