

realm is near, that your Word rules the world. Free us from the weight of heavy cares to bear your joyous truth into our relationships. Join us together in a spirit of thanksgiving and earnest prayer. 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 this family of faith, which enriches our lives and enables us to share. Thank you for making us aware that some faint with fear and others dwell in hopelessness. We are grateful that you show us ways to lift the burdens of our sisters and brothers. May our offerings further this ministry among us and beyond our community. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN *Grace Alone* TFWS 2162
*BENEDICTION Pastor Jenny Lee
POSTLUDE

Upper St. Croix Parish

ONE Parish THREE Churches:
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
November 28th, 2021
"First Sunday of Advent"



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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St. Croix Falls Office: 715-483-9494
www.upperstcroixparish.org

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
November 28th, 2021
“First Sunday of Advent”

*Please stand if you are able.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING OF ADVENT CANDLE AND WREATH

ADVANT SONG

TFWS 2090 (vs. 1)

LIGHTING THE FIRST CANDLE

PASSING OF THE GREETINGS

“Peace be with you”

We Celebrate New Life in Christ

***CALL TO WORSHIP** Responsive

The days are surely coming, says our God,
when justice and righteousness will appear.

**God’s promises will be made known to us,
and we will declare God’s goodness and salvation.**

Lift up your souls in trust and praise;
open your hearts and minds to God’s teaching.

**God’s ways will be demonstrated to us,
and we will seek to walk in them all our days.**

Render thanksgiving to God for all life’s benefits.

Watch and pray, in holiness and abiding faith.

**God’s mercy and steadfast love will surround us,
and we will abound in love for one another. Amen.**

***OPENING HYMN** *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

UMH 196 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

In obedience and trust, we approach you, God of covenant. Day by day, your promises are fulfilled among us. Our redemption is drawing near. Help us to prepare ourselves and our communities for Christ’s coming. Equip us now to worship you with all the saints, past and present, nearby and far away. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Luke 21:25-36

25 “There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. 26 People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

29 Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; 30 as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. 31 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. 32 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

34 “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, 35 like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

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

Thanks be to God.

MINISTRY OF MUSIC (C)

SERMON *“Let’s See the World through the Lens of God’s Word!”*

Pastor Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

**Direct our attention, O God, above the turmoil of our times,
beyond the distress of human greed. We look for signs that your**

CHURCH MISSIONS



ATLAS...November

<p>INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:</p> <p>Atlas collects and recycles ink jet cartridges and cell phones year round.</p> 	<p>Moolah For Milk</p> <p>Collecting loose change to support Moolah for Milk!</p> 	 <p>Operation Christmas Child</p> <p>We sent 30 shoeboxes! Thank you for your support</p>
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GRANTSBURG...November

<p>BE A "BACK-PACK BACKER"!</p> <p>REMEMBER ... Every Sunday Is MAC 'N CHEESE SUNDAY!</p> <p>Supporting the Salvation Army's "Happy Kids Back-Pack Program"</p> 	 <p>Operation Christmas Child</p> <p>We sent 13 Shoeboxes. Thank you very much for your support!</p>
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ST. CROIX FALLS...November

<p>Food Shelf (Communion Sunday)</p> 	 <p>Sailor Hat Offering:</p> <p><i>We delivered 12 gift cards to St. Croix Falls school, and thanksgiving meals for 3 families.</i></p> <p>Thanks for your support!</p>
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TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers All God's People
Pastor Jenny Lee

Volunteering is a work of heart



Today's Service

Central:

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Toni Koons
Snow Removal	Stan Chute
Acolyte(s)	Willow Erickson
Fellowship	Mary McNally & Linda Hokanson
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Younger/Older LuAnne Martell/Barb Loomis

Atlas:

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Colleen Adams-Schween
Usher(s)	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Younger/Older Mariah Gaffey/Jamie Steffen

St. Croix Falls:

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

BREAKTHROUGH PRAYERS FOR THIS WEEK:
"This kind can come out only by prayer." (Mark 9:29)
Please pray every morning at 8:30, if it is possible!

- 1) Pray for the Youth/Children ministry.
- 2) Pray for 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>
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: “First Sunday of Advent.” May God bring to us hope and a warm winter! God bless you all!

Worship Services:

- 8:30 am Grantsburg
9:45 am Atlas
11:15 am St. Croix Falls

- 11/30: 6pm, Special Charge Conference (G) via Zoom
12/1: 1pm, Craft Group Gathering at Central-Grantsburg. Learn how to make prayer shawls. Everyone is welcome!
6:30pm, Youth Gathering (Acts 300) at St. Croix Falls
12/2: 9am, North West Clergy Meeting via Zoom
6:30pm, SPRC Meeting via Zoom

This Week’s Birthdays and Anniversaries:

- Blake Reid 11/29
Tanner Gaffey 11/30
Ashley Bistram 12/3



Next Sunday (December 5th) Volunteers:

Ministers	All God’s People <i>Pastor Jenny Lee</i>
Central:	
Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Snow Removal	Stan Chute
Acolyte(s)	Willow Erickson
Fellowship	Judy Lien
Counter	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
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	Jim Andrews
Usher(s)	Karen Sciacca
Money Counter	Peter Gionis
Flowers	Kathy Gionis
Fellowship	Ad Council member(3rd Sunday)



DECEMBER 6-8, PASTOR JENNY GOES TO SUN PRAIRIE FOR ICD TRAINING.

