

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** Unison
God of steadfast love, we pray that you will love the world through the money we dedicate today. We pray that your work of transformation will be carried forward by our gifts. As a church, we seek to follow where Jesus leads. As individuals, we heed the call to discipleship. Bless our efforts to fish for people—for their sake, not our own. Amen!

NO. 2024-03
January 21st, 2024



Upper St. Croix Parish United Methodist Church

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN** *O Jesus, I Have Promised*
UMH 396 (vs. 1 & 4)

***BENEDICTION** Pastor Jenny Lee

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

The 2024 Parish Ministry Theme:
“Let’s Replant It” (Galatians 6:7-10)

3rd Sunday After the Epiphany



Grantsburg-Central
Since 1897



Atlas
Since 1887



St. Croix Falls
Since 1859

SUNDAY SERVICES:

*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
January 21st, 2024
3rd Sunday after the Epiphany

*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!”

(Waive your hands at one another)

We Celebrate New Life in Christ

***CALL TO WORSHIP** Responsive

For God alone our souls wait in silence.

Our hope is from God, our fortress.

God is our rock and our salvation.

God is our refuge and our deliverance.

Thrust in God at all times, in all places.

Pour out your hearts to the One who hears.

All people are valuable in God’s sight.

No one is more important than another.

Worship God, who is ready to speak to us.

Open your lives to God’s steadfast love.

All power in the universe belongs to God.

Yet God depends on our faithful service. Amen.

***DEDICATING HYMN** *Jesus Calls Us* UMH 398 (vs. 1, 2 & 5)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

We await your message, God of all places and times. Sometimes we do not like what we hear, but we know we need to listen. Your message is inclusive and fair, while we like to make distinctions that favor us and our friends. You call us out of our comfort zones to do new things and try better ways. You direct us to reach out to people with whom we seem to have little in common. Speak your truth to us in this service so we can carry it to the place where you want us to go, to the people you are eager to reach. Amen!

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs.1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Mark 1:14-20

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God ¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

¹⁶ As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people.” ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰ Immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

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

Thanks be to God. Amen!

SERMON

“How Can It Be?”

Pastor Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

God, whose reign is nearer than we have realized, and whose realm is available to us even here and now, speak your invitation to us today in ways we have never fully heard before. Confront us again with the good news you want us to share. Enlist us in reaching out to the world with love and joy, so all may be saved from calamity and know the fulfillment you intend for every person. 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

JANUARY CHURCH MISSIONS



ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Ashleigh Olson

<p>INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:</p> <p>Atlas collects and recycles ink jet cartridges and cell phones year-round.</p> 	<p>LOAVES & FISHES NEEDS OUR ONGOING SUPPORT</p> <p>Requested items: cooking oil (smaller and larger), mayonnaise, sugar 4# size, bar soap, dish and laundry soap. Personal products for men and women.</p>	<p>In January we will be collecting hygiene kits for Polk County Foster Care. Deadline Sunday, January 28. There will be a sign-up sheet at church for people to sign up for items to donate.</p>  <p>Hygiene Kits Needed</p>
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GRANTSBURG

Mission committee chair: Deb Hammer

<p>BE A "BACK-PACK BACKER"!</p> <p>REMEMBER ... Every Sunday Is MAC 'N CHEESE SUNDAY! Supporting the Salvation Army's "Happy Kids Back-Pack Program"</p> 	<p>We will be collecting financial donations for the Grantsburg Food Shelf.</p> 
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ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh

<p>Food Shelf (Communion Sunday)</p> 	<p>Sailor Hat Offering:</p> <p><i>The Sailor Hat offering will go to support The Salvation Army!</i></p> 
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Thank you for your support!

TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers

All God's People
Pastor Jenny Lee

Central -Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Jenni Tober-Stedman
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Deb Hammer
Counter	Deb Hammer
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson & Charlie Glonek
Snow Removal	Russ Hammer

Atlas

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Colleen Adams-Schween
Usher	Sue Olson
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Josie Grimes
Fellowship	All together

St. Croix Falls

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Karen Sciacca
Usher(s)	Jim Andrews
Money Counter	Peter Gionis & Karen Sciacca
Bell Ringer	Jim Sciacca
Flowers	Lynn Hanson
Potluck Fellowship	All Together



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 9:00 am at Central at 11:15 am by request.** 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=SDZleFNubmEvaDBlcytTRzVxMFIzZ09>
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: 3rd Sunday After Epiphany
God bless you!

Worship Service Schedule

- 1/21: 9:00 am Grantsburg with Zoom (at 9:15 am, Sunday School)
10:00 am Atlas (at 10:15 am, Sunday School)
11:15 am St. Croix Falls with Zoom
- 1/21: 12:15 pm Ad Council Meeting (SCF)
1/23: 6:30 pm SPRC Meeting via Zoom
1/24: 6:30-8:00 pm Youth Worship Night at Wood Lake Camp
1/25: 12-2:00 pm Diversity Council Meeting via Zoom -

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

Briella Reid 1/21
Renee Tooze 1/26
Max Dauer 1/27



Next Sunday (January 28th)

VOLUNTEERS

Central -Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Paulie Kratchmer
Counter	Deb Hammer
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson & Charlie Glonek
Snow Removal	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>

Atlas

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Sue Olson
Usher	Colleen Adams-Schween
Cleaning	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Sunday School	Cheryl Olson

St. Croix Falls

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

Upcoming Events-Mark Your Calendar

- Feb. 2-3, Pastor Jenny Attends Retreat at St. Anthony Spirituality Center in Marathon, WI
- Feb. 5-6, Racial Ethnic Clergy Summit with Jung at Green Lake Conference Center.
- Youth Retreat, April 19-21 at Wood Lake Camp (Contact their Youth Director)
- VBS 2024, August 5-8



January 21st, 2024

Mark 1:14-20

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



“How Can It be?”

