

**INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS**

**\*DOXOLOGY**

UMH 95

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION** Unison

Thank you, God, for this opportunity to share our treasures with others who are in need, and support the ministry and mission of our congregation. May there be a harvest of righteousness among us, shown in the peaceful handling of disputes, in mutual love and support, and in courageous outreach to people near and far who need the help we can give. Bless each gift and giver. We pray in Jesus' Name. Amen.

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

**\*HYMN**

*How Great Thou Art*

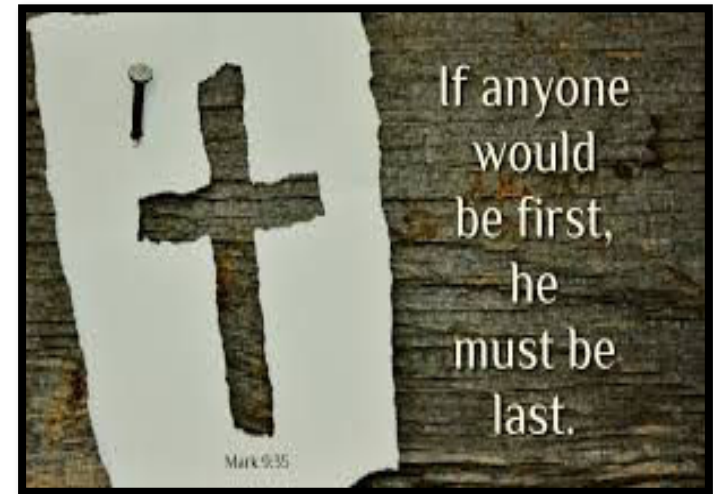
UMH 77 (vs. 1)

**\*BENEDICTION  
POSTLUDE**

Pastor Jenny Lee

# Upper St. Croix Parish

**ONE Parish THREE Churches:  
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls  
September 19th, 2021  
“Seventeenth 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**

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





# CHURCH MISSIONS

## ATLAS ... September

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

<p><b>BE A "BACK-PACK BACKER"!</b></p> <p>REMEMBER ... Every Sunday Is MAC 'N CHEESE SUNDAY!</p> <p>Supporting the Salvation Army's "Happy Kids Backpack Program"</p> 	<p><b>Moolah For Milk</b></p> <p>Collecting loose change to support Moolah for Milk!</p> 
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## ST. CROIX FALLS - September

**Sailor Hat Offering:  
To School Backpack Program**

# TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers All God's People  
*Pastor Jenny Lee*

### Today's Service

**Central:**  
Pianist Toni Koons  
Liturgist Mark Nelson  
Mowing Dave Huff  
Acolyte(s) Willow Erickson  
Fellowship **Volunteer Needed**  
Counter **Volunteer Needed**  
Church Doors Close  
**Volunteer Needed**

Sunday School Younger/Older  
LuAnne Martell/Barb Loomis

**Atlas:**  
Pianist Sharon Asp  
Liturgist Colleen Adams-Schween  
Usher(s) Sue Olson  
Cleaning **Volunteer Needed**  
Sunday School Younger/Older  
Cheryl Olson/ Jamie Steffen

### St. Croix Falls:

Pianist Sharon Asp  
Liturgist Jim Andrews  
Usher(s) Kathy Gionis  
Money Counter Peter Gionis  
Fellowship Ad Council members



### This Week's Calendar:

Today: Sunday Worship Service at 8:30 am @ Grantsburg; 9:45 am Atlas, and 11:15 am St. Croix Falls. Vow of New Members & Welcoming to the Body of Christ (G)  
Sept. 21st at 6:30 pm, Administrative Council Meeting (G)

- **BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK:** Please pray for the youth/children director **ONCE A DAY** if possible.

## 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.  
Click the LINK to Join Zoom Meeting  
**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84147808460?pwd=SDZleFNubmEvaDBlcytTRzVxMFIIZz09>**  
Meeting ID: 841 4780 8460 Passcode: 568271  
Phone: +1 312 626 6799,  
Meeting ID: 841 4780 8460, Passcode: 568271
- 2) Our Sunday Sermons are on the website at [upperstcroixparish.org](http://upperstcroixparish.org) under Sermons!
- 3) You can hear “the service by Phone,” whenever you are able 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>



**9/21 AT 6:30 PM ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MEETING (G)**

**9/23-24, ICD TRAINING**

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

**9/30 AT 9 AM, DISTRICT CLERGY MEETING VIA ZOOM**

**10/1 SPRC MEETING AT 6PM IN THE PARSONAGE**

**10/3 WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY**

## Next Sunday (September 26th) Volunteers:

Ministers All God's People  
*Pastor Jenny Lee*

### Central:

Pianist Toni Koons  
Liturgist *Volunteer Needed*  
Mowing *Volunteer Needed*  
Acolyte(s) Willow Erickson  
Fellowship *Volunteer Needed*  
Counter *Volunteer Needed*  
Church Doors Close  
*Volunteer Needed*  
Sunday School Younger/Older  
LuAnne Martell/ Barb Loomis

### Atlas:

Pianist Sharon Asp  
Liturgist *Volunteer Needed*  
Usher(s) *Volunteer Needed*

Cleaning *Volunteer Needed*  
Sunday School Younger/Older  
*Volunteer Needed*

### St. Croix Falls:

Pianist Sharon Asp  
Liturgist Jim Andrews  
Usher(s) Kathy Gionis  
Money Counter Peter Gionis  
Fellowship Ad Council Members



