

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** Unison

Lift us up, O God, from the graves of our self-interest as we invest ourselves in sharing the good news with the world. Increase our gifts of time and treasure, that all who are drained of hope might have their minds set on the Spirit. May the Spirit raise them to new life as we celebrate the resurrection Jesus promised to all who trust and follow where God leads. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN** *Standing on the Promises*
UMH 374 (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)

Fifth Sunday in Lent
Membership Caring Month



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

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 26th, 2023

Fifth Sunday in Lent/Membership Caring 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
God calls us from the valley of dry bones.
Come, listen for a word from our God.

We hear God calling us in a far distant voice.

We had nearly forgotten God’s care for us.

The Spirit breathes life into our dry bones.

God offers hope when we have lost our way.

Our souls wait for the refreshment God offers.

Our spirits are filled with great expectation.

Christ came as a light to all the world.

Christ comes among us today to light our way.

We hear the teacher calling for us.

Christ unbinds us that we may see and believe. Amen.

***DEDICATING HYMN** *In the Garden* UMH 314 (vs. 1 & 3)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

God of steadfast love, bring new life to this community of your people. We are eager to hear your voice and be filled with your Spirit. Come, O Lord, and bring vitality and purpose to our gathering, that we might be energized and encouraged. Hear our voices, lifted in praise and crying out from our need. Be attentive to our supplications, lest we die apart from you. Only you can unbind us and set us free. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs.1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON**

Colossians 2:6-7

6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

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

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“Stay in Love with God!”

Pastor Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Father of all the nations, Mother to all of earth’s children, we cannot live apart from you. Send the Holy Spirit among us and within us so we may feel you are with us wherever we go. As we stay in love with you, we may know the abundant life which you offer and be empowered to share it. With compassion and courage, we want to share with all whom we meet and with all whom you have called us to love. 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

UMH 487

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

THE LORD’S PRAYER

INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

***DOXOLOGY**

UMH 95

MARCH CHURCH MISSIONS

ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Peggy Frederickson

INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:

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



We will support the following missions in March:

- 1) *Support to Loaves and fishes with canned juices of 100% or monetary donations.*
- 2) *Collecting money to help the people in Turkey and Syria.*

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"



We will be collecting money to help the people who lost everything by the earthquake in Turkey and Syria through UMCOR. See the details in the March Newsletter or the church bulletin board.



ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh



Food Shelf
(Communion Sunday)



Sailor Hat Offering:

March's Sailor Hat offering will go to support Polk County Drug Court.

Thank you for your support!

TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers	All God's People <i>Pastor Jenny Lee</i>
Central:	
Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Cameron Smallwood
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Snow Removal	Tom Goepfert
Fellowship	Jenni Tober and Peyton Smallwood
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(s)	Sue Olson
Acolyte(s)	Copelan Grimes
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Younger/Older Josie Grimes/ Jamie Steffen

St. Croix Falls:	
Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Kathy Gionis
Usher(s)	Karen Sciacca
Money Counter	Peter Gionis
Bell Ringer	Jim Andrews
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 a person who you want to invite to God's house.

PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) **Online Zoom Services are scheduled for this Sunday at 9:00 and 11:15 am.** 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: Fifth Sunday in Lent/Membership Caring Month
God bless you all!

Sunday Worship Services:

- 3/26: Fifth Sunday in Lent.
9:00 am Grantsburg with Zoom
10:00 am Atlas (10:15 am Sunday School)
11:15 am St. Croix Falls with Zoom
- 3/26 12:15 pm Ad Council Meeting (SCF)
3/28 4:00 pm Lenten Bible Study (G)
3/29 1:00 pm Craft Group Gathering (G)
3/30 5:00 pm Soup Supper; 6:00 pm, Lenten Bible Study (SCF)
4/1 9:00 am -1:00pm, Easter Craft & Bake Sale (A)

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!

Lenten Bible Study & Craft Group

Every Tuesday (4pm)-Bible Study (G) &
Thursday (5:00pm)-Bible Study with Soup Supper (SCF)
Every Wednesday at 1pm, Craft Gathering (G)

April 2, Palm Sunday
April 6, Maundy Thursday service
April 7, Good Friday
April 9, Easter Sunday



Next Sunday (April 2nd) Volunteers:

Central:

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



Atlas:

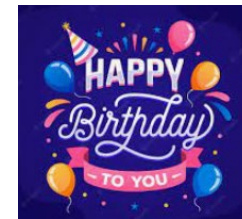
Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Volunteer Needed
Usher	Volunteer Needed
Acolyte(s)	Chase Steffen
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Communion	Sue Olson
Sunday School	Younger/Older Volunteer Needed

St. Croix Falls:

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Jim Andrews
Usher(s)	Jasmine & Jessica
Money Counter	Peter Gionis
Bell Ringer	Jasmine & Jessica
Flowers	Ladies of the church
Communion	Karen Sciacca

This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries

Mike Dennison 3/26
Majesty Rehbein 3/27
Monica Loomis 4/1



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



“Stay in Love with God!” (Membership Caring Month #4)

I want to start with something funny I found on an internet site: A kindergarten teacher was walking around observing her classroom of children while they were drawing pictures. As she got to one girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was. The girl replied, “I’m drawing God.” The teacher paused and said, “But no one knows what God looks like.” Without looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, “They will know in a minute.”

