

Welcome to the
October 2024 Newsletter
of
The United Church of Big Rapids



120 S. State St.
Big Rapids, MI 49307
(231) 796-7124
(231) 527-9567

Sunday Morning Worship Service - 9:30 a.m.

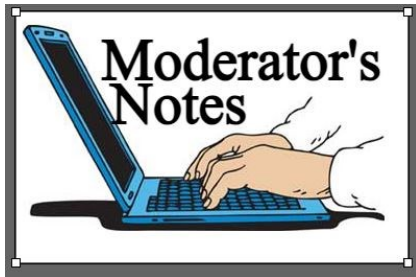
The United Church

120 S. State St., Big Rapids, MI 49307

(231) 796-7124 or (231) 527-9567 secretary@unitedchurchbr.org



Moderator's Message - October 2024



We all know that the fall is here, although not officially, because the calendar dictates that specific date for us. Our schools are back in session, football at all levels has begun, leaves are falling, and our choir is back and ready to sing. I want to encourage all of you to continue to be a part of our church mission as we continue our journey to serve our community in the celebration of Jesus Christ and be-

come good neighbors to all.

I have good news for all of you, Rev. Devon Herrell, has agreed to help us as a part time pastor as we move forward. She will provide pulpit supply in addition to working with Julie to assist whenever possible. Look for exciting new projects Rev. Devon has planned for our congregation! She wants to help us with worship and bulletin prep when Julie is in the office. Rev. Herrell is committed to doing this job with us and will commit through the fall and beyond if possible.

We have been fortunate to have such great pastors that have provided pulpit supply for our congregation since December 2022. We will continue to rely on them at times as we move through 2024 and into 2025. A special thank you to: Rev. David Wheeler, Rev. Forrest Hoppe, Rev. Bob Garrels, Mr. Bob MacCord, Rev. Lillian Daniel, Rev. Penny Lowes, Revs David & Susan Sickelka, Rev. Andy DeBra-ber, Rev. Kaye Patton, Rev. Bruce Roller, Rev. Taylor Kunst, Rev. Bert Nelson and others over the last 21+ months.

Please provide as much support as possible to help Julie and Devin and your Governing Board as we move us forward to a successful 2024 and 2025. I encourage you to consider joining our Governing Board and a committee that might interest you in the upcoming year. We all have to work together to assist our church to continue its mission in the community.

God Bless All of You - Marshall Henry, Moderator

World Communion Sunday is October 6

In celebration of World Communion Sunday, the Spiritual Life Commission will be decorating the sanctuary with fabrics from different cultures. If you have a piece of cloth or table runner or something that you'd like to share with the congregation and you are willing to loan it to us, please bring it into the church office with your name and where it comes from by Thursday, October 3. We are looking forward to a very colorful Communion celebration!

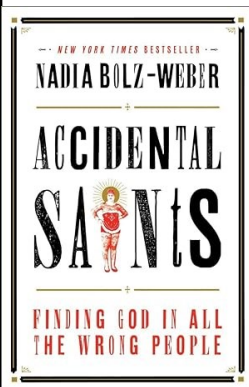




Rev. Dr. Devon Herrell is an ordained pastor in the United Methodist Church, currently serving as a corporate chaplain for Tyson foods in Allendale. Devon resides in Big Rapids with her partner, Laura and daughter Lucy, two cats: Ramen and Noodle, and a dog, Mochi. She is a lover of people, coffee, and spending as much time enjoying the outdoors as possible. She received her Master of Divinity from Emory University and her Doctor of Ministry from Claremont School of Theology. Faith development, meditative practices, and helping people make space to grow in relationship with the Holy are all the parts of ministry she enjoys the most.

Hi Friends! I am excited for the opportunity to journey with you for the next few months. Let's have some fun together! My chaplaincy job is full-time so my time will be a bit limited for in-person conversations. Starting September 26th, I plan to be in the office from 8a-12pm on Thursdays and can be available by phone for pastoral care needs anytime (231-649-2302). My hope is to provide a little bit of pastoral support while the search team continues connecting with potential full-time Pastor candidates. I look forward to getting to know you further!

