

The United Church of Big Rapids
(120 South State St., Big Rapids MI 49037)

May 29, 2022

Seventh Sunday of Easter

❖ *Please stand if you so choose*



Welcome

Announcements

Choral Introit

Prelude

Come, Now is the Time to Worship

❖ **Call to Worship**

Leader: The grace of Jesus Christ be with all the saints! We have gathered in that grace to worship God.

People: Rejoice in God and give thanks to God's holy name. Let all heaven and earth behold God's glory.

Leader: God is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. All creation is subject to God's rule and reign.

People: We bring our prayers and praise to God most high. We lift our voices in hymns of celebration.

Leader: Come, all who hunger, all who thirst; be nourished and renewed in this time of worship.

People: We bring joys and sorrows, fullness and needs. We come with successes and failures; we come seeking.

❖ **Hymn #412**

Verse 1

Eternal God, whose power upholds
Both flower and flaming star,
To whom there is no here nor there,
No time, no near nor far,
No alien race, no foreign shore,
No child unsought, unknown:
O send us forth, Thy prophets true,
To make all lands Thine own!

Verse 3

O God of truth, whom sciences seeks
And reverent souls adore,
Who lightest every earnest mind
Of every clime and shore:
Dispel the gloom of error's night,
Of ignorance and fear,
Until true wisdom from above
Shall make life's pathway clear!

Verse 5

O God of righteousness and grace,
Seen in the Christ, Thy Son,
Whose life and death reveal Thy face,
By whom Thy will was done:
Inspire Thy heralds of good news
To live Thy life divine,
Till Christ is formed in every heart,
And every land is Thine!

Eternal God, Whose Power Upholds, tune: Forest Green

Verse 2

O God of love, whose Spirit wakes
In every human breast,
Whom love alone, can know
In whom all hearts find rest:
Help us to spread thy gracious reign
Till greed and hate shall cease,
And kindness dwell in human hearts,
And all the earth find peace!

Verse 4

O God of beauty, oft revealed
In dreams of human art,
In speech that flows to melody,
In holiness of heart:
Teach us to turn from sinfulness
That shuts our hearts to Thee,
Till all shall know the loveliness
Of lives made fair and free!

Invocation

We come seeking a presence that shakes foundations and helps us build new ones. We come with all our wounds, asking for healing. We come, remembering our baptism, and wanting to claim the difference that makes in our lives. We come through the shadowy clouds of our unbelief, seeking the brightness of your glory, O God. We want a faith to sustain us through times of trial and testing. Be powerfully present with us, gracious Spirit. Amen.

Scripture Lessons *(From the New Living Translation)*

Gospel Reading

John 17:20-26

²⁰ "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. ²¹ I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one-- as you are in me, God, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. ²² "I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. ²³ I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. ²⁴ God, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began! ²⁵ "O righteous Creator, the world doesn't know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me. ²⁶ I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them."

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Special Music

True Colors, written by Steinberg/Kelly

Rev. Greg Larsen, guitar/vocals

Reflection

Breaking Chains – Rev. Greg Larsen

Reflection Reading

Acts 16:16-34

¹⁶ One day as we were going down to the place of prayer, we met a demon-possessed slave girl. She was a fortune-teller who earned a lot of money for her masters. ¹⁷ She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved." ¹⁸ This went on day after day until Paul got so exasperated that he turned and said to the demon within her, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And instantly it left her. ¹⁹ Her masters' hopes of wealth were now shattered, so they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities at the marketplace. ²⁰ "The whole city is in an uproar because of these Jews!" they shouted to the city officials. ²¹ "They are teaching customs that are illegal for us Romans to practice." ²² A mob quickly formed against Paul and Silas, and the city officials ordered them stripped and beaten with wooden rods. ²³ They were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn't escape. ²⁴ So the jailer put them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks. ²⁵ Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. ²⁶ Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off! ²⁷ The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself. ²⁸ But Paul shouted to him, "Stop! Don't kill yourself! We are all here!" ²⁹ The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ Then he brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ They

replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household."³² And they shared the word of the Lord with him and with all who lived in his household.³³ Even at that hour of the night, the jailer cared for them and washed their wounds. Then he and everyone in his household were immediately baptized.³⁴ He brought them into his house and set a meal before them, and he and his entire household rejoiced because they all believed in God.

Sharing of our Joys & Concerns

Pastoral Prayer & The Lord's Prayer

(The basics of the Lord's Prayer appear in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. It may be familiar to you in this form, or with "sins" or "debts" toward the end. Please use what is spiritually comfortable for yourself, allowing others to do the same. We support the use of traditional or contemporary language for addressing the holy and naming the holy's realm.)

Our Father/Creator, who is in heaven, hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom/kingdom 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/kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Call to Offering

Offertory

Simple Gifts

Prayer of Dedication

With joy and gladness we dedicate our gifts to the service of Jesus Christ. May the abused find solace and courage; abusers be led to new awareness, sensitivity, and change; prisoners know release from bondage; and all humankind be led to accept the saving grace of Jesus Christ. To this end, we offer ourselves with these gifts. Use us as ambassadors of your love. Amen.

