

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**

As you blessed us, O God, we are eager to share. May we offer more than crumbs from your table. May none be sent away from the blessings you intend for all. We want our offerings to preserve and extend life to your children, here in this place and wherever our influence can reach. What is in the offering plates is only a part of what we dedicate ourselves to do and be that your reign of unity and peace may come. Amen!

NO. 2023-34  
August 20th, 2023

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

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

**\*CLOSING HYMN** *Freely, Freely* **UMH 389**

**\*BENEDICTION** **Pastor Jenny Lee**

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

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

**12th 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**

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**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**  
**August 20th, 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**

This is a Sabbath dedicated to our God.

Let this gathering place be a home for all people.

**May God be gracious to us and bless us.**

**May God's face shine over all the earth's people**

Let all the people praise the God of all nations.

Let us give thanks and enjoy the blessings God gives.

**May God grant us understanding and courage.**

**May faith grow beyond our doubts.**

The earth has yielded its blessing.

Let all the ends of the earth revere our Creator.

**God brings us together in unity of purpose.**

**May our circle grow as we welcome newcomers. Amen.**

**\*DEDICATING HYMN**    *Christ for the World We Sing*

**UMH 568 (vs. 1 & 2)**

**OPENING PRAYER**    **Unison**

**How good and pleasant it is, O God, when kindred live together in unity. Draw us now into the community you intend for all your people. Help us to listen and understand, both your word for us and our sharing with one another. Keep us from being misled by popular acclaim and the wisdom of the marketplace. May we not be unobservant guides to one another but rather be fully open to your gifts and obedient to your call. Come to us now with healing and blessing. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen!**

**CHILDREN'S TIME (G)**

**UMH 191 (vs.1)**

**Proclamation of God's Word**

**\*THE GOSPEL LESSON**

**Matthew 15:21-28**

21 Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22 Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." 23 But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." 24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." 25 But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." 26 He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." 27 She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." 28 Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed from that moment.

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

**Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON**    *"A Challenge is Another Opportunity!"*    **Pastor Jenny Lee**

**We Respond to God's Word**

**RESPONDING PRAYER**    **Unison**

**God of many blessings, whose gifts to us are more numerous than we can count, show us how to use these benefits according to your will and purpose. Lead us to understand many challenges we face daily may be another opportunity toward your blessings, that opportunities may be opened for all your children and unity may become a reality among us. May we know a taste of eternal life in the quality of our mutual caring and our sharing with a needy world. 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**

# AUGUST 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!*

We will focus on the financial support of our church to help expand our 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 collect school supplies which will be distributed on August 17th. We appreciate your ongoing support of our monthly missions. Thank you!



## ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh



**Food Shelf**  
(Communion Sunday)



### Sailor Hat Offering:

*The Sailor Hat offering will go to support Interfaith Caregivers!*

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*  
Charles & Mary Lou Wright  
*Volunteer Needed*  
Sandra Erickson  
Barb Loomis

### Atlas:

Pianist  
Liturgist  
Usher  
Acolyte(s)  
Cleaning  
Sunday School

Sharon Asp  
Sue Olson  
Colleen Adams-Schween  
*Volunteer Needed*  
*Volunteer Needed*  
Younger/Older  
*Summer Break*

### St. Croix Falls:

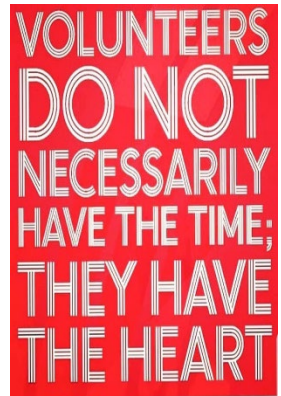
Pianist  
Liturgist  
Usher(s)  
Money Counter  
Bell Ringer  
Flowers  
Fellowship

Sharon Asp  
Kathy Gionis  
Jim Andrews  
Peter Gionis  
Jim Andrews  
Church Gardeners  
Ad Council Members



### *Breakthrough Prayers:*

Please pray for the kids and teachers who are going back to school.



## 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: 12th Sunday after Pentecost; God bless you all!

### Sunday Worship Services:

- 8/20: 12<sup>th</sup> 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
- 8/24: 11 am -1 pm Pastor Jenny Volunteers at Loaves & Fishes in Luck  
8/25: 11:00 am Charles Zeigler's Celebration of Life Service (SCF)  
8/26: 2:30-5:00 pm Pie & Ice Cream Social (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!**

## Next Sunday (August 27th) Volunteers:

### A Joint Service at Atlas Park

### Sunday of Blessings:

*Blessing of the Backpacks*  
*Blessing our Teachers*  
*Blessing our Pets*

### Atlas:

|               |                         |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| Pianist       | Sharon Asp              |
| Liturgist     | Sue Olson               |
| Usher         | Colleen Adams-Schween   |
| Acolyte(s)    | <i>Volunteer Needed</i> |
| Cleaning      | <i>Volunteer Needed</i> |
| Sunday School | Younger/Older           |
|               | <i>Summer Break</i>     |



## PLEASE NOTE:

- **Bring your beloved pets to the joint service to be blessed, and a lawn chair if you would like.**
- **We will provide a simple lunch after service-we hope you'll join us!**

### Upcoming Events

August 27th Joint Worship Service at Atlas Park



### THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Valetta Walton 8/20  
Adeline Dauer 8/22



## **“A Challenge is Another Opportunity!”**

I want to start with something funny I found on an internet site: A new department store opened in New York City. It's called the Husband Store. It is a place where women can shop for a husband. The store has seven floors, each with different qualities of a husband. The higher the floor, the better the husband. If women wanted better qualities, they would go to the next floor. But there was a restriction saying that once you go to another floor, you have to settle for that man; you cannot go back down to the previous floor.

