

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

**UMH 95**

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION** Unison

Thank you, God, for your mercy and protection, for feeding us physically and spiritually, for caring for us like a shepherd. We present our offerings as an act of gratitude. What we can never repay we pause to appreciate. In the name of generosity we cannot match, we seek to be generous toward others. May these offerings do far more than support our church. We dedicate ourselves and these gifts to honor Christ through ministry in the world. Amen!

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

**\*CLOSING HYMN** *Angels We Have Heard on High*  
**UMH 238 (vs. 1 & 3)**

**\*BENEDICTION** **Pastor Jenny Lee**  
**POSTLUDE**

# Upper St. Croix Parish

**ONE Parish THREE Churches:**  
**Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls**  
**December 19th, 2021**  
**“Fourth Sunday of Advent”**



**Fourth 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](http://www.upperstcroixparish.org)

**Upper St. Croix Parish**  
**Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls**  
**December 19th, 2021**  
**“Four Sunday of Advent”**

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\*Please stand if you are able.

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**BLESSING OF ADVENT CANDLE AND WREATH**

**ADVANT SONG**

**TFWS 2090 (vs. 4)**

**LIGHTING THE THIRD CANDLE**

**PASSING OF THE GREETINGS**

*“Peace be with you”*

**We Celebrate New Life in Christ**

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**      Responsive

Before the majesty of God, we gather to worship;  
in quiet expectation, we come to hear God’s promises.

**This is where we belong; here we are warmly greeted.**

**Surely God will feed our deepest hunger.**

Before God’s strength and power, we bow down;  
in hesitant anticipation, we listen for God’s judgment.

**This is our home, where our lives are redirected.**

**Surely God will show us new ways to live.**

Before the mercy of God, we lift our hearts;  
in humble imagination, we welcome a new visitation.

**This day God is present with us; we feel it.**

**Surely God is preparing for us a time of joy. Amen.**

**\*OPENING HYMN**

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

**UMH 230 (vs. 1 & 2)**

**OPENING PRAYER**      Unison

**Let your face shine on us, mighty God. Break through the obstacles that keep us from seeing your way. Melt down the barriers that keep us from knowing the embrace of your love so we may know how you love us. Remove from us the low self-esteem that keeps us from valuing the overwhelming gift**

**of life that you entrust to us so we may know how precious we are to you. Speak to us here in life-changing accents. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.**

**CHILDREN’S TIME (C)**

**UMH 191 (vs. 1)**

**Proclamation of God’s Word**

**\*THE GOSPEL LESSON**

**Luke 1:39-45**

39 In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, 40 where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit 42 and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. 43 And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? 44 For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

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

**Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON**

*“Blessed are You Who Believe in!”*

**Pastor Jenny Lee**

**CHRISTMAS PROGRAM (A)**

**Sunday School**

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

**UMH 230 (vs. 1 & 2)**

*Angels We Have Heard on High*

**UMH 238 (vs. 1 & 3)**

*Joy to the World*

**UMH 246 (vs.1, 2, & 4)**

**We Respond to God’s Word**

**RESPONDING PRAYER**      Unison

**God of love, whose good news often comes in strange packages, open our hearts to grow in faith! Guide us to believe in the Holy God, who came in Jesus Christ, and comes in the Holy Spirit. Visit us today to restore our memory of all your goodness to us so that as you love us, we may love one another. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen!**

**SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**PASTORAL PRAYER/THE LORD’S PRAYER**

# CHURCH MISSIONS



## ATLAS...December

<p><b>INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:</b></p> <p>Atlas collects and recycles ink jet cartridges and cell phones year round.</p> 	<p><b>Christmas Special Offering ...</b></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><b>Mitten Tree</b></p>  <p>We will collect mittens, scarves, hats, gloves, etc. Our donations will be taken to Loaves &amp; Fishes Food Pantry.</p>
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## GRANTSBURG...December

<p><b>BE A "BACK-PACK BACKER"!</b></p> <p>REMEMBER ... Every Sunday Is MAC 'N CHEESE SUNDAY! Supporting the Salvation Army's "Happy Kids Back-Pack Program"</p> 	<p><b>Christmas for Kids Interfaith Caregivers</b></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><b>Food Shelf</b></p> <p>(Communion Sunday)</p>	<p><b>Sailor Hat Offering:</b></p>  <p><b>Christmas Gift Cards to those in need.</b></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 Paulie Kratchmer  
 Counter **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  
 Christmas Program

**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 our church and what you hope for our future.
- 2) Pray for Youth/children ministry and what your children want it to be.

