Upper St. Croix Parish United Methodist Church Grantsburg, St. Croix Falls, Atlas P.O. Box 128 Grantsburg, WI 54840

December



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A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

Did you ever wonder why we celebrate Christmas on December 25th? Jesus didn't have a birth certificate, so how do we know when Jesus was really born? Because the Bible offers no date for Jesus' birth, the placement of the nativity is up for debate. But there are three explanations that land us on December 25th.

First, the Christian historian Sextus Julius Africanus had identified the 25th as Christ's nativity in the 3rd century. Chronographers reckoned that the world was created on the spring equinox and four days later, on March 25th, light was created. Since the existence of Jesus signaled a beginning of a new era, or new creation, the Biblical chronographers assumed Jesus' conception would have also fallen on March 25th, placing his birth in December, nine months later.

The second theory proposes that early Christians were convinced that Jesus must have lived upon earth for an exact number of years. Therefore, the date on which he died would also have been the same as the date of his conception. Because they believed that he was crucified on March 25 (and therefore conceived on March 25), his birth would have been placed nine months later, on December 25th.

The final theory concludes that December 25th was chosen at Rome because it was also the date of the winter solstice in the Julian calendar and a popular pagan feast celebrating the birthday of the invincible Sun. The pagan feast was established by Emperor Aurelian in 274 A.D. After Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity, he wanted to draw people away from these pagan festivities and point to Christ as the true

Sun of Righteousness, and so instituted at Rome the feast of the Nativity

on the same date.

So, you can take your pick as to which theory you believe has us celebrating Christmas on December 25th. No matter what option you choose—or even if you believe we have the date all wrong — Christmas is a reminder that God has come near and that the world and our lives will never be the same.

Rev. Jason Mahnke, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

Visit the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation at www.wumf.org or Facebook/wumf.org Or call 1-888-903-9863

United Methodist Messenger

THE UPPER ST. CROIX PARISH



715-463-2624 Parish Office (in Grantsburg)
715-483-9494 St. Croix Falls Church
Church Email: centralumc2016@gmail.com,
Pastor Jenny Lee: JENNLEE1732@GMAIL.COM

Website: www.upperstcroixparish.org
Facebook: Upper St. Croix Parish United Methodist Churches
December 2023



Pastor Jenny Lee, Ph.D.

"Family Matters"

"Now, if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15)



We have confessed how grateful God has been for us this year, by writing a "Thank You Card" to God on "Thanksgiving Sunday." I wrote many things about my gratitude to God for this year. In our ministry, we were able to start Vacation Bible School (VBS) and youth ministry, especially high school youth ministry, and we successfully made laity Sunday a joint service. Then, we showed how our three churches banded together as a parish when Atlas faced financial crisis. As we

supported each other, Atlas was able to overcome the situation. I am so grateful our parish is a family that cares for, and supports one another in Jesus Christ. Is it a true family in Jesus Christ!

The thing I am most grateful for on a personal level was that I was able to visit my family and friends in South Korea this year. It has been fifteen years since I've seen them. Many things have changed; they have developed a lot and most of the street and city names have changed, and my family moved to a new place. However, one thing that never changed is my family's love. Even though we couldn't see each other for a long time, we are still a family. I had a great and grateful time reuniting with family and friends. The most impressive thing I recall was visiting our family cemetery to greet my parents. My elder brother shared how hard our parents worked and prayed to convert our family religion to Christianity. He said, "I appreciate you becoming a pastor as our parents' wished and prayed for. Let's not forget how we became Christians." Our family members became Christians with our mother and father's prayers and sacrifice. Then, I remember that Joshua proclaimed, "Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

FROM THE PASTOR CONTINUED...

My father and mother decided going against "ancestor worship", which our ancestors served, and serving God as Joshua did. Then they lived with financial difficulties because my grandparents wouldn't support us. However, they lived with God's abundant blessings as Christians. My parents taught us all to live as Christians and that family matters and that a Christian family becomes, with the love of God, in the bloodline of Jesus Christ. My parents' lessons are on my mindset constantly.

It is a season of family reunions. We are a family in the love of Jesus Christ. Let's be happy and enjoy God's abundant blessings with our family members who are homeless, sick, home-bound, and staying in a nursing home and a hospital, especially during this

holiday season.

Blessings!

