

**PRAYER SONG**

**UMH 487**

*This is our prayer. This is our prayer, O God!*

NO. 2024-46  
November 17th, 2024

**THE LORD’S PRAYER**

**INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS**

**\*DOXOLOGY**

**UMH 95**

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**

**Our hearts are glad and our souls rejoice in the opportunity to share. Here are the fruits of your generosity and our hard work. In thanks for the perfect offering of Jesus Christ, we bring ourselves with our gifts. Show us how to combine our efforts to build wholesome relationships, extend your church, and minister in your name throughout the world. 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)

**26th 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**

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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**  
**November 17th, 2024**  
**26th Sunday After Pentecost**

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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

Come, let us present ourselves before our God.

Bring all your troubles and anxiety to God in prayer.

**Surely God knows our thoughts and hears our prayers.**

**We find strength for living as we praise God.**

Lay down your arrogance and false pride.

Admit your needs as you seek God’s favor.

**We pour out our souls before the living God.**

**We do not withhold from God our misery and distress.**

God grants our petitions and gives us peace.

The counsel of our God gladdens our hearts.

**In God’s presence there is fullness of joy.**

**As we meet together, we are encouraged and comforted.**

**Amen.**

**\*DEDICATING HYMN** *I Stand Amazed in the Presence*

**UMH 371 (vs. 1, 2 & 5)**

**OPENING PRAYER** Unison

**Our hearts exult in you, O God. All knowledge has its origin in you. Our deepest hungers are satisfied as you give counsel and instruct our hearts. Be known to us now, that our covenant with you may be strengthened. Grant confidence to all who enter this sanctuary, that our faith may grow, our love expand, and our hope find fulfillment. Show us the path of life, and grant us courage to walk in your ways. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen!**

**CHILDREN’S TIME**

**UMH 191 (vs. 1)**

**Proclamation of God’s Word**

**\*THE GOSPEL LESSON**

**Mark 13:1-8**

13 As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!” 2 Then Jesus asked him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.”

3 When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, 4 “Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?” 5 Then Jesus began to say to them, “Beware that no one leads you astray. 6 Many will come in my name and say, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. 7 When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. 8 For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

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

**Thanks be to God. Amen!**

**SERMON**

*“The Signs of A New Life”*

**Pastor Jenny Lee**

**We Respond to God’s Word**

**RESPONDING PRAYER** Unison

**Source of all wisdom, who in Jesus Christ offers to teach us the way of love, we have asked for signals and signs of your presence and your leading but have often been led astray by our own desires and interpretations. Testify to us now that we may hear your counsel above the clamor of other voices and, hearing, respond as you intend. Amen!**

**SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS**

*After each prayer request:*

*Pastor: Lord, in your mercy,*

*All: Hear our Prayer.*

# NOVEMBER 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><b>OPERATIONS CHRISTMAS CHILD</b></p>  <p><b>Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes were collected Sunday, Nov. 10th.</b></p> <p><b>Thank You!</b></p> <p><b>NON-PERISHABLE THANKSGIVING DINNER GOODS</b></p> <p><i>Canned vegetables, box stuffing, canned cranberries, canned yams, etc. Donated items will be given to the food shelf to help those who are in need for the Thanksgiving Holiday. Thank you!</i></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><b>OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD</b></p>  <p>We will be collecting shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. There are shoe boxes available at church along with information on suggested items to include in your shoe box.</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><i>The Sailor Hat offering will go to support families in need with Thanksgiving Gift Cards</i></p> 
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**Thank you for your support!**

# TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

**Ministers All God's People**  
Rev. Jenny Lee

## Central -Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Barbara Loomis
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Toni & Georgeanne Koons
Counter	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	Jenni Stedman

## 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)	Karen Sciacca
Counter	Peter Gionis
Bell Ringer	Jim Andrews
Flowers	Karen Sciacca

## Breakthrough Prayers:

**Please pray for those who are sick or scheduled for surgery:** Russ Hammer (recovery), Julie Branstad (scheduled surgery in Dec.), Lynn Hanson (surgery-11/14), Harley & Jameson Koser (surgery-11/14), Virginia (assisted living), Dorothy Miller (Pioneer Home) and those who you know.

**Praise the Lord:** Russ Hammer-surgery went successfully (11/11), Harley & Jameson Koser (baptized-11/10), Atlas UMC made 40 Christmas Shoeboxes! (11/10)

**"This kind can come out only by prayer" (Mark 9:29)**



## 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](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: 26th Sunday After Pentecost/  
*God Bless you all!*

### Worship Service Schedule

11/17:	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
11/17:	12:15 pm	Ad Council Meeting (SCF)
	2:00 pm	Pastor Jenny leads worship at C.C.C. in Burnett Medical Center
11/19:	6:30 pm	Ad Council Meeting (G)
11/20	5:30 -7:30 pm	Junior Youth Gathering (G)
11/21	1:30-2:30pm	New Membership Class (SCF)
	5:30-6:30 pm	Youth Bible Study (G)
11/22	5:00 pm	Northwest Clergy Thanksgiving Gathering-Eau Claire Thanksgiving Sunday/United Methodist Student
11/24:		Sunday/Christ the King Sunday <i>(Please prepare "Thank You Card" to God)</i>

## This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries

Pastor Jenny Lee 11/17

Bob Branstad 11/23 & Haven Rehbein 11/23



## Next Sunday (November 24th):

### Central -Grantsburg

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

### Atlas

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

### St. Croix Falls

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Kathy Gionis
Usher(s)	Karen Sciacca
Counter	Peter Gionis
Bell Ringer	Jim Andrews
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## Upcoming Events & News

- 11/24: **Advent Bible Study-Register by 11/24. The book price is \$13.90 at Amazon.com.**
- 12/1: **1st Sunday of Advent**
- 12/1: **Mitten Tree (A)/Decorating for Christmas (A & G)**
- 12/8: **Recognition of New Members (SCF)**
- 12/22: **Christmas Program of Sunday School (A)**



November 17th, 2024

Mark 13:1-8

Pastor Jenny Lee, Ph.D.

