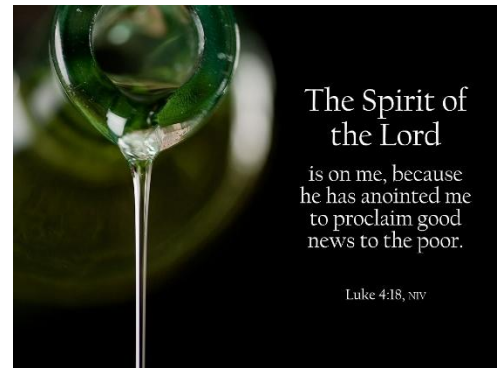


**The United Church of Big Rapids
January 26, 2025
Third Sunday after the Epiphany**

❖ *You are invited to stand*



Choral Introit

Welcome

Announcements

Prelude

Prelude on a Shaker Tune, by Eugene Butler

Call to Worship

Leader: We have come to worship God, the living God,

People: who calls prophets and teachers to bear witness.

Leader: We have come to praise God, the almighty God,

People: who answers the forces of hatred and hurt with the power of grace.

Leader: We have come to worship God, all-gracious God,

**People: who chooses even you and me, to receive and carry the Word of life and hope.
All glory to God!**

❖ **Unison Invocation**

Gracious God, anoint us anew with your Holy Spirit of Love. By it, form our hearts, minds, and lives into channels of your good news. Grant us a renewed passion for your vision of a world where none are poor and where every weight is lifted. Cultivate your courageous compassion in us to move toward any who have been marginalized or run over by the world. Yes, bless and strengthen us to bless and strengthen others. We pray this in the name of the one whose life fulfilled Your Holy vision, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

❖ **Hymn #376**

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling, tune: Hyfrydol

Scripture Lesson

Epistle Lesson (from the New Revised Standard Version)

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴ Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many members, yet one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' ²² On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; ²⁴ whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, ²⁵ that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Gospel Lesson

Luke 4:14-21

¹⁴ Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵ He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

¹⁶ When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives

and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Chancel Choir Anthem

Never Let Us Go, by Ruth Schram

Sermon

The Bringers of Good News! – Rev. Bob Garrels

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

Behold That Star, by Robert M. Thompson

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

We thank you, God, for loving us into the freedom of a generous life. Bless these gifts we bring in response to the blessing you have already given us with the gift of life. Form our lives anew into living offerings, sharing Your love with a grace that frees others. Amen.

❖ **Hymn #367**

Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love, tune: Chereponi

Benediction

Postlude

We Sing of God, by Lani Smith



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 choir thought you might like to read the lyrics of their anthem today:

"Never Let Us Go"

Words and Music by: Ruth Schram

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God's love will never let us go.
God's love will never let us go.
It reaches down from heaven to everyone below.
God's love will never let us go.

God's love is deeper than the sea.
God's love is deeper than the sea.
Through Jesus' sacrifice, we're forgiven, you and me.
God's love is deeper than the sea.

God's love will never let us go.
God's love will never let us go;
eternal, pure, and strong, it holds on and on and on.
God's love will never let us go.
God's love will never let us go.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.

Winter Visits – from Bill Burmeister: *"Hello friends – Hope all is well with you. Winter is upon us, and it is tough to get through. As most of you know, Nancy is in Hospice at the Big Rapids Brook. Being confined to a wheelchair, it gets lonely!!! If you are in Big Rapids, please visit her. She loves company!"*

REFRESH! REFRESH! REFRESH! - As you come in and out of the church over the next few months you will see painters, floor finishers, carpet layers – all working to refresh the look of our wonderful sanctuary and halls. First in line is painting of the hall leading from the parking lot to the sanctuary along with the entrances at the parking lot and side door. Although it may be a bit distracting, church activities and church services will continue as usual while the look changes. More specific information will be provided soon regarding dates and specific activities.

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.

Arts Opportunities at the United Church! The United Church is hosting two organ concerts as part of the Festival of the Arts. Hae Won Jang, organ instructor at Michigan State University, is performing on our lovely instrument on Tuesday, February 4, at 7 pm. Noah Mallett, who grew up in Big Rapids and is a graduate student at Michigan State University, will perform on Tuesday, February 11, at 7 pm. Please come and support our church and the Festival of the Arts! Both concerts promise to be interesting and rewarding.

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
December 2024	\$ 21,327.71	\$ 12,232.12
Year-to-Date (Jan-Dec 2024)	\$ 198,525.69	\$ 227,739.88

A few notes on the budget:


- Just a reminder the expenses would be larger if we were paying a full-time pastor
- The December income includes \$1,650 from the Christmas Offering




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. Robert Garrels
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	Mike Rinehart
Sanctuary Sound	Wayne McKay
Liturgist	Dee Van Horn
Ushers	Paul Challender, Maxine McKay
Livestream Team	Amy Buse, Adam Jewell, Aleah Ritzema, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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