

PRAYER SONG

UMH 487

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

NO. 2023-21

July 30th, 2023

THE LORD'S PRAYER

INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND  
OFFERINGS

\*DOXOLOGY

UMH 95

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison

The gift of your realm is precious to us, O God. It is worth our greatest efforts and our caring sacrifice. As we search for the best in life, we also want to share our faith discoveries with friends and neighbors. We do that personally and with our giving. May our outreach proclaim to all that nothing can separate us from your love. We give you thanks that you have entrusted to us all that we are privileged to share. Amen!

*We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another*

\*CLOSING HYMN *I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord*

UMH 540 (vs. 1, 2 & 5)

\*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)

9th Sunday After Pentecost



Grantsburg-Central,  
Since 1897



Atlas, Since 1887



St. Croix Falls,  
Since 1859

### SUNDAY SERVICES:

*9:00 AM at Grantsburg with Online Zoom Service  
(9:15 AM, Sunday School)*

*10:00 AM at Atlas (Sunday School-summer break)  
11:15 AM at St. Croix Falls with Online Zoom Service*

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor Jenny Lee: [jennlee1732@gmail.com](mailto:jennlee1732@gmail.com)

Youth Director Shayna Schmid: [snssnyder@gmail.com](mailto:snssnyder@gmail.com)

Parish Secretary Colleen Norenberg: [centralumc2016@gmail.com](mailto:centralumc2016@gmail.com)

Parish Office: 715-463- 2624 St. Croix Falls Office: 715-483-9494

[www.upperstcroixparish.org](http://www.upperstcroixparish.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/UpperStCroixParishUMC>

**Upper St. Croix Parish**  
**Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls**  
**July 30th, 2023**

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\*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**

Let us call on our God and give thanks.

Let hearts rejoice as we sing God's praise.

**Glorify be to God in whose covenant we find life.**

**Let all the people tell of God's wonderful works.**

Let us open ourselves continually to God's presence.

Let us seek the strength that God alone provides.

**Surely the Spirit helps us in our weakness.**

**The Spirit searches our hearts and enlarges our prayers.**

Who can separate us from the love of God?

Will hardship, distress, or peril overcome us?

**Nothing can separate us from God's love.**

**We can face all things, knowing God's care. Amen.**

**\*DEDICATING HYMN**                      *Seek Ye First*                      **UMH 405**

**OPENING PRAYER**    **Unison**

Meet us here, Holy God, to search our hearts and strengthen our spirits. Plant your word among us that it may spring up in nurturing, inviting ways for the sake of all your creatures. May we find in these moments of worship the assurance we need to live triumphantly in the face of loss, discouragement, and suffering. Lead us, by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, to trust you and your will for us. We believe that whatever happens, you can bring some good from it. Show us, O God, the good you intend. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen!

**CHILDREN'S TIME (G)**

**UMH 191 (vs.1)**

**Proclamation of God's Word**

**\*THE GOSPEL LESSON**

**Matthew 13:31-33;44-52**

31 He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; 32 it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." 33 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. 45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; 46 on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. 47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; 48 when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous 50 and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 51 "Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." 52 And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

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

**Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON**                      *"Making the Impossible Possible"*                      **Pastor Jenny Lee**

**We Respond to God's Word**

**RESPONDING PRAYER**    **Unison**

Loving God, whose realm is like treasure hidden in a field, like a pearl of great value, like a tree with many branches that emerges from a tiny seed, focus our attention on your will for us, for our community, for our world, that we might experience your reign among us, yearn for its fulfillment, and give our best efforts toward full realization of the community of faith on earth as in heaven. As you called us like mustard seeds, may make us grow in your word and love to move forward our church ministry and transform the world through us. Amen.

**SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS**

*After each prayer request:*

*Pastor: Lord, in your mercy,*

*All: Hear our Prayer.*

# JULY 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. Donate items for the thrift sale (8/5)

## 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"



CUMC's mission for July is to help support Atlas United Methodist Church financially and through donations to their Thrift & Bake Sale and scheduled for August 5th. Donations can be dropped off at Central for delivery to Atlas prior to the sale. Thank you for your continued support of the Upper St. Croix Parish.

## ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh



**Food Shelf**  
(Communion Sunday)



### Sailor Hat Offering:

*The Sailor Hat offering will go to support Harbor 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  
*Volunteer Needed*  
Sharon Huff  
*Volunteer Needed*  
Sandra Erickson  
Barb Loomis

### Atlas:

Pianist  
Liturgist  
Usher  
Acolyte(s)  
Cleaning  
Sunday School

Sharon Asp  
Colleen Adams-Schween  
Sue Olson  
*Volunteer Needed*  
*Volunteer Needed*  
Younger/Older  
*Summer Break-VBS: Aug. 7th-10th*

### St. Croix Falls:

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

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



**Break through Prayers:** Please pray for those who are moving, traveling, and transitioning in this season.

## 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](http://upperstcroixparish.org) under Sermons!
- 3) You may watch a recorded video of the service on our parish Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/UpperStCroixParishUMC>
- 4) We will also 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.

