

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

All that we present to you now, O God, we have received from your hand. We give so the hungry may eat and the thirsty may receive pure water. We share the good news of your Word with those who have not heard. We invest in just causes, that your mercy may be known among all people. Most of all, we give because passing on your gifts in a generous response is necessary to life. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*
UMH 384 (vs. 1 & 2)

*BENEDICTION Pastor Jenny Lee
*POSTLUDE

Upper St. Croix Parish

ONE Parish THREE Churches:
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
March 20th, 2022
"3rd 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.com
Youth Director Shayna Schmid: snsnyder@gmail.com
Parish 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 20, 2022

“3rd 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**

Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters.

You who have no money, come, buy, and eat!

Our souls thirst for God in a dry and weary land.

We seek God’s power and glory in the sanctuary.

Listen carefully to God and eat what is good;

delight yourselves in the rich food God provides.

Here our souls are satisfied as with a rich feast.

Together our mouths praise God with joyful lips.

God offers us steadfast love and a covenant relationship.

We are called to be faithful witnesses and leaders.

We have come to meditate on the living God.

We seek inspiration and empowerment to do what God asks.

Amen.

OPENING HYMN *O Jesus, I Have Promised

UMH 396 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

We come before you, gracious God, seeking what money cannot buy. Only you can provide nourishment for our souls. There is no other source of meaning in our mixed-up world. We can find no fountain of strength or sustenance apart from you. Surely you can be found where two or three are gathered together. As a community of faith, we call on you, believing that you are nearer than our next breath, more available to us than we can think,

more caring than we ever dare to imagine. Uphold us now that we may worship on wings of joy. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Luke 13:1-9

13 At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 He asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? 3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. 4 Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”

6 Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. 7 So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ 8 He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. 9 If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

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

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“Repent or Perish?”

Pastor Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Eternal God, whose call comes to us through the scriptures, in the remembrance of our baptism and in our shared life in the church, feed us now with your Word, that we may bear fruit. Confront us with your truth and keep us from being tempted beyond our strength, for we seek to be faithful in our covenant with you and responsible in our relationships with one another. May we together witness to your steadfast love in ways that transform evil into good. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

MARCH CHURCH MISSIONS



ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Peggy Frederickson

<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

<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

 <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	Charles and Mary Lou Wright
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Charlie Glonek and Sandra Erickson
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
	Josie Grimes/Jamie Steffen

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: Third 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:

- 3/20: 8:30 am Grantsburg with Zoom
9:45 am Atlas
11:15 am St. Croix Falls with Zoom
- 3/19: 4:30-6:30 pm, Confirmands' volunteer work for Feed My Starving Children, meet at 2:30 pm at church (G)
- 3/20: 3:00 -5:00 pm, Youth Gathering-Bowling Day (Centuria; Questions contact Youth Director Shayna Schmid), meet at 2:30 pm at Grantsburg Church
- 3/22: 10:00 am, April Newsletter's Information Due
1:30 pm, Ad Council Meeting (A)
- 3/23: 1:00 pm, Lenten Craft Group Gathering-Session 2 (G)
4:00 pm, Go Fish for Kids (G)
4:00-5:30 pm, District New Ministry Team Meeting via Zoom
- 3/24: 6:30 pm, Lenten Bible Study -Session 3 via Zoom
- 3/26: 2:00 pm, Celebration of Life Service for Bevan Branstad (G)



This Week's Birthdays and Anniversaries:

Wendell Hauble 3/22 Kayleen Branstad 3/23 Majesty Rehbein 3/27
Chase Steffen 3/23 Meryl Walsten 3/25

Next Sunday (March 27th) Volunteers:

Ministers	All God's People <i>Pastor Jenny Lee</i>
Central:	
Pianist	Toni Koons <i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Liturgist	Stan Chute
Snow Removal	Willow Nylend <i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Acolyte(s)	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Fellowship	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Counter	Younger/Older
Sunday School	LuAnne Martell/ Barb Loomis
Atlas:	
Pianist	Sharon Asp <i>Volunteer Needed</i>
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	Karen Sciacca
Usher(s)	Jim 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)

3/29: SPRC MEETING VIA ZOOM

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



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

March 20th, 2022

Luke 13: 1-9

“Repent, or Perish?”

I want to start with something funny. I heard about this 95-year-old lady who lived in a nursing home and had a visit from one of her fellow church members. The visitor asked, “How are you feeling, Mary?” The old lady said, “Oh, I’m just worried sick!” The visitor said, “What are you worried about, dear? You look like you’re in good health. They are taking care of you, aren’t they?” The old lady said, “Yes, they are taking very good care of me.” The visitor asked her, “Are you in any pain?” The old lady said, “No, I have never had a pain in my life.” The visitor asked her again, “Well, what are you worried about?” The lady leaned back in her rocking chair and slowly explained her main worry. “Every close friend I ever had has already died and gone on to heaven. I’m afraid they’re all wondering where I went.”

