

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

UMH 95

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** Unison

We repeat our vows of commitment to you, gracious God, as we dedicate this offering. We are disciples of Jesus Christ, commissioned to share the good news. May all that we dedicate here-our abilities, the fleeting moments of our days, the resources entrusted to our management-announce your reign and the nearness of your dominion. We give with joy and serve with delight, thanking you for this opportunity to share what you have given. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN**

Standing on the Promise UMH 374 (vs. 1 & 4) (G & SCF)
We Are the Church UMH 558 (vs. 1, 2 & 5) (A)

***BENEDICTION** Responsive (G & SCF)/ Rev. Tom Cook (A)

Go out, prepared each day for God's appearing.
Recognize the Christ within and among us.

**Surely God is present wherever we go.
God listens and responds to our prayers.**

We have peace with God through Jesus Christ.
God's love has been poured into our hearts.

**We have received the gift of the Holy Spirit.
We carry God's grace into the world. Amen!**

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

*All fathers at Atlas will receive donuts as a gift of gratitude on Father's Day.

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)

Father's Day Sunday



**Grantsburg-Central,
Since 1897**



Atlas, Since 1887



**St. Croix Falls,
Since 1859**

SUNDAY SERVICE:

ONLINE SERVICE OFFERS ONLY AT 9:00 AM

**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 18th, 2023
Father's Day Sunday

*Please stand if you are able.

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

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING TO FATHERS

(All fathers will receive blue flowers.)

God our Father, in your wisdom and love you made all things.

Bless all fathers, especially these fathers before you, that they may be strengthened as Christian fathers. Let the example of their faith and love shine forth. Grant that we, their sons and daughters, may honor them always with a spirit of profound respect. Grant this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!

PASSING OF THE GREETINGS

Peace be with you! (*Waive your hands with one another*)

We Celebrate New Life in Christ

***CALL TO WORSHIP** Responsive

This is a time of God's appearing; let us worship!

Let us recognize that God is within and among us.

God's ear is inclined toward us.

We know that God listens and hears our prayers.

We are here to offer our thanks to God.

We will pay our vows to God in the presence of others.

We are grateful for the grace in which we stand.

We praise God with great joy and gladness.

God bears us up on eagles' wings.

God draws us into a covenant community.

We will listen for God's commandments.

We will seek to do all that God requires. Amen.

***DEDICATING HYMN**

Spirit of God TFWS 2117 (vs. 1, 3 & 5) (G & SCF)
For the Beauty of the Earth UMH 92 (vs. 1, 2, 5, &6) (A)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

God of all creation, help us to recognize your presence among us. May we greet one another as your precious children and as messengers of your care. Help us offer such hospitality to one another that even the most skeptical among us will be touched by love. You are love; in you we find hope amid our weakness and doubt. Let your glory shine in this place today as we lift up the cup of salvation and call on your name. Amen!

CHILDREN'S TIME (G)

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God's Word

***THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**

Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7 (G & SCF) See Insert

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

John 1:1-18 (A) See Insert

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

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Barb Loomis (G)
Rev. Toom Cook (A)
Kathy Gionis (SCF)

We Respond to God's Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Father of all creations, teach us and empower us to proclaim the good news of your dominion, that healing may be offered, new life received, and demons overcome. May your love tend all of us day by day, transforming us in the image 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 OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**

Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7 (G & SCF) See Insert

18:1 The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day.

18:2 He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground.

18:3 He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant.

18:4 Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.

18:5 Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on--since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said."

18:6 And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes."

18:7 Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it.

18:8 Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

18:9 They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent."

18:10 Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him.

18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

18:12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?"

18:13 The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?'

18:14 Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son."

18:15 But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. He said, "Oh yes, you did laugh."

21:1 The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised.

21:2 Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him.

21:3 Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him.

21:4 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.

21:5 Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

21:6 Now Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me."

21:7 And she said, "Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

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

Thanks be to God.

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

John 1:1-18 (A) See Insert

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. 15 (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") 16 From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

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

Thanks be to God.

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
Volunteer Needed
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
Copelan Grimes
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 18: Barb Loomis (G), Rev. Tom Cook (A), and Kathy Gionis (SCF)

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

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 upperstcroixparish.org under Sermons!
- 3) Recorded videos may not be available in June.

This Week's Calendar:

Today: Father's Day Sunday/ 3rd Sunday after Pentecost
God bless you all!

Sunday Worship Services:

6/11: Father's Day Sunday

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.

6/20 6:30 pm Ad Council Meeting (G)
6/25 4:00-6:00 pm Youth Cooking Day at 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!

VBS is from August 7th- August 10th

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

Questions: Contact Shayna Schmid (Youth Director)

Next Sunday (June 25th, Father's Day) 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	Colleen Adams-Schween
Usher	Cheryl Olson
Acolyte(s)	Chase Steffen
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Younger/Older <i>Summer Break-VBS coming soon</i>

St. Croix Falls:

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Karen Sciacca
Usher(s)	Jim Andrews
Money Counter	Peter Gionis
Bell Ringer	Jim Sciacca
Flowers	Ladies of the Church
Fellowship	Ad Council Members



THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Leland Snyder 6/18
Shane Tooze 6/19
Judith McCann 6/20



CENTRAL UMC-GRANTSBURG

PROMISES

By Barb Loomis

Happy Father's Day, everyone! Take a moment and think about your father, happy moments, when he made you laugh, when he made you smile, and when he taught you things that you still remember.