DECEMBER 9, AT 9AM, NORTH WEST CLERGY MEETING VIA ZOOM

DECEMBER 11, AT 8AM, UMM MEETING (G)



November 28, 2021.
Luke 21:25-36

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

“Let’s See the World through the Lens of God’s Word!”

I want to start with something funny. I heard about this couple who moved to a new neighborhood. While they were having breakfast one morning, the wife looked out the window and noticed that their neighbor was washing their clothes. The wife said to her husband, “I think they don’t know how to wash. The clothes they washed are so dirty. I am sure they didn’t use detergent.” Week after week, it was the same. She looked out the window, saw the clothes, and made the same comments about how dirty their laundry was. One morning she looked out the window and saw them doing their laundry and was surprised that their clothes were so clean. She said to her husband, “Honey! Look, finally they learned how to wash their clothes properly.” Her husband smiled and said to her, “I got up early this morning and cleaned our windows.”

This relates not only to their story but for all of us in some ways. Each of us has a window we look through to see the world, see people, and see things. However, sometimes we don’t notice what we look at things through. The window is perhaps our mindset, filled with bias and prejudice. The window might be the principle of our lives, which is formed by what we have learned and by what we have experienced. No doubt that the principle might have been great at first. But, my point is that it is time to retake a look at our own window, and maybe it is time to clean and renew it again. Our window should be God’s Word. We should practice seeing the people and the world through the lens of God’s Word.

Today is the first Sunday of Advent. In the Advent season, we light five unique candles; three purple, one pink or red, and one white center candle. Until Christmas Day, we light one by one each week. Each candle has a special meaning. The first candle is the symbol of hope; the second is peace; the third is joy; the fourth is love, and the fifth candle which is white is the symbol of the light of Christ. It symbolizes that Jesus Christ comes to the dark world as the light with hope, peace, joy, and love. As Jesus comes into the world, we pray that Jesus brings us hope, peace, joy, love, and light in the world. Therefore, we begin the season of Advent with these candles waiting for hope, peace, joy, love, and light that Jesus Christ brings us.

Someone may ask me, “Is there any hope in the world? Wars, poverty, and injustice still reign. The world is racked with lots of violence.” We indeed hear lousy news more than good news in everyday life. The world is indeed racked with violence, yet not destroyed. It is indeed filled with destruction yet not overcome. We indeed live amidst injustice, poverty, violence, and prejudice, yet still, there are signs of justice, fullness, and hope as long as we pray, commit to mission work, and live out God’s love by our acts. And, we watch. And, we wait. And we wonder.

Today’s scripture says, “There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great

glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads because your redemption is drawing near.” Jesus told us that the way of redemption comes at the edge of despair. Even though the world is full of violence, poverty, and injustice, God never gives up on us. Jesus will come again to save us.

Have you ever experienced finding hope at the moment of despair? I have several times. One of them was when I was hopeless with a broken spine. My doctor gave up on me, and many people around me thought that I wouldn’t walk again. I felt more and more depressed every day. When I was at the edge of despair, God sent a pastor to my hospital room. He brought me a hopeful message that God loves me. The pastor was a sign that God never gave up on me even though everyone else had. Jesus said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”(Luke 21:33). So, I believed that God might heal me, and I could walk again. Throughout a long, dark, and hopeless time, I learned that there is hope even though we are at the edge of despair. Trust in God; trust in Jesus Christ. Even though you are standing at the edge of pain, please don’t give up hope. God will send you an angel who will help you out.

NASA’s Apollo 13 had one mission which landed on the moon. On April 13, 1971, the spacecraft carrying three astronauts was halfway to the moon when an oxygen tank exploded. Tumbling through space while leaking breathable air, losing power, and drifting off course, Commander Jim Lovell radioed to mission control. “Houston, we’ve had a problem,” and their mission immediately changed. Their goal was to get back to earth alive instead of getting at the moon. After they splashed down in the Pacific Ocean four days later, their mission was dubbed “the successful failure” because they lost their original goal of landing on the moon but made it back to earth alive.

Likewise, our story began with a simple mission: “God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it” (Genesis 2:15). But soon, there was the big lie, rebellion, so Adam and Eve ran into a problem in Eden. God had a new mission that saved us from our sin and its catastrophic effects. It is a successful failure because we lost our original goal, but God has saved us through Jesus Christ. Remember, “Because God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (John 3:16). God’s purpose is to save us, not destroy us. “Jesus Christ will love us to the end” (John 13:1). God’s goal is not for the world to perish because “God so love the world.” No matter what happens in your life, hold God’s Word. Trust in God’s steadfast love.

The best example of hope at the moment of despair is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was born through the Virgin Mary and grew up in a poor family. He was an outcast in society, but he had many friends in his world, such as the poor, women, the sick, the hungry, and many outcasts. Later on, he seemed to be a king but died on the cross with terrible suffering. However, it was not the end. He rose from death as he promised. He held the God’s Word to save his people in the edge of despair. He is hope for those who are at the point of despair. He is hope for those who pray in the world of despair.

Advent is God’s coming into what has been, what is, and what is yet to be. Advent is God’s activity and God’s way of entering human history. As death came in Advent, so did life. As sorrow came in Advent, so did freedom. As grief came in Advent, so did possibility. God’s redemption is of such tolerance, such kindness, such generosity, such compassion that the whole earth and all that is therein reverberate with signs. God comes to redeem the present moment. God comes to hold all that is to be. So, let us see the world through the lens of God’s Word.

Thanks be to God. Amen.