

**RESPONDING PRAYER** Unison

O healing presence, whose claim on us is strong enough to change our direction, look with favor on this gathered congregation, that none may go astray but all may respond with joy to your promises and go out share your good news with the hungry and needy and oppressed. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

**SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS**

*After each prayer request:*

*Pastor: Lord, in your mercy,*

*All: Hear our Prayer.*

**PASTORAL PRAYER/THE LORD'S PRAYER  
INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND  
OFFERINGS**

**\*DOXOLOGY**

UMH 95

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION** Unison

Majestic God, thank you for inviting us to share the blessings you pour out on us. We want to extend the healing ministry of Jesus who gave sight to those who were blind and new insight to some who only pretended to see. Use our resources to heal attitudes as well as bodies, to bring wholeness, not just cures. Help us to address the inequities of the earth that leave so many without food or shelter or hope. Lead us into your realm in the midst of our daily living. Amen.

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

**\*CLOSING HYMN** *O Come, All Ye Faithful* UMH 234 (vs. 1&2)

**\*BENEDICTION** Pastor Jenny Lee

**\*POSTLUDE** Toni Koons (G) / Sharon Asp (A & SCF)

Worship Resources "Gathered by Love" by Lavon Bayler.

 **Upper St. Croix Parish  
United Methodist Church**

**ONE Parish THREE Churches  
"3rd Sunday of Advent"**



**Grantsburg-Central,  
Since 1897**



**Atlas, Since 1887**



**St. Croix Falls,  
Since 1859**

**SUNDAY SERVICE:**

*8:30 AM at Grantsburg with Online Zoom Service*

*9:45 AM at Atlas (10:00 AM, Christmas Program)*

*NO SERVICE at St. Croix Falls*

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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[www.upperstcroixparish.org](http://www.upperstcroixparish.org)

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

**Upper St. Croix Parish**  
**Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls**  
**December 11th, 2022**  
**“3rd Sunday of Advent”**

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\*Please stand if you are able.

**\*PRELUDE** Toni Koons (G) / Sharon Asp (A & SCF)  
**\*ADVANT SONG** TFWS 2090 (vs. 3)  
**\*LIGHTING THE THIRD CANDLE**  
**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
**PASSING OF THE GREETINGS**  
*“Peace be with you”*

**We Celebrate New Life in Christ**

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP** Responsive  
Come away from haste and frantic busyness.  
This is the season for quiet waiting.  
**It is hard to still our soul when we are so busy.**  
**It is hard to be patient with ourselves or others.**  
Receive God’s mercy and strengthen your hearts.  
A Savior is coming; God’s love is near.  
**We want to hear and believe God’s promises.**  
**We want to become patient, loving seekers.**  
God presents us with a high and holy way.  
Come before God now with praise and singing.  
**We sense the joy God offers to us.**  
**Our spirits rejoice in God our Savior. Amen.**

**\*DEDICATING HYMN** *In the Bleak Midwinter*  
UMH 221 (vs. 1 & 2)

**OPENING PRAYER** Unison  
**Mighty One, we rejoice that you strengthen our weak hands and make firm our feeble knees. You open our eyes and unstop our ears. You meet our hunger with good things. You disturb our false pride while helping us discover our true strength. You topple us from our pretensions while lifting up the lowly to claim the inner power you alone can provide. We have assembled to worship you.**

**Awaken the gladness that comes when we recognize your presence. We long to know you in this hour. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen!**

**CHILDREN’S TIME (G)**

**UMH 191 (vs.1)**

**Proclamation of God’s Word**

**\*THE GOSPEL LESSON** **Matthew 11:2-11**  
2 When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” 4 Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. 6 And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.” 7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. 9 What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is the one about whom it is written, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ 11 “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

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

**Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON (G)**

*Joy of Salvation*

**Pastor Jenny Lee**

**CHRISTMAS PROGRAM (A)**  
*“Christmas Story”*

\* Singing with Congregation  
**Atlas Sunday School Kids**

Narrator 1: Chase Steffen  
Narrator 2: Copelan Grimes  
Wiseman: Noah Dennison  
Joseph: Landon Olson  
Mary: Wren Grimes  
Angels: Indie Tooze and Elli Olson

**O Little Town of Bethlehem**  
**Away in the Manger**  
**Angels We Have Heard on High**  
**Twinkle Twinkle Christmas Star**  
**We Three Kings**  
**Go Tell it On the Mountain**  
**Joy to the World**

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

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

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

# DECEMBER CHURCH MISSIONS

## ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Peggy Frederickson

### INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:

Atlas collects and recycles ink jet cartridges and cell phones year round.



Collecting canned food to support Loaves and Fishes food pantry in Luck.