Most people that know me know I do not tell jokes very well. I messed up the punchline or something else. I leave an important part out. Hopefully the jokes I tell you here today will be correct. Part of that is because my dad was the master of dad jokes, so my exposure to humor was limited. Even when I was in college, there was a place that I found to go and study. Nobody was there, and then this group of young men showed up, and they had tapes of not clean jokes that they were playing and laughing about until they realized that I was sitting there, using my slide rule, ignoring everything they said, I wasn't really ignoring them completely. I just didn't get it. In fact, some of those jokes that were on that audio, would come back to me later. And I would think or say to myself, "Oh that's what they meant." Because I didn't get it then!". A coworker used to tell me a joke every time I came to work. Nine times out of ten, I didn't get it. On the days I did, he would laugh very hard. He was surprised and pleased.

I can't give you this introduction without at least giving you a two or three dad jokes.

Did Eve ever have a date with Adam? No, just an apple.

What kind of person was Boaz before he got married? Ruthless!

Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible? Samson. He brought down the house.

Now You are probably asking yourself what is this all about.? Why is Barbara telling these dumb jokes? Do you know there's many stories in the Bible that are really funny. Stories that make you laugh, and make you question how did that happen? This is one of them. When I first read this scripture, I always wondered. "How did Abraham know that it was the Lord visiting him?" Was God visiting him? There were three people, so was that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Was that God, and two angels alongside Him? No matter what the case was, Abraham greeted them quickly. brought them water to wash their feet. told Sarah to make bread. Asked the servant to kill a calf. All this is gonna take time and some people say it was just three strangers. The Hebrew people were taught to always welcome strangers. You never know when you're welcoming angels of the Lord, or the Lord himself. So did he only do these things because culture demanded it of him? That in itself, is amazing to me.

If someone showed up at your door, would you make a feast for them and welcome them into your home?. Not many people are willing to do that in this day and age, but there is the occasional person that would. My sister, when she moved to Kentucky about 40 years ago, she and her family went to church on Sunday morning. People there greeted them and one family took her, her husband and children home with them and fed them a good meal. Actually welcomed them to stay in their home for a few days, rather than sleeping in the camper that they were all staying in. How many of us would do that?

I digress. Maybe we know the story of Abram becoming Abraham. When the Lord promised to Abraham that his descendants would outnumber the stars that you can count in the sky.

Well, many years have passed since God made that promise to Abraham and of course to Sarah. Sarah is in her 90's possibly some interpretations of the Bible say she was in her 80's. Sarah overheard this conversation when the guests said that Sarah would become pregnant and have a son. 80 years old! She laughed. I believe that Abraham laughed. If somebody even suggested that at my age, I would have a baby I would have to sit down because I'd be laughing too hard.

The problem was that Sarah's laughter reflected her unbelief, in the promise of God. Unbelief is more serious than you could imagine. To doubt God's promise is like calling God a liar. It is to say that you know better than God. God, the creator. You know better than God.

Sarah was way past childbearing age so of course she laughed. Pastor, Alan George once asked the youth what was the greater miracle Sarah having a baby in her old age, Elizabeth, Mary's cousin having a baby in her old age or Mary having a baby. All are great miracles and works of God.

All of us have struggled some time in our life with disbelief in God. Did God hear our prayers? Some answers to prayer aren't the way we wanted them. maybe you have suffered a tragedy, such as the loss of a close, loved one, and you wonder, where was God when this happened? Maybe it's a family problem that has dragged on for years. You wonder, why doesn't God do something? Why doesn't he answer?

How many years do you suppose that Sarah prayed to have a child? Having a child, that was the main purpose of a wife in the days of Sarah and Abraham. Yet she was unable to conceive. What do you pray for? Are your prayers always important? Do you ever pray for something simple and easy? Right now we need to pray for rain. I have a tendency to lose things. So, I often pray to find that which is lost. Sometimes it is as trivial as a lost sock. Sometimes it is my car keys. God hears all our prayers. God does not care if they're small or large. God cares about us. God promised that Abraham's descendants would be as numerous as the stars. We know that by Sarah's laughter that she had given up hope in that promise. We have to assume that Abraham deeply loved Sarah, or he would have set her aside in order to have children. It was a common practice in those days. Further in the book of Genesis, Sarah offers her handmaiden as a surrogate in order to fulfill God's promises. It is not up to us to fulfill the promise. Sarah and Abraham did learn that eventually.

Even after offering the Handmaiden, Sarah did become pregnant. "In due time", Sarah gave birth to a son. They named him Isaac. His name could not have been more meaningful. The name Issac is of Hebrew origin and means "laughter".

