The United Church of Big Rapids

March 31, 2024

Easter Sunday

❖ *You are invited to stand*

Choral Introit

Welcome

Announcements

Prelude *That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright, by Lyndell Leatherman*

❖ **Call to Worship**

Leader: This is the day that God has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
People: We gather today to shout Alleluia! Christ is risen; he is risen indeed.
Leader: Out of the doom of death and despair, victory comes, glory appears.
People: We gather today to shout Alleluia! Christ is risen; he is risen indeed.
Leader: We shall live, witness, and recount the deeds of the God whose love endures forever.
People: We gather today to shout Alleluia! Christ is risen; he is risen indeed.

❖ **Hymn #123** *Jesus Christ is Risen Today, tune: Easter Hymn*

Psalm Reading *Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24*

Leader: O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever!
People: Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever." The Lord is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.
Leader: There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: "The right hand of the Lord does valiantly; the right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly."
People: I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord.
Leader: The Lord has punished me severely, but he did not give me over to death.
People: Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.
Leader: I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.
People: This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Scripture Lesson

Gospel Lesson (from the Inclusive Bible) *John 20:1-18*

Early in the morning on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance, [2] so she ran off to Simon Peter and the other disciple – the one Jesus loved – and told them, "The Rabbi has been taken from the tomb! We don't know where they have put Jesus!"

[3] At that, Peter and the other disciple started out toward the tomb. [4] They were running side by side, but then the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. [5] He didn't enter, but bent down to peer in and saw the linen wrappings lying on the ground. [6] Then Simon Peter arrived and entered the tomb. He observed the linen wrappings on the ground, [7] and saw the piece of cloth that had covered Jesus' head lying not with the wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. [8] Then the disciple who had arrived first at the tomb went in. He saw and believed. [9] As yet, they didn't understand the scripture that Jesus was to rise from the dead. [10] Then the disciples went back to their homes.

[11] Meanwhile, Mary stood weeping beside the tomb. Even as she wept, she stooped to peer inside, [12] and there she saw two angels in dazzling robes. One was seated at the head and the other at the foot of the place where Jesus' body had lain.

[13] The asked her, "Why are you weeping?"

She answered them, "Because they have taken away my Rabbi, and I don't know where they have put the body."

[14] No sooner had she said this than she turned around and caught sight of Jesus standing there, but she didn't know it was Jesus. [15] He asked her, "Why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?"

She supposed it was the gardener, so she said, "Please, if you're the one who carried Jesus away, tell me where you've laid the body, and I will take it away."

[16] Jesus said to her, "Mary!'

She turned to him and said, "Rabboni!" – which means Teacher.

[17] Jesus then said, "Don't hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to Abba God. Rather, go to my sisters and brothers and tell them, 'I'm ascending to my Abba and to your Abba, my God and your God!'"

[18] Mary of Magdala went to the disciples. "I have seen the Teacher!' she announced. Then she reported what the savior had said to her.

Leader: This is what the Spirit is saying to the Church.
People: Thanks be to God.

Chancel Choir Anthem *Resurrection Victory, by Lloyd Larson*

Children's Time in Worship

Sermon *Be the Resurrection - 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 *Easter Dawn, by James Southbridge*

❖ **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**

Mighty God of Resurrection and Redemption, we offer our gifts alongside our alleluias! We offer our hands and feet and voices to take the celebration out of this place into a world that needs hope so desperately! May we go into the world with such energy, excitement, and power that people see in us your redeeming love and the triumph of light over darkness! In the name of the risen Christ, we pray. Amen.

Hymn #116 *O Sons and Daughters. Let Us Sing! tune: O filiiet et filiae*

❖ **Benediction**

Choral Benediction

Postlude *O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing, by Lani Smith*

Easter Flower Dedications

Amy Buse, in honor of my mom, Mary Ryman.

Wayne & Maxine McKay, in memory of our parents:
Claude & Zylda McKay, and James & Thelma Eddy.

Jim & Carolyn Chipman, in memory of our parents and loved ones.

Cecilia Hamilton, in memory of Murriel Hamilton and in honor of Lucinda Russell.

Randy & Linda Vance in memory of loved ones past.

Jim & Alice Bandstra in honor of Juliana Bandstra's graduation from Grand Canyon University.

Barb Johnson, in honor of family and in memory of Newell H. Johnson.

Susan H. Grant, in memory of A. Donald Grant and in honor of Maryanne Heidemann.

Marshall & Melanie Henry, in memory of Diane Kennedy.

Bill & Nancy Peters, in memory of our family.

Don Olree, in memory of Joan.

Paul & Maryanne Heidemann, in memory of their parents.

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

"Resurrection Victory"
Music by Lloyd Larson
Words by Cecil Alexander and Godfrey Thring
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He is risen! Christ is risen! Sing it out with joyful voice!
He has burst the three days' prison, let the whole wide earth rejoice!
Death is conquered, we are free, Christ has won the victory.
He is risen! Christ is risen! He shall reign for all eternity!

He is risen! Christ is risen! Risen to a holy state!
We are free from sin's dark prison, He has opened heaven's gate.
Death is conquered, we are free, Christ has won the victory.
He is risen! Christ is risen! He shall reign for all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave,
And rose victorious in the strife for those He came to save;
His glories now we sing, of him who died and rose on high,
He died eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die!

He is risen! Christ is risen! Sing it out with joyful voice!
He has burst the three days' prison, let the whole wide earth rejoice!
Death is conquered, we are free, Christ has won the victory.
He is risen! Christ is risen! He is risen! Christ is risen!
Christ is risen, alleluia!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome back to the United Church, Rev. Devon Herrell! We're glad to have you here. Thank you for sharing your message with us. Happy Easter!

Invitation: Come join our church family for Easter brunch after worship today. It will be a time of fun, fellowship, and food as we celebrate together. Thank you to Megan Vajda and her team for providing us with our food today.

Next Sunday, April 7th, is known as Holy Hilarity Sunday. It is a Sunday when we celebrate God's victory over death and evil through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a day for joy and laughter! Please wear fun clothes: a Hawaiian shirt, mismatched plaids, pajamas, Halloween Costume, etc. or even a funny hat. Use your imagination! There will also be a few minutes allowed for short jokes. You are invited to bring a short, g-rated joke to share during the open microphone time if you would like. Mostly, come prepared to worship with joy -- laughing with God and one another. I look forward to rejoicing with you! Reverend Penny Lowes

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 *cereal* as the "food of the month" for April. 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.

Adopt-a-Highway Clean-up – Our annual Highway Pick-up event will be held on Saturday, April 20. Meet at the church at 9:00 am for a safety video, to form teams, pick up gear, and carpool to the highway. If we field enough workers, we are generally done by noon. If you are interested in joining us for this worthwhile event, contact Susan H. Grant at adonaldgrant73@gmail.com.

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.

Thank you to all who purchased lilies and spring flowers to decorate our sanctuary today. Don't forget to pick up your plant(s) to take home with you. Thank you to the Spiritual Life Commission for decorating!

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. 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	Nancy Nelson
Moderator	Marshall Henry
Member in Charge	
Sound Board	Mike Rinehart
Sanctuary Sound	Wayne McKay
Liturgist	Susan H. Grant
Ushers	Bruce Fredrick, Dee Van Horn, Don Stephen
Fellowship Hour Hosts	Congregational Group Life
Livestream Team	Amy Buse, Annie Ducat, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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