

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Gracious God, from whom comes all the abundance of this earth, and who has given us the true bread from heaven, Jesus Christ, feed us again by your word of truth, that we may come closer to you and believe in you more deeply. Make each of us be an instrument of your peace among all your people. 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!

INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

***DOXOLOGY**

UMH 95

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**

We dedicate our offerings, not alone for the good they can accomplish and the mission they will support, but also because giving helps us to gain perspective on what really matters. We would stop working only for food that perishes, seeking for all the food that endures for eternal life. May our lives and all we give perform the works of God. Build us up in love for one another and for all your children everywhere. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN**

Freely, Freely

UMH 389

***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)

11th Sunday After Pentecost



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 (No Sunday School-Summer break)
11:15 AM at St. Croix Falls*

CONTACT INFORMATION

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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
August 4th, 2024
11th Sunday After Pentecost

*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
Draw near to God, who has heard your complaining.
Come in the name of Jesus, who understands your need.
We have received manna in the wilderness.
We have been offered the bread of life.
Open yourselves to God’s steadfast love.
Be honest before the Holy One who knows all you do.
We are judged according to our deeds.
Our secret sins are known to our God.
The Holy Spirit has come to restore your joy.
God’s presence is real to those who accept God’s gift.
Whoever comes to Jesus will not be hungry.
Whoever trusts in Christ will never be thirsty. Amen.

***DEDICATING HYMN** *Grace Greater Than Our Sin*
UMH 365 (vs. 1 & 4)

OPENING PRAYER Unison (The Apostles Creed)
I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen!

Sacrament of Holy Communion

INVITATION FOR COMMUNION
CONFESSION AND PARDON Unison
Merciful God,

Pastor Jenny Lee

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 loved our neighbors,
and 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
SHARING THE 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 OLD TESTAMENT LESSON** 2 Samuel 11:26-12:13a
(See insert)

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

SERMON *“It is Time to Come Closer to God!”* Pastor Jenny Lee

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

2 Samuel 11:26-12:13a

26 When the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she made
lamentation for him. 27 When the mourning was over, David sent and
brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son.
But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord,

12 1 and the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him,
“There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. 2
The rich man had very many flocks and herds, 3 but the poor man had
nothing but one little ewe lamb that he had bought. He brought it up, and it
grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his meager fare
and drink from his cup and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to
him. 4 Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was loath to take
one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to
him, but he took the poor man’s lamb and prepared that for the guest who
had come to him.” 5 Then David’s anger was greatly kindled against the
man. He said to Nathan, “As the Lord lives, the man who has done this
deserves to die; 6 he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he did this
thing and because he had no pity.”

7 Nathan said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the Lord, the God of
Israel: I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from the hand of
Saul; 8 I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your
bosom and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah, and if that had been
too little, I would have added as much more. 9 Why have you despised the
word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down
Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife
and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. 10 Now, therefore,
the sword shall never depart from your house, for you have despised me
and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. 11 Thus says
the Lord: I will raise up trouble against you from within your own house,
and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your
neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in broad daylight. 12 For you
did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and in broad
daylight.” 13 David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.”
Nathan said to David, “Now the Lord has put away your sin; you shall not
die.

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

Thanks be to God. Amen!

AUGUST CHURCH MISSIONS



ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Ashleigh Olson

<p>INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:</p> <p>Atlas collects and recycles ink jet cartridges and cell phones year-round.</p> 	<p>LOAVES & FISHES NEEDS OUR ONGOING SUPPORT</p> <p>Requested items: eggs, milk, mayonnaise, coffee, tea, peanut butter, crackers, cookies. Personal Products for men & women.</p>	<p>LAUNDRY DETERGENT</p> <p>We will be collecting laundry detergent for Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf.</p> 
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GRANTSBURG

Mission committee chair: Deb Hammer

<p>BE A "BACK-PACK BACKER"!</p> <p>REMEMBER ... Every Sunday Is MAC 'N CHEESE SUNDAY! Supporting the Salvation Army's "Happy Kids Back-Pack Program"</p> 	<p>DISCRETIONARY FUND COLLECTION</p> <p>This month will be collecting financial donations for CUMC's discretionary fund. This fund is used by the pastor to assist individuals who reach out to the church for help. This can be money for gas, food or other essential needs. Thank you for your support!</p> 
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ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh

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

TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers All God's People
Rev. Jenny Lee

VOLUNTEERS

Central -Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Counter Cleaning	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Mowing	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	Russ Hammer
Communion	Jenni Stedman
	Barbara Loomis

Atlas

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Sue Olson
Usher	Colleen Adams-Schween
Cleaning	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Sunday School	Summer Break
Communion	Sue Olson

St. Croix Falls

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



Breakthrough Prayers:

Please pray for those who are in need, the sick, those who have lost loved ones, and for God's peace and justice for all over the world!



PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) **An Online Zoom Service is scheduled for this Sunday only at 9:00 am.**
- 2) 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>
BlytTRzVxMFIIZz09
Phone: +1 312 626 6799,
Meeting ID: 841 4780 8460, Passcode: 568271
- 3) Our Sunday Sermons are on the website at upperstcroixparish.org under Sermons!
- 4) Sunday's video may be uploaded on late Sundays!
<https://www.facebook.com/UpperStCroixParishUMC>
- 5) 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: 11th Sunday After Pentecost. Communion Sunday
God Bless you all!

Worship Service Schedule

8/4:	9:00 am	Grantsburg with Zoom (9:15 am, Sunday School)
	10:00 am	Atlas (No Sunday School-Summer Break)
	11:15 am	St. Croix Falls
8/4:	10:30-11:30 am	VBS Decoration (G)
	3:00-4:00 pm	Rehearsal for VBS (G)
	4:30-7:30 pm	VBS Day 1
8/5	4:30-7:30 pm	VBS Day 2
8/6	5:30-8:00 pm	National Night Out at Grantsburg <i>(We will have a church booth at the event!)</i>
8/7	4:30-7:30 pm	VBS Day 3
8/8	1:00-3:30 pm	Diversity Council Meeting via Zoom
	4:30-7:30 pm	VBS Day 4
8/9	5:30-8:00 pm	Youth Family Night
8/10	8:00 am	UM Men's Meeting (G)

This Week's Birthdays

Corey Smestad 8/7 & Eli Zeller 8/9

Next Sunday (August 11th):

VOLUNTEERS:

Central -Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Volunteer Needed
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Volunteer Needed
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Mowing	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Jenni Stedman



Atlas

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

St. Croix Falls

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

Upcoming Events & News-Mark Your Calendar

- 8/21** **Open House-Grantsburg Parsonage:**
Pastor Jenny's Ordination Celebration
- 8/22-25** **Grantsburg Fair**
- 8/24** **Pie & ice Cream Social (G)**
- 8/25** **Joint Service at Atlas Park-Blessing of the Backpacks, our Teachers and our Pets.**
(Atlas church will provide lunch; please bring a lawn chair if you have one)

August 4th, 2024
Samuel 11:26-12:13a

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



“It is Time to Come Closer to God Again!”

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: A man dies and goes to heaven. Of course, St. Peter meets him at the Pearly Gates. St. Peter says, “Here’s how it works. You need 100 points to make it into heaven. You tell me all the good things you’ve done, and I give you a certain number of points for each item, depending on how good it was. When you reach 100 points, you shall get in.”

“Okay,” the man says, “I was married to the same woman for 50 years and never cheated on her, even in my heart.” “That’s wonderful,” says St. Peter, “that’s worth three points!”

“Three points?” he says. “Well, I attended church all my life and supported its ministry with my tithe and service.” “Terrific!” says St. Peter. “That’s certainly worth a point.” “One point?!!” “I started a soup kitchen in my city and worked in a shelter for homeless veterans.” “Fantastic, that’s good for two more points,” St. Peter says.

“Two Points?!!” Exasperated, the man cries. “At this rate the only way I’ll get into heaven is by the grace of God.” “Bingo, you got 100 points! Come on it!”

In July, I was often out of town participating in various conference events, such as mentoring ordination candidates in Pine Lake and attending the Bishop’s farewell services in Madison and Stevens Point. These events were mostly held on Saturdays and Mondays, which were my days off. Additionally, VBS training sessions were held every Sunday afternoon. Can you imagine how tough that schedule was for me? But the good thing is that I enjoy my ministry even though I am busy.

While sharing my experiences with my colleagues, one of them said, “Yeah, I know. I used to enjoy my ministry too, but I don’t enjoy it any longer.” I asked him, “Why? Why don’t you enjoy it any longer? What caused your perspective to change?” He said, “Well, I am getting tired and feeling exhausted. In addition, no one appreciates my work. Because you are new to this ministry, you are able to enjoy it with passion and enthusiasm. I don’t think you can do it for long.”