ST. CROIX FALLS UMC

By Kathy Gionis

ABRAHAM—FATHER OF FAITH

When I'm arguing someone's case in court or writing a legal memorandum for a judge, I am not at a loss for words. Frequently, in court, I'll say a little prayer that the other lawyer will stop talking, just be quiet, and it's probably vice versa with the other lawyer. Anyway, trying to think of "what is a good topic for Father's Day", has been challenging. I remember when we had a lay speaker from Grantsburg and she said she found it difficult to compose a sermon and I wasn't able to empathize with her at that time, but this past week I found myself out of ideas. I wanted to talk about Father's Day and that is why I picked the Old Testament reading about Abraham and Sarah having a child when Abraham was about 100 years old.

This past week I have been engaging in thinking of past happy thoughts of my own father. I say "happy" because for the most part my thoughts of my father are happy thoughts. My father was a hardworking man who kept very disciplined working hours as a self employed newspaperman. My dad was a "preacher's kid". My grandfather was a local licensed pastor and he served churches in northern Wisconsin including Birchwood, St. Croix Falls and Greenwood, Wisconsin. He served this church from 1931 to 1936 when he accepted a new appointment at Greenwood, WI, in September of 1936. Both of my parents graduated from St. Croix Falls High School. My father was 15 years old when he graduated from high school and it was during the depression. He attended Hamline University for a year, but did not go further due to lack of money—it was during the depression. After that, he worked for the Standard Press here in St. Croix Falls and then in 1939 he purchased the Polk County Ledger in Balsam Lake which he operated until 1988.

What makes Father's Day special to me is the pleasant memories of my father and his relationship with me and my siblings. Can you remember pleasant times with your father? I think of the early morning we got up and drove to a high spot to see a solar eclipse. We had made smoked glass the day before which was supposed to make it safe to look at the sun without hurting your eyes. I remember my dad mowing the grass in our yard with a non-motorized push lawnmower that literally "cut" the grass and how good that smell was. My dad, in fact both parents, were curious about our great big country and every summer we took a long camping trip and explored many states.

Abraham is the “father” of three major faiths of the world, Christianity, Islam and Judaism. In Judaism he is seen as the father of the special relationship between God and Jews. In Christianity, he is a progenitor of all believers, and in Islam he is viewed as a link in the chain of Islamic prophets. Abraham’s father, Terah, was 70 years old when Abraham was born in Cutha, a Mesopotamian village. The book of Genesis says that Abraham left Ur, Mesopotamia, to follow God’s command to form a holy land.

Abraham’s parents were idol worshipers and his father was a descendent of Noah. Abraham was a shepherd when God called him to leave his home for the promised land and was around 75 years old, by some accounts. Other records suggest he was even older. Abraham had a dispute with his nephew, Lot, over grazing lands, but after that was settled, God renewed his covenant with Abraham and promised that Abraham’s descendants would inherit the land that Abraham now occupied. Abraham probably wasn’t what we would consider a model father by today’s standards. Sarah was childless when Abraham was 86 years old and he had no heirs. In the ancient system, it was a custom for a “substitute” to bear a child to continue the family line, and upon the advice of Sarah, Abraham had a child with their handmaid, Hager, and they named the boy Ishmael.

In Chapter 15 of Genesis, Abraham was living in the land God had promised him, but remained childless. The word of God came to Abraham that a son would come from his own body and be his heir. God said “Look up in the heavens and count the stars---if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” The Bible says that Abraham believed God and therefore gained “righteousness”.

In the account in today’s scripture, the three men that visited Abraham were thought to be angels, although the first verse in chapter 18, says that “the Lord” appeared to Abraham, and it is thought that “God” appeared to Abraham in the guise of three angels. This was following up on God’s original promise that Abraham and Sarah would bear a child. The angels told Abraham that Sarah would bear him a child. Sarah did have a child and that child was Isaac. The significance of this story is that God kept his promise to Abraham, and Sarah did bear a child. This was even more significant because Sarah had been unable to bear children her entire life and both Sarah and Abraham were old and beyond child bearing years. Sarah’s and Abraham’s son, Isaac, was the father of Jacob and Esau. Jacob’s children and grandchildren constituted the twelve tribes of Israel. There is the

account of Abraham being instructed by God to sacrifice his son Isaac, and being prepared to do so, was put to the test, but at the last moment an angel prevented the act and a nearby ram was sacrificed. Some later views portray Abraham's willingness to follow God's command to sacrifice Isaac as an example of faith.

As I reflect on the sacrifices of my parents in raising a family, I am happy that my parents were Christians and lived their lives based on Christian values. I can look back further to my grandparents and great grandparents and realize what good Christian stock they came from and see how they passed down their values and beliefs as they raised their children as best they could. As I look around me I can see fathers and mothers making daily sacrifices for their children and striving to raise their children with Christian morals. As parents and grandparents, we have an enormous influence on our children's and grandchildren's lives. It's amazing to realize that just by being a parent or grandparent, we love and are loved in return. I think that many of us can think of the promises that our heavenly father has made to us and about how our he has kept his promises to us, just as God kept his promise to Abraham and Sarah. The Genesis story is old, but the lesson it teaches remains true today and perhaps that is the significance of this story: that even the seemingly impossible is possible where God is involved.