❖ **Hymn #338** (*New Century Hymnal*)
(to the tune of "The Church's One Foundation")

Help Us Accept Each Other,, tune: Aurelia

Verse 1

Help us accept each other
As Christ accepted us;
Teach us as sister, brother,
Each person to embrace.
Be present, God, among us,
And bring us to believe
We are ourselves accepted
And meant to love and live.

Verse 3

Let your acceptance change us,
So that we may be moved
In living situations
To do the truth in love;
To practice your acceptance,
Until we know by heart
The table of forgiveness
And laughter's healing art.

Verse 2

Teach us, O God, your lessons
As in our daily life
We struggle to be human
And search for hope and faith.
Teach us to care for people,
For all, not just for some,
To love them as we find them,
Or as they may become.

Verse 4

God, for today's encounters
With all who are in need,
Who hunger for acceptance, for righteousness
and bread,
Bring us new eyes for seeing,
New hands for holding on;
Renew us with your Spirit;
God! Free us, make us one!

❖ **Benediction**

Pastor: Believers, you have been endowed with the gospel. Go out, with unity of spirit, to share good news.

People: We are awed and amazed at God's gifts to us. With fear and trembling, we dare to represent God.

Pastor: In the name of Jesus Christ, take love to the world. With the spirit of truth, offer peace to the nations.

People: We seek to live in peace with our neighbors. We offer our best selves to proclaim love for all.

Pastor: Invite the thirsty to receive the water of life. The grace of Jesus Christ be with all the saints.

People: We have received abounding grace. With joy and thanksgiving, we pass it on.

Pastor: Beloved, ...and may God be with you.

People: And also with you.

All: Amen

Postlude

They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love

(It is our custom to sit and listen to the postlude, but feel free to leave the sanctuary at any time after the benediction.)



The altar flowers are given today by Maxine & Wayne McKay
in memory of Maxine's brother, Robert James (Bobby Jim) Eddy,

5/29/1948 to 11/12/1953.



Here are the lyrics to today's special music:

"True Colors Lyrics." *Lyrics.com*. STANDS4 LLC, 2022. Web. 23 May 2022.
<<https://www.lyrics.com/lyric/33271599/Justin+Timberlake/True+Colors>>.

Written by: Billy Steinberg, Tom Kelly

You with the sad eyes
Don't be discouraged
Oh, I realize
It's hard to take courage
In a world full of people
You can lose sight of it all
The darkness inside you
Can make you feel so small
Show me a smile then
Don't be unhappy
Can't remember when
I last saw you laughing
This world makes you crazy
And you've taken all you can bear
Just call me up
'Cause I will always be there
And I see your true colors
Shining through
I see your true colors
And that's why I love you
So don't be afraid to let them show
Your true colors
True colors are beautiful
I see your true colors
Shining through (True colors)
I see your true colors
That's why I love you
So don't be afraid to let them show
Your true colors
True colors are beautiful
Like a rainbow
Oh, like a rainbow

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you to Ruth Reeds for sharing her musical talents with us today. We are so glad to have such talented friends to help us out!

Meijer "Simply Give" program is benefiting Project Starburst currently. You can pick up a card here at the church or Meijer. Every dollar you spend within the program is matched by Meijer. A double match day on June 18 will provide \$2 for each dollar that you spend. If you would like, you can give a check to Project Starburst ahead of time, and they will be sure to purchase what they need on June 18. It's an easy way to help out those that need a little extra food security.

Pride Big Rapids is happening June 26 at Northend Riverside Park! Information about the festival and how to support it with your donation of time or money is on the Cards of Caring table in the narthex. Frank Hartley can fill you in on the details. You can also find information on their Facebook page (@pridebigrapids) or by going to their website at <https://www.pridebigrapids.org>.

Save the Date – our annual outdoor worship service at Northend Riverside Park is scheduled for July 17. Mark your calendars!

Flowers and Coffee Hour – Don't forget to take a look at the sign-up sheets on the bulletin board to choose your date to provide flowers for worship or to host Coffee Hour in the Parlor after worship.

Prayer requests – If you have prayer requests that you would like lifted during our worship service, please send them via email or call the church office. You can also add your requests to our telephone prayer chain by calling Yvonne Kilbourne at 231-796-3729.

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 for you. If you have questions, contact Amy Buse, Treasurer, or a member of the Governing Board.

Financial Update:

	Expenditures	Income
April 2022	\$14,949.48	\$15,044.62
Year-to-Date (Jan-April 2022)	\$66,857.15	\$75,462.21



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
Transitional Pastor	Rev. Greg Larsen
Pastor Emeritus	Rev. Jon Fleming
Administrative Assistant	Julie Cole
Organist	Paul Heidemann
Guest Pianist	Ruth Reeds
Bell Choir Director.....	Judy Tressler
Chancel Choir Director	Linda Rinehart
Moderator.....	Marshall Henry
Elder in Charge.....	Frank Hartley
Sound Board	Bruce Fredrick
Sanctuary Sound	Wayne McKay
Liturgist	Dee Van Horn
Ushers.....	Jane Grzybowski, Maxine McKay, Marilyn Loken
Livestream Team.....	Amy Buse, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

**Permission to use the music in this service obtained from OneLicense with license #A-712368*