

Welcome to the  
June 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](mailto:secretary@unitedchurchbr.org)



## THANK YOU!



A note of sincere thanks to Marshall Henry, moderator of The United Church Governing Board, for his work in securing pulpit supply for us every week. Marshall has been relentless in his quest to fill the pulpit each Sunday. We have our calendar filled for every Sunday through September! While we hope that we find a new pastor soon (and a huge thank you to the Pastor Search Committee for their hard work!), we appreciate Marshall's dedication to his job as moderator!

We also need to say thank you to the Governing Board representatives: Roger Vajda, Wayne McKay, Chuck Achterhof, Erin Dumond, and Kerri Rouech, as well as our clerk, Dee Van Horn, and our treasurer, Amy Buse. They work hard keeping the church running smoothly.

There are so many others that do so much behind the scenes - THANK YOU for what you do! I know I'll miss someone if I try to list all the names, but know that you and your work are appreciated!!

- Julie

## Congratulations, Graduates!

It's graduation season! While we may not have pictures and/or names to celebrate each graduate individually, we wish the very best to each and every person who has reached this milestone in their academic career, whether it be from kindergarten, grade school, middle, school, high school or college. You have worked hard for this achievement. We wish you all the best as you take the next step in your life. The United Church is always here for you! Our prayers and good wishes always!



## SAVE THE DATE!!



Our annual worship service at Northend Riverside Park is scheduled for Sunday, July 21. Additional details will be shared as the date gets closer, but mark your calendars for what is always a highlight to our summer!

## 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.



April was cereal month and once again the church members were so generous – over 30 boxes of cereal and other non-perishables made for a generous donation to the pantry.

And the “Give to the Pantry” program has once again identified **cereal** as the “food of the month” for June. With every order, a family or individual gets a box of cereal. So as demand increases, so does the need for cereal.

## DUMP AND RUN IS SUCCESSFUL

During the 20th annual Dump & Run activity, headed by Immanuel Lutheran Church, volunteers from Immanuel, the United Church, New Journey Clubhouse, and Habitat for Humanity, collected 1,577 pounds of goods that were donated to twelve different non-profit endeavors. You can read more about Dump and Run on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/UnitedBigRapids>



Thank you to all the volunteers!!



For all the men in our lives that fill a fatherly role, for the soon to be dads, the dads, and the dads who don't have children of their own, for whatever reason... we are thankful for you and give thanks to God for giving us you!

## 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, Frank Hartley (email: [hartley51micro@gmail.com](mailto:hartley51micro@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/>



## Opportunities to Have Fun and Support Three Great Organizations

The Mission Commission follows the needs and activities of 5 local organizations working to meet the needs of community members. Two of those organizations have fund raisers coming up that will be fun for anyone – especially golfers. And the third is sponsoring a festival!

### Habitat for Humanity 2024 – Annual Golf Outing

When: Wednesday, June 19, 2024

Where: Royal Golf Course, Canadian Lakes

Entry fee: \$95 per player

For more information – [www.mecostahabitat.org](http://www.mecostahabitat.org)



### WISE 2024 Golf Outing

When: Wednesday, June 26, 2024

Where: Clear Lake Golf Club, Big Rapids

Entry fee: \$80 per golfer

For more information – [www.wiseagainstviolence.org](http://www.wiseagainstviolence.org)



### 2024 Pride Big Rapids Festival

When: Sunday, June 30, 2024

Where: Downtown Big Rapids

Time: 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

For more information – [www.pridebigrapids.org](http://www.pridebigrapids.org)



### *News from the Christian Education Commission*



**CHRISTIAN  
EDUCATION**

It is great to see young people in church and attending Sunday school. There are lots of things going on and the CE Commission will keep you up to date on all the happenings!!

Amanda Little will be working in the nursery & insure that there will be coverage for the nursery each Sunday.

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](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 UCB 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, UCB 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.



### Would You Be Interested in Going to a Whitecaps Game!?

We are planning a church visit to the Whitecaps game at 5/3 Field, Comstock Park, on Sunday, June 23. It's an afternoon game vs. the Dayton Dragons. Tickets would be \$22 for a reserved stadium chair with a cupholder, and a coupon for a free soda and hot dog. (Parking is NOT included in the price.) Please sign up on the sheet in the narthex so we can gauge interest - we need 20 people to go to get the group price. We will be ordering tickets about June 9 and money will be collected at that time. Invite your friends! An invitation to our friends at Immanuel Lutheran has been issued as well. Hope to see you at the ballpark!!

### 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!!

Please update your address book:

**Marilyn Loken**  
404 Greenleaf Circle #211  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Email: [smloken@hotmail.com](mailto:smloken@hotmail.com)  
Cell: 231-250-2298



# 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
6/2	Deb Chipman	6/3	Bill & Nancy Peters	68
6/2	Tessa Helsel	6/10	Steve & Heather Derwin	18
6/8	Pat Heeter	6/15	Don & Sandi Morris	61
6/9	Maureen Somsel	6/17	Marshall & Melanie Henry	57
6/12	Charles Achterhof	6/19	Bob & Paula Hampson	25
6/22	Bob Cassidy	6/20	John Berkenpas & Sue Glatz	12
6/22	Sue Glatz			
6/22	Nick Somsel			
6/23	Carol Yacavone			
6/27	Roger Vajda			



### JUNE 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](http://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!

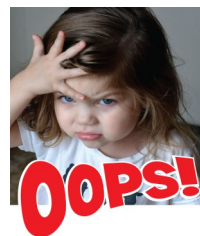
<u>Date</u>	<u>Liturgist</u>	<u>Member in Charge</u>	<u>Flowers</u>	<u>Fellowship Time Host</u>	<u>Sound Board</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
6/2	Diane Fleming			Marge Panches Don Stephen Judy Tressler	Mike Rinehart	Alice Dean, Paul Challender, Don Stephen, Judy Tressler
6/9	Kari Clark		Diane Fleming	John & Carlene Gahrs	Kerri Rouech Peter McHugh	Melanie Henry, Marshall Henry, Maxine McKay
6/16	Dee Van Horn		Julie Cole		Bruce Fredrick	Jane Grzybowski, Paul Challendar, Carlene Gahrs, John Gahrs
6/23	Jim Bandstra				Susan H. Grant	Jane Grzybowski, Sue Boitos, Kay Achterhof
6/30	Susan H. Grant				Trish McHugh Peter McHugh	Maxine McKay, Carole Yacavone, Don Otree

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.



**Flag Day is June 14 -  
fly your flag  
proudly!!**



Correction to the flower dedication on May 26:

The altar flowers are given today by Maxine & Wayne McKay in memory of Maxine's brother, Robert James (Bobby Jim) Eddy, May 29, 1948-November 12, 1953.

My apologies for the mistake!





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](http://www.facebook.com/UnitedChurch)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/@unitedchurchbigrapids.com](http://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.