

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Gracious God, grant strength and courage to deny ourselves, take up the cross, and follow in daily life. Increase among us empathy with all who suffer, identification with lowly, and a spirit of hospitality for all. We would live with hope and patience that bridge differences, promote harmony, and contribute to the peace you intend for humankind. 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!

INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

***DOXOLOGY**

UMH 95

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**

May our offerings be an expression of genuine love that reflects your love for us, O God. We seek to honor you as we serve one another in Christ's name. We reach out to overcome evil with good. Direct our use of the resources you entrust to us that we may not only contribute to the needs of the saints but also devote our lives to the building of a peaceable worldwide community in which all are valued. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN** *Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone* **UMH 424**

***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)

**14th Sunday After Pentecost
Communion Sunday**



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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Youth Director Shayna Schmid: snsnyder@gmail.com

Parish Secretary Colleen Norenberg: centerumc2016@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
September 3rd, 2023
14th Sunday After Pentecost

*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

Why have we gathered on this holy day?
What has drawn us to this time and place?

We have been drawn to a flame burning here.
We sense the glory of God in this place.

God calls us to this time of worship.
The place where we are standing is holy ground.

Give thanks to God: sing praises.
Give attention to the voice of God.

Out of a burning bush, God spoke to Moses.
In the rhythms of worship, God speaks to us.

We will listen for God's message to us.
Surely God's strength will supply our needs. Amen!

***DEDICATING HYMN** *Take Up Thy Cross*

UMH 415 (vs. 1 & 4)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

We tremble to think that the source of all life, the Creator of all worlds, is in this place, observing our worship, knowing our innermost secrets, calling us by name. O God, we dare to call on you, to bow before you, to welcome your Word. We tremble to think what you might expect of us, for we remember what you expected of Moses. You sent him against the rulers of his people to win release from oppression. You sent him from the comfortable places he knew to

plead for freedom amid threatening conditions. We dare to worship you, O God, knowing that you expect much of us. Amen.

Sacrament of Holy Communion

INVITATION FOR COMMUNION

Pastor Jenny Lee

CONFESSION AND PARDON Unison

Merciful God,
We confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have failed to be an obedient church.
We have not done your will,
we have broken your law,
we have rebelled against your love,
we have not loved our neighbors,
and we have not heard the cry of the needy.
Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(All pray in silence)

Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;
that proves God's love toward us.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

UMH 13-14 (See insert)

THE LORD'S PRAYER

GIVING (RECEIVING) THE HOLY COMMUNION

COMMUNION PRAYER Unison

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Proclamation of God's Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Matthew 16:21-28 (See Insert)

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

Thanks be to God.

SERMON *"Take Up Your Cross, and Follow Me!"* Pastor Jenny Lee

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples,

and said: “take, eat; this is my body which given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: “drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice,

in union with Christ’s offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other,

and one in ministry to all the world,

until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

*THE GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 16:21-28

21 From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised. 22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.” 23 But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me, for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

27 “For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. 28 Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

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

Thanks be to God.

SEPTEMBER 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.

In September the children will collect loose change to support the Moolah for Milk program. Thank you for your generosity!



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 support the survivors and victims of the Hawaiian wildfires. Please check out the church bulletin board for more information. Thank you!

Disaster Relief



ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh



Food Shelf
(Communion Sunday)



Sailor Hat Offering:

The Sailor Hat offering will go to support St. Croix Falls School's backpack program.

TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers

All God's People
Pastor Jenny Lee

Central:

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

Toni Koons
Volunteer Needed
Willow Nyland
Volunteer Needed
Sally Aldorfer
Volunteer Needed
Sandra Erickson & Charlie Glonek
Volunteer Needed
Mary Lou & Charles Wright



Atlas:

Pianist
Liturgist
Usher
Acolyte(s)
Cleaning
Communion
Sunday School

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

St. Croix Falls:

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

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



Breakthrough Prayers:

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

Thank you for your support!

PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) **An Online Zoom Service is scheduled for this Sunday at 9:00 am and 11:15am.** 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 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: 14th Sunday after Pentecost; God bless you all!

Sunday Worship Services:

- 9/3: Communion Sunday
9:00 am Grantsburg with Zoom (9:15 am, Sunday School)
10:00 am Atlas (Sunday School, Summer Break)
11:15 am St. Croix Falls with Zoom
- 9/6: 6-7 pm Pastor Jenny joins District New Ministry Strategy Team Meeting via Zoom
- 9/7 11 am-1 pm Pastor Jenny Volunteers at Loaves & Fishes in Luck
- 9/9 8:00 am UM Men's Meeting (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!

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

We have no birthday's or anniversaries this week!

Next Sunday (September 10th) Volunteers:

Central:

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Volunteer Needed
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Mowing	Volunteer Needed
Fellowship	Volunteer Needed
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson & Charlie Glonek
Sunday School	Volunteer Needed

Atlas:

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

St. Croix Falls:

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



Upcoming Events

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Sept. 10 th | Atlas Sunday School Begins |
| Sept. 16 th | New DS Rev. Peace Kim's Installment Service at Barron UMC |
| Sept. 20 th | SPRC meeting at Parsonage |





“Take Up your Cross, and Follow Me!”

