

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>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: The Sailor Hat offering will go to support the Salvation Army.</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	Volunteer Needed
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	Volunteer Needed
Communion	Barbara Loomis



Atlas

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

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
Communion	Jim and Karen Sciacca

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAY'S & ANNIVERSAIRES

No birthday's or anniversaries this week.

May the week ahead bring an abundance of blessings to all!

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: 1st Sunday of a new year; Epiphany Sunday
God bless you and Happy New Year!

Worship Service Schedule

1/5:	9:00 am	Grantsburg with Zoom (9:15 am, Sunday School)
	10:00 am	Atlas (Sunday School-Winter break)
	11:15 am	St. Croix Falls
1/7:	6:30 pm	SPRC Meeting via Zoom
1/8:	10:00-11:00 am	Korean Caucus Board Meeting via Zoom
1/8:	1:00 pm	UMW Meeting (G)
	5:30 -6:30 pm	Go Fish for K-Up (G)
1/9:	6:30-8:30 pm	Calm Psalms Group (G)
1/11:	8:00 am	UM Men's Meeting (G)

Upcoming Events & News

12/29-1/5:	No Sunday School (A)
1/15:	Junior Youth (G)
1/16:	Calm Psalms Group (G)
1/17:	Admin Council Meeting (A)

Next Sunday (January 12th):

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

Breakthrough Prayers:

Please pray for: Ron Alderfer (Healing & Strength), Virginia (Fell and broke hip), Barbara Loomis (Figuring out back pain), Luann Ward (Healing & Recovery), Georgeanne Koons (Strength), Julie Branstad (Strength), Nancy Branstad (Healing), Colleen Norenberg (Recovery), Troy Olson (Recovery & Strength), Brianna Salmon (Good Care), Lynn Hanson (Recovery), and those who lost loved ones.

Praise the Lord: Bob Determan (Cancer Free), Kay Lamphere (Thankful for good procedures), Gratitude for those who had a good holiday with family.

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



January 5th, 2025

Matthew 2:1-12

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



“The Best GPS”

I want to start with something funny I found an internet site: One Saturday, a pastor was walking down the street on his way to visit a parishioner. He needed to urgently post a package, so he asked a young boy where he could find the post office. After the boy gave him directions, the pastor thanked him and said, “If you come to church tomorrow morning, you can hear me tell everyone how to get to heaven.” The boy replied, “I think I’ll skip your sermon. If you don’t even know your way to the post office, how will you lead me to heaven?”

As I’ve mentioned before, I’m not great with maps. Because of this, I never volunteer to drive when we carpool, and I always rely on a GPS when traveling long distances. Yet, even with a GPS, I sometimes get lost. This happens when I input the wrong address or when the GPS fails to recognize a location.

I remember one particular day when I was driving to Pine Lake United Methodist Camp. It was probably my first year in Wisconsin. I entered “Pine Lake Camp” into my GPS and began the journey. After more than six hours, I found myself at the wrong Pine Lake campground! It was dark, the area was unfamiliar, and I felt scared and nervous. I pulled over to the roadside and prayed, realizing I had input the wrong information.

It’s true that technology makes life easier and more convenient, but it isn’t always reliable.

Do you remember how we found our way before GPS technology? I recall my first visit to the U.S. in 2003, before smartphones and GPS devices were common. I traveled with two friends to research seminaries in the Chicago area. I drove while my friends guided me using a paper map. We scheduled a visit to a seminary and planned to return the same way. However, we hadn’t accounted for one-way streets, which weren’t marked on the map. (At that time, we didn’t have one-way streets in Korea.) Can you imagine? What took us 30 minutes to reach took two hours to return!

Because I often get lost, I always pray before traveling, even when using a GPS. How about you? I’m sure many of you do as well.

Now, as we close the journey of 2024 and step into 2025, it’s time to set our focus. Let’s ensure we program our “GPS” toward the right destination. What is your New Year’s resolution? What will guide your path in this new season?

On this Epiphany Sunday, we reflect on the story of the wise men, mysterious travelers guided by a star. The Gospel of Matthew tells us about the wise men from the East who followed a star to Bethlehem. They first arrived at the palace where King Herod resided, asking if he knew the location of the Christ’s birthplace. This encounter presented challenges and a detour on their

journey toward Christ. Ultimately, the wise men found the correct sign—the star, a divine direction from God—and were led to meet and worship Him. They remind us that every journey of faith begins with a willingness to move toward God, even when the way isn't clear.

Their journey offers us three lessons as we step into the new year:

The first, follow the Best GPS. The wise men trusted the star, a divine GPS pointing them to Christ. Similarly, God places divine guides in our lives, such as scripture, prayer, our faith community, and the wisdom of others. Are we paying attention to these signs, or are we distracted by the noise of the world? As we set our resolutions and goals for 2025, let's make seeking God's guidance our priority.

Secondly, embrace the Detours. The wise men's journey wasn't straightforward. They stopped in Jerusalem, mistakenly assuming that worldly power would lead them to the Messiah. Even when life takes slow or unexpected turns, we must ask God for direction. Detours, though challenging, can have a purpose. They shape us, teach us patience, and redirect us toward God's plans.

