

We Respond to God's Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

God of love, whom Jesus knew as a caring parent, remind us of your commandments that it may become our heart's most earnest desire to pass on your love in truth and action. Grant us the courage to risk life itself that others may see Christ abiding in us and thus come to know your goodness and mercy. 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

How can we express our thanks, O God, for the one who laid down life itself in witness to your love for all people? We are aware that many have not experienced that love. We see their need, and we want to respond. Use what we offer to you to bring healing and peace to others not of this fold. Draw us together as one flock in the care of one shepherd, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

\*CLOSING HYMN

*They'll Know We Are Christian*

TFWS 2223 (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 of Easter/Communion 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

CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor Jenny Lee: [jennlee1732@gmail.com](mailto:jennlee1732@gmail.com)

Youth Director Shayna Schmid: [snsnyder@gmail.com](mailto:snsnyder@gmail.com)

Parish Secretary Colleen Norenberg: [centralumc2016@gmail.com](mailto:centralumc2016@gmail.com)

Parish Office: 715-463-2624 St. Croix Falls Office: 715-483-9494

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

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

**Upper St. Croix Parish**  
**Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls**  
**April 21st, 2024**  
**4th Sunday of Easter/ Communion Sunday**

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\*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

The good shepherd invites us to green pastures.

We are refreshed beside still waters.

**We have been given everything we have.**

**God offers us everything we need.**

When we walk through shadowed valleys, God is with us.

We are comforted and reassured.

**God leads us in the right paths.**

**Our cups are overflowing.**

God welcomes us to the table where love is expressed.

We are invited to partake of the truth God offers.

**We have received plenty that we might share.**

**We are called to be God’s helpers. Amen.**

**\*DEDICATING HYMN** *The Gift of Love* UMH 408 (vs. 1 & 2)

**OPENING PRAYER** Unison

Good shepherd, we meet in your name, confident that we are known and loved by you. Here we draw close to one another and to you, expecting to be empowered by fresh insights to live as your people. We want to care for one another in life-giving ways. We seek to reach out to those who deny you or suspect us. Help us grow in love that is genuine in its caring and self-sacrifice. We embrace the wholeness you offer and dare to risk acceptance of a healing role for ourselves and this faith community. Equip us for service beyond this hour of meeting. Amen!

**Recognition of 2024 Lenten Bible Study**

Jim Andrews (SCF), Lynn Hanson (SCF), Jim Sciacca (SCF),  
Karen Sciacca (SCF), Maxine Hauble (A),  
Wendell Hauble (A) and Sue Olson (A)

**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.**

(pray 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 HOLY COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION SONG**

TFWS 2260

**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 NEW TESTAMENT LESSON**

1 John 3:13-24 (See insert)

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

**Thanks be to God. Amen!**

## 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 NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

**1 John 3:13-24**

13 Do not be astonished, brothers and sisters, that the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brothers and sisters. Whoever does not love abides in death. 15 All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them. 16 We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers and sisters. 17 How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

18 Little children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. 19 And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him 20 whenever our hearts condemn us, for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. 21 Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God, 22 and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

23 And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. 24 All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

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

**Thanks be to God. Amen!**

# APRIL CHURCH MISSIONS

# TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

## ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Ashleigh Olson

<p><b>INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:</b></p> <p>Atlas collects and recycles ink jet cartridges and cell phones year-round.</p> 	<p><b>LOAVES &amp; FISHES NEEDS OUR ONGOING SUPPORT</b></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>We will be collecting supplies to stock the church! Here is a list of suggested items. You can also reference the bulletin board or newsletter! Thank you!</p> <p><b>ITEMS: Toilet Bowl Cleaner, Air Freshener Spray, Toilet Paper, Paper Towels, Tall Kitchen Bags, Gallon Twist-Tie Bags, Pine-Sol, Cleanser, Dish Soap</b></p>
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## GRANTSBURG