What do you think about his comments? I couldn’t say anything to him at that moment, but it led me to reflect on myself. It is a good time to review my ministry and check to see if I am losing my joy and gratitude. Who knows, I may lose my energy, passion, joy, and enthusiasm for my ministry sooner or later. Hearing him, I feel the need to come closer to God again. This Sunday marks my fifth-year, and as it turns to six years, walking with you on my ministerial journey, it is time to come closer to God once more.

We often say, “I used to do it, but I don’t anymore.” Why? Is it because you are getting old? Is it because you were disappointed? Or is it because you feel no one appreciates your work? What did you expect from God while you worked in God’s ministry? I believe that the reason we dedicate ourselves to God’s ministry is that God loved us, loves us, and will continue to love us. That’s all!

There is a Korean saying, “If you love your wife, you’ll even bow to the pillars of her parents’ house.” Love makes you feel gratitude and joy in everything. It is the same with God. If you love God, you may feel gratitude and joy in everything related to God.

You know Jacob, right? He fell in love with Rachel and worked at her father's house for seven years in order to marry her. However, her father Laban cheated him and gave him Leah instead of Rachel. Then Laban said to Jacob, "If you want Rachel, you should work for seven more years." Genesis 29:18 says, "Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, 'I'll work for you for seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel.'" The scripture continues, "So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her" (Genesis 29:20). That's the power of love. Love makes you patient and pleased with every effort.

However, if you forget how to love, your life becomes boring, full of suffering, and hopeless. We often share our testimonies of how God worked in our lives. Sharing a testimony helps us remember the Almighty God. For example, I often share the healing story of my broken spine. That unforgettable memory reminds me that God is Almighty. The Almighty God is the source of my strength. If I forget how God brought me out of suffering and painful times, I may lose joy in God's ministry. If you feel that no one appreciates your work, turn your face to God. God knows everything you do and will repay you even if it takes time. If you feel exhausted in your life, please check if you have drifted away from God. It is time to come closer to God again!

Today's scripture shows us that everyone can make mistakes because we are all weak and imperfect. King David was beloved by God, sought out by Him, and anointed as "a man after God's own heart" (1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22) before becoming the king of Israel. However, after becoming king, he forgot how God loved him and how he believed in Him, succumbing to the power and authority of the world. Therefore, the Apostle Paul says, "when you are weak, God's power is made perfect" (2 Corinthians 12:9). King David forgot how to love under the influence of worldly power and authority. He fell in love with his servant Uriah's wife and, to have her, sent Uriah to battle, ordering him to fight on the front lines so that he would be killed.

One day, God sent Nathan to David, and Nathan told him a story: There were two men in a town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, while the poor man had only a little lamb. The little lamb was like a baby, a daughter, and everything to the poor man. However, the rich man took the lamb from the poor man to feed his own guest. Hearing this, David burned with anger against the rich man and said, "As surely as God lives, the man who took the lamb from the poor man deserves to die, and he should pay for the lamb four times over. No mercy on him ever." Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! God said, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and I gave you everything you needed. But you displeased me by doing what is evil.'"

You know, we sometimes mistakenly do wrong because we are imperfect. Even if we try to love and care for others, someone might say they were hurt by us. Therefore, we need God's help even to love and care for others. Do you know why we remember David as a good believer even though he sinned against God by killing his servant and taking his wife? It's because he didn't miss the second chance God gave him. As soon as he heard from Nathan that the story was about him, he repented for his sins. The word "repent" means "to change your way." In other words, to repent means to turn back to God after going far from Him. David confessed, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan said to David, "Now the Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die." How amazing is God's grace! If we come back to God with repentance, He forgives us.

Recently, one of my prayers has been to stay closer to God. I try not to forget that the first commandment Jesus taught us is "to love God." It is true that if I am busy focusing on my ministry, I can forget why I am busy. My enthusiasm and passion for ministry are because of God's love. Even though you are busy with church ministry, it is no excuse to stay far from God. It is time to come closer to God again. This summer, let us come closer to God by reading scriptures with gratitude, praying continually, attending church ministry and worship joyfully, and writing in a daily journal if you can. Let's come closer to God together, caring for one another and checking in on one another to see if anyone is missing among us! God bless you! Thanks be to God! Amen!