

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY: ONE TABLE, ONE FAMILY

On Sunday, October 4, United Methodists will join Christians around the world in celebrating World Communion Sunday. As we gather around Christ's table, we remember that God's love knows no borders and that there is room for everyone in the kin-dom of God. The table is not ours to divide; it is Christ's invitation to a world in need of love, reconciliation, and hope.

World Communion Sunday is also our October Missions Giving Focus! Through this special offering, we help provide scholarships, mentoring, and leadership development opportunities for students from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic communities in the United States and around the world. Our gifts help remove financial barriers to education and equip emerging leaders to serve their churches and communities.

Your generosity makes a difference! When we give to World Communion Sunday, we invest in a more inclusive and diverse church, helping prepare leaders who will carry Christ's love into the world for generations to come.

Throughout October, we invite you to make a special gift to our Missions Giving Focus: World Communion Sunday. Together, we can help build a world where everyone has a place at the table and an opportunity to answer God's call.

To contribute, please designate your gift for World Communion Sunday. You can give in person or online at www.ummecosta.org/give.

CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP - WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM

Are you caring for a spouse, parent, child, family member, or friend? Whether you provide care for an aging loved one, someone with an illness or disability, or a person facing a season of need, you don't have to do it alone. We are exploring the possibility of starting a **Caregivers Support Group** - a welcoming place to share experiences, encourage one another, pray together, and find support along the caregiving journey. All types of caregiving are welcome.

Would you be interested in participating? We'd love to hear from you as we gauge interest and determine what would be most helpful. If you are interested, please contact Kathy Bell or Barbara Erb in the church office.

TAKE A "BOO BREAK" THIS HALLOWEEN!

Halloween can be a wonderfully chaotic day—and sometimes everyone needs a little break! UMMMC's Downtown Campus invites the community to stop by for a free "Boo Break" on **October 31** from **11AM-2PM @ 304 Elm (Big Rapids)**. Come warm up at The Boo Cauldron, featuring a hot cocoa bar, coffee, and apple cider. There will also be a spooky craft and a Halloween photo backdrop for some fun pictures before heading back out into the festivities.

Whether you're out enjoying Halloween activities with the kids, passing through downtown, or simply looking for a warm drink and a friendly place to rest for a few minutes, stop in and join us. Everything is free, and everyone is welcome!

Volunteers are also needed to help make Boo Break possible! Sign-up sheets are available in the Fellowship Hall at First Church, or you can contact Barb in the church office by phone or email to volunteer.

Boo Break is a great and fun way to offer hospitality to our neighbors and create a warm, welcoming presence in the heart of our community. Come join the fun—and help us make Halloween a little sweeter!

What's Happening

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4 - WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

9AM - Worship @ Paris (North) Campus
10AM - Worship @ First Church (Downtown) Campus
Coffee / Fellowship Immediately Following Worship
2:30PM - Church Conference @ Reed City UMC

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6

9AM - Director's Meeting @ Downtown Campus

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7

10AM - Choir Rehearsal
11AM - Planning Meeting @ North Campus
11:30AM - Good Company @ Big Rapids Public Library
12PM - Table Talk @ Downtown Campus

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8

5:30PM - Community Dinner @ Downtown Campus

OCTOBER IS PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH

October is Pastor Appreciation Month, offering a simple opportunity to pause and express gratitude for the pastors who help lead, care for, and walk alongside their congregations.

Here at UMMMC, we invite you to take a moment this month to share a note, card, email, or word of encouragement with Pastor Jeremy. Ministry includes far more than what happens on Sunday mornings, and a few thoughtful words of appreciation can go a long way.

Whether you want to thank him for his leadership, pastoral care, preaching, community involvement, or simply for the ways he helps hold the many pieces of church life together, we encourage you to let him know that his ministry is seen and appreciated.

GOOD COMPANY @ THE LIBRARY

Sometimes it really does take a village! Beginning Wednesday, October 7, adults with young children are invited to join us for Good Company @ the Library at the Big Rapids Community Library.

Come for Mr. Howard's Storytime from 11-11:45 AM, then stick around for Good Company from 11:45 AM-12:15 PM. While the kids play, adults can enjoy an iced coffee, a sweet treat, and some relaxed conversation with other parents, grandparents, caregivers, and community members. No program, no pressure—just a chance to meet people, enjoy some good company, and build a little more community together.

For more information, or to volunteer to serve, contact Paden at paden@ummecosta.org.

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Barbara Erb - Director of Administrative Services
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Kathy Bell - Director of Congregational Care
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Paden Clevenger - Director of Family Ministries & Community Outreach
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Rev. Jeremy Wicks - Executive Pastor
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Week of October 4 - October 10, 2026

Family News



MICAH

Faithful Living in a Fractured World

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 AND MINISTRY STAFF AVAILABLE BY APPOINTMENT

NORTH CAMPUS - PARIS

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

Worship Gathering in-person
Sundays @ 9:00AM

DOWNTOWN CAMPUS - FIRST

304 Elm Street
Big Rapids, MI 49307
bigrapidsfirst.org

Worship Gathering in-person and
live online, Sundays @ 10AM
www.facebook.com/brfumc

Services Archived Weekly:
www.youtube.com/@brfumc

Order of Worship - October 4, 2026

Prelude

Choral Introit

Welcome & Announcements

* Call to Worship (Reader / *People*)

Who is like our God—forgiving, restoring, and delighting in steadfast love?
God meets us with mercy and welcomes us with grace.

