

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** Unison

By giving away some of the wealth we cherish so much, we keep ourselves focused on who you are, gracious God, and on what you expect of us. As the body of Christ, we seek to be a healing force in our world. May the offerings we present be used in ways that encourage healthful behaviors among us in the church, within our community, and as far as our influence can reach. Receive us and our gifts, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN** *Blessed Assurance* UMH 369 (vs. 1 & 2)

***BENEDICTION** Pastor Jenny Lee

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

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

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

4th 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: 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
January 28th, 2024
4th 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

Great are the works of God, and greatly to be praised.

God’s righteousness endures forever.

We come together as a congregation of believers.

We give thanks to God with whole hearts.

God is gracious and merciful and trustworthy.

At all times, God is mindful of the covenant.

The works of God’s hands are established among us.

We can count on God’s righteousness and faithfulness.

Awe before God is the beginning of wisdom.

All who approach God in fear have good understanding.

Holy and awesome is God’s name.

We call on God to empower our worship. Amen.

***DEDICATING HYMN** *Sweet Hour of Prayer*

UMH 496 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

God of the prophets, help us to recognize your voice among the competing claims of our day. Raise up in our midst authentic witnesses to your truth. Be present with us now to guide our prayers and praise. Let us not presume to know your message without careful listening or to speak your word without discerning the Spirit. Light your fires within us so we may heed your summons and give our best in your service. Amen!

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs.1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Mark 1:21-28

²¹ They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²² They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. ²³ Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴ and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet and come out of him!” ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷ They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” ²⁸ At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

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

Thanks be to God. Amen!

SERMON

“Why Don’t You Cry Out?”

Pastor Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

All-powerful God, whose revelation in Jesus Christ communicated authority and wisdom and strength among people who lived long ago, let your word today address the unclean spirits in our midst, that your church may more fully represent Christ in today’s world, reaching out in love to all who need food, inspiration, direction, care, and healing. We pray in Jesus’ name. 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

FEBRUARY CHURCH MISSIONS

ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Ashleigh Olson

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.

In February we will be collecting soup and monetary donations to support Souper Bowl of Caring.



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"



In February we will be collecting soup and financial donations to support Superbowl of Caring through 2/11/24. Superbowl of Caring also benefits the Grantsburg Food Shelf. For the rest of February will be collecting donations in support for our church.



ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh



Food Shelf
(Communion Sunday)



Sailor Hat Offering:

The Sailor Hat offering will go to support UMCOR Human Relations!

TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers

All God's People
Pastor Jenny Lee

Central -Grantsburg

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



Atlas

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Sue Olson
Usher	Colleen Adams-Schween
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
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



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!

Thank you for your support!

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: 4th Sunday After Epiphany
God bless you!

Worship Service Schedule

- 1/28: 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
- 1/31: 5:30-8:00 pm Junior Youth Gathering (G)
- 2/2-2/3: Pastor Jenny attends in the Provisional Elder Retreat at St. Anthony Spiritual Center in Marathon, WI
- 2/5-2/6: Pastor Jenny Attends in the Racial Ethnic Clergy Summit at Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake

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

Charlie Glonck 1/28
Russ Hammer 1/29
Joseph Murtaugh 2/2



Next Sunday (February 4th)

VOLUNTEERS



Central -Grantsburg

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

Atlas

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

St. Croix Falls - Only Online service

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

Upcoming Events-Mark Your Calendar

- Feb. 5-6, Racial Ethnic Clergy Summit with Jung at Green Lake Conference Center.
- Feb. 11, Communion Sunday
- Lenten Bible Study, 2/29, 3/7, 3/21, and 3/28
- Youth Retreat, April 19-21 at Wood Lake Camp (Contact their Youth Director)
- VBS 2024, August 5-8

January 28th, 2024
Mark 1:21-28

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



“Why don’t You Cry Out?”

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: Johnny had been misbehaving and was sent to his room. After a while he emerged and informed his mother that he had thought it over and then said a prayer. “Fine,” said the pleased mother. “If you ask God to help you not misbehave, He will help you.” “Oh, I didn’t ask Him to help me not misbehave,” said Johnny. “I asked Him to help you put up with me.”

We may not realize how distressed we are by hearing people around us— there are many sufferings, infirmities, anxieties, worries, addictions, family illnesses, world-disasters, violence, injustice, and even small gossips that we have to deal with. All negative things come to our minds, and they grow within us. Finally, we can become depressed with all the negativity. If we hear bad things every day, it is like feeding our soul and mind with bad soul food. If you tell your spouse or family member repeatedly, “you are so bad.” They will become that person. Please don’t feed them and yourself with bad soul food! Instead, cry out to God to help you be a channel of blessing.

