

We Respond to God's Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

God, whose love for us never fails, even when we wander far from home, teach us compassion for all who are lost and confused. Keep us from living as competitors for your favors, that we might participate joyfully in your forgiving, reconciling work. Make us ambassadors for Christ, that all your children may come home to your welcoming arms. 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 proclaiming our worth when we do not value ourselves. Thank you for welcoming us to a celebration of life with so many precious gifts. Thank you now for the privilege of sharing so others may be led to your joyous embrace. Help us to be generous in gratitude for your lavish provision for all our needs. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN

Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is calling

UMH 348 (vs. 1 & 4)

*BENEDICTION

Pastor Jenny Lee

*POSTLUDE

Upper St. Croix Parish

ONE Parish THREE Churches:

Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls

March 27th, 2022

"4th Sunday in Lent"

**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 with Online Zoom Service***CONTACT INFORMATION**Pastor Jenny Lee: jennlee1732@gmail.comYouth Director Shayna Schmid: snsnyder@gmail.comParish Secretary Colleen Norenberg: centralumc2016@gmail.com

Parish Office: 715-463-2624 St. Croix Falls Office: 715-483-9494

www.upperstcroixparish.org<https://www.facebook.com/UpperStCroixParishUMC>

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
March 27, 2022
“4th Sunday in Lent”

*Please stand if you are able.

***PRELUDE**

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE GREETINGS

“Peace be with you”

We Celebrate New Life in Christ

***CALL TO WORSHIP Responsive**

A new day has dawned, God’s gift to us;
the fruits of the land are ours to enjoy.

**We are a new creation in Jesus Christ;
the old has passed away, the new has come.**

This is a day for forgiveness and reconciliation;
celebrate God’s love for the lost who are found.

**The glad cries of deliverance surround us;
shouts of joy arise from our hearts.**

Let all who are faithful offer up prayers;
may all who are in Christ give thanks.

**We will be glad and join the dance of life;
with the upright of heart, we rejoice and sing. Amen.**

OPENING HYMN *Great is Thy Faithfulness

UMH 140 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Welcoming God, we have gathered together so that you may teach us the way we should go. In our times of distress and need, you have provided. When we have stubbornly followed our own plans, you have curbed our impulses. From our days of confusion and aimless wandering, you have rescued us and restored us to our true identity. Meet us now as we worship together to shape us into a righteous, reconciling people. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

15 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

3 So he told them this parable:

11 Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. 13 A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. 14 When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. 16 He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. 17 But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’” 20 So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. 21 Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ 22 But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

25 “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. 27 He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ 28 Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. 29 But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ 31 Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

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

Thanks be to God.

MARCH CHURCH MISSIONS



ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Peggy Frederickson

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|--|---|--|
| <p>INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:</p> <p>Atlas collects and recycles ink jet cartridges and cell phones year round.</p>  | <p>Support Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry</p>  | <p>Collecting Canned vegetables</p>  |
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GRANTSBURG

Mission committee chair: Deb Hammer

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| <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>Providing support to the middle school by collecting personal items, notes, shampoos, soaps, toothbrushes, toothpastes, and school supplies.</p>  |
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ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh

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|  <p>Food Shelf</p> <p>(Communion Sunday)</p> | <p>Sailor Hat Offering:</p> <p>Support the Polk County Drug Court</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 Nyland |
| Fellowship | Volunteer Needed |
| Counter | Volunteer Needed |
| Cleaning | Charlie Glonek and Sandra Erickson |
| 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 Adams-Schween |

St. Croix Falls:

| | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Pianist | Sharon Asp |
| Liturgist | Karen Sciacca |
| Usher(s) | Jim 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 you are able!

"Please pray for Ukraine, and its people and its leaders!"

PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) **An Online Zoom Service is scheduled for this Sunday at 8:30 am and 11:15am.** 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=SDZlZFNumbEvaDBlcytTRzVxMFIIZz09>

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: Fourth Sunday in Lent! Let us come closer to God in Lent!