What are you most concerned about? Somehow, we spend valuable time on useless thought and worry. Useless worry means that there is nothing we can do to change the situation even if we worry about it all day and night. I hope that you don’t spend your precious time on useless worries. The Disciple Peter says, “Cast all your anxieties on him [the Lord] because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

Today, I want to talk about “repent, or perish?” It is the Third Sunday in Lent. How have you been doing during Lent? Has it been going as you planned, such as your self-control or self-promise? Don’t regret it if you failed. It is not late yet. You can start it again now. There are two kinds of people who fail or made a mistake in their plan. One is those who regret it; the other is those who repent it. The word “regret” implies looking back, putting yourself down, giving up, being discouraged, frustrated with failure, and so on. On the other hand, the word “repent” implies starting again in a new way, turning it around 180 degrees to a new challenge, looking forward, and so on. In other words, “repent” means that you turn around 180 degree from how you are going. It means that you may come back to God when you’ve been running away. Again, Lent encourages us to come closer to God in a more profound way. Which one do you prefer, “regret,” or “repent”?

We live in a world of abundant information. We can hear or watch the global news at home, on the street, at a park, at a cafe, and everywhere. Even though we don’t read newspapers or books, we may see what’s going on worldwide by checking our smartphones. We live in a world where it is easy to get lots of information. However, the world makes us confused and messed up trying to determine what is right or wrong. Somehow, even though we don’t know what’s happening with our family members, we may understand what’s happening in Ukraine, Russia, Africa, and even Korea. We don’t know when and where it started, but bad news and wrong information comes and goes like a boomerang, easily and fast, and then they hurt one another with misunderstanding. The Disciple John says, “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Don’t trust all information. If you get information about faith, the church, denomination, and conference, please confirm it with your leaders, and pray to God to distinguish between right and wrong before you make a decision. Wrong information (gossip) runs faster than correct information (the truth) in today’s world, or in the past.

Terrible news went around Galilee, Jesus’ hometown as well. In today’s scripture, we will read a strange verse, “At that very time there was some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had

mingled with their sacrifices.” People ran to Jesus to inform him in a hurry what was going on in Galilee and interrupted at that very time when Jesus was preaching. Something happened on Galilee in an urgent case, and people notified Jesus, the teacher of Galileans. The name Pilate might be familiar to us. Yes, it is him, whom we may say, “Jesus suffered under the Pontius Pilate’s trial, and died on the cross” in The Apostles’ Creed. He was the governor of the Roman province of Judaea at that time. Pilate killed Galileans who were going to the Jerusalem Temple to worship God. What “Galilean’s blood was mingled with their sacrifices” means that he killed people with their sacrifices for worship beastly, and blood of the people and the blood of the animals’ that were sacrificed were mingled. The intention of the people informing Jesus of this information might be to question “How did Pilate kill the people who were going for worship? It is not a time to preach. Let’s go and destroy the Roman leaders!” Or, some intended to show Jesus, “why people who worship God should be killed.”

However, Jesus’ reaction was different unexpectedly. Jesus rather asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way, they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.” Jesus, suddenly, brought up what it means to “repent.” It happened but not because of it. However, the matter is “repentance” as Jesus said, “unless you repent, you will all perish.” It came out of the blue. However, Jesus was just continuing his preaching. His major theme of the sermon was “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15). Also, John the Baptist proclaimed, “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Mark 1:4). Jesus intended to invite people closer to the kingdom of God through repentance.

Here is more terrible news. Jesus says, “those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them- do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.” We may assume there was a disaster in which the collapse of the tower killed eighteen people. Jesus emphasized that it might happen in our life, but it is not because you did something wrong. It is not because you have sinned if you have children who break away or if you have a child with an incurable illness. The matter is, you have to have the fruit of repentance. Here is Jesus’ teaching: Jesus told a parable story of a fig tree with no fruit on it. “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, ‘see here! I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree for three years, and still, I found none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good, but if not, you can cut it down.’” (13:6-9).

A fig tree in the vineyard is, perhaps, what we are. In this Lenten season, God may give us another chance to have the fruit of repentance. We are curious what the fruit of repentance is. We can find it in the Gospel of Luke 3:9-11. John the Baptist says, ‘Repent, the ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.’ And people asked, “What should we do then?” John the Baptist answered them clearly, “whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” The fruit of repentance is to practice the love of God and the love of our neighbors by acts. In today’s scripture, verse 9 says, “if it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.” Nobody knows what’s going on in the next year. It is our choice whether to “repent” or “perish.” Which one do you prefer? Thank be to God. Amen!