

Welcome to First Church!

Welcome to Big Rapids First United Methodist, an inclusive and affirming congregation - we are so happy you're here! If this is your first visit, or you're not familiar with us, we hope the information below will be helpful. If you require additional assistance, please ask any of our welcome team members, and they will be happy to help!

BATHROOM LOCATIONS:

- Main Sanctuary Level - Through the double doors at the back of the Sanctuary (Elm St), opposite the balcony stairs, you will find one of our two "all gender" single stall restrooms. There is a baby changing station in this restroom.
- Balcony - Through the south door (toward the elevator) and down the hallway, you will find another "all gender" single stall restroom.
- Fellowship Hall - As you are heading toward the Warren St Lobby, across from the coffee station, you'll find separate men's and women's restrooms.
- Basement - To the left side of the large classroom at the bottom of the Warren St Lobby stairs you'll find separate men's and women's restrooms.

OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN DURING WORSHIP:

- The sound of children is welcome during worship at First Church! If you prefer to have your children with you during worship, please do!
- Nursery - We staff a nursery for those parents who might need a little "break" from their infants through four-year-olds.
- "Pray Ground" - In the back of the sanctuary, near the organ, there is an area with a play mat and toys where kids are welcome to wiggle!
- Parent's Lounge - Located across from the nursery is a quiet place that gives caregivers a place to address the needs of the littlest among us. There is a changing table, rocking chairs, and complimentary supplies in the lounge for your convenience.
- Sunday School for K-6th grade meets upstairs and gives our younger friends a place to learn about Jesus. Kids can be picked up in the upstairs classroom after worship.

Worship Celebration - Sundays @ 10:00AM
Nursery Available - Infant - 4y/o @ 9:50AM
Children's Sunday School @ 10:15AM
(Kindergarten - 6th Grade, start in the Sanctuary)

Coffee and light refreshments are served immediately after worship, and everyone is welcome!

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Closed / Tues - Friday, 9AM - 3PM
Pastor Jeremy is at the church by appointment and is not available on Friday except in emergency situations.



Big Rapids First United Methodist Church is an inclusive and affirming community. To read our welcome statement, please visit us online @ www.bigrapidsfirst.org/welcome.

Happening This Week

SUNDAY, APRIL 21

9AM - Worship Celebration @ Paris UMC
10AM - Worship Celebration @ First Church
*Childcare available for Infants - 4 years old (Nursery)
Fellowship / Coffee Hour immediately following worship.*
10:15AM - Worship Celebration @ Third Ave UMC

MONDAY, APRIL 22

12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave UMC

TUESDAY, APRIL 23

12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave UMC
6PM - Lyrics in Motion (Sanctuary)
7PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris UMC

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24

11:30AM - Community Lunch Program @ Third Ave UMC
6PM - Bell Choir Rehearsal (Music Room) @ First Church
7PM - Choir Rehearsal (Music Room) @ First Church

THURSDAY, APRIL 25

5:30PM - Community Meal (Fellowship Hall) @ First Church
7PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris UMC

FRIDAY, APRIL 26

6AM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave UMC
12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave UMC

SATURDAY, APRIL 27

10AM - Crafting with a Cause (Fellowship Hall) @ First Church
11AM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris UMC

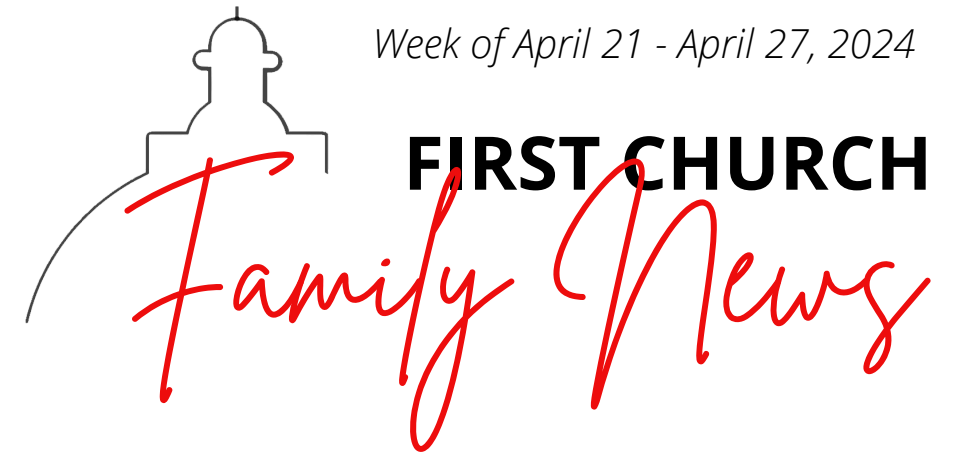
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

- Yard Sale - Sign-up sheets are available in the Fellowship Hall @ First Church for the following areas related to the yard sale:
 - Set Up Thursday, May 16
 - Working the Sale May 17-18
 - Clean Up May 18

A reminder that proceeds from the sale will be applied toward the cost of purchasing new equipment for the kitchen at First. You may drop off your sale items in Fellowship Hall during office hours on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday the week of the sale. Questions? Call Barb in the church office (796-7771).

