

## UMMMC DINNER SCRAMBLE – A SIMPLE WAY TO CONNECT

One of the best parts of being a church community is getting to know one another beyond Sunday morning. This April, we're inviting you to do just that through the UMMMC Dinner Scramble—a fun and easy way to connect with others across our church family. Anyone can sign up to share a meal with others from UMMMC. You can register as an individual, a couple, or a family. After the sign-up period closes, participants will be randomly grouped, giving everyone a chance to meet and spend time with people they may not already know.

The dinners will take place during the last two weeks of April, and each group will decide the details that work best for them. Some groups may choose to meet at a restaurant, others might gather at someone's home, grab fast food together, or even enjoy a picnic if the weather cooperates. The goal is simple: good food, relaxed conversation, and meaningful connection.

Beginning Sunday, March 8, you can sign up:

- **In person** - Sign-up sheets are available in the Fellowship Hall at First Church or at the back of the sanctuary at our Paris Campus.
- **By email** - Send your name, phone number, number attending, and whether you are signing up as an individual, couple, or family to [register@ummcosta.org](mailto:register@ummcosta.org).

*Sign-ups will close on March 31, and groups will be paired shortly afterward, so everyone has time to plan their dinner.*

## MEMBERSHIP OPPORTUNITY - SPRING 2026

If you've been worshipping with us and are sensing that it might be time to make this your church home, we would love to walk that step with you. We will be welcoming new members into the life of the church on Easter Sunday at our First Church campus, and this is a beautiful day to say "yes" to deeper connection, shared mission, and growing together in faith. If you're interested in joining, check the "I'm interested in membership" box on your Connection Card, or reach out to the church office and let us know. If you have questions about what membership means, please contact Barbara Erb or Pastor Jeremy.

Membership isn't about putting your name on a list. It's about committing to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ, together, for the transformation of the world.

## MARCH MISSION GIVING FOCUS: UMCOR

This month we turn our hearts and hands toward one of The United Methodist Church's most trusted and impactful mission partners: the United Methodist Committee on Relief, known widely as UMCOR. At its core, UMCOR answers Jesus' call to love our neighbors and bear one another's burdens by bringing help and hope where suffering is greatest.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief is the global humanitarian relief and development organization of The United Methodist Church. UMCOR serves as the Church's principal response to human suffering around the world—whether caused by natural disasters, war and conflict, famine, or other overwhelming crises. It is a nonprofit ministry operating under the General Board of Global Ministries and engages in relief efforts in more than 70 countries, including here in the United States.

One defining strength of UMCOR is that 100% of every dollar designated for a specific disaster or relief project goes directly to that work—not to administrative costs. That's because the "costs of doing business" for UMCOR are funded through a separate annual offering that underwrites administrative expenses so gifts to specific projects can go entirely to those in need.

*If you feel called to support the work of the United Methodist Committee on Relief, you can give through our regular offering process. Simply note "UMCOR" on your check or on your giving envelope. You may also contribute online and designate UMCOR, so your gift is directed to this important ministry.*

## What's Happening

### SUNDAY, MARCH 8 (DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS)

9:30AM - Worship @ Paris (North) Campus  
10:00AM - Worship @ First Church (Downtown) Campus  
11:15AM - Fellowship / Coffee Hour @ First

### TUESDAY, MARCH 10

9AM - Ministry Staff Team Meeting @ Downtown Campus  
10AM - Worship Design Team @ Downtown Campus

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

11AM - Lenten Book Study "Knowing Who We Are" @ Downtown Campus  
12PM - Table Talk (BYO Lunch!) @ Downtown Campus  
5:00PM - Praise Team Rehearsal @ Downtown Campus

### THURSDAY, MARCH 12

5:30PM - Community Dinner @ Downtown Campus

**PLEASE NOTE:** In an effort to preserve the spirit of anonymity that is central to recovery programs, we have stopped publishing the dates and times of AA meetings held at our campuses. If you or someone you know is looking for an AA meeting, you can find up-to-date listings by visiting the official Alcoholics Anonymous meeting locator at [aa.org](http://aa.org) (see the "Find A.A. Near You" page), which helps people locate meetings in their area or online.

### CRAFTING WITH A CAUSE

Join us for **Crafting with a Cause** on **Saturday, March 28 @ 10AM (Downtown Campus)** for a morning of creativity, connection, and compassion. This isn't just about making something — it's about *making a difference*. Together, we'll create simple handmade items that will be shared with members of our community who could use a reminder that they are seen, valued, and loved. You don't have to be "crafty" to participate. Whether you're experienced with glue guns and paintbrushes or you simply want to show up and help, there's a place for you. Supplies will be provided, and all ages are welcome. Come create. Come connect. Come be part of something that extends hope beyond our walls.

### WE'RE HIRING!

**Choir Director** - Provide musical leadership, rehearse and direct our choir, and help shape meaningful worship experiences through choral music.

**Director of Family Ministry & Community Outreach** - Lead initiatives that engage families, build community partnerships, and connect our church with the needs of our neighbors.

If you have questions or would like to apply, please contact the main office and speak with Barb or Pastor Jeremy.

### STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

To schedule an appointment with Pastor Jeremy, contact Barbara Erb or schedule online @ [calendly.com/jeremy-ummecosta](https://calendly.com/jeremy-ummecosta)

Week of March 8, 2026 - March 14, 2026

# Family News



## KNOWING WHO WE ARE

### UNITED METHODIST MINISTRIES OF MECOSTA COUNTY

304 ELM STREET, BIG RAPIDS MI 49307 • (231) 796-7771 • [WWW.UMMECOSTA.ORG](http://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](http://ummecosta.org/paris)

Worship Gathering  
in-person  
Sundays @ 9:30AM

#### DOWNTOWN CAMPUS - FIRST

304 Elm Street  
Big Rapids, MI 49307  
[bigrapidsfirst.org](http://bigrapidsfirst.org)

Worship Gathering  
in-person and online  
Sundays @ 10AM

# Order of Worship - March 8, 2026

## Prelude

## Welcome & Announcements

### \* Call to Worship (Reader / *People*)

God gathers us from many places and many paths.  
*Yet we are one body in Christ.*

In this local community, we worship, learn, and grow together.  
*And we are connected to a wider movement of grace.*

Across neighborhoods, cities, and nations, God is at work through the church.  
*We are part of that shared mission.*

Come, let us worship the God who gathers us, connects us, and sends us together.  
*Let us worship with grateful hearts.*

### \* Hymn - "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing", UMH #57, vss. 1-5\*

## Children's Message

### Scripture Reading - 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 (NRSVUE)

Reader: The word of God, for the people of God.  
People: *Thanks be to God!*

### Hymn - "Spirit of the Living God", UMH #393

### Message - "Knowing Who We Are: Local and Connectional"

## Pastoral Prayer

## The Lord's Prayer

### \* The Doxology, UMH #95

### \* Hymn - "The Church's One Foundation", UMH #545, vss. 1-2

## \* Benediction

### \* Hymn - "The Church's One Foundation", UMH #545, vs. 5

## Postlude

\* PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

*Join us for coffee and conversation in Fellowship Hall immediately following worship. Pastor Jeremy will also be in the Warren Street Lobby after the service and would love to greet you.*

# 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](http://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 - MARCH 8

Reader: Brian Bejcek  
Ushers: Colin & Roberta Cline  
Greeter: Pete Jensen  
Nursery: Sarah Delany, Char Fitch  
Sunday School: Thomas Wheeler, Frankie Supanich  
Fellowship Host: Brenda Chaffee  
Organist: Shirley Jernstadt  
Tech Team: Ken Draves, Gary Poole

### SERVING NEXT WEEK - MARCH 15

Reader: Doug Fitzgerald  
Ushers: Mike & Jana Pisani  
Greeter: Kathi Parker  
Nursery: Sarah Delany, Kati Wheeler  
Sunday School: Kathi Parker, Laurie Daniels  
Fellowship Host: Cheryl Richardson

## THINK ABOUT IT: LOCAL AND CONNECTIONAL

One of the distinctive features of Methodism is that we have never understood the church as a collection of isolated congregations. From the earliest days of the Methodist movement, local communities of faith were connected to one another in shared mission and shared responsibility.

John Wesley organized the Methodist societies so that they would support one another, learn from one another, and work together to respond to the needs of the world. This connectional structure was not simply an organizational strategy—it was a theological conviction. Wesley believed that the church reflects the body of Christ most faithfully when its members remain connected, supporting and strengthening one another.

Scripture echoes this vision. In 1 Corinthians, Paul reminds us that the church is like a body with many parts, each one necessary and each one contributing to the whole. No single part stands alone. Each depends on the others. In Ephesians, we are reminded that Christ is the head of the body and that as we grow together in love, the whole body is built up.

Our local congregation is one expression of the body of Christ. At the same time, we are connected to believers across communities, across generations, and across the world. This connection allows the church to do far more together than any congregation could accomplish alone.

As we reflect this week, consider what it means to belong to a church that is both deeply local and profoundly connected.

### Questions to Think About This Week

- When have I experienced the strength and encouragement that comes from being part of a larger Christian community?
- How does knowing that our church is connected to others shape the way I think about our shared mission?
- In what ways might God be inviting me to see our congregation not just as "my church," but as part of the wider body of Christ?

### Action Steps

- *Learn something new about our connection.* Take a few minutes this week to explore how United Methodist churches support ministries around the world through shared mission and resources.
- *Pray for the wider church.* Include another congregation, a missionary, or a ministry partner in your prayers this week.
- *Encourage connection.* Reach out to someone within the church community this week. A simple conversation or word of encouragement can strengthen the bonds that hold us together.

### Prayer for the Week

*Gracious God, thank you for gathering us into the body of Christ. Help us remember that we are not alone, but connected to a wider community of faith. Teach us to support and encourage one another, and strengthen our shared mission in the world. May our lives reflect the love and unity that come from belonging to you. Amen.*

### Final Thought

The church is most faithful when it remembers that it is both local and connected. Each congregation carries a unique story and calling, yet together we form one body in Christ. As we move through this week, may we remember that the strength of the church lies not only in what we do individually, but in what we accomplish together through God's grace.

**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!**