## 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](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>

### This Week's Calendar:

Today: “Fourth Sunday of Advent.” May God bring us love! God bless you all! We have a new sign-up sheets for volunteers for 2022. Please find an opportunity where you can help support the church. We are the church and are growing in faith together.

### Sunday Worship Service:

8:30 am Grantsburg

9:45 am Atlas “Christmas Program”

11:15 am St. Croix Falls

12/21: 6:30 pm, Ad Council meeting (G)

12/22: 10:30 am, Celebration of Life Service for Donna Shogren  
1pm, Craft Group Gathering, making Prayer shawls.  
We welcome everyone.

12/24: 1pm, Christmas Eve Service (SCF)  
4pm (Atlas) and at 7pm (Central-G)

12/25: Christmas Day - “Merry Christmas!”

### This Week's Birthdays and Anniversaries:

Kim Wheeler & Patrick Grimes 12/18

Brody Woltz 12/19

Brittney Woltz 12/22

Mike Giles 12/24

Janelle Smestad 12/25



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Charles &  
Mary Lou  
Wright 12/23

### Next Sunday (December 26th) Volunteers:

Ministers All God's People  
*Pastor Jenny Lee*

#### Central:

Pianist Toni Koons  
Liturgist Toni Koons  
Snow Removal Stan Chute  
Acolyte(s) Willow Erickson  
Fellowship *Volunteer Needed*  
Counter *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  
No Sunday School

#### 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)



12/25-1/7: PASTOR JENNY'S VACATION

12/27-12/29: WISCONSIN KOREAN CLERGY ANNUAL FAMILY RETREAT

1/9: COMMUNION SUNDAY, “LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION SUNDAY”

1/16: NEW COVENT SUNDAY (RECOGNITION OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP)



December 19th, 2021  
Luke 1:39-45

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

## **“Blessed are You Who Believe in!”**

I want to start with something funny. A Baker was asked to print 1 John 4:18 on a wedding cake. He forgot and instead printed John 4:18. Guess what they say: 1 John 4:18 is “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.” However, John 4:18 says, “For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband.”

We often make mistakes in everyday life. When you see someone make a mistake, what do you do? Last Sunday, while having the communion service at St. Croix Falls church, I started saying, as I usually do, “The Lord be with you.” and people said, “Also with you.” I said, “Lift up your hands.” At that moment, I felt something was wrong because no one said anything, and so I looked at them. Suddenly, I noticed that I had made a mistake. I said again, “I’m sorry, lift up your hearts.” If they really would have lifted their hands up, what would I have done?

As you may know, we are having Craft Group gatherings this Advent Season. Every Wednesday, we learn how to make “prayer shawls.” Thankfully, Paulie Kratchmer teaches us how to knit the “prayer shawls” and how we prepare our minds and environments with prayers for making the prayer shawls. It is an excellent opportunity to learn about “prayer shawl ministry.” The prayer shawl is not a simple gift, but it is a mindful, thoughtful, and spirit-filled gift for those who are really in need of prayers and caring or those who need to be blessed. We

all are involved, whether we are caregivers or care-receivers, because we love to care for one another in Jesus' love. One of the good lessons I learned from Paulie is that "love which is shown by acts and words is a powerful lesson."

