

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 worship you with our offerings, O God, even as we seek through them to bring good news, comfort, and healing to the afflicted, brokenhearted, and oppressed. May all the ministries and outreach of this church honor you and use well the resources you entrust to us. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing
UMH 400 (vs. 1 & 2)

*BENEDICTION

Pastor Jenny Lee

*POSTLUDE

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

NO. 2025-02
January 12th, 2025

Upper St. Croix Parish United Methodist Church

The 2025 Parish Ministry Theme:
“Do Good and Share with Others”
(Hebrews 13:16)
Baptism of the Lord
Law Enforcement Appreciation 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

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

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
January 12th, 2025
**Baptism of the Lord/
Law Enforcement Appreciation 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

* THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

**I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America,
and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God,
indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Amen.**

*CALL TO WORSHIP Responsive

Worship God, whose glory fills the universe,
whose majesty is over all the earth.

**The voice of God shakes the wilderness
and flashes forth flames of fire.**

God builds up the ancient ruins
and raises up the former devastations.

**God gives strength to people who respond,
and blesses them with joy and peace.**

The Spirit of God calls and empowers us
to bring good tidings and proclaim liberty.

**God anoints us to bind up the brokenhearted
and open the prisons of those who are bound. Amen.**

*DEDICATING HYMN *America* UMH 697 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Send your Spirit among us, O God, and into each one. Confirm our baptism with the fire of your love. Direct our ministry in the footsteps of Jesus, that we may experience liberation, and extend the blessings of freedom to those who are bound. Lift up and inspire our work and worship. Amen!

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

*THE GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

15 As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, 16 John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

21 Now when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

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

Thanks be to God. Amen!

SERMON *“You Have Been Baptized to Serve: God’s Calling”*

Pastor Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Gracious God, thank You for the men and women who serve in law enforcement. Just as You have called us as Christians to serve You and others, You have also called them to serve. May they feel Your Spirit guiding them, empowering them, and reminding them that they are beloved and called. Bless their work and keep them safe. Amen.

JANUARY CHURCH MISSIONS



ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Ashleigh Olson

<p>INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM: 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>HEIFER INTERNATIONAL</p> <p>We will be collecting financial donations for Heifer International. Heifer International's mission is to end hunger and poverty in a sustainable way by supporting and investing alongside local farmers and their communities. Heifer International is working to end world hunger in 19 countries across four continents. Thank you for your generosity!</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 be collecting financial donations to support the Grantsburg Senior Care Center.</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 the Salvation Army.</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	Paulie Kratchmer
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	Volunteer Needed

Atlas

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

St. Croix Falls

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



THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAY'S & ANNIVERSAIRES

Kenneth Olson 1/13
Cindy Berenschot 1/14
Jim Loomis 1/14
Pauline Bistram 1/15
Vanessa Harmon 1/16



Peter & Kathy Gionis 1/16

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: Baptism of the Lord/Law Enforcement Appreciation Sunday
God bless you and Happy New Year!

Worship Service Schedule

1/12:	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
1/14:	3:30 pm	Provisional Elder Mentoring via Zoom
1/15:	5:30 -7:30 pm	Junior Youth Gathering
1/16:	6:30-8:30 pm	Calm Psalms Group (G)
1/17:	1:30 pm	Ad Council Meeting (A)
1/19:	12:15 pm	Ad Council Meeting (SCF)

Upcoming Events & News

*Ad Council Meetings:

Jan. 17 Atlas: at 1:30 pm
Jan. 19 SCF: at 12:15 pm
Jan. 21 Central-G: at 6:30 pm

*February: Stewardship Month

2/2 Recognition of all the Church Committees

Next Sunday (January 19th):

Central -Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Volunteer Needed
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Kayleen Branstad
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	Volunteer Needed

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	Kathy Gionis
Usher(s)	Lynn Hanson
Counter	Peter Gionis
Bell Ringer	Jim Sciacca
Flowers	Kathy Gionis
Fellowship	Admin Members



Breakthrough Prayers:

Please pray for: Kaylee Branstad (her mom, Virginia passed away on 1/6), Georgeanne Koons (Strength), Julie Branstad (Strength), Cheryl Olson (Healing for her brother, Karman) and all immigrants.



Praise the Lord: Julie Branstad (Having a good neighbor), Bob Determan (Cancer Free), Kay Lamphere (Thankful for good procedures), Ron Alderfer (All procedures went well)

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

January 12th, 2025

Luke 3:15-17; 21-22

Pastor Jenny Lee, Ph.D.

