

After each prayer request:
Pastor: Lord, in your mercy,
All: Hear our Prayer.

NO. 2023-26
June 25th, 2023

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**

For all the great and wondrous things you have done for us, O God, we are grateful. You give us strength to go on when we are troubled and discouraged. You grant newness of life as we share in Christ's resurrection. We want to pass on the good news through this offering and by the way we live each day. Lead us and guide us in your steadfast love, that we might channel your gift to all we meet. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN**

His Eye is on the Sparrow

TFWS 2146

***BENEDICTION**

Rev. Deb Lind or Responsive

The Teacher has called you as disciples.
Learn from Christ to serve without fear.

We expect to learn daily from our Teacher.

We commit ourselves anew to Christ's service.

Let God's love be your first awareness each day.

Let that love flow through every activity.

We bow down to glorify God's name.

We rejoice that God makes a place for our witness.

Now, go forth with God's love and Jesus Christ's grace.

And, be a witness of Christ's love by the Holy Spirit.

We will go to the world as Jesus' disciples.

and we will live as Jesus' witnesses. Amen!

***POSTLUDE**

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

Worship Resources "Taught by Love" by Lavon Bayler.

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

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

4th Sunday After Pentecost



**Grantsburg-Central,
Since 1897**



Atlas, Since 1887



**St. Croix Falls,
Since 1859**

SUNDAY SERVICES:

ONLINE SERVICE ONLY AT GRANTSBURG AT THIS TIME

9:00 AM at Grantsburg (9:15 AM, Sunday School)

10:00 AM at Atlas (Sunday School-summer break)

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
June 25th, 2023

*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!

(Waive your hands at one another)

We Celebrate New Life in Christ

***CALL TO WORSHIP** **Responsive**

Come, nations of the earth, to bow before God.

Distant galaxies proclaim the Creator of all things.

We are humbled by the wonders of creation.

We are amazed by God's mighty works.

This infinite God cares for each one of us.

God hears our cries and responds to our needs.

In our days of trouble, we call on our God.

We are confident that God listens and answers.

Let us also call on God with our prayers of thanks.

Let us celebrate the wondrous things God provides.

God cares for us, even when others reject us.

We gather to glorify God's name. Amen.

***DEDICATING HYMN** *O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee*

UMH 430

OPENING PRAYER **Unison**

Holy God, come to us in our distress. We are weary of conflict and long for your healing waters of forgiveness and renewal. You have sent us a teacher to draw us into discipleship, and we have found fulfillment when we are faithful to Christ's call. We long to find peace as we serve, but more often we encounter a sword. Our disagreements are many, and our capacity to forgive is strained. Send your light that we might not falter in our caring and in the proclamation of your good news. Amen!

CHILDREN'S TIME (G)

UMH 191 (vs.1)

Proclamation of God's Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Matthew 10:24-39

24 "A disciple is not above the teacher nor a slave above the master; 25 it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

26 "So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered and nothing secret that will not become known. 27 What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. 28 Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, fear the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 And even the hairs of your head are all counted. 31 So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

32 "Everyone, therefore, who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven, 33 but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword.

35 For I have come to set a man against his father,

and a daughter against her mother,

and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law,

36 and one's foes will be members of one's own household.

37 "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me, 38 and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

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

Thanks be to God.

SERMON *"From Lament to Praise: His Eye is on the Sparrow"*

Rev. Deb Lind

We Respond to God's Word

RESPONDING PRAYER **Unison**

Gracious God, in whose eyes every sparrow has value, and in whose love even the hairs of our heads are counted, lead us to the light, that we might proclaim your love from the housetops and put you first in our lives. May our discipleship reflect the witness of our teacher, Jesus Christ, that all nations may bow down before you and glorify your name. Amen.

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

JUNE 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

Requested items: Bread, eggs, milk, cheese, fresh vegetables (carrots, potatoes), fresh fruit (apples, oranges), canned meat, dish soap, lotion, toothpaste, toothbrushes, paper towels. They appreciate any and all donations.

We appreciate your ongoing support!

1. We will focus on financial support of our church to help expand our ministry.
2. We will also be supporting Peace with Justice- Richard Hodes MD's ministry.

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 supporting "Peace with Justice" Richard Hodes MD's Ministry

(Please see the June newsletter or the church bulletin board for additional details)

ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh



Food Shelf
(Communion Sunday)



Sailor Hat Offering:

The Sailor Hat offering will go to support CRA & the Butterfly House

Thank you for your support!

TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers

All God's People
Pastor Jenny Lee

Central:

Pianist
Liturgist
Acolyte(s)
Mowing
Fellowship
Counter
Cleaning
Sunday School

Toni Koons
LuAnne Martell
Willow Nyland
Russ Hammer/Dave Huff
Volunteer Needed
Volunteer Needed
Charlie Glonek and Sandra Erickson
Younger/Older
LuAnn Martell/Barb Loomis

Atlas:

Pianist
Liturgist
Usher
Acolyte(s)
Cleaning
Sunday School

Sharon Asp
Colleen Adams-Schween
Cheryl Olson
Chase Steffen
Volunteer Needed
Younger/Older
Summer Break-VBS coming soon

St. Croix Falls:

Pianist
Liturgist
Usher(s)
Money Counter
Bell Ringer
Flowers
Fellowship

Sharon Asp
Karen Sciacca
Jim Andrews
Peter Gionis
Jim Sciacca
Ladies of the Church
Ad Council Members



Preachers During Pastor Jenny's Vacation

June 25: Rev. Deb Lind will preach at all three churches (G, A, SCF)
(Thanks to Rev. Deb Lind)

Please note all three churches should have a liturgist as they typically do.



Break through Prayers: Please pray for those who are suffering from illness whether physically, emotionally or spiritually.

PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) Online service may be available on June 18th and 25th only at 9:00 AM. But we will send you a weekly bulletin and written sermon through post mail and email. If you have any questions regarding the mailing weekly materials, please contact our parish secretary, Colleen Norenberg.
- 2) Our Sunday Sermons are on the website at upperstroixparish.org under Sermons!
- 3) Recorded videos may not be available in June.

This Week's Calendar:

Today: 4th Sunday after Pentecost
God bless you all!

Sunday Worship Services:

- 6/25: 4th Sunday after Pentecost
- | | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|
| 9:00 am | Grantsburg (9:15 am, Sunday School) |
| 10:00 am | Atlas (no Sunday School) |
| 11:15 am | St. Croix Falls |
- 6/13-6/27 Pastor Jenny's Vacation. In case of emergency contact her via text. She will have very limited access to email.
- 6/25 4:00-6:00 pm Youth Cooking Day (G)
- 6/27 10:00 am July Newsletter and Calendar Information Due
- 6/29 5:00 pm VBS Staff and Volunteer Meeting (G)
- 7:00-8:30 pm Provisional Elder Mentoring 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!

VBS is from August 7th - August 10th

First Registration Deadline: by July 14th (All Kids will get a shirt)
Second Registration Deadline: by July 28 (Kids may not get shirts)

We need your help as volunteers. A sign-up sheet is available.
Find a spot and be a part of Vacation Bible School.

Questions: Contact Shayna Schmid (Youth Director)

Next Sunday (July 2nd) Volunteers:

Central:

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------|
| Pianist | Toni Koons |
| Liturgist | Volunteer Needed |
| Acolyte(s) | Willow Nyland |
| Mowing | Russ Hammer/Dave Huff |
| 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 | Sue Olson |
| Usher | Colleen Adams-Schween |
| Acolyte(s) | Volunteer Needed |
| Cleaning | Volunteer Needed |
| Sunday School | Younger/Older |
| | <i>Summer Break-VBS coming soon</i> |

St. Croix Falls:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| Pianist | Sharon Asp |
| Liturgist | Volunteer Needed |
| Usher(s) | Volunteer Needed |
| Money Counter | Peter Gionis |
| Bell Ringer | Volunteer Needed |
| Flowers | Ladies of the Church |
| Fellowship | Ad Council Members |



THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- Mary McNally 6/27
Emily Rahkola 6/28
Maxine Hauble 6/28
Steve & LeAnn Sylvester 6/29
Taryn Gaffey 6/29



June 25, 2023

Upper St. Croix Parish: Grantsburg, Atlas, and St. Croix Falls
Rev. Dr. Deborah Lind, preacher

Scriptures for Proper 7/Fourth after Pentecost

Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17 (NRSV) 1 Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. 2 Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you; save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God; 3 be gracious to me, O Lord, for to you do I cry all day long. 4 Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. 5 For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you. 6 Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; listen to my cry of supplication. 7 In the day of my trouble I call on you, for you will answer me. 8 There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. 9 All the nations you have made shall come and bow down before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. 10 For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.

16 Turn to me and be gracious to me;
give your strength to your servant;
save the child of your maidservant.

17 Show me a sign of your favor,
so that those who hate me may see it and be put to shame,
because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

Matthew 10: 24-39 A disciple is not above the teacher nor a slave above the master; ²⁵ it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

²⁶ “So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. ²⁷ What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸ Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, fear the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell.^[a] ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹ So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

³² “Everyone, therefore, who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven, ³³ but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.³⁴ “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword.

³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father,
and a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law,
³⁶ and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.

³⁷ “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me, ³⁸ and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Sermon: “From Lament to Praise: His Eye is on the Sparrow”

Lectionary Readings for this Sunday deal with the underside of faith. The disciples who have faithfully followed Jesus are now faced with the reality that they too will deal with conflict, hatred, and death. In the Gospel according to Matthew, everything that Jesus has endured will be their fate. There is a cost to discipleship. (Matthew 10:16-23) This is a reality check, “if you follow me, it will not be an easy life”. Ministry is not a get rich scheme, like some evangelists from tents to TV demonstrated. Jesus was clear that the rich ruler and the Pharisees who demanded attention and glory might not make it through the gates of heaven. Peace might not reign in your family because of religious rifts. So, what’s new?

