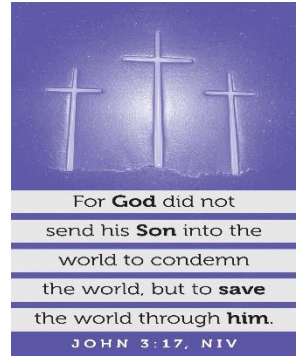


The United Church of Big Rapids

March 10, 2024

The Fourth Sunday in Lent

❖ *You are invited to stand*



Choral Introit

Welcome

Announcements

Prelude

Children's Prayer from Sweden, by Roberta Bitgood

❖ Call to Worship

Leader: Why have we gathered in this sacred place today?

People: We are here to lift Jesus up.

Leader: We lift up Jesus as our example.

People: As Jesus showed forth the being of God and the fulfillment of authentic humanity,

Leader: We lift up Jesus as our teacher.

People: As one who spoke kin-dom truth to oppressors and oppressed,

Leader: We lift up Jesus as our guide.

People: As one who brought healing for those who need it,

Leader: We lift Jesus up as an answer to the world's ills.

All: As Jesus was lifted up on the cross and beyond, we look to him, and we unleash God's love in our world.

As Moses Raised the Serpent Up

605

*Versification The New Century Hymnal, 1993**John 3:14-17*

1 As Mo - ses raised the ser - pent up, God's
 2 For God so loved the world that God, all
 3 That Child was sent in - to the world not



Child is lift - ed high; And all who in that
 hu - man life to free, Gave to the world God's
 to con - demn but save; Now through Christ's name all



Child be - lieve shall nev - er, nev - er die.
 Child that all might live e - ter - nal - ly.
 are re - deemed—what won - drous love God gave.

Psalm Reading *(from the Revised Standard Version Bible)**Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22*

Leader: O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
 for his steadfast love endures forever.

**People: Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
 those he redeemed from trouble**

Leader: and gathered in from the lands,
 from the east and from the west,
 from the north and from the south.

**People: Some were sick through their sinful ways,
 and because of their iniquities endured affliction;**

Leader: they loathed any kind of food,
 and they drew near to the gates of death.

**People: Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
 and he saved them from their distress;**

Leader: he sent out his word and healed them,
 and delivered them from destruction.

**People: Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.**

Leader: And let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices,
and tell of his deeds with songs of joy.

Scripture Lesson

Hebrew Reading (from the Revised Standard Version Bible)

Numbers 21:4-9

⁴ From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵ The people spoke against God and against Moses, 'Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.' ⁶ Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷ The people came to Moses and said, 'We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us.' So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ And the LORD said to Moses, 'Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.' ⁹ So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

Gospel Lesson

John 3:14-21

¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ 'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.'

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

Lifted Up – Rev. Dr. Bruce Roller

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

Largo, by Elizabeth Stirling

❖ 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 offer our treasure and hearts to you, O God, may they be used to pass on the promise of hope, of peace, of life, of community to all in need of your gifts and presence in their lives. Amen.

Hymn #423 (vss. 1-4)

Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun, tune: Duke Street

❖ Benediction

Choral Benediction

Postlude

Fantasia on "Duke Street," by David Paxton



The altar flowers are given today by Dee Van Horn & Bruce Fredrick
in honor of their son, Brian's, birthday.



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

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

Arrangement by Dan Forrest

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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!

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.

Today is Woman Composer Sunday, a celebration begun several years ago by the AGO (American Guild of Organists) to honor women composers, who have often been ignored. Women composers you may have heard of include Hildegard of Bingen, Fanny Mendelssohn, and Clara Schumann. Paul has chosen pieces by women for both the prelude and the offertory in honor of this celebration.

Easter & Spring flower orders will be taken during Fellowship time today and next Sunday. There are order forms on the Cards of Caring table as well. Orders can also be taken by calling the church office. Deadline for ordering is March 18.

Invitation: Come join our church family for Easter brunch after worship on March 31. It will be a time of fun, fellowship, and food as we celebrate together.

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 *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. Services will be offered at 4 locations in the county. 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.

The Project Starburst Souper Supper annual fundraiser is coming on March 20, 2024. Come join us from 11:00 am – 3:00 pm at Three Girls Bakery in Big Rapids for a yummy bowl of soup and bread – all for \$20 for adults, \$10 for ages 6-17, and under 5 free. Tickets are available at Project Starburst, 120 S. State Street, Big Rapids, or Three Girls Bakery, 106 N. Michigan, Big Rapids, or online at projectstarburst.org. You can also get tickets from Alice Bandstra and Dee Van Horn after Sunday worship. Contact Project Starburst for more information at (231)796-5342.

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-Jan 2024)	\$ 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. Dr. Bruce Roller
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	Maryanne Heidemann
Ushers	Paul Challender, Kay Achterhof, Julie Kysela
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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