

The United Church of Big Rapids
September 3, 2023
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

❖ *You are invited to stand*



Welcome

Announcements

Prelude

My Faith Looks Up to Thee, by Lloyd Larsen

❖ **Call to Worship** *(from Psalm 26)*

Leader: Vindicate us, O Lord, for we have walked in integrity, and we have trusted in the Lord without wavering.

People: Prove us, O Lord, and try us; test our hearts and minds.

Leader: For your steadfast love is before our eyes, and we walk in faithfulness to you.

People: O, Lord, we love the house in which you dwell, and the place where your glory abides. We do not sit with the worthless: We hate the company of evildoers. We wash our hands in innocence and come to your altar, O Lord.

Leader: As a community of believers let us come together singing aloud a song of thanksgiving, and listening to the telling of all your wondrous deeds, and learn the lessons of faithful living.

❖ **Hymn #455**

All Creatures of Our God and King, tune: Lasst uns erfreuen

❖ **Prayer of Invocation**

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: graft in our hearts the love of your Name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and bring forth in us the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Scripture Lessons

Old Testament Lesson (from the Inclusive Bible)

Jeremiah 15:15-21

¹⁵ YHWH, remember and help me!

Remember me and help me!

Avenge me on my persecutors. You are slow to anger – do not take me away.

For I suffer insults for your sake.

¹⁶ When your words came, I devoured them.

Your word was my delight

and the joy of my heart.

For I was called by your Name, YHWH God Omnipotent.

¹⁷ I took no pleasure in sitting with merrymakers;

with your hand on me I sat alone,
choking with the indignation you filled me with.

¹⁸ Why is my pain ongoing,
my wound incurable, refusing to heal?
Why, you're like a spring that dries up when it's needed most,
like waters that can't be relied upon!

¹⁹ Then YHWH answered me:

"If you repent,
I will return you to my service.
If you extract the valuable from the worthless,
you will be my mouthpiece.
Let them come back to you,
but you must not go back to them.

²⁰ I will make you a bronze wall
fortified against this people.
They will fight against you,
but they will not overcome you.
For I am with you,
to save you and deliver you –
it is YHWH who speaks.

²¹ I will free you from the hand of the evildoer,
and rescue you from the clutches of the violent."

Epistle Lesson

Romans 12:9-21

⁹ Your love must be sincere. Hate what is evil and cling to what is good.

¹⁰ "Love one another with the affection of sisters and brothers. Try to outdo one another in showing respect.

¹¹ Don't grow slack, but be fervent in spirit: the One you serve is Christ.

¹² Rejoice in hope; be patient under trial; persevere in prayer.

¹³ Look on the needs of God's holy people as your own; be generous in offering hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless your persecutors – bless and don't curse them.

¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

¹⁶ Have the same attitude toward everyone. Don't be condescending to those who aren't as well off as you; don't be conceited.

¹⁷ Don't repay evil with evil. Be concerned with the highest ideal in the eyes of all people.

¹⁸ Do all you can to be at peace with everyone.

¹⁹ Don't take revenge; leave room, my friends, for God's wrath. To quote scripture, "Vengeance is mine, I will pay them back, says our God."

²⁰ But there is more:

"If your enemies are hungry, feed them;

if they are thirsty, give them drink.

For in doing so you will heap burning coals upon their heads.”

²¹ Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil by doing good.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

What is YOUR cross? - Bob MacCord

Gospel Lesson

Matthew 16:21-28

²¹ From that time on, Jesus began to explain to the disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, to suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and religious scholars and that he must be killed, and on the third day raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Rabbi!” he said. “This will never happen to you!”

²³ Jesus turned to Peter and said, “Get yourself behind me, you Satan! You are trying to make me stumble and fall. You're setting your mind not on the things of God, but of Mortals.”

²⁴ Then Jesus said to the disciples, “If you wish to come after me, you must deny your very selves, take up the instrument of your own death and begin to follow in my footsteps.

²⁵ “If you would save your life, you will lose it; but if you would lose your life for my sake, you will find it. ²⁶ What profit would you show if you gained the whole world but lost yourself? What can you offer in exchange for your very self?