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

Sunday Worship Service:

3/27: 8:30 am Grantsburg with Zoom

9:45 am Atlas

11:15 am St. Croix Falls with Zoom

3/29: 6:30pm, SPRC meeting via zoom

3/30: 1:00 pm, Lenten Craft Group Gathering-Session 2 (G)

3/31 9am, District Clergy Meeting via Zoom

6:30 pm, Lenten Bible Study -Session 4 via Zoom

This Week’s Birthdays and Anniversaries:

Majesty Rehbein 3/27

Don Schween 3/28

Emma Rahkola 3/31

Monica Loomis 4/1



HAPPY BELATED TO THESE BIRTHDAYS MISSED LAST WEEK

Paulie Kratchmer 3/18

Pam Clausen 3/20

Rene Wright 3/20



Next Sunday (April 3rd) Volunteers:

Ministers All God’s People
Pastor Jenny Lee

Central:

Pianist Toni Koons
Volunteer Needed

Liturgist Stan Chute

Snow Removal Willow Nyland

Acolyte(s) *Volunteer Needed*

Fellowship *Volunteer Needed*

Counter *Volunteer Needed*

Cleaning Charlie Glonek and Sandra Erickson

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

Volunteer Needed

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)



IN THE LENT SEASON: LENTEN BIBLE STUDY (THURSDAYS) AND CRAFT GROUP GATHERING (WEDNESDAYS)

4/7: BISHOP’S DAY (NORTH WEST DISTRICT: HOLY TRINITY UMC)

4/9: EASTER CRAFT AND BAKE SALE AT ATLAS UMC

March 27th, 2022
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

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



“It is Time to Come Back!”

I want to start with something funny. I heard about this man who was out hunting. He sees a bear and shoots at it. But, he misses and suddenly slips and falls down the mountainside. His leg is caught in a bear trap, and the bear is coming right towards him. He cries out, “Lord, I know I’ve done some bad things in my life, but I promise to repent now if you make this bear a Christian!” The bear skids to a halt, drops to his knees, clasps his paws together, and says, “O Lord, I thank you for the food I am about to receive!”

I wonder how often you pray to God and receive an answer to your prayers. We have to realize it is God’s answer to our prayers at certain times, not the answer we were looking for. Sometimes we don’t recognize that we got an answer to our prayers. If we don’t realize it, we may perhaps, feel like we’ve lost our concentration on God. However, it might come to light later on with an “aha moment” like “aha, it was God’s answer.” We are going through the Lenten season. It is the third Sunday in Lent. I hope we can come closer to God and concentrate on God more during Lent. Today, I want to talk about how “it is time to come back!” It is time to come back to church. It is time to come back to God!

I want to share a story about a lady. I met her when I was a chaplain in a hospital. She was in her mid-fifties and single. She just received a diagnosis of cervical cancer and decided not to receive the chemotherapy. Her nurse asked me to visit her and encourage her because she was depressed. When I visited her with a prayer shawl, she lied on her bed toward the window. I came closer to her and sat on a chair near her bed. I put the ‘prayer shawl’ on her bed near her head and talked to her: “I’m Chaplain Jenny. I brought this prayer shawl for you.” But she didn’t say anything. I continued to say. “I hope this prayer shawl represents how God loves you and how many people are praying for you. When you see this prayer shawl, remember that someone prays for you. You are not alone. As much as this shawl has knitted stitches, someone thinks of you and prays for you.” The next day, her nurse called me and said she wanted me to revisit her. I revisited her. As soon as I came into her room, she asked me, “Are you Chaplain Jenny?” I said, “Yes, I am.” She said she thought she had a dream and met a chaplain named Jenny in her dream. But, as soon as she saw the prayer shawl, she realized that it was not a dream.