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: There was a Christian Parish that had many attendees. A priest who was part of the parish used to give out miniature palm crosses that he made by hand. One Sunday, he announced that he would be giving them out. The congregation in the church that day reacted with glee. “Put this cross in the room where your family argues most,” he advised. “When you look at it, the cross will remind you that God is watching.” When the parishioners left the church, a woman approached the priest, shook his hand, and said, “I’ll take five.”

Most of you have a cross at home. I wonder how many crosses you have. Is there anyone who has more than five crosses at home? I have more than five. Most of them were given to me by our parishioners. So, I have crosses in every room at the parsonage. But don’t think I argue everywhere.

What comes to mind when you see the cross? The cross was a terrible tool used to lynch political criminals, who went against the Roman Empire in the first century. The cross was a curse symbol, representing things like oppression, imprisonment, suffering, and death to the powerless. Many died on the cross because of the Roman Empire's colonial policy. However, the cross’ meaning was changed from a curse to a blessing for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ since Jesus died on the cross without sin for all sinners. The Apostle Paul says, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18).

You may have heard what unbelievers have said about the cross; they talked about the cross as a curse and a lynching tool. I used to think the same thing when I didn’t believe in God. I have shared my story of when I first heard the good news of Jesus Christ in the hospital. I was hopeless with a broken spine, a pastor, his wife, and church members whom my mother knew visited my hospital room to comfort me. After they prayed for me, the Pastor’s wife told me, “Here is the good news for you; God may heal you when you read this bible,” she then gave me her bible. The strange thing was that I felt it was a curse to me even though she clearly said, “Here is the good news for you; God may heal you when you read this bible.” So, I upset them and threw the bible at them. Can you imagine? I suffered terrible pain and was hopeless because my doctor told me, “There is no hope that you will ever walk again.” Meanwhile, people came and said, “The good news is here; God may heal you when you read the bible.” They didn’t ask me to work hard; they didn’t ask me to pay lots of money, they just asked me to read a book in order to be able to walk again. What an easy thing that was! However, I couldn’t understand why it sounded like a curse to me then. Later on, I realized it happened because I didn’t believe in the power of God. Therefore, the cross has two meanings; Curse versus Blessing and Death versus Resurrection. Which one would you prefer? I hope you go in a positive way always! The more you grow in faith, the more you focus on positive ways. So, Christians can “rejoice always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

Today’s scripture sounds similar: there are positive and negative ways. Today’s scripture begins with the word “from that time on.” It means it was right after Peter confessed, “You are

the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.” Finally, “Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”

The strange thing was that the disciples were taught about the Messiah from their ancestors, he should suffer and be killed to save his people. If they understood Jesus was the Messiah that they waited for and what Peter confessed, it was nothing surprising for them. And one more strange thing was that: Jesus mentioned both death and resurrection, saying he should “be killed and on the third day be raised.” However, the disciples heard only one thing: he would be killed, not about his resurrection. As I felt they told me a curse and I threw the bible at them in anger, Peter, who confessed, “You are the Messiah, The Son of the Living God,” took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.” And then Jesus said to him, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

As Peter’s did, our faith may go up and down. We sometimes confess we love God and believe in Jesus Christ, and sometimes we complain to God according to our current situation. It is because we are still weak in faith. And it’s because we live in the world which makes us focus on human things. Therefore, we need to pray continually to get help from God. Don’t worry, for Peter, the best disciple of Jesus, also thought of human things. While Jesus thought of death on the cross to save all the nations and the people, Peter thought Jesus would be the king of Jews to save the people under the Roman Empire’s colony. The Letter of Isaiah says, “For my thoughts, not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heaven are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Jesus then told his disciples, “If anyone wants to become my follower, let them deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.” It is a difficult paradoxical logic. Jesus taught the kingdom of God and Christian’s life in the paradoxical logic: “The last will be the first, and the first will be last” (Matthew 20:16): Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave” (Matthew 20:26-27).

We should understand his paradoxical lessons in order to follow Jesus. Jesus’ life and teachings themselves were in the paradoxical logic. Jesus came to the world as the Messiah (The Savior). His disciples understood Jesus would be the king of Jews, thinking of human things. They sometimes argued about who would get the higher position when Jesus became the king. But, Jesus “did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). If you understand this passage, you may understand all the paradoxical logic in Jesus’ teachings. And you may know what it means to “deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus.” If you don’t deny yourself, you may stay focused on human things. The way of taking up your cross means that sometimes you should come out of your comfort zone as Peter did when he went out of the boat, and tried to walk on water. The way to take up your cross means that sometimes you should obey God’s call, serve those around you, and not be served. Please deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior! Thanks be to God. Amen!