

21 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

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

Thanks be to God.

SERMON *It is by the Grace of God!* Pastor Jenny Lee

We Respond to God's Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

God of gifts and blessings, who opened the heavens to the prayers of Jesus, send your Spirit among us that we, too, may learn to please you and live as your beloved children. Baptize us with the Holy Spirit and with fire so our lips may sing to your glory and our hands reach out to heal and bless your people, in Jesus' name. Amen.

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*DOXOLOGY

UMH 95

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison

For bringing us safely to this hour, we give you thanks, O God of wind and fire. May our offerings honor you. May our lives reflect your mercy. May our prayers unite us with one another and with Christ, in whose name we celebrate the privilege of giving. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN

Grace Greater than Our Sin

UMH 365 (vs. 1 & 4)

*BENEDICTION

Pastor Jenny Lee

*POSTLUDE

Worship Resources "Gathered by Love" by Lavon Bayler.

Upper St. Croix Parish

ONE Parish THREE Churches:

Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls

January 9th, 2022

"Baptism of the Lord"/

"Law Enforcement Appreciation Sunday"



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
January 9th, 2021

**“Baptism of the Lord Sunday”/”Law Enforcement
Appreciation Sunday”**

*Please stand if you are able.

***PRELUDE**

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE GREETINGS

“Peace be with you”

BLESSINGS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

We Celebrate New Life in Christ

***CALL TO WORSHIP** Responsive

Gather from East and West, from North and South.

God is calling us; listen, for God is naming you.

The voice of God thunders through our midst.

The voice of God is powerful and full of majesty.

Bow in awe before the one who created you.

God knows you completely, yet accepts you.

The voice of God commands our attention.

The voice of God is like fire and tornado.

God reaches out to strengthen, not condemn us.

God brings us through terror to a place.

Ascribe to God’s glory and strength.

Worship God in awe, wonder, and joy! Amen.

***OPENING HYMN**

When Jesus Came to Jordan

UMH 252 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

(UMH 253)

Father in heaven, at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit. Grant that all who are baptized into his name may keep the covenant they have made, and boldly confess him as Lord and Savior, who with you and Holy Spirit lives and reigns, One God, in glory everlasting. 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 3:15-17; 21-22



15 As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, 16 John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

CHURCH MISSIONS



ATLAS...January

<p>INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:</p> <p>Atlas collects and recycles ink jet cartridges and cell phones year round.</p> 	 <p>We will be collecting soup and monetary donations to support Super Bowl of Caring.</p>	<p>Help Support the Food Shelf in Luck</p> 
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GRANTSBURG...January

<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>Collecting soup and coins to support Souper Bowl of Caring</p>
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ST. CROIX FALLS...January

 <p>Food Shelf</p> <p>(Communion Sunday)</p>	<p>Sailor Hat Offering:</p>  <p>Funds will go to the Salvation Army.</p>
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Thank you for your support!

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 *Volunteer Needed*
 Counter *Volunteer Needed*
 Sunday School Younger/Older
 LuAnne Martell/Barb Loomis

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

St. Croix Falls:
 Pianist Sharon Asp
 Liturgist Karen Sciacca
 Usher(s) Jim Andrews
 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) For those who lost their loved ones recently.
- 2) For those who stay in a nursing home, or homebound.

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: “Baptism of the Lord Sunday”/”Law Enforcement Appreciation Sunday” God bless all of the law enforcement agencies and their family members! Let us express our gratitude to them as you are able.

We have new 2022 signup sheets for volunteers. Please find a spot where you can be a part of the church. We are the church, which grows in faith together.

Sunday Worship Service:

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

- 1/8 8am, UM Men’s Meeting (G)
11 am, A Celebration of Life Service for Louise Reisewitz (G)
1/12 1:00 pm, UMW Meeting/Grantsburg Police Dept. Visit (G)
6:30pm, Confirmation Class (G)
1/13 1:00 pm, Visiting the Police department of SCF (SCF)

This Week’s Birthdays and Anniversaries:

Kenneth Olson 1/13
Jim Loomis 1/14
Pauline Bistram 1/15

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**

Next Sunday (January 16th) Volunteers:

Ministers All God’s People
Pastor Jenny Lee

Central:

Pianist Toni Koons
Liturgist *Volunteer Needed*
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

St. Croix Falls:

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



- 1/16/22 NEW COVENANT SUNDAY (RECOGNITION OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP)
1/18/22 AD COUNCIL MEETING (G)
1/19/22 GO FISH FOR KIDS (G) AND YOUTH GATHERING
1/20/22 AD COUNCIL MEETING (SCF)
1/22/22 NORTHWEST DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TRAINING



January 9th, 2022
Luke 3:15-17; 21-22

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

“It is the Grace of God!”

