

PANTRY UPDATE: MOVING TO NON-PERISHABLE FOOD

Thank you for the incredible support you have shown through our Personal Hygiene Pantry. Thanks to your generosity, we have been able to assist many neighbors over the past year+.

As we move into winter and face the very real impact of the federal government shutdown and the many questions around SNAP benefits, many families in our community are already experiencing heightened food insecurity. In response to this growing need, we are shifting our focus from hygiene items to non-perishable food donations for the season.

As winter temperatures approach, we are requesting items that will not freeze during transport or storage. Canned goods and dry shelf-stable foods are especially helpful right now. Suggested donations include:

- Canned vegetables, fruit, beans, and soups
- Pasta, rice, and boxed meals
- Peanut butter
- Cereal and oatmeal
- Shelf-stable proteins (tuna, chicken, beans, etc.)

Please avoid items with liquid in bottles or cartons, which may freeze and be damaged in storage. You can drop your donations off at First Church or place them directly in the pantry.

Your generosity makes a real and immediate difference. As a church, we are committed to standing with our neighbors through uncertain times, offering compassion, stability, and hope.

Thank you for being a community that shows love in tangible ways. If you have questions or would like to help with distribution, please contact the church office.

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS PARADE – VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

The Festival of Lights Parade is scheduled for Saturday, November 22, from 6–8 PM in downtown Big Rapids, and UMMMC will have a float! We need volunteers to help build the float @ 10AM on 11/22 and to join us the night of the parade. Julie Setlock, Director of Family Ministries, is coordinating. If you’d like to help, please contact Julie or Barb in the church office.

A NEW CHRISTMAS CHOIR IS FORMING!

We are excited to share that we’re forming a Christmas Choir for this Advent and Christmas season, directed by Ruth Zoccoli! This is open to absolutely everyone. Whether choir has been part of your life in the past or you just love to sing and want to be part of something meaningful this season, we’d love to have you.

The Christmas Choir will sing on November 30, December 7, December 21, and Christmas Eve. Rehearsals begin Wednesday, November 12, at 4 PM and will continue weekly at that time. If you’d like to participate, please contact Kathy Bell by November 16, 2025.

BAKING BUDDIES MINISTRY IS UNDERWAY

We’re kicking off a sweet new way to care for one another! Each Sunday, a set of take-home pans will be available for anyone who’d like to help provide baked goods for the next week’s coffee hour. Simply take a pan, fill it with homemade or store-bought treats during the week, and return it to Kitchen Too on Sunday morning. Our hospitality team will take it from there. Whether you love to bake, shop, or simply enjoy helping our church family gather with warmth and joy, this is an easy way to serve. Thanks for adding a little sweetness to our Sundays!

Happening This Week

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16

9:30AM - Worship @ Paris Campus
10:00AM - Worship @ First Church Campus
Fellowship & Coffee immediately After Worship, Fellowship Hall

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17

12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18

9AM - Ministry Staff Meeting
12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave
6:30PM - SOUL Circle Gathering @ First
7PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19

10AM - SOUL Circle Gathering @ First
11:30AM - Community Lunch @ Third Ave
4PM Christmas Choir Rehearsal
6PM - Euchre / Game Night @ First

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20

5:30PM - Community Dinner @ First
7PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21

12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22

10AM - Crafting with a Cause @ First
10AM - Parade of Lights Float Building
11AM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris
11:30AM - Community Lunch @ Third Ave
6PM - Parade of Lights (Downtown Big Rapids)

DATE CHANGE: POTLUCK & FAMILY MEETING

Join us Sunday, November 30, at 11:15 AM (First Church) for a potluck lunch and UMMMC Family Meeting. We’ll celebrate our progress together, share updates on new and upcoming ministry opportunities for 2026, and review the budget for the year ahead. Bring a favorite dish to share (drinks and tableware will be provided), and come ready for good food, meaningful conversation, and connection with siblings in Christ. A sign-up sheet is available on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Barbara Erb - Director of Administrative Services
barbara@ummecosta.org - (231) 796-7771

Julie Setlock - Director of Family Ministry
julie@ummecosta.org - (231) 796-7771

Kathy Bell - Director of Congregational Care
kathy@ummecosta.org - (231) 224-6177

Rev. Jeremy Wicks - Executive Pastor
jeremy@ummecosta.org / (231) 224-6545

To schedule an appointment with Pastor Jeremy, contact Barbara Erb or schedule online @ calendly.com/jeremy-ummecosta .