Pastor Jenny

11-2-2023, Pastor Jenny's parent's grave in South Korea





CHRISTMAS HUMOR



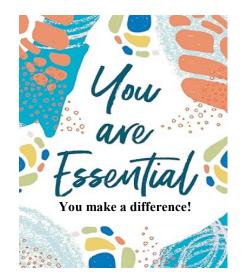






GRANTSBURG: CENTRAL NEWS





Central UMC is holding church services with a Zoom service at 9:00 am on Sundays. We are looking for volunteers to help out at each service. Sign up sheets are available at the church. We appreciate your willingness to help out!

Most all of us are vaccinated, but we respect everyone whether masks are on or off. As we are still living with the Coronavirus we are encouraging people to avoid hugging or shaking hands with each other.

We welcome everyone to join us for Coffee Fellowship after service each Sunday.



Mikala Hammer 12/7

Kim Wheeler 12/18

Janelle Smestad 12/25



Charles & Mary Lou Wright



12/23

Hurry in this Sunday to beat the Christmas rush!



Offering Income through October 2023

Funds Description	October 2023	Year-to-date 2023		
General Fund Gifts	\$	5,551.84	\$	38,064.84
Loose Offering	\$	69.00	\$	503.78
Easter	\$	-	\$	595.00
Pie & Ice Cream Social	\$	-	\$	330.00
Total General Funds	\$	5,620.84	\$	39,493.62
	_		_	
Special Offering	\$	140.00	\$	580.00
Missions	\$	-	\$	1,239.00
Pastor's Youth Fund			\$	110.00
United Methodist Men	\$	300.00	\$	300.00
All Funds Total	\$	6,060.84	\$	41,722.62

GRANTSBURG: MISSIONS & MEETINGS & MISC.





Ad Council Meeting

December 19, 2023





lext Meeting: Dec. 9th

8:00 am at Central UMC

The United Methodist Men typically meet the 2nd Saturday of every month at 8:00 am.



Missions Giving



December Mission

Central's December mission is a financial collection for Christmas For Kids. Once again, Interfaith Caregivers of Burnett County is

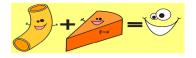


sponsoring the Christmas for Kids Program to help support Burnett County families. In the past 2 years over 239 children, 127 families received new clothes and toys.

November's Mission Results: 23 boxes were delivered to a drop off site for Operation Christmas Child.

Thank you for your support!

BE A "BACK-PACK BACKER"! REMEMBER. Every Sunday Is MAC 'N CHEESE SUNDAY!





Can you donate a box or two (or more) of Macaroni and Cheese in support of the Salvation Army's "Happy Kids Back-Pack Program"? This program provides back-packs full of food to help feed families over the weekends throughout the school year. Thanks for caring for those in need in our own community.



UMW had a productive meeting on November 8th, 2023. We made 20 Operation Christmas Shoe Boxes! Thank you to all who supported this mission! You are blessing many children!

There are two important messages from UMW:

- 1) Advent Craft Group Gatherings are every Wednesday at 1pm. (11/29, 12/6, 12/20) Paulie Kratchmer will lead us in making quilt blankets to send to local nursing homes.
- Christmas Luncheon will be on December 13th:
 UMW invites all women in the parish to join them.
 Please RSVP by December 6th to Mary McNally (715 791 8010).

Ladies from Central will provide the food and two white elephant gifts each for a game. Come and join us to celebrate Christmas! All are welcome.

-Mary McNally



SUNDAY
DECEMBER 24TH
7:00 PM
CENTRAL UMC
GRANTSBURG

ATLAS NEWS

In-person (indoor) worship services Sundays at 10:00 am.

We will be needing volunteers so please check the sign up sheets if you are able to help. Thank you!

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MEETING



nurch Next Meeting
Council December 15, 2023
1:30 pm
Atlas UMC



INCOME TOWARD ATLAS' BUDGET

Offering: \$ 2430

Thank you for your faithful financial support of the ministry of Atlas church!









Copelan Grimes 12/13

Jeff Tooze 12/13

Patrick Grimes 12/18

Brody Woltz 12/19

Brittney Woltz 12/22





Christmas Program & Potluck

Atlas UMC Sunday, December 17th 10:00 am



Do you have used ink jet cartridges or old cell phones? Every one that you donate to the church provides extra money to fund Atlas Church's Ministry and outreach. Thank you for your continued support of this











Sunday December 24th 4:00 pm Atlas UMC



We are currently operating with two interim food shelf coordinators. We would like to get a full time coordinator. We will train people who are interested. We can always use more volunteer workers as well. If interested please contact Pam Girtz 320-232-7541 Email: girtzp@gmail.com

DECEMBER MISSION Mitten Tree



We will continue to collect mittens, scarves, hats, gloves, etc. in December. Our donations will be taken to Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry... they will help keep our neighbors in need warm this winter. Thank you for your kindness.

