

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

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

NO. 2024-47
November 24th, 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

(Please offer your thank-you card to God and a canned food item for our neighbors as well.)

SPECIAL MUSIC (G)

*DOXOLOGY

UMH 95

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison

We have bread, so we will share it. We have pure water, so we will help dig wells for others. We have faith, so we will tell of the great things You have done, O God. These sacred moments of giving acknowledge Your ownership of all our possessions. We seek to answer Your call to responsible stewardship and faithfulness in mission. We are Your heralds and disciples of Jesus. Thank You, God. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN

Grace Alone

TFWS 2162

*BENEDICTION

Pastor Jenny Lee

*POSTLUDE

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

Worship designed "Led By Love" by Lavon Bayler

Upper St. Croix Parish United Methodist Church

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

Christ the King/Thanksgiving Sunday/Methodist Student Day



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
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www.upperstcroixparish.org
<https://www.facebook.com/UpperStCroixParishUMC>

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
November 24th, 2024
Christ The King/Thanksgiving Sunday/
Methodist Student Day

*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

Be glad and rejoice, for God has done great things.
Our mouths are filled with laughter and shouts of joy.

A harvest of abundance surrounds us.

We will eat in plenty and be satisfied.

Praise God for all the bounty we enjoy.

Give thanks for every good and perfect gift.

We lay aside our worries and our fears.

God has dealt wondrously with us, and we rejoice.

Seek first God’s realm of righteousness.

Let God reign in all your thoughts and relationships.

We know God is with us here.

We trust God to supply what we most need. Amen.

***DEDICATING HYMN** Give Thanks TFWS 2036

OPENING PRAYER Unison

How good it is to join in prayers of thanksgiving and songs of praise! You have been good to us, gracious God! For sunshine and rain, for the labors of all who harvest the grain, we pour out our gratitude. You have dealt wondrously with us so that we have more than we need. Dwell with us now that we may not only be inspired to share but also prompted to work for a more just world in which all your children have enough to eat and reasons for joy. Amen!

BLESSINGS FOR STUDENTS

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

MATTHEW 6:25-33

25 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your span of life? 28 And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ 32 For it is the gentiles who seek all these things, and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

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

Thanks be to God. Amen!

SERMON “Don’t Worry, but Give Thanks!” Pastor Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Caring God, whose attention is given impartially and completely to each of Your children, and whose love is ever available, make Yourself known to us now. Clothe us with faith, fill us with the knowledge of Your truth, and lift us to new heights of godliness and dignity. Take away our worries and anxieties so that our thanksgiving may be generously shared and joyously celebrated. Amen!

NOVEMBER 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>OPERATIONS CHRISTMAS CHILD</p>  <p>Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes were collected Sunday, Nov. 10th.</p> <p>Thank You!</p> <p>NON-PERISHABLE THANKSGIVING DINNER GOODS</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>BE A "BACK-PACK BACKER"!</p> <p>REMEMBER ... Every Sunday Is MAC 'N CHEESE SUNDAY!</p> <p>Supporting the Salvation Army's "Happy Kids Back-Pack Program"</p> 	<p>OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD</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>Food Shelf (Communion Sunday)</p>	<p>Sailor Hat Offering:</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	Volunteer Needed
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Volunteer Needed
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	Jenni Stedman



Atlas

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Colleen Adams-Schween
Usher	Sue Olson
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
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: Shane Tooze (job transition), Kay Lamphere (hospitalized again), Brianna Salmon (good caring), Julie Roberts (hospitalized), Allison Reid (supportive caring), Julie Branstad (scheduled surgery in Dec.), Lynn Hanson (surgery-postponed in Dec.), Virginia (assisted living), Dorothy Miller (Pioneer Home) and those who you know.



Praise the Lord: Harley & Jameson Koser -surgery went well (11/14), Central UMC made 25 Christmas Shoeboxes! (11/13)

"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=SDZleFNubmEvaDBlcytTRzVxMFllZz09>
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: Christ the King/Thanksgiving Sunday/Methodist Student Day
(Please prepare your "Thank You Card" to God and canned good for our neighbors)
God Bless you all!

Worship Service Schedule

11/24:	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
11/26:	3:30pm-4:30pm	Provisional Elder Mentoring Meeting via Zoom
11/27:	5:30 -7:30 pm	Go Fish for K-Up (G)
11/28-29:		Thanksgiving Holiday-Church Offices Closed
12/1:		1st Sunday of Advent

This Week's Birthdays & Anniversaries

Marjorie Broker	11/26
Donna Norman	11/28
Blake Reid	11/29
Tanner Gaffey	11/30



Next Sunday (December 1st):

Central -Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Barbara Loomis
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Youth Group
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	Jenni Stedman
Communion	Barbara Loomis



Atlas

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

St. Croix Falls

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

Upcoming Events & News

- 11/24: **Advent Bible Study-Register by 11/24. The book price is \$13.90 or \$16.99 at Amazon.com.**
- 12/1: **1st Sunday of Advent/Christmas Decorating (A & SCF)**
- 12/8: **Mitten Tree (A)**
- 12/8: **Recognition of New Members (SCF)**
- 12/22: **Atlas Sunday School Christmas Program (A)**



November 24th, 2024

Matthew 6:25-33

Pastor Jenny Lee, Ph.D.

