

SEPTEMBER MISSION GIVING: DISCRETIONARY FUND

Our Discretionary Fund allows us to respond quickly and compassionately when people in our congregation or community are struggling to make ends meet. It is a fund used to address immediate, practical needs—often at moments when few other resources are available.

In our community, we have become especially known for helping people put gas in their vehicles. A tank of gas may not sound like a major form of assistance, but it can mean getting to work, making it to a medical appointment, picking up groceries, or taking children to school. When every dollar is already spoken for, even a few gallons can help someone make it through a difficult week.

The fund also allows us to respond to larger emergency needs. During the past year, we purchased a refrigerator for a family that desperately needed one. We have assisted students and families who lacked basic household necessities, including beds, mattresses, pillows, sheets, and pillowcases. Each situation is different, but the purpose remains the same: to offer practical help with compassion, dignity, and as few barriers as possible.

We are deeply grateful for the generosity that makes this ministry possible. Every gift to the Discretionary Fund becomes a tangible expression of God’s love for a neighbor in need. September’s mission focus provides a special opportunity to support this important work. You may contribute anytime by:

- Giving online - ummcosta.org/give, select Discretionary Fund.
- Check / Cash - Write “Discretionary Fund” on your giving envelope or on the memo line of your check, indicating that a portion or all of that gift should be directed to the fund.

Thank you for your faithful regular giving, your special mission support, and the many other ways you help UMMMC embody Christ’s compassion. Together, we are helping our neighbors get to work, furnish a safe place to sleep, secure food for their families, and face difficult circumstances with the assurance that they are not alone.

BACKPACKS, BLESSINGS, AND A BRAND-NEW SCHOOL YEAR!

Pencils sharpened? Check. Folders labeled? Check. Backpack filled with approximately 847 things that may or may not be needed? Check. Now there is just one more thing to do: bring that backpack to church for a blessing!

Our annual Blessing of the Backpacks will take place during worship on Sunday, September 13. Children, youth, college students, teachers, school staff, administrators—and anyone else beginning a new academic year—are invited to bring their backpacks, tote bags, briefcases, or whatever accompanies them through the school day.

During worship, we will offer a special blessing for the bags and, more importantly, for the people who carry them. We will pray for curiosity, courage, patience, good friendships, caring teachers, hardworking students, safe schools, and enough grace to make it through the occasional forgotten assignment or mysteriously disappearing lunchbox.

A backpack carries more than books and supplies. It carries hopes, worries, responsibilities, possibilities, and sometimes a few crushed crackers hiding at the bottom. As a congregation, we want everyone returning to school to know that they are loved, supported, and surrounded by prayer throughout the year.

So pack up your backpack and bring it to worship on **September 13**. Let’s begin the new school year with plenty of joy, a little laughter, and a whole lot of blessing!

What’s Happening

SUNDAY, AUGUST 30

9AM - Worship @ Paris (North) Campus
10AM - Worship @ First Church (Downtown) Campus

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

9AM - Director’s Meeting @ Downtown Campus
12PM - Table Talk @ Downtown Campus

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

5:30PM - Community Dinner @ Downtown Campus

HELP SUPPORT CAMPUS MINISTRY AT FERRIS STATE

Are you passionate about supporting college students and helping create an inclusive, welcoming Christian presence at Ferris State University? The FSU Wesley Foundation is seeking individuals interested in serving on its board. Board members help guide and support the ministry as it connects with students and begins an exciting new chapter. If you would like to learn more about this opportunity, please contact Pastor Jeremy.

COMING NEXT WEEK: WHEN WEALTH BECOMES WORSHIP

Next Sunday, our journey through Micah continues with “*When Wealth Becomes Worship*,” based on Micah 2. Micah confronts powerful people who use their wealth and influence to take land, homes, and security from others. His words invite us to consider an important question: When do possessions stop being something we use and become something that controls us?

Together, we will explore how our faith shapes the ways we understand wealth, share resources, and respond to economic systems that leave some with far more than they need while others struggle to survive. Micah reminds us that God cares deeply about whether our neighbors have enough—and calls us to help build communities where everyone can live with dignity, security, and hope.

Read Micah 2 this week and join us next Sunday at either campus as we continue discovering what faithful living looks like in a fractured world.

CRAFTING WITH A CAUSE

Join us Saturday, September 12, from 10:00 a.m. to noon as we decorate hygiene tote bags for students at Big Rapids Virtual School. If you can color with markers, you can help—everyone is welcome! The group will gather for lunch at Gypsy Nickel afterward.

Both campuses are invited to donate personal hygiene products. Please see the bulletin board (Downtown, Fellowship Hall) for specific needs and place donations in the gray bins by Sunday, September 20. Thank you for supporting our local students!