LOAVES & FISHES FOOD PANTRY

Monthly Report ~ October 2023

Households Served
Adults
Children

Total People

37
62
9
71

USDA Food Received 458 NON-USDA (Donations) \$448.32 Volunteer Hours 61



Needs for next month: cooking oil (smaller and larger), mayonnaise, sugar 4# size, bar soap, dish and laundry soap. Personal products for men and women.



HELPING HANDS

Volunteers for the month

Liturgist Kathy Gionis
Money Counter Peter Gionis
Usher Lynn Hanson
Bell Ringer Karen Sciacca
Fellowship Admin Members
Flowers Karen Sciacca
Communion Kathy & Peter Gionis

In-person/Zoom services will be held Sunday's at 11:15 am. There will be no service at SCF on December 17th. Instead we will join Atlas for their Christmas Program at 10 am.

Check out our website and Facebook page for details. We hope you can join us!

Christmas Eve Service

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24TH 10:00 AM ST. CROIX FALLS UMC

ST. CROIX FALLS NEWS

REMEMBER THE FOOD SHELF

On Communion Sundays, you are invited to bring in donations for the SCF Food Pantry... just be sure your food items have not expired.





December Mission



The Sailor Hat Offering will go to support buying Christmas Food Cards for Families in Need!

Thank you for your support!



St. Croix Falls

12/10/23

1:30 pm





Sharon Asp 12/9

ZOOM VIDEO WORSHIP SERVICE

9:00 & 11:15 am Sunday's

There will be a parish-wide ZOOM video service at 9:00 am at Central-Grantsburg and 11:15 am at St. Croix Falls every Sunday until further notice. The worship materials will be mailed out to those without email, emailed out to everyone in the parish we have email addresses for and posted on our website. The sermon and ZOOM login information will also be sent with the service material and posted on our website.

The video of the worship service will be posted on the parish Facebook page after the service.



MINISTRY TABLETS AVAILABLE

Just a reminder we have ministry tablets available for all churches to use for their members, please let Pastor Jenny know if you would like to use one. Our experiences are that users really appreciate them, they are able to hear and see other members during the service. -Karen Sciacca

ADVENT CRAFT GROUP **GATHERINGS**

This Advent season we will gather to make guilted lap blankets.

Paulie Kratchmer will lead us, and we will send all blankets to the nursing home as they need them.

If you have any sleeping fabrics at home, please donate to the Craft group for quilt blankets.

The Advent Craft Group will meet every Wednesday at 1pm from November 29th to December 20th.



Come and join us to have fun in a meaningful way during Advent!









NW District Youth Christmas Party

December 16th 12:00-3:00 pm



Youth Worship **Night** at Wood

Lake Camp

6:30-8:30 pm





YOUTH GROUP **GATHERINGS**

December 6th & 20th

6:00-8:00 pm

Central UMC Grantsburg

Family Game Night & Dinner

Dec, 8th 5:30-8:00 pm

Central UMC Grantsburg





YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY

December 27th

6:00-8:00 pm



"For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace". (Isaiah 55:12)

As we approach the season of Thanksgiving, we want to think of warm, happy memories, but we can't as easily right now. Our minds and very souls are distressed by the scenes of war victims and refugees, which is painful and hopeless.

We decry the October 7, 2023, attack by Hamas and the continuing loss of life of Israelis and Palestinians including thousands of children and vulnerable people.

We continue to pray that God's protective hand be with those who are in despair because of the wars taking place in Russia, Ukraine, and the Gaza Strip in Palestine and other parts of the world. Today, my heart and soul gravitate towards the Gaza Strip in Palestine.

We have watched the news clips of hospitals, refugee camps, schools, and even ambulances bombed. I think about the lives of innocent children who die trapped in collapsed buildings. There are too many vulnerable people sacrificed.

The atrocities don't stop there; we see and read about hospitals that are cut off from basic energy supplies and are short on medical supplies and bottled water. It breaks my heart that so many lives won't blossom into the future. They exist in the darkness of fear and death. This carnage must stop.