We believe in God, following Jesus’ life and teachings. But, I wonder if you have ever thought about what God looks like. As I read this funny story, I also thought about how it is that we imagine what God looks like when we’ve never seen Him. According to Israelite history, they dare not see God or call God’s name. They believed if they saw God, they might die. They could write “*Yahweh*” or “*Jehovah*,” but they couldn’t say it out loud. When they read the Scripture, if they saw God’s name in it, they paused there without saying the word and skipped God’s name to read what followed. Nevertheless, they believed God was always with them. We also believe that God is with us as God promised, even though we can’t see God. Jesus told Thomas, who doubted Jesus’ resurrection, “Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” We are so blessed because we believe in God without seeing Him.

Keeping with membership caring month, on the first Sunday, we thought of our identity as ambassadors for Christ, who Jesus Christ sends for a specific mission. In other words, we are official representatives of the kingdom of God to be sent into the world for a specific mission to reconcile the world with God. I encouraged you, as Jesus offered himself for us, we may offer ourselves to others who don’t believe in him yet, or get hurt by the belief in Jesus. Living in the world as ambassadors for Christ, we should keep three rules; “Do no Harm,” “Do Good,” and “Stay in love with God.” These three simple rules are what the Methodist Founder John Wesley suggested. I chose these themes to discuss during Membership Caring month because we should keep these rules in order to care for our family, friends, loved ones, and all of God’s people.

For the last theme of Membership Caring month, I will talk about “Staying in Love with God.” Even though we can’t see God, we can feel God is with us through “love.” The First Letter of John says, “And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him” (3 John 4:16). How we love God and love one another is evidence we are ambassadors for Christ. Furthermore, it is evidence we belong to God and have eternal life. John says, “We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers (and sisters). Anyone who does not love remains in death” (3 John 3:14).

We should be with God to love one another because love is a great gift from God. Without God’s help, we can’t love one another always. Therefore, we should stay in love with God. The way we live with God keeps our relationship with God good, vital, alive, and growing. John Wesley named it “the means of Grace,” such as Public worshiping of God, the Lord’s Supper (Communion), private and family prayer, searching the Scriptures, Bible study, and fasting as essential to a faithful life. Wesley saw these disciplines as central to any life of

faithfulness to God in Jesus Christ.

Living in the presence of, and in harmony with God, is made known in Jesus Christ and accompanies us in the Holy Spirit, to live life from the inside out. It is to find our moral direction, wisdom, courage, and strength to live faithfully from the One who authored us, called us, sustained us, and sent us into the world as ambassadors and witnesses who practice daily the way of living with Jesus. The means of grace keep us in that healing, redeeming presence and power of God that forms and transforms each of us more and more into the image of the One we seek to follow.

Today's Scripture says, "As you, therefore, have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you are taught, abounding in thanksgiving." As the Scripture says, we are rooted and built in Jesus Christ, and we should live in him continually. That's the way we keep our life. Again, the way to keep our life in Jesus Christ is to stay in love with God. Jesus says, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now stay in my love" (John 15:9). Jesus taught us how important it was to stay close to God, and it would be through love.

After being resurrected, Jesus met his disciples in Galilee, where they first met Jesus, to reaffirm their mission in the world. Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" It was a great deal about the essentials of our relationship with God. Jesus asked him three times, "Do you love me?" and Peter answered three times in the affirmative. Staying in love with God was the primary issue of living a life of love because God will flow his goodness and love into the world. It can be no other way. Without love, we cannot keep the first and the second rules, "harm no others" and "do good," because it is possible only by the power of love. Christian life will not be discovered, achieved, continued, and sustained without staying in love with God.

As you know, Peter denied three times that he was Jesus' disciple. Jesus came to him again and asked him three times, "Do you love me?" Peter says, "You know I love you, but with your help." Peter surely knew that he couldn't love Jesus without God's help. Even though Peter answered him, "Yes, I love you; Yes, Lord, I love you; But, Lord, you know what, I love you with your help." And then, Jesus reaffirmed his mission in the world, "Feed lambs; take care of my sheep; Feed my sheep." To take care of family, friends, loved ones, and our neighbors is that "feed and take care of them with love." Therefore, while staying in love with God involves prayer, worship, study, and the Lord's Supper, it also involves feeding the lambs, tending the sheep, and providing for the needs of others (John 21:15-16).

Sometimes we fail to love them, but don't worry. The good news is that God gives us a second chance, as Jesus gave Peter a second chance, whose denial seemed like such an enormous failure, and to each of us, no matter what our failures may have been. The question to Peter becomes the question to each of us, "Do you love me?" When we respond in the affirmative, the response from God is always the same, "Feed my lambs, take care of my sheep." I want to conclude the Membership Caring month series with one Scripture verse, "If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brothers (and sisters), he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brothers (and sisters), who has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen" (1 John 4:20). Thanks be to God. Amen!