Upper St. Croix Parish UMC

“Don’t Worry, but Give Thanks!”

I want to start with something funny: A farmer was preparing for Thanksgiving and noticed his turkey strutting around the yard with a bit too much confidence. Every day, the farmer would feed him and say, “You’re going to make a fine Thanksgiving dinner.”

But as Thanksgiving approached, the turkey started getting nervous. So, he hatched a plan. On Thanksgiving morning, when the farmer came to the coop, the turkey wasn’t there!

The farmer searched everywhere until he finally found the turkey sitting in the middle of the barnyard with a large sign around its neck. The sign read: **“EAT MORE BEEF.”**

The farmer couldn’t stop laughing. He decided the turkey had earned its freedom with such a clever trick. So instead of turkey dinner, the family had hamburgers that year!

What a smart turkey! Like that turkey, who avoided its fate, we too receive God’s unearned and surprising grace. Psalm 100:4-5 reminds us, “Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name. For the Lord is good, and His love endures forever.” Even when we think we don’t deserve it, God’s love and mercy give us every reason to laugh, rejoice, and give thanks!

According to the Christian calendar, today is the last Sunday of the year, marking the end of the liturgical year. Next Sunday, with the beginning of Advent, we enter a season that leads us toward hope, peace, joy and love as we wait for the Lord and begin a new year.

Before Advent, Thanksgiving serves as a fitting conclusion to our year, inviting us to reflect with gratitude. The Apostle Paul encourages us in Colossians 2:6-7: “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”

As we receive God’s grace and love, we are called to let gratitude overflow from our hearts. Even in the face of difficulties, we have countless reasons to give thanks—because of Jesus Christ, God’s unwavering love, and the blessings in our lives, including our loved ones and daily provisions.

Today, we have the opportunity to reflect on this year and express our gratitude by writing a card of thanks to God. What a joy it is to share our grateful hearts, letting them overflow with thanksgiving! In today’s scripture, Jesus says, “Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”

Let’s be honest—don’t we often worry about these very things? Not because we lack them, but because we have so much! We stress over what to wear because our closets are full, and we ponder on what to eat because we have an abundance of food. Thank God for His generous provision!

However, we often forget His grace and instead focus on what we lack. When we dwell on scarcity, we’ll always feel incomplete. But when we cultivate a grateful mindset, we begin to see that we are already blessed with more than enough.

Make a list of things you're thankful for. If you can't remember what happened this year, even that's a reason for gratitude! As Isaiah 43:18 says, "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past." Focusing solely on the past—whether it was good or bad—can hold us back. Instead, let's look forward to what God has in store.

Jesus reminds us to "look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them." Living in Grantsburg, WI, I've come to truly appreciate this verse. Every fall, I see thousands of Sandhill Cranes migrating near my parsonage. It's breathtaking to watch their orderly flight, their instinctive journey, and God's provision for such a massive flock.

If God cares for the birds, how much more will He care for us? We are of far greater value to Him. Worrying won't change our circumstances, but thanksgiving invites God to move in miraculous ways.

Here are a few examples of how giving thanks can lead to joyful salvation: Consider Paul and Silas, who were unjustly imprisoned for preaching the Gospel (Acts 16:25). Instead of despairing, they prayed and sang hymns to God at midnight. Through their gratitude and praise, a sudden earthquake shook the prison, opening its doors. Not only were they set free, but the jailer and his family came to salvation. Gratitude has the power to transform hardship into joy and reveal God's grace in the darkest moments.

Similarly, Joseph endured numerous hardships, including being betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, and unjustly imprisoned. Yet, in every situation, he trusted that God was with him and maintained an attitude of gratitude.

Ultimately, Joseph rose to become the prime minister of Egypt, a position through which he saved his family and an entire nation during a severe famine. He declared, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Genesis 50:20), expressing his gratitude for God's plan. It is vital to trust in God's good plans for us and to give thanks, even in moments of hardship.

Let me close with a story. A small-town grandmother, known for her pies, hosted her family for Thanksgiving. She poured her heart into every dish, filling the home with the aroma of roasted turkey and spiced cider. But when it was time for dessert, disaster struck—the prized apple pie was burnt to a crisp. Embarrassed, she felt her perfect meal had been ruined. Yet, instead of frustration, she placed the burnt pie on the table with a smile and said, "Let's give thanks. Today isn't about perfection; it's about the love we share and the God who provides."

Her son chimed in, "Mom, life is full of burnt pies—mistakes and setbacks. But love and grace make everything sweeter." That evening, the family laughed, enjoying store-bought cookies and ice cream. They realized the burnt pie wasn't a failure—it was a reminder of grace, humility, and the joy of being together.

We all face "burnt pie" moments in life. Yet, gratitude shifts our focus from what's wrong to what's right. As 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

This Thanksgiving, let us put aside our worries and let gratitude overflow in every circumstance. Thanks be to God. Amen!