

reigns and love prevails so that we may live as faithful stewards to transform the world. Amen!

NO. 2024-05
February 4th, 2024

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

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison

Thank you, God, for showing us a better way to live than we are able to devise for ourselves. Thank you for reaching out to win our hearts. Thank you for Jesus Christ, for the ministry that extended your love to the least and the lost, for the powerful presence that offered wholeness to those who were sick or brokenhearted, for the prayers that demonstrated how we, too, can be in communion with you. In gratitude, we dedicate this offering along with ourselves. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN *I Am Thine, O Lord* UMH 419 (vs. 1 & 2)

*BENEDICTION Responsive

Go out to witness the good news you have heard
God is even now raising up prophets among us.

We thank God for this time of being together

We are grateful for freedom to worship and grow.

God will supply us with what we need.

We will be led to offer others appropriate help.

All honor and majesty and glory to be God.

May we never stop praising God with our lives. Amen!

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

Worship resource "Led by Love" by Lavon Bayler

Upper St. Croix Parish United Methodist Church

The 2024 Parish Ministry Theme:
"Let's Replant It" (Galatians 6:7-10)

"Stewardship Month"

5th 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
February 4th, 2024
“Stewardship Month”
5th 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
Worship God, who is from everlasting to everlasting!
The God of creation does not faint or grow weary.

**How good it is to sing praises to our God!
How expansive is God’s understanding of us!**

The whole universe is subject to God’s power.
Creation continues as the universe expands.

**God rules all time and space, yet cares about us.
God is pleased with all who reflect steadfast love.**

Sing to God with great thanksgiving.
Praise God with the best you have to offer.

**We lift up our eyes to see God’s wonders.
We open our ears to receive God’s message. Amen.**

*DEDICATING HYMN *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*
UMH 400 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison
Powerful God, before whom we are as nothing, we dare to approach you because you assure us that we are not like mere grasshoppers to you. Our individual potential is not hidden from you, and the faithfulness of your church is important to you. We have gathered with great expectation, seeking to have our strength renewed and our hope restored. Make yourself known among us as we unite in your praise. Amen!

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs.1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

*THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Genesis 1:26-31 (G & SCF)

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

²⁷ So God created humans in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” ²⁹ God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Proverbs 20:24 (A)

All our steps are ordered by the Lord;
how then can we understand our own ways?

This is the word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God. Amen!

SERMON “Stewardship Mindset” *written by Pastor Jenny*
Toni Koons (G)
Karen Sciacca (SCF)
“Attitude” Sharon Asp (A)

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison
Compassionate Savior, at whose touch people are healed and by whose word lives are transformed, show yourself to us now; touch our lives; speak to us. We do not seek these gifts for ourselves alone, but for the sake of the gospel. May your message be proclaimed among all people, drawing us all into the community you intend, where God

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!

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



Atlas

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

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



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: "Stewardship Month/5th Sunday After Epiphany"
God bless you!

Worship Service Schedule

- 2/4: 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
- 2/5-2/6: Pastor Jenny Attends the Racial Ethnic Clergy Summit at Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake
- 2/8 9:00 am, NW Clergy Zoom Meeting
10:30-1:00 pm, Pastor Jenny Volunteers at Loaves and Fishes in Luck
6:30-8:00pm, Senior Youth Gathering (G)
- 2/9 5:30-8:00pm, Junior Youth Family Worship and Game Night (G)
- 2/10 8:00 am, UM Men's Meeting (G)

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

There are no birthday's or anniversaries to celebrate this week.

Next Sunday (February 11th)

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
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

St. Croix Falls

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

Upcoming Events-Mark Your Calendar

- Feb. 11, Communion Sunday/Transfiguration Sunday Coffee Fellowship (G & A); Potluck Meal Fellowship (SCF)
- Feb. 13, Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper/Ash Service (G)
- 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





“The Stewardship Mindset”

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: There was a strongman at a circus sideshow who demonstrated his power before large audiences every night. Toward the end of one performance, he squeezed the juice from a lemon between his hands. He said to the onlookers, “I will offer \$200 to anyone here who can squeeze another drop from this lemon.”

A thin older lady hobbled up the stage. She picked up the lemon and clamped it between her two frail, boney hands. She squeezed. And out came a teaspoon of lemon juice. The strongman was amazed. He paid the woman \$200 but privately asked her, “What is the secret of your strength?” “Practice,” the woman answered. “I have been treasurer of my church for forty-two years!”