Atlas will support these two missions in December:

**Mitten Tree & Christmas Eve Special Offering**  
 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.

## GRANTSBURG

Mission committee chair: Deb Hammer

### BE A "BACK-PACK BACKER"!

REMEMBER ... Every Sunday Is MAC 'N CHEESE SUNDAY! Supporting the Salvation Army's "Happy Kids Back-Pack Program"



Grantsburg will support these two missions for December, please see bulletin board for details:

- 1) Christmas for Kids
- 2) Middle School Supplies

## ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh



**Food Shelf**  
 (Communion Sunday)



### Sailor Hat Offering:

December's Sailor Hat offering will go to buy Christmas Marketplace Food Gift Cards for families in need!

Thank you for your support!

## TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers

All God's People  
 Pastor Jenny Lee

### Central:

Pianist  
 Liturgist  
 Acolyte(s)  
 Snow Removal  
 Fellowship  
 Counter  
 Cleaning  
 Sunday School

Toni Koons  
**Volunteer Needed**  
 Willow Nyland/Leland Snyder  
 Tom Goefert  
**Volunteer Needed**  
**Volunteer Needed**  
 Charlie Glonek and Sandra Erickson  
 Younger/Older  
 LuAnn Martell/Barb Loomis



### Atlas:

Pianist  
 Liturgist  
 Usher(s)  
 Acolyte(s)  
 Cleaning  
 Sunday School

Sharon Asp  
 Sue Olson  
 Colleen Adams-Schween  
 Copelan Grimes  
**Volunteer Needed**  
 Younger/Older  
**Christmas Program**

### St. Croix Falls:

No service on December 11th. Instead, St. Croix Falls members will join the Atlas service at 9:45 am for their Christmas Program.

### 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 our neighbors in need!*

## PLEASE NOTE:

1) **An Online Zoom Service is scheduled for this Sunday at 8:30.**

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 may watch a recorded video of the service on our parish Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/UpperStCroixParishUMC>

### This Week's Calendar:

Today: 3rd Sunday of Advent.

God may give you joy in your life!

#### Sunday Worship Service:

12/11: 3rd Sunday of Advent Service/ Christmas Program (A)

8:30 am Grantsburg with Zoom

9:45 am Atlas (Sunday School Kids Program & Potluck)

No Service at St. Croix Falls

12/14: 1:00pm, UMW Meeting with Light Lunch (G)

6:30pm, Confirmation Class (A)

12/15: 9:00am, North West Clergy Meeting via Zoom

5:00 -7:30 pm, 3rd Gathering of the Advent Bible Study (SCF)

5:00 pm Soup Supper, 6:00-7:30 pm Bible Study

12/16: 1:30pm, Ad Council Meeting (A)

12/17: 3:00-4:00pm, Youth & Kids Christmas Program Practice (G)

**PLEASE NOTE: WHEN WRITING A CHECK PLEASE MAKE IT PAYABLE TO YOUR INDIVIDUAL CHURCH. WHEN THE OFFERING IS MAILED IN WE ARE THEN ABLE CREDIT THE APPROPRIATE CHURCH. THANK YOU!**

### This Week's Birthdays

Adalyn Snyder 12/12

Copelan Grimes 12/13

Jeff Tooze 12/13

Stan Chute 12/15



*If you know anyone's birthday is missing,  
please let pastor Jenny know.*

### Next Sunday (December 18th) Volunteers:

#### Central:

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland/Indie Tooze
Snow Removal	Tom Goefert
Fellowship	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Counter	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Cleaning	Charlie Glonek and Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	Younger/Older LuAnn Martell/Barb Loomis

#### Atlas:

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Sue Olson
Usher(s)	Colleen Adams-Schween
Acolyte(s)	Chase Steffen
Cleaning	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Sunday School	Younger/Older Josie Grimes/Jamie Steffen

#### St. Croix Falls:

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



Dec. 11: Christmas Program and Potluck (A & SCF at Atlas)  
SCF has no Sunday Service, instead, they will join the Atlas service for their Christmas Program at Atlas (9:45am)

Dec. 21: Youth & Kids Christmas Program and Potluck at (G)

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Service  
10:00 am St. Croix Falls  
4:00 pm Atlas  
7:00 pm Grantsburg

Dec. 25: No Sunday Service



December 11th, 2022  
Matthew 11:2-11

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



### **“The Joy of Salvation”**

I want to start with something funny. I found this story from one internet site: The Sunday after Christmas, Father John looked at the nativity scene before packing away the figures when he noticed the baby Jesus was missing from the scene. Immediately, Father John turned toward the parsonage to call the police. But as he was about to do so, he saw little Harry with a red wagon, and the figure of the little infant, Jesus, was in the wagon. Father John walked up to Harry and said, “Well, Harry, where did you get the little infant?” Harry replied honestly, “I took him from the church, Father John.” “Why did you take him?” With a sheepish smile, Harry said, “Well, about a week before Christmas, I prayed to little Lord Jesus. I told him if he would bring me a red wagon for my Christmas present, I would give him a ride around the block in it.”

