

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, gracious God, for making your home with us and claiming us as your own people. We dedicate ourselves and our gifts towards the new world you are creating among us—a world where peace emerges from mutual respect and honest encounters. May your love be reflected in our attitudes and actions when we are together and when we are scattered. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN *I'm Fly Away* TFWS 2282 (all verses)

*BENEDICTION Responsive

We go out as disciples of Jesus Christ
The world will recognize you by your love.

Love has created us and makes us whole.

We grow in love when we share love.

God is Alpha and Omega, beginning and end.

God refreshes us daily with the gift of living water.

We have been baptized with water and the Holy Spirit.

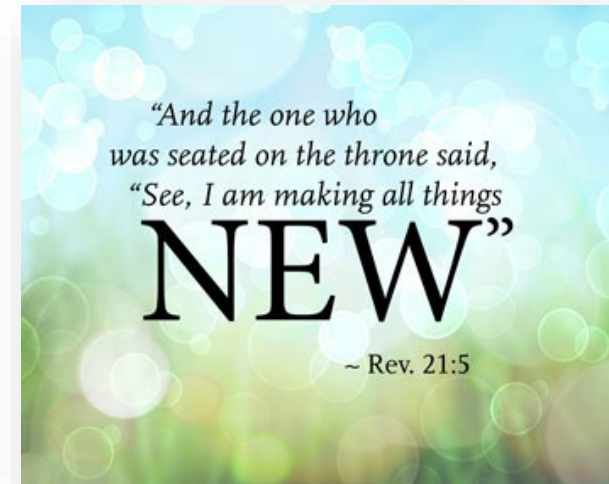
We are ambassadors of love to all we meet. Amen!

*POSTLUDE

Worship Resources "Gathered by Love" by Lavon Bayler.

Upper St. Croix Parish

ONE Parish THREE Churches:
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
May 15th 2022
"Fifth Sunday of Easter"



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

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
May 15th, 2022
“Fifth Sunday of Easter”

*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**

Come to praise God, all you faithful people!

Come, for God welcomes you and offers to draw close.

Praise to God, who rules over all the earth.

Praise to God, who is as near as our next breath.

Sun and moon and stars shine in praise to God.

God created them and established for each a place.

God has a place for us in this world;

we have come that God may instruct and equip us.

Mountains and hills, trees and animals praise God.

Let all the rulers of the earth do so as well.

God provides abundantly for our needs.

God makes one family all who dwell on earth. Amen!

***OPENING HYMN** *Marching to Zion* UMH 733 (vs. 1, 2, & 3)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

We praise you, O God, and celebrate your presence with us. Your glory fills all heaven and earth, all time and space. Your gifts surround us and dwell within us. We are your children. Come to wipe away our tears and comfort us in our distress. Come to heal our divisions and overcome our prejudices. Come, that we might be loved into discipleship. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON**

Revelation 21:1-6

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them and be their God;

4 he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.”

5 And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” 6 Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

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

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

New Heaven?

Barb Loomis

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Loving God, glorified on earth by the witness of Jesus Christ, touch our lives with the love that creates disciples, that we may learn to love one another. Teach us new attitudes so we will welcome the new heaven and new earth you have promised and work together to live as your people. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

MAY 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>May Mission We will be supporting the food shelf!</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>MAY MISSION: CHURCH SUPPLIES</p> <p><i>Please see list in the newsletter or at church for requested items.</i></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><i>May's Sailor hat offering will go to support the SCF Food Shelf.</i></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:

Preach	Barb Loomis
Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Bob Branstad
Lawn Mowing	Volunteer Needed
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Volunteer Needed
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Charlie Glonek and Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	Younger/Older
	No Class

Atlas:

Preach	Barb Loomis
Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Volunteer Needed
Usher(s)	Don Schween
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday school	Younger/Older
	Summer Break

St. Croix Falls:

Preach	Barb Loomis
Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Karen Sciacca
Usher(s)	Jim Andrews
Money Counter	Jim Andrews
Bell Ringer	Jim Sciacca
Flowers	Kathy Gionis



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 those who are traveling safely!”

