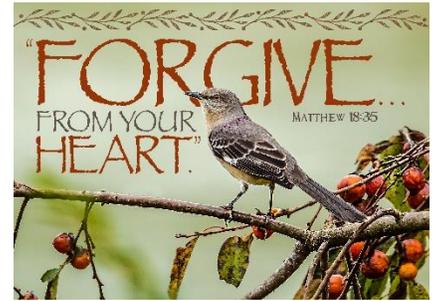


The United Church of Big Rapids
September 17, 2023
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

❖ *You are invited to stand*



Choral Introit

Welcome

Announcements

Prelude

In the Sanctuary, by G. F. Handel

❖ **Call to Worship**

Leader: Grace is the cup of tea, the warm welcome, and the sweet embrace: it's the school rebuilt, the playground equipped, and the hungry heart fed.

People: Grace dwells deep and sends us out.

Leader: Grace is the effort in our hopes, the movement of our dreams: it's forgiving the wrong and working for right.

People: Grace is speaking the truth and claiming the change.

Leader: Grace is the challenge to raise the olive branch when push invites shove: it's the courage to embrace and the struggle to live a new way.

People: We gather in Grace, to celebrate God's call to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly side-by-side.

❖ **Prayer of Invocation**

We sing and speak your praise, O God, grateful for the many ways in which you have healed us. Keep our hearts, our minds, and our spirits open to learn ways in which we can offer healing love for others. For we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

❖ **Hymn #142**

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name, tune: Coronation

Scripture Lessons

Gospel Lesson

Matthew 18:21-35

²¹ Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' ²² Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.'

²³ 'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on

his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." ²⁹ Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Chancel Choir Anthem

Love, by Allen Koepke

Sermon

Settling Accounts – 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

Sing Joyfully to God, by Robert J. Powell

❖ 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**

Ever-patient God, you amaze us each day with your ability to forgive our many sins. You display merciful acts and answer our prayers in profound ways. Help us to be stewards of your mercy and grace. Transform these gifts into active ministries. Multiply the span of these ministries to reach people in new ways. We pray in the name of the one who shows us mercy, Jesus Christ. Amen.

❖ **Hymn #555**

Now Thank We All Our God, tune: Nun danket alle Gott

❖ **Benediction**

Choral Benediction

Postlude

Festive Voluntary on "Nettleton," by David Lasky



The altar flowers today are given by Diane Fleming,
in memory of Jon.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

"New" members – Please join us in the Parlor after worship to welcome Bill and Nancy Peters as new members to the United Church family. Bill and Nancy have been worshipping with us for quite a while and their letter of transfer was received and accepted at the beginning of September by the Governing Board. Welcome to the United Church family, Bill and Nancy!

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!

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 Minister	Rev. Devon Herrell
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.....	Wayne McKay
Sound Board	Bruce Fredrick
Sanctuary Sound	Wayne McKay
Liturgist	Dee Van Horn
Ushers.....	Paul Challender, Maxine McKay, Marilyn Loken
Livestream Team.....	Annie Ducat, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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