

FINANCIAL UPDATE - FIRST QUARTER 2026

The ministry happening through UMMMC—worship, congregational care, outreach, community meals, and the everyday ways we show up in our community—is only possible because of your faithfulness and generosity. What we do matters, and it is making a difference. As we continue to live into our mission together, we are committed to clear and honest communication in all respects, and in particular, in the area of finances. This quarterly update is something we plan to share regularly—not just to report numbers, but to help all of us understand how our shared generosity fuels the ministry we’re building together. **Here is where we currently stand:**

Year-to-Date Income: \$88,202
Year-to-Date Expenses: \$78,240

Expense Breakdown (Year-to-Date):

- Building & Property: \$17,771 (\$72,950 budgeted)
- Staff: \$51,804 (\$240,184 budgeted)
- Office: \$1,038 (\$7,000 budgeted)
- Worship: \$472 (\$4,350 budgeted)
- Missions: \$1,297 (\$10,500 budgeted)
- Ministry Shares: \$4,954 (\$25,336 budgeted)
- Education / Family Ministry: \$326 (\$7,750 budgeted)
- Outreach / Evangelism: \$420 (\$5,400 budgeted)
- Other: \$158 (\$8,290 budgeted)

Total Annual Budget: \$381,760

To meet this budget, we need an average of approximately \$7,341 per week in giving over the course of the year. Because this report reflects the first 13 weeks of the year, our average weekly giving so far is approximately \$6,785. To date, income has outpaced expenses, and that gives us a strong foundation moving forward. At the same time, it’s important to remember that both giving and expenses will continue to shift in the months ahead. Some of our larger expenses are still to come, and some giving patterns have not yet fully played out.

Several significant facility improvements have been completed this year, including roof repair, electrical upgrades, and updates to the nursery. These projects were made possible through distributions from our Endowment Fund, as approved by the Leadership Team. In addition, the basement at our Downtown Campus has been transformed into a modern, functional meeting space using funds that had previously been allocated but not yet utilized. These investments strengthen our ability to do ministry well, both now and into the future.

Beyond the operating budget reflected above, we also steward a number of non-budget accounts that exist because of designated or directed giving. These include funds such as the Improvement/Maintenance Fund, Memorial Fund, and Pastor’s Discretionary Fund. These resources are given for specific purposes and are used accordingly, allowing us to respond to needs, care for our facilities, and support individuals and families in meaningful ways.

What matters most is not any single report, but the ongoing pattern of faithful participation. Every dollar given represents someone choosing to invest in the life and future of this community. If you already give regularly, thank you—your consistency creates stability in a system that naturally ebbs and flows. If you give occasionally or are considering taking a next step, recurring giving (weekly or monthly) can make a meaningful difference in helping us plan and sustain ministry.

We remain committed to transparency, faithful stewardship, and using the resources entrusted to us in ways that align with our mission—to make a real impact in the lives of people in our community. **This is our work—together. Thank you for being part of it.**

What's Happening

SUNDAY, APRIL 12

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

TUESDAY, APRIL 13

9AM - Ministry Staff Team Meeting @ Downtown Campus
10AM - Worship Design Team @ Downtown Campus

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15

10AM - SOUL Circle @ Downtown Campus
11AM - *Embracing an Adverbial Faith* Discussion Group @ Downtown Campus
12PM - Table Talk @ Downtown Campus
5:30PM - Euchre Night @ Downtown Campus

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

As we begin our new worship series, “Embracing an Adverbial Faith,” you’re invited to take the conversation a little deeper. 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!*)

This is a space for honest reflection, meaningful discussion, and growing together in faith. Whether you’ve been part of groups like this before or this is your first time, you’re welcome.

WE’RE HIRING!

Choir Director - Provide musical leadership, rehearse and direct our choir, and help shape meaningful worship experiences through choral music. If you have questions or would like to apply, please contact the main office and speak with Barb or Pastor Jeremy.

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 12 - April 18, 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 12, 2026

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

* Call to Worship (Reader / *People*)

Family of God, like Peter, James, and John, Jesus calls to us from the shorelines and the sidelines of life. Will you leave everything behind and follow?

