

AUGUST MISSION GIVING: JONAH FOUNDATION

Our mission giving focus for August is the Jonah Foundation, a local organization serving men who have experienced incarceration, addiction, and other barriers to rebuilding their lives.

Returning to the community after incarceration can be extraordinarily difficult. Finding stable housing and meaningful employment, navigating probation requirements, rebuilding relationships, and maintaining sobriety can become overwhelming—especially when someone is expected to face those challenges alone. The Jonah Foundation works to ensure that men making this transition have both practical assistance and a supportive community surrounding them. Through its residential reentry and recovery home, the Jonah Foundation provides a supervised sober-living environment along with employment connections, probation navigation, mentoring, counseling, fellowship, and social, mental, and spiritual support. Its peer-led approach helps participants develop the stability, accountability, relationships, and skills needed to become thriving members of the community.

This work reflects an important truth of our faith: *no human being should be defined only by their worst decision, their deepest struggle, or the most difficult chapter of their story.* God's grace continually creates possibilities for healing, restoration, and new life. When people receive the support they need to break cycles of addiction and incarceration, the impact extends beyond a single individual. Families are strengthened, relationships can begin to heal, and the entire community becomes healthier.

Throughout August, we invite you to support the Jonah Foundation through our monthly mission giving. Your gifts will help provide the safe environment, guidance, practical resources, and caring relationships that make a successful return to the community possible. Together, we can help ensure that those seeking a new beginning do not have to make that journey alone.

HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF UMMMC

United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County is seeking individuals from both the First Campus and the Paris Campus to serve on our Leadership Team. The Leadership Team is the governing body of UMMMC. They care for the church's resources, discern long-term priorities, ask important questions about the future, and ensure that our ministries and finances remain aligned with our mission, vision, and values. If you believe this may be a meaningful way for you to serve—or if you would simply like to learn more—please contact Pastor Jeremy to schedule a conversation.

NOW HIRING: NURSERY SUPERVISOR

United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County is seeking a caring, dependable individual to serve as Nursery Supervisor at our First Church campus. This is a part-time, paid position supporting our nursery during Sunday morning worship and other services or activities as scheduled.

Our nursery ministry is an important part of the welcome we extend to young families. The Nursery Supervisor will help provide a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment where our youngest children know they are loved and their parents and caregivers can participate fully in worship. The ideal candidate will enjoy working with infants and young children, communicate reliably with families and church staff, and be committed to maintaining a safe and welcoming nursery. A background check and current CPR and First Aid certification will be required prior to employment.

If you or someone you know might be a good fit for this ministry, please contact Barbara Erb or Pastor Jeremy for the complete job description and information about applying. Please also help us spread the word!

What's Happening

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9

9AM - Worship @ Paris (North) Campus
10AM - Worship @ First Church (Downtown) Campus
Fellowship and Coffee immediately following the worship service

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11

9AM - Director's Meeting @ Downtown Campus
3PM - 6PM - Good Company @ Hemlock Park

THURSDAY, AUGUST 13

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.

PASTOR JEREMY'S VACATION

Pastor Jeremy will be on vacation and out of the office from August 16–29. During this time, he will be stepping away from regular church responsibilities, calls, and email.

Rev. Daniel Hoffman, a retired United Methodist elder, will be preaching while Pastor Jeremy is away. If you have a congregational care need during this time, please contact Kathy Bell, Director of Congregational Care.

For other assistance, please contact Barbara Erb, Director of Administrative Services. Pastor Jeremy will return on Sunday, August 30.

FAMILY MEETING & POTLUCK, AUGUST 30 @ 11:15AM

Join us for a church family meeting and potluck as we share ministry updates, celebrate what God is doing among us, and look ahead together. Bring a dish to share if you are able—but most importantly, bring yourself! Everyone is welcome.

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Barbara Erb - Director of Administrative Services
barbara@ummecosta.org - (231) 796-7771 ext. 1

Kathy Bell - Director of Congregational Care
kathy@ummecosta.org - (231) 224-6177 ext. 3

Paden Clevenger - Director of Family Ministries & Community Outreach
paden@ummecosta.org - (231) 796-7771 ext 4

Rev. Jeremy Wicks - Executive Pastor
jeremy@ummecosta.org / (231) 796-7771 ext 2 / (231) 224-6545

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

Week of August 9 - August 15, 2026



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 9, 2026

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

* Call to Worship (Reader / *People*)

We come with questions—some serious, some complicated, and some we may have been afraid to ask out loud.
We come trusting that God can handle all our questions.

We may not settle every theological debate before lunch.
But we can listen, learn, laugh, and grow together.

We do not gather because the pastor has every answer.
We gather because God is still speaking, teaching, and leading us.

So bring your faith, your doubts, your curiosity, and your sense of humor.
With open minds and open hearts, let us worship God!

* Hymn - “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”, UMH #110

Children’s Message

First Reading - Psalm 25:4–10 (NRSVUE)

Hymn - “He Leadeth Me: O Blessed Thought”, UMH #128

Second Reading - James 3:13–18 (NRSVUE)

Message - “Ask the Pastor!”

The Lord’s Prayer

* Doxology, UMH #95

* Blessing and Sending

* Hymn - “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”, UMH #139

Postlude

Altar flowers are given in celebration of Sue Malzahn's Anniversary.

* 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 9

Reader: Suzette Compton
Ushers: Colin & Roberta Cline
Greeter: Pete Jensen
Nursery: Julie Tessin, Char Fitch
Fellowship Host: Denise Cosper
Organist: Shirley Jernstadt
Accompanist: Kathy Bell
Tech Team: Ken Draves, Gary Poole

SERVING NEXT WEEK - AUGUST 16

Reader: Paul Hillman
Ushers: Mike & Jana Pisani
Greeter: Kathi Parker
Nursery: Larisa Draves, TBD
Fellowship Host: Pat Little

MICAH: FAITHFUL LIVING IN A FRACTURED WORLD

Beginning August 30, both our First and Paris campuses will begin a new six-week preaching series, Micah: Faithful Living in a Fractured World. Micah spoke to communities facing injustice, economic inequality, failed leadership, violence, fear, and uncertainty about the future. Although his words were first proclaimed centuries ago, the questions he raises remain strikingly relevant: *What does faithfulness look like when the world around us feels fractured? How should people of faith use power, wealth, and influence? What does God expect from our leaders—and from each of us? Is peace possible? Can mercy have the final word?*

Micah does not offer easy answers or empty reassurance. He honestly names the ways people and institutions can depart from God’s purposes. Yet his message does not end with condemnation. Micah points toward God’s vision of a world shaped by justice, peace, restoration, belonging, and steadfast mercy.

Throughout the series, we will discover that faith is about more than what happens during worship. God’s grace shapes how we listen, share resources, exercise leadership, make peace, treat our neighbors, respond to harm, and participate in the life of our wider community. Each week will explore another dimension of faithful living:

- August 30 — A Prophet from the Countryside
- September 6 — When Wealth Becomes Worship
- September 13 — The Responsibility of Leadership
- September 20 — God’s Vision for the World
- September 27 — What Does God Really Want?
- October 4 — The God Who Delights in Mercy

From Micah’s reminder that God often speaks through overlooked voices to his beautiful declaration that God delights in mercy, this series will invite us to listen carefully, examine our shared life, and imagine how we can participate in God’s healing work.

Join us at either campus as we explore what it means to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God in a fractured world.

GO DEEPER AT TABLE TALK

Our exploration of Micah will not end when Sunday worship is over! Each Wednesday, beginning September 2 through the end of the series, at 12:00PM, 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 and make new friends. Join us Wednesdays at noon 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!**