

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

*DOXOLOGY

UMH 95

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison

Receive our offering, gracious God, as an expression of our thankfulness. In your church, we are privileged to cultivate the dimensions of our lives that give meaning and purpose to all we do. Here we become aware that the greatest gifts we receive are not material, and we learn how best to use the particular gifts you give us. At the same time, you show us how our material advantages can help others. May many be blessed through our sharing of these offerings and our sharing of ourselves. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN *God Be with You till We Meet Again*

UMH 672

*BENEDICTION

Pastor Jenny Lee

*POSTLUDE

Sharon Asp

NO. 2023-35
August 27th, 2023

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

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

13th Sunday After Pentecost
Blessings of the Backpacks & Animals Sunday
Joint Worship Service



Grantsburg-Central,
Since 1897



Atlas, Since 1887



St. Croix Falls,
Since 1859

SUNDAY SERVICE:

10:30 AM at Atlas Park (next to the Atlas UMC)
2108 295th Ave, Luck, WI 54853

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
August 27th, 2023
13th Sunday After Pentecost

*Please stand if you are able.

***PRELUDE**

Sharon Asp

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE GREETINGS

“Peace be with you”

We Celebrate New Life in Christ

***MISSION STATEMENT Responsive**

Let us shout our mission statement together.

**Let us make the disciples of Jesus Christ all generations with
open hearts, open minds, and open doors for the
transformation of the world. Amen.**

***CALL TO WORSHIP Responsive**

Our help is from God, who made heaven and earth.

Come to worship the One who answers our prayers.

If God were not on our side, we could not live.

If God were not for us, we would be swept away.

God has gifted each one of us in unique ways.

In our variety, we complement one another.

We rejoice in God’s love and faithfulness.

Blessed be our God, whose word is true.

In thankfulness, we bring our joyous songs.

We are here to pay attention to God’s instructions.

We are here, seeking to discern God’s will.

We are open to God’s transforming Spirit. Amen!

***DEDICATING HYMN**

Give Thanks

TFWS 2036

OPENING PRAYER Unison

**God beyond our knowing, we believe that you care for humble
people who seek to follow your Word more than for those who are
pretentious and proud in places of power. You have protected**

**your people when they were surrounded by trouble. You have
provided a way of escape in the midst of oppression. Your love
never fails. Come, Holy One, to transform us. Work within and
among us to renew our minds and build community. Nurse us into
the health you intend for all your children. You are our help and
our hope. Amen!**

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Matthew 16:13-20

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist but others Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” 20 Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

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

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“Who do you think Jesus is?”

Pastor Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

**Holy God, who revealed to Peter the significance of Jesus’ loving
ministry, open our ears to hear your Word for us, and our eyes to see
ways you are working among us today. We seek the keys to your
realm where all are welcome and freedom is offered to become all we
can be. May cheerfulness, generosity, and compassion abound among
us. Amen.**

BLESSINGS TO BACKPACK/ANIMALS

Please fill in the form for blessing your pets, and give it to Pastor Jenny.

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

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
Counters Sue Olson, Dave Huff, and Peter Gionis
Acolyte(s) *Volunteer Needed*
Cleaning Together
Sunday School Younger/Older
Blessings of the Backpacks



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!



Breakthrough Prayers:

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

PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) **Joint service on August 27th, is not available for a zoom service.**
- 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>
- 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: 13th Sunday after Pentecost; God bless you all!

Sunday Worship Services:

- 8/27: Joint Worship Service
 Sunday of Blessings: Blessing of the Backpacks, Teachers and our Animals
 10:30 am Atlas Park (Next to Atlas UMC)
(No Zoom Service, but you may view a recorded video on the Parish Facebook page.)
- 8/29: 4:00 pm Pastor Jenny joins District New Ministry Strategy Team Meeting via Zoom

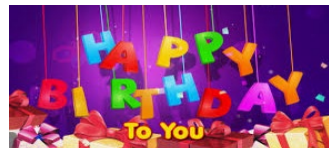
PLEASE NOTE: WHEN WRITING A CHECK PLEASE MAKE IT PAYABLE TO YOUR INDIVIDUAL CHURCH. WHEN THE OFFERING IS MAILED IN WE ARE THEN ABLE CREDIT THE APPROPRIATE CHURCH.

THANK YOU!

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Rachel Tooze 8/27

Landon Smestad 8/30



Next Sunday (September 3rd) Volunteers:

Central:

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Volunteer Needed
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Mowing	Volunteer Needed
Fellowship	Sally Aldorfer
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	Volunteer Needed
Communion	Mary Lou Wright

Atlas:

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Sue Olson
Usher	Colleen Adams-Schween
Acolyte(s)	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Communion	Sue Olson
Sunday School	Younger/Older
	Volunteer Needed

St. Croix Falls:

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Kathy Gionis
Usher(s)	Jim Andrews
Money Counter	Peter Gionis
Bell Ringer	Jim Andrews
Flowers	Church Gardeners
Fellowship	Ad Council Members
Communion	Kathy Gionis



Upcoming Events



September 16th

New District Superintendent Rev. Peace Kim installment service at Barron UMC

September 22-24

Youth Retreat



“Who Do You Think Jesus Is?”

