

CONGREGATIONAL SONG *O Come, All Ye Faithful*  
UMH 234 (vs. 1 & 3)

NARRATOR 5

CONGREGATIONAL SONG *Angels We Have Heard on High*  
UMH 238 (vs. 1, 2 & 3)

PASTOR'S NARRATION 1

CONGREGATIONAL SONG *The First Noel*  
UMH 245 (vs. 1 & 2)

***We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another***

PASTOR'S NARRATION 2  
SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

*Pastor takes the light from the Christ Candle, and lights the candles of Mary and Joseph. Then they light their candles in a semi-circle, then they distribute it to the congregation. Please receive the light from the person sitting next to you by tilting your unlit candle to receive the flame. When all the candles are lit, you will be invited to stand and sing together.*

\*CAROL *Silent Night, Holy Night* UMH 239 (All Verses)

\*PEACE PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS (See insert)

\*BENEDICTION Pastor Jenny Lee

*Please extinguish your candles carefully.*

\*POSTLUDE

**Merry Christmas!**

NO. 2023-52  
December 24th, 2023

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

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**



**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:**

*10:00 AM at St. Croix Falls*

*4:00 PM at Atlas*

*7:00 PM at Grantsburg with Online Zoom Service*

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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[www.upperstcroixparish.org](http://www.upperstcroixparish.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/UpperStCroixParishUMC>



# Peace Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.  
Amen.

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

### Mitten Tree

We will collect mittens, scarves, hats, gloves, etc. for the Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry.



## 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 financial donations for Christmas for kids through

interfaith Caregivers of Burnett County.

## ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh



**Food Shelf**  
(Communion Sunday)



### Sailor Hat Offering:

The Sailor Hat offering will go to support Buying Christmas Food Gift Cards for Families in Need!

Thank you for your support!

## TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers All God's People  
Pastor Jenny Lee

**12/24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**  
10:00 am at St. Croix Falls UMC  
4:00 pm at Atlas UMC  
7:00 pm at Central UMC



### Grantsburg-Central:

Pianist Toni Koons  
Acolyte(s) Willow Nyland  
Cleaning Sandra Erickson & Charlie Glonek  
Snow Removal *Volunteer Needed*

### Atlas:

Pianist Sharon Asp  
Usher Colleen Adams-Schween  
Cleaning *Volunteer Needed*

### St. Croix Falls:

Pianist Sharon Asp  
Usher(s) Lynn Hanson  
Money Counter Peter Gionis  
Bell Ringer Karen Sciacca  
Flowers Karen Sciacca



- We will have a Participatory Dramatic Reading during Christmas Eve Service. If anyone is willing to be one of the narrators (readers) or participants, please contact Pastor Jenny if you haven't talked with her yet.



### Breakthrough Prayers:

Please pray for those who are in need, the sick, those who have lost loved ones, and for God's peace for all over the world!

## PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) **An Online Zoom Service is scheduled for this Sunday at 7:00 pm at Central.**  
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=SDZleFNubmEvaDBlcytTRzVxMFliZz09>  
Phone: +1 312 626 6799,  
Meeting ID: 841 4780 8460, Passcode: 568271
- 2) Our Sunday Sermons are on the website at [upperstcroixparish.org](http://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: Christmas Eve  
Merry Christmas!

### Christmas Eve Candlelight Services:

12/24: 10:00 am St. Croix Falls  
4:00 pm Atlas  
7:00 pm Grantsburg with Zoom

12/25-12/27: Korean Clergy and Family Christmas Retreat at Wisconsin Dells

12/26: 10:00 am - January Newsletter Information Due

12/27: 5:30 pm-8:00 pm - Youth Christmas Party

**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

Janelle Smestad 12/25



Next Sunday (December 31st):

## VOLUNTEERS

### Central -Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Counter	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson & Charlie Glonek
Snow Removal	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>

### Atlas

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Colleen Adams-Schween
Usher	Sue Olson
Cleaning	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Sunday School	(No Sunday School)

### St. Croix Falls

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Kathy Gionis
Usher(s)	Lynn Hanson
Money Counter	Peter Gionis
Bell Ringer	Karen Sciacca
Flowers	Karen Sciacca



## Upcoming Events-Mark Your Calendar

- 1/1 Happy New Year
- 1/7 New Year-Blessing Service
- 1/12 Youth Family Worship & Game Night
- 1/14 SCF fellowship meal / Atlas fellowship week



## The Participatory Dramatic Reading Christmas Eve Service

### “Christmas is for all the People”

Reader 1,  
Mary & Joseph (with baby) - a chair for Mary and a manger for the baby Jesus  
Reader 2,  
Two poor people (or children)  
Reader 3,  
Two sick people (maybe with walker)-two chairs  
Reader 4,  
Two rich people (with shopping bag or gift boxes)  
Reader 5,

#### **Reader 1:**

There is nothing false about Christmas, nothing hokey or make believe. It’s the real thing. It is forgiveness for people who need forgiveness and life for those who have none. It is strength to fight temptation that is cruel and to do the thing that is right when it is hard to do. It is the hope of life in the face of death that is crudely real. It is God in the straw [*pause*]. Are you ready to come to the manger and to the cross? [*pause*] Can you let go of the Christmas Nativity scenes of your past and see the event with new eyes?