She was a famous designer, but she hadn’t seen her family since graduating from college. She was emotionally wounded by the broken relationship with her family. She thought she got sick because of her sins related to her family and God. She believed God punished her, and she decided not to receive the therapy. I talked with her, “God is love.” And I encouraged her to contact her family members, saying, “As God waits for you, your family may be waiting for you. It is time to return to your family and God. God is the Healer and the Reconciler.” We prayed together, and she promised to contact her family. A few days later, when I revisited her, she said she called her family, and they were going to come to see her. She decided to receive therapy. Later, her family helped her and cared for her while she received the treatment. She called me six months later; she said she received the news she was cancer-free from her doctor.

Is there anyone struggling in a broken relationship? It is time to reconcile with them. Jesus taught us about a good relationship’s significance with one another. He said, “I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you lose on earth will be lost in heaven” (Matthew 18:18). Let us reconcile with God and our loved ones this Lent. If we are not in harmony with our brothers and sisters, we may not be in harmony with God. The love of God and the love of our neighbors are the great commandment from our Lord Jesus Christ. If we hate our brothers and sisters, we can’t love God. Jesus taught us, “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). The reconciliation with our neighbors is more important than offering a gift to God because if we hate someone or are in a broken relationship, we might not be joyful in worshipping God. It means, even though we are in the sanctuary, our minds fly away. It is time to reconcile with one another. It is time to come back to God with all our hearts, with all our minds, and with all our souls. It is time to worship God in the truth and spirit.

Today’s scripture is a famous story about “a lost son” or “a prodigal son.” However, today, I want to read this scripture about “the Prodigal Father.” The father gave all his property to his sons because his son wanted it. In the law of the Israelites, before a father died, his children couldn’t ask for an inheritance from their father. Nevertheless, the younger son asked for his father’s inheritance, and his father gave it to his son at his younger son’s request. As soon as his younger son received his portion of the inheritance, he left his father’s house. He spent all his money with his friends. However, he had no one to help him after spending all his money. He got a job feeding pigs. In the Israelite custom, a pig was considered an unpurified animal, and they didn’t come close to pigs or eat pork. But, the younger son fed pigs and ate pigs’ food. It showed how the younger son went against the laws.

Suffering and hungry, the younger son recalled how much abundant food there was at his father’s house and regretted that he left his father’s house. He said, “How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger.” I told you last Sunday the word “regret” means “looking back” and “frustrated with failure.” The younger son looked back at how it was at his home and was frustrated that he had left his father. However, he didn’t stop there. He went further to repent, saying, “I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy of being called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands,’ and set off and went to his father. He moved forward from “regret” to “repentance.” The word “repentance” means turning around 180 degrees from how you are going. The son was back to his father. The prodigal father gave his son good clothes, sandals, and even a ring. In the custom of the Israelites, when a father provides a ring to his son it means that you are my inheritor. That is, the father accepted his younger son as his heir again. Furthermore, the father had a party with neighbors for his son. This father is a prodigal father for his son.

As you may know, this father’s love represents our God’s love. Our God is the prodigal God with his love and grace unconditional. God loved us, even though we are sinners. God gave Adam and Eve everything in the Garden of Eden. But, they disobeyed and left God. Nevertheless, our God gave his only Son to us to take us back to Him, saying, “For 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). As God asked Adam, “where are you?” God looks for us. As the father gave his son everything, God gave us everything we need. Nevertheless, we left God like the prodigal son. God is waiting for us as the father waited for his son. It is time to return to your home and the church like the son returned to his father’s house. It is time to be back to God with our whole hearts, with our whole minds and whole souls. Thanks be to God. Amen!

ATLAS UMC

EASTER CRAFT & BAKE SALE



Saturday, April 9th 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Atlas United Methodist Church

Downtown Atlas ~ 2110 295th Avenue ~ County Road B

Spring is almost here! Stop by and shop a variety of wonderful homemade treats and crafts-they will make great Easter basket stuffers and gifts!

Goodies of All Kinds!

Breads * Bars * Cookies * Candies * Cupcakes * Jellies
Homemade Crafts

