

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION SUNDAY

This Sunday, April 19th, we're taking a moment to recognize those who work behind the scenes and make *everything* we do possible—our volunteers.

Across each campus, in ways both visible and unseen, volunteers are the ones who show up. They greet at the doors, prepare spaces, lead ministries, care for others, organize details, and step in wherever there's a need. Quite simply, the life of our church is sustained by people who are willing to give their time, energy, and heart to this shared work.

Volunteer Appreciation Sunday is our opportunity to say thank you—not just in words, but in community. After worship t our First Church Campus, we invite to enjoy a special Fellowship / Coffee Hour. This will be a relaxed time to connect, enjoy some good food, and celebrate the people who help make this ministry what it is.

Whether you're currently serving, have served in the past, or are just beginning to find your place, we hope you'll stick around. This is a moment for all of us to recognize that what we're building together only happens because people choose to be part of it.

We're grateful—and we're better because of you.

FAMILY MEETING & POTLUCK – JUNE 7

On Sunday, June 7, we'll gather for a UMMMC Family Meeting and Potluck immediately following worship at our downtown campus. This is one of the key ways we come together as a whole church—to connect, share a meal, and stay engaged in the life and direction of our ministry. You'll hear updates about what's happening across our campuses and where we're headed next.

Everyone is invited, and if you're able to bring a dish to pass, it's always appreciated. Make plans to stay, and be part of the conversation!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We have a few opportunities for those looking to get more involved in the life of our church:

- **Landscape Coordinator** – We're looking for someone to organize and lead a team that cares for the flower beds, landscaping, including the Memorial Garden, at our Downtown Campus. This role is about coordination and team building, not doing all the work yourself—and no, mowing the lawn is not required, unless you really want it to be!
- **Worship Video Editor** – This role involves taking our weekly worship recording, doing some light editing, and uploading it to YouTube so we can stay connected with those who join us online.
- **Community Meal Cook** – We're looking to add at least one more cook to the team that prepares meals for our neighbors on Thursdays. This is a hands-on way to make a direct impact and help extend hospitality to our neighbors.

If you're interested in any of these opportunities, or just want to learn more, please reach out to Pastor Jeremy. There's a place for you to connect and make a difference.

BOOK STUDY: THE PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE

You're invited to join a six-week book study on *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren, on Wednesdays, May 6 - June 10. This study will explore questions of meaning, calling, and how we live out our faith in everyday life. The evening with begin with dinner at 5:30PM, followed by the study from 6:00-7:30PM. If you'd like to participate, please contact Barbara Erb in the church office to register by May 1.

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN...

We're already looking ahead to one of the sweetest events of the summer—our Ice Cream Social, coming soon to the Paris campus. Last year was a wonderful success, filled with great conversation, lots of laughter, and (of course) plenty of delicious ice cream. More details are coming soon, but for now... keep your eyes open. You won't want to miss it!

What's Happening

SUNDAY, APRIL 19

9:30AM - Worship @ Paris (North) Campus
10AM - Worship @ First Church (Downtown) Campus
11:15AM - Fellowship / Coffee Hour @ First Church (Downtown) Campus

MONDAY, APRIL 20

12PM - Red Cross Blood Drive @ Downtown Campus

TUESDAY, APRIL 21

9AM - Ministry Staff Team Meeting @ Downtown Campus

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22

10AM - SOUL Circle @ Downtown Campus
11AM - *Embracing an Adverbial Faith* Discussion Group @ Downtown Campus
12PM - Table Talk @ Downtown Campus
6PM - Praise Team Rehearsal @ Downtown Campus

THURSDAY, APRIL 23

5:30PM - community Dinner @ Downtown Campus

SATURDAY, APRIL 25

10AM-12Pm - Crafting with a Cause @ Downtown Campus, Basement

WILD WEDNESDAY PLANNING MEETING - APRIL 26

This is our first call for volunteers for Wild Wednesday—our signature summer children's ministry experience—and we'd love to have you involved. Join us for a planning meeting on April 26, immediately following worship at First Church. Whether you've served before or are stepping in for the first time, your voice and presence matter as we begin shaping this summer's ministry. If you have questions or want to learn more, please connect with Paden Clevenger, our Director of Family Ministries and Community Outreach.