I had learned knitting when I was in high school, but I had haven't completed anything. This time, I wanted to experience knitting a prayer shawl with patience and prayers as my meditation in Advent. I started a prayer shawl, and when I ran out of yarn, I noticed that I had done something wrong because it was wider and shorter than I expected. I texted Paulie that my prayer shawl was wider and shorter. She texted me back, saying, "Wow, I am amazed you are done with your yarn so quickly. It could be used for a lap blanket. I am sure someone would love it." She so encouraged me, and so I was able to finish it. I know it is not perfect, nor the normal shape. But, she said, "It is a perfect lap blanket." And she helped me to finalize it. Finally, I completed it and am making another prayer shawl. I am sure my knitting is improving. Proverbs 10:12 says, "Love covers over all wrongs." Again, when you see people's mistakes, how do you see them? Remember, "Love not only covers over all wrongs" but also encourages others to go forth. I would say, "Love leads us to open our spiritual eyes, which can see God's miraculous work." Blessed are you who believe in God's work.

Today is the Fourth Sunday of Advent. We lit the fourth Advent candle, hoping Jesus brings us "love" in the world. I hope you are ready to receive "the love" Jesus will bring to us. Jesus' love may come to us in miraculous ways, such as feeding five thousand people, healing the sick, and raising the dead.

In today's Scripture, we see God's unbelievable miracle. Two women were pregnant unexpectedly: Mary and Elizabeth. Mary was a teenager, and Elizabeth was much older, what we'd consider a senior citizen. Both had experienced the blessings of God, but Mary's case was

unacceptable by society because she wasn't yet married. It was not possible for our rational or scientific minds to comprehend because in Elizabeth's case, she was too old to bear a child and in Mary's case, she hadn't been with any man yet. However, they both met an angel and heard the good news. Well, I'm not sure everybody thought of the news as good at that time. But, it must be amazing news for both of them. Mary was a poor and rural girl and a fiancé of Joseph, a carpenter; Elizabeth was a rich, higher-class woman because she was the wife of the Priest Zachariah. Both their babies were from the Holy Spirit. However, nobody argued about Elizabeth's pregnancy, but there were many arguments about the Virgin Mary's pregnancy, and are still going on today. However, according to the Scripture, both cases are the same for God's work because "Nothing will be impossible with God."

Today's Scripture begins with the words "in those days." "In those days" means when Mary met the angel Gabriel and heard that she would conceive in her womb, bear a son, and name him Jesus. However, Mary was afraid and asked the angel, "how can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the child is to be holy; he will be called Son of God." The angel, as the evidence of God's providence, said to Mary, "Now your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. Nothing will be impossible with God." And, Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." (Luke 1:26-38). And, at that time, Mary went to Elizabeth in a hurry. She may have wanted to visit Elizabeth and check on everything the angel said to her.

As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb leaped in joy. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." And she called Mary, "The mother of the Lord." Elizabeth blessed

Mary, the child, and those who believe that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!”  
If you might believe in both cases as God’s providence, you are blessed!

When I was in a Ph. D. program, working as a Teaching Assistant to my Advisor, I met a seminarian concerned about the Virgin Mary’s pregnancy. One day, he said in class, “I can believe every miracle in the Gospel except the Virgin Mary’s pregnancy.” I asked him, “Do you believe that Jesus walked on water?” He said, “Yes, I believe it because He is Jesus the Son of God.” I asked him again, “What about how Jesus fed five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish?” He answered confidently, “Of course, he could do it because he is the Messiah.” I asked him, “Do you believe that Elizabeth gave birth to John the Baptist in her old age?” He answered loudly, “Yes, I believe that because she was a wife of the Priest.” I said, “Do you think that God’s power is less than the priest’s?” He hesitated to say, “Well.” I said, “Even though her husband Joseph believed it, and accepted it as God’s providence, why are you concerned about the Virgin Mary?”

What do you think about it? I know that it is not easy to explain or understand God’s providence. It is not rational, but spiritual in nature. Let us think about God’s power of omniscience! Do you believe that God’s power is less than a man’s power? Who made man? Who created all of nature, the universe, and all creatures here on earth? Don’t make God’s power limited in your thinking. God’s thoughts and plans go over our thoughts. God can make things happen beyond our comprehension.

It is the season of sharing the love of God. Especially in this season, Jesus would bring love to those seeking to be loved. Let us pray for those who don’t believe in God’s providence and the incarnated God, the savior Jesus Christ in the Christmas season. Blessed are you who share God’s love. Blessed are you who believe in God’s miracles! Thanks be to God. Amen!