When we have wandered, God calls us home.
When we have failed, God opens a new way.

Our failures do not have the final word.
God's faithful love endures forever.

From many places and many stories, God gathers one beloved community.
At Christ's table, there is room for us all. No one is forgotten, and no one is beyond grace.

Come with your burdens, your hopes, and your longing to begin again.
We come to worship the God who forgives, the God who restores, and the God who delights in mercy.

* Hymn - "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" — UMH 400

Children's Message

Scripture Reading - Micah 7:18–20 (NRSVUE)
The word of God, for the people of God.
Thanks be to God!

Hymn - "Spirit of the Living God" — UMH 393

Message - "Micah: The God Who Delights in Mercy"

Hymn - "Come, Share the Lord" — TFWS 2269

Celebration of Holy Communion

* Doxology, UMH 95

* Hymn - "This Is a Day of New Beginnings" — UMH 383, vss 1-3

* Blessing and Sending

* Hymn - "This Is a Day of New Beginnings" — UMH 383, vss 4-5

Postlude

Altar flowers are given by Sue Malzahn in honor of all October birthdays.

* PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

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 - OCTOBER 4

Reader: Pat Little
Communion Servers: Toinette Wicks, Denise Cosper, Shirley Jernstadt
Ushers: Rex & Cheryl Richardson
Greeter: Nancy Spedowski
Sunday School: No Sunday School
Nursery: No Nursery
Fellowship Host: Marlene Rodgers
Accompanist: Kathy Bell
Organist: Shirley Jernstadt
Tech Team: Ken Draves, Gary Poole

SERVING NEXT WEEK - OCTOBER 11

Reader: Brian Bejcek
Ushers: Colin & Roberta Cline
Greeter: Pete Jensen
Sunday School: TBD
Nursery: TBD
Fellowship Host: Denise Cosper

THINK ABOUT IT THIS WEEK: THE GOD WHO DELIGHTS IN MERCY

This Sunday, we conclude our series, Micah: Faithful Living in a Fractured World, with one of Scripture's most beautiful descriptions of God: "Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of your possession? He does not retain his anger forever because he delights in showing steadfast love."

Micah has not minimized the seriousness of injustice, corrupt leadership, violence, exploitation, or unfaithfulness. Throughout this book, the prophet has spoken honestly about the harm people cause and the consequences that follow. Yet Micah's final word is not condemnation. It is mercy.

God does not reluctantly forgive because we have finally offered a convincing apology or completed enough religious work. Mercy is not something God must be persuaded to show. Micah says that God delights in steadfast love. Forgiveness, restoration, and new beginnings flow from the character of God.

That does not mean harm is ignored or accountability becomes unnecessary. God's mercy tells the truth about what has been broken while refusing to believe that brokenness must have the final word. Divine mercy creates the possibility of repentance, repair, reconciliation, and renewed life.

On World Communion Sunday, we will gather at Christ's table with Christians around the world. We come from different cultures, traditions, nations, and experiences, but all of us come needing grace. At the table, we remember that God's mercy is larger than the divisions we create and that Christ continues forming one beloved community from a fractured world.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Is it easier for you to believe that God tolerates you or that God genuinely delights in showing you mercy? Why?
- Are there failures, regrets, or wounds that you have allowed to define your identity more completely than God's grace?
- When someone harms you or your community, what might it look like to hold truth, accountability, mercy, and the possibility of restoration together?
- Where do you see the Church being called to embody God's steadfast love in a divided and wounded world?

WAYS TO LIVE IT OUT

- Receive mercy. Name one failure or regret you continue to carry. Offer it honestly to God and practice trusting that your failure is not the whole truth about who you are.
- Release condemnation. Notice when you reduce another person to the worst thing they have done. Ask God to help you see their humanity without denying the harm that occurred.
- Take one restorative step. Apologize, make amends, repair what you can, or open a conversation where healing may become possible.
- Make room at the table. Reach out to someone who may feel forgotten, excluded, or alone. Extend an invitation that communicates genuine belonging.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

God of steadfast love, you know the truth about us and still meet us with mercy. Free us from the failures we have allowed to become our identity. Give us courage to tell the truth, humility to make amends, and grace to believe that restoration is possible. Teach us to extend to others the mercy we so readily desire for ourselves. Where relationships are fractured, make us healers. Where people are excluded, help us make room. Where condemnation has spoken the loudest, let steadfast love have the final word. Form us into one beloved community and help us co-operate with your Holy Spirit in the healing of the world. Amen.

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!**