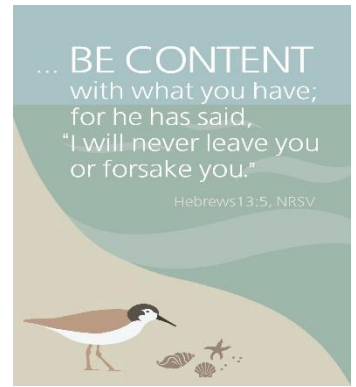


**The United Church of Big Rapids**

**March 2, 2025**

**Last Sunday after the Epiphany**

❖ *You are invited to stand*



**Choral Introit**

**Welcome**

**Announcements**

**Prelude**

*O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing, by Carl G. Glaser*

❖ **Call to Worship**

Leader: Come, all who seek a love that endures.

**People: We gather to practice hospitality, to care for the suffering, to love as Christ loves.**

Leader: Come, all who long for a faith that is lived out in action.

**People: We come to lift our hearts in gratitude, to worship the One who is our help and our strength.**

Leader: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Let us worship the Living God!

❖ **Invocation**

**Holy and ever-present God, You call us to a life of love, generosity, and courage. In this time of worship, open our hearts to the ways You are still speaking. Stir in us a faith that moves beyond words into action. May our praise rise to You like an offering of thanksgiving, and may we be transformed in Your presence. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.**

❖ **Hymn #386**

*O for a World, tune: Azmon*

## Scripture Lesson

*New Testament Lesson (from the New Revised Standard Version Bible)*

*Hebrews 13:1-6*

<sup>1</sup> Let mutual love continue. <sup>2</sup> Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. <sup>3</sup> Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. <sup>4</sup> Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers. <sup>5</sup> Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.' <sup>6</sup> So we can say with confidence,

'The Lord is my helper;

I will not be afraid.

What can anyone do to me?'

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## Chancel Choir Anthem

*And Can It Be, by Charles Wesley*

## Sermon

*A Love that Endures – Rev. Steven Naylor*

## Sharing of our Joys & Concerns

## Pastoral Prayer

## Choral Amen

## Call to Offering

### ❖ Offertory

*What Wondrous Love Is This, from Southern Harmony, arr. by Jan Sanborn*

### ❖ 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 abundance, we bring these gifts before You – not just the offerings of our hands, but the offerings of our lives. May they be used to extend Your love, to care for the forgotten, to build a world where all are welcome, and all are fed. Bless our giving and our living, that they may reflect Your grace and goodness. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

## Sacrament of Holy Communion

*Invitation to the Lord's Table*

*The Great Thanksgiving*

Leader: The Lord 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 Lord our God.

**People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Leader: .... Guide us all through the promise of Jesus, your light, who teaches us to pray:

**People: 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*

Leader: Let us pray -

**People: Nourishing God, at this table you have refreshed us with your holy gifts of food and drink. Strengthen us for service and send us out to embody your good news of liberation and healing for the sake of the world. In the name of Christ, we pray – Amen.**

**Hymn #420**

*God of Grace and God of Glory, tune: CWM Rhondda*

**Benediction**

**Choral Benediction**

**Postlude**

*Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise, Welsh Hymn tune, arr. by Jan Sanborn*



**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.



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Welcome Rev. Steven Naylor!** Today we welcome Rev. Steven Naylor to the pulpit to lead us in worship. Born and raised in Grand Rapids, MI, Rev. Naylor earned a BA in Sociology from GVSU before venturing to the west coast. After graduating from Pacific School of Religion in 2007, he served for five years as the associate minister at the Congregational Church of San Mateo. Returning to Grand Rapids in 2014, he started a painting company. Experiences in the business world have rekindled his passion for ministry, leading me to this new opportunity in 2025. His wife's name is Kourtnee Naylor.