Mission committee chair: Deb Hammer

<p><b>BE A "BACK-PACK BACKER"!</b></p> <p>REMEMBER ... Every Sunday is <b>MAC 'N CHEESE SUNDAY!</b> Supporting the Salvation Army's "Happy Kids Back-Pack Program"</p> 	<p><b>APRIL SHOWERS</b></p> <p>We will be collecting supplies to stock the church. Please see the bulletin board or newsletter for more details. Thank you!</p> <p><i>ITEMS NEEDED: D-Cell Batteries, Toilet Cleaner, Gallon Zipper Baggies, Paper Dinner Plates-Dixie Ultra Preferred, Paper Dessert Plates-Dixie Ultra Preferred, Plastic Forks (Forks Only!), Napkins, Bleach (1 Gallon Only), Oven Cleaner (Spray Can), Coffee Creamer Singles (200 max.), Kool-Aid Premix Containers (or Similar), Crystal Light, Juice Boxes (or Similar), Distilled Water, Liquid Hand Soap Individuals or Refills, Hand Sanitizer Individuals or Refills, Type CC Vacuum Cleaner Bags</i></p> 
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## ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh

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

### Ministers

### All God's People

#### Central -Grantsburg

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

#### Atlas

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

#### St. Croix Falls

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

**VOLUNTEERS DO NOT NECESSARILY HAVE THE TIME; THEY HAVE THE HEART**



### 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](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: 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter/Communion Sunday  
God Bless you all!

### Worship Service Schedule

- 4/21: 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
- 4/19-4/21: Youth Retreat at Wood Lake Camp
- 4/21: 12:15 pm Ad Council Meeting (SCF)  
2:00 pm Pastor Jenny Leads CCC Worship
- 4/22: Pastor Jenny attends Harmony Choir Rehearsal at First UMC in Rice Lake
- 4/23-5/3: General Conference at Charlotte, North Carolina
- 4/23: 10:00 am May newsletter's information due
- 4/24: 5:30-8:00 pm Junior Youth Gathering (G)
- 4/25: 6:30-8:00 pm Senior Youth Gathering (G)
- 4/26: 1:30 pm AD Council Meeting (A)
- 4/27: 9am-1pm Spring Boutique Sale & Lunch (G)



### **This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries**

Doug Kunze 4/21, Julie Branstad 4/24,  
**Jim & Barbara Loomis 4/25** and Dustin Kunze 4/26



## Next Sunday (April 28th)

### 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

#### Atlas

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Usher	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Cleaning	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Sunday School	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>

#### St. Croix Falls

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

### Upcoming Events-Mark Your Calendar

April 29	Youth Fun Day (G)
May 6	Naomi McLean's Celebration of Life Service (SCF)
May 14	SPRC Meeting
August 6-8	2024 VBS

**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!**



April 21st, 2024

1 John 3:13-24

Pastor Jenny Lee, Ph.D.

Upper St. Croix Parish UMC



## **“Love in Truth and Action”**

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: After a long illness, a woman died and arrived at the Gates of Heaven. While she was waiting for St. Peter to greet her, she peeked through the Gates. She saw a beautiful banquet table. Sitting all around were her parents and all the other people she had loved and who had died before her.

They saw her and began calling greetings to her—“Hello” “How are you? We’ve been waiting for you!” “Good to see you.” When St. Peter came by, the woman said to him, “This is such a wonderful place! How do I get in?” “You have to spell a word,” St. Peter told her. “Which word?”, the woman asked. “Love.” The woman correctly spelled “love” and St. Peter welcomed her into Heaven.

About two years later, St. Peter came to the woman and asked her to watch the Gates of Heaven for him that day. While the woman was guarding the Gates of Heaven, her husband arrived. “I’m surprised to see you,” the woman said, “How have you been?” “Oh, I’ve been doing pretty well since you died,” her husband told her. “I married the beautiful young nurse who took care of you while you were ill. And then I won the lottery. I sold the little house you and I lived in and bought a big mansion. My wife and I traveled all around the world. We were on vacation and I went water skiing today. I fell, the ski hit my head, and here I am. So, how do I get in?” “You have to spell a word,” the woman told him. “Which word?”, her husband asked. “Czechoslovakia.”

I had a great vacation visiting my friends in Iowa and Chicago, Illinois. These friends are always good to me, like family members. I met some of them in Chicago when I was planting a new church in 2008, and I met the others later as I prepared for ministry. Since then, we’ve maintained our relationships like those of family members and friends in Jesus Christ. Sometimes when I visit them, it feels like returning home, and they treat me like a family member who has left home for work and returned to rest. When I left, they even prepared a package for me filled with lots of food, including kimchi (a Korean primary side dish). It’s a Korean custom for a mother to do this for her daughter who has married and visits her parents’ home. So, I had a wonderful rest and returned home safely. Thank you very much for giving me the time to rest and refresh my body and mind.