Upper St. Croix Parish UMC



“You Have Been Baptized to Serve: God’s Calling”

I want to start with something funny that I found an internet site: A minister parked his car in a no-parking zone in a large city because he was short on time and couldn’t find a space with a meter. He left a note under the windshield wiper that read, “I have circled the block 10 times. If I don’t park here, I’ll miss my appointment. Forgive us our trespasses.”

When he returned, he found a citation from a police officer along with this note: “I’ve circled this block for 10 years. If I don’t give you a ticket, I’ll lose my job. Lead us not into temptation.”

Today, as we celebrate “Law Enforcement Appreciation Sunday” alongside the “Baptism of the Lord,” I want to share a story about a police officer that ties into God’s calling and our baptism. It was a cold, clear morning in January. Officer Michael adjusted his uniform and zipped up his jacket—another day, another patrol. But that day felt different. Michael loved his job—most days. He believed in justice and serving others, but lately, the badge felt heavier. The calls were harder, the criticism sharper and moments of gratitude fewer.

As he drove through the quiet streets, he noticed a man standing on a corner holding a sign that read, “Hope is coming.” Michael chuckled and muttered to himself, “Well, I sure hope so.” But the words lingered.

That Sunday, Michael sat in church, not in uniform, but as a father, husband and believer. The pastor read from the Gospel of Luke 3: “The people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah.”

Michael leaned forward. The people were waiting—hoping—for someone who would bring justice and peace, someone who would make things right, and someone would serve. The pastor continued: “John told them, ‘I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’” Michael felt a spark in his chest. A baptism of fire? That sounded a lot like what he faced every day on the job—moments of pressure, split-second decisions, and the courage it took to step into the unknown.

Then the pastor said: “Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also was baptized, the heavens opened, the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove, and God said, ‘You are my beloved Son; with you, I am well pleased.’”

Michael realized something in that moment: baptism wasn’t just a ritual—it was a calling, a declaration and a confirmation of purpose. Yes, baptism is not only about washing away our sins, but also a response to God’s calling—a confirmation that we are God’s beloved children, ready to do God’s work.

Later that week, Michael responded to a serious accident on the highway. Chaos surrounded him, but he remembered the words from Sunday: “Hope is coming.” He took a deep breath, stepped

forward, and did what he was called to do—serve.

That night, as he hung up his uniform, Michael whispered a prayer: “Lord, remind me every day that I’m not just wearing a badge—I’m living out a calling.”

Yes, police officers, firefighters and other first responders are family, friends, and humans like us. But they have accepted a calling to serve, often taking great risks. Do you have friends, family, or neighbors who serve in law enforcement, as 911 operators, firefighters, or in other government and community roles? How often do you express your appreciation to them?

We expect their service to keep us safe, and they take on that responsibility despite the challenges and dangers.

I remember one night in the winter of 2010 when my car broke down on the side of a highway. I didn’t know what to do. I called my insurance company, but only got the answering machine. I then called a friend for help, but I couldn’t clearly explain where I was. At that moment, a police car stopped by. The officer asked what was going on, called a tow truck company and stayed with me until everything was resolved.

Some people might say they experience “police-phobia,” but I know from experience that many officers serve their communities with compassion, even while facing challenges and risks daily.

Jesus also showed us the importance of respecting both government and ministry. When people tried to test Him, asking whether it was lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, He replied: “Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:17-22). This is a powerful example of how Jesus taught us to honor both our civic responsibilities and our spiritual callings. As Christians, we are called to be the light of the world so that others may follow the path we walk in faith.

When Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, it symbolized repentance, the washing away of sins, and initiation into God’s household and ministry. But we know Jesus was without sin, so why was He baptized? He did it to set an example—that every human being must respond to God’s call and begin their journey of ministry. Baptism is our response to God’s call. It’s a confirmation that we are the children of God. When we respond to God’s calling, God says, “You are my child, whom I love; with you, I am well pleased.”

Jesus’ baptism marked the beginning of His ministry. Similarly, our baptism calls us to live out our faith in action. To the officers, their work is a ministry in the field. Every act of courage, kindness, and justice reflects God’s calling in their lives.

How about us as Christians? We are also called by God to do good, seek justice and walk humbly with God. Remember, you have been baptized to serve God and others with love and joy.

Let us be like the man with the sign, reminding everyone that hope is coming—because Christ has come. God has sent us to prepare the way for the Lord. As we fulfill our duties, love God, and love our neighbors, Jesus will come again. He is our hope and Savior.

Thanks be to God. Amen!