

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Amazing God, your presence among us has been revealed so dramatically in Jesus Christ, the One who became the cornerstone for your church. Build each one of us into your household of faith, fitting us together by your great design into a beautiful witness to your truth, that resurrection power may energize us for service in your name and bring joyous transformation to all your children. Amen.

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

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

PRAYER SONG

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

UMH 487

THE LORD'S PRAYER

INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

***DOXOLOGY**

UMH 95

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** Unison

Ruler of all space and time, we want to be faithful stewards in your vineyard. All that we have is yours. Our lives are in your hands. Help us to use all that we here devote to the work of your church. Help us to manage well, to your honor and glory, all that we retain for ourselves. May we know heaven on earth because you hold first place in our priorities and our daily goal is to serve you. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN** *O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee*

UMH 430 (vs. 1 & 2)

***BENEDICTION**

Pastor Jenny Lee

***POSTLUDE**

Toni Koons (G)/Sharon Asp (A & SCF)

Worship Resources "Taught by Love" by Lavon Bayler.

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

The 2023 Parish Ministry Theme:

"Fill My House" (Luke 14:23)

"19th 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 8th, 2023
19th 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
The God who frees us invites us to worship.
The God of Law welcomes our loyal response.
The heavens are telling the glory of God.
The firmament proclaims God’s handiwork.
God is present with us, eager to speak to us.
Our Creator is here to test us and to keep us from sin.
The law of God is perfect, reviving the soul.
God’s decrees are sure, making wise the simple.
We tremble before God, yet are not afraid.
We are ready to listen to God’s word.
May our awe before God be pure and enduring.
May our thoughts and our words be acceptable to God. Amen!

***DEDICATING HYMN** *More Love to Thee, O Christ*
UMH 453 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison
O God, our rock and our redeemer, enlighten us today through the ancient witness of your faithful people. Lead us to desire the guidance of your word. Remind us of your ordinances that are true and righteous altogether. May your words shape our living and warn us when we are in error. We seek to honor your name, to divest ourselves of idols, to keep this day of rest and worship. Work with us to develop the right relationships in our families and

with all your children near and far, we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen!

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs.1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON** **Matthew 21:33-46**
33 “Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went away. 34 When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. 35 But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other slaves, more than the first, and they treated them in the same way. 37 Then he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ 39 So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. 40 Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” 41 They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes’?”

43 “Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces its fruits. 44 The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. 46 They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

This is the word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

SERMON **“You are the New Tenants of God’s Vineyard”**
Pastor Jenny Lee

TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

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

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
Kayleen Branstad
Volunteer Needed
Sandra Erickson & Charlie Glonek
Volunteer Needed

Atlas:

Pianist
Liturgist
Usher
Acolyte(s)
Cleaning
Sunday School

Sharon Asp
Sue Olson
Cheryl Olson
Volunteer Needed
Volunteer Needed
Colleen Adams-Schween



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=SDZleFNubmEvaDBlcytTRzVxMFIz09>
 B1cytTRzVxMFIz09
 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: 19th Sunday after Pentecost; God bless you all!

Sunday Worship Services:

10/8:	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
10/10:		All Charge Conference Documents Due
10/11:	1:00 pm	UMW Meeting (G)
	6-8 pm	Youth Gathering-All parish youth are welcome! (G)
10/12:	10 am-4 pm	Pastor Jenny attends New Ministry Board meeting via Zoom
10/13:	10 am-12 pm	Pastor Jenny Leaderwise Online Interview (Elder pastor process)
	1:30 pm	Ad Council Meeting (A)
10/15:	12:15 pm	Ad Council Meeting (SCF)

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

Brody & Brittney Woltz	10/9
Lynn Hanson	10/9
Josie & Pat Grimes	10/10
Dawson Kunze	10/10
Doug & Deb Kunze	10/10
Sue Olson	10/12
Barbara Loomis	10/13



Next Sunday (October 15th) 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	Volunteer Needed
Usher	Volunteer Needed
Acolyte(s)	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Colleen Adams-Schween

St. Croix Falls:

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

Upcoming Events



10/19-21	Pastor Jenny attends a Training & Diversity Council Meeting in Sun Prairie
10/22	Laity Sunday: Joint Worship Service & Charge Conference at Central-Grantsburg



October 8th, 2023
Matthew 21:33-46

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

“You Are the New Tenants of God’s Vineyard!”

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: A mother called her son on Sunday morning to make sure he got out of bed and was ready for church. “I’m not going,” he replied. “Yes, you are going, so get out of that bed!” his mother demanded. “Give me ONE good reason why I should go,” said her son. “I’ll give you THREE good reasons: One, I’m your mother, and I say you’re going. Two, you’re 40 years old, so you’re old enough to know better, and three, you’re the Pastor, so you need to be there.”

