

## SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

*After each prayer request:  
Pastor: Lord, in your mercy,  
All: Hear our Prayer.*

NO. 2024-39  
September 29th, 2024

## 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 dedicate ourselves and our offerings to the work of your church. For those who are sick, who are suffering, who are grieving, who are lost, we have words of hope and acts of caring. We stand with all who face discrimination, oppression, and confusion, seeking to work with them for justice and meaningful existence. As you have accepted us, we reach out to include all your children in the family of mutuality, self-revelation, and growing in love. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen!

### *We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another*

\*CLOSING HYMN *Hymn of Promise* UMH 707 (vs. 1 & 2)

\*BENEDICTION Pastor Jenny Lee

\*POSTLUDE Toni Koons

# Upper St. Croix Parish United Methodist Church

The 2024 Parish Ministry Theme:  
“Let’s Replant It” (Galatians 6:7-10)

## 19th 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 (10:15 AM, Sunday School)

11:15 AM at St. Croix Falls

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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

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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**  
**September 29th, 2024**  
**19th Sunday After Pentecost**

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\*Please stand if you are able.

**\*PRELUDE**

**Toni Koons**

**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**

Come one and all to meet God here.

Let all who are suffering find hope in this place.

**We have come that God might raise us up.**

**Our only hope is in the Maker of heaven and earth.**

Come, all who are weary and oppressed.

God offers relief and enlists our mutual helpfulness.

**God hears our prayers and answers us.**

**God equips us to be helpful to one another.**

Come together to sing songs of praise to God.

Give thanks for God’s wondrous deeds.

**God’s glory abides in this place of worship.**

**God’s presence and help are real. Amen.**

**\*DEDICATING HYMN**

*Spirit of the Living God*

**UMH 393**

**OPENING PRAYER    Unison**

**May all your people find favor with you this day, God of majesty and power. Turn our sorrow into gladness and our mourning into a holiday, a holy day, in which to praise you and find ways to help those less fortunate than ourselves. Lift us from our daily preoccupations that we may pray with earnest intent, both to thank you and to be changed by you. Let our prayers be powerful and effective. May our worship be alive and life-changing. May the service we extend find favor in your eyes, blessed God. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen!**

**CHILDREN’S TIME**

**UMH 191 (vs. 1)**

**Proclamation of God’s Word**

**\*THE GOSPEL LESSON**

**Mark 9:38-50**

38 John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him because he was not following us.” 39 But Jesus said, “Do not stop him, for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. 40 Whoever is not against us is for us. 41 For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

42 “If any of you cause one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. 43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. 45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. 47 And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, 48 where their worm never dies and the fire is never quenched.

49 “For everyone will be salted with fire. 50 Salt is good, but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

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

**Thanks be to God. Amen!**

**SERMON**

*“In the Name of Love”*

**Pastor Jenny Lee**

**We Respond to God’s Word**

**RESPONDING PRAYER    Unison**

**Reigning God, whose dominion is over all worlds, and whose witnesses come from many places and points of view, expand our knowledge of your truth and our appreciation of diversity so we may find common ground with others rather than being stumbling blocks in their way. Show us how to be at peace with one another and faithful to you. Amen!**

# SEPTEMBER CHURCH MISSIONS

## 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: eggs, milk, mayonnaise, coffee, tea, peanut butter, crackers, cookies. Personal Products for men &amp; women.</p>	<p>We will be collecting financial donations for Moolah for Milk and supplies for DIF, an agency in Mexico which is responsible for child welfare.</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 MAC 'N CHEESE SUNDAY! Supporting the Salvation Army's "Happy Kids Back-Pack Program"</p> 	<p>We will collect financial donations to support the Burnett County Salvation Army's Backpack Program.</p> 
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## ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh

<p><b>Food Shelf (Communion Sunday)</b></p> 	<p><b>Sailor Hat Offering:</b></p> <p>The Sailor Hat offering will go to support SCF School Backpack Program</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	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Sharon Huff
Counter	Dave Huff
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Mowing	Dave Huff
Sunday School	Jenni Stedman



## Atlas

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Mariah Gaffey
Usher	Colleen Adams-Schween
Cleaning	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Sunday School	Cheryl Olson

## St. Croix Falls

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Jim Andrews
Usher(s)	Karan Sciacca
Counter	Peter Gionis
Bell Ringer	Jim Sciacca
Flowers	Kathy 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=SDZleFNubmEvaDBlcytTRzVxMFllZz09>  
Phone: +1 312 626 6799,  
Meeting ID: 841 4780 8460, Passcode: 568271
- 3) Our Sunday Sermons are on the website at [upperstcroixparish.org](http://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: 19th Sunday After Pentecost. *God Bless you all!*

### Worship Service Schedule

9/29:	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
10/2-10/4:		School for Ministry at Green Lake Conference Center
10/2:	5:30-6:30 pm	Go Fish for K-Up (G)
10/3:	5:00 pm	Youth Band (G)
	6:30-8:00 pm	Senior Youth Bible Study (G)
10/5:		Grantoberfest in Grantsburg
10/6:		World Communion Sunday

### Upcoming Events & News

- 10/6 World Communion Sunday:** Please offer your family bread or diverse bread. Please take a look at the signup sheet! If you signed it, please bring your bread to the church on Saturday or contact those who are in charge of communion.
- 10/3 or 10/6 Rotary Club Roses Delivery Day:** Pick up at T'Dogs between 9 am to noon—otherwise, you can pick them up on Sunday at church (10/6)
- 10/8 SPRC Meeting:** SPRC will meet with the treasurers of the three churches at the Parsonage (4:30pm)

## Next Sunday (October 6th):

### VOLUNTEERS

#### Central -Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Lory Grady
Counter	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Mowing	Dave Huff
Sunday School	Jenni Stedmen
Communion	Barbara Loomis

#### Atlas

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

#### St. Croix Falls

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



### This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries



LeAnn Sylvester 9/29

**Derek & Jenni Stedman 10/3**

Karen Sciacca 10/5

September 29th, 2024

Mark 9: 38-50

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



### **“In the Name of Love”**

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: A very poor and elderly man applied for membership at a wealthy church. The pastor tried to dissuade him with various evasive remarks. The old man soon realized he wasn't welcome and finally told the pastor that he would pray about it. After several days, he returned.