What a cute story! He prayed to Jesus making a promise and kept it. He enjoyed his Christmas present with little Jesus. What do you expect for Christmas? You may wish to have a family gathering, exchange gifts, meet with loved ones, and have a Christmas party with good food. Every Christmas season, we have the Advent service, waiting for Christ to bring hope, peace, joy, and love to the world. However, he hasn’t come yet, even though we pray for and expect him yearly. We still live in a chaotic world full of violence, fighting, wars, poverty, disasters, and injustice.

The coming Christ we expect, according to the Scripture Acts, is “The same Jesus, who has been taken from you (us) into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). As we believe in him, we are waiting for the coming of Christ. Nobody knows what the coming Christ looks like. But no one expects baby Jesus to be born again and again every Christmas, but we celebrate Jesus’ birthday with the joy of salvation. As you may know, Christmas is a compound noun, “Christ” and “Mass.” The word “Mass” means “worship service,” as typically the Catholic Church uses the term “Mass.” Therefore, Christmas is “the day we serve Christ.” Hopefully, we can make a real Christmas and serve Christ. Don’t have Christ’s birthday party without him.

The delay in his return does not mean he has broken his promise. There is only one reason that God loves us so much. The Scripture 2 Peter 3:9 says, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” Yes, Jesus will come, but he is waiting for his people to repent and come back to him. If the purpose of having Jesus come first was that “for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16), the purpose of the coming Jesus is also because God loves us so much, God waits for us. You may say, ‘well, we believe in Jesus Christ.’ You might be right, but he still waits for us to bring our families, relatives, and neighbors, who we love, so that they also believe in him and shall not perish but gain eternal life.

I want to share a story I read recently: It is about a man who drove on the road in the countryside of L. A. at midnight a few years ago. At that moment, he felt an earthquake had passed near his place. He pulled his car over for a while, waiting for the earthquake to end. After a few minutes, it was calm, and then he drove again over a bridge. But, about halfway over the bridge, he suddenly noticed a car in front of his car had disappeared. He pulled over and looked



at what had happened. He found the bridge destroyed by the earthquake. The car drove fast without noticing the broken bridge and fell under the bridge. At that moment, several cars were cruising toward the broken bridge, and he was waving his hands to stop the cars. But, at midnight, a man who was standing on the road trying to make them stop seemed crazy.

Nobody stopped, and they all fell to their death. Soon he saw a bus coming. He decided he had to stop the bus even though he would die with the people on the bus. He stood in the middle of the road, waving his hands. The bus drove toward him by honking its horn, but he didn't move, waving his hands. Finally, the bus stopped, and the driver got out of the bus and saw the dangerous situation. The bus driver blocked the road with the bus to save people. [J. D. Greear, *Gospel: Recovering the Power that Made Christianity Revolutionary*]

If you were in his shoes, what would you do? Would you handle it the same way as he did? Remember, many people run towards death without knowing the way to the salvation of Jesus Christ. Among them, could be your loved ones. If you have family members who don't believe in Jesus yet, please speak to them about the joy of salvation before it is too late. What would you do if you saw your loved ones die without knowing salvation? You have the chance to speak about Jesus when you gather with your family during the holiday season.

Someone asked Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892, Baptist Pastor) if someone who had never heard about Jesus could get saved. He answered, "well, I don't think so, but there is a better question if anyone who knows Jesus, but he/she does not speak about the joy of salvation to those who have never heard about Jesus, is he /she saved in Jesus?" I want you to consider how often you speak about the joy of salvation with your loved ones. The kingdom of God begins with you who know Jesus Christ. If you rejoice in Jesus, that joy of salvation must flow from you to your family, friends, relatives, and neighbors.

The king imprisoned John the Baptist because he did the right thing for king Herod. In prison, he heard about what Jesus was doing and was curious if he was Christ. When he baptized Jesus, he was sure he was Christ because he heard a voice from heaven, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him, I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). He expected that Christ was coming as the Lord of judgment, as he says, "his winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12). However, he heard that Jesus healed the sick, fed the poor, and ate meals with sinners and women. That was not what he expected. So, he sent his disciples to Jesus and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" (Matthew 11:3). Jesus said, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them." It is the good news that the Prophet Isaiah proclaimed in B.C 8 century: "He will come to save you. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy" (Isaiah 35: 4b-6). If you believe in Jesus, you may praise the Lord for the joy of salvation in everyday life.

However, we easily forget God's grace in providing fresh air, food, clothes, shelter, and family. Count how God has blessed you! We often forget what Jesus says, "Whatever you did do for one of the least of these, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40). We see many little Jesus' around the world, near and far, such as the least, the powerless, the sick, the oppressed and the poor. I hope you can serve little Jesus during the Christmas season, sharing the joy of salvation. We lit the third advent candle, hoping Christ would bring joy to the world. The joy of salvation should go forward from you. The candle of joy may empower you to bring the good news to your loved ones! Thanks be to God. Amen!