One Woman arrived at the first floor. A sign said that the men on this floor had a job. She thought to herself that this was a quality of a husband she wanted to see, but she was curious to see what the next level held for her, so she decided to go to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. As she exited the elevator, a sign said, “The men on this floor have a job and love children.” She thought this was even better, but she decided to go to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. As she got off the elevator on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, the sign said, “The men on this floor have a job, love children, and are good-looking.” She thought this was even better! But curiosity got the best of her, and she could not resist going to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. As she got off the elevator, the sign now says, “The men on this floor have a job, love children, are good-looking, and like to do housework.” Wow, she thought, what more could a wife ask for? But she decided to go to the next level. The sign on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor read, “The men on this floor have a job, love children, are good-looking, like to do housework, and they are very romantic.” She thought to herself, “How much better can this get?” But instead of selecting a man on this floor, she decided to go to the 6<sup>th</sup> floor. The 6<sup>th</sup>-floor sign says, “The men on this floor have a job, love children, are good-looking, like to do housework, are romantic, and love to shower their wives with luxurious gifts.” She could not believe what this floor could offer her and could not think there could be anything better or hoped to imagine.

But...she could not pass up on going to the final floor. As the 7<sup>th</sup>-floor elevator opened, the sign now says, “There are no men on this floor. If you are reading this, please understand that some people can't be pleased!”

Today, I want to talk about how “a challenge is another opportunity.” Everyone faces challenges, which make us grow in some ways. However, some challenges are harder for us to overcome, such as misunderstandings, ignorance, rejection, and being forsaken. When I think of these words, one person comes to my mind. Can you guess who it is? Yes, Jesus Christ.

He has experienced misunderstanding from the people in his hometown, ignorance from Pharisees and Religious leaders, rejection from the people he loved, and finally, God has even forsaken him on the cross. However, he has overcome all these challenges, even overcoming death. His biggest challenge was giving himself up to those who rejected him. However, his challenges show us how much he loves us. A challenge is another opportunity to pass over toward blessing.

In today's scripture, a Canaanite woman is experiencing many challenges in her life. From a Jewish perspective, she is a gentile treated like a dog, not a person. She is a woman who was treated as someone's possession and ignored her human rights socially, economically, and religiously. In addition, she had a daughter with a mental illness. At that time, people thought that someone with mental illness was demon-possessed. All circumstances around her led her to get worse and worse. She may have heard about Jesus Christ, who healed many weaknesses, sicknesses, and even demon possession. The news about Jesus spread out over the country.

Even though she had heard about Jesus, she could not reach out to Jesus. She did not have the chance to see him because of her circumstance, and her social status which blocked her from going to the Jewish land. However, she often thought about how to reach out to Jesus to get healing for her daughter. Finally, Jesus came into the gentile land. Verse 21 says, “Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon.” It is not usual, but Jesus intentionally went to the gentile land. “Just then,” as if the Woman waited for Jesus, she came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me.” She got a chance. She does not want to miss the great opportunity to see Jesus. She shouted, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon” (v. 22). The amazing thing is that she called Jesus “Lord,” and she knows that Jesus is the descendant of David, which means “Messiah.” Jewish people believe that someday the Messiah will come to redeem them. According to Isaiah’s prophecy, the Messiah will come through David’s descendants (Isiah 11:1). She not only knows Jesus, but also confesses him as “the Lord and Messiah.”

However, despite her confessing, Jesus did not answer at all. In addition, the disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.” How could the disciples say, “Send her away,” and not say, “Please help her?” The disciples were also in the typical Jewish mindset, in which she was just a gentile woman with a demon-possessed daughter who was never respected as a human being. As if Jesus knew their mindset, he says, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Because of this, some people misunderstand thinking that salvation is a Jewish privilege. Furthermore, salvation is the Christian’s privilege. I boldly say there is no privilege in God’s grace. Salvation is open to all God’s creatures. Romans 10: 13 says, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Do not make the power of Jesus’ blood narrow down. Jesus died for everyone and rose for everyone. That is the divine grace of God for all. Therefore, we have hope in Jesus Christ.

Going back to the scripture. Even though she heard that Jesus was sent only for the chosen people, only the royal family, and only the privileged people, she did not give up. Instead, she came to Jesus closely and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” But Jesus still reject her request, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” Wow, that is too much. I cannot imagine how she felt and how she could handle her emotions. Nowadays, we love our dogs like they are a part of our family. But at that time, the dogs lived outside and ate leftover food, which people threw out in the garbage cans. It is like the Jewish people who treated gentile people like dogs.

If you were in her shoes, what would you do? I guess that she is a mother before she is a gentile woman. Nothing is too shameful when it came to helping her daughter. She needs to get healing for her daughter. If she missed this chance, her daughter would never be healed. So, she challenged Jesus by saying, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” She means that just a little piece of grace and mercy is enough to heal her daughter. Also, she accepts that she is like a being of dust before God. We all are God’s creatures. Before God, we are equal regardless of social, economic, and political privilege. In God’s grace and love, there isn’t any boundary. The apostle Paul confesses, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, or sword? No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:35-37). Finally, she got the right answer from the Lord Jesus Christ, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed. She overcame many challenges by faith; Jesus is the Lord, Messiah, and the healer.

We are facing many challenges in our life. The challenges somehow lead us to God's grace. If you give up in the face of these challenges, you lose the opportunity to receive God’s grace. Do not pay attention to the challenges, but see God’s grace beyond the challenges. Jesus teaches us, “This kind can come out only by prayer” (Mark 9:29). “Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened” (Matthew 7:7-8). There is no exception in God’s grace. Even though you failed it once, it is okay. You can get a second chance soon. One day, God may say to you, “let it be done for you as you wish.” Thanks be to God. Amen.