

PROPERTY UPDATE & UPCOMING CHARGE CONFERENCE

Over the past several months, the Leadership Team of United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County has been engaged in a thoughtful and prayerful process regarding the future of the East Campus (3rd Avenue) property. This discernment has included internal conversations, consultation with district leadership, and ongoing dialogue with community partners—particularly Love INC of Mecosta County.

Through that process, the Leadership Team has come to believe that the most faithful and strategic use of this property is to transfer it to Love INC. Their ability to mobilize churches, coordinate volunteers, and respond directly to community needs positions them to utilize the building in ways that will have a meaningful and lasting impact on the surrounding neighborhood—impact that we, as UMMMC, are not currently resourced to provide on our own.

This decision reflects both a missional and practical reality. The East Campus building is not a space we have the capacity to maintain or redevelop for active ministry. Rather than allowing it to remain underutilized, this partnership creates the opportunity for the property to become a hub of connection, care, and support within the community.

We are grateful to share that the District Committee on Building & Location has reviewed and approved this proposal. This is an important step in the process and affirms the direction our Leadership Team has taken.

What happens next? The next step is to hold a Charge Conference, which is required in the United Methodist Church for matters related to the sale of church property.

CHARGE CONFERENCE - APRIL 1 @ 6:30 PM
FELLOWSHIP HALL (FIRST CHURCH)

At this Charge Conference, eligible members will be asked to vote on the proposed sale of the East Campus property to Love INC of Mecosta County. While anyone is welcome to attend, voting will be limited to those who are members of the Charge Conference, as outlined by our structure.

We believe this step represents an opportunity to align our resources more fully with our mission—to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world—while also strengthening our partnership with an organization that is deeply committed to serving our local community.

We invite you to be in prayer for this process, for the upcoming Charge Conference, and for the future of this property as it continues to serve the people of Mecosta County in new and meaningful ways.

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 either our Paris or First Church campuses. 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

This April, connect beyond Sunday morning through the UMMMC Dinner Scramble by signing up as an individual, couple, or family to be randomly grouped for a shared meal during the last two weeks of April; each group will decide the details (restaurant, home, or casual gathering), with the goal of simple, meaningful connection. Sign up beginning Sunday, March 8, either in person at First Church (Fellowship Hall) or the Paris Campus (back of the sanctuary), or by emailing register@ummcosta.org with your name, phone number, number attending, and whether you're signing up as an individual, couple, or family; registration closes March 31, and groups will be assigned shortly after.

What's Happening

SUNDAY, MARCH 29

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

TUESDAY, MARCH 31

9AM - Ministry Staff Team Meeting @ Downtown Campus

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1

11AM - Lenten Book Study "Knowing Who We Are" @ Downtown Campus
12PM - Table Talk (BYO Lunch!) @ Downtown Campus
6:30PM - Charge Conference @ Downtown Campus
7PM - Leadership Team Meeting @ Downtown Campus

THURSDAY, APRIL 2

5:30PM - Community Dinner @ Downtown Campus
7PM - Holy Thursday Worship @ The United Church

FRIDAY, APRIL 3

11AM - Community Choir Rehearsal @ Immanuel Lutheran
12PM - Good Friday Worship @ Immanuel Lutheran

SUNDAY, APRIL 5 - EASTER SUNDAY

7AM - Sunrise Service w/ The United Church @ Hemlock Park
9:30AM - Worship @ Paris (North) Campus
9:30AM - Fellowship / Coffee Hour @ First Church (Downtown) Campus
10:00AM - Worship @ First Church (Downtown) Campus

MEMBERSHIP OPPORTUNITY - SPRING 2026

If you've been worshipping 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. 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.

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@ummcosta.org - (231) 796-7771

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

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

Rev. Jeremy Wicks - Executive Pastor
jeremy@ummcosta.org / (231) 224-6545

To schedule an appointment with Pastor Jeremy, contact Barbara Erb or schedule online @ calendar.com/jeremy-ummcosta

Week of March 29, 2026 - April 4, 2026

Family News



KNOWING WHO
WE ARE

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
ummcosta.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 - March 29, 2026

PALM SUNDAY

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

* Call to Worship (Reader / *People*)

We gather to remember a moment of resistance:

Crowds shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in God's name!"

We wave our branches and join the call for liberation and freedom,

Welcoming Christ into our lives and into our world.

