

John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. 3 He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, 4 as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; 6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.""

This is the word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

SERMON "Get Ready for Jesus Christ!" **Pastor Jenny Lee**

We Respond to God's Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Gracious God, your salvation is freely offered to us by your grace. Straighten the crooked ways and smooth out the rough places in our lives and in our minds that we may be about the same ministry in the world. Make us humble and gentle, and use us as peacemakers for your kingdom so that we live at peace with one another. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

***DOXOLOGY**

UMH 95

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** Unison

Gracious God, how good you have been to us! How meagerly we have responded. You have restored our fortunes when we felt all was lost. You have filled our mouths with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy. We give thanks not only with a portion of our income, but also through renewed commitment to righteous living. By your grace, we share in the work Christ came to accomplish among us. May love abound in and through us. Amen.

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

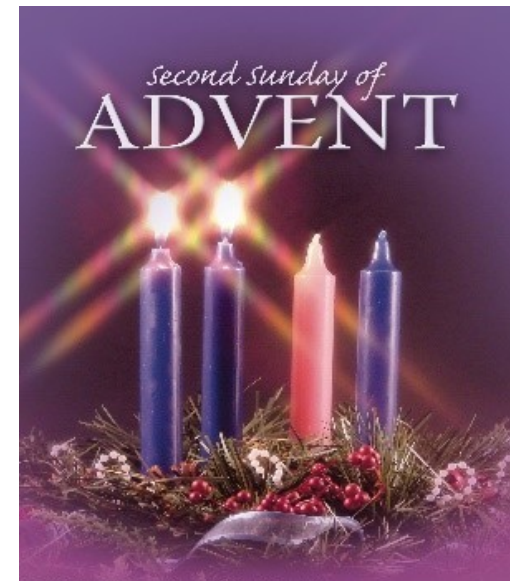
***CLOSING HYMN** *Change My Heart, O God* **TFWS 2152**

***BENEDICTION** **Pastor Jenny Lee**

POSTLUDE

Upper St. Croix Parish

ONE Parish THREE Churches:
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
December 5th, 2021
"Second 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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Parish Office: 715-463-2624 – centralumc2016@gmail.com

St. Croix Falls Office: 715-483-9494

www.upperstcroixparish.org

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
December 5th, 2021

“Second Sunday of Advent”

*Please stand if you are able.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING OF ADVENT CANDLE AND WREATH

ADVANT SONG TFWS 2090 (vs. 2)

LIGHTING THE SECOND CANDLE

PASSING OF THE GREETINGS

“Peace be with you”

We Celebrate New Life in Christ

***CALL TO WORSHIP** Responsive

Listen! Listen for a messenger from God.

The way is being prepared for Christ’s coming.

We are here to listen for a word from God.

We have gathered to prepare for Christ’s advent.

Come with your joys and sorrows, laughter and tears.

There is a place for you in the company of seekers.

We thank God for our acceptance in the church.

We rejoice to offer the love of Christ to others.

We are partners in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Claim anew today this opportunity and responsibility.

We are glad God is doing great things among us.

We want to rejoin ourselves in God’s work in the world.

Amen.

***OPENING HYMN** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

UMH 211 (vs.1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

How good it is to gather where garments of sorrow and affliction are removed. Here, we are wrapped in the beauty of God’s glory and welcomed to life at its fullest. Surely, you restore us to our best, mighty God, and equip us for productive living. Make a difference

within and among us today so we can work for a better tomorrow. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs.1)

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 your love,

we have not loved our neighbors,

and we have not heard the cry of the needy.

Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(All pray 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.

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Luke 3:1-6

3 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, 2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to

CHURCH MISSIONS



ATLAS...December

<p>INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:</p> <p>Atlas collects and recycles ink jet cartridges and cell phones year round.</p> 	<p>Christmas Special Offering ...</p> <p>10% of our tithe will go to support the St. Croix Falls and Luck school back-pack program...let us all give thanks! Envelopes will be available in the church entry for this offering.</p>	<p>Mitten Tree</p>  <p>We will collect mittens, scarves, hats, gloves, etc. Our donations will be taken to Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry.</p>
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GRANTSBURG...December

<p>BE A "BACK-PACK BACKER"!</p> <p>REMEMBER ... Every Sunday Is MAC 'N CHEESE SUNDAY! Supporting the Salvation Army's "Happy Kids Back-Pack Program"</p> 	<p>Christmas for Kids Interfaith Caregivers</p>  <p>This program helps families with limited income provide a gift for their children. We are requesting financial donations this year-we are collecting the first two Sundays of December. Thank you for your generosity.</p>
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ST. CROIX FALLS...December

 <p>Food Shelf</p> <p>(Communion Sunday)</p>	<p>Sailor Hat Offering:</p>  <p>Christmas Gift Cards to those in need.</p>
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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**
 Snow Removal Stan Chute
 Acolyte(s) Willow Erickson
 Fellowship Judy Lien
 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
 Cheryl Olson/Josie Grimes

St. Croix Falls:

Pianist Sharon Asp
 Liturgist Jim Andrews
 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: “Second Sunday of Advent.” May God bring to us peace and a warm winter! God bless you all!

