

NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRY SUNDAY OFFERING

Each year, United Methodists across the connection join together to support Native American Ministries Sunday - an opportunity to recognize the gifts, history, and sacred identities of Native peoples and to address the ongoing need for understanding and partnership.

Your contributions help strengthen Native American ministries within our conferences and provide scholarships for Native individuals pursuing licensed or ordained ministry. Half of every gift remains in our annual conference to support Native-led programs through the Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM), which helps develop ministries, promote cultural education, and advocate for Indigenous communities. The remaining funds are divided equally: one-quarter supports seminary scholarships for Native students, and one-quarter is used to develop leadership, economic, and cultural renewal programs in Native communities across the country.

Last year, nearly \$240,000 was raised. Every dollar makes a difference. Together, we honor the past, invest in the present, and build a future where Native voices and ministries continue to thrive.

You can give using the envelope provided in this week’s newsletter, online at [ummecosta.org/give](http://ummecosta.org/give), or by noting on your check “Special Offering NAMS”.

UMMMC DINNER SCRAMBLE!

We’re trying something new—and delicious—this summer at United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County! The UMMC Dinner Scramble is a chance for folks from First, Third Avenue, and Paris to gather around the table, meet new friends, and deepen our connection as one faith community.

Here’s how it works: Sign up as an individual, couple, or family during the month of May. In early June, we’ll randomly match people into small dinner groups (2–3 households). During the week of June 30, each group will choose their own time and place to gather—host at home, go out to eat, meet at a park—it’s up to you!

Sign-up sheets will be available at all campuses on Sunday, May 18. You can also call the office and register by phone, or email your: NAME, PHONE NUMBER, and NUMBER ATTENDING FROM YOUR HOUSEHOLD to [register@ummecosta.org](mailto:register@ummecosta.org) with the subject line “Dinner Scramble”. *Deadline to sign up is May 31.*

We hope this is just the first of many chances to build new relationships and strengthen old ones. Let’s break bread together and build something beautiful.

CAMP CHAOS DECORATIONS CREATION DAYS

Join us in building, creating, and crafting the decorations and prop pieces that will be used for Camp Chaos! Don't worry you don't have to be crafty or creative, though - our team leaders will give you all the direction you need! Feel free to come for any amount of time during the times listed below:

- May 20, 5:30PM – 8PM
- June 3, 1PM – 5PM
- June 3, 5:30PM - 7:30PM
- June 9, 1PM – 7PM, SET-UP

Happening This Week

SUNDAY, MAY 18

- 9:00AM - Worship Celebration with Communion @ Paris Campus
  - Fellowship & Coffee Immediately After Worship
- 10:00AM - Worship Celebration @ First Church Campus
  - Fellowship & Coffee Immediately After Worship, Fellowship Hall
  - “From Haiti to the U.S.”, Presentation by Mario Damis, Basement
- 11:00AM - Worship Celebration with Communion @ Third Ave Campus
  - Planting / Landscaping with Lunch, immediately after worship.

MONDAY, MAY 19

- 12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave

TUESDAY, MAY 20

- 12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave
- 5:30PM - Camp Chaos Creation Day @ First
- 6:30PM - Wild Wednesday Planning Team @ First
- 7PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21

- 11:30AM - Community Lunch @ Third Ave
- 6:00PM - Euchre / Game Night @ First

THURSDAY, MAY 22

- 1PM - Camp Chaos Creation Day @ First
- 5:30PM - Community Dinner @ First
- 7PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris

FRIDAY, MAY 23

- 12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave

SATURDAY, MAY 24

- 11AM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris
- 11:30AM - Community Lunch @ Third Ave

MAY PERSONAL HYGIENE PANTRY NEEDS LIST:

- Paper Towel
- Toilet Paper
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Shampoo & Conditioners
- Body Wash
- Cleaning Products
- Laundry detergent
- Adult Toothpaste

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

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Week of May 18 - May 24, 2025

Family News



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  
*Director of Administrative Services: Barbara Erb ([barbara@ummecosta.org](mailto:barbara@ummecosta.org))*

PARIS UMC

109 Lincoln St  
Paris, MI 49338  
Worship @ 9AM

FIRST CHURCH

304 Elm Street  
Big Rapids, MI 49307  
[www.bigrapidsfirst.org](http://www.bigrapidsfirst.org)  
Worship @ 10AM  
Fellowship @ 11AM

THIRD AVENUE UMC

226 North Third Ave  
Big Rapids, MI 49307  
Worship @ 11AM

# Order of Worship - May 18, 2025

Fifth Sunday of Easter

## Prelude

## Welcome & Announcements

### \* Call to Worship

We come today not because we have it all together, but because we need help - help beyond what we can do on our own.

