

## HELP SHAPE WORSHIP THIS SUMMER

This summer at First Church, we are planning a couple of fun and meaningful ways for the congregation to help shape our worship together.

First, we would love to know your favorite hymns! Throughout the summer, we will be using hymn suggestions from the congregation as part of our worship planning. Whether it is a hymn that has carried you through a difficult season, one that reminds you of someone you love, or simply one you love to sing, we want to hear about it.

Second, Pastor Jeremy will be preaching several “Ask the Pastor” style sermons this summer. These messages will be shaped by questions, thoughts, and topics submitted by the congregation. This is a chance to ask about faith, Scripture, theology, the church, life, or anything else you would like to hear reflected on in worship.

You can submit both hymn suggestions and sermon questions on your connection card and turn it in any Sunday between May 17 and June 7.

We are looking forward to a summer shaped by the voices, questions, and songs of our church family.

## GRADUATION SUNDAY

On **Sunday, May 24**, we will celebrate Graduation Sunday during worship as we recognize and bless the graduates connected to our church family. Graduation is an important milestone, not only for students and their families, but for the whole congregation. It gives us the chance to give thanks for the hard work, growth, perseverance, and many gifts of those who are beginning a new chapter.

If you or someone in your family is graduating this year from high school, college, graduate school, trade school, or another program, we would love to include them in this celebration. Please contact Barb in the church office no later than May 17 with the graduate’s name, school, degree or program, and any future plans you would like to share.

## PHOTO DIRECTORY - HAPPENING NOW!

As we continue growing together as United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County, we’re excited to create our very first photo directory!

Photos will be taken each Sunday in May during fellowship time after worship at the Downtown Campus. There will be a Saturday photo session at the North (Paris) Campus on **May 16, from 10AM - 11AM**. We hope everyone will take advantage of whichever opportunity works best for them. There’s no need to sign up—just stop by the photo area when you’re ready. Photos can be taken for individuals, couples, or families.

We’re grateful to Gary Poole for serving as our photographer. If you’d like printed copies of your photo, Gary will have prints available for purchase directly through him—no pressure, just an option if you’re interested. Print sizes will include 8x10, 11x14, and 16x20.

A few simple tips to help your photo turn out well:

- Dress neatly—no need to be formal
- Solid, medium to darker colors tend to photograph best
- Couples and families may want to coordinate colors
- Photos will be taken from the waist up

We’re looking forward to creating something that helps strengthen connection across our whole church community!

## What's Happening

### SUNDAY, MAY 17

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

### TUESDAY, MAY 19

9AM - Director’s Meeting @ Downtown Campus

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

10AM - SOUL Circle @ Downtown Campus  
11AM - *Embracing an Adverbial Faith* Discussion Group @ Downtown Campus  
12PM - Table Talk @ Downtown Campus  
5:30PM - “Purpose Driven Life” Dinner / Book Study @ North Campus  
5:30PM - Euchre Night @ Downtown Campus  
6PM - Praise Team Rehearsal @ Downtown Campus

### THURSDAY, MAY 21

5:30PM - Community Dinner @ Downtown Campus

## READERS NEEDED FOR HYMN SING SERVICE

On **Sunday, May 31**, we will have a special Hymn Sing service at the **First Church Campus**. As part of the service, we will need several readers to help lead different portions of worship. If you would be willing to serve as a reader that morning, please contact the church office or let Pastor Jeremy know. This will be a meaningful way to help lead the congregation in worship as we sing, pray, and celebrate the hymns that have helped shape our faith.

## 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!

## 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](https://calendly.com/jeremy-ummecosta)

Week of May 17 - May 23, 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.UUMMESTA.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 - May 17, 2026

## Prelude

## Welcome & Announcements

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

Family of God, who are you?

*We are disciples, formed by Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit.*

Family of God, why do you gather?

*To worship God who loves us and teaches us to love our neighbors, ourselves, and all creation.*

Family of God, how do you worship God?

*By loving boldly, serving joyfully, and leading courageously.*

Family of God, receive this good news: in our loving, our serving, and our leading, we are not alone—God is with us!