I am so grateful to all of you every Sunday morning as you make Sunday morning bright in the sanctuary. I know it is not easy to wake up early and come to church every Sunday morning, especially after the pandemic. Because we learned a convenient way to have remote Sunday services, like our online Zoom home service, we would stay at home or get excused for some reason. However, we should renew and remold our faith day by day. If you stay at home, you should think to yourself, “Have I lost my faith through the pandemic?” Here is a good reason you should come to church: you are a new tenant of God’s vineyard whom God chose.

Today’s scripture is another parable story Jesus told us. You may understand this story is about the chief Priests and the Pharisees because verse 45 says, “When the chief Priests and the Pharisees heard his parable, they realized that he was speaking about them.” However, that’s not all. This story is designed to teach us about God and ourselves as well. In today’s scripture, we learn of a landowner who has planted a vineyard, leased it to tenants, and went to another country. This landowner is likely God. As you assume, God is the ultimate landowner, and we are merely his tenants. That’s why we, as Christians, understand ourselves to be stewards of God’s creation rather than owners.

In Jesus’ time, when it was in the 1st century, biblical scholars say that it would typically be five years before the landowner would expect to receive his first payment. So, let us imagine for a moment that you are one of those tenants. The landowner made an excellent vineyard, and everything is perfectly ready to work there; vineyard is planted, a nice fence has been constructed around it, there’s a wine press service at in it, and a watchtower has been built. Then he leased it to YOU and went to another country. Then you worked hard in the vineyard for the last five years, and finally, it has produced much fruit. Now, after five years without any word from the landowner, some servants of his suddenly appear to collect the landowner’s produce. You might have begun to think and to hope that these servants would never appear, that the landowner might forget all about this vineyard and that you would get to keep it all for yourself. After all, it’s been five years. The landowner may take all of your efforts.

As you know, I have been here for four years, and it is now the beginning of the fifth year. I have a garden and enjoy gardening at the parsonage. I learn new skills and wisdom every year on how to garden effectively. The first year, when I said, “I’d like to have a garden at the Parsonage,” Russ Hammer (Grantsburg Committee member) cultivated the Parsonage garden for me, making it ready for gardening. I started planting a few veggies in it. But, as they grew, many

wild animals enjoyed them before I got to harvest them. In the second year, I made a fence around my garden, but some anonymous animals still came into it, and my veggies disappeared unexpectedly. So, I got information from our parishioners on protecting my garden, such as spraying around the fence, putting the poisons out, getting a better fence, and having enough veggies to share with the animals. Then, this year, I got a better fence, two spots for gardens; one for me with a nice fence, the other for animals without a fence; spraying at the proper time matters. Now, I have more produce and am a good gardener. Some of my colleagues told me ‘you have a green thumb,’ and asked me for some advice on gardening. They may not understand how hard I work for my garden. I love my garden. I will do it better next year. But, if my bishop asks me to move, I have to leave my garden. It will be so sad, but it is my bow to the bishop. If I reject the bishop’s order, what will happen to me? I know the parsonage and garden do not belong to me. They are not mine, but I can care for them as long as I am here.

Going back to the scripture, the tenant shouldn’t think the vineyard is theirs. Isn’t that always a danger for stewards when they last saw the owner long ago? Isn’t it dangerous for us to keep all the church ministry and faith journey without seeing God visibly? Do you know what happened next in the parable story? The tenants of the vineyard killed the servants who came for the produce. The landowner patiently sent the other servants to forgive their previous behavior. The tenants treated them the same way. Then, the landowner sent his own son, hoping that the tenants would finally get the point, which was that he always remembered the vineyard. The fruits are very important to the landowner. So much so that he will send his son to collect them. He sends his son with the hope that the tenants will respect him.

Yes, his son is Jesus Christ, and many servants are likely prophets and ministers. The tenants killed his son with a desire to inherit the vineyard as the chief Priest and Pharisees killed Jesus Christ. However, they couldn’t inherit the vineyard. Verses 40 and 41 say: “Now when the landowner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” They told him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.” They may think that the landowner never came back and they would get the vineyard by themselves.

It is teaching us that the chief Priest and Pharisees are like the original tenants of the vineyard. It was obvious. They knew it was about them (v. 45). Jesus teaches us that we are new tenants of the vineyard, the stewards of God for all creations and for God’s vineyard. We have been entrusted with this world, with all that we have, and are now called to care for it well and give our creator the fruits of our harvest. This parable also warns us not to take any of this for granted. Our world, life, family, possession, and salvation are all God’s grace, all a gift from God. We, too, can sometimes be tempted to think that we can keep the fruits of God’s vineyard for ourselves. We work hard, making our living and providing for ourselves and our family, and it’s easy to forget that everything we have is not ours but the Lord’s. As God chose you as his new tenant, he may choose another one if you forget that He owns the vineyard. Don’t forget God may come some day and ask us to show our produce before God. Be faithful tenants of God’s vineyard and look forward to His promised return. Thanks be to God. Amen!