

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

*After each prayer request:
Pastor: Lord, in your mercy,
All: Hear our Prayer.*

NO. 2023-42
October 15th, 2023

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

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison

May our offerings help to prepare many to feast at your banquet table. May our generosity reflect the amazing abundance you entrust to our care. As we find joy in giving, may others be inspired to give their best, and may all of us realize your peace, dwelling within and among us as we serve in Christ's name. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN *Here I Am, Lord*

UMH 593 (vs. 1 & 2)

*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)

20th Sunday After Pentecost



Grantsburg-Central,
Since 1897



Atlas, Since 1887



St. Croix Falls,
Since 1859

SUNDAY SERVICE:

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

10:00 AM at Atlas (10:15 AM, Sunday School)

11:15 AM at St. Croix Falls with Online Zoom Service

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
October 15th, 2023
20th 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”

We Celebrate New Life in Christ

***CALL TO WORSHIP** Responsive

Come away from the valleys of misplaced loyalty.
Come, seeking to meet the God of all worlds.

We have come to praise God and give thanks.

We believe God’s steadfast love endures forever.

We come together so that our faith might be strengthened.

We seek the strength to live by all we profess.

God’s awesome deeds saved our ancestors.

Surly God’s steadfast love continues with us.

God continues to deliver us in times of distress.

God’s steadfast love endures forever.

We rejoice that God is near and available to us.

We hear God welcoming us to this time of prayer. Amen!

***DEDICATING HYMN** *Jesus Is All the World to Me*
UMH 469 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Gracious God, you have invited and welcomed us to this place of worship. You draw us away from the idols we create to take your place. When we come together, we sense that there is nothing in life that can substitute for a vital relationship with you. Yet we are only dimly aware of who you are. All the mysteries of the universe are in your hands, yet you have made yourself known among the people of this earth. We catch glimpses of your work among us and are amazed. We want to meet you again through this worship. Touch us. Remake us. Help us to stand firm in the faith. Amen!

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs.1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Matthew 22:1-14

22 Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: 2 “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. 3 He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. 4 Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ 5 But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, 6 while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. 7 The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ 10 Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad, so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11 “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, 12 and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.”

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

Thanks be to God. Amen!

SERMON *“Bring as Many People as You Can!”* Pastor Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Gracious God, whose banquet table, prepared for our enjoyment, offers all the best that life can hold, grant us in these moments we spend together such a taste of your bounty. Empower us to bring as many people as we can. We are eager every day to meet you with our loved ones in prayer, meditation, and study of the Scriptures, and be confident of finding you in our relationships and in all we do, that our lives may honor you and bring joy to others. Amen.

OCTOBER 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 will be collecting Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes.

Deadline 11/23/23



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 collecting loose change for Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF.



ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh



Food Shelf
(Communion Sunday)



Sailor Hat Offering:

The Sailor Hat offering will go to support Homeless Shelter

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
Barbara Loomis
Willow Nyland
Dave Huff
Volunteer Needed
Volunteer Needed
Sandra Erickson & Charlie Glonek
Barbara Loomis



Atlas:

Pianist
Liturgist
Usher
Cleaning
Sunday School

Sharon Asp
Colleen Adams-Schween
Sue Olson
Volunteer Needed
Josie Grimes

St. Croix Falls:

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

Sharon Asp
Karen Sciacca
Lynn Hanson
Peter Gionis
Jim Sciacca
Church Gardeners
Ad Council Members



Breakthrough Prayers:

Please pray for those who are hospitalized, homebound and in nursing homes.

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=SDZleFNubmEvaDBlcytTRzVxMFIzZz09>
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: 20th Sunday after Pentecost; God bless you all!

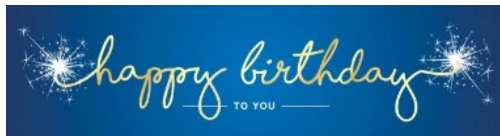
Sunday Worship Services:

- 10/15: 9:00 am Grantsburg with Zoom (9:15 am, Sunday School)
10:00 am Atlas (10:15 am, Sunday School)
11:15 am St. Croix Falls with Zoom
- 10/17: 6:30 pm Ad Council Meeting (G)
- 10/18: 2:30 pm Lay Servant Study Meeting via Zoom
6-8 pm Youth Gathering-All parish youth are welcome! (G)
- 10/20: 1-6 pm Pastor Jenny attends Participatory Theater Training in Sun Prairie
- 10/21: 10 am-3 pm Pastor Jenny attends Diversity Council Meeting in Sun Prairie
Noon -8:30 pm Youth Group District Youth Event at Hunt Hill
- 10/22: 10:30 am Joint Worship Service at Central-Grantsburg
(Followed by lunch and Charge Conference)

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

- Amy Harmon 10/15
Briana Olson 10/16
Cameron Smallwood 10/19



Next Sunday (October 22nd) Volunteers:



Laity Sunday: You all are Wonderful Ministers of God!

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Pianist | Toni Koons |
| Liturgist | Barbara Loomis (Lay Servant) |
| Acolyte(s) | Willow Nyland |
| Mowing | Russ Hammer |
| Fellowship | Central-Grantsburg members |
| Counter | Deb Hammer, Sue Olson, and Peter Gionis |
| Cleaning | Sandra Erickson & Charlie Glonek |
| Speakers | Sue Olson (Atlas: Ad Council Chair)
Karen Sciacca (SCF: Ad Council Chair)
Mary McNally (President of UMW)
Sharon Asp (Director of Food Shelf of SCF) |



Upcoming Events

- 10/22 Laity Sunday
Joint Worship Service & Charge
Conference at Central Grantsburg
- 10/26-11/10 Pastor Jenny's Vacation
- 11/5 All Saints Sunday
- 11/12 Veterans Sunday





October 15th, 2023
Matthew 22:1-14

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

“Bring as Many People as You Can!”