We observe February as “Stewardship Month.” We often hesitate to talk about “stewardship,” but the reason we designate February as “Stewardship Month” is to remind ourselves at the beginning of every year that we are God’s people. God calls us to be good stewards of all we are given, such as our bodies, minds, talents, gifts, money, and property. Furthermore, our church and family are also entrusted to us by God. Let us reflect on what we have and how God graciously provides for us. Some may think that it is not appropriate to talk about “stewardship” because we are a smaller congregation. However, the God who was with us during the prosperous days of the church is still with us. We are God’s people, whether rich or poor. The church is the body of Christ, whether it is smaller or larger.

Today, as the first session of the Stewardship Month, I want to talk about the meaning of having a steward/stewardship mindset. The word “Steward” comes from “*oikonomos*” in Greek, which is a component word, combining “*Oikos*” (house) and “*nemein*” (manage). It shares the same root as the word “economy.” The term “steward” refers to an economic manager who takes care of the affairs of the whole house. For these reasons, when we talk or hear about stewardship, money (offering), tithing, or apportionment often comes to mind first.

That being said, we can find a more profound meaning of steward in the biblical context. In the scriptures, “*oikonomos*” is sometimes translated to “manager” (Luke 16:1-13; Matthew 20:8), steward (Luke 8:3), or slaves/servants (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:13). The common point among these words is that the Master entrusted them with his property, giving them authority to manage it. In other words, the steward is the manager of the property with authority, but is still the Master’s servant.

Therefore, the steward of God is the manager of God’s property. Stewardship is based on our confession that God is the owner of all creation, including ourselves, family, people, and all of creation. Furthermore, since our abilities, opportunities (time), talents, skills, ideas, and gifts are from God, we are stewards of God for all these gifts and skills.

In today’s scripture, we find the original steward’s story. God planned for humans to be His stewards before creating heaven and earth. “Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” The purpose for which God created humankind was to entrust them with the management of all the creatures. In other words, God created us to care for

all things given by Him, including animals, plants, our loved ones, and ourselves.

God created humans and all creation according to His plan, blessed humans, and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.” God’s stewardship command, “be fruitful, multiply, and fill and subdue” should be applied to all things God has entrusted us with, including all creation, family and the church.

The words “be fruitful, multiply, and fill” may apply for not only “number” and “quantity”, but also to “quality.” So, we have a task to make things “be fruitful and multiply in quantity and quality” in whatever we are entrusted with, such as family, work, and the church. As God cares for us with His steadfast love, we should care for all things with love. That is stewardship. It includes providing your family good nutrition, giving your children an education, feeding and caring for your companions, and taking care of yourselves physically and spiritually. In other words, the stewardship mindset is inherent to human nature as we are from God.

How will you practice your stewardship this year? Sometimes, there is a misunderstanding about stewardship, thinking that the church forcing you to give more. The stewardship campaign is about practicing being the people of God in everyday life. The stewardship mindset is to love God and our neighbors through actions in our everyday lives, just as God love us.

I want to share a story I read a few years ago, “Conversation with God,” written by Neale Donald Walsch. He wrote the book based on his true story. He was an ordinary person who was happy with his family and worked at a company. However, after breaking his neck in a car accident, he lost his job and became homeless, begging for coins on the street. He suffered every day and complained to God, asking, ‘why was he so unfortunate?’

One day in winter, he saw two children on the street, covered with a blanket. He brought them to his house, turned the heat on, and cooked some food to feed them. He felt happy at home with them, sharing his warm house, abundant food, and caring love. When they left the house, he gave them \$20. He realized that he didn’t treat them; they treated him. Through that event, he noticed that he had a warm house, some food, and money, which God still provided him with, but he couldn’t see God’s grace because he complained all the time.

A way of practicing stewardship is to count what we have with gratitude rather than dwell on what we don’t have. The stewardship mindset is a life in which we trust in God, who is the provider. It is to live in hope, joy, peace, gratitude, and promotion even when we have only one loaf of bread. The stewardship mindset is to give God even the last piece of bread with the faith that God provides, as seen in the story of the widow at Zarephath (1 King 17:8-16).

The widow at Zarephath was very poor. One day, Elijah visited her, asking for a piece of bread. She replied, “I have only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I will make a loaf of bread for myself and my son. After eating them, we are going to die.” Despite her desire situation, Elijah reassured her, saying, “Don’t be afraid. Do as you said, but first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, then make some yourself and your son.”

What would you do if you were the widow? You might say, “What? I said I have only a handful of flour. How can I make bread for you, myself, and my son? It’s not enough for you.” But, she did it as Elijah said. Can you imagine how she made the bread? She might have made it with lots of tears. She gave Elijah the bread of her tears. Then, there was food every day. Her jar of flour never ran out, and the jug of oil never ran dry. The stewardship mindset is to live day by day, trusting in God. It is by faith God can make things happen that we can’t. Let’s equip our mind, soul, and spirit with stewardship mindset so that we can live it out in everyday life.

Thanks be to God! Amen!