

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**

Faithful God, we give in gratitude for your abundant gifts to us. As we offer our tokens of thanks today, we hear you sending us out to mend broken relationships. Our offerings are not a substitute for our own engagement in your reconciling work. Go with us to help us as we accept the assignments you give us. Amen.

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN *Here I Am, Lord* UMH 593 (vs. 1 & 2)

*BENEDICTION Pastor Jenny Lee

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

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

The 2023 Parish Ministry Theme:
“Fill My House” (Luke 14:23)

**“6th Sunday After Epiphany/Stewardship Month”
“Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday”**



**Grantsburg-Central,
Since 1897**



Atlas, Since 1887



**St. Croix Falls,
Since 1859**

SUNDAY SERVICE:

***9:00 AM at Grantsburg with Online Zoom Service
10:00 AM at Atlas (10:15 AM, Sunday School)
11:15 AM at St. Croix Falls with Online Zoom Service***

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Upper St. Croix Parish

Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls

February 12th, 2023

“6th Sunday After Epiphany/Stewardship Month”

*Please stand if you are able.

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

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE GREETINGS

“Peace be with you”

We Celebrate New Life in Christ

***CALL TO WORSHIP** Responsive

Happy are those who seek God with their whole heart.

Their eyes are fixed on all that God commands.

We have come to reflect together on God’s law.

We gather together in the temple of God.

Ready yourselves to receive all that God supplies.

Attune your hearts to God’s promises and warnings.

We expect to be challenged as well as encouraged.

We know that our ways are not God’s ways.

God gives us choices that result in life or death.

We can obey or reject the way of life God intends for us.

We seek to know and follow the way of life.

We want to live according to promises we have made. Amen.

***DEDICATING HYMN**

Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service UMH 581 (vs. 1&2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

We come to you, gracious God! We make decisions without giving consideration to your will for us. We pursue desires that divert our attention away from your call to us. We make gods of our

possessions, our work, our hobbies, even our families. We need to experience your presence and power to bring us to obedience.

Make yourself known to us. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON**

Acts 2:43-47

43 Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 All who believed were together and had all things in common; 45 they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceed to all, as any had need. 46 Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

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

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“The Church of God”

Pastor Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

God of the universal church, you called us as the steward of you, and entrusted everything to us including your church. Each of us is called to be a part of the church, one body of Christ. Let us make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. May we prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of fullness of Christ. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

After each prayer request:

Pastor: Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our Prayer.

PRAYER SONG

This is our prayer. This is our prayer, O God!

UMH 487

THE LORD’S PRAYER

INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

FEBRUARY CHURCH MISSIONS

ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Peggy Frederickson

INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:

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



Souper Bowl of Caring:
We will collect canned soup and donations to support the Luck Food Pantry.



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"



The missions for Grantsburg in February are:

- Souper Bowl of Caring: We will be collecting cans of soup and monetary donations for the Food Pantry in Grantsburg by 2/12
- Financial support of the church

ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh



Food Shelf
(Communion Sunday)



Sailor Hat Offering:

February's Sailor Hat offering will go to UMCOR Human Relations

Thank you for your support!

TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

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



Atlas:

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Sue Olson
Usher(s)	Don Schween
Acolyte(s)	Copelan Grimes
Cleaning	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Sunday School	Younger/Older Josie Grimes/Colleen Adams-Schween

St. Croix Falls:

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

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 Elaine Frees' (G) family as she passed away on February 5th.

PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) **Online Zoom Services are scheduled for this Sunday at 8:30 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 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: "6th Sunday after Epiphany/Stewardship Month"
"Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday" ~ Thank you for bringing canned soup to share with those in need!

Sunday Worship Services:

- 2/12: 9:00 am Grantsburg with Zoom
10:00 am Atlas (10:15 am Sunday School)
11:15 am St. Croix Falls with Zoom
- 2/12-14: Racial Ethnic Clergy Leadership Workshop with Bishop at Green Lake Conference Center (Pastor Jenny)
- 2/16: 9:00 am, North West Clergy Meeting via Zoom

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 & Anniversaries

Kathleen Gionis 2/12
Grace Harmon 2/15
Peyton Smallwood 2/17
Betty Wilson 2/18



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

Next Sunday (February 19th) Volunteers:

Central:

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



Atlas:

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Colleen Adams-Schween
Usher	Don Schween
Acolyte(s)	Chase Steffen
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Younger/Older Cheryl Olson/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



February is Stewardship Month

February Ad Council Meetings:

SCF-2/19 Grantsburg-C-2/23 Atlas-2/24
February 21st: Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper & Ash service
February 26th: First Sunday of Lent (Please check the Lenten Bible Study & Craft Group Gathering Information)



“The Church of God” (Stewardship Month #2)

I want to start something funny that I found on an internet site: Timmy didn't want to put his money in the offering plate Sunday morning, so his mother decided to use some hurried creative reasoning with him. “You don't want that money, honey,” she whispered in his ear. “Quick! Drop it on the plate. It's tainted!” Horrified, the little boy obeyed. After a few seconds, he whispered, “But, mommy, why was the money tainted? Was it dirty?” “Oh, no, dear,” she replied. “It's not really dirty. It just 'taint yours, and it 'taint mine,” she replied, “It's God's.”

