

We Respond to God's Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Eternal God, lead us to grow in faith day by day so we stand in faith firmly. Guide us not into temptation, and take away all our worries and concerns so that we are joyful always, and pray all the time, and give thanks in all circumstances. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER/THE LORD'S PRAYER

INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*DOXOLOGY

UMH 95

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison

Thank you, God, for the wealth you have entrusted to us. As we share a portion of that wealth, we pray that it may never become the object of our affection. Keep our focus on people and relationships and lasting values, rather than on the possessions we can accumulate. We dedicate our time, money, gifts, talents, and ourselves to the kingdom of God, praying that all whom our gifts may reach may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*HYMN

Here I Am, Lord

UMH 593 (vs. 1 & 3)

*BENEDICTION

Pastor Jenny Lee

POSTLUDE

Upper St. Croix Parish

ONE Parish THREE Churches:

Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls

October 10th, 2021

“Twentieth 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

*Please stand if you are able.



Pastor Jenny Lee

CHURCH MISSIONS


ATLAS ... October

INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM: Atlas collects and recycles ink jet cartridges and cell phones year round. 	Collecting donations for the food shelf. Communion Sunday: HOLIDAY FOODS (canned yams, stuffing, cranberry sauce, instant potatoes)  Operation Christmas Child We will be supporting Operation Christmas Child-shoe boxes and information is available at church
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GRANTSBURG... October

BE A “BACK-PACK BACKER”! REMEMBER ... Every Sunday Is MAC ‘N CHEESE SUNDAY! Supporting the Salvation Army’s “Happy Kids Back-Pack Program” 	Trick or Treat for UNICEF Collecting Loose Offering 
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ST. CROIX FALLS ...October

Food Shelf (Communion Sunday) 	Sailor Hat Offering:  Homeless Shelter in Amery
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TODAY’S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers All God’s People
Pastor Jenny Lee

Today’s Service

Central:
Pianist Toni Koons
Liturgist **Volunteer Needed**
Mowing Dave Huff
Acolyte(s) Willow Erickson
Fellowship **Volunteer Needed**
Counter **Volunteer Needed**
Flowers UMW
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
Mariah Gaffey/ Cheryl Olson

St. Croix Falls:
Pianist Sharon Asp
Liturgist Karen Sciacca
Usher(s) Kathy Gionis
Money Counter Peter Gionis
Flowers Kathy Gionis
Fellowship Ad Council members

BREAKTHROUGH PRAYERS FOR THIS WEEK:

- 1) Pray for the Youth/Children Director position **ONCE A DAY** if possible.
- 2) Our church’s revitalization.

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 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>

This Week's Calendar:

Today: “20th Sunday after Pentecost” God bless you and your family!
Bible Presentation at Central UMC in Grantsburg

Sunday Worship Service:

- 8:30 am Grantsburg (Town Hall Meeting right after service)
Your voice matters. Please join the town hall meeting.
All are welcome!
- 9:45 am Atlas
- 11:15 am St. Croix Falls

October 12-13: ICD Training (Pastor Jenny)

The week's birthdays and anniversaries:

Doug & Deb Kunze 10/10

Josie & Pat Grimes 10/10

Melissa Dahl 10/12

Sue Olson 10/12

Barb Loomis 10/13

Amy Harmon 10/15



Next Sunday (October 17th) Volunteers:

Ministers	All God's People <i>Pastor Jenny Lee</i>
Central:	
Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Mowing	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Acolyte(s)	Willow Erickson
Fellowship	UMW
Counter	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Flowers	UMW
Sunday School	Younger/Older LuAnne Martell/ Barb Loomis
Atlas:	
Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Usher(s)	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Cleaning	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Sunday School	Younger/Older <i>Volunteer Needed</i>

St. Croix Falls:

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Karen Sciacca
Usher(s)	Kathy Gionis
Money Counter	Peter Gionis
Flowers	Kathy Gionis
Fellowship	Ad Council member



10/17: “LAITY SUNDAY”

10/25: CHARGE CONFERENCE (PAPERWORK DUE IS 10/7)

10/31: ALL SAINTS SUNDAY



October 10th, 2021
Joshua 24:14-24

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

“Only Serve the Lord”

Today, I want to talk about how we should “Only serve the Lord.” We are experiencing difficulties; especially dealing with all the problems living with the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic brought many issues to the forefront, like political and social issues. It made us hate each other, suspect each other, fight with each other, and divide from each other. We hear more bad news than good news. We often pass the bad news on to one another, and the bad news goes round and round like rumors and comes back to us like a boomerang. Moreover, COVID-19 made churches, stores, schools, and many organizations unable to function. Many Christians lost their faith and left their churches during the pandemic. Many people lost their jobs, loved ones, and shelters because of the pandemic. We live with the fear of “COVID phobia.” We are worried about what will happen to us in the future and what will happen to our church.

