

The United Church of Big Rapids
September 13, 2020
Fifteenth Sunday of Pentecost



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.

Music

Abide with Me, O God of Bethel, arr. Matthew McConnell

Greeting

Music*

Our God, Our Help in Ages Past, tune: St. Anne

Prayer of Invocation

Eternally present God, you journey with us through wilderness and through desert. No matter the circumstance the signs of your presence are always with us: sometimes in fire and cloud; sometimes in bread from heaven and water from a rock. As we your people gather in prayer and praise, reveal yourself to us in the sounds and the screens of this worship time, in the spaces of our kitchens and our living rooms, in your creation and in your cross. Above all, make yourself known to us through Christ in every breaking of bread. We wait for you in glad reverence and expectant awe. Amen.

Scripture

Exodus 1:8 - 2:10

Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. He said to his people, 'Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.' Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, 'When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live.' But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, 'Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?' The midwives said to Pharaoh, 'Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.' So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, 'Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live.'

Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. 'This must be one of the Hebrews' children,' she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?' Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Yes.' So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, 'because', she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'

Sermon

The Israelites Are Oppressed

Offertory

I Need Thee Every Hour, arr. Terry Osman

Prayer

O God, be present among us, for the sake of all human beings on earth. Open our eyes that we may see the salvation that is in you, and reveal yourself to a blind humanity. Make your face shine upon those stricken with disease; give them your strength and your peace. All the poor ones, the weak, all those weighed down by want, may they have the knowledge of you, so to lean on you and be filled to overflowing in you. To the mighty and the wealthy, grant the power they are lacking; give them a discerning spirit, that they may be free by your freedom, and free to love others. To one and all of us, may you grant your life and your peace. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray, saying...

Please pray the words that are comfortable to you. Here is what we use:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; Thy 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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Hymn*

Light Dawns on a Weary World, tune: Temple of Peace

Announcements

Benediction

Music

When I Can Read My Title Clear, arr. Dan Forrest



Ministers.....	The Body of Christ
Senior Pastor.....	Rev. JT Hills
Pastor Emeritus.....	Rev. Jon Fleming
Secretary.....	Julie Cole
Organist.....	Paul Heidemann
Chancel Choir Director.....	Linda Rinehart
Bell Choir Director.....	Judy Tressler
Moderator.....	Kristina Coby
Elder In Charge	Deb Ducat
Radio.....	Marshall Henry
Liturgist.....	Wayne McKay, Frank Hartley

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Due to the recent updates to “Stay Home, Stay Safe” from the Governor’s office, we will continue with online and broadcast worship *for the foreseeable future*. As re-opening plans are shared, we will share with you. In the meantime, videos can be accessed on our Facebook page or on our YouTube channel. If you need help in accessing these resources, please contact the church office.

Pastor JT’s Office Hours - Don’t forget that Pastor JT is available on Thursdays via Zoom at 4:00 pm. Go to zoom.us and click “Join a Meeting” and enter the meeting ID 870 9675 4152 (no passcode is needed). You can also call him to make an appointment to meet either through the office phone or his cell phone - 707-583-5731.

The physical Church office is closed - please do not leave a message on the regular church phone number. However, you can still email, secretary@unitedchurchbr.org or you can call **231-527-9567** during regular office hours, 9:00 am - 2:00 pm, Monday through Thursday, with questions or concerns. This phone number also accepts messages outside of regular business hours. You can also schedule an appointment to come into the office, if needed, at the same number.

Lucky Duck Race - Join other members of the community for the 2nd Annual Lucky Duck Race on September 19 at 11:00 am at Mitchell Creek Park in Big Rapids to benefit Our Brother’s Keeper. Ducks are \$5 each and can be purchased at Three Girls Bakery, The Moose Lodge-Reed City, American Legion Post-Big Rapids, Old Pioneer & Emporium, The Pie wHole, The Yellow Window, Curries BP and St. Vincent dePaul Store. A fun way to help raise funds to help provide safe, secure shelter for the homeless during the upcoming months. For more information, contact Dee Van Horn at 231-972-5737.

Searching for the Promised Land is the topic of Pastor JT’s messages for the next few weeks. He will be examining the book of Exodus. Join the worship service and re-live the stories of the Israelites as they searched for the “land flowing with milk and honey” as promised by God when God set them free from service to the Egyptians.

