

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

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison

Thank you, God, for the abundant life we enjoy, not in the things we possess but in the relationships you offer and the opportunities for sharing that you provide. May all that we here dedicate to you be distributed in ways that meet human need and offer praise to you. Extend our outreach beyond our vision, that we may live in awe and wonder before you, marveling before your goodness and mercy. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN *Where He Leads Me* UMH 338 (vs. 1 & 4)

*BENEDICTION

Pastor Jenny Lee

*POSTLUDE

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

Please take a plant home with you as a way of sharing life.

If you want to share your seeds or plants, please bring them to the church and share them with others.

Upper St. Croix Parish United Methodist Church

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

Fourth Sunday of Easter



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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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
April 30th, 2023
Fourth Sunday of Easter

*Please stand if you are able.

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

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
PASSING OF THE GREETINGS

Leader: Our Lord Jesus Christ is risen!

All people: Jesus is risen. Hallelujah! Amen!

Leader: Peace be with you!

All People: And, also with you!

We Celebrate New Life in Christ

***CALL TO WORSHIP** Responsive

How awesome to gather before God!

We are here to celebrate with wide-eyed wonder.

The God of all worlds is with us.

Praise God for this season of Easter.

Praise God for all the signs of new life.

Praise God for all we can do together.

Praise God for the life and ministry of Jesus.

Praise God for all who share that ministry today.

Christ came to offer us abundant life.

We are here today to reclaim that gift.

We gather in the name of Jesus Christ.

We want to follow in the steps of Jesus. Amen.

***DEDICATING HYMN** *My Jesus, I Love Thee*

UMH 172 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Let us hear your voice today, O Shepherd. Call our names and claim us as your own. Lead us beside still waters and restore our souls. Comfort those who suffer pain and loss. Assure all who are afraid. Lead us in the right paths for your name's sake. We have

known your goodness and mercy in so many times and places. We open ourselves now to receive these gifts again. Unlock with us the barriers that keep us from recognizing and appreciating all the evidence of your love that surrounds us. Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME

UMH 191 (vs.1)

Proclamation of God's Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

John 10:1-10

10 "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. 2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." 6 Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

7 So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

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

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

"Jesus is the Holy Insurance"

Pastor Jenny Lee

We Respond to God's Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

God, beyond our knowing, yet revealed so personally in Jesus Christ, help us to embrace the abundant life you have offered us. May we follow the example of Jesus, who is our insurance for salvation and eternal life, trusting in your abiding care for each one of us until all join in praising you with mutual goodwill and joy. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

APRIL CHURCH MISSIONS

ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Peggy Frederickson

INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:

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



LOAVES & FISHES NEEDS OUR ONGOING SUPPORT

April Collection:

Toothbrushes, toothpaste & paper towels.



Easter Special offerings" 10% of the Easter offering went to support the Ukraine.



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"



APRIL SHOWERS

Let's shower the church with needed supplies.

Toilet bowl cleaner, Dusting spray, Multi-surface disinfectant spray, Bleach – 1 gal, Room deodorizer (solid, not spray), Hand soap - pump, Hand sanitizer - pump, Distilled water 1 gallon (for piano), 9V Batteries, D Batteries, Paper towels, Toilet paper, Kool-Aid or Crystal Light, Lysol Lime & Rust, Coffee-regular, Ziplock bags- sandwich, quart and gallon.

ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh

Food Shelf



(Communion Sunday)

Sailor Hat Offering:



The Sailor Hat offering will go to support UMCOR.

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
Tom Goepfert
Paulie Kratchmer
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
Colleen Adams-Schween
Sue Olson
Chase Steffen
Volunteer Needed
Younger/Older
Josie Grimes/Jamie Steffen

St. Croix Falls:

Pianist
Liturgist
Usher(s)
Money Counter
Bell Ringer
Flowers

Sharon Asp
Jim Andrews
Karen Sciacca
Peter Gionis
Jim Sciacca
Ladies of the church



Break through Prayers:

- 1) **Baby Lila (hospitalized)**
- 2) **Baby Harley (upcoming surgery)**
- 3) **Anneliese Snyder (youth)**

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=SDZleFNubmEvaDBlcytTRzVxMFlIZz09>
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: Fourth Sunday of Easter
Christ is risen, Hallelujah, Amen!

Sunday Worship Services:

- 4/30: Fourth Sunday of Easter
9:00 am Grantsburg with Zoom
10:00 am Atlas (10:15 am Sunday School)
11:15 am St. Croix Falls with Zoom
- 4/30-5/1 Pastor Jenny attends Provisional Elder Retreat at Pine Lake Camp
- 5/3 1:30 pm Ad Council Members Meet with DS Barb Certa-Werner (A)
6:30 pm Confirmation Class (A)
- 5/4 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!

Important Dates
and INFORMATION

5/14 Mother's Day Sunday

5/21 Graduation/Confirmation Sunday

5/28 Pentecost Sunday

Next Sunday (May 7th) Volunteers:

Central:

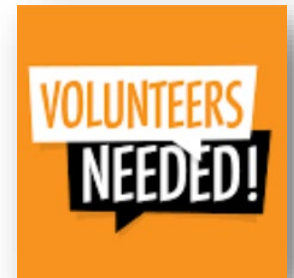
Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Volunteer Needed
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Snow Removal	Tom Goepfert
Fellowship	Volunteer Needed
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Charlie Glonek and Sandra Erickson
Communion	Barb Loomis
Sunday School	Younger/Older LuAnn Martell/Barb Loomis

Atlas:

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Sue Olson
Usher	Jamie Steffen
Acolyte(s)	Copelan Grimes
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Communion	Sue Olson
Sunday School	Younger/Older Cheryl Olson/in service

St. Croix Falls:

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Karen Sciacca
Usher(s)	Jim Andrews
Money Counter	Karen Sciacca
Bell Ringer	Jim Sciacca
Flowers	Ladies of the church
Communion	Jim & Karen Sciacca



This Week's Birthdays

Rekha Roelfs 5/1
LuAnne Martell 5/3
Ashleigh Olson 5/4
Colleen Skeie Norenberg 5/4
Jason Frenette 5/4
Naomi McLean 5/6



April 30, 2023
John 10:1-10

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



“Jesus is the Holy Insurance.”