**Celebrating Bob Daniels** – Bob Daniels is retiring from his position as head hockey coach at Ferris State University at the end of this hockey season. Bob's accomplishment and tenure as coach is being celebrated this weekend on campus and at the ice rink. Many of you will remember Bob and his family as much loved members of the United Church. Bob, we wish you all the best in your retirement – thank you for your service to the church as well as many thrilling moments behind the "Dawg" hockey bench! We are very proud of all of your accomplishments and hope you enjoy this new chapter of life! Please sign the congratulatory card on the Cards of Caring table today so we can honor Bob for his stellar career!

**Ash Wednesday** – Lent begins on Wednesday, March 5 with our Ash Wednesday service at 7:00 pm. There will also be two Lenten study opportunities. The first begins on Thursday, March 6 at the First United Methodist Church beginning at 7:00 pm. The book is *Sacred Resistance* by Ginger Gaines-Cirelli. You may attend in person or via Zoom. To register for the Zoom session, please send an email with "Sacred Resistance to [register@ummecosta.org](mailto:register@ummecosta.org). The second study will be led by Pastor Devon in the Parlor on Tuesday evenings beginning on March 11, 7:00 pm. The book is *Entering the Passion of Jesus* by Amy-Jill Levine. Both studies will be for 6 weeks. You can find more information in the newsletter or by contacting the church office.

**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 *noodles* as the "food of the month" for March. With the demand, any non-perishable food item is greatly appreciated. The bin in the Narthex is available to accept donations.

**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.

**AARP Tax Program Ready to Serve Mecosta County Residents** – There is an AARP program in Mecosta County that can help prepare your taxes. This program is designed for taxpayers with low to moderate incomes, with special attention to those aged 60 and older. The program is run entirely by volunteers who assist clients at four centers from February 10 through April 15. Appointments are usually scheduled for one and a quarter hour and can be completed in a timely manner if the taxpayer brings all the paperwork required to prepare the return. Appointments can be scheduled by calling the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). They have a NEW number for tax scheduling – 231-349-0842 which accepts phone calls and texts.

**Chocolate bar sales** – Wayne McKay will again be assisting the 7<sup>th</sup> graders from Kelloggsville Public Schools in their quest to raise money for a day trip to Chicago. Wayne will be selling candy bars for \$1 today after worship during Fellowship time.

**Project Starburst's Annual "Souper Supper"** is coming Wednesday, March 19 from 11:00 am – 3:00 pm at Three Girls Bakery. We are looking for sponsors. Forms are on the table in the narthex. Alice Bandstra and Dee Van Horn will have tickets.

**Pub Theology** – The March session of Pub Theology will be on Monday, March 24 at Crankers, 7:00 pm. Please join us for fellowship and discussion – all are welcome.

**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 March and April. 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](mailto: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](http://www.unitedchurchbr.org) or by visiting our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/UnitedBigRapids](https://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](mailto: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
January 2025	\$ 29,211.76	\$ 22,812.39
Year-to-Date (Jan-Jan 2025)	\$ 29,211.76	\$ 22,812.39

The expenses include the downpayment for the painting project of \$18,000.

**The choir thought you might like to see the words of their anthem today:**

"And Can It Be", by Charles Wesley (1738)

Arrangement by Dan Forrest

© 2014 Beckenhorst Press, Inc.

And can it be? and can it be?  
Amazing love, how can it be?  
And can it be that I should gain  
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?

Died he for me who caused His pain?  
For me who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love, how can it be  
That Thou my God, shouldst die for me?

He left his Father's throne above,  
So free, so infinite His grace;  
Emptied Himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race;

'Tis mercy all, immense and free;  
For, O my God, it found out me.  
And can it be? and can it be?  
Amazing love, how can it be?

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus and all in Him is mine!  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine,

Bold I approach th'eternal throne,  
And claim the crown through Christ my own.

Amazing love, how can it be,  
That Thou my God, shouldst die for me?


Amazing love, how can it be?  
Amazing love!




## 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. Steven Naylor
Administrative Assistant .....	Julie Cole
Organist .....	Paul Heidemann
Guest Accompanist.....	Ginny Kerwin
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 .....	Susan H. Grant
Ushers.....	Julie Kysela, Melanie Henry, Marshall Henry
Livestream Team.....	Amy Buse, 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*