

*(If you prepared an offering, please send it to your church.)*

**\*DOXOLOGY**

**UMH 95**

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION** Unison

O God, from whom comes all the good things we enjoy, we offer our gifts in the spirit of those long ago who opened costly treasures before Jesus. We give in response to your generosity, identifying with your pity and compassion for victims of violence, poverty, and oppression. May all who are in need experience the unsearchable riches of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit, even as their physical needs are met. May we be coworkers with Christ, whose sacrifice bought our redemption. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Sacrament of Holy Communion**

**INVITATION FOR COMMUNION**

**Pastor Jenny Lee**

**CONFESSION AND PARDON** Unison

Merciful God,

We confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.

We have failed to be an obedient church.

We have not done your will,

we have broken your law,

we have rebelled against you love,

we have not heard the cry of the needy.

Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(prayers in silence)*

Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;

that proves God's love toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ,

we are forgiven! Amen.

**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

**UMH 13-14 (see insert)**

**THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**GIVING (TAKING) THE HOLY COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION PRAYER** Unison

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another**

**\*HYMN**

*Go, Tell it on the Mountain*

**UMH 251 (vs. 1 & 3)**

**\*BENEDICTION**

**Pastor Jenny Lee**

**POSTLUDE**

# Upper St. Croix Parish

**ONE Parish THREE Churches:**

**Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls**

**January 3rd, 2021**

**“Epiphany Sunday”**



**The United Methodist Church**

*10 AM Online Zoom Service*

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Pastor Jenny Lee:** [jennlee1732@gmail.com](mailto:jennlee1732@gmail.com)

**Parish Office:** 715-463- 2624 – [centralumc2016@gmail.com](mailto:centralumc2016@gmail.com)

**St. Croix Falls Office:** 715-483-9494

[www.upperstcroixparish.org](http://www.upperstcroixparish.org)

**Upper St. Croix Parish**  
**Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls**  
**January 3rd, 2021**  
**“Epiphany Sunday”**

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\*This bulletin is for a Zoom Service and home service.

**PRELUDE**  
**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
**PASSING OF THE GREETINGS**  
*“Peace be with You!”*

*We Celebrate New Life in Christ*

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**    Responsive  
Have you seen the star of Bethlehem?  
Arise, people of God; let it shine in your lives.  
**We have seen Christ’s star and have come to worship.**  
**We are ready to let God lead and direct us.**  
Come from the shadows of earth  
to the light of God’s eternal purposes.  
**We see the glory of God in our midst**  
**and our hearts rejoice in expectation.**  
The promises of the gospel are for us,  
and for all people everywhere.  
**We are here to be equipped by God**  
**to carry good news into the world. Amen.**

**\*OPENING HYMN**            *Thine Be the Glory*  
**UMH 308 (vs. 1& 3)**

**OPENING PRAYER**  
We come to your light, God of All History, seeking to experience your presence at work among us and within each one of us. In our poverty of spirit we reach for the unsearchable riches of Christ. Amid our narrowness of vision we long for an outpouring of your all-inclusive love. From our advantaged position in your world we seek to develop greater compassion for the needy and oppressed. Move us from our complacency to be and do more fully as you intend. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

*Proclamation of God’s Word*

**\*THE GOSPEL LESSON**

**Matthew 2:1-12**

2 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.”

3 When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

6 ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

7 Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 8 Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” 9 When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 11 On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

This is the word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN OF PREPARATION-SPECIAL MUSIC**

**SERMON**                    *“Where is the King?”*                    **Pastor Jenny Lee**  
*(If you could not join our Zoom Service, one of your family members may read the written sermon, or view the video clip on Facebook.)*

*We Respond to God’s Word*

**RESPONDING PRAYER**    Unison  
Shine your truth into our lives, O God, sharpening our awareness of your grace, and attuning us to the signs by which you would lead us. Open our eyes and hearts from our bias and assumption, and guide us to your eternal purposes. Come to our center in daily lives, and be our Lord. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

**SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**PASTORAL PRAYER**

**PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS**

## Announcements (Insert) January 3rd, 2021

1. Today is the First Sunday in 2021, and Epiphany Sunday. May we experience God's presence in our daily lives!. Happy New Year!
2. Thank you for sending us **your photos for Christmas decoration with you or with your family**. We will send gifts to those who participated in the Christmas Family Photo contest.
3. January 3rd is a Communion Sunday. You may pick up the "Communion elements" from the church –Grantsburg (Tuesday or Wednesday) or St. Croix Falls (Thursday), or you may prepare them yourself.
4. January 8th is National Police Officers' Appreciation's Day. Please stop by the police station to express your gratitude. We will hold the Police Officer's Appreciation Sunday on January 10th.
5. Children's messages will be uploaded on our parish Facebook page at 4 pm every Monday. Please encourage your kids to view the messages.
6. The Upper Room (Daily Meditation Book) is available. You may pick it up at church in office hours or request us that we mail you a copy.
7. Pastor Jenny's office hours: Grantsburg- 9 to 5 pm Tuesdays and Wednesdays, St. Croix Falls- 11 to 4 pm Thursdays.
8. An Online Zoom Service is scheduled for this Sunday (January 3rd) at 10 am, and here is the zoom service LINK. This link will be posted on our parish website and Facebook also. The link will be changed every Sunday.