“Well,” asked the pastor, “Did the Lord give you a message?”

“Yes, sir, He did,” the old man replied. “He told me it wasn't any use. ‘I've been trying to get into that same church myself for ten years, and they won't let me in either.’”

A few months ago, a youth came to my office and asked, “Do you think I can come to your church?” I replied, “Of course-Why not?” He said, “Well, I think people may not welcome me.” So, I told him, “God loves everyone, including you. The church is the house of God, and therefore, it's for everyone. We welcome you!” He said, “Thank you for saying that.”

After that encounter, I prayed deeply for our church, that it would be a safe, comfortable, peaceful, hopeful, and joyous house of God, filled with love. Let's reflect on our church. How do you feel about it? Do you believe God is here with us?

Let's reflect: Are we truly opening our minds, hearts, and doors to everyone, as our mission statement declares: “Let's make disciples for Jesus Christ in all generations with open minds, open hearts, and open doors for the transformation of the world”? What if Jesus is standing outside our church because we have rejected Him? What if we feel ashamed to welcome the poor, the alcoholic, the drug addict, or those who are emotionally or spiritually sick into our church family? What if our actions are hypocrisy in the sight of God? What if we have done wrong in the name of love?

Today's scripture begins with the disciple John's report. He said, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him because he was not following us” (Mark 9:38). The disciples didn't like others doing good in the name of Jesus because they did not belong to their group. What is their group? It's Jesus' followers. In other words, their group is a Christian community, which was a new movement emerging because of Jesus.

The disciples perhaps didn't hate the good deeds being done; rather, it seems they resented that others were gaining more recognition than they were. Or perhaps the disciples were jealous that others could cast out demons while they had failed to do so. Do you remember that one day when the disciples were unable to cast out a demon from a boy with an evil spirit? Jesus told them, “This kind can come out only by prayer” (Mark 9:29). This happened just before the other person successfully cast out the demons. It might have been jealousy over others accomplishing what they could not.

For whatever reason, they rejected that person and considered it natural, reporting it to Jesus just as they had done. The issue is that they didn't recognize what they had done wrong. The people were casting out demons in the name of Jesus while the disciples rejected them in His name. They both acted in the name of Jesus. So, who truly did good?

Here is a question: If someone speeds on the highway because they couldn't see the speed

limit sign, does the policeman forgive them without issuing a ticket? I don't think so. When I visited my friend's house in Iowa, I had a great time with her. A few weeks later, I received a ticket for a \$200 fine for speeding. I was actually driving 40 miles per hour, which felt slow because it was in town. However, according to the fine letter, the speed limit in that area was 25 miles per hour. I truly didn't know about the speed limit, even though I tried to drive carefully. However, that didn't waive the fine.

It is the same with sin. Even if we sin unknowingly, we cannot be forgiven without recognition and repentance. Listen carefully! The Pharisees and scribes (teachers of the law) in the early church considered themselves righteous leaders. However, Jesus scolded them strongly, saying, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean" (Matthew 23:27). Forgiveness comes after recognizing our sins and repenting. In the Old Testament, there is a clear passage: "If a member of the community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the Lord's commands, he is guilty" (Leviticus 4:27).

However, our God, who is full of love and mercy and who desires to forgive us, always gives us opportunities to repent of our sins. The passage continues, "When he is made aware of the sin he committed, he must bring as his offering for the sin he committed a female goat without blemish. He shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and the sin offering shall be slaughtered at the place of the burnt offering" (Leviticus 4:28-29). In other words, even though you sinned unknowingly, you must pay for your sin. However, as soon as you realize you have sinned, if you come to God and pray for forgiveness, He may forgive you.

It's acceptable even if you are an addict or have sinned, as long as you repent before God. The word "repentance" means turning away from the sin you committed. "Repentance" implies that you will not repeat the sin again. However, we are all weak, and sometimes our decisions may fail. That's why we need God's help. That's why we need to pray. That's why we need to belong to a faithful Christian community. Are you a Christian who can hold those in need in your prayers? Is our church one that can embrace and care for those in need without bias?

Today, Jesus says, "Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward" (Mark 9:41).

The disciples had become outsiders to the Jewish community. They forgot that they had been outsiders until Jesus called them. Jesus accepted them as disciples, friends, and members of a community. As soon as Jesus called them, they came out of their darkness and were able to stand in the light of Jesus Christ. We all might find ourselves feeling weak, lost, or powerless at any point in our life journey. This is why we should love and embrace everyone with open minds, just as Jesus did.

Jesus came not to build walls but to break down barriers. He came to establish a kin(g)dom in which every member would be affirmed and cared for. Whatever we do in the name of love means that we are embodying the love of Jesus. As Christians, we are called to be open and receptive to good news wherever we find it.

The Apostle Paul serves as an exemplar for us. When he was imprisoned, others preached Christ out of selfish ambition, supposing they could stir up trouble for Paul. However, Paul said, "But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice" (Philippians 1:18-19). We who gather and act in the name of love are a family in Christ, regardless of ethnicity, gender, race, age, political stance, or any other background. The point is that we are Christians, carrying the good news within us to create a better world in the name of love. Thanks be to God. Amen!