

We Respond to God's Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Inclusive God, ever available to all who truly seek you, come to us now through all we read and speak, that the messages your people hear may become your word to us, a word that transforms, makes whole, and unites us in mutual learning and serve, for the sake of all your people. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYERS/THE LORD'S PRAYER

INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND

OFFERINGS

*DOXOLOGY

UMH 95

PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison

Gracious God, we give because you have been generous to us. We give because we need to give in order to realize your image within us. We give to feed the hungers of body and soul that are all around us and deep within. May the ministries of this church meet the needs of our members, our community, and our world. Help us to love our neighbors as ourselves. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

UMH 526 (vs.1 & 2)

*BENEDICTION

Barb Loomis (C/A)
Kathy Gionis (SCF)

"Be strong, and bold in faith! May the God of power fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen!"

POSTLUDE

Upper St. Croix Parish

ONE Parish THREE Churches:

Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls

September 5, 2021

"Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost"



The United Methodist Church

8:30 AM at Central-Grantsburg with Online Zoom Service

9:45 AM at Atlas

11:15 AM at St. Croix Falls

CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor Jenny Lee: jennlee1732@gmail.com

Parish Office: 715-463- 2624 – centralumc2016@gmail.com

St. Croix Falls Office: 715-483-9494

www.upperstcroixparish.org

<https://www.facebook.com/UpperStCroixParishUMC>

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
September 5th, 2021
"Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost"

* Please rise as you are able.

PRELUDE
WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
PASSING OF THE GREETINGS

"Peace be with you!"
(Wave your hands!)

We Celebrate New Life in Christ

***CALL TO WORSHIP Responsive**

Listen! God is welcoming us to this time of worship.
Young and old, rich and poor, all are welcomed.

This is a place where all belong.

This is a time when all are accountable to God.

The Maker of all seeks our common good.

The God of Mercy calls on us to be merciful.

We are not judges over our sisters and brothers.

We are called to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Come to sing praises and put your trust in God.

Come to prepare yourself to serve in Christ's name.

We bring all our needs to God, our hope.

We want to share faith and hope with others. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN**

Rise, Shine, You People

UMH 187 (vs. 1 & 3)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

God of all humankind, come to lift us up to our full humanity as we worship you in this hour. You surround us on every side and are acquainted with all our ways. You know our shallow motives and our deepest thoughts. You are aware of the distinctions we make and the favoritism we express. Yet you welcome us, not as

strangers but as heralds of your reign. We want to worship you and to represent you well. Come among us now with your transforming power. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God's Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Mark 7:24-37

24 From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, 25 but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. 26 Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 27 He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." 28 But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." 29 Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter." 30 So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

31 Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. 32 They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. 33 He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." 35 And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. 37 They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

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

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

"The Audacity (Boldness) of Believing"




Barb Loomis (C/A)

"What Do They Mean?"



Kathy Gionis (SCF)

CHURCH MISSIONS

ATLAS ... September

INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM: Atlas collects and recycles ink jet cartridges and cell phones year round. 	Collecting donations for the food shelf. Communion Sunday: Shelf-Stable Milk or 100% Juice 	 We will be collecting loose change during worship to support & Operation X-Mas Child Shoe-Box
--	--	--

GRANTSBURG... September

BE A "BACK-PACK BACKER"! REMEMBER ... Every Sunday Is MAC 'N CHEESE SUNDAY! Supporting the Salvation Army's "Happy Kids Backpack Program" 	Moolah For Milk Collecting loose change to support Moolah for Milk! 
---	--

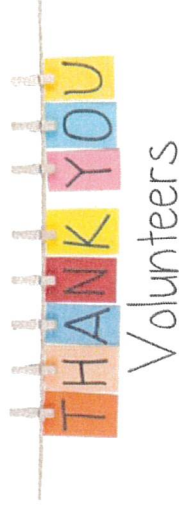


ST. CROIX FALLS - September

Sailor Hat Offering:
To School Backpack Program

TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers	All God's People <i>Pastor Jenny Lee</i>
Today's Service	
Central:	
Preacher	Barb Loomis
Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Bob Branstad
Usher(s)	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Mowing	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Acolyte(s)	Willow Erickson
Fellowship	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Altar Flowers	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Counter	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Church Doors	Open/Close
Sunday School	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
	Older/Middle/Kindergarten LuAnne Martell
Atlas:	
Preacher	Barb Loomis
Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Colleen Adams-Schween
Usher(s)	Sue Olson
Cleaning	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Sunday School	Big/Little (Begins Sep. 12)
St. Croix Falls:	
Preacher	Kathy Gionis
Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Jim Andrews
Usher(s)	Karen Sciacca
Money Counter	Karen Sciacca
Fellowship	Ad Council members
Altar Flowers	<i>Volunteers Needed</i>



PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) An Online Zoom Service is scheduled for this Sunday at 8:30 am. The link will be posted on our parish website and Facebook page.
Time: Sundays, 08:30 AM Central
LINK to Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84147808460?pwd=SDZleFNubmEvaDBycytTRzVxMFJlZz09>

Meeting ID: 841 4780 8460 Passcode: 568271

Phone: +1 312 626 6799,

Meeting ID: 841 4780 8460, Passcode: 568271

- 2) Sunday Sermons are on the website at upperstcroixparish.org under Sermons!
- 3) You can hear "the service by Phone, at any time by calling 1-715-298-0854.
- 4) You may watch a recorded video of the service on our parish Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/UpperStCroixParishUMC>

This Week's Calendar:

Today: 8:30 am Service @ Grantsburg

9:45 am Atlas,

11:15 am St. Croix Falls.

9/30-9/10: Pastor Jenny is on vacation. (Emergency contacts are each church's Ad Chairs. Grantsburg: LuAnne Martell, 715-222-3016; Atlas: Sue Olson, 715-554-3126; St. Croix Falls: Karen Sciacca, 715-338-1865)

Next Sunday: Communion Sunday, and Rally Sunday (A)



SEPT. 11~UMM MEETING (8AM) @ GRANTSBURG-CENTRAL

SEPT. 11~ CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR WESLEY SKEIE (10 AM)

(740 E. HAYDEN LAKE RD. CHAMPLIN, MN)

SEP.12 ~ RALLY SUNDAY (A) BLESSINGS SUNDAY SCHOOL KIDS AND TEACHERS

SEP. 19~ VOW OF NEW MEMBERSHIP (G)

9/27-9/29~SIREN HARVESTFEST-SIREN, WI

Next Sunday (September 5th) Volunteers:

Ministers All God's People

Pastor Jenny Lee

Central:

Pianist Toni Koons

Liturgist *Volunteer Needed*

Usher(s) *Volunteer Needed*

Mowing *Volunteer Needed*

Acolyte(s) Willow Erickson

Fellowship *Volunteer Needed*

Altar Flowers *Volunteer Needed*

Counter *Volunteer Needed*

Church Doors Open/Close

Sunday School *Volunteer Needed*

Older/Younger

LuAnne Martell/ Barb Loomis

Atlas:

Pianist Sharon Asp

Liturgist *Volunteer Needed*

Usher(s) *Volunteer Needed*

Cleaning *Volunteer Needed*

Sunday School Big/Little

Volunteers Needed

St. Croix Falls:

Pianist Sharon Asp

Liturgist Jim Andrews

Usher(s) Karen Sciacca

Money Counter Karen Sciacca

Fellowship Ad Council Members

Altar Flowers *Volunteers Needed*

This Week's Birthdays and Anniversaries:



Andy Loomis 9/6

Tammy Anderson 9/6

Betty & Richard Benjamin 9/7

Briana & Jared Olson 9/10

Troy & Kristie Olson 9/10

Mark Chapter 7, verses 24-37, what do they mean?

Probably all of us are somewhat familiar with today's scripture reading in Mark 7:24-30 about Jesus talking to a Gentile woman about her demon-possessed daughter and something else about not giving food to dogs, but I've never really understood what this story means or what it is supposed to mean, other than the woman was very insistent that she wanted Jesus' help in making her little daughter better.

The scenario opens with Jesus leaving Nazareth and going to Tyre. Preceding this, the 6th chapter of Mark sets the stage with Jesus going to "His own country" and preaching in the synagogue and being rejected there. After preaching in the synagogue Mark says that Jesus went about the villages in a circuit teaching. He called the twelve disciples and sent them out two by two. Later the apostles gathered and told Jesus what they had been doing and teaching. They were tired and Jesus and the apostles got in a boat and set off for a deserted place where they could rest and eat.

Chapter 6 of Mark describes that "multitudes" saw them departing and ran on ahead and arrived at the place before Jesus and the apostles and when Jesus saw them all he was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So, Jesus began to teach, even though it was late in the day. The disciples told Jesus that he should send the people away so that they could go into the surrounding countryside and find something to eat. But Jesus declined and instead blessed five loaves of bread and two fish and fed 5000 men.

After that, Jesus made the disciples get into a boat and go to the other side of the lake or sea, to Bethsaida, while Jesus sent the people away. Then Jesus went to the mountain to pray. In the night Jesus saw the disciples struggling against the wind and he came to them walking on the sea. When Jesus reached the boat the wind ceased.

When they had crossed over they came to the land of Gennesaret and people by now recognized Jesus and brought sick people to be healed. Jesus was becoming very popular and his preaching and healing well known.

