

BEHIND THE SCENES AT UMMMC

A lot happens at UMMMC before Sunday morning ever begins—and much of it happens because of volunteers.

Choir members gather during the week to rehearse and prepare music for worship. Volunteers help prepare our worship spaces, assist with ministries, care for our buildings, and handle countless details that most people never see. Every Thursday, volunteers are also at the heart of our Community Meal. They shop, cook, set tables, serve food, welcome guests, wash dishes, and clean up afterward. Others help with special events, community partnerships, hospitality, children and youth ministries, and the many small tasks that keep our shared ministry moving forward.

Our staff works alongside them—planning, coordinating, communicating, and helping all of those pieces come together—but UMMMC simply could not do what it does without the time, energy, and generosity of our volunteers.

So this week, we want to say a very intentional thank you to everyone who gives of themselves behind the scenes. Whether you serve every week, once a month, or whenever a need arises, your ministry matters. You help make UMMMC a place of worship, welcome, service, and community—and we are deeply grateful.

ANNUAL CHURCH CONFERENCE—EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Our Annual Church Conference will be held on Sunday, October 4, at 2:30 PM and will be hosted by Reed City United Methodist Church.

If you have ever wondered what a Church Conference actually is, think of it as the annual business and ministry meeting of our congregation within the United Methodist connection. It is one of the ways we pause each year to look at where we have been, tend to the practical work of the church, and prepare for the year ahead.

During Church Conference, we receive and act on reports, affirm leaders for the coming year, review aspects of our ministry and administration, and conduct other business required of a United Methodist congregation. It is also a reminder that the church is not simply something we attend—it is a ministry we share together.

Everyone is welcome to attend, whether or not you are a church member. Professing members of the church have both voice and vote, meaning they may participate in the conversation and vote on matters that come before the Church Conference.

Church Conference may not sound like the most exciting item on the church calendar, but it is an important part of our shared life. It gives us an opportunity to participate in the decisions and commitments that shape our ministry and to celebrate the work God is doing among and through us.

We hope you will join us on October 4 at 2:30 PM at Reed City United Methodist Church.

SEPTEMBER MISSION GIVING: DISCRETIONARY FUND

Our Discretionary Fund provides quick, compassionate assistance to neighbors facing urgent needs. Through your generosity, we have helped with gasoline, food, refrigerators, beds, mattresses, and other household necessities. Every gift offers practical help with dignity and reminds someone that they are not alone.

Give online at ummecosta.org/give by selecting “Discretionary Fund,” or write “Discretionary Fund” on your giving envelope or check memo line.

Thank you for helping UMMMC embody Christ’s compassion in our community.

What's Happening

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

9AM - Worship @ Paris (North) Campus
Coffee / Fellowship Immediately Following Worship
10AM - Worship @ First Church (Downtown) Campus
Coffee / Fellowship Immediately Following Worship
12-1:30PM - Youth Group @ Downtown Campus

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

10AM - Director’s Meeting @ Downtown Campus

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

12PM - Table Talk @ Downtown Campus
5PM - Praise Team Rehearsal in the Sanctuary

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

5:30PM - Community Dinner @ Downtown Campus

FINAL CHURCH DIRECTORY CHECK

We are preparing to print our new church directory! A proof copy will be available at each campus on Sunday September 20. Please take a moment to review your name, address, phone number, email address, and other household information and clearly note any necessary corrections. This is the final opportunity to make changes before the directory is printed, so even if you believe your information is correct, please check it one last time. We plan to send the directory to print shortly after September 20. Thank you for helping us make sure our records are accurate!

YOUTH GROUP KICKS OF THIS WEEKEND!

Our Youth Group is a space for high school students to come as they are, ask questions, build friendships, and find community. Youth in 9th–12th grades are invited to join us on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month from 12–1:30 PM at First United Methodist Church in Big Rapids. Our first gather is Sunday, September 20! There will be snacks, games, conversation, and plenty of room to be curious, have fun, and connect with others. Friends are always welcome! For more information, contact Paden at paden@ummecosta.org.

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
barbara@ummecosta.org - (231) 796-7771 ext. 1

Kathy Bell - Director of Congregational Care
kathy@ummecosta.org - (231) 224-6177 ext. 3

Paden Clevenger - Director of Family Ministries & Community Outreach
paden@ummecosta.org - (231) 796-7771 ext. 4

Linda Rinehart - Director of Choral Music
linda@ummecosta.org - (231) 631-4380

Rev. Jeremy Wicks - Executive Pastor
jeremy@ummecosta.org / (231) 796-7771 ext 2 / (231) 224-6545

Week of September 20 - September 26, 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 - September 20, 2026

Prelude

Choral Introit

Welcome & Announcements

* Call to Worship (Reader / *People*)

Come, let us seek the ways of God and learn the paths that lead to life.
Teach us your ways, O God, and make us people of peace.

