

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Transforming God, in whose love we become new people able to see others in a new light, help us to view Christ beyond the blinders of our culture as one whose way is relevant and exciting in our time and place. In the name of Jesus Christ, lead us to reconnect with you, our neighbors, and the whole universe, to be faithful stewards who participate in the transformation you envision for our world. We pray in the name of Jesus. 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!

INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

***DOXOLOGY**

UMH 95

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**

Use our gifts, mighty God, to bring light where there is gloom, hope where there is despair, peace where there is turmoil. May Jesus Christ be proclaimed among us and around your world. May righteousness and justice prevail in spite of differences. May we inherit a double portion of the prophets' spirit to discern clearly the ways you would have us go. We dedicate ourselves and our offering to these ends. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN** *Here I Am, Lord* **UMH 593 (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)

Stewardship Month/Transfiguration Sunday



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

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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
February 11th, 2024
Stewardship Month/Transfiguration Sunday

*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

God summons us from the sun’s rising to its setting.

Listen, for the mighty One speaks to us.

Our God comes and does not keep silent.

Through fire and tempest, God is with us.

God gathers those faithful to the covenant.

Be quick to respond to God’s invitation.

We seek a double share of the prophet’s spirit.

We look for a vision to claim our souls.

Open your ears to the good news of the gospel

Open your eyes to the glory of God.

We have come to share knowledge of Jesus Christ.

We gather, seeking transformation and empowerment. Amen.

***DEDICATING HYMN**

We Are Called

TFWS 2172 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Speak to us, Mighty One, for we are eager to listen. Bless us, as we cry out to you for strength and vision. You have acted in times past to save your people. Save us now. You have sent prophets to change the world. Change us now. You have granted light in Jesus Christ. Shine on us now. Let us see your glory. Lift us to the mountaintop in this time of prayer. Stay close to us to melt away our doubts, and do not leave us, we pray, through Jesus Christ. Amen!

Sacrament of Holy Communion

INVITATION FOR COMMUNION

Pastor Jenny Lee

CONFESSION AND PARDON Unison

Merciful God,

We confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.

We have failed to be an obedient church.

We have not done your will,

we have broken your law,

we have rebelled against you love,

we have not heard the cry of the needy.

Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(prayers in Silence)

Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;

that proves God’s love toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ,

We are forgiven! **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

UMH 13-14 (See insert)

THE LORD’S PRAYER

RECEIVING THE HOLY COMMUNION

COMMUNION PRAYER Unison

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**

Genesis 9:7-17 (See insert)

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

Thanks be to God. Amen!

SERMON *“Reconnecting with God and Neighbors”* Pastor Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his
disciples,

and said: “take, eat; this is my body which given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it
to his disciples, and said: “drink from this, all of you; this is my blood
of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the
forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living
sacrifice,

in union with Christ’s offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of
faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

**(Together) Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on
these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and
blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood.**

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,

one with each other,

and one in ministry to all the world,

until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly
banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

*THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Genesis 9:7-17

7 And you, be fruitful and multiply, abound on the earth and multiply in
it.”

8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 9 “As for me, I am
establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you 10 and
with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals,
and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. 11
I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off
by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy
the earth.” 12 God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make
between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all
future generations: 13 I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a
sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 When I bring clouds
over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, 15 I will remember my
covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh,
and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16
When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting
covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the
earth.” 17 God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have
established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

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 the 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!

Thank you for your support!

TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

"Stewardship Month"

Ministers

All God's People

Pastor Jenny Lee

Central -Grantsburg

Pianist

Toni Koons

Liturgist

Barbara Loomis

Acolyte(s)

Willow Nyland

Fellowship

Volunteer Needed

Counter

Volunteer Needed

Cleaning

Sandra Erickson & Charlie Glonek

Snow Removal

Volunteer Needed

Communion

Barbara Loomis



Atlas

Pianist

Sharon Asp

Liturgist

Mariah Gaffey

Usher

Colleen Adams-Schween

Cleaning

Volunteer Needed

Sunday School

Cheryl Olson

Communion

Colleen Adams-Schween

Fellowship

Cheryl Olson

St. Croix Falls

Pianist

Sharon Asp

Liturgist

Karen Sciacca

Usher(s)

Jim Andrews

Money Counter

Jim Andrews /Karen Sciacca

Bell Ringer

Jim Sciacca

Flowers

Lynn Hanson

Communion

Jim & Karen Sciacca



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: "Stewardship Month/Transfiguration Sunday
God bless you!

Worship Service Schedule

- 2/11: Communion Sunday
9:00 am Grantsburg with Zoom (9:15 am, Sunday School)
10:00 am Atlas (10:15 am, Sunday School)
11:15 am St. Croix Falls with Zoom
- 2/13: 5:30 pm, Fat Pancake Supper, 6:15pm, Ash Service (G)
- 2/14: 1:00 pm, UMW Gathering (G)
5:30-8:00 pm, Junior Youth Gathering (G)
- 2/15: 10:00 am-3:30 pm, Bishop's Day Apart at Eau Claire

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

Kathleen Gionis 2/12
Grace Harmon 2/15
Peyton Smallwood 2/17



Next Sunday (February 18th)

VOLUNTEERS

Central -Grantsburg

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

Atlas

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

St. Croix Falls

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

Upcoming Events-Mark Your Calendar

- February 18, 1st Lent-Ash Service (A & SCF)
- Lenten Bible Study, 2/29, 3/7, 3/21, and 3/28
- March 23, Easter Spring Craft & Bake Sale (A)
- Youth Retreat, April 19-21 at Wood Lake Camp
(Contact their Youth Director)
- VBS 2024, August 5-8



Check Your
Calendar

February 4th, 2024,
Genesis 1:26-31

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



“Reconnecting with God and Neighbors!”