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: Mr. Smith was brought to Mercy Hospital (a Catholic hospital) and taken quickly in for coronary surgery. The operation went well, and as the groggy man regained consciousness, he was reassured by a sister of Mercy Hospital, who was waiting by his bed.

“Mr. Smith, you’re going to be just fine,” said the nun, gently patting his hand. “We need to know how you intend to pay for your stay here. Does insurance cover you?” “No, I don’t have it,” the man whispered hoarsely. “Then can you pay in cash?” persisted the nun. “I’m afraid I cannot, Sister.” “Well, do you have any close relatives?” the nun questioned sternly. “Just my sister in New Mexico, but she’s a humble spinster nun,” he said. “Oh, I must correct you, Mr. Smith. Nuns are not spinsters—they are married to God.” “Wonderful,” said Mr. Smith. “In that case, please send the bill to my brother-in-law.”

Have you ever thought of why you became a Christian? Most of you were Christians from birth. Honestly, you might have even been considered a Christian in your mother’s womb. However, at times, you may have thought seriously about when you actually became a Christian. You may have had an opportunity to decide your faith through the confirmation of your teenagers. You may think about it whenever you face a life crisis, or sometimes you may wander far from the faith community.

Many people who don’t know about Jesus are still good at helping others. They may live what appears to be a better life than Christians do. Yes, we should live in the world as well as we can. However, it is not all, because we are the Easter people living eternal life. If all family members believe in Jesus Christ as the Savior and the Lord, it is the best blessing for that family. So, I ask you every Sunday to pray for those who don’t believe in God yet among your family, relatives, and loved ones. I bless you and your family members who believe in Jesus Christ and worship him daily. We should believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and the Lord because he is our insurance of salvation and eternal life.

As we learned through Genesis, we became living beings by God’s Spirit from the beginning of the world God created, which means we are connected to God in spirit. As long as we are connected to God, we may live in eternity. However, the first human beings, Adam and Eve, went away from God. The Scripture, Romans, say, “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and in this way, death came to all men because all sinned” (Romans 5:12). However, God still loves them and wanted to protect and save them from the death. Finally, God sent us His Only Son, Jesus Christ. The Gospel John says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). So, we can be reconnected with God through Jesus Christ for eternal life. Romans says, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:23-24).

Yes, Jesus is the only way to get to God. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). We confess we are saved by faith alone in Jesus Christ through the grace of God. Such faith in Jesus Christ may cure our physical and spiritual illnesses. We found that when Jesus healed the sick, he used to say, "Your faith saved you," but he did not say, "I heal you." Such faith in Jesus Christ leads us to God and eternal life.

Before today's scripture, there was a big miraculous event in which Jesus cured a man who was blind from birth. He used to beg for his life on the street and was known as a blind beggar. So, many people were surprised to find out that he could see and asked how he got his sight back. He answered that the one called Jesus cured him, and now he could see. And people brought him to the Pharisees (the religious leaders) and told them about what happened to him. The Pharisees thought Jesus was not from God because he cured the blind on Sabbath day, which went against the Law. The Pharisees were more focused on the fact that Jesus went against the Law than that he healed blind people because they were concerned that people were following Jesus, and not following them. However, the man said, "You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." And then the Pharisees threw him out.

At that time, people trusted in Pharisees as being the gate of heaven, and people respected them and followed their teachings. In other words, they were the Law; if anyone didn't follow them, they were regarded as going against God. Hearing they threw him out, Jesus told them the story about the good shepherd and sheep. The story of shepherds and sheep was familiar to Israelite people because many were stock farmers. You may know that King David was also a shepherd.

Sheep follow their owners; they know their owner's voice; they follow their owner when they call their names. It is like our beloved pets. If you have pets, you easily understand what that means. Here is an example: Who would your pet follow if you and a stranger called your pet's name at the same time? Yes, of course, they would follow you. Your pet knows you and your place; they know you are the owner; they know you take care of them; they know you feed them; they know you protect them; they know you love them; that's why they follow you rather than others. Likewise, Jesus is the good shepherd, and we are his sheep. We should recognize Jesus' voice, which means the words of God, and follow his direction. Jesus said, "I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pastures." Jesus is only the good shepherd who lays down his life to save his sheep. Remember how Jesus loved us and died on the cross to save us from our sins.

We have medical insurance. The medical insurance is good enough to cover our needs if we have any medical issues. We have auto insurance to cover us if we have any car accidents. We also have insurance for our property, such as houses, land, and buildings. However, we know that insurance will only protect us for a while. Some day we will die, even if we have medical, auto, and other types of insurance. Have you ever thought about insurance for our eternal life? What if we die having insurance for eternal life? I am not kidding. It is true, Jesus is our life-long insurance but also our insurance for eternal life. Jesus said to Martha, who was sad about the loss of her brother Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26). I ask you, do you believe this? Jesus is our holy insurance; He is the Savior and the Lord. Thanks be to God. Amen!