

whole, and unites us in mutual learning and service, for the sake of all your children. Amen!

NO. 2024-36
September 8th, 2024

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!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*DOXOLOGY

UMH 95

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison

We give because you have been generous to us, gracious God. We give to feed the hungers of body and soul that are all around us and deep within. May the ministries of this church meet the needs of our members, our community, and our world. Help us to love our neighbors as ourselves. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN

Jesus Is All the World to Me

UMH 469 (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)

16th Sunday After Pentecost/ Rally 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

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>

Worship designed “Led By Love” by Lavon Bayler

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
September 8th, 2024

16th Sunday After Pentecost/Rally Sunday

*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

Listen! God is welcoming us to this time of worship.

Young and old, rich and poor, all are welcomed.

This is a place where all belong.

This is a time when all are accountable to God.

The Maker of all seeks our common good.

The God of Mercy calls on us to be merciful.

We are not judges over sisters and brothers.

We are called to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Come to sing praises and put your trust in God.

Come to prepare yourself to serve in Christ’s name.

We bring all our needs to God, our hope.

We want to share faith and hope with others. Amen.

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

UMH 454 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Author of all humankind, come to lift us up to our full humanity as we worship you in this hour. You surround us on every side and are acquainted with all our ways. You know our shallow motives and our deepest thoughts. You are aware of the distinctions we make and the favoritism we express. Yet you welcome us, not as rangers but as heralds of your reign. We want to worship you and to represent you well. Come among us now with your transforming power. Amen!

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Mark 7:24-37

24 From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, 25 but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. 26 Now the woman was a gentile, of Syrophoenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 27 He said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” 28 But she answered him, “Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” 29 Then he said to her, “For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.” 30 And when she went home, she found the child lying on the bed and the demon gone.

31 Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went by way of Sidon toward the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. 32 They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. 33 He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” 35 And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one, but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. 37 They were astounded beyond measure, saying, “He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

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

Thanks be to God. Amen!

SERMON *“A Challenge might be a Pathway to Blessings!”*

Pastor Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Inclusive God, ever available to all who truly seek you, come to us now through all we read and speak, that the messages your people hear may become your word to us, a word that transforms, makes

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



Atlas

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

St. Croix Falls

Pianist	Sharon Asp
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=SDZleFNubmEvaDBlcytTRzVxMFIIZz09>
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: 16th Sunday After Pentecost. Rally Sunday/Grandparent Day
God Bless you all!

Worship Service Schedule

9/8:	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
9/8:	2:00 pm	Pastor Jenny Leads Worship at Continuing Care Center
9/9:	10:30 am-2:00 pm	Pastor Jenny at Choir Rehearsal at Rice Lake UMC
9/10:	10:30 am-1:00 pm	Pastor Jenny Volunteers at Loaves & Fishes in Luck
9/11:	11:00 am-12:00 pm	Pastor Jenny Mentor's Provisional Elder Group /Zoom
	1:00 pm	UMW Meeting (G) Paulie Kratchmer leading Loom Class
	5:30-7:00 pm	Junior Youth Gathering (G)
9/12:	5:00-6:00 pm	Youth Band (G)
	6:30-7:30 pm	Senior Youth Bible Study (G)
9/13:	5:30-8:00 pm	Family Game Night (G)
9/14:	8:00 am	UM Men's Meeting (G)

Upcoming Events & News

9/18: K-up Kids Gathering (G)

MARK YOUR
CALENDAR

Ad Council Meetings:

9/20 :Atlas; 9/24 Central-G; 9/22 SCF

Next Sunday (September 15th):

VOLUNTEERS

Central -Grantsburg

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



Atlas

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Sue Olson
Usher	Cheryl Olson
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St. Croix Falls

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

This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries

Briana & Jared Olson 9/10
Troy & Kristie Olson 9/10
Sasha Chute 9/11
Don Anderson 9/12



September 8th, 2024

Mark 7:24-37

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



“A Challenge Might be a Pathway to Blessings.”

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: A guy is out hunting. He sees a bear and shoots at it, but he misses. Suddenly, he slips and falls down the mountainside. His leg gets caught in a bear trap, and the bear is coming right toward him. He cries out, “Lord, I know I’ve done some bad things in my life, but I promise to repent now if you make this bear a Christian!” The bear skids to a halt, drops to his knees, clasps his paws together, and says, “O Lord, I thank you for the food I am about to receive!”

