

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



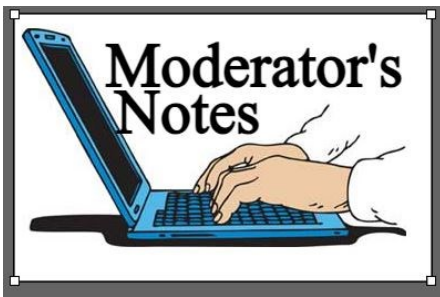
120 S. State St.
Big Rapids, MI 49307
(231) 796-7124
(231) 527-9567

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 - July 2024

The 2024 year is moving right along as we reach the halfway point of the year. We have been fortunate to have a dedicated church membership that has been involved in our church in many capacities. I went through the church membership roster recently and found that there were over 50 members actively involved in the mission of our church. There are many more members who regularly contribute in a monetary way to the operation of our church who are unable to be here in person. As members we should feel fortunate that we have so many who care for our church and its mission in the community and Mecosta County.

Over the last 18 months I have been tasked to recruit pastors for pulpit supply on a weekly basis for our Sunday service. We have been fortunate that many of the retired clergy who provide pulpit supply for our congregation are willing to return to our church in an ongoing basis. This is something you should be proud of as a congregation. I have had members ask me about pastors who regularly return to preach at our Sunday services. I know why, because they enjoy coming to the United Church of Big Rapids, because of the friendly members, our mission and warm reception that they receive whenever they return to preach on Sunday.

I am looking forward to our Sunday service in the North End Park on July 21. I always enjoy the fellowship, conversation, music, food, games and good times had by all.

Have a great July 4th holiday with your family and friends. Please remember why we celebrate that holiday and all the people in the world who cannot celebrate the freedoms we enjoy.

God Bless -

Marshall Henry, Moderator

Worship, Fellowship, and Food are on the Way!

Our annual outdoor service, hosted by the Spiritual Life Commission, will be held at 9:30 am at Northend Riverside Park on Sunday, July 21 in the double pavilion. Plans are in the works for an interesting time. A potluck lunch will follow the service.

Please bring a dish to pass and your own table service. Beverages will be available. There will be plenty of food for everyone, so please join us for a time of fellowship and food whether you bring a dish or not. Stay tuned for more information as the date draws near.

In the event of potential bad weather, check your email or Facebook the day of the event.



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.

May was soup month and once again the church members were so generous – 45 cans/packages of soup along with 3 cans of veggies, 3 pairs of socks and 1 feminine hygiene item.



Cereal is being collected for June. An update will be provided next month but the bin is filling and the generosity continues!

And the “Give to the Pantry” program has once again identified mac and cheese as the “food of the month” for July. Mac and cheese is a staple that every family gets with an order. So as demand increases, so does the need for mac and cheese.

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 1200 individuals in May. Together, we can be a source of hope and compassion for our neighbors in need. Thank you for your ongoing support!

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/>

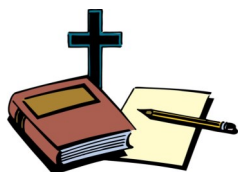
WISE - <https://wiseagainstviolence.org/>

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

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



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 |
|------|----------------|------|-----------------------|-------|
| 7/1 | Luke Somsel | 7/13 | Chuck & Kay Achterhof | 39 |
| 7/3 | Carol Larimer | 7/25 | Dave & Candy Reichert | 37 |
| 7/8 | Jim Chipman | 7/31 | Rob & Katie McInnis | 27 |
| 7/12 | Erin Dumond | | | |
| 7/14 | Richard Boitos | | | |
| 7/14 | Frank Hartley | | | |
| 7/17 | Kay Achterhof | | | |
| 7/19 | Peter McHugh | | | |
| 7/21 | River Rewa | | | |
| 7/23 | Julia Guest | | | |
| 7/31 | Gail DesNoyers | | | |



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> |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| 7/7 | | | Susan H. Grant | | Mike Rinehart | |
| 7/14 | Dee Van Horn | | | | Bruce Fredrick | |
| 7/21 | | | Barb Johnson & Julie Cole | Spiritual Life Commission | Paul Heidemann | |
| 7/28 | | | | | Peter McHugh Trish McHugh | |

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 mean-



Happy 248th Birthday, America!

Enjoy your 4th of July holiday!!

The church office will be closed on Thursday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day. Voicemail messages and emails will be responded to on Friday, July 5. The office will reopen on Monday, July 8. Happy Fourth of July!!



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.