Two weeks ago, in the ICD (Institution of Congregational Development) session, a survey asked participants about “what are you looking for from ICD training.” Fifty-seven percent answered, “Hope for the church.” It showed us that the pandemic left churches unable to function and losing hope. Even though churches reopened, worship attendance in most churches reduced by more than 20 % compared to attendance before the pandemic. Even pastors are having anxieties about what will happen in the church in the future. However, worries and fears cannot help us grow in faith. Rather, it makes us go far from God. Only by committing to God will we take away all worries and anxieties.

The Apostle Paul says, “Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). We wonder how we can be joyful always and give thanks in all circumstances even though it is God’s will. Can we be joyful in the pandemic? Can you give thanks even though many have left the church? Yes, we can. In the survey of the ICD, there was a question about “How do you feel about the future of your church?” The answers of being hopeful and optimistic are 72%. Yes, as long as you commit to God, our church is hopeful.

We know Elijah very well. He didn’t die, but was lifted up to heaven. He also had times in fear and anxiety because he saw many people leaving God and worshiping Baal. He was afraid of being alone after all left God. At that moment, God was present before him and said, “Yet, I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal.” (1 King 19:18). Have hope in the future of our church. Who knows, God reserves new members who will commit to God in sincerity and faithfulness.

Central- Grantsburg has a town hall meeting today. While I prayed for it, today’s scripture came to my mind. “Town Hall Meeting,” as you may know, means to call all people in

a town to gather together at a place to discuss an issue or a specific topic. It is a kind of informal meeting to hear everyone's opinions and ask everyone to make a decision. The idea of "Town Hall meetings" may be used in the United States, but we can also find such meetings in the scripture. One of the examples is in today's scripture.

In today's scripture, Joshua called people for a town hall meeting. He assembled all the tribes of Israel in Shechem. He called the elders, leaders, judges, and officials of Israel, and they presented before God. Joshua brought them an urgent issue, "Only serve the Lord." He thought that it was a significant time to decide whether they were committed to God or not. Joshua told them how God guided their ancestors, blessed Abraham, brought their ancestors out of Egypt, and how God helped them to conquer the Promised Land, Canaan. And then, he said, "Now, therefore, serve the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. Now, if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." Joshua's faith was firm in God. He had experienced who God is.

As you know, Joshua was one of the two people who survived the wilderness for forty years. When all Israelites complained to God and Moses, he didn't complain at all. Before Israelites conquered Canaan, Moses sent twelve people to explore Canaan. After exploring Canaan, the twelve representatives returned to Moses and reported to Moses before the Israelite community. Ten out of twelve said that "the people who live there are powerful and the cities are fortified and very large. But we can't attack those people. They are stronger than we are. We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them." Hearing that report, all people cried out the whole night and grumbled against Moses. However, Joshua with Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it." They said to the whole Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and God will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them." (Numbers 14:7-9).

Yes, indeed. If God is pleased with us, God will lead us to move forward. If you commit to the church, our church will be revitalized. If you believe, you may see that God makes things happen in our church. "Faith is to have hope in the uncertainty." As you know, Israelites died like grasshoppers in the wilderness, as they mentioned in their grumbling. God said, "As surely as I live, I will do to you the very things I heard you say: Your dead bodies shall fall in this very wilderness." (Numbers 14:28-30). So they all died in the wilderness except Caleb and Joshua as God said. Caleb and Joshua conquered the land and got all the possessions of the land.

Today, all people who gather together in the scripture decided to serve only God. Joshua said to them, "Now then, throw away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the Lord" (Joshua 24:23). We cannot serve God and the other gods together. If you decide to serve God, please serve God with your whole hearts and whole minds. If God is pleased with us, our church will have a hopeful future. Remember how you grew in faith through this church, and how God has led us so far. "Be joyful always and give thanks to God in all circumstances." Thanks be to God. Amen!