In addition to a few office hours I am hoping to start small-group gatherings this fall. The first monthly meeting will be on **October 15th, 7:00 pm.** We will start with the book *Accidental Saints*, by Naida Bolz-Weber. If you can focus on chapters 1 - 8 (pp. 1-80) prior to the 15th, that would be great. You can utilize the link below to purchase the book on Amazon for \$12. If you want to participate and need a book just let me know.



[Accidental Saints: Finding God in All the Wrong People: Bolz-Weber, Naida: 9781601427564; Amazon.com: Books](https://www.amazon.com/dp/9781601427564)

Our next conversation is scheduled for **November 19 at 7:00 pm.**

What a great turnout for our first "Pub Theology" session on September 24! We had 18 people show up. The plan is to continue this meeting time monthly. The next two meetings have been scheduled for **Tuesday, October 22 and Tuesday, November 26, both at 7:00 pm.** At this time, we will continue to meet at Cranker's but will consider other venues. If you have a suggestion, please contact the church office.

Thank you for your participation!

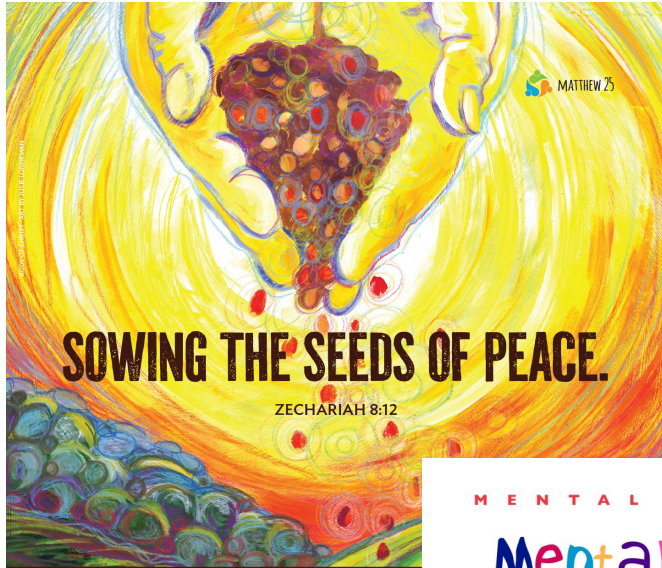


Special Offering To Be Collected

On October 6, during worship, we will be collecting the *Neighbors in Need (UCC)* and *Peace & Global Witness (PC-USA)* special offerings. This special offering supports ministries of justice and compassion through the United States through both of our parent denominations. 25% of the monies collected are kept by our church to support ministries of justice in our community.

"You Are With Me" - Teresa of Ávila

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.



M E N T A L H E A L T H J U S T I C E F O R A L L

Mental health is
a universal
human
Right

"God will not falter or lose heart until justice
prevails throughout the earth." (Isaiah 42:4)

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
NEIGHBORS IN NEED 2024
ucc.org/nin



Project Starburst – Keeping the Pantry Filled!

Project Starburst would like to thank the United Church members for their continued support of the pantry on a regular basis and are thankful for their participation in the “keep the pantry filled” project. The demand from families needing assistance continues including both returning families and new ones.

August was elbow noodles month and once again the church members were so generous with total donations of 20 boxes.

Instant potatoes are being collected for September. An update will be provided next month but the bin is filling and the generosity continues!

And the “Give to the Pantry” program has identified **instant rice packets** as the “food of the month” for October. Instant rice is an easy filler and wonderful to include with every order. So as demand increases, so does the need.



10th Annual Community Resource Group Winter Giveaway!

Do you have any coats, gloves, scarves, mittens or boots sitting or hanging around that you no longer use or need? How about your children or grandchildren – ready to let go of items they have outgrown?

