

## HELP US FILL BACKPACKS AND HEARTS!

Beginning this Sunday, July 12, we're collecting school supplies for an exciting new outreach opportunity! As part of this year's Ice Cream Social at our Paris campus on **August 9**, we'll be opening our doors to the wider community and providing free school supplies to local students as they prepare for a new school year. It's a simple but meaningful way to support families, encourage children, and remind our neighbors that they are loved.

Getting involved is easy! Visit the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall Downtown or the display at the North Campus and pick up a tag—or several. Each tag lists a specific school supply item and the quantity needed. Simply take the tags, purchase the items, and return them to the church by **Sunday, August 2**. Thank you for your generosity and for helping us share Christ's love in such a practical way!

## HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF UMMMC

United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County is seeking individuals from both the First Campus and the Paris Campus to serve on our Leadership Team. The Leadership Team is the governing body of UMMMC. They care for the church's resources, discern long-term priorities, ask important questions about the future, and ensure that our ministries and finances remain aligned with our mission, vision, and values.

Working alongside the Executive Pastor, the Leadership Team helps set the congregation's priorities, oversees the stewardship of our buildings, finances, and other tangible assets, and anticipates the changing needs of both the church and the wider community. The team establishes policies and standards for the governance of UMMMC, while the Executive Pastor remains responsible for the management and oversight of the church's day-to-day operations and ministries.

Leadership Team members serve a three-year term and meet every other month. They are professing members of UMMMC who are actively engaged in the life of at least one campus, are committed to nurturing their own spiritual growth, regularly participate in worship, and serve in another area of ministry beyond the Leadership Team. Team members are expected to faithfully attend and participate in meetings, support the ministry of the church, and demonstrate integrity and sound character in both their personal and public lives. Previous board experience is not required. What matters most is a willingness to pray, listen, learn, ask thoughtful questions, and help discern where God is leading our church next.

If you believe this may be a meaningful way for you to serve—or if you would simply like to learn more—please contact Pastor Jeremy to schedule a conversation. This is an opportunity to ask questions, explore the responsibilities of the role, and prayerfully consider whether serving on the Leadership Team may be your next step in ministry.

## UMMMC ICE CREAM SOCIAL - DATE CHANGE!!!

Mark your calendars for the 2nd Annual UMMMC Ice Cream Social, happening Sunday, August 9, at 1PM at our Paris Campus! This is an opportunity to gather as one church, welcome our neighbors, strengthen community connections, help local students begin the new school year with confidence - and eat ice cream!

This year, we are partnering with Angels of Action to offer a school supply giveaway during the event. We may need to supplement the supplies provided, so watch for more information about specific items that may be needed and additional ways you can support this important outreach.

Volunteers will be needed to help with preparation, setup, serving, welcoming guests, the school supply giveaway, cleanup, and all the little details that make an event feel special. Whether you can help before the event, during the afternoon, or afterward, your participation will make a difference. To volunteer, please contact Jane Pedelty (Paris) or Paden Clevenger, Director of Family Ministry and Community Outreach.

## What's Happening

### SUNDAY, JULY 12

9AM - Worship @ Paris (North) Campus  
10AM - Worship @ First Church (Downtown) Campus

### TUESDAY, JULY 14

9AM - Director's Meeting @ Downtown Campus  
3PM - 6PM - Good Company @ Hemlock Park

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 15

12PM - Table Talk: Politics & Following Jesus @ Downtown Campus

### THURSDAY, JULY 16

5:30PM - Community Dinner @ Downtown Campus

## TABLE TALK: FAITH, POLITICS, AND FOLLOWING JESUS

What does it mean to follow Jesus in a time when faith and politics are often deeply intertwined? Beginning Wednesday, July 1, our regular Table Talk gathering will become a five-week book discussion centered on *The Flag + The Cross: White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to American Democracy* by Philip Gorski and Samuel Perry. We will meet Wednesdays at noon through July 29 at the Downtown Campus.

In *The Flag + The Cross*, the authors explore the history and influence of white Christian nationalism in the United States and examine how it differs from the teachings of Jesus. Through history, sociology, theology, and contemporary examples, they challenge readers to consider the relationship between faith, power, and public life while inviting Christians to reclaim a faith rooted in humility, justice, and love of neighbor.