*We come to worship God by loving boldly, serving joyfully, and leading courageously in our community and through our worldwide connections, that we may be disciples of Jesus Christ who transform the world. Amen.*

### \* Hymn - "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing", UMH #57

## Children's Message

## Old Testament Reading - Psalm 96 (NRSVUE)

## Song - "Way Maker", led by the Praise Team

## New Testament Reading - Matthew 28:16-20 (NRSVUE)

Reader: The word of God, for the people of God.

People: *Thanks be to God!*

## Song - "Lean on Me", led by the Praise Team

## Message - "Disciples Transform the World"

## Pastoral Prayer

## The Lord's Prayer

### \* The Doxology, UMH #95

### \* Hymn - "Go, Make of All Disciples", UMH #571, vss. 1-3

### \* Benediction

### \* Hymn - "Go, Make of All Disciples", UMH #571, vs. 4

## Postlude

\* PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

*Pastor Jeremy will be in the Warren Street Lobby after the service and would love to greet you.*

# 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](http://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 - MAY 17

Reader: Barbara Ross

Ushers: Rex & Cheryl Richardson

Greeter: Kathi Parker

Nursery: Sara DeLany, Beth Bejcek

Sunday School: Kathi Parker, Liberty Beam

Fellowship Host: Cheryl Richardson

Organist: Shirley Jernstadt

Accompanist: Kathy Bell

Tech Team: Ken Draves, Gary Poole

## SERVING NEXT WEEK - MAY 24

Reader: Barbara Ross

Ushers: Rex & Cheryl Richardson

Greeter: Betsy Curtis

Nursery: Sara DeLany, Paden Clevenger

Fellowship Host: Marlene Rodgers

## THINK ABOUT IT THIS WEEK - DISCIPLES TRANSFORM THE WORLD

This week, we bring our series "Embracing an Adverbial Faith" to a close by turning toward the larger purpose of it all: *Disciples transform the world*. That can sound impossibly big. After all, most of us are not trying to transform the world when we wake up in the morning - we are trying to get through the day, care for the people around us, keep up with responsibilities, and make faithful choices in the middle of ordinary life. But maybe that is where transformation begins; when ordinary people allow the grace of God to reshape how they live, how they love, how they serve, and how they lead.

Over these past weeks, we have talked about faith not just as something we believe, but as something we live. We have talked about being formed by Christ, empowered by the Spirit, and called to love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously. This week reminds us that none of that is just for us. We are formed so that we can participate in God's healing work in the world. We are empowered so that we can bear witness to grace. We love, serve, and lead because God's love is meant to move through us into our homes, our church, our community, and beyond.

## QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON

- Where have you sensed God forming you over these past few weeks?
- Which phrase has stayed with you most: love boldly, serve joyfully, or lead courageously?
- Where do you see signs of God's transforming work in your life, our church, or our community?
- What gifts, experiences, or passions might God be inviting you to offer for the sake of others?

## ACTION STEPS FOR THE WEEK

- Name one place of transformation. Pay attention to one area of your life, family, church, or community where healing, courage, or change is needed.
- Offer one gift. Use something God has entrusted to you—time, compassion, wisdom, encouragement, skill, or presence—for the good of someone else.
- Tell one story. Share with someone where you have seen God at work recently.
- Take one faithful step. Don't try to do everything. Choose one concrete way to participate in God's transforming work this week.

## PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

*God of grace, you form us, empower us, and send us. Thank you for the ways you are already at work in us and in the world around us. Help us to love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously, not for our own sake, but for the healing and transformation of your world. Show us the next faithful step, and give us the courage to take it together. Amen.*

## MAY MISSION FOCUS: UMC STUDENT SUNDAY

Each May, we join United Methodist churches across the connection in supporting UMC Student Sunday, an offering that invests directly in students pursuing higher education and discerning their call in the world.

Through the work of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, every dollar given funds scholarships for undergraduate, graduate, and seminary students, helping ease financial burdens and open doors that might otherwise remain closed. This is one of the ways we live out our connectional commitment—pooling our resources to make a meaningful impact beyond our local church.

More than just financial support, this offering is a tangible reminder to students that the Church believes in them and is committed to their future. Throughout the month of May, we invite you to prayerfully consider giving, knowing that your generosity helps shape leaders who will carry forward the work of faith, justice, and service in the world.

**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!**