WITH A GRATEFUL HEART

Throughout Pastor Appreciation Month, I have been deeply touched by the many cards, notes of encouragement, thoughtful gifts, and expressions of kindness I have received. I want to take a moment to say thank you!

Ministry is both a tremendous privilege and a shared journey, and I am continually reminded of what a blessing it is to walk alongside such a loving, generous, and faithful congregation. Your words of encouragement mean more than you may realize, especially in the midst of the challenges and opportunities that come with ministry.

What I appreciate most, however, is not simply what you have done for me this month, but who you are throughout the year. Your compassion, your willingness to serve, your commitment to one another, and your desire to make a difference in our community are constant reminders of why I love doing what I do.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside you as we continue discovering where the Holy Spirit is leading us. Thank you for your love, your support, your prayers, and the many ways you make this ministry possible.

With gratitude and love,
Rev. Jeremy Wicks

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY – NOVEMBER 1

On Sunday, November 1, we will observe All Saints Day, a sacred time in the life of the church when we pause to remember and give thanks for the lives of those who have gone before us. During worship, we will honor the saints whose love, faith, and presence have shaped our lives and continue to inspire us.

As part of our service, we will share a special time of remembrance, reading aloud the names of loved ones who have died. If you have someone you would like remembered during worship, please call or email Barbara Erb in the church office before 3PM on Thursday, October 29, to have their name included.

Together, we will celebrate the gift of their lives, give thanks for the love that endures beyond death, and remember that we remain connected as one communion of saints through the grace and love of God.

THIRD AVENUE PARSONAGE UPDATE

We are pleased to share that the former Third Avenue parsonage has been sold! The home was purchased by a family whose children are currently attending, or plan to attend, Ferris State University's nursing program.

While this marks the closing of another chapter in the history of our ministry at Third Avenue, we are delighted that the property will continue to serve a meaningful purpose by providing a home for students pursuing careers in healthcare.

We wish the new owners and their family all the best as they begin this new chapter!

What's Happening

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25
9AM - Worship @ Paris (North) Campus
10AM - Worship @ First Church (Downtown) Campus
Coffee / Fellowship Immediately Following Worship

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27
9AM - Director's Meeting @ Downtown Campus

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28
10AM - Choir Rehearsal
12PM - Table Talk @ Downtown Campus

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29
5:30PM - Community Dinner @ Downtown Campus

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31
11AM - BOO BREAK @ Downtown Campus

GOOD COMPANY @ THE LIBRARY

Sometimes it really does take a village! 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.

TAKE A "BOO BREAK" THIS HALLOWEEN!

Halloween can be wonderfully chaotic, and sometimes everyone needs a little break! Join us for Boo Break on Saturday, October 31, from 11 AM–2 PM at First Church (304 Elm Street, Big Rapids). Stop by The Boo Cauldron for free hot cocoa, coffee, and apple cider! Enjoy a spooky craft, snap a picture at our Halloween photo backdrop, and take a break from the festivities. Everything is free, and everyone is welcome!

Volunteers are needed! Sign up in the Fellowship Hall at First Church or contact Barb in the church office by phone or email. Boo Break is a fun way to share hospitality, connect with our neighbors, and make Halloween a little sweeter. Come join the fun!

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Barbara Erb - Director of Administrative Services
barbara@ummecosta.org - (231) 796-7771 ext. 1

Kathy Bell - Director of Congregational Care
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Paden Clevenger - Director of Family Ministries & Community Outreach
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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 October 25 - October 31, 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 - October 25, 2026

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

Welcome & Announcements

Musical Meditation - *Ed Mallett*

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

We come with questions, convictions, doubts, and hopes.
God welcomes us as we are and calls us deeper.

We live in a world filled with competing voices and competing claims.
Christ invites us to listen for the truth that leads to life.

We do not gather because we have every answer.
We gather because we trust the One who continues to meet us in our questions.

In Jesus, truth takes on flesh;
in compassion, courage, justice, mercy, and love.

Come, let us worship with open minds and willing hearts.
And let us follow the way of Jesus together.

*** Hymn**

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

Scripture Reading - John 18:33–38 (NRSVUE)
The word of God, for the people of God.
Thanks be to God!

Hymn

Message

*** Doxology**, UMH 95

*** Hymn**

*** Blessing and Sending**

Postlude

* PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

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

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!

THINK ABOUT IT THIS WEEK: WHAT IS TRUTH?

This Sunday, we conclude Ask Me Anything: The Jesus Edition with one of the most enduring questions in Scripture: "What is truth?"

Pilate asks the question while Jesus is standing directly in front of him. That is part of the irony of John's Gospel. Pilate appears to be searching for a definition, an argument, perhaps even a convenient answer. But John places the question in the presence of Jesus himself. For Christians, truth is not merely a collection of correct ideas. Truth has a shape. Truth has a way of living. Truth looks like Jesus.

That does not mean facts do not matter, or that every claim is equally valid. Truth matters deeply. But Christian faith invites us to ask more than, "Am I right?" We are also called to ask, "Does the truth I claim to believe make me more like Christ?" Does it lead us toward compassion, justice, humility, courage, mercy, and love? Does it deepen our concern for the dignity of others? Does it help us resist cruelty, dishonesty, domination, and fear? Or do we sometimes become so determined to defend what we believe that we stop resembling the One we claim to follow?

The prophet Zechariah gives us a similar picture when he calls the people to "speak the truth to one another" and to practice judgments that lead to peace. Truth is not presented only as something to be known. It is something that becomes visible in the way a community lives.

In a world filled with competing voices, certainty can feel comforting. But faith does not require us to have every question settled. Sometimes mature faith means trusting Christ even when we do not possess complete certainty.

Throughout this series, people have come to Jesus asking questions. "Who is my neighbor?" "How many times must I forgive?" "What is truth?" Again and again, Jesus refuses to reduce discipleship to a simple answer. Instead, he invites people into a different way of living.

Perhaps that is where this series leaves us: faith is not about having every answer. It is about learning to love and live like Jesus.

Questions to Consider
- When you think about "truth," do you think first about being correct, or about living faithfully?
- Are there places where certainty has become more important to you than humility?
- What does truth look like when it is embodied in compassion, justice, and mercy?
- When Christians disagree, what might it look like to remain committed to truth without abandoning love?
- Where is Jesus inviting you to keep following even when you do not have every answer?

Ways to Live It Out
- Listen carefully. Before responding to something you disagree with, make sure you understand what the other person is actually saying.
- Practice humility. Be willing to say, "I may not understand this completely."
- Test what you believe. Ask whether your convictions are helping you become more compassionate, courageous, just, and loving.
- Speak truthfully. Resist exaggeration, distortion, gossip, and claims you have not taken time to examine.
- Keep following Jesus. When certainty is unavailable, return to the life, teachings, and way of Christ.

Prayer for the Week
God of truth, in a world filled with competing voices, teach us to listen with wisdom and humility. Keep us from confusing certainty with faithfulness or winning arguments with following Jesus. Shape our words, our convictions, and our actions so that the truth we profess becomes visible in compassion, justice, mercy, courage, and love. When we do not have every answer, give us enough trust to keep walking in the way of Christ. Amen.