

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** Unison

As we give ourselves and our offerings, we pray, O God, that they may reveal your love in such a way that many will respond. Awaken in us a love for you and for one another that is contagious. Remove from us all apathy, pretension, and greed that we may grow in holiness and compassion, living joyously in communion with you. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN** *Where Charity and Love Prevail*
UMH 549 (vs. 1, 2, 4 & 6)

***BENEDICTION** Responsive

Brothers and sisters, our coming together is not in vain.
God is doing a new thing among us and beyond us.

We have sensed a vision of God's plan for us.

God's sign and wonders await our discovery.

God has compassion on all who seek to serve.

Steadfast love is with all who continue in faithfulness.

God's glorious power is manifested in humility.

Surely God's favor rests upon us here.

Now we go out with courage, entrusted with the gospel.

We carry good news of God's love to our neighbors.

We will be gentle with others as God is gentle with us.

We offer tender care in the spirit of Jesus. Amen!

***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)

22nd 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

CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor Jenny Lee: jennlee1732@gmail.com

Youth Director Shayna Schmid: snssnyder@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 29th, 2023
22nd 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
Gather together to hear stories of faith and courage.
Listen for the ways God has acted among us.
Our ancestors in the faith listened for God’s word.
They dared to believe God’s promises.
Leaders like Moses and Paul saw evidence of God’s work.
They believed they were face-to-face with God’s truth.
They looked beyond the present moment.
They lived for dreams not yet realized.
Many felt God’s love in knowing Jesus.
They experienced a new relationship with neighbors.
We have come seeking a community centered in Christ.
We want to feel God’s presence as we worship. Amen!

***DEDICATING HYMN** *Deep in the Shadows of the Past*
TFWS 2246 (vs. 1, 3 & 4)

OPENING PRAYER Unison
God, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the earth was formed, long before there were people on this planet, you were fashioning life in its myriad forms. Out of the billions of years you have been creating, our lives have come to this moment of meeting. We stand in awe before you, amazed to discover that you care about us, tiny blips on the screen of eternity. O God, we want our lives to count for something. Show us how to fit into your plans. Amen!

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs.1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON** Matthew 22:34-46 (G) See Insert
John 1:1-4 (A) See Insert

***THE NEW TESTAMENTS** Ecclesiastes 1:1-11 (SCF) See Insert

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

SERMON

What’s Important? Barbara Loomis (G)
Grace and Truth Sharon Asp (A)
Ecclesiastes Reflection Kathy Gionis (SCF)

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison
Eternal God, whose wisdom defies our limited insights, and whose commandments are from everlasting to everlasting, open our hearts and souls and minds to your love that surrounds us and seeks a dwelling place in us, that we may regard ourselves as your valuable children and accord the same care and concern to others as we would, at our best, lavish on ourselves. May our lives honor you and display the power of your love to the 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

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Matthew 22:34-46 (G)

³⁴ When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵ and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" ³⁷ He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

⁴¹ Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: ⁴² "What do you think of the Messiah?^[a] Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." ⁴³ He said to them, "How is it then that David by the Spirit^[b] calls him Lord, saying,

⁴⁴ 'The Lord said to my Lord,
"Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet" ' ?

⁴⁵ "If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?" ⁴⁶ No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

John 1:1-4 (A)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life,^[a] and the life was the light of all people.

***THE NEW TESTAMENTS**

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11 (SCF)

¹ The words of the Teacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

² Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher,
vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

³ What do people gain from all the toil
at which they toil under the sun?

⁴ A generation goes, and a generation comes,
but the earth remains forever.

⁵ The sun rises, and the sun goes down
and hurries to the place where it rises.

⁶ The wind blows to the south
and goes around to the north;
round and round goes the wind,
and on its circuits the wind returns.

⁷ All streams run to the sea,
but the sea is not full;
to the place where the streams flow,
there they continue to flow.

