

FSU WESLEY MISSION TRIP FUNDRAISER

Join FSU Wesley right after worship on February 8 for their "Soup-er Bowl" Mission Trip Fundraiser — a long-standing First Church tradition that helps make the Wesley students' spring break mission trip possible.

Following worship, we'll kick things off with lunch, and then the real fun begins — the baked goods and craft food auction, featuring homemade treats and creations!

This fundraiser is vitally important to supporting the Wesley Foundation's mission trip program, and your participation — whether donating items, bidding in the auction, or coming for lunch — truly makes a difference. Plan to be there and help support our Wesley students!

ASH WEDNESDAY - FEBRUARY 18

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a season of reflection, prayer, and re-centering our lives around what matters most. It's a chance to slow down, tell the truth about our need for grace, and begin again. The ashes remind us that we are human, we are finite, and we belong to God —and that even in our fragility, God is still at work making all things new.

We invite you to join us in one of three opportunities to receive ashes and worship on Ash Wednesday:

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

7:30-9AM @ First United Methodist Church
9:30-12PM @ The United Church
9:30-11:30AM @ St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

WORSHIP SERVICES

12:00PM @ St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
7:00PM @ First Church United Methodist Church

Whether you can slip through in the morning, pause at midday, or gather in the evening, this is a meaningful way to begin the Lenten journey together.

URGENT: PANTRY ITEMS NEEDED

Our Personal Care Pantries are in immediate need of donations to help support individuals and families in our community. Your generosity makes a real difference, and right now the following items are especially needed:

- Shampoo & conditioner
- Deodorant
- Toothpaste & toothbrushes
- Pasta & rice
- Boxed meals
- Cereal & oatmeal
- Hats, gloves, and mittens

Thank you so much for your continued generosity and care for our neighbors in need!

Donation Drop-Off Locations:

- Downtown (First) Campus: Fellowship Hall, near the bulletin board
- North (Paris) Campus: Sanctuary, table near the main door

Every donation helps meet a real need—thank you for being part of this ministry of compassion and support.

We are incredibly grateful for the members and friends of United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County who faithfully give their time, talents, gifts, and hearts to serve. It is because of your dedication and willingness to show up in so many ways that our ministry thrives and makes a real difference in our community—thank you for all you do!

What's Happening

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8

9:30AM - Worship @ Paris Campus (*Communion Sunday*)
10:00AM - Worship @ First Church Campus
11:15AM - FSU Wesley "Soup-er Bowl Lunch and Craft Food Auction"

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9

12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

9AM - Ministry Staff Team Meeting @ First
10AM - Worship Design Team @ First (*Lower-Level Meeting Room*)
12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave
7PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

11:30AM - Community Lunch @ Third Ave
12PM - Table Talk (*BYO Lunch!*) @ First
5:30PM - Euchre / Game Night @ First (*Play Begins @ 6PM*)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12

5:30PM - Community Dinner @ First

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13

12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14

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

SAVE THE DATE - BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION!

On Sunday, February 15th, immediately following worship at First Church, we will be celebrating a very special milestone — Keith Hans' 96th birthday! Join us for a time of joy, fellowship, and gratitude as we honor Keith and give thanks for his life and witness among us. *Cards and notes are welcome!*

TABLE TALK - WEDNESDAYS AT NOON

You're invited to join Pastor Jeremy for Table Talk at the First Church campus. Bring your lunch and gather around the table for open, relaxed conversation and connection. This is a space to talk about whatever is on your mind — current events, questions of faith, or life in general. There's no formal agenda, just time to listen, share, and be in community together. Come every week or drop in when you're able — all are welcome! No registration or RSVP necessary. *(From Pastor Jeremy: This isn't a gripe session, church business meeting, or a place to troubleshoot programs and policies. The goal is connection, dialogue, and shared reflection in a relaxed and welcoming space.)*

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Julie Setlock - Director of Family Ministry
julie@ummecosta.org - (231) 796-7771

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

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 February 8, 2026 - February 14, 2026

Family News



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 - February 8, 2026

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Welcome & Announcements

Prelude

Celebration of Communion

* Call to Worship (Leader / People)

Come, all who gather in the presence of God—not as strangers, but as neighbors.

We come, knowing we are welcomed by grace.

In a world that ranks worth and plays favorites, God calls us to a different way.

A way shaped by mercy, justice, and love.

Here, no one stands above another. Here, no one is overlooked.

We belong to one another in Christ.

So come, let us worship the One who shows no partiality and teaches us to do the same.

We come to worship, ready to be shaped by grace.

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

Praises and Prayers

Prayers and Praises of the People

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn - "Help Us Accept Each Other" (UMH 560)

Scripture Reading - James 2:1-13

The word of God, for the people of God. *Thanks be to God!*

Message - "Faith That Works: Favor Isn't Fair"

Offering

* "The Doxology" (UMH 95)

* Hymn - "In Christ There Is No East or West" (UMH 548)

* Benediction

PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

NOTES:

THINK ABOUT IT: FAVOR ISN'T FAIR

James does not treat favoritism as a small social misstep. He names it as a contradiction of the gospel itself. When we rank people by wealth, status, appearance, or usefulness, we are no longer seeing one another through the lens of grace. Faith that works refuses to play favorites—not because everyone is the same, but because everyone belongs. The question James places before us is not whether we intend to be fair, but whether our habits, assumptions, and systems reflect the mercy we claim to believe in.

Questions for Reflection

- Where do I notice myself making quick judgments about people—before I really know them?
- Who feels most at home in the spaces I'm part of? Who might feel overlooked or out of place?
- Are there voices I tend to trust more quickly than others? Why?
- How does mercy—not comfort or familiarity—challenge the way I relate to others?
- What would it look like for my faith to shape how I welcome, listen, and respond?

A Prayer for the Week

Gracious God, you show no partiality, yet we confess that we often do. Open our eyes to the ways we sort, rank, and judge—sometimes without even realizing it. Soften our hearts where comfort has made us careless, and teach us to see one another through your mercy. Form us into people whose faith makes room, whose love does not play favorites, and whose lives reflect the grace we have received. Amen.

Practice It This Week

Faith that works shows up in ordinary choices. Small acts matter. They shape us more than we realize. You might try one of these:

- Notice who gets your attention. Pay attention to whose voices you instinctively trust—and whose you tend to overlook.
- Practice intentional welcome. Sit with someone new, speak to someone who is often quiet, or reach out beyond your usual circle.
- Interrupt assumptions. When you catch yourself making a snap judgment, pause and ask, "What story might I be missing?"
- Choose mercy. In a moment where it's easier to dismiss or avoid, lean toward compassion instead.

Final Thought

James reminds us that faith is not proven by what we say we believe, but by how we treat one another—especially those who are easy to overlook. Favoritism may feel ordinary in the world around us, but it has no place in a community shaped by grace. Faith that works is faith that makes room.

FEBRUARY MISSION GIVING FOCUS: CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS

Our February Mission Giving Focus will support Camp Scholarships, helping children and youth attend Christian summer camp — even when cost might otherwise be a barrier.

At UMMMC, every child who attends church camp automatically receives a \$100 scholarship, and we also offer additional need-based scholarships to ensure no one misses out because of finances. These scholarships make it possible for more young people to experience a place where faith is formed, friendships grow, and lives are often changed in powerful ways.

All funds received through the February Mission Giving will be directed to the *Karen Poole Camp Scholarship Fund*. Karen's passion for camping ministry was evident not only during her time at First Church but throughout her entire ministry. Supporting this fund is a meaningful way to honor her legacy while investing in the faith of the next generation.

Thank you for helping make camp possible for our children and youth!

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



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.