

GRADUATION SUNDAY

On Sunday, May 18, we'll be celebrating Graduation Sunday across all of our campuses! If you or someone in your family is graduating this spring from high school, college, or a trade program, we want to recognize them during worship. Please send us the names of your graduates by Wednesday, May 14, along with a photo and a short note about their next steps (barbara@ummecosta.org). Let's make this a joyful and memorable moment for the incredible students in our community!

FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP + BOLD GENEROSITY

At our recent Charge Conference, two significant decisions were made regarding the use and future of our church properties:

- The sale of the former parsonage near the Third Avenue Campus was formally approved. With the hiring of our Director of Congregational Care, who does not require housing as part of her role, the Leadership Team discerned that the parsonage no longer aligns with our current ministry needs.
- The transfer of ownership of the church-owned portion of the parking lot behind the First Church Campus to the City of Big Rapids was also approved. The City will repave, restripe, and maintain the entire lot, while ensuring continued use for church events and worship. This partnership relieves us of future maintenance costs and strengthens our connection to the downtown community.

But perhaps even more important than what we're releasing is what we're choosing to do with what we've been given! The Leadership Team has made the bold and faithful decision to give 10% of the net proceeds from the sale of the Third Avenue parsonage to Our Brother's Keeper, a vital local ministry currently engaged in a capital campaign to expand their services to those in crisis. This gift represents not just a tithe, but a commitment to the values we proclaim: compassion, justice, and community-rooted generosity.

A minimum of \$12,000 will be contributed—a tangible sign that we are not simply consolidating resources, but releasing them for God's work beyond our walls.

In every decision—property, personnel, or programming—our focus remains the same: to align our resources with our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. If you have questions about these actions or want to learn more about Our Brother's Keeper, please reach out to Pastor Jeremy or any member of the Leadership Team.

CAMP CHAOS DECORATIONS CREATION DAYS

Join us in building, creating, and crafting the decorations and prop pieces that will be used for Camp Chaos! Don't worry you don't have to be crafty or creative, though - our team leaders will give you all the direction you need! Feel free to come for any amount of time during the times listed below:

- May 15, 1PM - 4PM
- May 20, 5:30PM - 8PM
- June 3, 1PM - 5PM
- June 3, 5:30PM - 7:30PM
- June 9, 1PM - 7PM, SET-UP

Happening This Week

SUNDAY, MAY 11

9:00AM - Worship Celebration @ Paris Campus
10:00AM - Worship Celebration @ First Church Campus
Fellowship / Coffee Immediately After Worship
11:00AM - Worship Celebration @ Third Ave Campus

MONDAY, MAY 12

12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave

TUESDAY, MAY 13

12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave
7PM - Ministry Team Meeting @ First Church
7PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14

11:30AM - Community Lunch @ Third Ave
1PM - First Church Landscape Team Clean-Up Day

THURSDAY, MAY 15

1PM - Camp Chaos Creation Day @ First Church
5:30PM - Community Dinner @ First Church
5:30PM - Praise Band Rehearsal @ First Church (Sanctuary)
7PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris

FRIDAY, MAY 16

12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave

SATURDAY, MAY 17

9:30AM - First Church Landscape Team Planting Day
10AM - Crafting With A Cause @ First Church
11AM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris
11:30AM - Community Lunch @ Third Ave

MAY PERSONAL HYGIENE PANTRY NEEDS LIST:

- Paper Towel
- Toilet Paper
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Shampoo & Conditioners
- Body Wash
- Cleaning Products
- Laundry detergent
- Adult Toothpaste

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

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

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

Ray Setlock - Campus Pastor @ Paris & Third Ave
ray@ummecosta.org - (231) 224-6520

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

Week of May 11 - May 17, 2025

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
Director of Administrative Services: Barbara Erb (barbara@ummecosta.org)

PARIS UMC

109 Lincoln St
Paris, MI 49338
Worship @ 9AM

FIRST CHURCH

304 Elm Street
Big Rapids, MI 49307
www.bigrapidsfirst.org
Worship @ 10AM
Fellowship @ 11AM

THIRD AVENUE UMC

226 North Third Ave
Big Rapids, MI 49307
Worship @ 11AM

Order of Worship - May 11, 2025

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

* Call to Worship

Come, all who are weary and worn, all who are carrying more than they can hold.