Calling for an end to the war does not mean siding with Hamas. As followers of Christ, we must call for an end to this situation where life, which is more precious than anything, is treated as expendable.

Violence begets violence: violence plants hatred, resentment, and anger in someone's heart. Wounds on the body will heal over time, but the memories of violence are engraved in the heart and rarely go away.

Believing that the victors will create peace through violence is a misnomer. We must wake up and pray for a world where God's love is known, and everyone can practice and experience that love.

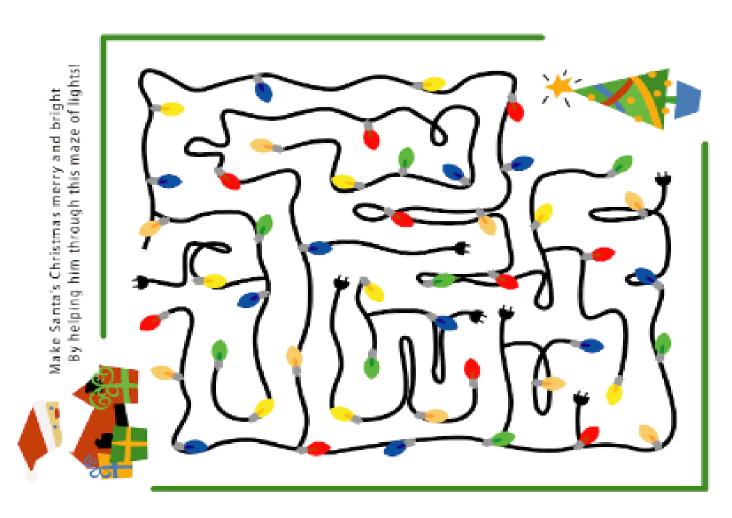
In the Scripture text from Isaiah, the prophet dreamed of a world ruled by God: "Where wolves will live with lambs, leopards will lie down with their young goats, calves, lion cubs, and fatlings will graze together, and a child will lead them" (Isaiah 11:6-9). The characteristics of this world are revealed in the word "together." God's world is not one in which we are satisfied to be "alone." The ultimate question is, how can we create a world where the weak and the strong coexist, where no one harms or destroys each other? Isaiah says that the dream of such a world will finally come true when the knowledge of God fills the earth.

I imagine the darkness's grip is weaker when we allow Isaiah's dreams to seep into our daily lives. Although the current reality seems to be dominated by darkness and rampant violence, we do not lose heart because we can dream of a world where God's love and peace reign.

I pray that this Thanksgiving is filled with abundance - of gratitude, love, peace, and, above all else, hope. May God make it so. Amen.

celebrate RECEIVE JOY GRACE GIVE Peace THANK YOU togethernes remember than the second second

ACTIVITY FUN PAGE



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WEDNESDAYS

Come enjoy a time of biblical teaching. worship & fun with your youth group!

FUN GAMES FRIENDS WORSHIPCAMPFIRES

WHEN? 6:30PM - 8:00PM

- SEPTEMBER 20TH - DECEMBER 13TH

- MARCH 20TH

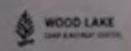
- OCTOBER 18TH - JANUARY 24TH

- APRIL 17TH

- NOVEMBER 15TH - FEBRUARY 21st

- MAY 15TH

Planning on attending? Let us know! INFO@WOODLAKE.US





What: N.W. District Youth Christmas Party,

When: Saturday, Dec. 16th

Time: Noon (lunch provided) - 3 pm

Where: Chapel Heights United Methodist Church

300 E. Hamilton Ave. Eau Claire, WI 54701

Please text for head count of youth attending: cell: 608-632-2792

What to expect at the party:

Wear an ugly Christmas Sweater/Shirt

Food will be provided, starting at noon for lunch.

Gift exchange: White Elephant; bring a gift - receive a gift. \$10 - \$15 max.

Food donation for Food Pantry: Please bring a **food item** for the local Food Pantry at Chapel Heights. Name entered for a special gift drawing.

Youth will wrap some **gifts** for local charities, play some **games** and finish with **singing Christmas Carols**.





10-24-2023, Pastor Jenny volunteers at Loaves & Fishes in Luck

Pastor Jenny's South Korea Visit 10/26/2023 – 11/10/2023

With her elder brother and sisterin-law.





