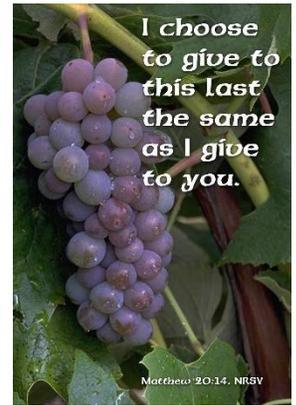


The United Church of Big Rapids
September 24, 2023
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

❖ *You are invited to stand*



Choral Introit

Welcome

Announcements

Prelude

Lord Jesus, Ever Loving, by Rex Koury

❖ **Call to Worship**

Leader: Come!

People: We come to worship,

Leader: we who woke early, and we who slept late.

People: Some who come often, and some who don't.

Leader: Whether we are first or last or somewhere in between,

People: there is room for all of us in God's kingdom,

Leader: and more than enough grace to go around.

People: Let's worship God together!

❖ **Prayer of Invocation**

Call all the laborers, O God,

Call your laborers who woke early,

Call your laborers who came late,

Call your laborers who feel wronged,

Call your laborers who feel overlooked,

Call your laborers who can't feed their children with this wage,

Call your laborers who know they are working in your fields,

Call your laborers who use their wage to increase your love,

Call all your laborers, O God,

Tell us to roll up our sleeves

For we know that we have work to do.

Let us find you in the work we share here and now,

In Christ's presence we pray. Amen.

Scripture Lessons*Gospel Lesson**Matthew 20:1-16*

'For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; ⁴ and he said to them, "You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, "Why are you standing here idle all day?" ⁷ They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You also go into the vineyard." ⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, "Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first." ⁹ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." ¹³ But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?" ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.'

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

People: Thanks be to God.

Chancel Choir Anthem*African Psalm, Victor C. Johnson**Roger Vajda – Soloist, Katie McInnis - Djembe***Sermon***It's Not Fair – 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

Wonderful Words of Life, by Van Denman Thompson

❖ 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

Knowing God, in many ways we live so abundantly. Yet, we often forget the nature of your divine gift. We become entangled in the snares of self-centeredness. Today, we joyfully share these many offerings as a way to release ourselves from being self-focused to being God-focused. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen

❖ Hymn #343

Called as Partners in Christ's Service, tune: Beecher

❖ Benediction

Choral Benediction

Postlude

Postlude on "Duke Street," by Edward Broughton



The altar flowers today are given by Pat Heeter,
with thanksgiving for Kari Heeter Clark. Happy birthday!



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.

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!

Candy bars are available TODAY after worship in the Parlor. 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.

Thank you! Thank you all for being so welcoming and kind in our transition to the United Church family. We are so grateful for all of you and the kindness shown last week during Fellowship Hour and every Sunday. God's blessings – Bill & Nancy Peters

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
Chancel Choir Director	Linda Rinehart
Chancel Choir Assistant Director	Katie McInnis
Christian Education Program Director	Amanda Little
Bell Choir Director	Judy Tressler
Moderator	Marshall Henry
Elder in Charge	Marshall Henry
Sound Board	Peter McHugh, Trish McHugh
Sanctuary Sound	Wayne McKay
Liturgist	Sue Glatz
Ushers	Paul Challender, Jane Grzybowski, Marilyn Loken
Fellowship Hour Host	Amanda Little
Livestream Team	Annie Ducat, Wayne McKay
Technical Advisors	Amy Buse & Paul Heidemann

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