VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

Do you have a heart for helping others stay connected to our church family? We are looking for volunteers who would be willing to drive individuals to worship services at our First Church campus.

For some members of our congregation, transportation can be a challenge. By offering a ride, you help ensure that everyone who wants to worship, connect with friends, and participate in the life of the church has the opportunity to do so. Even serving occasionally can make a meaningful difference.

What volunteering involves:

- Picking up a church member and bringing them to a worship service
- Returning them home afterward
- Serving on a flexible schedule that works for you

If you feel called to help in this way, or if you would like to learn more about becoming a volunteer driver, please contact Kathy Bell, Director of Congregational Care. Thank you for helping our church remain a welcoming and connected community.

UMMMC DINNER SCRAMBLE – A SIMPLE WAY TO CONNECT

One of the best parts of being a church community is getting to know one another beyond Sunday morning. This April, we're inviting you to do just that through the UMMMC Dinner Scramble—a fun and easy way to connect with others across our church family. Anyone can sign up to share a meal with others from UMMMC. You can register as an individual, a couple, or a family. After the sign-up period closes, participants will be randomly grouped, giving everyone a chance to meet and spend time with people they may not already know.

The dinners will take place during the last two weeks of April, and each group will decide the details that work best for them. Some groups may choose to meet at a restaurant, others might gather at someone's home, grab fast food together, or even enjoy a picnic if the weather cooperates. The goal is simple: good food, relaxed conversation, and meaningful connection.

Beginning Sunday, March 8, you can sign up:

- In person - Sign-up sheets are available in the Fellowship Hall at First Church or at the back of the sanctuary at our Paris Campus.
- By email - Send your name, phone number, number attending, and whether you are signing up as an individual, couple, or family to register@ummcosta.org.

Sign-ups will close on March 31, and groups will be paired shortly afterward, so everyone has time to plan their dinner.

MARCH MISSION GIVING FOCUS: UMCOR

This month we turn our hearts and hands toward one of The United Methodist Church's most trusted and impactful mission partners: the United Methodist Committee on Relief, known widely as UMCOR. At its core, UMCOR answers Jesus' call to love our neighbors and bear one another's burdens by bringing help and hope where suffering is greatest.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief is the global humanitarian relief and development organization of The United Methodist Church. UMCOR serves as the Church's principal response to human suffering around the world—whether caused by natural disasters, war and conflict, famine, or other overwhelming crises. It is a nonprofit ministry operating under the General Board of Global Ministries and engages in relief efforts in more than 70 countries, including here in the United States.

One defining strength of UMCOR is that 100% of every dollar designated for a specific disaster or relief project goes directly to that work—not to administrative costs. That's because the "costs of doing business" for UMCOR are funded through a separate annual offering that underwrites administrative expenses so gifts to specific projects can go entirely to those in need.

If you would like to support the work of the United Methodist Committee on Relief, you can give through our regular offering process. Simply note "UMCOR" on your check or on your giving envelope. You may also contribute online and designate UMCOR, so your gift is directed to this important ministry.

What's Happening

SUNDAY, MARCH 15
9:30AM - Worship @ Paris (North) Campus
10:30AM - Fellowship / Coffee Hour @ Paris
10:00AM - Worship @ First Church (Downtown) Campus
11:15AM - Fellowship / Coffee Hour @ First

TUESDAY, MARCH 17
9AM - Ministry Staff Team Meeting @ Downtown Campus
10AM - Worship Design Team @ Downtown Campus

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18
11AM - Lenten Book Study *"Knowing Who We Are"* @ Downtown Campus
12PM - Table Talk (BYO Lunch!) @ Downtown Campus
6PM - Praise Team Rehearsal @ Downtown Campus

THURSDAY, MARCH 19
5:30PM - Community Dinner @ Downtown Campus

SATURDAY, MARCH 21
10AM - Confirmation Retreat Day @ Downtown Campus

CRAFTING WITH A CAUSE - SATURDAY, MARCH 28 @ 10AM (DOWNTOWN)
Crafting with a Cause will be gathering to make Easter cards for shut-in,then will go to Gypsy Nickel for lunch at noon. They will have lots of paper, stickers, etc. but please bring scissors and double-sided tape or a tape runner if you have one.

