

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

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

NO. 2025-04
January 26th, 2025

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

Gracious God, we give thanks for the abundance with which You have enriched our lives: for Your truth, more precious than gold, and for the individual gifts You have granted us, given for the common good. We are most grateful. Receive now the offerings we return to You, that they may proclaim the good news and fulfill Your purposes. Amen.

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN

Wonderful Words of Life

UMH 600 (vs. 1 & 2)

*BENEDICTION

Pastor Jenny Lee

*POSTLUDE

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

Upper St. Croix Parish United Methodist Church

The 2025 Parish Ministry Theme:
“Do Good and Share with Others” (Hebrews 13:16)

3rd Sunday After the Epiphany



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

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
January 26th, 2025
3rd Sunday After the Epiphany

*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

The Creator of the universe bids us come to worship;
let us come in awe, reverence, and eager anticipation.

**We gather in unity with other Christians,
for in Christ we are one body.**

We are together to learn, to care for one another,
and to gain strength for our common ministry.

**We need one another to discern God’s will,
and we depend on one another to carry it out.**

The Spirit of God is upon us, teaching and empowering.
The joy of God is our strength, today and always.

**We open ourselves to the Word of life
as we lift up hands and hearts to the source of help. Amen.**

***DEDICATING HYMN** *Thy Word Is a Lamp* **UMH 601**

OPENING PRAYER Unison

How shall we come before you, O God, when we have closed our ears to your law and dismissed your ways as out of date? Yet we long for clear direction and would be attentive to the word you want us to hear. Let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O God, our rock and our Redeemer. Amen!

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Luke 4:14-21

¹⁴ Then Jesus, in the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding region. ¹⁵ He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

¹⁶ When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

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

Thanks be to God. Amen!

SERMON

“Back to the Bible”

Pastor Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Gracious God, thank You for the gift of Your Word, a lamp to our feet and a guide for our lives. We confess that we have not always treasured it as we should. Forgive us for the times we have neglected Your Word. Renew in us a deep love for Your Word. Help us to see it as Your living voice, drawing us closer to You and guiding our steps. Empower us to live out its truth daily, reflecting Your love and grace in all that we do. Let Your Word transform us, shaping our thoughts, words, and actions for Your glory. May Your Word dwell richly within us and bear fruit in our lives. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the living Word. 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	Kayleen Branstad
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	Volunteer Needed

Atlas

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Mariah Gaffey
Usher	Sue Olson
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Josie Grimes

VOLUNTEERS DO NOT NECESSARILY HAVE THE TIME; THEY HAVE THE HEART

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

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAY'S & ANNIVERSAIRES

Renee Tooze	1/26
Max Dauer	1/27
Charlie Glonek	1/28
Russ Hammer	1/29



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=SDZleFNubmEvaDBlcytTRzVxMFliZz09>
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: 3rd Sunday After the Epiphany
God bless you!

Worship Service Schedule

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|-------|---------------|--|
| 1/26: | 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 |
| 1/26: | 12:15 pm | Ad Council Meeting (SCF) |
| | 1:30 pm | Harley Koser's Birthday Party (SCF) |
| | 2:30 pm | Stewardship TF Team meeting at Bob's House (A) |
| 1/29: | 5:30 -7:30 pm | Youth Gathering (G) |
| | 8:00 pm | Harmony Choir Board Meeting via Zoom |
| 1/30: | 6:30-8:30 pm | Calm Psalms Group (G) |

Upcoming Events & News

*February: Stewardship Month

2/2 Recognition of all the Church Committees

Pastor Jenny leads worship at C.C.C.

2/3 Laity Bible Study with Bishop via ZOOM

2/5 Clergy Bible Study with Bishop at Onalaska UMC



Next Sunday (February 2nd):

Central -Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Volunteer Needed
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Toni & Georgeanne Koons
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	Volunteer Needed
Communion	Barbara Loomis

Atlas

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Volunteer Needed
Usher	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Josie Grimes
Communion	Sue Olson

St. Croix Falls

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Jim Andrews
Usher(s)	Lynn Hanson
Counter	Karen Sciacca
Bell Ringer	Jim Sciacca
Flowers	Karen Sciacca
Fellowship	Admin Members
Communion	Jim and Karen Sciacca

Breakthrough Prayers:

Please pray for: Don Anderson (strength and healing), Judy Lien (house fire), Lancy Tober (surgery, 1/29), Sue Piland (peace and comfort), Lynn Hanson (strength and peace), Kristy Olson (loss of her father), Christopher Olson (healing), Kayleen Branstad (loss of her mother), those struggling with addiction, and undocumented immigrants.

Praise the Lord: Thank you to those who serve in law enforcement, especially Troy Olson, Adam Morrison and Charles Wright's great-niece.

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



January 26th, 2025

Luke 4:14-21

Pastor Jenny Lee, Ph.D.