## This Week's Calendar:

Today: 9th Sunday after Pentecost; God bless you all!

### Sunday Worship Services:

7/30: 9th 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

7/27-7/30: Polk County Fair  
7/30: 2-5 pm All Kids Pool Party (Questions to Shayna Schmid)  
8/3: 9:00 am North West Clergy meeting via zoom  
8/4: 2:00 pm Thrift & Bake Sale Drop-off at Atlas  
8/5: 9 am-1pm Thrift & 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!**

### VBS is from August 7th - August 10th

**We welcome all kids (kindergarten to 6th grade)! 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**

### Upcoming Events

8/10 Grantsburg Food Shelf Picnic  
8/12 UMM Meeting (G)

## Next Sunday (August 6th) Volunteers:

### Central:

|               |                         |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| Pianist       | Toni Koons              |
| Liturgist     | <i>Volunteer Needed</i> |
| Acolyte(s)    | Willow Nyland           |
| Mowing        | <i>Volunteer Needed</i> |
| Fellowship    | <i>Volunteer Needed</i> |
| Counter       | <i>Volunteer Needed</i> |
| Cleaning      | Sandra Erickson         |
| Communion     | Barb Loomis             |
| Sunday School | Barb Loomis             |

### Atlas:

|                                        |                         |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Pianist                                | Sharon Asp              |
| Liturgist                              | Sue Olson               |
| Usher                                  | Colleen Adams-Schween   |
| Acolyte(s)                             | <i>Volunteer Needed</i> |
| Cleaning                               | <i>Volunteer Needed</i> |
| Communion                              | Sue Olson               |
| Sunday School                          | Younger/Older           |
| <i>Summer Break-VBS: Aug. 7th-10th</i> |                         |

### St. Croix Falls:

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



## THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| Joan Ziegler   | 7/31 |
| Reed Olson     | 8/1  |
| Sally Schmitt  | 8/1  |
| Noah Dennison  | 8/2  |
| Peter Branstad | 8/3  |





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

July 30th, 2023  
Matthew 13:31-33;44-52

## **“Making the Impossible Possible”**

I want to start with something funny I found on an internet site: Three men approached the gates of Heaven, where Saint Peter immediately greeted them. “Hello, good sirs, and welcome to the Kingdom of God. We have one rule in Heaven: “Do not step on a duck.” “I’m sorry. Can you repeat that?” questioned one of the men. “Over the years, many misconceptions of Heaven have arisen. Yes, it’s a pretty nice place. But it’s not perfect; it’s close. You see, the only problem is the ducks. If you step on a duck, it will begin to quack, and then all the other ducks will begin to quack, and it’s simply a nuisance for us all.” Saint Peter replied.

The three men looked at each other, shrugged, and entered Heaven. As far as the eye could see, there were ducks everywhere. Almost immediately, one of the men accidentally stepped on a duck. As Peter had said, the duck began quacking, and then the ducks around him began an audible tidal wave of quacks. Soon after the quacks had passed, Saint Peter approached the men in hand with a hag of a woman. Without a word, he shackled the hag to the man that stepped on the duck and left.

The other two men were careful not to step on a duck. Although they tried their best, one eventually stepped on a duck. The same phenomenon arose, and Saint Peter arrived again with a huge Amazonian woman. He shackled the woman to the man and left.

The final man tried carefully and successfully stepped around the ducks for many days and nights. After a while, Saint Peter approached the man with a beautiful woman. He shackled the woman to the man and left without a word. The man was so delighted he audibly said to himself, “What did I do to deserve this?” The woman replied, “I don’t know, but I stepped on a duck.”

Today’s scripture includes five parable stories. We will continue to study the parable stories for a few weeks. Jesus had taught his disciples with many parable stories. His disciples asked him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” Jesus answered, “To you, it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given” (Matthew 13:10-11). In the Gospel of Matthew’s view, it is essential to understand the parables as Jesus says at the end of the parable, “Let anyone with ears listen!” (Matthew 13:9).

Jesus used to speak in parables to teach them, especially about the kingdom of Heaven. Many Christians believe in the kingdom of Heaven, but many still need clarification about what the kingdom of Heaven is. Some may think of it like the sky; some may think of it as someplace we may go after death; some may think of it like peaceful moments in the world we currently live in. What do you think the kingdom of Heaven is like?

The kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom of God are the same, but Matthew uses the term, the kingdom of Heaven, and Mark and Luke use the Kingdom of God. Last week, I mentioned a little bit about how the kingdom of God is not a space, but Jesus himself. One day, Pharisees asked Jesus, “When will the Kingdom of God come?” Jesus replied, “The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘there it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20-21). In other words, the



kingdom of God means the world Jesus Christ brings and the world God reigns. Therefore, if you believe that Jesus is here and among us, the kingdom of God may be here and among us. Again, if you believe that God is here with us (*Immanuel*; God be with us), the kingdom of God is already here with us. However, it is still partly because our faith is not perfect yet. Therefore, we may say, ‘The kingdom of God is already here and now, but yet.’ The Apostle Paul says, “But, speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (Ephesians 4:15). We should grow in love up to Christlikeness to fully see the kingdom of God.

We may understand the kingdom of God more through today’s scripture. We read five parable stories regarding the kingdom of God. They have the patterns: a pair with the parables of the Mustard seed and the yeast, a pair with the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl; then the parable of the net is about the judgment of God at the end of the age, likely the parable of the weeds we studied last Sunday. I bound the four parables in two pairs. Do you find any common themes in each pair of parables?

The first pair, the mustard seed and the yeast have a negative potentiality. The mustard was like wild weeds in Israel, which the people could see everywhere nearby Galilee Lake. It is like nobody cares as nothing significant is founded in it. And for the yeast, Jesus used a pessimistic parable to teach his disciples: “Be careful, the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Matthew 16:6). So, the Israelites didn’t use the yeast for their bread, and they usually eat unleavened bread, especially on their holy days like “Passover.” So, why did Jesus use the things that looked like unimportant and insignificant images for the kingdom of God? It has a hidden meaning, like Jesus of Nazareth: Nathanael asked his friend Philip, who invited him to see Jesus, “Nazareth? Can anything good come from there?” (John 1:46) There is “no beauty or majesty to attract people” apparently, but “when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches” (vs. 32). Nobody expected Jesus would be the Messiah, they waited for. He was born in a manger. He grew up in a poor family. He worked as a carpenter in Galilee, Nazareth. However, he obeyed God’s mission to save all humankind and became the Lord, the Savior, and the Redeemer. The mustard seed and yeast also imply Jesus’ disciples, who were poor and uneducated and looked unvalued, but they became paramount Christian Leaders who spread the Good News over the world. And then, how about our church ancestors? Their faithful seeds were planted here for us, and came to us. Look at us now! Well, some may say, “It is a small church; it is a rural church; they have downsized, and so on. Whatever they say, it doesn’t matter. What matters is that our faith is God-Centered. God’s expectation makes the impossible possible. Let God work for us and our church. Accept God as the owner of life and ministry! Only God makes the impossible possible!

Also, let’s look at the second pair of the parables, the Treasure and the Pearl: They seemed very valuable, but were hidden. Not everyone can find them, very few can find them. Don’t you think they are all of us? We already found it. It is the Good News, Jesus Christ. That’s why we are still here today, even though others are not in church so they can be out and enjoy the summer. Those who know the value in our lives do not care about worldly matters. They want to keep their faith in God, even though they sell all their possession. We need to keep our faith in Jesus Christ, enduring efforts to do our best.

Finally, in the parable of the net, Jesus tells us the final judgment. The kingdom of Heaven is like the net used to collect good fish. It is similar to the parable of the weed: at the end of ages, the angels collect the weeds, bind them and throw them into the fire, and gather all the good grains (wheat) to store in God’s barn. The angels come and separate the wicked from the righteous. Jesus says, “Have you understood all this?” The children of God finally shine like the sun in the world and rejoice in Heaven. Thanks be to God, Amen!

**Atlas United Methodist Church**  
**Annual Thrift and Bake Sale**  
**Saturday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023**



Downtown Atlas

2110 295th Avenue/County Road B

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

\*\*\*\*\*\$5/BAG SPECIAL BEGINS AT 12:00\*\*\*\*\*

Most Items  
Free Will  
Offering

Household items, holiday  
decor, clothes, books,  
picture frames  
and much more!!



SALE

Lots of great baked goods for  
sale as well!!!



BAKE SALE

**MINECRAFT THEMED VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

Is your child looking for something to do this August?

Parents  
need a  
break for  
a few  
hours?



*Don't feel  
like  
cooking for  
the kids?*

**Have us entertain and feed them dinner!!**

UPPER SAINT CROIX PARISH is having an  
evening VBS August 7<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> nightly  
from 4:30-7:30 pm.

Where: 301 N PINE STREET, GRANTSBURG

When: August 7-10 4:20-7:30 each night

Who: Children Ages Kindergarten to 6th grade

Register by calling or texting Shayna at 920-312-2857

Register by July 14 for free t-shirt.

Registration closes July 28 at 6pm.



We look forward to seeing everyone at our  
Minecraft themed Vacation Bible School!