

The United Church of Big Rapids

March 5, 2025

Ash Wednesday

❖ *You are invited to stand*



Welcome

❖ **Call to Worship**

People: **We come, aware of our sin, of all the ways we miss the mark.**

Leader: God welcomes you with compassion.

People: **We come, longing for restoration, to be made new.**

Leader: God surrounds you with grace and forgiveness, reconciling you to God and one another.

People: **We come, thirsting for reconciliation, to draw close to God and one another.**

Leader: God embraces you with love, reuniting us with God and one another.

All: **Sustain in us, O God, a willing spirit to return to the joy of our salvation as we journey together through the season of Lent.**

❖ **Hymn #81**

Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days, tune: St. Flavian

Psalm Reading

Psalm 51:1-5

¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.

² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

⁴ Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgement.

⁵ Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.

Time of Confession

**We confess to you, O God, that we
too often claim to see the special
in others only to use them for
our own purposes.**

**We have used others for our own
glory and at their expense.**

**Forgive us for the ways we
dehumanize friends, strangers,
and whole groups of people.**

**Remind us that black and brown lives matter
as much as our own. Move us to
affirm those who love in ways
different than us.**

**Open our hearts to the immigrant,
helping us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.**

**Release us from the bondage of
possessions while teaching us to
share your abundance with all.**

**In the name of Jesus, who
refused to participate in systems
of oppression. Amen.**

Words of Hope & Assurance

Psalm Reading

51:6-12

⁶ You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

⁹ Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.

¹¹ Do not cast me away from your presence,

and do not take your holy spirit from me.
¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Time of Confession

**We confess we have propped
ourselves up,
letting pride claim special
status for ourselves at the
expense of our neighbors.**

**You've told us that the vulnerable,
are the greatest in your
unfolding realm, in heaven.**

**Still we justify the sins
of our culture
as somehow Christian.**

**Release us from our prideful
pursuit of the standards
of this world.**

**Open our hearts and eyes
that we can see you in the
weak and powerless.**

In the name of Jesus who exalts vulnerability. Amen.

Words of Hope & Assurance

Psalm Reading

51:13-17

¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.

¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

¹⁶ For you have no delight in sacrifice;
if I were to give a burnt-offering, you would not be pleased.

¹⁷ The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Time of Confession

**We confess we sin
individually against others,
we confess we repeat our
mistakes,
even though we know better.**

**We allow our actions to make it
harder for others to reach you.**

**Release us from our flawed ideas
and the desires that trip us up.**

**Move us closer to you and
away from that which tempts us.**

**We confess we are also a part
of the world's system of sin.**

**We are all twisted up in that
which we barely understand.**

**We claim our success is our own,
even as our kindred struggle in
poverty or other injustices
that we never face.**

**Release us from our ignorance and
arrogance so that we can live in
your beloved community.**

**In the name of those with whom we
are connected yet do not know. Amen.**

Words of Hope & Assurance

Time of Silent Confession

Words of Hope & Assurance

❖ Hymn #372

Lord, I Want to Be a Christian, tune: I Want to Be a Christian

Scripture Lesson

New Testament Lesson

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

'Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

² 'So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³ But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵ 'And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶ But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁶ 'And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹ 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Meditation

Taking Time to Look Inward – Rev. Devon Herrell

Invitation to Observe a Holy Lent

Invitation

Thanksgiving over the Ashes

Leader: ...are we given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ;

People: **Amen.**

Imposition of Ashes

❖ Hymn Insert

In All Our Living, tune: Pues si vivimos

Pues si vivimos

499

(In All Our Living)

St. 1, Mexican folk hymn; transl. anon.

St. 2, Elise S. Eslinger, 1983

Unison

1 Pues si vi - vi - mos, pa-ra Dios vi - vi - mos
1 In all our liv - ing, we be-long to God;
2 God sent Christ Je - sus to be our sha-lom,

y si mo - ri - mos, pa-ra Dios mo - ri - mos.
and in our dy - ing, we are still with God;
to show us mer - cy and heal - ing love;

Se-a que vi - va - mos o que mu - ra - mos,
So, wheth-er liv - ing, or wheth-er dy - ing,
So in our liv - ing, and in our dy - ing,

so - mos del buen Dios, so - mos del buen Dios.
we be-long to God; we be-long to God.
Christ is our sha - lom; Christ is our sha - lom.

❖ Unison Benediction


Created from dust, held together by God's extravagant love, we turn away from sin, and leave today embracing God's 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. Devon Herrell
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
Nursery Attendant	Michell Kamptner
Moderator	Marshall Henry
Liturgist	Julie Cole
Usher	Maryanne Heidemann
Livestream Team	Amy Buse, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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