I want to start with something funny I found on an internet site: After dying in a car crash, three friends go to Heaven for orientation. They are all asked the same question, “When you’re lying in your casket, and friends and family are mourning over you, what would you like to hear them say about you?” The first guy immediately responds, “I would like to hear them say that I was one of the great doctors of my time and a great family man.” The second guy says, “I would like to hear that I was a wonderful husband and school teacher who made a huge difference in the children of tomorrow.” The last guy thinks for a moment and then replies, “I guess I’d like to hear them say, “Look, he’s alive!”

What about you? What would you like to hear your people say about you at your celebration of life service? In Chicago, I led the young adult group at a retreat. We had a special event at the retreat: “to experience a funeral service.” The group was in their twenties and thirties. We all had a holy, but fearful moment to think about the end of life through that event: We wrote a last wish letter to loved ones and experienced lying in a casket while others had a celebration life service around us. After that experience, we rethought life: How we should live our lives as a child of God, as God gave us only one chance to live in the world. After that, I often think of my end of life and try to live in a good Christian way, one in which God intended for me. I realized I want to save time and love others rather than fight or hate people. I lost my elder sister last year. I never knew I wouldn’t be able to visit her before she passed away. It has been for 15 years since I have seen my family in person. As you know, time flies so fast. Please save time to live out in God’s guidance; save time to love family, your people, and God, as life is short!

Today’s scripture is another parable story Jesus tells us, beginning with, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son.” We don’t know what the kingdom of Heaven looks like, but we can imagine through the several parable stories Jesus tells us. Today’s story is one of them. Here is the story in a brief way: there is a king who prepares a wedding party for his son. He prepared everything perfectly for the party and invited many people. But for his first invitation, no one wanted to come for several reasons, and they even killed his servants. He was upset and sent his troops, destroyed those murders, and burned their city. He sent other servants to bring everyone, whether good or bad. So, the party venue was full of people, but the king found one person who didn’t fit in the proper dress code. He ordered his servants to take him out.

Well, it is a challenging parable story to understand. You may think, what? Is it Heaven? Is Heaven like the king who invites people to his son’s wedding party, and then he gets upset and destroys the city? Even though people came, because of a dress code, he kicks someone out?

Jesus tells this story before he dies on the cross. The king is likely God, who sends many missionaries, God’s people, and prophets to invite people to Heaven. However, few people listen to the prophets, God’s people, and missionaries’ invitations. The people sometimes persecute the people of God, even kill them. God may punish those who persecute God’s people. Some

biblical scholars interpret this event as having occurred after Jesus died on the cross and related to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in the 70's. The first group of people who received the invitation were Jews, but they rejected it, killing many prophets, even Jesus Christ. After Jesus' crucifixion, the invitation was open to everyone, whether good or bad, whether Jews or Gentiles. The invitation is like the Good News of Jesus Christ, which is "For God so loved the world and gave his Only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Then, the invitation of Jesus Christ came over the world through many missionaries. Some of them were killed by those who rejected their invitation. And, finally, the invitation of Jesus Christ came to us. I know you all accepted that invitation and prepared to go to Heaven. But that is not all. We must get the invitation of the Good News of Jesus Christ and invite people around us. We are the people who received the invitation to Heaven, and at the same time, we are God's servants sent by God to bring as many people as possible.

Do you know what our 2023 parish ministry theme is? We put the theme on the bulletin; you may see it every Sunday. Some of you might have seen my article in January's newsletter, "Fill My House." Our ministry theme is taken from the Gospel of Luke 14:23, "The master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in so that my house will be full.'" The scripture story is similar to today's. A man was preparing for a great banquet and invited many guests. But no one would come for many reasons, and the master sent his servants to bring as many people as possible to fill the place, whether they were poor or rich or sick or healthy. But there were still rooms, and the man told his servants, "Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in so that my house will be full."

How often do you invite your people to come to the church? How often do you tell non-Christians about Jesus Christ? You may say, "I used to do it a lot for many years, but no one heard me and came." It is OK whether they heard you or not. Your duty as a child of God is to tell them about the Good News. In other words, you can invite them, but the decision is theirs. Even though they didn't hear you, that's not your fault. It matters whether you tell them or not.

A few weeks ago, I attended "School for Ministry" in Green Lake, and we had a small group gathering as provisional elders. We talked about how to make disciples in a local church. "Making Disciples" is Jesus' great commission: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20a). I said that making disciples begins with "GO," but we often miss "GO." We mostly stay at church and at home, saying, we have "Open Doors," but nobody comes in, so how and whom can we make disciples?

What do you think? If we don't try to "OUTREACH," how can we expect to fill God's house? So, I suggest that if you don't go out to see people, you may have a chance to see people around you, such as your family members, relatives, and friends. You may know who doesn't have a church to attend among them. Why don't you invite them before it is too late? Some of you may think you are too weak to go out to invite people to the church. If you feel this way then why don't you put people as many as you can in your prayers? Make a list of whom you would invite to be Christians, and put them on your refrigerator door or on a mirror where you can see them well. Then, as you see the names, you may pray for them. Every morning, lift them to God in your prayers.

I am not talking about the number of members when I say, "Fill God's House." Instead, I want to fill God's House with children's joyful noise and people's dancing minds and with vision and hope towards God. Remember, we made VBS together: we didn't have enough money, people, or kids. But as God pleased us, God sent us money, volunteers, and kids. God makes things happen for us as long as we have hope with prayers. Let's invite as many people as we can, and then we may see how God works for us! Thanks be to God. Amen!