

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

*After each prayer request:
Pastor: Lord, in your mercy (Grace),
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

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison

We offer to you our common stewardship, loving God. We want to be faithful in meeting one another's needs and in serving the world in Christ's name. The gifts we bring today will not mark an end to our giving. We sense that you are sending us, as Jesus was sent, to share light with the world. Thus, we dedicate our time and effort as a further offering. May life and faith be extended to many through us. Amen.

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN

He Lives

UMH 310 (vs. 1, 2 & 3)

*BENEDICTION Responsive

You are sent into the world as a sign of God's love.

God forth, carrying God's peace to all you meet.

We will live in unity with our kindred;

We will listen and speak as God guides us.

The grace of Jesus Christ has been poured out on you.

God ordains a blessing for you; life forevermore.

Our fears are unlocked; our faith is renewed.

We will invite our neighbors to share the joy. Amen.

*POSTLUDE

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

Worship resource "led by Love" by Lavon Bayle



Upper St. Croix Parish United Methodist Church

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

Second Sunday of Easter



Grantsburg-Central,
Since 1897



Atlas, Since 1887



St. Croix Falls,
Since 1859

SUNDAY SERVICE:

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

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
April 7th, 2024
Second Sunday of Easter

*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!
(Wave your hand!)

We Celebrate New Life in Christ

***CALL TO WORSHIP** Responsive

Life has been revealed to us in this Easter season.

Gather once more to testify to life.

We declare to each other what we have experienced.

In community we find the life God intends.

Early believers were of one heart and soul.

We, too, are called to find common ground in Christ.

How very good and pleasant it is.

When kindred live together in unity.

Peace be with you as we celebrate resurrection.

Christ is with us to renew our faith.

We are here to testify to God's grace.

We will share our story and ourselves. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN** *Open My Eyes, That I May See*

UMH 454 (vs. 1, 2 & 3)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

You pour out upon us the oil of gladness, gracious God, as we gather in the name of our risen Savior. You have given us the Word of Life; we have heard and seen your greatest of all gifts and testify to that experience by our presence here. Let Jesus Christ be known among us, in our conversation and in our prayers. May our thoughts center on the message that light has come to chase away the shadows, community has been born to remove our isolation,

joy has been heaped upon us that we might share it with the world. Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God's Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

John 20:19-31

19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." 22 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

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

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Barbara Loomis

We Respond to God's Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Ever-present God, who by the power of the Holy Spirit transforms us individually and as a church to be your dwelling place, confront us here in the midst of our doubts, grant us your peace while we face our fears, and increase our trust that we may embrace life in all its fullness. Speak to us now the word that we need, empowering us to be a unifying presence in our broken world. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

APRIL 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.



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!
ITEMS: Toilet Bowl Cleaner, Air Freshener Spray, Toilet Paper, Paper Towels, Tall Kitchen Bags, Gallon Twist-Tie Bags, Pine-Sol, Cleanser, Dish Soap

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"



APRIL SHOWERS

We will be collecting supplies to stock the church. Please see the bulletin board or newsletter for more details. Thank you!
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



ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh



Food Shelf
 (Communion Sunday)



Sailor Hat Offering:

The Sailor Hat offering will go to support UMCOR!

Thank you for your support!

TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers

All God's People

Central -Grantsburg

Preach
 Pianist
 Liturgist
 Acolyte(s)
 Fellowship
 Counter
 Cleaning

Barbara Loomis
 Toni Koons
Volunteer Needed
 Willow Nyland
Volunteer Needed
Volunteer Needed
 Sandra Erickson & Charlie Glonek



Atlas

Preach
 Pianist
 Liturgist
 Usher
 Cleaning
 Sunday School

Barbara Loomis
 Sharon Asp
 Sue Olson
 Cheryl Olson
Volunteer Needed
 Colleen Adams-Schween

St. Croix Falls

Preach
 Pianist
 Liturgist
 Usher(s)
 Money Counter
 Bell Ringer
 Flowers

Barbara Loomis
 Sharon Asp
 Kathy Gionis
 Jim Andrews
 Peter Gionis
 Jim Sciacca
 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!

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=SDZleFNubmEvaDBlcytTRzVxMFIIZz09>
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: Membership Caring Month/Easter Sunday!
Christ is risen for you!

