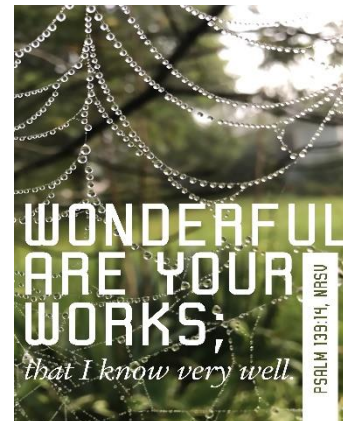


The United Church of Big Rapids

January 14, 2024

Second Sunday after the Epiphany

❖ *You are invited to stand*



Welcome

Announcements

Choral Introit

Prelude

A Morning Reverie, by Rex Khoury

❖ **Call to Worship** (*adapted from Howard Thurman from "The Growing Edge"*)

People: We gather to attune ourselves to sacred surprises:

Leader: A rainbow arched over the roof of the sky when the clouds are heavy with foreboding,

People: The cry of life in the newborn babe when, forced from its mother's nest, it claims its right to live,

Leader: The brooding Presence of the Eternal Spirit making crooked paths straight, rough places, smooth, tired hearts refreshed, dead hopes stir with the newness of life;

People: We gather to attune ourselves to sacred surprises:

Leader: The promise of tomorrow at the close of every day, the movement of life in defiance of death,

People: The assurance that love is sturdier than hate, that right is more confident than wrong,

Leader: That good is more permanent than evil.

People: We gather to attune ourselves to sacred surprises.

❖ **Hymn #473**

For the Beauty of the Earth, tune: Dix

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

Psalm 139:1-18

Leader: O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

People: You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.

Leader: You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

People: Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely.

Leader: You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

**People: Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?**

Leader: If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

**People: If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,**

Leader: even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.

**People: If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night',**

Leader: even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

**People: For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.**

Leader: I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.

**People: My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.**

Leader: Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.

**People: How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!**

Leader: I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end—I am still with you.

Scripture Lesson

Hebrew Reading (from the Revised Standard Version Bible)

1 Samuel 3:1-20

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

² At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³ the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴ Then the LORD called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' and he said, 'Here I am!' ⁵ and ran to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call; lie down again.' So he went and lay down. ⁶ The LORD called again, 'Samuel!' Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call, my son; lie down again.' ⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸ The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹ Therefore Eli said to Samuel, 'Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening."' So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.' ¹¹ Then the LORD said to Samuel, 'See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle. ¹² On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. ¹³ For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. ¹⁴ Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever.'

¹⁵ Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. ¹⁶ But Eli called Samuel and said, 'Samuel, my son.' He said, 'Here I am.' ¹⁷ Eli said, 'What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.' ¹⁸ So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, 'It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him.'

¹⁹ As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. ²⁰ And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the LORD.

Gospel Lesson

John 1:43-51

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' ⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus, son of Joseph from Nazareth.' ⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of

Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.'⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!'⁴⁸ Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.'⁴⁹ Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!'⁵⁰ Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.'⁵¹ And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Chancel Choir Anthem

Peace in Twelve Languages, arr. by Craig Palmer

Sermon

Attuning Ourselves to Sacred Surprises – Rev. Dr. Bruce Roller

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 & 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

Meditation on "Beecher," by Gerald Peterson

❖ **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 #343**

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

❖ **Benediction**

Choral Benediction

Postlude

Postlude in G Minor, by George Blake



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

"Peace in Twelve Languages"

Words and Music by: Thomas Knight

Arranged by: Craig Palmer

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Paz ("poz")	Spanish
Peace English	English
Siochan ("sha-kan")	Gaelic
Shalom	Hebrew
Irene ("ear-ree-knee")	Greek
Heiwa ("hay-wha")	Japanese
Paix ("pay")	French
An ("on")	Korean
Friede ("free-deh")	German
Salaam ("sa-lahm")	Arabic
Santeepop	Thai
Hoa Bihn ("hwah-bin")	Vietnamese

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.

Give to the Pantry! Project Starburst continues to have a high demand for food. The Mission Commission "Give to the Pantry" program has identified fruits as the "food of the month" for November. With the demand, any non-perishable food item is also greatly appreciated. The bin in the Narthex is available to accept donations.

New contact information for Christian Education – our Christian Education Coordinator, Amanda Little, has a new email address: christianed@unitedchurchbr.org. Please use this email to correspond with Amanda.

The church office will be closed on Monday, January 15, in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

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. Please pass this information along to any organization that you are a part of that uses the church 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.

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 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
December 2023	\$ 43,492	\$ 11,839
Year-to-Date (Jan-Dec 2023)	\$269,493	\$255,548*


This includes \$35,220.92 we received from the Employee Retention Tax Credit Program (ERTC) along with \$30,919 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. Dr. Bruce Roller
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	Frank Hartley
Sound Board	Bruce Fredrick
Sanctuary Sound	Wayne McKay
Liturgist	Dee Van Horn
Ushers	Jane Grzybowski, Don Olree, Kay Achterhof
Livestream Team	Amy Buse, Annie Ducat, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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