- Memorial Garden - Spring is right around the corner, which means it's time to start thinking about getting the Memorial Garden up and running - and maintaining that beautiful space throughout the spring / summer seasons. If you are interested in serving as a part of the Memorial Garden care team, please contact Barbara in the church office, or reach out to Toinette Wicks.
- Summer Sunday School Help @ First - We need a little help to cover vacations and to give our regular helpers a break. All lessons are completely planned and prepared. You will be emailed a copy of the lesson the week before and all you have to do is show up on your Sunday. If you have one Sunday or several when you'd be available to help, please contact our Director of Family Ministries, Julie Setlock, at julie@bigrapidsfirst.org.

Week of April 21 - April 27, 2024



BIG RAPIDS FIRST UMC

304 Elm St Big Rapids, MI 49307
(231) 796-7771 / www.bigrapidsfirst.org

Pastor - Rev. Jeremy Wicks
Voice / Text - (517) 851-1494
Email - jeremy@bigrapidsfirst.org

Order of Worship - April 21, 2024
FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

We've come to worship God,
who loved us before we were yet born,
who knows us even better than we know ourselves,
whose presence never leaves us,
and whose love for us never ceases.
This is our God. Let's worship together!

* **Hymn** - "Crown Him with Many Crowns", UMH #327

Children's Message

Choral Anthem - "Just a Closer Walk with Thee"

Scripture Reading - Matthew 23:27-28, 33 & Titus 1:16 (NRSVUE)

The word of God, for the people of God.
Thanks be to God!

Hymn - "Change My Heart, O God", TFWS #2152

Message - "What Would Jesus Undo? - Hypocrisy"

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

* **Hymn** - "Sent Forth by God's Blessing", UMH #664

* **Benediction**

Postlude

Pastor Jeremy will greet people in the Warren St. lobby immediately following worship.

*Please stand as you are able.

NOTES:



Check In Here

Serving Today - April 21

Reader: Doug Fitzgerald
Ushers: Mike & Jana Pisani
Greeter: Mike Gibson
Children's Sunday School: Larisa Draves, Thomas Wheeler
"Believers Share" - Acts 4:32-37
Nursery: Diane Parrish, Katie Aris

Serving Next Week - April 28

Reader: Barbara Ross
Ushers: Rex & Cheryl Richardson
Greeter: Denise Cospier
Children's Sunday School: Pam Fleming, Bev Wesche
"Choosing the Seven" - Acts 6:1-7
Nursery: Diane Parrish, Kati Wheeler

SPECIAL OFFERING TODAY - Native American Ministry

An offering is taken on this Special Sunday to support vital ministries and churches in the Native American communities. The offering allows The United Methodist Church to partner with existing native ministries to develop new programs on behalf of Native Americans.

- Fifty percent of the funds collected on Native American Ministries Sunday remain in the Annual Conference to develop and strengthen Native American ministries in the conferences. To assist in developing these programs, each conference has a Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM). These committees seek to advocate for ministry with and by Native Americans to share the diverse culture, history and traditions of Native peoples.
- Twenty-five percent of donations received fund designated scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist schools of theology. A significant shortage exists of Native American pastors and trained professionals and these scholarships provide development, implementation, and assessment of a higher education recruitment/retention for Native Americans.
- Twenty-five percent of the donations collected are used to create programs that allow the UMC to partner with existing native ministries to offer mentoring programs, peer support systems, funding for economic development projects, and restoring traditional and historic ways that bring forth new leaders for Native American communities.

Please use the enclosed envelope or write "NAMS" on the notes line of your check. All gifts can be placed in the basket located at the front of the sanctuary or in any of the offering plates.

GENERAL CONFERENCE

The United Methodist Church has no pope, but it does have a General Conference — the only body that can set official policy and speak for the international denomination, this includes making edits to The Book of Discipline. General Conference brings together lay and clergy delegates from across the globe whose decisions will affect how millions of United Methodists do church for years to come. Think of the two-week gathering as a combination of a United Nations General Assembly, a U.S. congressional session and a time of rousing Christian worship. The coming General Conference, scheduled for April 23 - May 3 in Charlotte, North Carolina, comes at a particularly momentous time. General Conference typically gathers every four years, but because of the COVID pandemic, the assembly could not meet in 2020. That means the last regular session was in May 2016 — nearly eight years ago. In the interim, the denomination has seen a quarter of its U.S. churches depart under a disaffiliation policy that began in 2019 and expired at the end of 2023. To say we, as a denomination, as in a state of flux is a ridiculous understatement. Please be in prayer for the delegates, as they prepare to do the work of the church.

MEMBERSHIP AUDIT UNDERWAY

Members of First, Third Avenue, and Paris United Methodist Churches voted to merge into a new church called United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County. While we celebrate the results of the merger vote, there is significant work to be done in order to facilitate this merger process. One of the major steps we need to take is to audit the membership of the three churches to find out who would like to be a member of the new church. When you receive your letter, with your Membership Audit Response Card, please take a minute to complete the card and send it back in the self-addressed return envelope. This will be very helpful during this time of transition. If you have any questions, please contact the office at 231-796-7771.