*We lift our eyes to the hills, where does our help come from?*

Our help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth, the One who does not slumber or turn away.

*God is our keeper, our protector, our constant companion.*

Let us set aside the myth that we must be strong enough, and open ourselves to the grace that meets us in our weakness.

*We come to worship the God who helps not only the capable, but the weary, the worried, and the waiting. Let us praise the One who never leaves our side.*

\* Hymn - "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God", UMH #110

## Recognition of the Class of 2025

### Scripture Reading - Psalm 121:1-8 (NRSVUE)

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

Hymn- "Tis So Sweet", UMH #462, led by the Praise Team

## Story Telling

Song - "Lean On Me", led by the Praise Team

## Pastoral Prayer & The Lord's Prayer

\* "The Doxology", UMH #95

\* Hymn - "How Firm a Foundation", UMH #529, vs. 1 - 3

## \* Benediction

\* Hymn - "How Firm a Foundation", UMH #529, vs. 4

## Postlude

\*PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

*Pastor Jeremy will greet people in the Warren St Lobby immediately following service.*

*Altar flowers are given in memory of Carol Evatt.*

## NOTES:



Check In Here

## SERVING TODAY - MAY 18

Reader: Doug Fitzgerald  
Ushers: Colin and Roberta Cline  
Greeter: Kathi Parker  
Nursery: Diane Parrish and Liberty Beam  
Sunday School: Larisa Draves and Kathi Parker  
Fellowship Host: Denise Cospoer

## SERVING NEXT WEEK - MAY 25

Reader: Herm McConnell  
Ushers: Rex and Cheryl Richardson  
Greeter: Barbara Ross  
Nursery: Diane Parrish and Paige Madden  
Sunday School: Thomas Wheeler, TBD  
Fellowship Host: Cheryl Richardson

*Welcome to First Church!*

Welcome to Big Rapids First United Methodist Church, an inclusive and affirming congregation (you can read our welcome statement here: [bigrapidsfirst.org/welcome](http://bigrapidsfirst.org/welcome)) - we are so happy you're here! If this is your first visit, or you're not familiar with us, check out our "First Visit" page @ [bigrapidsfirst.org/firstvisit](http://bigrapidsfirst.org/firstvisit).

If you require additional assistance, please ask any of our welcome team members, and they will be happy to help!

## THINK ABOUT IT THIS WEEK

"God helps those who help themselves" sounds wise, but it's not found anywhere in Scripture. In fact, the Bible often tells a different story of a God who helps the broken, the weary, the overwhelmed, and those who don't know where to turn. Psalm 121 reminds us that our help comes not from our own effort, but from the Lord, who watches over us constantly and never sleeps.

### Reflection Questions:

- Where in your life are you trying to "handle it" on your own?
- How does it change your perspective to remember that God offers help simply because you need it?
- Who around you might need help this week, and how can you offer it without judgment or condition?

### Prayer for the Week:

God of steady love, thank you for being my help even when I don't have it all together. Teach me to ask for help with humility and to offer it with compassion. Let me trust in your care more than my own strength. Amen.

### Final Thought:

You don't have to prove yourself to receive God's help. Grace meets you where you are, simply because you need it.

## COMING NEXT WEEK

Next Sunday, we take on one of the most enduring and fear-filled ideas in Christian tradition: hell. Is it really a place of fire, torment, and eternal punishment? And does God use fear to get our attention?

We'll explore and look at the origins of our modern ideas around hell and talk about Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus - not as a literal map of the afterlife, but as a powerful challenge to how we live, love, and notice the suffering around us. What if Jesus didn't tell this story to scare us about what happens when we die, but to wake us up to how we live now?

Join us as we move past fear-based faith and into a deeper conversation about justice, compassion, and the hope-filled heart of God.

## VOLUNTEER BACKGROUND CHECKS

At United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County, we require all volunteers and staff who work with vulnerable populations to annually complete a background check. The form, can be found at [ummecosta.org/forms/background](http://ummecosta.org/forms/background), and should be completed before the end of May each year. You can find a hardcopy of this form in the information center, outside the main office, at our First Church campus.

If you have questions about why we do this, how your information is protected, or how the process works, feel free to reach out to the church office. Thank you for helping us live into our call to love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously - safely.

Your generosity makes a difference! To avoid any confusion in our giving systems, please make your checks out to your local campus. Thank you for your continued support!