

The United Church of Big Rapids  
March 16, 2025  
The Second Sunday of Lent

❖ *You are invited to stand*



**Choral Introit**

**Welcome**

**Announcements**

**Prelude**

*Balm in Gilead, by Ben Logan*

❖ **Call to Worship**

Leader: Open your hearts to God's love today.

**People: In the midst of darkness, we seek the brightness of God's love.**

Leader: Don't be afraid. God is with you.

**People: With the Lord's help, we can overcome the darkness.**

Leader: The Lord is your light and your salvation.

**People: Even though everything around may feel disturbing, God's love is constant.  
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

❖ **Unison Invocation**

**Gracious God, prepare us to receive you. May our eyes behold you in those around us.  
May our ears receive your word. May our hearts be open to your teaching and leading.  
In this precious moment, may we know you in new ways.**

❖ **Hymn #281**

*Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah, tune: CWM Rhondda*

**Psalm Reading**

*Psalm 27:1-14*

<sup>1</sup> YHWH, you are my light, my salvation –  
whom shall I fear?

You are the fortress of my life –  
of whom will I be afraid??

<sup>2</sup> When my enemies attack me,  
spreading vicious lies about me  
wherever they go,  
they my adversaries and foes,  
Will stumble and fall.

<sup>3</sup> Though an army mounts a siege against me,  
my heart will not fear;  
though war break out against me,

I'll still be confident.

<sup>4</sup> One thing I ask of you, YHWH,  
one thing I seek:

that I may dwell in your house  
all the days of my life,  
to gaze on your beauty  
and to meditate in your Temple

<sup>5</sup> You will keep me safe in your shelter  
when trouble arises,  
you will hide me  
under the cover of your Tabernacle –  
you'll set me on a rock,  
high and out of reach.

<sup>6</sup> Then I'll be able to hold my head up,  
even with my enemies surrounding me.  
I will offer in your Tabernacle  
sacrifices of great joy –  
I'll sing and make music to you, YHWH!

<sup>7</sup> Hear me when I call, YHWH!  
Have mercy on me and answer me!

<sup>8</sup> You say to my heart, "Seek my face,"  
and so it is your face I seek!

<sup>9</sup> Don't hide your face from me;  
don't turn your faithful one away in anger.  
Don't reject me, don't desert me,  
O God of my salvation,  
for you are my only help.

<sup>10</sup> Even if my own parents reject me,  
you, YHWH, will accept me.

<sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, YHWH,  
and lead me on a straight path because of my enemies.

<sup>12</sup> Don't surrender me to the will of my enemies;  
for defamers rise up against me breathing violence.

<sup>13</sup> Even so I have confidence  
that I'll see the goodness of YHWH  
in the land of the living!

<sup>14</sup> Wait for God – stand tall  
and let your heart take courage!  
Yes, wait for YHWH!

## Scripture Lesson

*Gospel Lesson*

*Luke 13:31-35*

<sup>31</sup> Just then, some Pharisees came to Jesus and said, "You need to get out of town, and fast. Herod is trying to kill you."

<sup>32</sup> Jesus replied, "Go tell that fox, 'Today and tomorrow, I'll be casting out devils and healing people, and on the third day I'll reach my goal. <sup>33</sup> Even with all that, I'll need to continue on my journey today, tomorrow and the day after that, since no prophet can be allowed to die anywhere except in Jerusalem.

<sup>34</sup> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often have I wanted to gather your children together as a mother bird collects her babies under her wings – yet you refuse me! <sup>35</sup> So take note: your house will be left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is the One who comes in the name of our God!'"

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## Chancel Choir Anthem

*He Is a Mighty Lord, by Jay Althouse*

## Sermon

*Prophetic Vulnerability - Rev. Devon Herrell*

## 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

*Lonesome Valley, by Eugene Butler*

## ❖ 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**

**Merciful God, as we offer these gifts, we remember the longing of Jesus to gather us under his wings like a hen gathers her chicks. May these offerings be a sign of our desire to follow Christ's example of compassion, seeking the lost and caring for the vulnerable. We give to spread your love and peace to all who are in need, drawing us closer to your embrace. Amen.**

❖ **Hymn #302**

*I Danced in the Morning, tune: Simple Gifts*

**Benediction**

**Choral Benediction**

**Postlude**

*To Walk in God's Ways, by Lani Smith*



**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.



The altar flowers today are given by Kathleen Keys Singh  
in honor of Jerena's birthday



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**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/pasta 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.

**Lenten Book Studies** – There are two Lenten book studies in which you may participate during this Lenten season. The first is on THURSDAYS at the First United Methodist Church at 7:00 pm. The book is Sacred Resistance by Ginger Gaines-Cirelli. You may attend in person or via Zoom. Pastor Devon will lead the second study in the United Church Parlor on TUESDAY evenings, 7:00 pm. The book is Entering the Passion of Jesus, by Amy-Jill Levine. Both courses will be for 6 weeks.

**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.

**40 Days of Kindness Challenge** – The First United Methodist Church has shared their Lenten activity with us – the 40 Days of Kindness Challenge. The challenge is an opportunity to grow in faith by putting kindness into action, embracing justice, and caring for oneself along the way. It provides suggested activities for each day during Lent for the three focus areas – kindness, justice, and self-care. It is an interesting way to use the 40 days of Lent in a meaningful way. Copies are available in the Narthex or online at [www.ummecosta.or/40days](http://www.ummecosta.or/40days).

**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.

**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](http://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 is generally 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
February 2025	\$ 11,724.33	\$ 12,159.07
Year-to-Date (Jan-Feb 2025)	\$ 53,948.62 *	\$ 40,243.38

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

**Here is today's Chancel Choir anthem. They thought you would like to see the words:**

"He Is a Mighty Lord"  
Words and music by: Jay Althouse  
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Division of Shawnee Press, Inc.

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord of creation.  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, for He is a mighty Lord.

He is our king of all the earth. He is the Lord of all.  
He is our great salvation, for He is the Lord, yes, He is the Lord of all.

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord of creation.  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, for He is a mighty Lord.

We see His wondrous power. We feel His mighty hand.  
We hear His admonitions in words we understand.  
We worship and adore Him, and this we now proclaim:  
We magnify Him, glorify Him. Blessed be His name!

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord of creation.  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, for He is a mighty Lord.

He is our king of all the earth. He is the Lord of all.  
He is our great salvation, for He is the Lord, yes, He is the Lord of all.

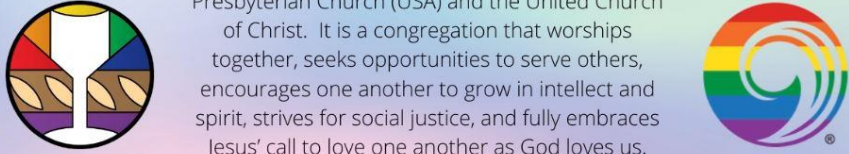
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord of creation.  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, for He is a mighty,  
He is a mighty, He is a mighty,  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
O praise the Lord, the mighty Lord!



# 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
Fellowship Hosts .....	Kathleen Keys Singh
Moderator .....	Marshall Henry
Sound Board .....	Wayne McKay
Liturgist .....	Susan H. Grant
Ushers .....	Don Oree, Jane Grzybowski, Paul Challender
Livestream Team .....	Amy Buse, Adam Jewell, Aleah Ritzema, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors .....	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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