Upper St. Croix Parish UMC



“Back to the Bible”

I want to start with something funny that I found an internet site: An elderly lady walked into the local church. The friendly usher greeted her at the door and helped her up the flight of steps. He asked her politely, “Where would you like to sit?” She answered, “The front row, please.” He said, “You really don’t want to do that because the pastor is really boring.”

The lady asked him, “Do you happen to know who I am?” He said, “No.”

She replied indignantly, “I’m the pastor’s mother.”

He asked her, “Do you know who I am?” She said, “No.”

Then, he said, “Good.”

I hope we truly know one another—no one should feel like an outsider in our congregation. We care for one another, without exception—even the pastor, right?

Today, I want to talk about going “Back to the Bible.” When you hear the phrase “Back to the Bible,” what comes to mind? Perhaps you remember the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. During that time, we closed our churches and even removed Bibles from the pews out of concern for spreading the virus. Although we reopened long ago, we still haven’t brought those Bibles back.

It’s time to reflect: Have we brought the Bible back physically and spiritually? Have we returned the Word of God to the center of our individual lives and ministry?

As I prayed over this year’s ministry, I realized something crucial: We’ve missed the opportunity to bring the Bible books back. This isn’t just about placing them back in the pews; it’s about a profound spiritual awakening. “Back to the Bible” highlights the importance of Scripture as the foundation of our faith. It calls us to return to the Bible as the core of Christian life and ministry.

How often do you read the Bible? Every day? Once a week? If you love someone, you naturally want to know how they’re doing—every day, even every moment. Now, ask yourself: What’s closer to you in your daily life than the Bible? Is it your smartphone? The TV? A novel?

Imagine someone says they love you, but rarely calls or listens to you. Wouldn’t you question their love? In the same way, if we claim to love God, but don’t read the Bible or pray, we deceive ourselves. Returning to the Bible isn’t just about reading—it’s about letting it shape our lives, as Jesus demonstrated.

During His temptation in the wilderness, Jesus said, “One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). It’s time to bring the Word of God back to the center of our lives. The Word is a map for our faith journey. If you feel lost or in darkness, turn to the Bible—it will guide you toward the light. Psalm 119:105 says, “Your [God’s] word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” This verse reminds us that God’s Word provides direction and purpose, much like a lighthouse guiding us through

life's storms. Without the Word of God, we cannot navigate life's journey—individually or as a faith community. Let's recommit to reading the Bible.

As we see in today's Scripture, after Jesus returned from the wilderness, He began His public ministry, rooted in Scripture. The Bible is not just a book—it is the living Word of God, empowered by the Spirit to transform lives. Reading it with an open heart invites the Holy Spirit to guide and empower our daily walk.

I've shared my story before, but I want to share it again today. When I was in the hospital with a broken spine, I felt hopeless. The doctors told me I'd never walk again. One day, a pastor and his wife visited me. After praying, the pastor's wife handed me a Bible and said, "Sister, please read the Bible. When you've read it in its entirety, God may heal you. You may walk again." At the time, I didn't believe her. I thought, "If the doctor can't heal me, how could reading a book help?" I threw the Bible away.

Two years later, God gave me a second chance. A pastor visited a girl in my hospital room. When I heard him praying, I felt an unexplainable warmth in my body. I asked him to pray for me, too. Through his prayers, I accepted Jesus as my Savior and Lord. That moment of faith opened my heart to believe in God's power. I began reading the Bible, holding onto hope that I could walk again. I underwent surgery and physical therapy, and by God's grace, I walked again. Even now, I often wonder where I'd be if I hadn't accepted that second chance.

The Bible is not just a book; it's the living Word of God. It brings hope to the hopeless, joy to the despairing, peace to the brokenhearted, and reconciliation to the divided. Revelation 3:20 says, "Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me." God's grace is for everyone, but only a few recognize it. Faith comes by God's grace, but the handle to the door of faith is on the inside of your heart. In other words, only you can open the door of faith. We should willingly read the Bible, willingly go to church, and willingly pray to God. If you take the first step to open the door, God will guide you through the rest of your journey.

Returning to today's Scripture, we see that Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, went to the synagogue on the Sabbath, "as was His custom." This habit of attending worship and engaging with Scripture reminds us to do the same. Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ." If we neglect church and Scripture, how can we expect to grow in faith? It's like trying to operate a new machine without a manual. The Bible is God's manual for life—a guide to who we are and how we should live.

In Luke 4, Jesus read from Isaiah 61, declaring His mission: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Even Jesus grounded His mission in Scripture. Returning to the Bible means letting it define who we are and what we do. It's time to rediscover our mission and purpose through Scripture. Is the Bible central in your life, or merely background noise? Commit to reading and meditating on it daily—not as a ritual, but as a lifeline.

Jesus said, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." The Bible isn't just a record of the past—it's alive and active, speaking to us today. Back to the Bible means living it out—allowing it to shape our actions, relationships, and worldview.

How can we, like Jesus, proclaim good news to the poor and set the oppressed free?

May the Word of God release us from anxiety, guide us toward light, and transform our lives.

Thanks be to God. Amen!