I want to start something funny I found an internet site: A Sunday School teacher of preschoolers was concerned that his students might be a little confused about Jesus Christ while they were learning about Jesus’ birth. He wanted to make sure they understood that the birth of Jesus occurred a long time ago, that He grew up, etc. So he asked his class, “Where is Jesus today?” Johnny raised his hand and said, “He’s in heaven.” Mary was called on and answered, “He’s in my heart.” And Robert, waving his hand furiously, shouted, “I know! I know! He’s in our bathroom!!” The class got very quiet, looked at the teacher, and waited for a response. The teacher was completely at a loss for a few seconds. He finally gathered his wits and asked Robert how he knew this. And Robert said, “Well, every morning my father gets up, bangs on the bathroom door, and yells, Jesus Christ, are you still in there?!”

I want to talk about who you think Jesus is or who you say Jesus is for you. Everyone knows who Jesus is, especially those who attend Sunday service. Is that true? Most people know who Jesus is, but what we know about who Jesus is does not really matter. What really matters is who you believe Jesus is. The Gospel of Mark (Mark 1:21-28) says the evil spirit also knows who Jesus is: When Jesus went to a Synagogue to teach the word of God, there was a man who was possessed by an evil spirit. As soon as he saw Jesus, he says, “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are; you are the Holy One of God!” The evil spirit knew who Jesus was as was fearful.

I met a gentleman who grew up in a Christian family when I worked at a hospital as a chaplain. He was baptized when he was an infant, confirmed as a teenager, and married a Christian lady at a church. Furthermore, he worked hard in church ministry, devoting himself as a Sunday school teacher, a committee member, and a choir member. He amazingly memorized many biblical verses. However, when he was 52, he heard his cancer diagnosis.

He couldn’t believe it because he thought he always did an excellent job for God. He couldn’t understand why it happened to him and he was upset with God. He refused to eat any food or receive any treatment. He wouldn’t even speak with anyone. I visited him at his nurse’s request. He wouldn’t look at me or respond to my greeting. Nevertheless, I entered his hospital room to see if I could help him. As soon as I introduced myself to him as a chaplain, he rejected my visit, saying with a sulky voice, “I’m a Christian of one hundred percentages.” I understood what he meant, which was that he was 100% an honest Christian, so I don’t need your help. If he hadn’t said anything, I would have left him. But, what he said sounded to me like, “I need your help.” So, I challenged him by saying, “Well, I don’t think you are a one hundred percent Christian. Maybe, you are fifty percent Christian. He looked at me with an angry face. I told him, “Ok, show me how you are a one hundred percent Christian.”

His nurse said he didn’t want to speak with anyone. But, he might want to show me how much he knew about the scripture or how he was one hundred percent Christian; we talked about the scriptures for more than two hours. He told me how many scripture verses he had memorized, how many Bible stories he knew, and how hard he worked for the church ministry.

Finally, I told him, “Ok, now I know how good of a job you did for the church and how many scriptures you know. So, do you know how much God loves you?” He said, “I know God loved the world so much and gave his only son Jesus Christ, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). And I said, “How about you? Do you know how much God loves you? And do you believe in Jesus as your Savior?” He was suddenly silent. He might have been hesitant to say God loves him so much, because he got upset with God because of his diagnosis. Even though he knew Jesus’ story and said many times that Jesus was the Savior for the world, he never seriously thought Jesus was his personal Savior.

In today’s scripture, Jesus brought his disciples to Caesarea Philippi and asked them, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” They said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others say Elijah, and still others say Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” Jesus said to them, “But who do you say I am?” Perhaps, the disciples thought at that moment that he was not John the Baptist because they were at Jordan River when John the Baptist baptized Jesus; that he was not Elijah because Peter, John, and James were at Transfiguration Mountaintop when Jesus was with Elijah and Moses; that he is not Jeremiah or one of the prophets because they knew the prophets from Jesus’ teachings. So who is he? They spent time with Jesus for three years, learned many things about the kingdom of God and the Messiah, and saw many miraculous works, such as walking on water, turning water to wine, feeding five thousand people with five loaves and two fish, and the healing of many of the sick and weak, and even the raising of dead people. However, they didn’t know who Jesus was. While many disciples kept silent, Peter said, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.” Jesus said, “Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.”

The One who makes us know who Jesus is, is God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Without faith in God, even though you read the scriptures several times and memorized the whole bible book, you never knew who Jesus was for you. Jesus wanted to know who his disciples said that he was. What matters is not what the Bible says and not what others say, but what matters is what you say about Jesus.

The gentlemen I met at a hospital couldn’t answer my questions then; do you know how much God loves you? And do you believe in Jesus as YOUR SAVIOR? I told him my story about meeting God in a hospital when I was full of hopelessness. Even though I had never read the Bible and didn’t know about God, God sent me a pastor. Through the pastor, God let me know how much God loves me. And then, I was released from the darkness and hopelessness and finally healed my soul as well as my physical body. God is the one who loves us unconditionally and steadfastly. God loves us not because we did a great job, but because we are God’s children. And then, I prayed for him and left his hospital room. Two hours later, I went to his hospital room again when his nurse called. When I entered his room, he was crying. When he saw me, he said, “I met Jesus in my dream. He said he loved me so much. He is my Savior and healer. I am born again. I am sick not because I did something wrong but because it happened. I will receive the therapy so that God may heal me.”

Again, who do you think Jesus is for you? What matters is your faith in him. I pray that you believe Jesus is your Savior first, and you may share such good news with as many as you can. The good news is that Jesus saves YOU. Thanks be to God. Amen!