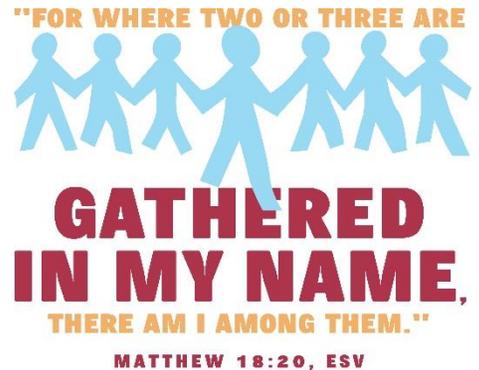


The United Church of Big Rapids

September 10, 2023

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

❖ *You are invited to stand*



Choral Introit

Welcome

Announcements

Prelude

"As Moses' Hymn & Miriam's Psalm," Movements I & II, by John Barr

❖ **Call to Worship** *(from Psalm 119:1-5)*

Leader: Happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.

People: Happy are those who keep God's decrees, who seek God with their whole heart.

Leader: Happy are we, when we do no wrong and walk in God's ways.

People: O that our ways may be steadfast in keeping your commandments, O Lord.

ALL: Let us worship God!

❖ **Hymn #430**

Come Sing, O Church, in Joy!, tune: Darwall's 148th

❖ **Invocation**

Ever loving and eternal God, source of the light that never sets and of the love that never fails. Life of our life, Father of our spirits; draw near to us, and by the remembrance of your ancient mercies, and by the ministry of the Church, teach us and lead us nearer to you; by all our fears, by all our joys and sorrows, by life and death itself, teach us and lead us nearer to you. Amen.

Chancel Choir Anthem

*Let Music Fill This Place, by Joseph Martin
(Directed by Katie McInnis)*

Scripture Lessons

Epistle Lesson (from the Revised Standard Version Bible)

Romans 13:8-14

⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet'; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

¹¹ Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹² the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³ let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. ¹⁴ Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Gospel Lesson (from the Revised Standard Version Bible)

Matthew 18:15-20

¹⁵ 'If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶ But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector. ¹⁸ Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.'

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

The Look of Love - Rev. Robert Garrels

Sharing of our Joys & Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Choral Amen

Call to Offering

Offertory

Offertory in G Minor – Homage to Couperin, by Craig A. Pendell

❖ **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**

Loving God, with hearts brimming with love, we present these offerings. May our love infuse every gesture, every coin, every effort. Let these gifts be an extension of the boundless love you have bestowed upon us, nurturing the hearts and lives they touch. Amen.

❖ **Sacrament of Holy Communion**

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Leader: God is with us!

People: We are not alone!

Leader: Lift up your hearts,

People: We lift them up to God.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Words of Institution

Prayer of Consecration

Sharing of the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Thank you, O Christ, for this feast of life.

We are fed by your love;

We are strengthened by your life.

We are sent forth into this world to live into the visions God has laid on our hearts.

We are now commissioned to:

Feed as we have been fed,

Forgive as we have been forgiven,

Love as we have been loved.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

❖ **Hymn #425**

Lord of Light, Your Name Outshining, tune: Abbot's Leigh

❖ **Benediction**

Choral Benediction

Postlude

Recessional on "St. Denio," by Gordon Young



The altar flowers today are given by Julie Kysela
in honor of Julie & Stan's 43rd wedding anniversary.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today we welcome Rev. Bob Garrels to lead worship. Welcome back to the United Church! Thank you for sharing with us today!

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." With the demand, any non-perishable food item is also greatly appreciated. The bin in the Narthex is available to accept donations.

PLEASE HELP! Beginning Sept. 24th, Wayne McKay will be selling candy bars to help 7th-grade Kelloggsville students raise money for a day trip to Chicago. These are economically and socially challenged youth from diverse cultures. 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 help Wayne bring enough boxes of candy. You can contact Wayne for additional information at 231-250-3691 or wemckay@charter.net.

Welcome back to the Chancel Choir! Rehearsals are scheduled for Wednesdays at 10:00 am in the choir room. New voices are always welcome!

Adopt-a-Highway Clean Up is scheduled for Saturday, September 23, 2023, with a rain date of Saturday, September 30. 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 9:00 am 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 questions, contact Susan H. Grant at adonaldgrant73@gmail.com.

THANK YOU to all the volunteers who help out around the church and don't often get a shout-out. Small maintenance projects, outside work that keeps the church looking good, serving as liturgists, hosting coffee hours, serving on commissions and committees, providing altar flowers, and helping with the media team each Sunday. Your efforts are invaluable! Volunteers make our church work, and we are grateful for your service!

Contacting the church office – Julie will be out of the office this week until Thursday, September 14. You may contact the office at any time via email, secretary@unitedchurchbr.org or you can call **231-527-9567**. Messages and emails will be responded to in a timely manner. 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 Minister	Rev. Robert Garrels
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.....	Frank Hartley
Sound Board	Trish McHugh, Peter McHugh
Sanctuary Sound	Wayne McKay
Liturgist	Alice Bandstra
Ushers.....	Jane Grzybowski, Marilyn Loken, Paul Challender
Fellowship Time Hosts.....	Marge Panches
Livestream Team.....	Annie Ducat, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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