

HOSPITALITY—WITHOUT MAKING IT WEIRD

At United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County, we create welcoming, affirming, diverse spaces where everyone can belong, thrive, and experience Christ's love. This is more than an aspiration—it is a commitment that should shape how people experience our worship, ministries, and shared life.

Hospitality is at the heart of the gospel. Jesus crossed social and religious boundaries, welcomed people who had been excluded, shared meals with those others avoided, and made room for people who had been pushed to the margins. His hospitality communicated through both words and actions: *You are seen. You are valued. There is room for you here.*

Hospitality does not, however, require us to make things weird or cringy. A new person does not need to be surrounded by six people, interrogated about why they came, or recruited for three committees. At the same time, they should not be ignored while everyone else talks with the people they already know. Genuine hospitality is as simple as:

- wearing a name tag
- introducing yourself
- learning (and remembering) someone's name
- helping a guest find what they need
- inviting them to sit with you—while also giving them room to breathe
- welcoming the sounds and movements of children
- avoiding assumptions about anyone's identity, family, background, abilities, or beliefs

Hospitality is not a performance or a recruitment strategy. It is a way of living together. It means paying attention, making room, and helping people know that they truly belong—without making it weird.

WE'RE LOOKING FOR A NURSERY SUPERVISOR

United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County is seeking a caring, dependable individual to serve as Nursery Supervisor at our First Church campus. This is a part-time, paid position supporting our nursery during Sunday morning worship and other services or activities as scheduled.

Our nursery ministry is an important part of the welcome we extend to young families. The Nursery Supervisor will help provide a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment where our youngest children know they are loved and their parents and caregivers can participate fully in worship.

The ideal candidate will enjoy working with infants and young children, communicate reliably with families and church staff, and be committed to maintaining a safe and welcoming nursery. A background check and current CPR and First Aid certification will be required prior to employment.

If you or someone you know might be a good fit for this ministry, please contact Barbara Erb or Pastor Jeremy for the complete job description and information about applying. Please also help us spread the word!

ASK THE PASTOR

Have you ever heard a Bible passage and wondered, What does that actually mean? Maybe you have a question about United Methodist beliefs, Christian history, theology—or something you have heard Pastor Jeremy say during worship. Now is your chance to ask!

“Ask the Pastor” will be part of worship at the North Campus on August 2 and at the Downtown Campus on August 2 and 9. Questions can be deep, thoughtful, curious, or even a little silly.

Please send your questions to Pastor Jeremy by Friday, July 31. There are no guarantees that he will have a perfect answer—but we can guarantee an interesting conversation!

What's Happening

SUNDAY, JULY 26

9AM - Worship @ Paris (North) Campus
10AM - Worship @ First Church (Downtown) Campus
Fellowship and Coffee immediately following the worship service

MONDAY, JULY 27

6-7:30PM - Teen Book Study (*ch. 6-10*) @ Downtown Campus

TUESDAY, JULY 28

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

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29

12PM - Table Talk: Politics & Following Jesus @ Downtown Campus
(Chapter Four: Avoiding “The Big One”)

THURSDAY, JULY 30

5:30PM - Community Dinner @ Downtown Campus

ICE CREAM, SCHOOL SUPPLIES, AND COMMUNITY!

Join us for the second annual UMMMC Ice Cream Social on Sunday, August 9, at 1:00 p.m. at our Paris Campus! This year, we are inviting the wider community to enjoy an afternoon of ice cream and connection while providing free school supplies to local students.

You can help by selecting a school-supply tag—or several—from the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall at the Downtown Campus or the display at the North Campus. Each tag lists a specific item and quantity needed. Please purchase the supplies and return them to the church by Sunday, August 2.

Volunteers are also needed for preparation, setup, serving, welcoming guests, distributing supplies, and cleanup. Whether you can help before, during, or after the event, your participation will make a difference. To volunteer, contact Jane Pedelty at the Paris Campus or Paden Clevenger, Director of Family Ministry and Community Outreach.

Come enjoy some ice cream, welcome our neighbors, and help local students begin the school year with confidence!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Family Meeting & Potluck, August 30 @ 11:15AM

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

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

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

Week of July 26 - August 1, 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 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 - July 26, 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*)

The Scriptures were written for our instruction, so that through steadfastness and encouragement we might have hope.

Open our hearts, O God, that we may learn from the stories of those who came before us.

When many paths lie before us, God calls us to look beyond what is easy, attractive, or profitable.

Give us wisdom to choose what is faithful, just, and life-giving.

When our choices affect our neighbors, God calls us to walk with humility, generosity, and trust.

Shape our desires and guide our decisions.

Come, let us worship the God whose word teaches us, whose grace sustains us, and whose hope leads us forward.

We come to listen, to learn, and to worship. Amen.

*** Hymn**

Praises and Prayers

Prayers and Praises of the People

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Scripture Reading - Romans 15:4 and Genesis 13: 5-13

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

*** Hymn**

Message - “Learn from Lot's Choice”, Kate Hanna

Silent Prayer of Reflection

*** Doxology, UMH #95**

*** Hymn**

*** Benediction**

Postlude

If you came prepared to give today, please place your offering in the plate on the rail at the front of the sanctuary. 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!

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

Every day, we make choices—some small and quickly forgotten, others capable of changing the direction of our lives. In Genesis 13, Abram and Lot face such a decision. When the land can no longer support both of their households, Abram offers Lot the first choice of where to settle. Lot looks toward the fertile Jordan Valley and chooses the land that appears most promising. It is an understandable decision, but he considers what the land might offer without fully considering where that choice might lead.

Lot's story reminds us that what appears most attractive is not always what is most faithful. We can make decisions based on comfort, profit, appearance, or immediate advantage while overlooking how those choices may affect our relationships, our neighbors, and the people we are becoming. Abram, by contrast, is willing to release control, make room for another, and trust that God's faithfulness is greater than whatever he might gain for himself.

Paul writes in Romans 15:4 that the Scriptures were written for our instruction so that, through endurance and encouragement, we might have hope. We do not read Lot's story simply to criticize his decision. We read it so that his experience might help us examine our own lives with greater wisdom.

As you face choices this week, ask yourself: What is shaping this decision? Am I choosing only what benefits me, or what contributes to the well-being of others? Does this path reflect trust in God, love for my neighbor, and the person Christ is forming me to become?

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. 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.

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.