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=SDZleFNubmEvaDBlcytTRzVxMFIIZz09>
Phone: +1 312 626 6799,
Meeting ID: 841 4780 8460, Passcode: 568271
- 2) Our Sunday Sermons are on the website at uppercroixparish.org under Sermons!
- 3) **We don't offer "the service by Phone" any longer.**
- 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: Fifth Sunday of Easter. God bless you and your family!

Sunday Worship Service:

- 5/15: 8:30 am Grantsburg with Zoom
9:45 am Atlas
11:15 am St. Croix Falls (No Zoom this week)
- 5/9-5/20: Pastor Jenny on vacation. In case of emergency please contact Pastor, Yul Kwon (St. Luke UMC, Frederic, 715-327-8383).
- 5/18: 4:00 pm, Go Fish for Kids (G)
6:30 pm, Youth Gathering (G)
- 5/19: Birthday Party for Continuing Care Center at Burnett Medical Center
(Questions to Mary McNally, 715-791-8010)

This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries:

Peter Gionis 5/15
Shayna Schmid 5/16
Mary Lou Wright 5/17
Emily & Daniel Rahkola 5/21
Laura Drohman 5/21
Brad Rehbein 5/21



Next Sunday (May 22nd) Volunteers:

Ministers	All God's People <i>Pastor Jenny Lee</i>
Central:	
Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Lawn Mowing	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Counter	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Cleaning	Charlie Glonek and Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	Younger/Older LuAnne Martell/ Barb Loomis



Atlas:

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Usher(s)	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Cleaning	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Sunday School	Younger/Older <i>Summer break</i>

St. Croix Falls:

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



MAY IS G-C'S VOLUNTEER'S MONTH FOR THE FOOD SHELF IN GRANTSBURG (5/19, 5/26) PLEASE CHECK WITH PAULIE KRATCHMER.

5/24 AD COUNCIL MEETING (G)
5/26 AD COUNCIL MEETING (SCF)
6/3-6/4 RAMAGE SALE (G)
6/5 JOINT SERVICE (@ 10:30 AM, SCF)

5-15-22 Heaven?

Revelation 21:1-6

Let me share a fun little story. During the children's message, the pastor was telling the children if you are good you will go to Heaven someday. At the end of his message he asked where do you want to go. All but one of the children boldly said Heaven. The pastor asked, "Billy, don't you want to go to Heaven?" Billy's answer "Not if I have to die first."

Is there a heaven? Do you believe in heaven? I had that asked of me. Have you ever been asked that question? And what was your answer? When I worked at the nursing home, there was a gentleman that proclaimed to be an atheist. He would ask me questions involving religion and my beliefs, "Is there a heaven?" That was one of the questions he asked me. I said yes of course? Then he asked me, "What makes you so sure?" I had an answer for that!

Due to blood loss I had an out of body experience. I know some people think out of body experiences are all something with the brain you're not really out of your body. It was very real to me! After Andy was born, I was taken to my room and the nurse said I could get up and go to the bathroom myself. I got up, and passed out and there was blood everywhere. But I was standing over my body. Luckily I had the presence of mind to grab the cord before I went down. That call light was loud in my mind, but the response was not like I would've liked it to be. In my out of body experience, I went into the hallway trying to get the attention of people. Of course they couldn't see me. When the nurse came she was a very small petite woman and I tried to help her lift me up. That didn't happen because my arms went right through my body. So I went back to the hallway looking for more people to help. But once again they couldn't see me.

Eventually another nurse came and I lost track of things. I became conscious in my bed. I'm not sure how they managed to get me up there. I was just grateful that the nurse was there. But that wasn't the end of it. I went unconscious again and in that unconscious state I had a conversation with, I presume God "You know I haven't even held my baby yet." My husband and I had been married 8 1/2 years before we were able to have Andy. So he was very special. The doctor came in and they did things. I don't remember now what, but everything seemed OK. The nurse brought Andy into the room. I was able to hold him.

About 30 minutes later it all started over again. I was unconscious. I was out of my body and I was looking for help. I did not see a light at the end of the tunnel. But I was walking around and it was very real. Once again I had a conversation. This time the

conversation was because I saw Jim holding Andy, and I asked “Do you really believe that he can take care of this baby by himself?” That was the mother's instinct. I believe he could've taken care of Andy by himself, but I felt Andy needed Jim and I to be with him. With the help of the doctor, a D&C, and several units of blood, they got my problem under control and the bleeding stopped. Life is good.