Worship Service Schedule

- 4/7: 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
- 4/10: 1:00 pm UMW Meeting (G)
5:30-8:00 pm Junior Youth Gathering (G)
- 4/12: 5:00-8:00 pm Junior Youth Family Worship and Game Night (G)
- 4/13: 8:00 am UM Men's Meeting (G)
9am-3pm District Gathering at First UMC in Rice Lake
- 4/1-4/15: Pastor Jenny's Vacation
Pupil Supply: 4/7, Barbara Loomis (All 3 churches)
4/14, Sharon Asp (G & A)
Kathy Gionis (SCF)

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!

The Week's Birthdays

Lee Frederickson 4/8
Peggy Frederickson 4/13



Next Sunday (April 14th)

VOLUNTEERS

Central -Grantsburg

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

Atlas

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

St. Croix Falls

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

Upcoming Events-Mark Your Calendar

- April 1-15 Pastor Jenny's Vacation
April 19-21 Youth Retreat, at Wood Lake Camp
(Contact their Youth Director)
- April 21 Communion Sunday/Lenten Bible Study Recognition
April 27 UMW Spring Sale (G)
August 6-8 2024 VBS



Sharing of a Life



Anyone wants to share your plants or seeds,
bring them to the table “Sharing Station.”
And, anyone who wants them, help yourself!
We will continue sharing through Pentecost!



SPRING BOUTIQUE SALE & LUNCH



Saturday, April 27th, 2024 ~ 9:00 am-1:00 pm

Central UMC, 301 S Pine St., Grantsburg

Come and Shop our Crafts & Quality Used Items and join
us for lunch where we will be serving Sloppy Joes, salads
and dessert bars! You won't want to miss the great deals
and delicious food! We hope to see you there!



Youth Group Retreat Donation Needs

Youth group is going on a retreat to Wood Lake Bible Camp April 19th to 21st.

We are looking for donations for our weekend to save costs. Please reach out to Shayna with any questions 920-312-2857.

- Old T-shirts
- Fleece Scraps
- Empty Water Bottles
- Yarn
- Fabric Fill
- Socks (don't need to be pairs)
- Snack bags of Chips
- Individual wrapped snacks (No Nuts)

Donations can be left in the church office or given to Pastor Jenny. Thank you for your support!



Youth retreat benefits:

- Developing community with other believers who are dealing with similar circumstances in life
- Refocusing on and growing in relationship with God
- Intentional time for prayer and meditating on Scripture
- Learning from and being mentored by godly adults
- Spending time surrounded by God's creation
- Having fun

Believe (John 20:19-31) 1

Barbara Loomis

I'm going to start with the story of my grandson Link, when he was two years old. We were on the swings in his backyard when a butterfly landed on my toe. I said, "Link, I hope it doesn't lay eggs on my toe." He responded with a "silly Yama". That's what he calls me. Yama. "Butterflies don't lay eggs, turtles lay eggs." It turned out, he had seen a turtle lay eggs under the deck. So I asked him about the eggs in the refrigerator. He was quiet for a while, very thoughtful and he goes "oh they become pancakes". Some of us question life more than others. Usually children believe anything a trusted adult tells them. However, there is a time when they might become a seeing is believing person. Two was a bit early.

We want confirmation for things we believe. After all "Seeing is believing." Jesus even said in the fourth chapter of John "unless you see the wonders, you will not believe". This statement was in conjunction with Jesus' encounter with a royal official. The official said, "Sir, come down before my little boy dies." Jesus said to him; "Go your son will live." The child did live. The official knew of Jesus and knew of the miracles. Is this faith, trust, belief, or simply hope.

To regain the trust that Link had in his "Yama" I took him to a friend's house, where they raise chickens. He had a tour of the chicken coop and heard the chickens clucking away when some laid eggs and he accepted turtles and chickens lay eggs. I had to take them to the library and find a book that had all the different kinds of animals, insects, etc. that laid eggs. He studied that book over and over again and then he accepted what his grandma told him. He was always a strong-minded child, but that was a little deep. I didn't have the heart to tell him, that all things you find in books may not be true.

Logic is important to us. We like to consider ourselves rational people. Unfortunately, rationalism has given way to skepticism in so many of us. It has become hard to put faith in anything, or anyone. Many have promised so much, and they have let us down. We had faith in the government and the government has let us down. We trusted people and people have let us down. It's easy not to believe anymore. I'll believe it when I see it. You wanna say seeing is believing. Believing in Jesus, resurrection is one event in which both the elements of seeing is believing come together. His resurrection was verified by the eyewitness testimonies of hundreds of his day.

