

THE WORK BEHIND THE WELCOME
Long before worship begins, someone has unlocked a door, adjusted the temperature, prepared the sanctuary, folded a bulletin, rehearsed the music, or made sure the building is ready to receive people. Someone has answered a telephone call, updated a calendar, washed a tablecloth, taught a lesson, repaired something that was broken, purchased supplies, prepared food, or quietly noticed a need and responded to it.

Much of this work happens behind the scenes. It may not be recognized publicly, and some of it is hardly noticed when everything goes well. Yet each task contributes to the welcome we offer. A clean room communicates care. A prepared meal creates a place at the table. Music helps people pray when they cannot find their own words. A lesson tells a child that their questions and faith matter. A repaired handrail, a shoveled sidewalk, an answered email, or a warm greeting helps someone know that we were expecting them.

None of these ministries is insignificant. Together, they create the conditions in which relationships can grow, worship can happen, neighbors can be served, and people can experience the love of God. This is holy work—not because it always takes place in the sanctuary, but because it helps make room for beloved community.

To everyone who sings, teaches, cooks, cleans, repairs, organizes, welcomes, prepares, serves, communicates, leads, gives, or simply steps forward when something needs to be done: thank you. Your ministry matters. You are helping us become the kind of church we proclaim ourselves to be—a community in which people are not merely greeted at the door but are seen, valued, included, and invited to belong.

And perhaps that is one of the most beautiful things about the church: our welcome is not the work of one pastor, one staff member, or one committee. It belongs to all of us. Every act of service, whether public or unseen, helps open the door a little wider.

May we continue to recognize the sacred work happening all around us—and may each of us ask how we can help extend God's welcome to someone else.

PACK-A-PACK EVENT

Join us at Paris for a time of service and community as we prepare backpacks and school supplies for our Ice Cream Social & School Supplies Giveaway!



10-11AM, SAT.
AUGUST 8



PARIS UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH



What's Happening

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2

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

TUESDAY, AUGUST 4

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

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5

6PM - Leadership Team Meeting @ Downtown Campus

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6

5:30PM - Community Dinner @ Downtown Campus

ICE CREAM, SCHOOL SUPPLIES, AND COMMUNITY!

Join us for the second annual UMMC Ice Cream Social on Sunday, August 9, at 1:00 p.m. at our Paris Campus! This year, we are inviting the wider community to enjoy an afternoon of ice cream and connection while providing free school supplies to local students.

Volunteers are needed for preparation, setup, serving, welcoming guests, distributing supplies, and cleanup. Whether you can help before, during, or after the event, your participation will make a difference. To volunteer, contact Jane Pedelty at the Paris Campus or Paden Clevenger, Director of Family Ministry and Community Outreach.

Come enjoy some ice cream, welcome our neighbors, and help local students begin the school year with confidence!

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 2 - August 8, 2026

Family News



ASK the PASTOR

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 2, 2026

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

* Call to Worship (Reader / *People*)

We come carrying questions—some deep, some difficult, and some simply curious.

We come trusting that God is not afraid of our questions.

We come not because one person has all the answers, but because wisdom grows when we seek together.

Through Scripture, tradition, reason, experience, and one another, God continues to speak.

So bring your questions, your doubts, your wonder, and your faith.

With open hearts and curious minds, let us worship the God who welcomes our seeking.

* Hymn - “Open My Eyes, That I May See”, UMH 454

Children’s Message

First Reading - Proverbs 2:1–6 (NRSVUE)

Hymn - “Be Thou My Vision”, UMH 451

Second Reading - 1 Corinthians 13:9–12 (NRSVUE)

Message - “Ask the Pastor!”

Celebration of Communion

The Lord’s Prayer

* Doxology, UMH #95

* Blessing and Sending

* Hymn - “How Firm a Foundation”, UMH 529

Postlude

Altar flowers are given in celebration of Clare Maddens 4th birthday and in celebration of Fred & Coleen Jaegers 58th 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 2

Reader: Emmanuel Jadhav
Ushers: Pat & Marion Williamson
Greeter: Nancy Spedowski
Nursery: Paden Clevenger
Fellowship Host: Brenda Chaffee
Communion Servers: Marlene Rodgers, Pat Little
Organist: Shirley Jernstadt
Accompanist: Kathy Bell
Tech Team: Ken Draves, Gary Poole

SERVING NEXT WEEK - AUGUST 9

Reader: Suzette Compton
Ushers: Colin & Roberta Cline
Greeter: Pete Jensen
Nursery: Paden Clevenger, TBD
Fellowship Host: Denise Cosper

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!

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.

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.

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!**