⁸ All things^[a] are wearisome,
more than one can express;
the eye is not satisfied with seeing
or the ear filled with hearing.

⁹ What has been is what will be,
and what has been done is what will be done;
there is nothing new under the sun.

¹⁰ Is there a thing of which it is said,
"See, this is new"?

It has already been
in the ages before us.

¹¹ The people of long ago are not remembered,
nor will there be any remembrance
of people yet to come
by those who come after them.

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 11/12/23



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 UMCOR

Ministers

All God's People

Pastor Jenny Lee

Central:

Preach:
Pianist
Liturgist
Acolyte(s)
Fellowship
Counter
Cleaning
Sunday School

Barbara Loomis
Toni Koons
Bob Branstad
Willow Nyland
Volunteer Needed
Volunteer Needed
Sandra Erickson & Charlie Glonek
Volunteer Needed

THANK YOU TO
OUR AMAZING
VOLUNTEERS!

Atlas:

Preach Sharon Asp
Pianist Sharon Asp
Liturgist Colleen Adams-Schween
Usher Sue Olson
Cleaning **Volunteer Needed**
Sunday School Cheryl Olson

St. Croix Falls:

Preach Kathy Gionis
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

Breakthrough Prayers: Please pray for those who have lost loved ones, and for God's peace in the middle east area and all over the world!

Thank you for your support!

PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) **An Online Zoom Service is scheduled for this Sunday at 9:00.** 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=SDZleFNubmEvaDBlcytTRzVxMFllZz09>
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: 22th Sunday after Pentecost.
God bless you all!

Sunday Worship Services:

10/29:

9:00 am Grantsburg with Zoom (at 9:15am, Sunday School)
10:00 am Atlas (at 10:15 am, Sunday School)
11:15 am St. Croix Falls (**No Zoom**)

REMINDER: For All Saints Sunday next weekend, please sign up those who you would like to be lifted up by lightning candles. The lists should be sent to Colleen Norenberg so that she can prepare name cards listing the saints.

10/26-11/12 Pastor Jenny's Vacation (Thank you all ministers)
11/3 6-8 pm Youth Bowling Day (Contact with Shayna, Youth Director)

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

Jim Mattson 10/29
Cheryl Olson 11/2
Margie Mattson 11/3
Mike Steffen 11/4
Linda Harmon 11/4



Next Sunday (November 5th)

VOLUNTEERS

Central:

Preach:	Rev. Cathy Hamblin
Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Barbara Loomis
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Judy Lien
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson & Charlie Glonek
Sunday School	Volunteer Needed



Atlas:

Preach	Rev. Cathy Hamblin
Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Sue Olson
Usher	Cheryl Olson
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Colleen Adams-Schween

St. Croix Falls:

Preach	Rev. Cathy Hamblin
Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Jim Andrews
Usher(s)	Kathy Gionis
Money Counter	Peter Gionis
Bell Ringer	Lynn Hanson
Flowers	Karen Sciacca
Fellowship	Karen 1 st Sunday

Upcoming Events

10/26-11/12 Pastor Jenny's Vacation

11/5 All Saints Sunday/Communion Sunday
(Rev. Cathy Hamblin, UMC retired pastor)

11/12 Veterans Sunday



What's Important

When Pastor Ran was here and Caleb was a toddler, she shared a story about him. Caleb loved blueberries. They were his favorite finger food. It is a good finger food, because they have to learn not to squeeze too hard when they pick up a berry, unless of course they like to squish them before they eat them. One day Caleb had two blueberries left in his bowl and Pastor Ran asked if she could have them. Because Caleb loved blueberries she did not think that he would give them to her. He surprised Pastor Ran by picking the last up and putting them in his mother's mouth. Is that LOVE!?

I have heard similar stories by parents and grandparents. My own grandson, Casper, usually shares his blueberries with myself or his mother and now papa. When I say "Thank You" he will respond with "I love you". I do believe that children learn early about Love, from their family and the people that care for them. But is that love? I feel warmth and joy when Casper tells me "I love you" combined with his sweet little smile. But, is that Love?

