

FROM PASTOR JEREMY - STAFFING UPDATES

Choir Director - First Church Campus: United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County is seeking a part-time, paid Choir Director for the First Church (Downtown) Campus. We are looking for someone who is passionate about sacred music and eager to collaborate with volunteers to support and enrich our worship life. For more information or to express interest, please contact Pastor Jeremy or Barb in the UMMMC office.

Family Ministries Transition: After a period of prayerful discernment, Julie Setlock has decided that this is the right time to conclude her ministry with United Methodist Ministries of Mecosta County. Her final Sunday on staff will be no later than Easter Sunday.

Julie has served faithfully and fruitfully as our Director of Family Ministries, and we are deeply grateful for the many ways she has nurtured children, supported families, and strengthened our community. Her creativity, care, and genuine love for this congregation have made a lasting impact on our shared life together. We offer our sincere thanks for her ministry and our prayers for her in this season of transition. In the weeks ahead, there will be opportunities for the congregation to express appreciation and celebrate her work among us.

As we look ahead, this position will be posted soon. This role will be combined with a newly configured position that will continue to support family ministries while also strengthening our capacity for community outreach and engagement. If you feel drawn to this area of ministry, or know someone who may be, reach out to Pastor Jeremy directly.

BREAKING THE WHEEL - A LENTEN SERMON SERIES

Some patterns feel bigger than us. Cycles of anger. Cycles of division. Cycles of scarcity. Cycles of injustice. They repeat in our families, our communities, our politics, even in our faith. Lent invites us to slow down long enough to see the wheel turning — and to ask whether it has to keep turning at all.

In this six-week series, we will follow Jesus from the wilderness to Jerusalem and discover how he interrupts cycles of violence, retaliation, religious corruption, fear, and self-preservation. Again and again, Jesus refuses to play by the rules of domination and control. He chooses a different way — and invites us to do the same.

Join us this Lent as we explore what it means to follow the One who does not keep the wheel spinning — but stops it.

URGENT: PANTRY ITEMS NEEDED

Our Personal Care Pantries are in immediate need of donations to help support individuals and families in our community. Your generosity makes a real difference, and right now the following items are especially needed:

- Shampoo & conditioner
- Deodorant
- Toothpaste & toothbrushes
- Pasta & rice
- Boxed meals
- Cereal & oatmeal
- Hats, gloves, and mittens

Thank you so much for your continued generosity and care for our neighbors in need!

Donation Drop-Off Locations:

- Downtown (First) Campus: Fellowship Hall, near the bulletin board
- North (Paris) Campus: Sanctuary, table near the main door

What's Happening

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15

9:30AM - Worship @ Paris Campus
10:00AM - Fellowship / Coffee Hour @ Paris
10:00AM - Worship @ First Church Campus
11:15AM - Keith Hahn 96th BDay Celebration / Coffee Hour @ First

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16

12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17

9AM - Ministry Staff Team Meeting @ First
12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave
7PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18 - ASH WEDNESDAY

7:30-9AM - Imposition of Ashes @ First Church
9:30-11:30AM - Imposition of Ashes @ St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
9:30-12PM - Imposition of Ashes @ The United Church
11:30AM - Community Lunch @ Third Ave
12:00PM - Ash Wednesday Worship @ St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
12PM - Table Talk (BYO Lunch!) @ First
7:00PM - Ash Wednesday Worship @ First Church

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19

5:30PM - Community Dinner @ First

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20

12PM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Third Ave

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21

11AM - Alcoholics Anonymous @ Paris
11:30AM - Community Lunch @ Third Ave

TABLE TALK - WEDNESDAYS AT NOON

You're invited to join Pastor Jeremy for Table Talk at the First Church campus. Bring your lunch and gather around the table for open, relaxed conversation and connection. This is a space to talk about whatever is on your mind — current events, questions of faith, or life in general. There's no formal agenda, just time to listen, share, and be in community together. Come every week or drop in when you're able — all are welcome! No registration or RSVP necessary. *(From Pastor Jeremy: This isn't a gripe session, church business meeting, or a place to troubleshoot programs and policies. The goal is connection, dialogue, and shared reflection in a relaxed and welcoming space.)*

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 at calendly.com/jeremy-ummecosta

Week of February 15, 2026 - February 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 and online
Sundays @ 10AM

Order of Worship - February 15, 2026

TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

* Call to Worship (Reader / *People*)

On the mountain, Jesus was transfigured before them—His face shining, His presence radiant with glory.