God transforms swords into plowshares and turns instruments of harm into tools that cultivate life.
Shape our words, choices, and resources into gifts of healing and hope.

God imagines a world where every person has enough, every neighbor belongs, and no one lives in fear.
Help us live toward your promised future with justice, courage, and love.

Come, let us worship the God who brings hope from the ruins and peace to a fractured world.
Let us worship God together.

* Hymn - “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” — UMH 89

Children’s Message

Choral Anthem - “Abound in Hope”, Mark Hayes

Scripture Reading - Micah 4:1-5 (NRSVUE)
The word of God, for the people of God.
Thanks be to God!

Hymn - “Let There Be Peace on Earth” — UMH 431

Message - “Micah: God’s Vision for the World”

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer

* Doxology, UMH 95

* Hymn - “Lead On, O King Eternal” — UMH 580, vss. 1-3

* Blessing and Sending

* Hymn - “Lead On, O King Eternal” — UMH 580, vs. 4

Postlude

Altar flowers are given honoring our volunteers.

* 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 - SEPTEMBER 20

Reader: Carol Hillman
Ushers: Mike & Jana Pisani
Greeter: Kathi Parker
Choir Director: Linda Rinehart
Sunday School: Larisa Draves, Kathi Parker
Nursery: Coleen Jaeger, Paden Clevenger
Fellowship Host: Denise Cospers
Accompanist: Kathy Bell
Organist: Shirley Jernstadt
Tech Team: Ken Draves, Gary Poole

SERVING NEXT WEEK - SEPTEMBER 27

Reader: Denise Cospers
Ushers: Pat & Marion Williamson
Greeter: Betsy Curtis
Sunday School: Thomas Wheeler, Paden Clevenger
Nursery: Julie Tessin, Char Fitch
Fellowship Host: Marlene Rodgers

THINK ABOUT IT THIS WEEK: GOD’S VISION FOR THE WORLD

Micah 3 ends with a devastating image: Jerusalem has become a heap of ruins because its leaders abandoned justice and used their power to benefit themselves. Yet the very next chapter begins with a radically different vision. People from every nation stream toward God’s mountain to learn another way of living. Weapons are transformed into farming tools, families enjoy the fruit of their own land, and no one lives in fear.

Micah does not pretend the ruins are unreal. Instead, he declares that the ruins do not get to write the final chapter.

God’s promised future is not held together by domination, scarcity, or fear. It is cultivated through justice, peace, shared abundance, and belonging. The nations do not merely stop fighting; they stop learning war. The metal once shaped into weapons is redirected toward growing food and sustaining life.

This vision also brings peace into ordinary households. Micah imagines people sitting beneath their own vines and fig trees with no one to make them afraid. Peace is therefore more than the absence of war. It means having food, shelter, security, dignity, and enough stability to imagine a future. It means creating communities where people can tell the truth, participate fully, and live without fear.

Micah’s vision invites us to ask how God’s promised future might begin reshaping our lives now.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- When you imagine the future, are you more likely to approach it with hope, fear, or resignation? How does that expectation shape the way you live today?
- What habits, assumptions, or fears might you need to unlearn in order to become a peacemaker?
- Where do you see people being asked to remain quiet or accept injustice in the name of “keeping the peace”?
- What resources, influence, words, or abilities could you redirect from self-protection toward cultivating life for someone else?

WAYS TO LIVE IT OUT

- Become a student of peace. Listen to someone whose experiences differ from your own. Enter the conversation ready to learn rather than defend your position.
- Transform one weapon. Identify a habit you sometimes use to control, punish, exclude, or protect yourself—such as sarcasm, silence, resentment, or the need to have the last word. Ask how God might reshape it into a tool for honesty, healing, or growth.
- Make one place safer. Consider your home, church, workplace, or community. Take one practical step that helps another person feel heard, protected, welcomed, or able to participate.
- Cultivate life. Share a resource, encourage someone, repair a relationship where possible, provide a meal, plant something, or invest in work that someone else may one day enjoy.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

God of peace, when fear narrows our vision, help us imagine the future you are creating. Teach us your ways and give us humility to recognize what we still need to learn and unlearn. Take the words, habits, resources, and influence we have sometimes used as weapons and transform them into tools that cultivate life. Make us courageous peacemakers who tell the truth, confront injustice, share what we have, and create spaces where every person can flourish without fear. Help us co-operate with the Holy Spirit until your justice takes root, your peace becomes visible, and all your beloved children have enough. Amen.

CLOSING THOUGHT

We do not need to pretend the ruins are unreal to believe God is still building. The future God promises can begin becoming visible in the way we live today.

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!**