Now, there are people that still say it has something to do with your neurons or whatever in your brain. I had that conversation with God. I walked around. I don't know how you would explain it. You might be asking why I tell you the story.

That experience is so vivid in my mind. I didn't go to heaven, but when you read any of the books about people that have gone to heaven and of course come back, the experience is vivid and real. Before they went to heaven they walked around, they heard people speaking, they knew what was happening. I didn't see a light, but when I shared this with friends they would say God had more for me to do. That was reassuring for me to hear.

My out of body experience was not enough to convince this man there was a Heaven. So I began to share with him Bible verses that spoke to me about the Heaven I believed in. There is Heaven. I believe that. The Bible tells us about Heaven. And we are going to explore some of the places in the Bible that refer to heaven.

Let us start with Genesis 1:1. *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth..* When we hear that we think of the earth that we live on, and the heavens we think of the stars and the universe. Or was it the heavens where God and the angels dwelled?

Matthew 18:10 *See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my father who is in heaven.* I have always believed that we have angels watching over us. This verse confirms it. I also believe that there's extra angels watching over children.

In Psalm 33:6 *By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.*

Our scripture today Revelation 21:1, 2a says: *then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more and I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God...* Our God is a God that creates continuously, never stopping. There is a God, there must be a heaven.

If you look up verses referring to Heaven on the Internet it's innumerable. I didn't have the Internet back when my atheist friend, the nursing home resident, that asked me if I believed in heaven. He never said that I convinced him there was a heaven, but he did ask another provocative question. "Is heaven going to be everybody sitting around and singing? That would be a boring life. Life needs challenges.". Well, he gave me another challenge. Do you think that heaven would be boring? I certainly hope not.

Isaiah 65:21 tells us *They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruits.* That tells me the heaven for people that like to build will have the opportunity to build. People that like to plant and grow things will also have that opportunity. And those that like to collect the harvest will be able to do that.

Another part of Isaiah tells us that if you enjoy animals, or gorgeous scenery, or the study of science, you will find endless activities in those areas. We will even be able to explore the cosmos. Just imagining this takes your breath away.

Our friends and families who have chosen to serve Christ will be there. The Bible plainly teaches that we will recognize each other in our new forms that are given to us. This is in Thessalonians

Just think of all the people you will have the opportunity to meet, people throughout history. It's an opportunity to meet millions of new friends. Even better is an opportunity to talk to Jesus and to God.

Back when I led the youth group for Atlas and Grantsburg church they had a theme song that referred to John 14:2–4 *in my father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and will take you there myself.* The refrain to that went, it's a big big house. With lots and lots of rooms. With a big big table, with lots and lots of food. And a big big yard, where we can play football. Now many of the youth would replace football with their favorite sport volleyball, tennis not so much, video games yes, likely not a sport, but that song became their song. It was part of the Heaven they pictured. That heaven was not boring.

In our scripture today, verse 3, the God who comes is the same God promised in Leviticus. *And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.* Verses 4 & 5 tells us of a God that will wipe away our tears, comfort us and make all things new. That is not a God that would allow boredom, but a God of Joy.

And finally verse 6 will tell us about a God that has let every single promise he has made be perfectly fulfilled. When all of his plans will be finished. we will live day by day in God's promises.

There will be plenty to occupy us in eternity, like relishing the most delicious foods you've ever eaten, listening to and participating in the most stimulating music you've ever heard, worshiping before God's glorious thrones, building relationships with angels and other created beings, and endless other activities. The Bible tells us, no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him. This is found in 1 Corinthians 2:9.

I believe in heaven because there are people I know that have seen angels when a loved one passed away. There are people that would talk to someone that was gone when it was close to their time to go. My out of body experience didn't take me that far, but I did have a conversation with God. My fears were addressed not in words, but through miracles. Others have told of near death experiences where they've heard the sound of music, people calling to them, and the joy they felt, and the peace that they felt. For all those reasons I believe in heaven. And I would say it again. I not only believe it, but I'm counting on it.

Back to the fun little story at the beginning, the pastor was talking about being good. We should be good, because we're Christians. But we are Christians because we believe in Jesus Christ as our savior. Remember John 3:16 God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whosoever believe in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

Amen