MIDWEEK CONVERSATION: EMBRACING AN ADVERBIAL FAITH

Join us on Wednesdays at 11AM beginning April 15 at our Downtown Campus for a weekly gathering centered on the themes we're exploring in worship—what it means to be formed as disciples who love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously. There's no book to purchase and no prep required—just show up and be part of the conversation. (*Table Talk is immediately following, so bring your lunch if you'd like to stay and participate!*)

CRAFTING WITH A CAUSE - APRIL GATHERING

Crafting with a Cause will meet on Saturday, April 25th, from 10:00 a.m. to noon in the basement at our First Church campus. This month, participants will be creating May Day decorations and cards for residents at Evergreen Terrace and for members of our church community living at the Brook. Larissa Draves and Cheryl Richardson are organizing this month's gathering.

All are welcome to join in this meaningful and creative time together. Please Note: We are no longer collecting plastic grocery bags at the church. We invite you to take them to Meijer or the county recycling center for proper recycling rather than leaving them at the church.

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

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

Week of April 19 - April 25, 2026

Family News

LOVE
boldly

SERVE
joyfully

LEAD
courageously

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 OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAY & THURSDAY, 9AM - 12PM & 12:30PM - 3PM

NORTH CAMPUS - PARIS

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

Worship Gathering
in-person
Sundays @ 9:30AM

DOWNTOWN CAMPUS - FIRST

304 Elm Street
Big Rapids, MI 49307
bigrapidsfirst.org

Worship Gathering
in-person and online
Sundays @ 10AM

Order of Worship - April 19, 2026

"This is the Day" Call and Response - Gordon Mallett

Welcome & Announcements

Musical Meditation - Ed Mallett

*** Call to Worship** (Reader / *People*)

We come as people with good intentions—
longing to do what is right, yet aware of how often we fall short.

We know the good we want to do—
and we know the ways we miss the mark.

Still, we are not alone in this struggle.
God meets us in the tension, not just in our success.

Grace is not reserved for the perfect—
it is given to those who are honest about their need.

So come, not as you wish you were, but as you are.
*We come to worship, trusting in the grace that holds us and restores us.
Let us worship God.*

*** Hymn**

Praises and Prayers

Prayers and Praises of the People
Pastoral Prayer
The Lord's Prayer

Scripture Reading - Romans 7:14-25 (NRSVUE)
Reader: The word of God, for the people of God.
People: *Thanks be to God!*

*** Hymn**

Message - "Best of Intentions" - Ray Setlock

Silent Prayer of Reflection

Offering

*** The Doxology**, UMH #95

*** Hymn**

*** Benediction**

Postlude

* PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

NOTES:



Check In Here

Welcome to Paris!

Welcome to Paris, the North Campus of United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County - we're so glad you're here! This is a place where faith feels like family, where neighbors become friends, and where we learn and grow together in Christ's love.

Whether you're visiting, returning, or looking for a church home, you are welcome here. Come as you are, bring your questions and your hopes, and make yourself at home.

If you need anything or have questions, our church family is here to help. We're blessed to have you with us today.

SCRIPTURE - ROMANS 7:14-25

¹⁴For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. ¹⁵I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷But in fact it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸For I know that the good does not dwell within me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do the good lies close at hand, but not the ability. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me.

²¹So I find it to be a law that, when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. ²²For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, ²³but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴Wretched person that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, with my mind I am enslaved to the law of God, but with my flesh I am enslaved to the law of sin.

THINK ABOUT IT THIS WEEK

We all know the gap between intention and action—the space where we want to do what's right, but something gets in the way. Instead of ignoring that tension or being discouraged by it, what if we paid attention to it?

- Where in your life do your intentions and your actions feel out of sync?
- What patterns or habits tend to pull you away from what you know is good?
- How might honesty about that struggle open the door to something deeper than guilt—like growth or grace?

This week, resist the urge to pretend you have it all together. Instead, practice naming what's real—with God and with yourself. Not as a way of condemning yourself, but as a way of making space for transformation.

A Simple Practice:

At the end of each day, take a few quiet moments to reflect. Where did your actions align with your intentions? Where did they not? Offer both to God—without excuses, and without shame.

A Prayer:

God, you see me clearly—both my desire to do what is right and the places where I fall short. Help me to be honest about my life, open to your grace, and willing to grow. Shape my intentions and my actions so that they reflect your love more fully. Amen.

APRIL MISSION FOCUS: NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY

In April, we join The United Methodist Church in observing Native American Ministries Sunday. This special offering supports the development of Native American clergy and leaders, provides scholarships for Native students, and strengthens ministries serving Native communities. We invite you to give generously, knowing your gift helps nurture leaders and strengthen communities across the connection. Gifts can be given in person or online. Please mark your checks or your envelopes with "NAMS" so that your gift is credited to the correct account.

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