With Pastor Jenny's younger sister and her family.

<u>Pastor Jenny's South Korea Visit Cont.</u> 10/26/2023 – 11/10/2023



With her younger brother.



With her younger sister, elder brother-in-law and nephew.





With her high school friends.



11-5-2023, All Saints Sunday, (SCF: Rev. Cathy Hamblin and Jim Andrews)



11-12-2023, Veterans Sunday, (A: Barbara Loomis (G), Scott Olson, Colleen Adams-Schween, and Wren Grimes)

11-14-2023, Pastor Jenny and her friend at Rotary Club.



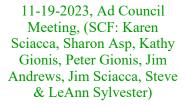


11-14-2023, Ad Council Meeting (G: Barbara Loomis, Toni Koons, Deb & Russ Hammer)





11-17-2023, SPRC meeting at Atlas, (Sue Olson (A), Sharon Asp (SCF), Kathy Gionis (SCF), Wendell Hauble (A), Kayleen Branstad(G), Barbara Loomis (G), and Pastor Jenny Lee)







11-19-2023, Pastor Jenny led worship at Continuing Care Center in Grantsburg.

Operation Christmas Shoe Boxes, 11-12-2023







Central-Grantsburg made 23 boxes.





The 12 Days of Christmas Safety

Keep lit candles away from real trees, wreaths, boughs and garlands



Keep poisonous sweets and chocolates away from your pets



Keep your tree away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources



3

Make sure your tree has a stable platform so it doesnt tip over



Choose an artificial tree that is labelled flame resistant



If you have a real tree, make sure you water it regularly



Check your lights for fraying, bare spots and kinks in the wire



Turn off all tree lights and decorations when not in use



8

Use an appropriate ladder or stepladder when putting up decorations



No matter how tempting it may be NEVER drink and drive!



When preparing the food, make sure you avoid cross contamination and clean your surfaces and utensils



Make sure you reheat your leftovers to at least 74 degrees to avoid food poisoning



Merry Christmas

Christmas

Polk County Food Shelves

Amery

Amery Food Shelf—230 Deronda Street, Amery

Food Shelf is located in the old Amery Regional Medical Center Building. Call (715) 268-5999 before 12:00 noon on Wednesday. Leave name and number on voice mail. Open Thursday 2-6 pm.

Area of service: Amery school district only

The Congregational Church—201 Harriman Ave. North, Amery Food distribution: 9-10:30 am every 2nd Saturday of the month. Registration is 7 am to 9:30 am. 715-268-7390 Special note: No economic restrictions; however, a \$20.00 donation is asked to help cover the cost of the truck.

Ruby's Pantry -www.amery.ucc.org or office.ameryucc@gmail.com Area of service: County wide



People Loving People --- 103 E. Main Street, Dresser

Monday and Saturday 11 am -1 pm Wednesday 2 pm -5 pm

Phone: 715-501-4657

Frederic

Family Pathways Food Shelf—1100 Wisconsin Ave South, Frederic Phone 715-327-4425

Open Tuesday 9 am—6 pm, Thursday 9 am—6 pm, Saturday 9 am—12pm For best service please call for appointment.

Luck

Loaves and Fishes Interfaith Food Pantry—300 North 1st Street, Luck Pantry is located in the back of the DBS Hall

Open Tuesday & Thursday 11 am—1 pm

Phone (715) 472-2003

Area of service: Luck & Unity School Districts

Osceola

The Open Cupboard Food Shelf—402 2nd Avenue, Osceola

Call for appointment: **715-294-4357**

Open Monday-Friday 8 am – 5 pm

(The Open Cupboard also has used furniture & clothing)

Area of service: Osceola & Dresser school district

St. Croix Falls

St Croix Falls Food Shelf—809 Pine Street, St Croix Falls

Phone: 715-557-1653

Open Monday 9 am—11 am Wednesday 3 pm—6 pm Friday 9 am – 10 am Area of service: SCF school district, Dresser elementary, Centuria, Cushing

& portions of Balsam Lake & Taylors Falls

Family Pathways Food Shelf—2000 US Hwy 8, St Croix Falls

Phone: 715-483-2920

Open Monday 9–5 pm, Tuesday 9-5 pm, Wednesday 12 pm–6 pm, Thurs-

day 9-5 pm, Friday 9-5 pm, & Saturday 9-Noon





NEW

FEED MY NEIGHBOR **Community Food Pantry**

316 Wisconsin Ave. - Centuria, WI Open to Polk County Residents

Open:

Monday 2 to 5pm Tuesday 5:30-7:30pm Thursday 10am to 20pm Saturday 9-11am

People can visit this pantry twice a month.