The One we welcome does not come with power as the world defines it,

But with a love that challenges, disrupts, and transforms.

The One who overturns tables,

Makes space for grace to move again.

The One who hears the cries of the people,

Refuses to turn away from suffering.

Come, people of God!

We worship with joy, with courage, and with open hearts.

For we follow Christ, The One,

Whose love refuses to back down.

* Hymn - "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna", UMH #278

Celebration of Confirmation

Scripture Reading - Matthew 21:12-17 (NRSVUE)

Reader: The word of God, for the people of God.

People: *Thanks be to God!*

Hymn - "Spirit of the Living God", UMH #393

Message - "Knowing Who We Are: Holy Tenacity"

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

* The Doxology, UMH #95

* Hymn - "Lift High the Cross", UMH #159, vss. 1-3

* Benediction

* Hymn - "Lift High the Cross", UMH #159, vs. 4

Postlude

* PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

Altar flowers are given by Paige & Charles Madden.

Join us for coffee and conversation in Fellowship Hall immediately following worship. Pastor Jeremy will also be in the Warren Street Lobby after the service and would love to greet you.

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 - MARCH 29 (PALM SUNDAY)

Reader: Pat Little

Ushers: Rex & Cheryl Richardson

Greeter: Barbara Ross

Nursery: Julie Setlock, Paden Clevenger

Sunday School: Pam Fleming, Liberty Beam

Fellowship Host: Jeremy & Toinette Wicks

Organist: Shirley Jernstadt

Accompanist: Kathy Bell

Tech Team: Ken Draves, Gary Poole

SERVING NEXT WEEK - APRIL 5 (EASTER SUNDAY)

Reader: Rick Hult

Ushers: Pat & Marion Williamson, Joann Haist

Greeter: Nancy Spedowski

Nursery: Sarah DeLany, Julie Setlock

Fellowship Host: DeLany Family

Communion Servers: Cheryl Richardson, Karen Leiter

STAFF UPDATE: WELCOMING PADEN CLEVINGER

We're excited to share that we have hired **Paden Clevenger** as our new **Director of Family Ministries & Community Outreach**. This role reflects an important step forward for UMMMC as we continue to invest in both the life of our families and our connection to the broader community. Paden will be helping us strengthen relationships with children, youth, and families, while also building meaningful partnerships and outreach opportunities beyond our walls. Paden will begin working with Julie for a short season before she steps into her new role, and we look forward to introducing her more fully in the coming weeks. *Please join us in welcoming Paden to the team!*

FOR THE WEEK AHEAD:

Palm Sunday appears to begin with celebration—crowds gather, branches are waved, voices rise with hope: "Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!" It is a moment filled with expectation—a longing for something new, something better, something that will finally set things right. But as the story unfolds, the tone shifts—Jesus enters the temple, the center of religious life, and instead of affirming what is happening there, he overturns tables and drives out those who are exploiting others. What began as a place of prayer had become something else.

This moment can feel unsettling. It challenges the image we often hold of Jesus as gentle and accommodating. But what we see here is not a rejection of love—it is love refusing to ignore what causes harm. This is what we might call holy tenacity. It is the kind of love that does not give up. The kind of love that does not remain silent. The kind of love that is willing to disrupt what is no longer life-giving in order to make space for grace to move again.

Throughout this series, we have been asking: Who are we? This week, that question becomes more pointed. Are we people who simply maintain what is familiar, or are we people willing to follow Christ into the work of transformation?

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON

- Where in your life have you experienced a moment when something needed to change in order for growth to happen?
- Are there places where you have become more focused on comfort or familiarity than on what is life-giving?
- What might it look like to practice love that is both compassionate and courageous this week?

ACTION STEPS

- Pay attention to moments this week where something feels out of alignment with the values of love, justice, or compassion.
- Ask where God might be inviting you to respond—not with anger, but with clarity and courage.
- Take one small step toward making space for grace—whether in a conversation, a relationship, or a situation that needs attention.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Faithful God, thank you for your grace that continues to shape and guide us. Give us the courage to follow where you lead, even when the path is challenging. Help us to live with love that is both compassionate and courageous, so that your grace may move more freely in our lives and in the world. Amen.

Palm Sunday reminds us that following Christ is not only about celebration—it is also about transformation. This week, may we be open to the ways God is at work, inviting us to live with holy tenacity and to make space for grace wherever we are.

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!