For the past 10 years, a group within the community led by staff from DHHS has sponsored a giveaway event for members of the community in need of warm clothing for the winter months. They collect gently used coats, snow pants, hats, gloves, boots, etc. In greatest need every year are items for children. *This year the event will be held on October 24 at the First Methodist Church from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.* They are looking for donations as well as volunteers to help. There are 7 Big Rapids locations to donate items or we will be collecting them at the Church.



Just drop your donations off in the Church Library. And if you would like to volunteer, contact Bonnie Swish at 231-492-7518 or swoishb@michigan.gov. This is a great way to help others and assure that members of the community are cared for when the cold weather arrives.

MISSION/SOCIAL ACTION COMMISSION:

The Mission/Social Action Commission currently meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 4:00 pm in the church parlor. Our meetings are open, and anyone interested in the work of the commission is invited to attend. Virtual attendance can be arranged by letting the commission chair, Dee Van Horn (email: deevanhorn44@gmail.com) no later than the Friday before the scheduled meeting.

MISSION
&
SOCIAL ACTION



From the Mission Commission

The Mission Commission continues to support the local organizations/charities that carry out our mission to help the members of our community who face food insecurity, the need for safe and affordable housing, safety in their day to day lives within the community (whether it be from personal crisis or from voices of discrimination). We encourage all of our Church members to support these organizations in whatever way they can; whether it be through financial donations, support of specific events or as volunteers. Your commission members encourage you to visit the links below for each organization to learn more about them and their needs.

Project Starburst - <https://projectstarburst.org/>

Our Brother's Keeper - <https://www.obkshelter.org/>

WISE - <https://wiseagainstviolence.org/>

Mecosta County Habitat For Humanity - <https://mecostahabitat.org/>

Pride Big Rapids - <https://www.pridebigrapids.org/>



Dates to Remember

October 3 - Support OBK—Applebee's - 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm, 20% of purchases to OBK

October 24 - 10th Annual Coat Giveaway Event



Note of **THANKS**

From Voca Lyrica:

Thank you for hosting our Big Rapids community and opening your wonderful space as a center of growth and learning! Voca Lyrica and the Treblemakers greatly appreciate your support and hospitality!

Sincerely,

Katie McInnis, Artistic Director - Voca Lyrica, Conductor - Treblemakers

Beth Schoenlein, President - Voca Lyrica

THANK YOU UCBR ECO-ACTIVISTS!!

On a beautiful September morning, eighteen dedicated volunteers devoted themselves to cleaning up our assigned segment of the US 131 Highway. The crew was composed of long-serving members who were joined by some of our newest members, a friend from Immanuel Lutheran Church and a Ferris Students. The participants in the pictures below are: Sue Boitos; Paul Challender; Carlene Gahrs; Sue Glatz, Susan H. Grant; Marshall Henry; Julie Kysela; June Liu (new member); William McFarlin (Katie's FSU student); Katie McInnis; Leah Mongar (Immanuel); Don Olree; Don Stephen; Jack Somsel; Kurt Somsel; Maureen Somsel; Judy Tressler; and, Juliet Zhon (new member).

We worked diligently for most of the morning, gathering approximately sixty bags of trash and making our corner of creation that much cleaner. The United Church of Big Rapids is grateful to have these good and faithful servants to assist us with this worthwhile mission.



From the Governing Board

We are sure you notice that each Sunday a member of the Governing Board serves as "Elder in Charge" for the service. As much as each of them enjoys this activity, there are months when it has been difficult to fill all of the slots due to vacations and other personal events. So the Board members are happy to announce that they welcome members of the congregation to share this duty with them. Now named "Member in Charge," all members of the congregation are encouraged to share this responsibility. If you are interested in participating, please contact Moderator, Marshall Henry.



And, as a reminder, the Governing Board meets once a month on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:45 pm in the Parlor. The meetings are open to any member of the congregation who would like to attend.

