

VALUES IN ACTION: A COMMUNITY WHERE ALL BELONG

At United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County, we are guided by a set of core values that shape who we are and how we live out our faith. One of those values says this: *"We create welcoming, affirming, diverse spaces where everyone can belong, thrive, and experience Christ's love."*

This is a commitment to ensure that every person who walks through our doors or joins us in ministry feels seen, valued, and loved. We believe that Christ's love is radical, inclusive, and boundless, not reserved for a select few. Creating truly welcoming spaces means more than just being polite. It means affirming people for who they are - across race, gender identity, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, socioeconomic status, ability, or any other "label" that we put on ourselves or others.

This value shows up in the way we worship, the way we lead, the way we greet newcomers, and the way we care for one another. It shows up at the block party table where a neighbor finds hygiene items they need, in the quiet conversation during a grief group, and in the joyful chaos of Wild Wednesday where every child knows they are cherished.

We know the church hasn't always gotten this right, but at UMMMC we are committed to doing better, together. When everyone belongs, we all thrive, and when we thrive, the love of Christ becomes real, right here in our own communities.

SUMMER BLOCK PARTY - JUNE 19

Mark your calendars and join us for a Summer Block Party on Thursday, June 19, from 2 to 5 PM on the corner of Elm and Stewart Street in Big Rapids! This family-friendly, free event will include:

- 🎲 Fun games and activities
- 🍔 Food and refreshments
- 📖 Free books
- 🐾 A petting zoo
- 📋 Information from local agencies

*Co-hosted by First Church, Angels of Action, and a wide range of community partners, this is a great opportunity to connect, celebrate, and support one another. Spread the word—hope to see you there!*

UMMMC "JUST BECAUSE" POTLUCK

Join us after worship on Sunday, June 22 for a potluck lunch in the Fellowship Hall! Why are we having a potluck? Just because we can! Bring a dish to share—main courses, sides, salads, and desserts are all welcome. A sign-up sheet is posted in the Fellowship Hall, so be sure to add your name and let us know what you're bringing. This is a wonderful chance to share a meal and spend time in community—we hope you'll join us!

ALL CAMPUS PICNIC - WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We're hoping to host our UMMMC All Campus Picnic on Sunday, July 13 at 1:00 PM at the Paris Campus, but here's the truth - this event can't happen without your help! If you've been looking for a meaningful (and fun!) way to contribute to our shared life together, this is it. Whether you're great at organizing, setting up, greeting, or just lending a hand, we need you to help bring this event to life. To volunteer or ask questions, reach out to Pastor Jeremy before June 19. Let's make this celebration happen - together.

Happening This Week

SUNDAY, JUNE 15

10:00AM - All Campus Worship @ First Church Campus  
- Fellowship & Coffee Immediately After Worship, Fellowship Hall

MONDAY, JUNE 16

12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave

TUESDAY, JUNE 17

12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave  
7PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18

11:30AM - Community Lunch @ Third Ave  
5:30PM - Wild Wednesday: Camp Chaos! @ First Church  
6PM - Euchre / Game Night @ Third Ave

THURSDAY, JUNE 19

5:30PM - Community Dinner @ First  
2-5PM - SummerBlock Party @ the corner of Elm & Stewart in BR  
7PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris

FRIDAY, JUNE 20

12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave

SATURDAY, JUNE 21

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

JUNE PERSONAL HYGIENE PANTRY NEEDS LIST:

*Donated items can be put in the basket in Fellowship Hall, under the bulletin boards.*

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

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Barbara Erb - Director of Administrative Services  
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Ray Setlock - Campus Pastor @ Paris & Third Ave  
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Rev. Jeremy Wicks - Executive Pastor / Campus Pastor @ First  
jeremy@ummecosta.org / (231) 224-6545

Week of June 15 - June 21, 2025

Family News

QUEERFULLY  
&  
WONDERFULLY  
made!

WHAT SCRIPTURE REALLY SAYS  
ABOUT LGBTQAI+ BELONGING

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

PARIS UMC  
109 Lincoln St  
Paris, MI 49338  
ummecosta.org/paris

FIRST CHURCH  
304 Elm Street  
Big Rapids, MI 49307  
bigrapidsfirst.org

THIRD AVENUE UMC  
226 North Third Ave  
Big Rapids, MI 49307  
ummecosta.org/third

SUMMER 2025 - ALL CAMPUSES GATHERING @ FIRST  
WORSHIP SERVICE - 10AM / FELLOWSHIP - 11AM

# Order of Worship - June 15, 2025

## Prelude

## Welcome & Announcements

### \* Call to Worship

Come, beloved community - you who have been called unclean, you who have been named “abomination,” you who have been wounded by words misused and faith that’s been weaponized.