## THIS WEEK BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Jennifer Engelken 9/20

Anneliese Snyder 9/22





September 19th, 2021  
Mark 9:30-37

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

### **“Nevertheless, God Loves You.”**

I want to start with a funny story. I heard this Christian, who liked to climb mountains. Most weekends, he went to the mountains or the hills to enjoy hiking or climbing. One day, he was climbing a mountain, praising God about how beautifully God created all the mountains and rivers. But, at that moment, he slipped, and he fell down under the cliff. He prayed, “O God, help me!” Immediately, he stopped falling, hanging on a branch. He said, “Thank you, God. I knew you always heard my prayers.” However, he noticed that he was still hanging on a branch on the cliff, and he became too weak to hold the branch any longer. He prayed again. “O God, save me. I’m afraid of dying.” God said to him, “Do you believe in me?” He said, “Yes, God. I believed in you all the time, and now I believe that you will save me.” God said, “If you believe in me, release your hand from the branch, and let go of yourself.” He said, “Hello! Is any human there to help me, not God?”

Today, I want to talk about our faith in God and God’s love. You cannot compare faith to see whose faith is greater, deeper, or firmer because faith is an intimate relationship with God. Faith cannot be judged on appearance, behaviors, or saying good words. However, we may know our faith by our relationship with God. When you face any life crisis, what do you do first? Of course, you might pray to God first. How about when your life crisis looks like it’s getting worse and worse? Do you still pray without any complaint or blaming God? Even though the crisis worsened, or another came after the other, which looked like it may never get better, do you keep your faith in God without any blame? Nobody can clearly say it because we don’t know the future, or what kind of crisis we may face and because we are weak, dull, and slow before God. Nevertheless, God still loves us; God still loves you!

We may see ourselves through the disciples in today’s scripture. As we learned last Sunday, Jesus began to teach about his important mission project after Peter’s confession, “You are the Messiah.” Even though Peter didn’t know what the Messiah meant, Jesus thought that it was time they should know about his death and resurrection. In today’s scripture, Jesus repeated teaching his disciples, saying, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.” The disciples couldn’t understand what Jesus was talking about, but no one among them asked him. Rather, they were afraid to ask. They couldn’t imagine Jesus would suffer and die because they saw the many miracles Jesus made for people. They might have thought about why Jesus would die and who would dare go against him because Jesus is the person who raised the dead, scolded the storm, healed the blind and the deaf, drove out the evil spirit, and fed five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish. They were also afraid to ask him because they saw that Jesus scolded Peter. When Peter said, “No way, you shouldn’t die,” Jesus said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things” (Mark 8:33).

Instead, the disciples discussed who would be greater among them. It meant that they still thought of a future kingdom, in which Jesus would be a king in the world, and then they discussed their positions when Jesus became a king. Can you imagine? Jesus planned to suffer and die, but his disciples planned who would be a vice president, a prime minister, and a

minister. Although the disciples spent their time together with Jesus and were taught closely for three years, they each had different purposes. They still had a self-centered mind, as Jesus said, “for your setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.” Nevertheless, Jesus was patient and taught them about “humble,” saying, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” And then, “Jesus took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me” (Mark 9:36-37). As you may know, Israelites thought that women and children were useless, and they didn’t consider them to be human beings. Women and children couldn’t make any decisions or have opinions in public. The reason Jesus showed a child as an example was to teach them “humble.” A child couldn’t make any decision or have opinions and was weak socially, economically, and politically. If you serve a child or the weak humbly, it means you serve Jesus. Furthermore, it means that you would serve God.

We’re sometimes surprised how foolish the disciples were. However, we are not much different from the disciples. We are still foolish in understanding God’s words because it is not knowledge, but the issue of the spirit. Jesus chose uneducated people and taught them for three years. However, they couldn’t understand what Jesus was talking about. They only saw his miracles and only believed what they wanted until when the Holy Spirit came to them and helped them understand God’s will. When Jesus was arrested, and when he died on the cross, they scattered with fear. When Jesus said, “I will be raised after three days,” they couldn’t understand it and returned to Galilee, their hometown, with disappointment. Nevertheless, Jesus didn’t give up on them. After being resurrected, he came to them again and gave them a second chance. Furthermore, Jesus promised them to send the Holy Spirit and said, “I will be with you by the end of the world.” Jesus kept his promise to his disciples. On the day of Pentecost, the disciples experienced the Holy Spirit, and they were totally changed. Finally, they could practice God’s love by the Holy Spirit in their lifetime.

We might sometimes fail to keep faith in God. We might sometimes wander the world. We might sometimes doubt the biblical stories without faith. We might sometimes complain or blame God when we face a life crisis, a bad medical report, experiencing a broken relationship with loved ones. We might sometimes depend on alcohol or drug, experiencing weakness, loneliness, and depression. Nevertheless, God never gives upon us. God’s love is higher, wider, and bigger than our sadness or disappointment or wandering, even than our sins. The Apostle Paul said, “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

I want to go back to the funny story I mentioned earlier. In the situation the Christian faced it looked like God might want him to die. But the truth was that he was almost there on the ground, which means God already saved him. If he released his hands from the branch, he would reach the land safely. But he couldn’t trust in God. We might sometimes feel that God pushes us into the crisis, but there must be the reason as if God said, “if you believe in me, release your hands from the branch,” in the story. Remember, when you release your hands from worldly things, you finally can hold God’s hand. Even if you can’t release your hands from worldly things yet, God still loves you, and is waiting for you. Thanks be to God. Amen!