²⁷ “The Promised One will come in the glory of Abba God accompanied by the angels, and will repay all according to their conduct. ²⁸ The truth is, some of you standing here will not taste death before you see the coming of the Promised One's reign.”

Hymn #371

Lift High the Cross, tune: Crucifer

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

Melody, by Villemo Daneling

❖ **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**

We thank you Lord and praise you for the many blessings we have received from Your bounty. Now we return this portion of our earnings so that your work may continue to be done, wherever there is a need. We pray in gratitude through our redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

❖ **Hymn #420**

God of Grace and God of Glory, tune: CWM Rhondda

❖ **Benediction**

Postlude

Festival for Organ, by James Mansfield



The altar flowers today are given by Aaron Rewa & Erin Dumond



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome back to the United Church, Bob! We're glad to have you here. Thank you for sharing your message with us again.

Communion will be celebrated NEXT Sunday, 9/10, to accommodate the schedule of our pulpit supply minister.

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 *spaghetti sauce* as the "food of the month" for September. With the demand, any non-perishable food item is also greatly appreciated. The bin in the Narthex is available to accept donations.. Thank you for your generous support to our community through giving to Project Starburst!

Chancel Choir rehearsals will start on Wednesday, September 6, at 10:00 am in the choir room. The choir will be back and singing with us on 9/10. New voices are always welcome!

Sunday school start date – It’s that time! Sunday school classes will start NEXT Sunday. Plans are being finalized for multiple classes. If you would like to volunteer to teach on a Sunday, please let Amanda Little, Deb Ducat, or the church office know. *There will be a short meet and greet in the Parlor after worship today for families with Sunday school-age children.* Please stop by and speak with Amanda if you are able.

UCC Women of Michigan are having their Fall Gathering at the Bavarian Inn Lodge in Frankenmuth on Sunday and Monday, October 22-23, 2023. There will be rooms available if you wish to attend both days, however, you can also just come for the program on Monday. Registrations are due by September 10th. The forms are available on the Michigan Conference Website or by request from Shari Hoppe at: sfhoppe@gmail.com. Several women from our congregation will be attending so if you have questions, talk to Susan H Grant or DeeVan Horn.

Adopt-a-Highway Clean Up is scheduled for Saturday, September 23, 2023, with a rain date of Saturday, September 30, 2023. Please invite any willing volunteers to join us. If anyone has connections to Ferris and could enlist student volunteers, they would be most welcome!! We will meet at the Church at nine a.m. to sign in, watch the safety video, form our work teams, grab our gear, and head out to the Highway. Please join us as we care for our little corner of God's creation. If you have any questions, contact Susan H. Grant at: adonaldgrant73@gmail.com

Candy bars will be available beginning September 24th. Wayne McKay will be selling candy bars to help 7th-grade Kelloggsville students raise money for a trip to Chicago. Wayne and Maxine’s daughter, Erin, is the teacher organizing this trip. Each bar costs \$1 and will provide 45¢ for their project. You may also purchase full boxes of 60 bars for \$60 with assorted chocolate flavors. Donations are gratefully accepted. Pre-orders are accepted by contacting Wayne McKay at 231-250-3691 or wemckay@charter.net.

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
June 2023	\$ 16,429.35	\$ 6,296.45
Year-to-Date (Jan-June 2023)	\$ 97,992.35	\$172,415.05*

This includes \$35,220.92 we received from the Employee Retention Tax Credit Program (ERTC) along with \$30,919 in donations for the elevator



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 Worship Leader.....	Bob MacCord
Administrative Assistant.....	Julie Cole
Organist.....	Paul Heidemann
Bell Choir Director.....	Judy Tressler
Chancel Choir Director.....	Linda Rinehart
Chancel Choir Assistant Director.....	Katie McInnis
Moderator.....	Marshall Henry
Elder in Charge.....	Roger Vajda
Sound Board.....	Mike Rinehart
Sanctuary Sound.....	Wayne McKay
Liturgist.....	Susan H. Grant
Ushers.....	Paul Challender, Maxine McKay, Marge Panches
Fellowship Time Host.....	Amanda Little
Livestream Team.....	Annie Ducat, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors.....	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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