Sunday Worship Service:

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

- 12/6-12/8: Pastor Jenny will be out of the office for ICD Training in Sun Prairie.
12/8: 1pm, Craft Group Gathering at Central-Grantsburg. Learn how to make prayer shawls. We welcome everyone.
12/9: 9am, North West Clergy Meeting via Zoom
12/11: 8am, UM Men’s Meeting at Central-Grantsburg

This Week’s Birthdays and Anniversaries:

Mikala Hammer 12/7
Sharon Asp 12/9



Next Sunday (December 12th) Volunteers:

Ministers	All God’s People <i>Pastor Jenny Lee</i>
Central:	
Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Barb Loomis
Snow Removal	Stan Chute
Acolyte(s)	Willow Erickson
Fellowship	Art and Pauline Bistram
Counter	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Sunday School	Younger/Older LuAnne Martell/ Barb Loomis
Atlas:	
Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Colleen Adams-Schween
Usher(s)	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Cleaning	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Sunday School	Younger/Older Christmas Program Rehearsal



St. Croix Falls:

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Jim Andrews
Usher(s)	Karen Sciacca
Money Counter	Peter Gionis
Flowers	Kathy Gionis
Fellowship	Ad Council Members (3rd Sunday)



- 12/12 CHRISTMAS PROGRAM REHEARSAL (A)**
12/15 1:00 PM, UMW CHRISTMAS TEA PARTY (G)
2:00 PM, CRAFT GROUP GATHERING (G)
4:30 PM, GO FISH FOR KIDS (G)
6:30 PM CONFIRMATION CLASS (G)
12/19 CHRISTMAS PROGRAM (A)



December 5th, 2021.
Luke 3:1-6

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

“Get Ready for Jesus Christ!”

Today is the second Sunday of Advent. The word “Advent” is from “*Adventus*” in Latin, and it is translated to “*Parousia*” in Greek, which means “coming” or “arriving at.” Advent in the Christian calendar means “the season that is waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ.” As everyone knows, we spend the season of Advent preparing for Christmas. Some are putting up Christmas decorations, buying Christmas presents, preparing Christmas food, or even buying/wearing Christmas clothes. However, we shouldn’t forget that Christmas is Jesus’ birthday. So, we should prepare something for Jesus, which means that we should get ready for God.

Therefore, I want to talk about “how we should get ready for Jesus”, especially focusing on “peace.” As we start the second week of Advent, we may think of “peace.” It is like when we light the second Advent candle, hoping Jesus brings “peace” again. The Prophet Isaiah named Jesus “Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6). Jesus came to the world as the Prince of Peace, and in order to accomplish his mission, he died on the Cross. The Apostle Paul says, “For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.” (Ephesians 2:14). However, we know that there are still wars, fighting, conflicts, violence, division, discrimination, etc., instead of harmony and peace. It is because we do not belong to God in wholeness yet. It is because we are not yet following Jesus Christ with all our hearts and minds. It is because we are not yet fully the children of God. If we are the children of God, we are at peace with one another. Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9). I wonder if we are at peace among our family, friends, and neighbors. I wonder if we are faithful as peacemakers. Every Sunday morning, we greet each other, “peace be with you!” It is a very simple greeting, but a very precious and meaningful greeting as Christians.

We may get a hint to “get ready for Jesus” from today’s scripture. We often mention John the Baptist every advent season because he spent his whole life waiting for the Lord Jesus. His vocation was to prepare for the way of the Lord. His father is a priest named Zechariah, and his mother is Elizabeth, a descendant of Aaron. They had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well along in years. One day an angel appeared to Zechariah when he was worshiping God at the altar. The angel said to him, “your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear a son, and you are to give him the name John. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God.” (Luke 1:14-16). When John was born, Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins.” (Luke 1:76-77).

As an angel said, and his father Zechariah prophesied, John the Baptist did not drink at all and lived in the wilderness, eating locusts and wild honey and wearing clothes of camel's hair. Many people thought of him as a crazy man. However, he believed that his time was coming, which was preparing for the way of the Lord. Finally, "during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness" (Luke 3:2). Finally, it was time for him. "He went into the region around Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Luke 3:3). His mission was proclaiming that he was to "prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

Imagine, if we were to have an important guest, we may clean the house, decorate beautifully, and prepare food. If we had the Olympics in Wisconsin, Wisconsin may build a huge stadium, many hotels, develop many new cultural places and restaurants, and make new highways for many people worldwide. In ancient times, if they would have a king in their city, they had to make way for the King, as if "every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth." In today's scripture it says, "prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." To get ready for Jesus, who is our Lord, the King of kings, we should make our hearts, minds, and souls gentle and humble.

As the Baptist John did, many Christians live in their belief in Christ, Proclaiming the good news, outreaching to the people, evangelizing people, sacrificing lifelong because of Jesus Christ. They would sometimes give up their joyful life because of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, they disappoint at the chaotic situation in the world and pray that Jesus comes soon, Emmanuel our Lord! How about you? Do you wait for the coming of Jesus? If you are waiting for Jesus, let us think of where John met Jesus and where Zechariah met God. John was in the wilderness, and Zechariah was worshiping God at the altar. And as everyone knows, Jesus, who is the incarnated God, came into a manger. God appeared in the wilderness, at the altar, and in a manger. God didn't come to a luxury palace. Where are you at? It means not only your physical place, but your spiritual and mindful place as well. Why don't you think of Jesus and his friends at Christmas in order to meet God? Waiting for Jesus, let us take care of his friends, who are the poor, the sick, the homeless, and those in need. At least, let us put our mind down in the pursuit of lots of Christmas presents and food this Christmas. Instead, give thanks to God for what we have already and share them with Jesus' friends. And, get ready for Jesus humbly.

Why don't you reconcile with your family, friends, and neighbors if you have a broken relationship with them? Are you at peace with one another? Jesus said, "if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23-24). A peaceful and harmonious life is more important than offering a gift to the altar. Before Christmas, let us reconcile with one another. That's the way of getting ready for Jesus. Therefore, we are waiting for Jesus Christ, who is coming to us again and bringing "peace" to the world. Even though our life gives us difficulties sometimes, and also the world is full of chaotic situations, let us be at peace with one another in the promise of Christ, holding the sign of the Cross. Thanks be to God! Amen.