

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



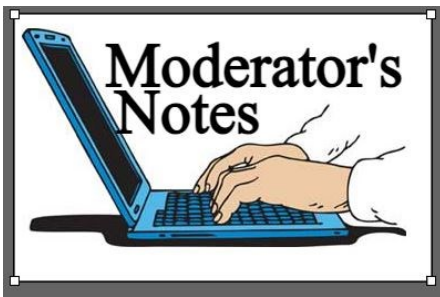
120 S. State St.
Big Rapids, MI 49307
(231) 796-7124
(231) 527-9567

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 - August 2024

Good evening, I am at home working on the new message to our congregation for the month of August. I am looking forward to the Annual United Church summer picnic at Northend Park on July 21. It's always a good time to meet with members and friends on a social basis, while still having the time to worship in a natural setting (if it doesn't rain!!).

Our Governing Board is working with various groups and individuals in the church to move us forward toward making the United Church of Big Rapids a strong religious institution. We need everyone to continue supporting the church with its religious mission to its members and the surrounding community. Please try to find time to volunteer as a member in charge, usher, liturgist, choir member, fellowship hour host(s), commission member.

We are moving closer to finding a permanent pastor, because of the hard-working members of our committees. Our church has been fortunate to have been served by numerous retired pastors and trained lay people over the last 18 months from both the United Church of Christ and Presbytery USA church groups. Our congregation has been welcoming to the many clergy that have provided pulpit supply for our congregation. With our welcoming membership to all visitors, it makes it easier for me, as Moderator, to find the clergy needed to fill the pulpit each week. Many of the clergy look forward to serving our church in the pulpit. I wish everyone a great summer and hope that I had a chance to visit with you at our annual United Church picnic in the park in July.

God Bless -

Marshall Henry, Moderator

It's Time for Meijer Simply Give

Project Starburst will be the recipient for the Meijer Simply Give program starting on Sunday, June 30, through Saturday, September 28, 2024. Double Days are Saturday, August 17th and Saturday, September 14th. A \$10 donation to Simply Give on that day will equal \$30! Cards are available at the Meijer store .

Demand for services continues to grow. Project Starburst reports serving 1,147 individuals representing 313 families in June. Together, we can be a source of hope and compassion for our neighbors in need. Thank you for your ongoing support!



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.

June was cereal month and once again the church members were so generous with total donations of 23 boxes of cereal, 1 jar of peanut butter, and 1 package of lasagna noodles.

Mac and cheese is being collected for July. 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 **elbow noodles** as the “food of the month” for August. Elbow noodles are a staple that every family gets with an order. So as demand increases, so does the need.



School Supplies Needed for Project Starburst

The start of school is fast approaching and children will need school supplies to be able to participate fully in their educational experience. The Mission/Social Action Commission is gathering school supplies for Project Starburst to share with their clients. Your assistance is needed to meet this need. As always, backpacks, pencils, crayons, spiral notebooks, folders, erasers, glue sticks, etc.



are needed and welcome. Project Starburst staff indicate they ran out of folders, erasers, glue sticks and pencil holders last year. So you may want to think of those items as you shop. Your donation can be dropped off at the Church in the library on the 1st floor or in Canadian Lakes at Coldwell Banker Realty. A special thank you to Rick Kempton for supporting our effort. We would like to receive all donations by August 11.

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/>

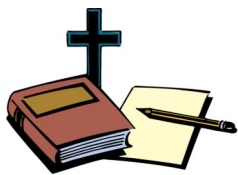
Pride Big Rapids - <https://www.pridebigrapids.org/>



Dates to Remember

- **August 1** - Lake – Mecosta – Osceola Counties Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Day – Mecosta County – Location: Chippewa Hills Intermediate School (3226 Arthur Rd., Remus) Time: 2-6 p.m.
- **August 11** – Deadline for School Supplies Donations
- **August 17 and September 14** – Double Match Days for Meijer Simply Give for Project Starburst
- **September 7** – WISE 5K Fun Run & Walk – see wiseagainstviolence.org for more information.

News from the Christian Education Commission



**CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION**

Kerri Rouech is the current Governing Board representative for Christian Education. She has been working on accumulating more toys, craft materials, and books that would be appropriate for the ages of our current Sunday school attendees. She has put together a list on Amazon of some things that might be helpful. If you are considering making a gift to the Christian Education program, you can look at the list at this link: https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1CA99PCFWBC3V?ref=wl_share. Purchases from the list can be shipped directly to the church to Kerri's attention.

In addition, the Children's Time during worship will be re-started on a periodic basis as well.

Questions about our Christian Education program may be directed to Kerri.

SEARCH & CALL COMMITTEE



The UCBR Search Committee continues to review profiles as we receive them from our two denominations. There were some unanticipated "hiccups", for example: The Presbyterian Church USA changed the system but did not inform us that we basically had to "renew" our Church Profile on their newly constructed website. The Michigan Conference UCC underwent some personnel changes but we are working with the new Liaison Associate Conference Minister, who recently sent us several profiles for our review. We have a process in place and are working diligently to find a settled Pastor. We appreciate your continued prayers and patience as we proceed with our quest.

Blessings and Peace, Susan H Grant, Chair, UCBR Search Committee.

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.

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 a pastor, 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!!



Friendship pads are back in the pews!!



On Sunday morning, we'd like to invite you to sign in on the friendship pad that is in the pew that you were here. Invite any guests in your row to sign in as well. If you're the last one to sign, if you could remove the page and put it in the offering plate on your way out—that would be great!

We want to be able to keep track of our visitors and their contact information so we can invite them back again!!

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
8/3	Marilyn Loken	8/4	Drake & Andrea Renas	6
8/9	Jack Somsel	8/14	Frank & Karol Hartley	31
8/12	Trish McHugh	8/15	Lowell & Becky Jacobs	60
8/19	Marshall Henry	8/18	Bruce & Deb Ducat	45
8/19	Judy Mullens	8/18	John & Shirley Garlick	52
8/22	Joan Paepke	8/18	Roger & Peggy Peterson	56
8/29	Diane Fleming	8/22	Jacob & Julia Guest	15
8/29	Linda Vance	8/25	Gary & Bonnie Huey	51
		8/26	John & Carlene Gahrs	35
		8/29	Kyle & Kerri Rouech	9



**AUGUST BIRTHDAYS
& ANNIVERSARIES**

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!



Altar Flowers

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 June

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!

<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>
8/4	Jim Bandstra				Mike Rinehart	Julie Kysela, Paul Challender, Alice Dean
8/11	Sue Glatz		Sue Glatz John Berkenpas		Susan H. Grant	Maxine McKay, Marshall Henry, Melanie Henry
8/18	Dee Van Horn		Don Olree		Bruce Fredrick	Don Olree, Jane Grzybowski
8/25	Susan H. Grant		John & Carlene Gahrs		Peter McHugh Trish McHugh	Paul Challender, Marge Panches

A special thanks to our hard-working media team - Amy Buse, Jaylah Lewis, 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.

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





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.