Burnett County Emergency Food Shelves and Distributions

Grantsburg Area Food Shelf No cost

Serving residents of the Grantsburg School District

Open: Tuesdays 9:30-11:30am Thursdays 9:30-11:30,

Third Thursdays 4:00-6:00 pm

Emergency food is always available through the emergency window. Allowed to come 2 times a month Located between the Library and the Village Hall Office, 320 Brad St., Grantsburg, WI 54840.



Indianhead Community Action Agency- "Connections" No cost

Serving all Burnett County residents
Open 10am-3pm Monday, Tuesday & Friday
Located in Webster next to the Holiday Gas Station
(715) 866-8151

Ruby's Food Shelf-Siren No cost

Serving residents of the Siren & Webster School Districts Open 10:00am-2pm Monday & Friday 10:00am-4pm Wednesday Closed Thursday

**You`re asked to be there at least 30 minutes before close Located at 24534 State Hwy 35/70 (Ruby`s Secondhand) (715)349-RUBY (7829)



"If you love me, feed my sheep."

Ruby`s Monthly Food Distributions *Bring own boxes or baskets Donation: \$25* For dates, times, and locations (no location restrictions at this time), visit http://www.rubyspantry.org/distribution/distschedule.htm

Second Harvest Food Distribution *No cost*

First and Third Thursday of every month Starts at 11:00am until food is gone Located at Connections in Webster (next to the Holiday Gas Station)

This distribution is offered to appone in recommendations.

This distribution is offered to anyone in need of food; please help get the word out

St. Croix Chippewa Commodities Distribution

24663 Angeline Ave., Webster 349-2195, Becky Reynolds

Food distribution: Monday to Thursday 7:30am-4:30pm

(Native American Income Eligible Only)

Closed first week of each month for inventory. Can only receive one time per month. A variety of items are available each month and may include canned meats; juice; canned foods; dry goods; frozen meats; cheese; rice and pasta; fresh produce.



2023

Calendar of the Upper St. Croix Parish

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
Pastor Jenny's Office Hours Tuesday: 9am - 5pm at Grantsburg Wednesday: 10am - 2pm at SCF & 3pm - 7pm at Grantsburg Thursday: 11am - 4pm at SCF Friday: by appointment only		Colleen's Office Hours (Times are approximate) Remotely: Tuesday's 8:00 am-4:00 pm Friday's 8:00 am-12:00 pm			1	2
3 1st Sunday of Advent Communion Sunday Mitten Tree Sunday (A) 9:00 Worship & Zoom Service (G) 10:00 Worship (A) 11:15 Worship (SCF)	4	10:30 am-1pm, Pastor Jenny Volunteers at Loaves & Fishes in Luck			8 5:30-8 pm Youth Family Worship & Game Night	9 8:00 am UM Men's Meeting (G)
10 9:00 Worship & Zoom Service (G) 10:00 Worship (A) 11:15 Worship (SCF) 12:15 pm Ad Council Meeting (SCF)	11	12	Luncheon (all women are	[= · ·	1:30 pm, Ad Council (A)	16 12pm-3pm, NW District Youth Christmas Party Christmas Party



2023

Calendar of the Upper St. Croix Parish

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SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
9:00 Worship & Zoom Service (G) 10:00 Worship (A) Sunday School Christmas Program (A) No SCF Service	18	19 6:30 pm Ad Council Meeting (G)	20 1pm, Advent Craft Group Gathering (G) 6-8 pm, Youth Gathering (G)	21	22	23
Christmas Eve Service 10 am St. Croix Falls 4 pm Atlas 7 pm Grantsburg Christmas Eve Services	Merry Christmas No Church Service WE WISH YOU MERRY CHRISTMAS	10:00 am Deadline to submit Newsletter and Calendar information	6pm-8pm, Youth Christmas Party (G)	28	29	30
31 1st Sunday after Christmas/Last Sunday of 2023 9:00 Worship & Zoom Service (G) 10:00 Worship (A) 11:15 Worship & Zoom Service (SCF)		* ALL	an	CHF CHF May the God of hold and peace as you to may overflow with of the Holy	rust in him, so to	hat you lower