**Topic: Sunday Zoom Live Service, 1-3-2021**

**Time: Jan 3, 2021 10:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)**

Click the LINK to Join Sunday Zoom Service

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83059862445?pwd=RGxsdjlaQjFZdkxhZmNrbyt2c3hscz09>

Meeting ID: 830 5986 2445

Passcode: 354649

- If you are attending the Zoom service for the first time, you may be asked to download the Zoom app. It is free, you will need it.
- If you want to join with your smart phone with video, click the link.
- If you want to dial the number without video, you may dial along with meeting ID and passcode.

**+1 312 626 6799**

Meeting ID: 830 5986 2445 Passcode: 354649

Any questions regarding technological issues of the service, contact pastor Jenny.

9. You can also participate via **Toll Free Call (smart phone or landline)** every Sunday at 10:00 am by calling (1-888) 222-0475 and enter participant code 2938435.
10. You can hear "**the service (the scripture lesson, song, sermon and prayer-about 30 minutes) by phone**" whenever you are able as you call 1-715-298-0854. We will upload a new one every Sunday afternoon.
11. We need volunteers to be the liturgist every Zoom Sunday. If you are willing to be a liturgist, let Pastor Jenny know which Sunday you are available, and we welcome a special song with your family members.
12. If you miss a Zoom Live Sunday service, you may view a video clip on Facebook or use materials (mailed, emailed or on the Parish website) for a home service. You may want to send your giving (offerings) to your church. If you have any questions regarding services or offerings, please email the church office at: [centralumc2016@gmail.com](mailto:centralumc2016@gmail.com)

You may send your giving (offering) to the church (**Please make your check payable to your individual church's name.**)

**Atlas UMC:** PO Box 254, Luck, WI 54853

**Grantsburg-Central UMC:** PO Box 128, Grantsburg, WI 54840

**St. Croix Falls UMC:** PO Box 458, St. Croix Falls, WI 54024

13. This Week's Birthdays and Anniversaries:

\*If we miss your birthday, please let us know by email or phone call: [centralumc2016@gmail.com](mailto:centralumc2016@gmail.com)/ 715-463-2624

**Mike & Terry Giles 1/6**



## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,  
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,  
gave it to his disciples,  
and said: “take, eat; this is my body which given  
for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks  
to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: “drink from  
this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,  
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of  
sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of  
me.” And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts  
in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and  
thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice,  
in union with Christ’s offering for us, as we proclaim the  
mystery of faith.

**(Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come  
again.)**

*(You may hold the communion elements with your two  
hands.)* **(Together) Pour out your Holy Spirit on us  
gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and  
wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of  
Christ, that we may be for the world the body of  
Christ, redeemed by his blood.**

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,  
one with each other,  
and one in ministry to all the world,  
until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his  
heavenly banquet.  
Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit  
in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours,  
almighty God, now and forever. Amen.



January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021  
Matthew 2:1-12

Pastor Jenny Lee, Ph. D.  
Upper St. Croix Parish UMC

### **“Where is the King?”**

I want to start with something funny I heard about a husband and his wife. They had been arguing for a long time about who should make the coffee in the morning. The husband thought it was the wife’s job. But she disagreed with him. After several debates, she told her husband, “I can prove from the Bible that it is a man’s job to make the coffee.” He said, “What are you talking about? Does the Bible say that a man should make the coffee?” She said, “Sure. There it is.” She opened the Bible and point to the book of “He brews” [Hebrews].

Who makes the coffee in the morning at your home? I used to say to my friends and siblings, “I would marry the one who would make coffee for me in the morning.” That was one of my dreams because I grew up in a patriarchal family. My brothers do not like to cook. They still thought cooking was a wife’s job. But, my brother-in-law likes to cook and clean up the house. However, my sister said, “if her family (his in-laws) were at their home, he should not do anything in front of the in-laws.” He used to say, “It is the way to keep peace at home.” He means that he cooks for peace at home, and he doesn’t cook in front of his in-laws for peace at home as well.

