

A PLACE TO BELONG: YOUTH GROUP AT FIRST CHURCH

All students in grades 9–12 are invited to Youth Group at First Church! We meet on the first and third Sundays of each month from noon to 1:30PM. Youth Group is a place to come as you are, enjoy snacks and games, build friendships, and discover a supportive community. It is also a space where young people are encouraged to ask honest questions, be curious, explore their faith, and know they are welcomed and valued. You do not need to have everything figured out—you simply need to show up! Students are welcome to bring a friend. For more information, contact Paden!

BACK-TO-SCHOOL BASH: A BLESSING FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

Join us at our downtown campus on Sunday, September 13, for a joyful Back-to-School Bash! The celebration begins during our 10AM worship service with the Blessing of the Backpacks and continues with our Sunday School kickoff, a potluck lunch, and carnival-style games.

Students of every age are invited to bring their backpacks to worship as we pray for them and bless them for the year ahead. Teachers, school employees, administrators, and others who support our students are also encouraged to attend as we recognize and pray for them and the important work they do.

Following worship, stay for lunch, fellowship, and plenty of fun! Bring a dish to share if you are able—but most importantly, bring yourself, your family, and your excitement for a new school year. Everyone is welcome!

LIFT YOUR VOICE—CHOIR IS BACK!

Choir rehearsals return this month! We will gather on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at 10AM, beginning Wednesday, September 9. Whether you have sung in a choir for years or are simply interested in giving it a try, you are welcome to join us. Come enjoy the music, fellowship, and joy of helping lead our congregation in worship. Please contact Linda with any questions. We look forward to singing with you!

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. 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 - ummecosta.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.

What's Happening

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

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

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

9AM - Director’s Meeting @ Downtown Campus
11AM - Worship Design Team

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

10AM - Choir Rehearsal @ Downtown Campus
12PM - Table Talk @ Downtown Campus

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

5:30PM - Community Dinner @ Downtown Campus

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

10AM - Crafting With a Cause @ 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.

FINAL CHURCH DIRECTORY CHECK

We are preparing to print our new church directory! A proof copy will be available at each campus on Sundays, September 13 and 20. Please take a moment to review your name, address, phone number, email address, and other household information and clearly note any necessary corrections. This is the final opportunity to make changes before the directory is printed, so even if you believe your information is correct, please check it one last time. We plan to send the directory to print shortly after September 20. Thank you for helping us make sure our records are accurate!

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
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

Linda Rinehart - Director of Choral Music
linda@ummecosta.org - (231) 631-4380

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 September 6 - September 12, 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 - September 6, 2026

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

* Call to Worship (Reader / *People*)

God gathers us from many places and welcomes us into one beloved community.

We come to worship the God who makes room for everyone.

God sees those who have too much and those who are struggling to have enough.

God calls us to share generously, seek justice, and care for our neighbors.

When greed divides and possessions control, God leads us toward compassion and freedom.

May our worship reshape our desires and teach us to love what God loves.

Come, let us worship the God who desires dignity, security, and abundant life for all.

Together, let us worship God.

* Hymn - “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”, UMH #400

Children’s Message

Scripture Reading - Micah 2:1–5, 12–13 (NRSVUE)

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

Hymn - “Change My Heart, O God”, TFWS #2152

Message - “Micah: When Wealth Becomes Worship”

Celebration of Holy Communion

* Doxology, UMH #95

* Blessing and Sending

* Hymn - “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”, UMH #127

Postlude

Altar flowers are given in honor of Jack Rambadt.

* 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 - SEPTEMBER 6

Reader: Doug Fitzgerald

Communion Assistants: Denise Cosper, Toinette Wicks, Shirley Jernstadt

Ushers: Pat and Marion Williamson

Greeter: Nancy Spedowski

Nursery: NO Nursery

Fellowship Host: Rex & Cheryl Richardson

SERVING NEXT WEEK - SEPTEMBER 13

Reader: Pat Little

Ushers: Colin & Roberta Cline

Greeter: Pete Jensen

Sunday School: TBD

Nursery: TBD

Fellowship Host: Back to School Bash Potluck

THINK ABOUT IT THIS WEEK: WHEN WEALTH BECOMES WORSHIP

This week, Micah tells us about powerful landowners who lie awake planning how to acquire more. By morning, they use their influence to seize fields, homes, and inheritances from people who are unable to resist them. Land was more than property in Micah's world; it provided a family with food, security, identity, and a future. To take someone's land was to deprive that family not only of a possession, but also of the resources they needed to flourish. Wealth has become more important than people.

This passage invites us to notice how personal choices, institutional practices, and economic systems can benefit some while making it harder for others to secure housing, food, healthcare, education, or a stable future. Wealth becomes worship when acquiring, protecting, or increasing what we have matters more than the well-being of our neighbors.

Yet Micah’s message does not end with judgment. God promises to gather the people and lead them toward restoration. Even after naming what is broken, the prophet reminds us that God is still working toward a community in which dignity is restored and everyone has enough.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What possessions, comforts, or measures of success are most closely connected to your sense of security or self-worth?
- How might choices that appear financially beneficial to us create hardship for someone else?
- What would it mean for our church and community to measure abundance by how well our most vulnerable neighbors are doing?

WAYS TO LIVE IT OUT

- Listen to a person who has experienced housing insecurity, food insecurity, debt, or another economic hardship. Resist offering quick solutions; begin by understanding.
- Learn about one policy or community practice affecting your neighbor's ability to access stable housing, adequate food, healthcare, or fair wages. Consider how you might help address the underlying problem.
- Give time, money, food, transportation, or another resource in a way that strengthens someone's dignity rather than treating them as a project.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

God of abundance, everything we have is held within your grace. Free us from measuring our worth by what we possess, earn, or control. Open our eyes to the ways our choices affect the lives of our neighbors. Give us generous hearts, courageous voices, and the wisdom to challenge systems that deprive others of dignity and security. Teach us to receive what is enough, share what we can, and help build communities where every person has what they need to flourish. Amen.

CLOSING THOUGHT

Wealth becomes worship when protecting what we have matters more than protecting our neighbor. Faithful living begins when we recognize that God's abundance was never intended for only a few.

COMING NEXT WEEK: THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERSHIP

Next Sunday, our journey through Micah continues with “The Responsibility of Leadership,” based on Micah 3:1–12. Micah delivers some of his strongest words to leaders who have used their positions for personal benefit while neglecting the people entrusted to their care. His challenge reaches beyond government officials. Leadership happens in churches, workplaces, schools, families, and communities—wherever our choices and influence affect the lives of others. Together, we will consider what faithful leadership looks like, how power can be used to serve rather than control, and why leaders must be accountable for whether people and communities flourish under their care.

Read Micah 3:1–12 this week and join us at either campus as we explore how God calls each of us to use whatever influence we have to serve, protect, and help others flourish.

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!**