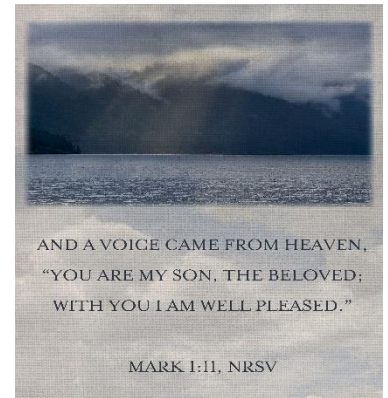


**The United Church of Big Rapids**

**January 7, 2024**

**First Sunday after the Epiphany**

❖ *You are invited to stand*



**Welcome**

**Announcements**

**Prelude**

*March of the Wise Men, by John Dixon*

❖ **Call to Worship**

**People: Jesus Christ is the light of the world.**

Leader: He will judge the people with righteousness and defend the cause of the poor.

**People: Jesus Christ is the light of the world.**

Leader: The mystery of the ages is revealed; the eternal plane of God is known to all.

**People: Jesus Christ is the light of the world.**

Leader: Let us kneel down before him to give him honor, glory, and praise.

**People: Jesus Christ is the light of the world.**

Leader: Let us offer him all the treasures of our hearts and our lives.

**People: Jesus Christ is the light of the world.**

❖ **Hymn #10**

*On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry, tune: Winchester New*

**Psalm Reading**

*Psalm 29*

Leader: Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,

**People: Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.**

Leader: Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name;

**People: Worship the Lord in holy splendor.**

Leader: The voice of the Lord is over the waters;

**People: The God of glory thunders, the Lord, over mighty waters.**

Leader: The voice of the Lord is powerful;

**People: the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.**

Leader: The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars;

**People: the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.**

Leader: He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,

**People: and Sirion like a young wild ox.**

Leader: The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.

**People: The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;**

Leader: the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

**People: The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl,**

Leader: and strips the forest bare; and in his temple all say "Glory!"

**People: The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;**

Leader: the Lord sits enthroned as king forever. May the Lord give strength to his people!

**People: May the Lord bless his people with peace!**

## Scripture Lesson

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

*Mark 1:4-11*

<sup>4</sup> John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup> And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup> Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. <sup>8</sup> I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

<sup>9</sup> In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## Sermon

*Rev. Robert Garrels*

## Commissioning New Church Officers

*The Introduction*

*The Vows of the Candidates*

*The Vows of the Congregation*

Leader: Do we, the members and friends of The United Church accept and welcome these persons as officers of our church, chosen by God through the voice of this congregation, to lead us in the way of Jesus Christ?

**People: We do, relying on God's grace.**

Leader: Do we promise to support our sisters in the work to which they have been called by God?

**People: We do, with the help of God.**

Leader: Will we encourage and work with one another, be honest and open with one another, respect and pray for one another, and, with the help and guidance of God, deepen our own personal spiritual commitment to serve Christ as true disciples?

**People: We will, God's Holy Spirit being our guide and help.**

*The Declaration*

*The Prayer*

**God of grace, who called us to a common ministry as ambassadors of Christ, trusting us with the message of reconciliation: give us courage and discipline to follow where your servants rightly lead us, that together we may declare your wonderful deeds and show your love to the world, through Jesus Christ the Lord of all. Amen.**

**Sharing of our Joys & Concerns**

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Call to Offering**

**Offertory**

*See the Child in the Manger, by Robert Powell*

❖ **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.**

**Amen.**

**Hymn #263** *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise, tune: St. Denio*

❖ **Benediction**

**Postlude**

*While By My Sheep, by Don Hustad*



The flowers today are given by Barbara Johnson,  
in celebration of her grandson, Trenton's, birthday.



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

**Congratulations and THANK YOU** to our new Governing Board members, Erin Dumond and Kerri Rouech. We are so excited to have your voices on the Governing Board.

**Elevator work** will begin on Monday, January 15. The elevator upgrade work is expected to take four (4) weeks. During that time, there will be NO elevator service in our building. 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.

**Project Starburst** continues to need donations and food to meet the demand as more families seek assistance – both returning families and new ones. The Mission Commission's "Give to the Pantry" program has identified **fruit** as the "food of the month" for January. With the continued demand, any non-perishable food item is also greatly appreciated. The tote will be available in the narthex for you to deposit your generous donation. Thank you!

**Spaces are available** to sign up to provide altar flowers or host fellowship time/coffee hour for the next two months. See the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

**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
October 2023	\$ 24,069	\$ 11,437
Year-to-Date (Jan-Oct 2023)	\$214,369	\$214,119*


\* 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
Christian Education Program Director .....	Amanda Little
Bell Choir Director .....	Judy Tressler
Moderator .....	Marshall Henry
Member in Charge .....	Marshall Henry
Sound Board .....	Trish McHugh, Peter McHugh
Sanctuary Sound .....	Wayne McKay
Liturgist .....	Susan H. Grant
Ushers .....	Maxine McKay, Paul Challender, Don Stephen
Livestream Team .....	Amy Buse, Annie Ducat, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors .....	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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