Upper St. Croix Parish UMC



## “The Signs of A New Life”

I'd like to start with something funny. A Wisconsin couple decided to go to Florida to thaw out during a particularly icy winter. They planned to stay at the same hotel where they had spent their honeymoon 20 years earlier. Due to their hectic schedules, it was difficult for them to coordinate their travel plans. So, the husband left for Florida on Thursday, while his wife planned to fly down the following day. The husband checked into the hotel. There was a computer in his room, so he decided to send an email to his wife. However, he accidentally left out one letter in her email address and sent the email without realizing his mistake.

Meanwhile, somewhere in Houston, a widow had just returned home from her husband's funeral. He had been a Baptist minister who was called home to glory after a heart attack. The widow decided to check her email, expecting condolence messages from family and friends. But after reading her very first email, she screamed and fainted. The widow's son rushed into the room, found his mother on the floor, and saw the computer screen, which read:

**To:** My Loving Wife  
**Subject:** I've Just Arrived

I know you're surprised to hear from me. They have computers here, and you're allowed to send emails to loved ones. Since I've just arrived, I thought I'd send you a message. Everything has been prepared for your arrival tomorrow. Looking forward to seeing you then! Hope your journey is as uneventful as mine was.

**P.S.** Sure is hot down here!!!

What surprised the widow? Was it that her husband seemed to send her an email from hell? Or was it the suggestion that she would join him tomorrow? What if we all knew exactly when we were going to die? What if we all knew when the end of the earth would come?

The good news is that no one knows when these things will happen—only God knows. That is the grace of God. Even though we don't know when the end will come, we do know when the beginning of new life is near. We can anticipate the arrival of a new baby. We know the seasons to plant seeds and when we can expect them to sprout.

Has anyone noticed signs of new life in their plants? I sometimes meditate each morning while looking at my houseplants. How beautiful they are, with new leaves appearing day by day! It is a mystery of life. One day, while observing my houseplants, I noticed that the soil in one cactus pot looked different—the soil was pushed up and cracked. I smoothed it out to make it flat again. Three days later, it was pushed up once more. I thought to myself, “What is this? Did a mouse come in and dig it up?” I carefully smoothed it out again.

Then, a few days later, I was very surprised. From that very spot, a new sprout was emerging.

I don't know where that seed came from, but it must have been mixed into the soil. How hard it must have been for that seed to push through the soil and begin a new life! And since it was in a cactus pot, I hadn't even watered it much. How difficult it must have been to sprout under such conditions! And yet, life was beginning to emerge from that soil. Without realizing it, I had been flattening the soil over and over, unknowingly hindering the beginning of new life.

What comes to mind when you read today's scripture? Some of you might think of "signs of the end of the age," while others may see it as "a new beginning of life." Jesus and his disciples are about to leave the temple after witnessing the widow's offering. Jesus had warned them, "Beware of the scribes," who exploited poor widows. At that time, religious leaders were forcing people to give offerings to build a new temple, feeding their own greed. Jesus used the widow's offering to teach a lesson. However, the disciples didn't fully understand his point.

As they left the temple and admired the grand building, they said to Jesus, "Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!" Jesus responded, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down." The disciples then asked, "When will this happen?" and "What signs will come when this is fulfilled?"

Jesus told them what they should expect: "Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, 'I am he,' and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs."

According to Jesus, we may still see wars, disasters, earthquakes, and famines in the world. However, these are not signs of the end but of the beginning of birth pains. Just as birth pains signal that a new life is coming soon, today's scripture reminds us as Christians of the coming of a new kingdom—a kin(g)dom where the poor and widowed are no longer exploited, where material wealth holds no value, and where Jesus has prepared a place for us.

Some people think that Christians should not experience hardships in life. If they do, others may question their faith in God. However, as we read in today's scripture, Christians sometimes suffer through natural disasters, illness, or family issues. This is not due to a lack of faith; these things simply happen. For example, Job suffered greatly without any wrongdoing. He was blameless, upright, and sincere in God's eyes, yet he suddenly lost his health, children, wife, and wealth. His suffering continued one hardship after another until he encountered God Almighty (Job 42:5).

God does protect His people, but that doesn't mean we won't face challenges. God never promised to remove all obstacles from our path. Instead, He promised, "I will be with you." For instance, the faithful Daniel and his friends were thrown into the blazing furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3:19-26). Then the king said, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" and his advisors replied, "Yes, certainly." But the king exclaimed, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." This is God's promise: He will be with His people. Even when we face difficulties, God is with us.

In today's scripture, we see the truth: "There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs." We might go through hardships that feel like the end of the world, but they are "the beginning of the birth pangs." In other words, this pain can signal the birth of something new.

Christians stand for hope, resurrection, and new life in Jesus Christ. As Jesus showed us, death is not the end but the beginning of new life. We practice dying to our old selves and living anew through baptism, confirmation, repentant prayers, and our daily lives. Through baptism and confirmation, we Christians have died in Christ and are reborn in Him. The Apostle Paul confessed, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). May we live in this hope! Thanks be to God. Amen!