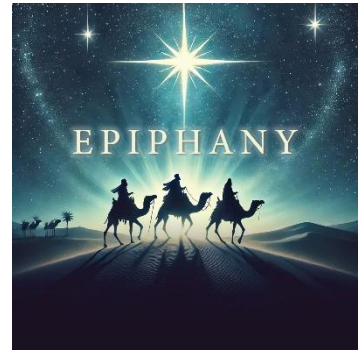


The United Church of Big Rapids

January 5, 2025

Epiphany

❖ *You are invited to stand*



Welcome

Announcements

Prelude

Christmas Brings Joy to Every Heart, by David Paxton

❖ Call to Worship

Leader: This little light of mine

People: I'm going to let it shine.

Leader: This little light of ours

People: We're going to let it shine.

Leader: This little light of the world

People: has overcome the darkness.

Leader: We have followed the light to this place,

People: and the glory of God's presence is among us! Let us worship God!

❖ Unison Invocation

Loving God, who breaks through the darkness of doubt and despair, be with us this day as we hear of the visit of the Wise Ones, who risked everything to follow a Star. Let us open our hearts and be willing to risk receiving the gift of gracious Love that you have to offer us in the form of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

❖ Prayer of Confession

Pastor: ... the injustices of this world.

People: Loving God, we confess our sins against you and one another, and pray that you will fill us with your light, that we may live our lives as true disciples in your name, without counting the cost. In the name of Christ, the one who showed us the way, we pray. Amen.

❖ Assurance of Pardon

Pastor: ...in all that guides us to love.

**People: God's light is in the world, and the darkness did not overcome it.
God's grace is in the world, and our missteps will not overcome it.
We are loved, we are forgiven. Alleluia! Amen.**

Scripture Lessons*Old Testament Lesson (from the New Revised Standard Version Bible)**Isaiah 60:1-6*

- ¹ Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
- ² For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
- ³ Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
- ⁴ Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.
- ⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
- ⁶ A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

*Gospel Lesson (from the New Revised Standard Version Bible)**Matthew 2:1-12*

- ¹ In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:
- ⁶ "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel." '
- ⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the

child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Showing Out vs. Showing Up, Rev. Devon Herrell

There's a Song in the Air!



1. There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky!
2. There's a tu - mult of joy o'er the won - der - ful birth,
3. We re - joice in the light, and we ech - o the song



There's a moth - er's deep prayer and a ba - by's low cry!
for the Vir - gin's sweet boy is the Lord of the earth.
that comes down through the night from the heav - en - ly throng,



And the star rains its fire while the an - gel choirs sing,
See, the star rains its fire while the an - gel choirs sing,
and we wel - come the glo - ri - ous gos - pel they bring,



for the man - ger of Beth - le - hem cra - dles a king!
for the man - ger of Beth - le - hem cra - dles a king!
and we greet in the cra - dle our sav - ior and king.

Sharing of our Joys & Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Call to Offering

Offertory

Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella, by Patricia Lou Harris

❖ 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

God of light and guidance, just as the wise men brought their gifts to honor the Christ child, we now present our offerings to you. May these gifts, like theirs, reflect our devotion and desire to seek your presence in all that we do. We pray that these tithes and offerings provide hope, healing, and peace to a world in need of your light. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Lord's Table

The Great Thanksgiving

Leader: God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to God.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the God we love.

People: We freely give God thanks and praise.

Leader: ... joining this unending song:

People: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Eucharistic Prayer

Leader: ...We excitedly proclaim:
People: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.
Leader: ...Into the extraordinary presence of Christ with us.
**People: In so doing,
Hold us as your own
Renew us as your people
For the sake of the world you love.**

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.

Sharing of the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving

**People: We have been fed, Holy One, by your presence.
We have been led, Eternal One, by your light.
May we bask in this glow
Now and forevermore. Amen.**

Hymn #66

We Three Kings of Orient Are, tune: Three Kings of Orient

Benediction

Postlude

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks, by Lani Smith



The altar flowers today are given by Julie Cole,
in honor of her son, Trenton's, birthday.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Book Study – A new book study will begin on January 14 at 7:00 pm in the Parlor. The book selected is “Everything Happens for a Reason: and Other Lies I’ve Loved,” by Kate Bowler. The book is available on Amazon.com and is currently on sale for \$9.99. If you would like to come to the book study and can’t obtain a book, please let the church office know. For the 1/14 meeting, please read Chapters 1-5.

Pub Theology – Tuesday, January 21, 7:00 pm at Crankers. Join the fellowship and conversation!

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 cereal as the “food of the month” for January. With the demand, any non-perishable food item is greatly appreciated. The bin in the Narthex is available to accept donations.

Congratulations to Pastor Devon and Laura on their wedding! They were married on December 28 here at the church in a small, private ceremony. We wish Devon and Laura every happiness and lots of love as they start a new chapter in their relationship! Congratulations!!

Sign up for Altar Flowers and Hosting Fellowship Time! Our sign-up sheets for altar flowers and fellowship time hosts are a bit empty for January and February. Check the bulletin board to sign up for your choice of Sundays!

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. You can also find information about our church on our website: www.unitedchurchbr.org or by visiting our Facebook page: 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. 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
November 2024	\$ 9,195.06	\$ 17,067.69
Year-to-Date (Jan-Nov 2024)	\$ 176,948.23	\$ 215,507.76




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. Devon Herrell
Administrative Assistant	Julie Cole
Organist	Paul Heidemann
Chancel Choir Director	Linda Rinehart
Chancel Choir Assistant Director	Katie McInnis
Bell Choir Director	Judy Tressler
Custodian	Erin Dumond
Moderator	Marshall Henry
Sound Board	Randy Vance
Sanctuary Sound	Wayne McKay
Liturgist	Kari Clark
Ushers	Melanie Henry, Marshall Henry, Mary Olshewski
Livestream Team	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*