THE UNITED CHURCH

The United Church of Big Rapids
is an
Open and Affirming (UCC) and a More Light Church (PC-USA)

Thanks to the hard work of our O&A Implementation team and many others in our church family, our church is recognized by both denominations as an inclusive church!

<https://openandaffirming.org/ona/>



<https://mlp.org/>



MORE LIGHT
PRESBYTERIANS

You can click on the links above to get more information about what this means to the "outside world." Thank you to all who live out the words in our O & A Covenant!

Date	Name	Date	Couple	Years
10/2	Megan Vajda	10/6	Maxine & Murray Sayre	67
10/6	Elizabeth Morningstar	10/12	Jim & Terri Cook	23
10/12	Katie McInnis	10/20	Carolyn & Jim Chipman	62
10/14	Dee Van Horn			
10/16	Don Olree			
10/21	Nancy Peters			
10/24	Judy Tressler			
10/27	Robert McInnis			
10/31	Janet Williams			



Thank You!

Thank you to the many volunteers that help make The United Church a welcoming place for all! Your efforts do not go unnoticed! We're so thankful for the help & time given to the Church to spread God's love.

Want to host coffee hour after worship or provide altar flowers on Sunday morning? Check the sign up sheets on the hallway bulletin board for available dates. No training or experience needed!



Remember that you may access our monthly events calendar online from our website, www.unitedchurchbr.org. The calendar is kept up-to-date. If you have questions or would like an item added to the calendar, please contact the church office.



Service Volunteers for October

Thank you for volunteering to serve on Sundays! If you see some empty spaces & would like to volunteer, contact the church office. If you'd like to volunteer in future months, let us know - we'd love to have you!

A special thanks to our hard-working media team - Amy Buse, Jaylah Lewis, Aleah Ritzema, Wayne McKay, and Paul Heidemann who make sure we can all see and hear the service, in the sanctuary and through the livestream and radio broadcasts.

There are spaces available on the sign-up sheets on the bulletin board to provide flowers or to provide coffee after worship during Fellowship time.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Liturgist</u>	<u>Member in Charge</u>	<u>Flowers</u>	<u>Fellowship Time Host</u>	<u>Sound Board</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
10/6	Kari Clark				Mike Rinehart	Paul Challender, Don Stephen, Julie Kysela
10/13	Sue Glatz				Peter McHugh Trish McHugh	Maxine McKay, Jane Grzybowski, Don Olree
10/20	Dee Van Horn		Jim & Carolyn Chipman		Peter McHugh Kerri Rouech	Carlene Gahrs John Gahrs
10/27	Diane Fleming		Diane Fleming		Randy Vance	Paul Challender, Jane Grzybowski, Marge Punches

We also would like to thank the Spiritual Life Commission for all they do to make our worship meaningful each Sunday.



Joys/Concerns Form Available

On the Cards of Caring table there are some half sheet forms that say "Joys/Concerns." This form is to let you inform the church of any prayer requests or joys that we may be able to share during Sunday morning worship. You may share your own or someone else's (with their permission, of course.) The office can also arrange for a visit or a call from Pastor Devon, if you desire. You are important to us all and we want to help celebrate your joys or listen/act when there is a problem. Please reach out!!



Don't forget to sign the friendship pad in the pew on Sunday morning! Encourage any visitors to add their name and address as well. If someone is interested in becoming a member of the church - have them contact the church office!



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.

Our Vision and Mission Statements

Our vision is to honor all children of God through following the ways 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 learn to foster more justice and love in ourselves and our community.

Contacting the Church

The church office is open and staffed Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm.

Messages & emails are checked every day.

231-527-9567

Leave a message if no one answers, your call will be returned as soon as possible.

You can also reach the church office via e-mail:

Secretary@unitedchurchbr.org

You can also see videos and keep up with us on:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/UnitedChurch

YouTube: www.youtube.com/@unitedchurchbigrapids.com

Sunday morning worship (9:30 am) is live streamed on YouTube with a link on our Facebook page and also broadcast live on WWBR-FM, 100.9.