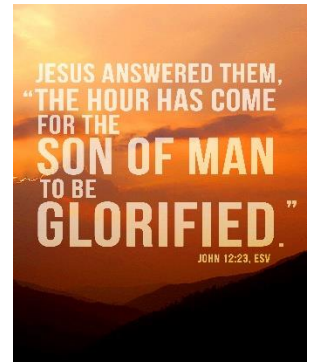


The United Church of Big Rapids

March 17, 2024

The Fifth Sunday in Lent

❖ *You are invited to stand*



Welcome

Announcements

Prelude

Meditation on "Forty Days and Forty Nights," By John S. Dixon

❖ Call to Worship

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

People: We wish to see Jesus.

Leader: May we envision God glorified, lifted up, fulfilled, and fulfilling.

People: May we see God extending love to all people.

Leader: May we watch God turning cruelty into everlasting love.

All: May we experience death being transformed into new life.

❖ Hymn #84

In the Cross of Christ I Glory, tune: Rathbun

Psalm Reading *(from the Revised Standard Version Bible)*

Psalm 119:9-16

Leader: How can young people keep their way pure?

By guarding it according to your word

**People: With my whole heart I seek you;
do not let me stray from your commandments.**

Leader: I treasure your word in my heart,
so that I may not sin against you.

**People: Blessed are you, O LORD;
teach me your statutes.**

Leader: With my lips I declare
all the ordinances of your mouth.

**People: I delight in the way of your decrees
as much as in all riches.**

Leader: I will meditate on your precepts,
and fix my eyes on your ways.

**People: I will delight in your statutes;
I will not forget your word.**

Scripture Lesson

Hebrew Reading (from the Revised Standard Version Bible)

Jeremiah 31:31-34

³¹ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the LORD', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more

.Gospel Lesson

John 12:20-33

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' ²² Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

²⁷ 'Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—"Father, save me from this hour"? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' ²⁹ The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to him.' ³⁰ Jesus answered, 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.' ³³ He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Investing for Life – 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.

Call to Offering

Offertory

Jesus, I Will Ponder Now, by Johann G. Walther

❖ 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 #539

Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise, tune: Ellers

❖ Benediction

Postlude

Toccata in G Major, by Lani Smith


**The altar flowers are given today by Barb Johnson
in honor of Julie's birthday.**


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.

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

Holy Week Services – The United Church will be participating in two ecumenical services during Holy Week: the Maundy Thursday service on March 28 at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church at 6:00 pm and the Good Friday service at First United Methodist Church at noon on March 29. Our members and friends are encouraged to attend one or both of these services.

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.

Special Offering – The One Great Hour of Sharing special offering will be taken during worship next Sunday, Palm Sunday. The offering received will be split between our two denominations to help with ministries that help our neighbors, here and around the world.

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.

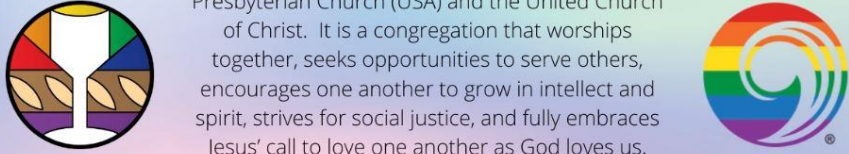
	Expenditures	Income
February 2024	\$ 18,289.34	\$ 56,504.06
Year-to-Date (Jan-Feb 2024)	\$ 54,803.96	\$ 64,728.09



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	Frank Hartley
Sound Board	Bruce Fredrick
Sanctuary Sound	Wayne McKay
Liturgist	Dee Van Horn
Ushers	Maxine McKay, Jane Grzybowski, Marilyn Loken
Fellowship Hour Hosts	Sue Boitos, Diane Fleming, Linda Rinehart
Livestream Team	Amy Buse, Annie Ducat, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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