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: A father and small son are traveling on a freeway. The boy says he’s hungry and would love to stop for a snack. They see the Golden Arches ahead and pull off the road. The boy sits at one of the tables in the restaurant and the father returns with a bag full of steamy, fresh French fries. The boy’s face brightens with delight! He is hungry. The father sets the fries before the boy and takes his seat opposite him. He loves his son and loves to watch him eat so heartily.

The two sit at the table together while the boy munches away at the snack. Then the dad does what all dads would do. He reaches over and takes one French fry for himself. The little boy snaps at his father, “Dad! These are mine. Why don’t you get your own?” The dad thinks about this incident on the long, silent drive home: I gave my son every fry he had... and all I wanted was one. My son doesn’t understand something. He doesn’t know that I could take all those fries away in an instant. Or, if I felt it best for him, I could add to that bag of fries so abundantly that he’d be overwhelmed by them. He thinks that they are his. How did he forget who bought them and brought them to him?

Have you ever experienced an incident like this with your child or grandchild? What was your reaction? How did you feel about it? I know some adults pretend to take a piece of a child’s snack from the child to see how they react, and then we laugh at their response, whether they allow us to take a piece or not. But the point is made: God has given us our resources and money, and when He asks for a tithe, many of us figuratively slap His hand and say, “Hands off my money.” However, King David’s prayer calls us back to basic truths: “All things come from your hand, and all of it belongs to you” (1 Chronicles 29:16). We should think of the story about the fries to drive that point home.

As we observe February as “Stewardship Month,” today, I want to talk about “Reconnecting with God and neighbors.” We humans are created by God in His image, which means we are allowed to have perfect love and freedom. However, we often choose to use our freedom rather than embracing love, thus drifting away from God, who is the embodiment of “Love.” Therefore, humanity once faced the Great Flood for forty days. Afterward, the earth was empty once again, resembling its state at the beginning, except for Noah and his family, and a few animals in accordance with God’s plan.

Genesis chapter 9 begins with God’s blessing to Noah and his sons after the Great Flood that lasted for forty days, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.” This may sound familiar to us. As I mentioned last Sunday, it is the first stewardship story where God entrusted all of creation to the first humans, Adam and Eve. After the Great Flood, God reiterated this command to Noah and his sons, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.” It is the same Word of God, but it was given in a different situation than that of Adam and Eve. When God entrusted all of creation to Adam and Eve, God had already set the earth and heaven beautifully for them, as Genesis says, “God saw all that He had made, and it was very good” (Genesis 1:31a).

However, now, after forty days of floods, there were sprouts of plants, as Noah saw when a dove brought a freshly plucked olive leaf. It was a sign of a new life and hope for them. Then, Noah and his family came out of the ark. As soon as they emerged, Noah built an altar to God and

offered burnt offering with clean animals and birds. God accepted his offering and, in His heart, declared, “I will never curse the ground again” (Genesis 8:20-21). Then, God blessed Noah and his family, along with every living creature, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Genesis 9:1); “Be fruitful and multiply, abound on the earth and multiply in it” (Genesis 9:7). God entrusted all of creation to Noah once again, and established a covenant with Noah, his family, his descendants, and all living creatures, promising, “Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the water of a flood, never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

God emphasized several times, “I have established a covenant” not only with Noah and his family, but also with his descendants and every living creature. God decided by Himself to love humans and all His creation, even though humans were still not good. It is God’s great decision to love human beings unconditionally. Genesis 8:21 says, “I will never again curse the ground because of humankind, for the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth; nor will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done.” God Himself reconnected with all His creations in love from the bottom of His heart. It was the beginning of God’s unconditional and one-way love story toward humans.

It is not because humans repented their sins, but because God decided by Himself to love us. The covenant God made with Noah was unconditional. God didn’t ask Noah and his family for any conditions to bless them, and said, “as long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease” (Genesis 8:22). This unconditional love of God is still evident through God’s work in the four seasons of spring, summer, fall, and winter, and in the entire universe with the moon, stars, sun, wind, rain, and snow. God grants us all-natural blessings whether we are good or bad; whether we believe in God or not. “God causes sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matthew 5:45) Furthermore, God sent His only Son Jesus Christ, as evidence of His love for every human being: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). God’s steadfast and unconditional love continues from Noah to us, as God established the covenant. Love is a decision and a certain action.

Now, it is our turn. We should restore our original love as God allows. It is a decision we should make, and we should practice it through certain actions. The word “Restore” reminds us of the covenant God made with Noah. “Restore” is like God’s “Re-story,” in which God rewrote His love story as unconditional and steadfast love, reconnecting with humans and all of creation.

Let us try to see God’s story, not our own story. If we see our own stories, there is nothing good, nothing hopeful, nothing interesting; perhaps, only suffering, conflicts, unfairness, injustice, weakness, powerlessness, and so on. However, we should lift our sight to see God, as the Psalmist says, “I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth” (Psalms 121:1-2). Yes, let’s focus on God’s help; let’s see God’s story toward us; let’s focus on God’s story toward our children and grandchildren through us.

When do you feel joy? Perhaps, it is when you see your children and grandchildren happy. God is also happy when we are happy. Let’s intentionally make a decision to love God and one another and try to practice it in everyday life. Love is to express through actions. Show God how we love our neighbors. God’s love is unconditional. Let’s continue to love God and our neighbors through certain actions, whether they are aware of our love toward them or not. Let’s create more opportunities to love our neighbors through outreach mission work. Perhaps, they may need Jesus more than material help. Let them know that Jesus is the good news for everyone. God bless you. Thanks be to God! Amen.