Week of November 16 - November 22, 2025

Family News



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 OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAY & THURSDAY, 9AM - 12PM & 12:30PM - 3PM

NORTH CAMPUS - PARIS

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

Worship Gathering
in-person
Sundays @ 9:30AM

DOWNTOWN CAMPUS - FIRST

304 Elm Street
Big Rapids, MI 49307
bigrapidsfirst.org

Worship Gathering
in-person and online
Sundays @ 10AM

Order of Worship - November 16, 2025

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

*** Call to Worship** (Reader / *People*)
In a world weary with sorrow and striving, God whispers,
“Behold, I am making all things new.”

We come with hope, trusting the One who brings light from darkness and life from death.

The Holy One dwells with us — not far off, not distant, but here, renewing creation from within.

We come to worship the God who wipes every tear, who heals every wound, who restores what fear has fractured.

See, a new heaven and a new earth begin to rise — not someday, but even now, where justice and peace embrace.

Come, let us worship the One who makes all things new. Amen.

*** Hymn** - “Hymn of Promise”, UMH #707

Children’s Message

Scripture Reading - Revelation 21:1-7 (NRSVUE)
Reader: The word of God, for the people of God.
People: *Thanks be to God!*

Hymn - “Thy Word Is a Lamp”, UMH #601

Message - “A Revelation of Hope: A Vision of Renewal”

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer

*** Hymn** - “Sent Forth by God’s Blessing”, UMH #664, vs. 1

* Benediction and Blessing

*** Hymn** - “Sent Forth by God’s Blessing”, UMH #664, vs. 2

Postlude

* PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

Altar flowers are given by Pat Little in honor of Ron.

Please join us for coffee and light refreshments in the Fellowship Hall immediately following worship!

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 - NOVEMBER 16

Reader: Pat Little
Ushers: Rex & Cheryl Richardson
Greeter: Kathi Parker
Nursery: Sarah Delany, Beth Bejcek
Sunday School: Kathi Parker, Laurie Daniels
Fellowship Host: Marlene Rodgers

SERVING NEXT WEEK - NOVEMBER 23

Reader: Beth Bejcek
Ushers: Mike & Jana Pisani
Greeter: Barbara Ross
Nursery: Sarah Delany, Paige Madden
Sunday School: Pam Fleming, Laurie Daniels
Fellowship Host: Family Meeting Potluck

THINK ABOUT IT THIS WEEK

One of the most striking things about Revelation is the way it ends. After all the imagery, all the symbols, all the unveiling of empire and resistance, the final word isn’t destruction, it’s renewal. The author doesn’t leave us with a world burned down to ash; they leaves us with a world restored - a holy city descending, a home where God dwells with the people, where every tear is wiped away, where mourning and pain no longer have the power to define anyone’s story. This vision isn’t meant to give us an escape hatch from reality; it’s meant to reorient us to the truth that God is not giving up on creation - God is healing it, renewing it, and drawing all things toward wholeness.

And if that is the vision at the end of Revelation, then that is the hope at the heart of our faith. We aren’t waiting for God to replace the world; we are watching God transform it. The New Jerusalem isn’t a place we flee to someday; it’s a promise breaking into the present, calling us to live as people shaped by renewal right now.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Where in your life do you feel the deepest longing for something to be made new?
- What does “renewal” look like in your relationships, your community, or in the way you move through the world?
- How might you participate in God’s healing work — even in one small, concrete way — this week?
- Where does hope feel fragile for you? How might God be quietly planting seeds of new life there?

A PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

God of new beginnings, you promise to make all things new — not in a distant someday, but in ways that are already stirring around us. Open our eyes to the quiet signs of renewal we often overlook. Open our hearts to the healing You long to bring to us and through us. Where we are tired, restore us; where we are discouraged, lift us; where we are broken, mend us. Shape us into people who carry Your hope and embody Your love in every place we go. Amen.

LIVING IT OUT

This week, try living as if God’s renewal is already underway — because it is. Every time you choose forgiveness over resentment, kindness over indifference, justice over convenience, you are participating in the world God is making new.

You don’t have to build the New Jerusalem by yourself; you just have to offer the pieces of your life to the One who is already at work. Let the promise of a world made whole shape the way you navigate this one. Hold onto the truth that even when everything feels unfinished, God is still writing a story of restoration.

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!