We come to behold that glory.

A voice from the cloud declared, "This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to Him."

We come to listen.

In a world loud with accusation, rumor, and rage, we gather to be shaped by a different Word.

Refine our speech, O God.

If our words are fire, let them not burn with cruelty or pride.

Let them burn with mercy and truth.

Come, let us worship the One whose glory transforms, whose voice steadies, *and whose love reshapes what we say and how we live.*

* Hymn - "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise", UMH #103

Children's Message

Scripture Reading - James 3:1-12 (NRSVUE)

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

People: *Thanks be to God!*

Song - "Give Me Jesus"

Message - "Faith That Works: Taming the Fire"

Remembering Our Baptism - "Gracefully Broken"

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

* The Doxology, UMH #95

* Hymn - "Take My Life, and Let It Be", UMH #399, vss. 1-2

* Benediction and Blessing

* Hymn - "Take My Life, and Let It Be", UMH #399, vs. 3

Postlude

* PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

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 - FEBRUARY 15

Reader: Suzette Compton

Ushers: Mike & Jana Pisani

Greeter: Kathi Parker

Nursery: Sarah Delany, Paige Madden

Sunday School: Kathi, Parker, Brenda Chaffee

Organist: Shirley Jernstadt

Accompanist: Kathy Bell

Praise Team: Denise Cosper, Toinette Wicks, Suzette Compton, Sherry Anderson

Fellowship Host: Pat Little

SERVING NEXT WEEK - FEBRUARY 22

Reader: Barbara Ross

Ushers: Rex & Cheryl Richardson

Greeter: Barbara Ross

Nursery: Sarah Delany, Beth Bejcek

Sunday School: Pam Fleming, Laurie Daniels

Fellowship Host: Marlene Rodgers

THINK ABOUT IT: TAMING THE FIRE

James doesn't minimize the power of words—he says they are fire. A small spark can set an entire forest ablaze. A small sentence can reshape a relationship. A careless phrase can echo for years. If faith that works shapes how we live, then it must also shape how we speak. This week we're invited to ask honest questions: *What kind of fire are my words carrying? Do they warm or wound? Do they build trust or erode it? Do they reflect the mercy of Christ—or the anxiety of the culture around me?* James reminds us that blessing and cursing should not flow from the same mouth, yet we know how easily frustration, sarcasm, fear, or anger can spill out in ways that diminish others. This isn't about being artificially polite. It's about being intentionally faithful—because words create worlds.

Questions for Reflection

- How do I speak about people who are not in the room?
- What words do I use for those with whom I disagree?
- Where has my speech been shaped more by fear than by faith?
- Who in my life needs a word of encouragement, repair, or truth?

A Prayer for the Week

God of light and refining fire, guard my mouth and steady my heart. Let my words reflect your mercy. When I am tempted to wound, teach me restraint. When silence would protect injustice, give me courage. Shape my speech so that it builds what love requires. Amen.

Practice This Week

- Pause before responding in frustration.
- Refuse to repeat gossip—even subtly.
- Offer one intentional word of encouragement each day.
- Speak up gently when language becomes dehumanizing.
- Before posting or sharing online, ask: Does this reflect mercy?

Final Thought

Transfiguration reminds us that glory shines from Jesus. James reminds us that fire comes from our mouths. May the fire we carry be refining rather than destructive, and may our speech reflect the One we claim to follow. Because faith that works doesn't just believe differently—it speaks differently.

FEBRUARY MISSION GIVING FOCUS: CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS

Our February Mission Giving Focus will support Camp Scholarships, helping children and youth attend Christian summer camp — even when cost might otherwise be a barrier.

At UMMMC, every child who attends church camp automatically receives a \$100 scholarship, and we also offer additional need-based scholarships to ensure no one misses out because of finances. These scholarships make it possible for more young people to experience a place where faith is formed, friendships grow, and lives are often changed in powerful ways.

All funds received through the February Mission Giving will be directed to the *Karen Poole Camp Scholarship Fund*. Karen's passion for camping ministry was evident not only during her time at First Church but throughout her entire ministry. Supporting this fund is a meaningful way to honor her legacy while investing in the faith of the next generation.

Thank you for helping make camp possible for our children and youth!

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!