There is a famous Korean blessing, “May you walk only on flower paths!” which expresses a wish for someone to have an easy, pleasant, and trouble-free life. However, is it really possible to live a life without any troubles? We all face challenges in our daily lives, and Christians are no exception. God promises His people, “I will be with you—Immanuel, God.” However, we do not find any promise from God saying, “Your life will be full of sunshine and roses.”

One of my favorite scriptures is Psalm 23. I believe many of you love this scripture as well. Let’s reflect on Psalm 23: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

At first glance, it sounds like God led the author to a life full of sunshine and roses. He has no worries because God provides him with everything he needs, both physically and spiritually. Do you know who this author is? It’s King David. Some of you might think, “Hmm, it’s because he was a king. If I were a king, yes, I would always walk on flower paths.”

However, many of you know that even though David was the King of Israel, he faced numerous challenges in his life. After young David won his battle with Goliath, King Saul became jealous of him and tried to kill him. As a result, David became a refugee in the wilderness for about ten years until King Saul died. Can you imagine running away from King Saul for ten years and living in the wilderness? Yet, David still confessed, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” Did he lie? No, I believe that he trusted in God wholeheartedly, without any doubt, even while living the life of a refugee.

Recalling the time I ran a preschool; my niece attended the preschool I managed. She was the shortest and youngest in the school, but she was a leader in her group because she had a strong sense of security—her aunt was the principal. After I stopped running the preschool to attend seminary, my niece had to go to another preschool. However, she cried every morning, saying, “I don’t want to go to that school because my aunt isn’t there.” Even at four years old, my niece knew that her aunt would protect her. She trusted that her aunt would be her strong supporter and rock. Reflecting on my niece, I believe that David deeply trusted in God in the same way.

Everyone faces challenges—some may overcome them easily, while others may struggle and suffer through them. As Christians, we also encounter many challenges in our everyday

lives. Today, I want to talk about “how challenges lead us to a pathway of blessings,” reflecting on today’s scripture. In this scripture, we see that both Jesus and a woman faced challenges. Through this story, we can learn how to find a pathway to blessings through our challenges.

The scripture begins with, “From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there.” Jesus was tired from his ministry—teaching and healing people—especially after performing the miracle of feeding five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish. It was unusual for Jews to stay in Gentile territory. Verse 24 suggests that Jesus went there to rest, avoiding the crowds. However, he could not rest because a Gentile, non-Jewish woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, immediately heard about Jesus. She came and bowed down at his feet, begging him to cast the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus said, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”

When I first read this, I was shocked because Jesus had never rejected a request for healing, except in this instance. He was extremely tired and had gone to a Gentile land to rest, away from the Jews. Even though it was unusual, he really needed that rest. However, a non-Jewish woman interrupted his rest, crying and begging for him to heal her daughter. At that time, Jewish custom treated women and Gentiles as less than human, like dogs. I know that nowadays dogs are our beloved companions, but in Jewish custom, dogs and pigs were considered unclean animals. People avoided touching them because they believed that doing so would make them unclean as well. Therefore, Jesus’ statement, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs,” reflects the Jewish customs of that time.

However, the woman, who was treated like an unclean dog, responded, “Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” What’s interesting here is that Jesus often said, “Your faith has made you well,” but he didn’t mention faith in this instance. I saw her strong faith in Jesus—believing that even a crumb of his grace and mercy would heal her daughter. But Jesus said, “For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.”

Jesus challenged the woman by treating her like a dog, but she boldly replied, “Yes, I may be a dog. But even a dog can get crumbs under the children’s table.” The woman faced her challenges head-on with hope for her daughter’s healing. In the end, she experienced the blessing of her daughter’s healing after overcoming a significant challenge. What about Jesus? The woman challenged him by saying, “I know you are naturally Jewish. However, we, the dogs, are also creatures of God. Dogs have the right to receive God’s grace.” After this encounter, Jesus went to other Gentile lands to heal them, and the good news of Jesus spread across the region. Her challenge opened the door for the good news to reach the Gentiles.

When we face challenges, it’s natural to feel fear. However, challenges can sometimes lead us to the pathway of blessings. There’s a saying, “Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.” We may grow in faith through challenges. President George Washington said, “The harder the conflict, the greater the triumph.”

Are you struggling with any challenges now? If so, trust in God because His grace is greater than any challenge. No challenge can separate us from the love of God. The Apostle Paul, who faced many challenges in his life, said, “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39). Thanks be to God, Amen!