It is against this backdrop that the events in Mark, Chapter 7, take place. It starts with the Pharisees and some scribes coming from Jerusalem to confront Jesus because He and the disciples didn't follow the rules of washings that were part of the traditions of the elders of Israel at the time. Traditions and rituals had become

so dominate that weightier matters of the law of love, justice and mercy had no value. The religious leaders ruled with a heavy hand and the most weak and vulnerable in society such as widows and orphans were routinely taken advantage of.

This is where the story of the sick daughter and the crumbs from the table going to the dogs begins. Jesus left Gennesaret which was in the Jewish provinces and went to Tyre and Sidon which were in Gentile territory, in order to get some rest, because he was exhausted. There he went to a house and didn't want anybody to know about it. Verse 24 says, "but He could not be hidden." The woman who came to Jesus was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. (There are a lot of great resources on the internet to help you figure out this stuff, like the geography and what a Syro-Phoenician is.) Tyre is near Judea and even though the woman was not Jewish, she would have been aware of Jewish customs. According to the standards of the day, she was unclean to approach a devout Jew, much less a rabbi. It would appear that she entered the house without an invitation, as Jesus wanted to be alone to rest. The woman fell down, and was asking, some translations say "begging", Jesus to cast out the demon from her daughter. In another account in Matthew, the disciples are urging Jesus to send her away.

The woman was bold and didn't give up easily. Parents will have no problem identifying with the woman's situation. Parents will go to extraordinary measures to protect their children and seeking help for a sick child. So, Jesus' reply to the woman is confusing and seems out of context. "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." (Note the use of the word "little" dogs—as in puppies.) This seems almost to be an insult, as back in Jesus' day, dogs were not the loveable pets they are now. It could be an insult, as women in Jesus day were not considered equal to men. In the feeding of the 5000, the account says that 5000 men were fed. Plus, this woman was a Gentile. But the woman engages Jesus and replies that even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs.

I read an interpretation of this story from "Jesus The King" by Tim Keller which offers a pretty satisfying explanation of what was going on. He says that Jesus was speaking in parable, as he often did. Keller says the woman is being assertive even though she knows she does not have a right to claim assertiveness. **"She's not saying, 'Lord, give me what I deserve on the basis of my goodness.' She is**

saying, 'Give me what I don't deserve on the basis of your goodness-and I need it now.'

It's not a stretch to see the implication this has about the distinctive nature of Christian salvation. The woman in the story understood that she had to lean on Jesus' grace alone. Jesus reached out to the woman and when the woman returned home, the demon was gone and her daughter was lying on the bed. In Keller's interpretation, he says this demonstrates that Jesus reaches out to the broken, the sick, the outsider, the sinner.

The account in verses 31-37 follow the same story line as the Gentile woman showing her faith. Jesus and his disciples leave Tyre and Sidon, probably still seeking rest and solitude, and going to Decapolis. Earlier in the journey the group was in Decapolis but stayed only for a short time. There Jesus had freed a man of his demons and was forced to leave. But before He left He had told the cured man to go and tell everyone what He had done. So, it makes sense that upon Jesus' return to Decapolis that word had spread of the previous miracle and thus a Deaf-Mute was brought to him for healing. In this story, Jesus takes the man aside and put his fingers in his ears and puts his own saliva on the man's tongue. Jesus looks up to heaven and sighs. While Mark doesn't get into the reason for Jesus' actions, His patient and purposeful interaction with this man seems to reveal the compassion of Jesus and His sympathy for human suffering. The actions of Jesus were probably symbolic gestures to emphasize to the man that he understood that he couldn't hear and empathized with him, because it would appear that Jesus took the man away from the crowd and that they were alone.

The two stories are stories of hope. Sometimes when we come to the end of ourselves we must turn to God for help as did the two individuals in these stories.

Indeed, as the people who witnessed the deaf man having his hearing restored, "He has done all things well." Jesus valued love, justice, mercy and compassion and as Christians we strive to attain these values as these two lessons demonstrate.

Mark 7:24-37
Barbara Loomis

“The Audacity (boldness) of Believing”

Throughout the gospels, we have times when Jesus needs to be alone, or alone with his disciples. The last time I spoke, they were sailing across the Sea of Galilee, to have time away from the crowds. We often find in Mark that Jesus would take the disciples aside to explain the parables. One of the times when he was alone with the disciples, Jesus asked “Who do people say I am?” In Luke he asks the same question. In this lesson from Mark, why didn't Jesus want anyone else to know he was there? Maybe it was because his cousin John was killed (Mark 6:27). It could have been because he had recently faced the Pharisees' criticism about his disciples eating with unwashed hands. (Mark 7:1-8). More importantly he had been healing people, feeding the hungry and teaching to very large crowds. He was fatigued, bereaved, and besieged. It is no wonder that he did not want anyone to know he was there.

I don't know about you, but I require alone time. Even if it is only five minutes. No TV, no phone, no internet, no grandchildren. This time of year, sitting outside gives time to breath and marvel at the world that God has created for us.