MEMBERSHIP OPPORTUNITY - SPRING 2026
If you've been worshiping with us and are sensing that it might be time to make this your church home, we would love to walk that step with you. We will be welcoming new members into the life of the church on Easter Sunday at our First Church campus, and this is a beautiful day to say "yes" to deeper connection, shared mission, and growing together in faith. If you're interested in joining, check the "I'm interested in membership" box on your Connection Card, or reach out to the church office and let us know. If you have questions about what membership means, please contact Barbara Erb or Pastor Jeremy.

Membership isn't about putting your name on a list. It's about committing to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ, together, for the transformation of the world.

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

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 March 15, 2026 - March 21, 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 / Online
Sundays @ 10AM

Order of Worship - March 15, 2026

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

*** Call to Worship** (Reader / *People*)

God's love is never small.
It reaches beyond our walls and into the world.

God's mercy lifts the lowly and feeds the hungry.
God's grace moves us to love our neighbors.

We are called not only to believe the good news—
But to live it with courage and compassion.

When the world grows weary,
God's love remains tenacious.

When injustice persists,
God's people rise to serve.

Come, people of grace.
Let us worship the God whose love
refuses to give up on the world.

*** Hymn** - *"Holy, Holy, Holy", Lord God Almighty UMH #64*

Praises and Prayers
Prayers and Praises of the People
Pastoral Prayer
The Lord's Prayer

Scripture Reading - Philippians 1:12-30
Reader: The word of God, for the people of God.
People: *Thanks be to God!*

Hymn - *"All Things Bright and Beautiful ", UMH #147*

Message - *"The Witness in All of Us"*

Offering

*** The Doxology,** UMH #95

*** Hymn** - *"God Be with You 'Til We Meet Again", UMH #672*

*** Benediction**

Postlude

* PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

NOTES:

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.

THINK ABOUT IT: TENACIOUS MISSION
In Luke's Gospel, a lawyer asks Jesus a question that sounds simple but carries enormous weight: "Who is my neighbor?"

Jesus responds not with a definition, but with a story—the parable of the Good Samaritan. A wounded man lies on the road, and two religious leaders pass by without stopping. Then a Samaritan, someone who would have been viewed as an outsider or even an enemy, sees the man, has compassion, and refuses to walk away. The Samaritan does more than offer a quick act of kindness. He binds wounds, carries the injured man to safety, pays for his care, and promises to return. His love refuses to stay small.

For Jesus, love of neighbor is not an abstract idea. It is practical, courageous, and sometimes inconvenient. It crosses boundaries, interrupts routines, and calls us to see the humanity in those we might otherwise overlook.

This is part of the Methodist story as well. From its earliest days, the Wesleyan movement understood that faith is not only about personal devotion—it is also about responding to the needs of the world. John Wesley and the early Methodists visited prisoners, cared for the poor, advocated for justice, and built systems of care in their communities. They practiced what we might call holy tenacity: a refusal to ignore human suffering.

As we reflect on this story, we are invited to ask ourselves some honest questions.

- When you hear the story of the Good Samaritan, which character do you most identify with, and why?
- Who are the "neighbors" you encounter in your daily life who may be easy to overlook?
- What barriers—time, fear, assumptions, busyness—sometimes prevent us from responding with compassion?
- Where might God be inviting you to practice a more tenacious love this week?

Action Steps
This week, consider one small but intentional way to embody the love described in this story:
- Pay closer attention to the people around you—in your neighborhood, workplace, or community.
- Look for an opportunity to offer practical care to someone who may be struggling.
- Reach out to someone who may feel overlooked or alone.
- Support a ministry or organization working to meet needs in our community.

Prayer for the Week
Gracious God, open our eyes to the needs around us and soften our hearts with compassion. Give us courage to love our neighbors in practical ways and help us follow the example of Christ by responding with mercy and care. Shape our lives so that your grace may be seen in the way we treat one another. Amen.

A Closing Thought
The question in Luke's Gospel begins with "Who is my neighbor?" but Jesus quietly shifts the focus. The deeper question becomes: What does it mean to be a neighbor? This week, may we live as people whose love refuses to stay small.

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