Let's admit it, you and I know what it's like to be despairing and faithful. Can you think of time when you cried out to God, and prayed in despair?

Our reading, Psalm 86 begins with such a plea to God...from one who is "poor and needy". Ever been there? (Raise your hands) **The Message** translation is something we can understand, "*Bend an ear, God: answer me. I'm one miserable wretch! Keep me safe-haven't I lived a good life? Help your servant- I'm depending on you. You are my God; Have mercy.*"

Sometime in your life, it may not be this moment. You and I have been there on our proverbial knees or standing screaming, "Where are you, God?" Can you relate?

Let me tell you a modern parable: A mule was walking along enjoying the sunny day when he fell into a deep dark hole. Unable to climb out the mule loudly cried out, "HE HAW, HEY UP THERE, HELP ME OUT!" A farmer in the field heard his cry, took his shovel out of his wagon, and started digging. He tossed dirt down the hole the mule cried out, "HE HAW, why are you burying me?". The mule stomped around while the man continued to toss dirt over the braying animal. Shaking it off and stomping the dirt down, the hole was filling up and the floor was rising UNTIL the mule could step out, walking away tired but alive and well.

Can you relate? Short story about me. I was ordained 34 years ago when women clergy were still new in the Presbyterian and Methodist churches. Christians in our family had mixed reactions. Catholics and Baptists love me, but were not in favor. Stay in music. The whole was dark and deep, but I did have people who lifted me up into the light. God was always with me and spoke through the faith community. One Princeton Seminary professor told me to look up and listen to the applause.

I think that the Psalms and Gospel selections for today are important reminders that discipleship, following Christ is difficult. And the journey can be rough. But you don't walk it alone. Yes, Matthew 10: 24-39 lays out a harsh reality, to follow Christ can be dangerous and difficult. Jesus needs harvest hands, workers in the vineyard. And you are never too young or old to sow seeds of love and devotion.

My sister and I are helping our 94-year-old mother move into a smaller room at the nursing home. And I she showed me a letter I'd written to my Swedish Grandfather in 1963. I was astonished. I wrote that I was playing the organ for children's church and organizing the worship. Plus, I attended the youth program and sang in the adult choir. Even little children can lead if you encourage them.

Same goes for all ages. We all assume that our ministry is right here inside these walls. But Jesus instructs his disciples to get out there! Imitate Christ and practice your ministry out there. On the roads, in your neighborhood, in the grocery store.

Reach out to the lost sheep. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse. (Matthew 10:5b-15)

Essentially Jesus Christ told his disciples to observe and do the same.

Now do as I have done. Love as I have loved you. Don't expect to sit at the head table, prance around like mucky mucks, or accumulate riches and titles or praise. Instead get out there on the dusty roads. And, if someone doesn't like you or the message, shake it off (the dust) and move on.

Don't retaliate. If they don't want the peace Christ's brings, so be it.

Share Christ's love and peace with the next person.

The tough talk in Matthew 10: 16-23 seems harsh at first but it was their reality. Jesus warns that everything he has experienced including death threats and division may happen to the disciples/Apostles. You may get arrested and they were. Or you may be put to death. And several disciples were martyred like Jesus. Families may divide, brothers and sisters may stop speaking to you. You may have division in your own families because of religion. We all want peace, in the world, in our communities and in our families. But that isn't easy. One seminary professor gently guided me during rough times in my family. It wasn't easy being a female called to the ministry 40 years ago. His directive reminds me to calm down, think, pray and remember to "Speak the

truth in love". Cunning or as smart as a serpent and gentle as a dove. The other directive I had posted over my office door. "Jesus came to take away your sins, not your mind".

There is a wealth of Jesus' Wisdom in verses 24-32 The TRUTH WILL COME OUT OR REVEAL ITSELF. Don't fear those who kill the body, they can not kill your soul. The old life is gone, and you will have a life that is worthy and priceless. God cares for the smallest and most vulnerable little birds, sparrows could be purchased for pennies.

"Why should I feel discouraged? Why should the shadows come? Why should my heart be lonely and long for heaven and home, When Jesus is my portion? My constant friend is he.

His eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me, I sing because I'm happy...I sing because I'm free for his eye is on the sparrow. And, I know he watches me".

You see in the end; we praise for the God who loves us. We thank God for Jesus Christ, who assures us that God knows inch of us body and soul. That includes the hairs or lack of hairs on our head, the aches of body and soul. Of each of us. Christ loved in an extravagant way to demonstrate his love for God and God's love for us. Whoever acknowledges God in heaven, acknowledges Christ. And those who acknowledge Christ before others will be One with God.

All Praise and Glory to God!

"His eye is on the Sparrow" lyrics written by a woman, Civilla D. Martin in 1905.