

The United Church of Big Rapids

March 3, 2024

Third Sunday in Lent

❖ *You are invited to stand*



Choral Introit

Welcome

Announcements

Prelude

Stars of the Morning, by Dennis Eliot

❖ **Call to Worship**

Leader: Into the house of God we are called to enter,

People: to worship and receive the gift of grace.

Leader: As we step towards this sacred space,

People: we acknowledge all that can distract or exploit.

Leader: God calls upon us to cleanse our houses of all that does not find its source in God's love.

**People: Together we give ourselves in worship and right relations with our neighbor.
Let us worship God.**

❖ **Hymn #291**

O God of Earth and Altar, tune: Llangloffan

Unison Invocation

O God of temples and tables turned over, we enter this sacred space of worship seeking your transformation and healing. Make us ready for the kind of turned upside-down world you are seeking to build among us. We have come to this place of worship to be changed, so turn over our tables and make us whole. In the name of Jesus, our Savior. Amen.

Scripture Lesson

Old Testament Reading (from the Inclusive Bible)

Exodus 20:1-17

¹ The God spoke all these words, and said, ² "I am YHWH who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage,

³ "Do not worship any gods except me!

⁴ "Do not make for yourselves any carved image or likeness of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters of the earth, ⁵ and do not bow down to them or serve them! For I, YHWH am a jealous God, and for the parents' fault I punish the children, the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren of those who turn from me; ⁶ but I show kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love me and heed my commandments.

⁷ "Do not utter the Name of YHWH to misuse it, for YHWH will not acquit anyone who utters God's Name to misuse it!

⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy! ⁹ For six days you will labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath for YHWH. Do no work on that day, neither you nor your daughter nor your son, nor your workers – women or men – nor your animals, nor the foreigner who lives among you. ¹¹ For in the six days YHWH made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that they hold, but rested on the seventh day; this is why YHWH has blessed the Sabbath day and made it sacred.

¹² "Honor your mother and your father, so that you may have a long life in the land that YHWH has given to you!

¹³ "No murdering!

¹⁴ "No adultery!

¹⁵ "No stealing!

¹⁶ "No giving false testimony against your neighbor!

¹⁷ "No desiring your neighbor's house! No desiring your neighbor's spouse, or worker – female or male – or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor!"

Gospel Reading (from the Inclusive Bible)

John 2:13-22

Since it was almost the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

¹⁴ In the Temple, he found people selling cattle, sheep, and pigeons, while moneychangers sat at their counters. ¹⁵ Making a whip out of cords, Jesus drove them all out of the Temple – even the cattle and sheep – and overturned the tables of the money changers, scattering their coins. ¹⁶ Then he faced the pigeon sellers: "Take all this out of here! Stop turning God's house into a market!" ¹⁷ The disciples remembered the words of scripture: "Zeal for your house consumes me."

¹⁸ "The Temple authorities intervened and said, What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?"

¹⁹ Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

²⁰ They retorted, "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you're going to raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But the temple he was speaking of was his body. ²² It was only after Jesus had been raised from the dead that the disciples remembered this statement and believed the scripture, and the words that Jesus had spoken.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Chancel Choir Anthem

We Place Upon Your Table Lord, by Christopher Gale

Sermon

Rev. Forrest Hoppe

Sharing of our Joys & Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Choral Amen

Call to Offering

Offertory

Eucharist, by Gilbert M. Martin

❖ 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

O God, whose richness is not found at the tables of those willing to exchange goods for the sake of acquiring earthly riches, but rather is found at the table of extravagant love for neighbor, we entrust these gifts to your care that they may abound in your steadfast love for all persons. Use them for the building of your beloved community here on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

❖ Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Leader: God is with us!

People: And with your spirit.

Leader: Lift up your hearts,

People: We lift them up to God.

Leader: Give thanks to God, Blessed Trinity.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

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.

Words of Institution

Prayer of Consecration

Sharing of the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We thank you God, for inviting us to this table where we have known the presence of Christ and have received all Christ's gifts. Strengthen our faith and increase our love for one another as we show our love for you in our lives, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn #408

Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life, tune: Germany

❖ **Unison Benediction**

God has turned our world upside down and called us to a life of transformation. Now, go forth changed, called anew, and turned towards a God who makes us whole. Amen and Amen!

Choral Benediction

Postlude

Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus, by John Scriveyner

** Today's liturgy adapted from "UCC Worship Ways."*



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

"We Place Upon Your Table, Lord"

by: Christopher Gale

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We place upon your table, Lord,
the food of life, the bread and wine,
as symbols of our daily work,
according to your grand design.

Within these simple things their lie
the height and breadth of life;
our pain and tears, our thoughts and toils,
our hopes and fears, our joy, our joy and strife.

Accept them, Lord; they come from you;
We take them humbly from your hand.
These gifts of yours for higher use
we offer up as you command.

We offer up as you command.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

Free Income Tax Service Preparation Program - Well, it is just about that time of year again when we all begin thinking about filing our income tax. The AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Program is back to normal this year, and all returns will be completed in one session. This is a free income tax preparation program designed for taxpayers with low and moderate incomes, with special attention to those who are 60 or older. The program is run entirely by volunteers who will be assisting clients at four (4) centers from February 5 through April 15, 2024. Morton Township Hall, Mecosta; The Salvation Army on Linden Street, Big Rapids; Morton Township Library, Mecosta; and Wheatland Township Library, Remus. (All sites have various days and hours available. To schedule an appointment call RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) at 231-796-4848 Monday through Friday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. For questions, contact Bruce Fredrick at 313-618-4825.

Book Collection for AAUW Book Sale - The Big Rapids chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) is collecting gently used books, CDs, and DVDs for its annual book sale. There is a donation bin in the narthex as well as other locations around the county. Please, no textbooks or encyclopedias. The sale will be held Friday, March 22 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturday, March 23 from 9:00 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, 304 Elm Street, Big Rapids. The proceeds will fund scholarships for nontraditional Ferris students. For more information, call 614-282-4396.

Special Offering - The Governing Board has approved the collection of the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering on Sunday, March 24, Palm Sunday. This offering provides relief from natural disasters, food for the hungry, and support for the poor and oppressed. Any monies collected during this special offering will be divided and sent to each of our denominations. Watch for a weekly "moment for mission" prior to the collection of this special offering.

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
January 2024	\$ 5,892	\$ 7,790
Year-to-Date (Jan-Dec 2023)	\$ 5,892	\$ 7,790




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. Forrest Hoppe
Administrative Assistant	Julie Cole
Organist	Paul Heidemann
Chancel Choir Director	Linda Rinehart
Chancel Choir Assistant Director	Katie McInnis
Bell Choir Director	Judy Tressler
Custodian	Nancy Nelson
Moderator	Marshall Henry
Member in Charge	Erin Dumond
Sound Board	Peter McHugh, Trish McHugh
Sanctuary Sound	Wayne McKay
Liturgist	Susan H. Grant
Ushers	Maxine McKay, Alice Dean, Marilyn Loken
Livestream Team	Amy Buse, Annie Ducat, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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