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Barbara Erb - Director of Administrative Services
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Rev. Jeremy Wicks - Executive Pastor
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To schedule an appointment with Pastor Jeremy, contact Barbara Erb or schedule online @ calendly.com/jeremy-ummecosta

Week of August 30 - September 5, 2026

Family News



MICAH

Faithful Living in a Fractured World

UNITED METHODIST MINISTRIES OF MECOSTA COUNTY

304 ELM STREET, BIG RAPIDS MI 49307 • (231) 796-7771 • WWW.UMMECOSTA.ORG

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE HOURS: TUES - FRIDAY, 9AM - 3PM
PASTOR AND MINISTRY STAFF AVAILABLE BY APPOINTMENT

NORTH CAMPUS - PARIS

109 Lincoln St
Paris, MI 49338
ummecosta.org/paris

Worship Gathering in-person
Sundays @ 9:00AM

DOWNTOWN CAMPUS - FIRST

304 Elm Street
Big Rapids, MI 49307
bigrapidsfirst.org

Worship Gathering in-person and
live online, Sundays @ 10AM
www.facebook.com/brfumc

Services Archived Weekly:
www.youtube.com/@brfumc

Order of Worship - August 30, 2026

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

* Call to Worship (Reader / *People*)

Come from city streets and country roads,
from familiar places and forgotten corners.
We come ready to listen for the voice of God.

God speaks through prophets and neighbors,
through voices the powerful may overlook.
Every voice matters to God, and every person belongs.

In a fractured world, God calls us to see clearly,
listen humbly, and live faithfully.
*Open our hearts to your truth, O God, and
give us courage to follow where you lead.*

* Hymn - “O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing”, UMH #57

Children’s Message - “Every Voice Matters to God”

Scripture Reading - Micah 1:1–9 (NRSVUE)

Hymn - “Open My Eyes, That I May See”, UMH #454

Message - “Micah: A Prophet from the Countryside”

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer

* Doxology, UMH #95

* Blessing and Sending

* Hymn - “Here I Am, Lord”, UMH #593

Postlude

* PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

Welcome to First Church!

Welcome to First Church, the downtown campus of United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County - we’re so glad you’re here! This is a community where every person belongs, every story matters, and every question is welcome. If you’re new or exploring, we’d love to get to know you. You can learn more about who *we* are and find helpful information for your first visit at bigrapidsfirst.org.

Need directions? Curious about something? Our welcome team is nearby and ready to help. Truly, we’re delighted to worship with you today.

NOTES:



Check In Here

SERVING TODAY - AUGUST 30

Reader: Beth Bejcek
Ushers: Rex and Cheryl Richardson
Greeter: Betsy Curtis
Nursery: Julie Tessin, Kristi Supanich
Organist: Shirley Jernstadt
Accompanist: Kathy Bell
Tech Team: Ken Draves, Gary Poole

SERVING NEXT WEEK - SEPTEMBER 6

Reader: Doug Fitzgerald
Communion Assistants: Denise Cosper, Toinette Wicks
Ushers: Pat and Marion Williamson
Greeter: Nancy Spedowski
Nursery: NO Nursery
Fellowship Host: Toinette Wicks

THINK ABOUT IT THIS WEEK: A PROPHET FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE

Micah did not come from Jerusalem, the nation’s religious and political center. He came from Moresheth, a small rural community whose people were especially vulnerable to the decisions made by distant rulers and powerful landowners. And it’s from the countryside that Micah could see how corruption, injustice, and misplaced priorities harmed ordinary people. God called him to speak uncomfortable truths to those at the center of power.

His story reminds us that wisdom does not always come from the loudest, most influential, or most credentialed voices. God often speaks through people and communities the world is tempted to overlook. Micah invites us to listen more carefully to the experiences of people whose voices are frequently ignored. *Faithful living begins with the humility to recognize that God may speak from unexpected places and through unexpected people.*

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Whose voices are you most likely to trust, and what gives those voices credibility in your eyes?
- Are there people or communities whose experiences you tend to dismiss, overlook, or never encounter?
- Where do you see decisions made by powerful people affecting those who have little influence over those decisions?
- What might God be trying to help you see or hear through someone outside your usual circle?

LIVE IT OUT

- Have a conversation with someone whose background or experiences differ from your own. Focus on understanding rather than preparing a response.
- Pay attention to who speaks—and who is rarely invited to speak—in your church, workplace, community, and the media you consume.
- In a meeting or conversation, invite someone who has not spoken to share their perspective.
- Spend time with Micah 1:1–9. Notice where Micah speaks, what he sees, and how deeply he grieves over the suffering of others.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

God who speaks from unexpected places, quiet the voices that compete for our attention and teach us to listen with humility. Help us notice those who are overlooked, take seriously the experiences of those who are unheard, and recognize your truth wherever it is spoken. Give us courage to hear what may challenge us and faithfulness to respond with compassion and action. Amen.

CLOSING THOUGHT

God’s voice is not limited to the centers of power. Sometimes the truth we most need to hear comes from the people and places we have learned not to notice.

GO DEEPER AT TABLE TALK

Wednesday at 12PM, *Table Talk* will offer an opportunity to dig more deeply into the week’s Scripture and continue the conversation begun during worship. Together, we will ask questions, share perspectives, and consider how Micah’s message speaks to our lives, our church, and the world around us. No special knowledge or preparation is required—just bring your lunch, your curiosity, and a willingness to join the conversation.

Whether you attend every week or simply stop by when you can, Table Talk is also a great opportunity to connect with others as we learn, listen, and grow together.

Your generosity makes a difference! To avoid any confusion in our giving systems, please make your checks out to **First Church. Thank you for your continued support!**