We come with burdens too heavy, with questions too big, and hearts longing for hope.

This is not the place for pretending.
This is the place for truth and grace.

*We do not come with strength alone,
we come seeking the strength of God.*

Let us worship the One who delivers, sustains, and walks beside us, not only when we are strong—but especially when we are not.

*In our weakness, God is strong. In our struggle, God is near.
Let us worship with honesty, hope, and praise.*

* Hymn - "Standing on the Promises", UMH #374

Children's Message

Scripture Reading - 2 Corinthians 1:8-10 (NRSVUE)

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

Hymn - "Give Thanks", TFWS #2036

Message - "God Won't Give You More Than YOU Can Handle?"

The Lord's Prayer

* "The Doxology", UMH #95

* Hymn - "Just A Closer Walk with Thee", TFWS #2158, vs. 1-2

* Benediction

* Hymn - "Just A Closer Walk with Thee", TFWS #2158, vs. 3

Postlude

*PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

Pastor Jeremy will greet people in the Warren St Lobby immediately following service.

Altar flowers are given in celebration of Charles Madden's birthday.

NOTES:



Check In Here

SERVING TODAY - MAY 11

Reader: Rick Hult
Ushers: Mike and Jana Pisani
Greeter: Pete Jensen
Nursery: Diane Parrish, Arnold Parrish
Sunday School: Pam Fleming, Julie Setlock
Fellowship Host: Pat Little

SERVING NEXT WEEK - MAY 18

Reader: Doug Fitzgerald
Ushers: Colin and Roberta Cline
Greeter: Kathi Parker
Nursery: Diane Parrish and Liberty Beam
Sunday School: Larisa Draves and Kathi Parker
Fellowship Host: Denise Cosper

Welcome to First Church!

Welcome to Big Rapids First United Methodist Church, an inclusive and affirming congregation (you can read our welcome statement here: bigrapidsfirst.org/welcome) - we are so happy you're here! If this is your first visit, or you're not familiar with us, check out our "First Visit" page @ bigrapidsfirst.org/firstvisit.

If you require additional assistance, please ask any of our welcome team members, and they will be happy to help!

THINK ABOUT IT THIS WEEK

You've likely heard the phrase, "God won't give you more than you can handle." While often said with care, it's not actually in the Bible, and it can lead people to feel ashamed or alone when life becomes overwhelming. In 2 Corinthians, Paul tells us plainly: things got so hard he "despaired of life itself." But even in that despair, he discovered a deeper truth - that God doesn't expect us to be strong all the time. God offers strength in our weakness, hope in our despair, and help through community and grace.

Reflection Questions:

- Have you ever felt pressure to be strong when you were actually struggling?
- What helps you remember that it's okay not to have it all together?
- How can you be present for someone else this week—without offering quick fixes or clichés?

Prayer: *God of comfort and compassion, Thank you for not expecting us to carry everything on our own. When life feels heavy, remind us that you are near. Help us lean on you, trust your strength, and be gentle with ourselves and others. Amen.*

Final Thought: The promise isn't that we'll always be strong. The promise is that God will always be with us—even when we're not.

COMING NEXT WEEK

We've all heard it—but is it true? Next Sunday, we'll take a closer look at the popular phrase "God helps those who help themselves" and hold it up to the light of Scripture. Psalm 121 paints a different picture: one of a God who watches over us, helps us, and never sleeps on the job. Join us as we explore what it really means to trust in God's grace and provision—especially when we can't do it all on our own.

VOLUNTEER BACKGROUND CHECKS

At United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County, we are deeply committed to creating safe, welcoming spaces for everyone - especially our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. That's why we require all volunteers and staff who work with vulnerable populations to annually complete a background check as part of our Abuse Prevention Policy.

All current and prospective volunteers are required to complete the background check form, found at ummecosta.org/forms/background before the end of May 2025. You can also find a hardcopy of this form in the information center, outside the main office, at our First Church campus.

If you have questions about why we do this, how your information is protected, or how the process works, feel free to reach out to the church office. Thank you for helping us live into our call to love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously - safely.

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