Today, I want to talk about, “where is the King?” We often argue about who would be served or who should serve. Even though we do not argue about it, there are potential tensions among people’s relationships. It happens everywhere at home, at the workplace, in the

community, and in the country. One of the human natures is to be served, not to serve. In other words, most people want to be the leader and the king and get first place. However, remember Jesus came to us to serve, not to be served (Mark 10:45).

In today's scripture, there is a king in Judea, Herod. He had been governor from 47 B.C, and he had received the title of king in 40 B.C. In power for four decades, he was called Herod the Great, a great ruler in keeping order, a great builder whose works included building the temple in Jerusalem, a great manager supplied from his own reserves to help the Jewish people famine. But he was also a man of great suspicion, and in his later years became known as a murderous old man. He murdered his wife (Mariamne); his mother (Alexandria); his oldest son (Antipater); and his sons (Alexander and Aristobulus) to keep his throne safe. Someone said at that time, "It was safer to be Herod's pig than Herod's son." King Herod was suspicious of the people around him and murdered many people to keep his throne.

Meanwhile, he had a big challenge on hearing the wise men. The wise men from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "where is the king of the Jews?" They did not ask if the king was born a Jew. Instead, they asked, "where is the king?" They were sure the king had been born. They said, "for we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him was shaken. People were afraid of it how dare mention anything about the other King in front of Herod.

What is interesting is that the wise men saw the rising star from the east and followed the star to Judea, but they lost the star in Jerusalem. There were two assumptions by the wise men. They assumed that the king would be in Jerusalem, the capital city of Judea, and they went to Jerusalem and asked people, "where is the child who has been born king of Jews?" Their other assumption was that all Jewish might know about the child who will be the king. The wise men were not Jewish but gentile who did not know about the Messiah. They were the Eastern

Scholars, like astronomers. They knew the providence of God through their studies of stars. As soon as they found the star, they traveled to worship the king as they said, “We saw his star in the east, and have come to worship him.” They were excited to seek the king.

On the other hand, King, Herod, who was always suspicious of people, called all the chief priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Messiah was to be born. King Herod and the chief priest and people’s scribes already knew about the Messiah God promised. The chief priest and scribes remembered the prophecy that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem of Judea, but they did not believe it. They talked to Herod about the prophecy that it will be Bethlehem of Judea because the prophet has written it. Even after they heard from the wise men and taught Herod about the Messiah who will be born in Bethlehem, that is all. They were indifferent about whether the Messiah will come or the child was born to be the King of Jews. Of course, Herod was concerned if it was true and talked to wise men “if you find him, let me know. And then I will go and worship him also.” As you may know, his intention was not to worship him but to kill him to sustain his throne.

Let us pay attention to the wise men’s assumption. Why did they lose the direction of the star in Jerusalem? They came from the east following the direction of the star. They were almost there but lost their way. The town of Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, is about five miles south of Jerusalem. They assumed the king would be born in the palace in the city of Jerusalem. Their assumption made them blind to the direction of the star. We need to be careful if we interpret God’s providence by personal bias. We might make God’s work smaller or distorted by our bias and assumption.

Here is an example of the assumption of God’s providence. There was a commander of the Army of the King of Aram. His name is Naaman. He was a great man in the sight of his master, but he had leprosy. One day, a young girl who was captive from Israel and who served

Naaman's wife, said to her mistress, "if my master saw the prophet in Samaria, he would cure him of his leprosy." Naaman went to the King of Israel, bringing his king's letter, silver, gold, and other gifts. He also went to the palace in Israel. The King of Israel tore his robe and cried out, feeling threatened by the Aram's King. But Elisha asked him to come. Naaman went to Elisha, but Elisha, without seeing him, sent a messenger to say to Naaman, "Go, wash seven times in the Jordan, and your body will be restored." However, Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy" (2 Kings 5:11).

What do you think of him? If you were in his shoes, what would you do? God's work sometimes goes simply. It is not necessary to lift up our own thought for God's providence. We should remember that Jesus also used to say in his prayers, "My father if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39). God works beyond our thoughts. We don't know how God makes things happen. We should trust God, no matter what. Our assumptions and bias might blind us not to see God's presence and God's grace.

After the wise men went out of Herod's palace, the star, they had seen at its rising in the east, went ahead of them until they arrived at the place Jesus was born. When they saw that the star stopped over the place, they were overwhelmed with joy. Finally, when they followed the direction of the star, they could see Jesus with God's amazing grace. They found the king of the kings in a manger among the livestock, not the palace. It was an unexpected place. God's grace may come to us sometimes in an incredible place and time. Therefore, we need to open our whole hearts and minds to our Lord and our neighbors so that we may experience God's grace unexpectedly. I wonder where your king is. I hope our King Jesus Christ will be in the center of our lives. Thanks be to God.