If you've attended Table Talk before, the format will feel familiar. Bring your lunch, bring your book, and join the conversation. This will be an opportunity to gather around the table, share perspectives, ask questions, and learn from one another, so whether you are curious about the topic, looking to deepen your understanding, or simply enjoy thoughtful conversation, you are welcome to join us.

## WORSHIPPING IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL @ FIRST CHURCH

We know the space may feel a little tight, but with patience, flexibility, and a spirit of hospitality, we can make it work! Please help us welcome one another, make room for guests, and embrace the opportunity to worship together in a more relaxed and connected setting. It may be cozy—but there is room for everyone!

## STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

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

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

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

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](https://calendly.com/jeremy-ummecosta)

Week of July 12 - July 18, 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 - July 12, 2026

\* PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

**"This is the Day" Call and Response** - Gordon Mallett

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Musical Meditation** - Ed Mallett

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

Come, let us gather in the presence of the One who knows us completely.

*Jesus Christ, fully human and fully divine, walks with us still.*

When we are weary, Christ understands our weariness.

*When we are tempted, Christ understands our struggle.*

When we rejoice, Christ shares our joy.

*When we grieve, Christ shares our sorrow.*

In Jesus, we meet a God who draws near.

*In Jesus, we discover mercy instead of shame, grace instead of fear, and hope instead of despair.*

Come, let us worship the One who became one of us, that we might know the depth of God's love.

*Let us worship God.*

**\* Hymn**

**Praises and Prayers**

*Prayers and Praises of the People*

*Pastoral Prayer*

*The Lord's Prayer*

**Scripture Reading** - Philippians 2:5-8 & Hebrews 4:14-16 (NRSVUE)

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

**\* Hymn**

**Message** - "The Humanity of Jesus: God With Us", Rev. Jeremy Wicks

**Silent Prayer of Reflection**

**Celebration of Holy Communion**

**Offering**

**\* Doxology, UMH #95**

**\* Hymn**

**\* Benediction**

**Postlude**

## 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.

### NOTES:



Check In Here

### THINK ABOUT IT THIS WEEK

One of the most remarkable claims of the Christian faith is that God did not choose to love us from a distance. In Jesus Christ, God entered fully into the human experience. Jesus knew hunger and exhaustion. He experienced friendship and betrayal, joy and grief, celebration and sorrow. He faced temptation, uncertainty, pain, and even death.

Because of that, we never pray to a God who simply observes our struggles. We pray to One who has lived them. Hebrews reminds us that Jesus is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, not because he has read about them, but because he has experienced life as we do. That doesn't mean life becomes easy. It does mean we never face it alone.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- When have you felt that God was distant? How does knowing that Jesus experienced the fullness of human life reshape that feeling?
- Is there a struggle you're carrying that you've assumed no one could understand? What would it look like to bring that honestly before Christ?
- How might you become a more compassionate presence to someone else this week because Christ has first been compassionate toward you?

### A PRACTICE FOR THE WEEK

Take five minutes each day to pause and simply tell Jesus what your day has been like—the joys, the frustrations, the disappointments, and the moments of gratitude. Don't worry about finding the right words. Speak honestly, trusting that Christ already understands.

### PRAYER

Gracious God, thank you for drawing near to us in Jesus Christ. Thank you for knowing our joys and our sorrows, our hopes and our fears. Remind us that we are never alone, and shape us into people who reflect your compassion to everyone we meet. Amen.

### A FINAL WORD

The good news of the Gospel is not simply that God loves humanity—it is that God chose to become one of us. Wherever this week takes you, remember: Christ goes with you, understands you, and meets you there with grace.

### JULY MISSION GIVING: OUR BROTHERS KEEPER

Throughout July, our mission giving will support Our Brother's Keeper, Big Rapids' shelter for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. OBK offers more than a safe place to sleep. Guests receive meals, showers, clean clothing, compassionate support, and assistance as they work toward stable housing and greater self-sufficiency. At a time when the need for emergency housing continues to grow—including among families with children and older adults—this ministry provides safety, dignity, and hope to some of our most vulnerable neighbors.

Thank you for giving generously and helping Our Brother's Keeper remind every guest that they are not alone.

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!