Why this story? Well, the scripture today tells us "You should love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second is similar: Love your neighbor as yourself." The Pharisees and the Sadducees were looking for ways to discredit Jesus and accuse him of heresy. Now the Pharisees strictly observed the laws from Moses, mainly through an oral process. The Sadducees were usually wealthy and often priests. They took stock in the written word. Both were the authority of their days, Lawyers and priests. The Pharisees had tried to catch Jesus earlier in the Book of Matthew, by asking Jesus if it was unlawful to pay taxes to Caesar. You know that response, "Give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, Give unto God that which is God's." The Pharisees walked away. They had no argument with that statement. The Sadducees could not argue with "Love the Lord your God", because they probably recited the fullness of that Law two or more times in a day. But Jesus added the second. Love your neighbor as yourself. They too walked away.

Both groups wanted to silence Jesus. Both were placed in a position that made them decide to walk away that day.

Why should we love God? because the Bible tells us to? Because our Sunday School teachers taught us to? I asked my five-year-old grandson after VBS what he learned. His answer was "God Loves me." After a moment he added, "and so does Jesus." He has not had Sunday School, only VBS this year, yet he got that. Why should we love God? Because He first loved us. When we rebel against Him, He loves us. When we turn our back on Him, He still loves us. Even when we do nothing to deserve God's Love, He loves us.

Caleb knew his mother's love and seemed to understand it.

What does it mean to Love God with all of your heart, mind and soul? It requires love from the whole person. Those three categories overlap like a Venn diagram. The heart is the seat of our emotions, the soul the center of our personality, and the mind is the place of reason. In

Deuteronomy, the word strength is used instead of mind. We do not know why Jesus used the word mind instead of strength. If we include the word strength with heart, mind and soul, we see that even our physical bodies are to show love for God. Pastor Jenny is a good example of that fullness of loving God. God loves us with His whole being, so we should do our best to return that same kind of love. All that is good we have from God. Loving God should be our #1 priority.

Now for a breakdown of "Love your neighbor as yourself" " As a young adult and an active participant in this church, Pastor Zager liked to use a large easel flip pads to interact with the congregation during his message. That Sunday "Love thy neighbor as thyself" was at the top of the flip pad. Several people shared how they interpreted that verse. Finally, I raised my hand. Andy was a baby and I was holding him. My answer was "first you have to love yourself". My reasoning was that I can't take care of Andy if I do not love myself. Once you love yourself, loving others comes easy. I would like to think that I am not some ego maniac. You do have to take care of yourself. Which includes loving yourself. You also need to rely on God.

"Love your neighbor as yourself." doesn't seem so hard if you look at how you would want to be treated. If you were in that situation, what would you want and need? Maybe it is as simple as a hug. Pastor Jenny really likes to send cards. There are members in our congregation that are good about sending cards. Cards are easy, why am I not good at that task. Thank you for being good at sending cards. Cards really do show Love. When I was in the Mayo Clinic Hospital for Breast Cancer, I would go for walks around the nursing station when they were sorting cards and say "Who loves me today."

Phone calls or text messages help. Tech is part of our world, after all. Every time we give to one of our missions we are loving our neighbors.

When Dave Walters lost his job many years ago when his children where small, they discovered boxes with food in their entryway and little treasures for the children.

There does not need to be stress and difficulty in our neighbors' lives to show that we love them.

My first lay speaker class that I attended was led by Pastor Steve Ward. He said in that class the only theology you need to know is "Love God and Love people. That sums it all up." Does a toddler understand love? I believe that they do. We are always teaching one another about love, including children. Why, because God loves us unconditionally. It's like a stream trickling down to feed a great river. God loves us. We love God. We love each other.

The entire Bible in a nutshell is Love God and Love people.

Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God.

Amen