Yes, we will follow!

Jesus calls us to work together, to build up the Body of Christ as we mature in faith. Will you leave everything behind and follow?

Yes, we will follow!

Jesus calls us to grow, to become disciples formed in the likeness of Christ. Will you leave everything behind and follow?

Yes, we will follow!

Family of God, on this journey of faith, we are not alone—God is with us!

Today, we choose once again to leave everything behind and follow Christ, who forms us as disciples, that we may live as disciples who transform the world. Amen.

* Hymn - "Take My Life, and Let It Be", UMH #399

Children's Message

Old Testament Reading - Psalm 119:1-8 (NRSVUE)

Hymn - "Lord, I Want to Be a Christian", UMH #402

New Testament Reading - Luke 5:1-11 (NRSVUE)

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

People: *Thanks be to God!*

Message - "Disciples Formed by Jesus Christ"

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

* The Doxology, UMH #95

* Hymn - "Here I Am, Lord", UMH# 593, vss. 1-2

* Benediction

* Hymn - "Here I Am, Lord", UMH# 593, vs. 3

Postlude

* PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

Altar Flowers are given in memory of Jeramey King - 46 years old in Heaven.

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.

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 - APRIL 12

Reader: Marlene Rodgers

Ushers: Colin & Roberta Cline

Greeter: Pete Jensen

Nursery: Sarah DeLany, Char Fitch

Sunday School: Larisa Draves, Brenda Chaffee

Fellowship Host: Cheryl & Rex Richardson

Organist: Shirley Jernstadt

Accompanist: Kathy Bell

Tech Team: Ken Draves, Gary Poole

SERVING NEXT WEEK - APRIL 19

Reader: Barbara Ross

Ushers: Jana Pisani, TBD

Greeter: Kathi Parker

Nursery: Sara DeLany, Paige Madden

Sunday School: Kathi Parker, Laurie Daniels

Fellowship Host: Paden Clevenger - Volunteer Appreciation

THINK ABOUT IT THIS WEEK

This week, we begin a new series called "Embracing an Adverbial Faith." It's built around a simple but challenging idea: faith isn't just something we believe—it's something we live. And how we live it matters. The renewed vision of The United Methodist Church names three ways of living that faith out loud: to love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously. But before we get there, we start at the foundation—what it means to be formed as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Discipleship is not about trying harder—it's about being formed over time. Through worship, scripture, prayer, relationships, and the work of the Spirit, our lives are slowly reshaped. Our instincts change. Our priorities shift. Our hearts become more aligned with the way of Jesus. So the question for this week isn't, "What should I do differently?" It's deeper than that: "How is Christ forming me right now?"

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON

- When have you experienced a moment where your faith actually changed you—not just what you believe, but how you live?
- Where in your life do you sense growth, stretching, or even discomfort right now?
- What practices (prayer, worship, scripture, community) are currently shaping you—and which ones are missing?
- What might it look like for you to be more intentional about your spiritual formation this week?
- Which of these words feels most natural to you right now: boldly, joyfully, courageously? Which one feels like a stretch?

ACTION STEPS FOR THE WEEK

- Create space: Set aside 5-10 minutes each day to pause, breathe, and become aware of God's presence.
- Engage scripture: Read Luke 5:1-11 or Ephesians 4:11-16 slowly at least twice this week. Pay attention to what stands out.
- Encourage someone: Reach out to someone who is growing in their faith and name what you see in them.
- Notice formation: At the end of each day, ask yourself, "Where did I see God shaping me today?"

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

God of grace, you are always at work in us, even when we don't notice. Shape our hearts, our habits, and our lives. Form us into people who reflect your love in real and tangible ways. Give us the courage to follow where you lead, the humility to be changed, and the trust to believe you are not finished with us yet. In Christ's way, we pray. Amen.

A CLOSING THOUGHT

Faith isn't formed in a moment—it's formed over a lifetime. And the good news is this: You don't have to have it all figured out to be a disciple. You just have to be willing to keep following. This week, pay attention. God is already at work in you.

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 First Church. Thank you for your continued support!