

The United Church of Big Rapids

January 21, 2024

Third Sunday after the Epiphany

❖ *You are invited to stand*



Welcome

Announcements

Choral Introit

Prelude

A Morning Reverie, by Rex Houry

❖ **Call to Worship**

People: Here we are gathered again...gathered to hear God still speaking.

Leader: Gathered to hear for the first or second or hundredth time the message of God's endless love.

People: How easy it is to forget this simple message!

Leader: Or to parochialize it so that it is true only for the people who think and feel as we do,

People: or worse, to allow its truth for others, but not for us.

Leader: Today may the voice of Spirit speak to us again, from deep within our beings, of limitless,

People: extravagant, wasteful,

Leader: unending, unconditional, unearned love -

People: the love of God!

❖ **Hymn #442**

The Church's One Foundation, tune: Aurelia

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

Psalm 62:5-12

Leader: For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him.

People: He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

Leader: On God rests my deliverance and my honor; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

People: Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah

Leader: Those of low estate are but a breath, those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath.

People: Put no confidence in extortion, and set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, do not set your heart on them.

Leader: Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God.

People: and steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord. For you repay to all according to their work.

Scripture Lesson

Hebrew Reading (from the Revised Standard Version Bible)

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

¹ The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying, ² Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.' ³ So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three day walk across. ⁴ Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, 'Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!' ⁵ And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

¹⁰ When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Lesson

Mark 1:14-20

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵ and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

¹⁶ As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰ Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

Chancel Choir Anthem

Let Music Fill This Place, by Joseph Martin

Sermon

Boundless, Extravagant, Unending Love – 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:

"Let Music Fill This Place" by Joseph Martin
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Incorporating Beethoven's "Ode to Joy"

Alleluia! Come and worship!
Alleluia, praise the Lord!
Alleluia! Come and worship!
Come, lift your voice, with a jubilant noise
praise the Lord! Alleluia!

Let music fill this place; let praise sound all around us.
Let every voice be raised; proclaim the Lord in song.
Let worship fill our hearts; let hope and joy surround us.
Declare the gift of grace; praise God with voices strong!

With hearts in one accord let us worship Christ our Lord!
Alleluia! Let music fill this place.

*Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to heaven and voices raise;
Sing to God a hymn of gladness, sing to God a hymn of praise.
Let the music of our living be an anthem clear and strong,
every note an alleluia to the Giver of the Song.*

Let music fill this place; let praise sound all around us.
Let every voice be raised; proclaim the Lord in song!

With hearts in one accord let us worship Christ our Lord!
Alleluia! Let music fill this place.
Sing alleluia! Let music fill this place.
Alleluia! Let glorious music fill this place!

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.

Elevator work has begun! The elevator upgrade work is expected to take four (4) weeks. During that time, there will be NO elevator service in our building. Access via the parking lot is still possible, just use the stairs. The doors on the Mill Street side of the church will be unlocked during business hours and on Sunday morning. 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	Don Stephen
Sound Board	Mike Rinehart
Sanctuary Sound	Wayne McKay
Liturgist	Kari Clark
Ushers	Jane Grzybowski, Maxine McKay, Marilyn Loken
Fellowship Hour Hosts	Dee Van Horn, Bruce Fredrick
Livestream Team	Amy Buse, Annie Ducat, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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