Today is the second Sunday of Stewardship month. Last Sunday, we talked about how “we are called as the stewards of God” since God created all things. We, the stewards of God, should manage everything given by God. But, we remember that the talent or gift God gave us may be different according to our ability. However, even though we have a smaller capability, we have hope because God may give us another chance to improve our capacity. This includes our personal gifts, talents, family members, loved ones, companions, possessions, and even the things and people around us. It also includes the church.

Therefore, I want to talk about “the church of God.” Our church was also entrusted to us by God through our Lord, Jesus Christ. Jesus promised Peter he'd build the church on his faithful confession. That story is here: Jesus asked his disciples at Caesarea Philippi, “Who do people say I am?” His disciples answered, “well, some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But, what about you?” he asked them again. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by person, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matthew 16:13-19).

It was the first time Jesus mentioned the church. Jesus promised to build the church on Peter's faithful confession about Jesus Christ. The church began on the Pentecost day after Jesus was lifted to heaven. As Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit came to his disciples, who gathered together and prayed in the Upper Room where Jesus had the Last Supper with his disciples. When Jesus was arrested, his disciples were scattered by fear. They saw Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, but they were still afraid of persecution. They gathered together and prayed with all their hearts. Finally, God sent them the Holy Spirit, who gave them strength and encouraged them to stand firmly in faith. They became strong evangelists, church planters, and the church of God by the Holy Spirit.

As Jesus wanted to build the church of God on his disciples' confessions, he still wanted to build the church on many believers' confessions. The church could be built by the faithful confession of Jesus Christ and with the help of the Holy Spirit. As we often hear, we are the church of God, the body of Christ. When we gather together in the name of Jesus, each of us becomes a part of the local church, belonging to the universal church of God. It is like how First Corinthians says, “The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts

are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12). Each of us, surely is the Temple of God, where the Holy Spirit is. However, our local church is built when we, having different gifts and talents, gather together in the name of Jesus. Therefore, each of you is a precious part of our local church. It is like how our church buildings are made up of bricks, roofs, windows, walls, pews, tables, chairs, floors, ceilings, and many more parts. Some may be praised by many as beautiful, like stained glass; some may not be recognized, like nails or glue; some may be used very often by many, like pews or chairs, or kitchen sinks, but some may be used rarely like communion plate and cup or Baptismal fountain. However, as all of the parts are important for the church, we are also very important to our local church. Remember, we can be a beautiful church because we are different and have other gifts and talents. As the First Letter of Peter says, “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God” (1 Peter 2:9). Each of you is a chosen people and God’s minister for the church of God.

Such as a beautiful church also should have a stewardship mind because it belongs to God, and God entrusted it to us. Today’s scripture shows us the stewardship of a local church. I will read it. Please form an image of the church in your mind, “All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the Temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day, the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”

What a beautiful church! It was the early church, and we should build this kind of church with our cooperation and God’s help. The church is where all believers gather together and share all their possessions with those in need. The church is where we spent much time together in the Temple. The church is where we have communion and eat our food together with glad and generous hearts. The church is where we praise God and have the goodwill of all the people. In the church, the Lord adds to the people who are being saved day by day. Can we make this kind of church? Can we enjoy gathering at the church and sharing food and materials with those in need with glad and generous hearts? We have been doing these things. I appreciate your faithful ministry, dedication, generous donation, and mindful prayers. Even though nobody fully knows your dedication and contribution, God surely knows you.

You may remember when Abraham prayed for Sodom and Gomorrah. God promised him God wouldn’t destroy the cities if He found ten righteous people. But God couldn’t find ten, so it was destroyed (Genesis 18:16-32). Remember, God still seeks faithful stewards for his ministry. If you are one of the ten faithful stewards in our church, our church should be revived again because of you. Remember, the Lord adds a number of people to our church when we enjoy gathering at the church and sharing our possessions with generous hearts, praising God. Let’s build the kind of beautiful church of God together. Thanks be to God, Amen!