My grandfather was a strict father. My father was overwhelmed by my grandfather’s expectations. Despite receiving a higher education, he struggled with lower self-esteem and alcohol addiction. He couldn’t talk to anyone in a public place without drinking. My grandfather scolded my weak father every day. The combination of my grandfather’s expectations and strict discipline contributed to my father’s alcoholic addiction. Everyone in town knew that my father was an alcoholic and gossiped about him. All these situations led to my father getting worse and worse.

One day, when I was a sophomore at a seminary, I saw my father crying alone. It was the first time that I had seen my father cry and I felt heartbroken. I talked to my mother about why my father cried alone. She told me that my father was deeply wounded from his childhood. He lost his mother when he was 6 and couldn’t cry in front of his father due to the strict belief that a man never cries. My father’s soul and mind were fed with fear, powerlessness, deep grief, and brokenness by his father and the situation around him.

My mother and I decided to start blessing him. Family members intentionally spoke positive words to my father every day, such as “you are a good father,” “you are beloved,” “we are proud of you,” and “God bless you.” He began looking at himself in the mirror and seeing himself differently. We started having home services and we prayed to stop all negative influences flowing through our family. Eventually, he began attending church without drinking and was baptized. Furthermore, as the head of household, he led all family members and relatives to convert to Christianity. He enjoyed daily prayers with my mother for the rest of his life.

It is essential to cut off all bad things and be positive, supportive, sympathetic, compassionate, and grateful. Bless and encourage the people around you, and if they are happy, you will feel happy too. Perhaps, we can’t do it by ourselves, but if we do so in the name of Jesus Christ, God makes things happen for us. We, as Christians, have the authority to pray in Jesus’ name. Jesus said, “This kind can come out only by prayer” (Mark 9:29). He also said, “You may

ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" (John 14:14). Why don't you cry out to God? We can cut off all the bad things flowing through our family history in the name of Jesus Christ. It is the power of prayer that Jesus gave us.

In today's Scripture, Jesus went into the synagogue on the Sabbath and taught people. The synagogue was a Jewish temple for worship and Bible study. People were astounded at his teaching because he spoke with authority. At that time, there was a man with an unclean spirit. This man was perhaps an image of what the lives of those in the synagogue looked like. They knew about God very well, but their souls might not have been clean. In looking at him, they might have seen themselves, and they were not surprised by him but were surprised by the contrast of the one who has a clean spirit. Finally, the man cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?" Jesus said, "Be silent, and come out of him." and then the unclean spirit came out of him, crying with a loud voice. They were all amazed, and they kept asking one another, "What is this? It is new teaching with authority!" Yes, Jesus' teaching was the good news that the wounded, the broken, the powerless, the sick, and the poor are not sins, but they can be healed, restored, and reconciled in the love of God.

We may not realize that we have a story in our lives that suffers spiritually and emotionally. Perhaps, our souls and minds may be full of unclean ideas and thoughts. Perhaps, the man with an unclean spirit might represent everyone who has ever experienced the brokenness of life. He is the spokesperson for all who feel disconnected from themselves, others, or God. He might represent the human condition. He might want to hear from Jesus, "I have everything to do with you; You can be the one with a clean spirit; You have possibilities and opportunities to do great things"

We are not very different. Each one of us also longs for that answer because we also know the separation and brokenness in our own lives. We have lived in isolation. We have been trapped in grief. We have carried the burden of guilt. The truth of those situations often reveals itself as if the man with unclean spirit said, "Have you come to destroy us?" You may feel that you are about to be destroyed: You are going to die. You are facing an untreatable illness. However, we may not want our life to be seen in its messy condition. We may want to cover up guilt, grief, fear, anger, and self-judgment so they are not visible to others. However, if we feed those things to our soul, finally, our soul may be destroyed. Brokenness and being wounded are not guilt, but need care with love. Among the many people at the synagogue, only one man cried out to Jesus, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? I know who you are." Finally, he was healed by Jesus Christ. Why don't you cry out to God like that man?

As Christians, we have authority in the name of Jesus Christ. We need to be careful to listen to others who cry out, and we may use the authority of Jesus Christ to release them from their suffering. The Gospel of Mark's witness on Christian's authority is very clear. In the Gospel of Mark, 16:17-18, it says, "These signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out the demon; They will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover." Jesus, as he promised, is with his disciples and works with them. Today Jesus is working among us. It is time to cut off the negative things and bad spirit in our family and around us. Do not let Jesus' authority be limited. Please pray for yourself and your family. "This kind can come out only by prayer" (Mark9:29). Thanks be to God. Amen.