I want to start with something funny I found on an internet site: A Priest was driving down to Boston on Christmas Eve when got stopped for speeding in Medford. The highway patrol officer smelled alcohol on the priest’s breath and then saw an empty wine bottle on the floor of the car at the church outreach event. He said, “Father, have you been drinking?” “Only Water,” replied Father. The policeman asked, “Then how come I can smell wine?” The priest looked at the bottle and said, “Good Lord! He’s done it again.”

Two weeks ago, I joined the senior youth bible lesson to encourage them and get to know them as they are a new group. Barbara Loomis led the group in a bible lesson, using, the Gospel of John 1:43-51. That’s the story about Jesus calling his first disciples, and Philip extended an invitation to his friend, Nathanael. Philip said, “We have found the One Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the Prophets also wrote. That’s Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Then, Nathanael asked, “Nazareth? Can anything good come from there?” Afterward, they shared the story and reflection on the scripture. Barbara then asked them, “Can anything good come from Grantsburg?”

What do you think about her question? I have learned from those in the Grantsburg community that Grantsburg is famous for cheese, beer, and furniture. Other than that, what else? Barbara said, “You are from Grantsburg. You are all good! Don’t you think so?” Yes, they are potential possibilities God called as Jesus called his first disciples. Nazareth of Galilee was a very small village. The residents were poor and people ignored the residents in Nazareth because there was nothing special to do. Nathanael’s words, “Nazareth? Can anything good come from there?”, are a good expression of how people thought of Nazareth at that time. However, Jesus is from Nazareth, which has become a very famous town globally.

Think of our location in Wisconsin. Among the clergy members in the Wisconsin United Methodist Church, the North West District is known as a very rural and barren area for ministry. However, when many churches disaffiliated last year, none of the churches in the North West District disaffiliated. I am proud of our town, our parish, and our district, no matter what people say. I love our parish; Grantsburg, Atlas and St. Croix Falls. I can see hope through our church ministry and find joy through our everyday lives. How can that be? It is because we believe in Jesus Christ.

The core of good news is that Jesus is Christ. I hope that you can sense that God gives us a chance. God may notify us through several channels. The Book of Revelation 3:20 says, “Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come into you and eat with you, and you with me.” God’s grace is open to everyone, but only a few people notice it. I hope you listen to God’s calling and follow God’s direction, holding hope, joy, peace and love with you.

Today’s Gospel also talks about the story Jesus calling his first disciples. As I read this scripture, I wonder how it happened. Imagine that you were Peter, John, Andrew, or James at the Lake of Galilee. You were fishing there because it was your job. Then, suddenly a stranger approached you and said, “Hey guys, come and follow me. I’ll give you a better job, which is to fish for people.” How would you react to him? Their reaction was to immediately follow him, leaving everything behind, including their family’s and jobs. Would you follow him? If I were them, I might ignore him, thinking, “Who is this crazy man?”, or I may have considered calling the cops.

However, think of it differently. Imagine it in this way; again, you are Peter, John, Andrew, or James. You were born and raised in Galilee, a small village. You followed in your father's footsteps doing the same job he had, never venturing outside the village. Yet, you know everything about what's going on in the community, including John the Baptist and his teachings about the Messiah coming soon after him, and Jesus, who was a carpenter, but often disagreed with the Law in the Temple. Additionally, you might have heard that "after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God."

Up to this point, what do you think of Jesus? The arrest of John the Baptist posed a difficult religious situation, as he was persecuted by the Roman Empire. Everybody hid, even his followers. One thing to consider is that they were initially followers of John the Baptist and had learned about that Messiah coming soon after him. John the Baptist pointed at Jesus, saying, "Look, the Lamb of God" (John 1:29; 36-37). So, you already knew who Jesus was.

After John the Baptist was arrested, you returned to your town and worked at the Lake. Then, Jesus approached you and said, "It's time. Follow me!" That's a totally different story, right? There was still a risk of persecution for them because it happened right after John was arrested. However, they chose to follow Jesus immediately. How about you? Would you follow him?

In our case, living in the 21st century, we face no risk of religious persecution. We can gather freely every Sunday morning. How can this be? It has happened, of course, because of Jesus' sacrificial love and the disciples' brave acts in following Jesus without hesitation. Now, it's our turn. It is time for us to respond to Jesus' call. Our courageous responses and actions make our ministry hopeful. The next generation can dream anew even if they live in a small town.

Can anything good come from Grantsburg, Atlas, and St. Croix Falls? Can anything make a difference in our parish ministry? Only your brave actions can make a difference tomorrow in our ministry. I acknowledge your courageous act of coming to the church every Sunday morning, but that is only two hours a week. What about the other 166 hours? How do you spend the remaining time for Jesus within those 166 hours, serving community, spreading the good news to your neighbors, and extending invitations to your family and relatives who don't attend Sunday service., especially to your children and grandchildren?

It is time for your courage to follow Jesus in your everyday life. The Letter of James says, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." If you believe in Jesus, but you don't follow him through action, your faith is dead.

It is important to gather together on Sunday morning, but more important is to live out Jesus' teachings in everyday life. Love God and love our neighbors through action. Yes, we gather together to worship God through action, and we also need to go out to invite others to experience God's love. Let them know they are loved by God. That's the first step in loving our neighbors! How can it be? It can happen through your faithful actions. We can make a difference tomorrow through our brave actions. Thanks be to God. Amen!