Today, I want to talk about how to love one another in truth and action. I mean, we should examine ourselves to see if we genuinely love God and our neighbors as Jesus taught us. Jesus gave us the new commandment: to love God and to love our neighbors. As we follow Jesus’ teachings, we strive to love God with our whole hearts, minds, and souls, and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Do you think we have truly accomplished this, or do you personally believe that you have?

Today’s scripture says, “Let us love, not only with words and speech, but with truth and action. By this, we will know that we are from the truth and reassure our hearts before Jesus and belong to Jesus.” In other words, we can assess our commitment to Jesus Christ by our actions, especially in how we demonstrate love for God and our neighbors. An example is found in verse 17, “How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?” Love is manifested through the sacrificial giving of your time, energy, possessions, and heartfelt joy, not merely through empty words.

Consider this simple analogy: if a man professes his love to a woman, but avoids spending time with her,

or fails to express his affection beyond mere words, he cannot truly claim to love her. Similarly, if someone reluctantly attends worship services at the Sanctuary, it prompts reflection on whether genuine love for God exists. Jesus imparted the commandment of love: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (John 13:34). We are instructed to love others as Jesus loved us, which encompassed forgiving and loving even those who despised, betrayed, and harmed him, as well as loving sinners like ourselves.

Today’s scripture emphasizes, “We know by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another” (v.16). Can we emulate His love and are we willing to sacrifice our lives for others? Can we embody the love demonstrated by Jesus?

One of the biblical leaders I greatly admire is Moses. Moses was initially a weak person who was raised in Pharaoh’s Palace, but he possessed a strong sense of patriotism as a Jew, nurtured by his mother as if she were his nanny. One day, he killed an Egyptian soldier mistakenly while attempting to defend Jewish laborers. Fearing punishment for his actions, he fled. However, upon encountering God at the burning bush, Moses experienced a transformation of his mind, soul, and spirit, gaining courage, confidence, and faith in God. He came back to Pharaoh and demanded the release of all the Israelites.

Throughout his leadership of Israelite in the wilderness, Moses maintained a close relationship with God, constantly praying and seeking divine guidance. Whenever God became displeased with the people’s complaints, Moses interceded on their behalf, praying for forgiveness for their sins. Even when the people fashioned a golden calf and worshiped it, Moses pleaded with God, saying, “Please forgive their sin but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written” (Exodus 32:32). In other words, Moses prayed for the people to enter the Promised Land, even though he knew he might not accompany them.

It’s difficult to understand how Moses could pray in such a selfless manner. Only thing I can guess is that Moses’ prayers were fueled by a profound love for the people he led, mirroring the love God had shown him.

It can simply be compared to a mother or father praying for their sick child’s healing, saying, “O Lord, please heal my child. I would rather be sick than see my child suffer.” I know many parents among you have had similar experiences. God’s love mirrors a parent’s love for their children. This love manifested in God Himself descending from the heavenly throne in the form of the incarnated human, Jesus Christ. It’s demonstrated in Jesus being born into a poor family, experiencing firsthand the challenges of poverty in the world. The love is seen in Jesus calling his disciples from among the poor and outcast, befriending them, and spending time with them. The love is evident in Jesus’ crucifixion on the cross for our sins and in his promise to return to us.

Once again, the love in truth and action that Jesus taught us involves dedicating our time, energy, and possessions with our entire being – heart, mind, and soul. Do you love God in this manner? And do you love your neighbors in the same way? If not, it should prompt self reflection on whether genuine love for God truly exists within you.

Today’s lectionary reading is 1 John 3:16-24. However, I would like conclude today’s sermon by reading verses 13-16: “<sup>13</sup> Do not be astonished, brothers and sisters, that the world hates you. <sup>14</sup> We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brothers and sisters. Whoever does not love abides in death. <sup>15</sup> All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them. <sup>16</sup> We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers and sisters”

Let’s love one another in truth and action. Thanks be to God. Amen!