*We come seeking healing, we come seeking truth,  
and we come seeking belonging.*

Come, all who long for a faith that liberates - a faith grounded in love not rooted in shame, in mercy and justice, not in fear.

*We come to worship the One who sees beyond labels,  
who invites us to holiness through love.*

In this place, we will not reduce Scripture to a weapon. Here, we will listen for the Spirit who reclaims the text and restores the brokenhearted.

*We come to worship the God who calls us beloved. We come to  
worship the God of justice, the Christ of compassion, and the Spirit  
who makes all things new.*

\* Hymn - “The Church’s One Foundation”, UMH #545

## Children’s Message

**Scripture Reading** - Leviticus 18:22 & 20:13, Matthew 22:37–40  
*(New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition)*  
The Word of God, for the people of God. *Thanks be to God!*

Hymn- “Thy Word Is a Lamp”, UMH #601

Message - “Queerfully & Wonderfully Made: Abomination?”

## Pastoral Prayer

## The Lord’s Prayer

\* “The Doxology”, UMH #95

\* Hymn - “Wonderful Words of Life”, UMH #600, vs. 1-2\*

## \* Benediction

\* Hymn - “Wonderful Words of Life”, UMH #600, vs. 3

## Postlude

\*PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

*Altar flowers are given in celebration of our “Camp Chaos” volunteers.*

## NOTES:



Check In Here

## SERVING TODAY - JUNE 15

Preaching: Rev. Jeremy Wicks  
Reader: Barbara Ross  
Ushers: Mike & Jana Pisani  
Greeter: Kathi Parker  
Nursery: Paige Madden  
Sunday School: Kathi Parker, Laurie Daniels  
Fellowship Host: Denise Cosper

## SERVING NEXT WEEK - JUNE 22

Reader: Shelby Fate  
Ushers: Rex & Cheryl Richardson  
Greeter: Barbara Ross  
Nursery: Liberty Beam, Jana Pisani  
Sunday School: Thomas Wheeler, Beth Bejcek  
Fellowship Host: OUR FANTASTIC POTLUCK TEAM!!!

## 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

This week, we take a closer look at two verses in Leviticus that have been misused to harm LGBTQ+ people. These verses include a word often translated as “abomination”, but the Hebrew word doesn’t mean what we’ve been told it means. *Toevah* refers to something culturally taboo or ritually unclean, like eating shellfish or mixing fabrics, not to something inherently sinful.

Jesus invites us to reframe our understanding of holiness as love in action, mercy, and justice - not purity or exclusion. Holiness is about the way we treat one another, especially those the world pushes to the margins.

## Reflection Questions:

- Have I ever accepted an interpretation of Scripture that was shaped more by fear than love?
- Where have I seen the Church confuse holiness with control or conformity?
- What does it look like for me to live a life that’s “set apart” by compassion?

**A Prayer for the Week:** *God of mercy and justice, open our hearts to the beauty of Your Word and the truth of Your love. Help us let go of harmful interpretations and embrace holiness rooted in grace. Teach us to see one another as sacred, not shameful. May our faith make space, not fences. Amen.*

**Final Thought:** True holiness doesn't exclude—it embraces. It doesn't gatekeep—it gathers. To be set apart in Christ is to be set apart for love.

## PEACE WITH JUSTICE SPECIAL OFFERING - TODAY

Today—and throughout the month of June—we will receive a special Peace with Justice offering. This United Methodist Church-wide initiative supports ministries that seek just and lasting solutions to conflict, reduce the reliance on weapons, and promote peace through education, advocacy, and action. Together, we can do more than we ever could alone. Let’s stand as people of faith working for peace with justice in our world. You can give in person or online at [ummecosta.org/give](http://ummecosta.org/give).

## COMING NEXT WEEK: “UNNATURAL?”

Next Sunday, we’ll explore one of the “clobber passages” in the New Testament, Romans 1:26–27. These verses have been wielded as a weapon against LGBTQAI+ people; but what if what we’ve been taught about this passage isn’t true? We’ll take a closer look at Paul’s intent, his use of rhetorical tradition, and the deeper message that unfolds from Romans 1 through 3. *Spoiler: Paul wasn’t condemning same sex love or relationships - he was confronting idolatry and calling a divided community toward unity in Christ.*

This series isn’t about rewriting Scripture - it’s about reading it faithfully. Come discover a gospel that’s bigger, braver, and more inclusive than we’ve been taught to believe.

**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!**