**Congregation song:** Singing “What Child Is This?” (UMH 219, vs. 1&3)

*[while congregation is singing, Mary and Joseph come forward. Mary is carrying the infant Jesus. When she gets to the chancel, she places him in the manger. She is seated on the bench that is covered with burlap. Joseph stands behind her, looking at the child.]*

#### **Reader 2:**

*[very happily]* This is what we hoped for; this is the scene we love. The young mother with her newborn child, gently placing him in the manger, and Joseph, the proud father, looking on in wonder and love. We could stay here for a long time, gazing on this scene. Most of us may wish we had a special camera to capture not only the picture but the feeling. We are so happy to see this scene. [*pause*] But perhaps there is more . . .

**Congregation song:** Singing “Away in a Manger” (UMH 217, all verses)

*[Two people (children), dressed in ragged clothes, bruised and barefoot, looking*

*as though they lived on the street, come down the center aisle and approach the manger. One of the children sits on the floor to the front right of the manger, the other children kneel behind this child, staying close to one another.]*

**Reader 3:**

We really didn't expect to see street people (children) at the manger. After all, isn't it supposed to be shepherds. They were the poorest of the poor in Jesus' day. But we are caught in a dilemma. You see, the name Emmanuel, given to Jesus and proclaimed by the angels, means "God with us"--not just long ago, but right now. Who are the poorest now? [pause] Perhaps the poorest of the poor, the young ones who have been hurt, beaten, abused, need to be at the manger.

**Congregation song:** Singing "In the Bleak Midwinter" (UMH 221, vs. 1 & 2)

*[Two sick adults enter from the left side of the chancel and walk toward the manger. Two chairs are placed there, covered in brown burlap and burgundy cloth for the older women. The men will stand behind them, as they all look at the manger]*

**Reader 4:**

[puzzled, questioning] Just a minute! I thought we might have some adult shepherds here, you know, keeping track of the children, the little sheep. Teenagers are great for the part. They are mostly in their adult height and look older than the little ones who so often have been shepherds. But what are we going to do about these new arrivals? What are these older people doing at the manger? Haven't they seen enough Christmases to know better? [pause] Or is Christmas really for everyone--for all those who have had many Christmases and for whom life has given a variety of experiences? They bring to the manger a wondrous array of experiences and gifts. Perhaps, just perhaps, it is right.

**Congregation song:** Singing "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (UMH 234, vs. 1 & 3)

*[Two people(children), dressed in very fancy clothes, carrying lovely gifts wrapped in fancy paper and having large bows, enter from the right side of the chancel. They approach the manger. one of the children kneel by the manger and the other stands behind them.]*

**Reader 5:**

Look at this scene. [pause] These fancy-dressed people look out of place. Where do they fit in? They have everything that they want, and they keep asking for more,

as if more will take the place of the emptiness that can exist in their lives. [pause] The jewelry and fancy-dress won't help. They just won't be enough. And all the bright ribbons and pretty packages cannot deliver to them the peace that this Christ child comes to bring. [pause] Yes, it is right for them to be here. They need to be here, for they, too, are beloved.

**Congregation song:** Singing “Angels We Have Heard on High” (UMH 238, vs. 1, 2 & 3)

*[All stand and form a semi-circle behind the scene.]*

**Pastor:** God's stupendous sign--a child in a manger, a Light given for our darkness. [pause] Just when we think that we have understood it all, we are surprised again. We are included--there is room for us in this picture, at this manger, in God's house--there is always room for everyone regardless of age, the sick, the poor, the prisoner, the rich, genders, ethnicities and any boundaries.

Let us raise our voices in song:  
\*\*\* “The First Noel” (UMH 245, vs. 1 & 2)

.....

**Pastor:**

Do you feel the spirit yet? Not the spirit of a childhood Christmas, but the spirit of God with us? [pause] It's here, among us right now. It is in the faces of each of the people in our unique Nativity scene. It is in your faces!

The light of God is given for you--given to you--and by you it is given to others.

*The pastor takes the light from the Christ Candle. She/He lights the candles of the people's candles (or Mary & Joseph's candles.)*

*[The congregation may receive the light from those in the semi-circle or it may be given to specially designated persons (Mary & Joseph) who then distribute it to the congregation.]*

Let us sing together.  
“Silent Night” UMH #239

Resource from [Ministry Matters™ | Worship Connection: Christmas Eve \(Option 3\)](#)