Thomas experienced so many things both before, and after Christ crucifixion. It is no wonder that he had difficulty understanding all that had taken place. I truly trust that he believed.

Before Jesus went to Judea, because Lazarus had died, the other apostles, urge Jesus, not to go, because Jesus could be stoned to death, but John 11:16 says then "Thomas said to the rest of the disciples, let us also go that we may die with Him." After the Lord's supper, Thomas did not understand what Jesus meant when he talked about his father's house and more (John 14:5) "Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

In Luke, we are told about when Jesus died. A darkness came over the whole land for three hours. The curtain and the temple ripped in half. The women found the tomb empty and believed they saw a living Jesus. Believe (John 20:19-31) 2 Those were emotionally filled days. It is no wonder that Thomas had difficulty believing all that happened so "he said unless I see the marks of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails, and my hand in his side, I will not believe." (John, 20:25).

Thomas was not the only one that had doubt. In Luke It says, " when Jesus first appeared to the others, while they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, Peace be with you. They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them why are you frightened and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet. See that it is my myself. Touch me and see: for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet while in their joy, they were disbelieving and still wondering he said to them have you anything here to eat?" That statement seemed to open their eyes.

Our belief is based on the Trinity, the three in one, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Since Jesus is God, He was aware of the conversation the other disciples had with Thomas, and decided to make a personal appearance, one week after the resurrection, and Jesus' first appearance to the disciples in the upper room, we find the disciples together. Once again, they are behind locked doors, and Thomas is present this time with the others, thus setting the stage for the dramatic events to follow.

Well, everyone is enjoying each other's company. Suddenly Jesus shows up. John's gospel does not indicate that any small talk took place. Jesus appeared to get right to the point. After His greeting, Jesus turns to Thomas and calls for Thomas to do the same thing the other disciples were required to do so that they could believe. Thomas did not need to touch Jesus to believe Jesus was alive.

The Bible teaches us we walk by faith and not by sight. It is really only by faith that are blind eyes can be opened so that we can truly see. In the book of acts. The disciples and the followers of Jesus went far and wide to preach the words that Jesus taught them, they sought out people that had never known Jesus.

It is hard to know what to believe nowadays. We live in an age of question the source the Internet gives us. There are so many. How well versed are you at knowing what is right and what is wrong. What actually has just portions of truth that pull you in to truly believe in everything, it's hard.

Having grown up in an era before the Internet became as relevant as it is, there were books and essays available out there that try to prove that Jesus didn't die. I have read a few. They give good arguments. But there are more writings that break down the description presented in the Bible of the crucifixion and to the scientific evidence. There are writings that give proof of the great flood, the Exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt, the list goes on. I would assume that we all have doubts. Many of us are more like Thomas than we would like to believe, or admit.

Have we questioned if God cares for us and loves us Believe (John 20:19-31) 3 Have we questioned if all the stories in the Bible are true? Which are true or just lessons?

It is a good question. It is good that we face those questions and search for answers. When our faith grows and it is nurtured, it becomes stronger. How can we do that? We attend church. We attend Bible studies. We study on our own. We talk with friends about our faith. I have a friend that used to read hymns as a form of devotion. Not everything we read or hear fulfills that need. We should always seek to know the Lord better.

We are not likely to blindly accept everything we hear. What faith is greater: the one that never questions, or the faith, that questions and investigates, and then believes. The believer that questions along the way, has a stronger faith. The nonbeliever that investigates can become a person of strong, unmovable faith. Lee Strobel, an atheist who wrote *Case for Christ*, set out to prove that the Bible and Jesus were all false. Now he teaches and writes books about Jesus.

When we question our faith, or when we hear about doubting Thomas, remember that he was so much more than a doubter, but rather a person who needed to find out for himself. He needed to search for the truth.

He needed to believe, not because of the words of others, but Because God himself revealed Himself to Thomas. Let that doubt lead you to a greater understanding and dedication to Christ our savior. Thomas had doubts. So did the others. When Thomas did see the risen, Christ, his reaction was very profound.

He did not touch Jesus' hands.

He did not touch Jesus' side.

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and My God"

I have an image in my mind of Thomas dropping to his knees when he said, "My Lord and My God"

What brings you to your knees?

What brought you to the moment of belief and faith.

What brought you to thinking or saying it out loud, "My Lord and My God"

Amen