I want to start with something funny. I learned about this story from an internet site: A man died and went to heaven. He met God at the Pearly Gates. God said to him, “Here’s how it works. You need 100 points to make it into heaven. You tell me all the good things you’ve done, and I give you a certain number of points for each item, depending on how good it was. When you reach 100 points, you get in to heaven.” The man said, “Okay, I was married to the same woman for 50 years and never cheated on her, even in my heart.” God said, “That’s wonderful! That’s worth three points!” He said, “Three-points? Well, I attended church all my life and supported its ministry with my tithes and service.” God said, “Terrific! That’s certainly worth a point.” The man said, “What? Just one point?? Okay, I started a soup kitchen in my city and worked in a shelter for homeless veterans.” God said, “Fantastic, that’s good for two more points.” The man cried, “Just two points more?” He was irritated and said, “At this rate, the only way I’ll get into heaven is by the grace of God.” God said, “Bingo, 100 points! Come on in!”

Happy New Year, everyone! Today, we are still faced with many difficulties, conflicts, and issues such as the COVID 19 pandemic, variant, omicron virus and natural disasters like fires, tornadoes, and earthquakes. In addition, these issues led us to unstable social moods, which sometimes caused social violence and injustice. Despite all of this, we have a new day and a new year! What do you hope for in the New Year? As we wished in the advent and Christmas season, we hope that Jesus brings hope, peace, joy, and love into the world through us because we will be the light of the world.

The good news is there are many good people around the world who serve at food pantries, homeless shelters, non-profit organizations, community service volunteers, and Law enforcement departments to name a few. They are the light of the world. We have heard many injustices in the news, but we shouldn’t generalize certain people or groups. We are all different in the educational backgrounds and family traditions we grew up with, even in our religious experiences. Remember, we may judge people by their appearance, but God does not. First Samuel says, “The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). Each of us is unique to God. Before God, we are equal as a precious child of God.

I appreciate law enforcement agencies such as police officers, 911 workers, firefighters and other government/community agencies. When I was not familiar with everything in the United States I experienced difficulties. One night in the winter of 2010, my car was stopped on the side of the road on a highway. I didn’t know what to do. I called my insurance company, but I got an answering machine. I then called a friend of mine to help, but it was hard for me to explain where I was. At that moment, a police car stopped, and a policeman asked me what was going on. He called a tow truck company and helped me. They stayed with me until everything was clear, and

they gave me a ride to the safety of my home. Some people may say, “They have police-phobia,” which means they are afraid of policemen/women. But, I know they serve people and the community as we Christians do.

Jesus also showed us he might respect government and church ministry as well: When people tried to test Jesus, they asked him, “Tell us, then what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?” People tried to make trouble for him because most people hated the Roman emperor and government leaders. However, Jesus knew their intention and said, “Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:17-22). It is an excellent example of how Jesus also respects our responsibility to the government and church ministry. We are Christians who should be the light of the world. Again, we should be the light in the world, not in heaven. Therefore, we should live out Jesus’ teachings in everyday life, which means love God and love people (neighbors).

In today’s scripture, we may learn about how great God’s grace is through the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ. The baptism of Jesus reminds us of our own baptism. Some of you may think that ‘I don’t remember my baptism at all.’ Yes, that’s correct. But, we may start at that point, where we don’t remember anything of our baptism. At our baptism we don’t remember, God confirmed that God loves us. God keeps us in the baptismal covenant, which we don’t remember. When we were baptized as babies we didn’t know anything about God and sin, we were baptized by the grace of God. Because we were infants, we didn’t confess our sins or faith either. We were baptized and became Christians. It is not because we confess our faith but because of the grace of God. The Methodists call it “Prevenient grace,” which means God loves everyone whether they believe in God or not.

God’s prevenient grace leads people to think of God and guides them to believe in God. All people and all creatures are under the prevenient grace. In other words, God loves everyone before they believe in God. Baptism perhaps is just the starting point of God’s epiphany. Through the Lord’s baptism, God was finally presented the Holy Spirit and voice: The scripture Luke 3: 21 says, “when the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven.” God presents with us in our life journey officially through baptism and identifies us, “you are my child, and the beloved with you I am well pleased.” As many of you know, Jesus finally started his public ministry, which means he officially joined God’s ministry and community after his baptism. Of course, the baptism symbolizes “washing out sins,” “being born again in Jesus,” and “joining a faith community (God’s kingdom).” The fact is that we became one family in Jesus Christ through baptismal covenant, whether we remember our baptism or not. God confirmed that we are beloved no matter who we are. It is possible only by the grace of God.

We all are the debtors of God’s grace and love. Therefore, we cannot judge anyone but only pray for them and love them as God loves us. Let us pay forward God’s love to one another this year. Let us express our gratitude to church leaders, community leaders and government leaders and pray for them. As we have a new year, we may have new hope to love one another and care for one another, experiencing God’s epiphany in everyday life. Thanks be to God!