So why wouldn't Jesus need alone time.

“Yet he could not escape notice” (Mark 7:24c)

In today's gospel lesson, Jesus and the disciples ventured into a territory to the west and north of Galilee, whose residents included Jews and Gentiles. Some theologians believe that he went there because the crowds and demands on him would be less, where others believe that Jesus truly wanted to meet more Gentiles, to spread the message beyond the Jews. Eventually, Mark formed his church in Rome and it was made up of Gentiles. It might not have existed if Jesus had not set out and gone to the region of Tyre.

At this point, we need to define Gentile. Gentile in Biblical terms is any person that is not Jewish. That covers a very large demographic. That covers us. Which makes this Gospel lesson pivotal to us.

The Story is also told in Matthew 15:21-28. I want to share the NIV version of this lesson.

21 Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. **22** A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly."

23 Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us."

24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

25 The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said.

26 He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs."

27 "Yes it is, Lord," she said. "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

28 Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment.

Matthew refers to her as Cannonite Woman and Mark calls her a Greek.

This woman lived in the sea-coast region in northwestern Palestine, so Matthew calls her a "Canaanite" woman. The pagan inhabitants of the land which Israel conquered under Joshua were known as Canaanites.

Mark, on the other hand, is writing for the benefit of the Romans, who controlled the Mediterranean world of the first century.

The two scriptures are of the same event in Jesus' ministries.

They tell us of a brave woman that dared to break the barriers of a patriarchal society by talking to a man. She broke through the barrier of racism by talking to a Jew. What parent, most especially a mother, wouldn't be willing to go to great lengths for their child. She was so desperate. She was willing to assert herself in her conversation with Jesus.

Now in Mark it does state that "she came and bowed down at his feet..."(Mark 7:25) "and she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. (Mark 7:26)

Where in Matthew she cried out and made such a scene the disciples wanted to send her away. This is when Jesus answered "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." (Matthew 15) At this point in the scripture, she came and knelt before Jesus. This helps us to better understand why Jesus said to the woman in Mark. "Let the children be fed first for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." Mk 27)

When I first read this years ago , it caught me off guard. We are the Gentiles. Are we no better than dogs? Some say the word for dog was a slur for non-Jews. Others say the word for dog that is translated in these books refers to a beloved pet or puppy. Still, am I no better than a puppy waiting for scraps?

Theologians will tell us that everything that Jesus said and did, had a lesson in it. Some believe that He did come for the lost sheep of Israel and this was the turning point of his mission to be the savior for all. I believe that Jesus came for us all, from the beginning. The Alpha and the Omega!

When He challenged the woman He was challenging her faith. She had enough confidence and the audacity to persist, even when it seemed like Jesus was belittling her. Yet her need was great. She wanted her daughter to be whole. Everything she had heard about Jesus told her that He could heal her child. So she dared to match wits with Him. "Sir , even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." (Mark 7:28)

With that "He said to her 'For saying that , you may go--the demon has left your daughter" (Mark 7:29)

She did go home and find her child. Her daughter was whole.

Our lesson did not end here. Jesus cures a deaf man who also had a speech impediment. He did not just lay His hands upon the man , He put his fingers into the man's ears, and spit on the man's tongue. This was a very physical display of healing. Jesus had taken the man away from the crowd in order to perform this miracle. But it was still very physical and he called out "Be Opened"

The people in this lesson go to Jesus desperate and begging. They know their needs. They come to Jesus , believing that he can help them. A desperate mother would do everything in her power to bring healing to her daughter. As a Gentile , she likely prayed to every deity she could without results. But she did not give up hope. You likely know someone with a terrible diagnosis that went to great lengths to find a cure. Some with success. Many with prayer. The deaf man and his community did not give up hope. They couldn't do anything, but they believed that God could, so they went to Jesus.

They were bold in their belief and in their prayers. God is interested in all the little and great details of our lives. Someone once told me, you could ask God to find the mate to your shoe. Have you ever misplaced the keys to the car? It seems trivial and unworthy to ask God for such an inconsequential item , however taking time for a little prayer can bring you the calm that you need. I have done this when I could not find something. Did the calm I felt help me find my lost item or did God calm me so I could find that which I had lost. God does care.

I like to tell people that the best lesson about prayer is found in the book Heidi. The book is based on a true story. The book is much more complicated than the movie. Heidi's life was very difficult. She learned about God and prayer. She also learned that God answered prayers, not in her time but in God's time.

Generations of Israel's prayers went unanswered, but they kept praying and God eventually answered. Jesus' response to the Gentile woman didn't stop her from asking. And he did answer her plea. The child was healed without Jesus seeing or touching her. The deaf man had Jesus physically touch him.

All things are possible through God, Jesus , and the spirit.

Never stop believing. Never stop trusting.

Amen.