Lastly, give Joyfully. When the wise men found Jesus, they offered gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh—valuable treasures given freely and joyfully. These gifts were acts of worship, not obligation. What can we offer Christ this year? Whether it's our time, talents, energy, or resources, let our giving flow from grateful hearts in response to God's love.

The word "epiphany" means a revelation or moment of clarity. For the wise men, the epiphany was seeing Christ, the light of the world. As we enter 2025, may we have our own epiphanies—moments when God reveals His presence in our lives, whether through worship, acts of kindness, or quiet prayer.

As we move forward, the question is simple: What star will guide you? In other words, what GPS will you trust to find God's will and walk with Him? The world offers many false lights—ambition, materialism, fear—but only the light of Christ leads to true peace and purpose.

Let us begin this year by committing to follow Christ's light, wherever it leads. Like the wise men, let us journey in faith, trust in God's guidance, and offer our best to the One who has given us everything.

As we embark on this new year, may God guide us as He guided the wise men. May we follow Christ's light, embrace the journey with trust, and live with joyful hearts. May we see Christ clearly this year and reflect His light in all we do. Thanks be to God. Amen.

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

May the star of wonder guide our journey through the scriptures, that we, too, may find the Christ who lives among us and serve Him. We would shout our praise in acts of justice and kindness as much as in words. Equip us for good deeds that will water the earth, and nourish within and among us the continuing gospel story. Attune us to the great joy of serving Christ. Amen.

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!

INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

***DOXOLOGY**

UMH 95

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**

Liberate us, O God, to give as we are able and to rejoice in the opportunity of sharing. We bring our gifts as an act of awe and wonder, knowing that you multiply our efforts. Take us, the very least of your saints, and use us, along with our gifts, to make Christ known. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN** *Only Trust Him* **UMH 337 (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)
Epiphany Sunday/Blessing the New Year Service



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 (Sunday School - Winter break)
11:15 AM at St. Croix Falls**

CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor Jenny Lee: jennlee1732@gmail.com

Youth Director Shayna Schmid: snssnyder@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>

Upper St. Croix Parish

Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls

January 5th, 2025

Epiphany Sunday/Blessing the New Year Service

*Please stand if you are able.

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

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE GREETINGS

“Happy New Year!”

(Waive your hands at one another)

BLESSING THE NEW YEAR

We Celebrate New Life in Christ

*CALL TO WORSHIP Responsive

The mystery of Christ is for all nations,
and God’s revelation, for the whole human race.

**We come to the light of the gospel,
eager to partake of its promises in Jesus Christ.**

The stewardship of God’s grace is given to us,
revealed to us by prophets and apostles.

**We are all members of one body, the church,
through which God’s wisdom is made known.**

By God’s power, we are called to be ministers,
to express our faith with bold confidence.

**We are the least of all the saints,
yet God chooses us to share the good news. Amen.**

*DEDICATING HYMN *We Three Kings* UMH 254 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

God of justice and righteousness, open us to new insights and equip us to deal fairly with the people we must and the circumstances we face. Minister to us in our weakness with your strengthening power. Surround us with the unsearchable riches of Christ, that we may become a new creation. Use us to defend the poor and deliver the needy from oppression, that all may rise up to sing your praise. Amen!

Sacrament of Holy Communion

INVITATION FOR COMMUNION

Pastor Jenny Lee

CONFESSION AND PARDON Unison

Merciful God,

We confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.

We have failed to be an obedient church.

We have not done your will,

we have broken your law,

we have rebelled against you love,

we have not loved our neighbors,

and we have not heard the cry of the needy.

Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(prayers in Silence)

Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;

that proves God’s love toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ,

We are forgiven! **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

UMH 13-14 (See insert)

THE LORD’S PRAYER

SHARING THE HOLY COMMUNION

COMMUNION SONG

TFWS 2260

COMMUNION PRAYER Unison

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Proclamation of God’s Word

*THE GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 2:1-12 (See insert)

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

Thanks be to God. **Amen!**

SERMON

“The Best GPS”

Pastor Jenny Lee

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his
disciples, and said: “take, eat; this is my body which given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it
to his disciples, and said: “drink from this, all of you; this is my blood
of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the
forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living
sacrifice, in union with Christ’s offering for us, as we proclaim the
mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

**(Together) Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on
these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and
blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood.**

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly
banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy
Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

*THE GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 2:1-12

2 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea,
magi from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 asking, “Where is the child who
has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and
have come to pay him homage.” 3 When King Herod heard this, he was
frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, 4 and calling together all the chief
priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah
was to be born. 5 They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has
been written by the prophet:

6 ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

7 Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact
time when the star had appeared. 8 Then he sent them to Bethlehem,
saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found
him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” 9 When
they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the
star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the
child was. 10 When they saw that the star had stopped, they were
overwhelmed with joy. 11 On entering the house, they saw the child with
Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then,
opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense,
and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod,
they left for their own country by another road.

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

Thanks be to God. Amen!