

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**

May these gifts of response to your love enable many to touch Jesus and be healed. May all who suffer for the sake of Christ be empowered to continue their witness. May your church manage well the resources entrusted to us, that faith and hope may abound. We rejoice in the resurrection and its power to transform us. Amen.

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN** *How Great Thou Art* UMH 77 (vs. 1 & 2)

***BENEDICTION** Rev. Jenny Lee

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

NO. 2025-07
February 16th, 2025

 **Upper St. Croix Parish
United Methodist Church**

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

**Stewardship Month
6th 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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Youth Director Shayna Schmid: snsnyder@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
February 16th, 2025
Stewardship Month
6th 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

Gather with the crowds who seek to touch Jesus;
come to hear and be healed.

**We are poor and hungry,
in need of food for our souls.**

Cursed are those who put their trust in human beings
and make flesh on their arm.

**Blessed are those who put their trust in God
and find their hope in Christ Jesus.**

Christ has been raised from the dead,
the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

**Our faith is not in vain and our hope is sure;
we rejoice and leap for joy at the good news. Amen.**

***DEDICATING HYMN** *Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty*
UMH 64 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Grant Planter and Provider, we rejoice at the streams of living
water you send within our reach. Help us to grow deep roots that
partake of your truth and thick branches that reach out in loving
support to all in need of our embrace. In these hours we seek, with
enthusiasm, the energy you provide as we sense your presence,
blessing us. Amen!

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**

Deuteronomy 14:22-29

(NRSV, p. 171 in the OT, and p.171 in the Living Bible)

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

Thanks be to God. Amen!

SERMON

“Our Faith in God’s Ownership”

Rev. Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Gracious God, thank You for the many blessings You have given us.
We confess that all we have is a gift from You. Help us to see that
tithing is not just about money, but about offering our time, talents,
and resources in faith and gratitude. Teach us to live generously,
serving others and supporting Your kingdom with joyful hearts. May
our offerings be a testimony of Your grace, and may we use all we
have to honor You. Guide us to be faithful stewards, trusting in Your
provision. In Jesus’ name, we pray. 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!

THE LORD’S PRAYER

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

***DOXOLOGY**

UMH 95

FEBRUARY 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 & Souper Bowl of Caring in February. We will also be collecting canned soup which will be donated to Loaves & Fishes Food Shelf.</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 and canned soup to support Souper Bowl of Caring. All donations will be given to the local food shelf.</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>The Sailor Hat offering will go to support the family in need.</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
Scripture Reading	Toni Koons
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Paulie Kratchmer
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	Volunteer Needed



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	Jim Andrews
Usher(s)	Karen Sciacca
Counter	Peter Gionis
Bell Ringer	Jim Sciacca
Flowers	Karen Sciacca
Fellowship	Admin Members

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAY'S & ANNIVERSAIRES

Peyton Smallwood	2/17
Betty Wilson	2/18
Dani Tooze	2/19
Debra Kunze	2/19
Mark Nelson	2/19
Landon Olson	2/20
Lila Tooze	2/22
Deb & Russ Hammer	2/22
Scott Andrews	2/22



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: Stewardship Month (Feb.), 6th Sunday after the Epiphany.
God bless you all!

Worship Service Schedule

2/16:	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
2/16:	12:15 pm	A D Council Meeting (SCF)
2/18:	6:30 pm	AD Council Meeting (G)
2/19:	5:00- 6:00 pm	Go Fish K-Up (G)
	8:00 pm	Harmony Choir Board Meeting via Zoom
2/20:	6:30-8:30 pm	Calm Psalms Group (G)
2/21	1:30 pm	AD Council Meeting (A)
	5:30-7:30 pm	Family Game Night (G)

Upcoming Events & News

*February: Stewardship Month

*Lenten Bible Study registration due is March 2nd (See the signup sheet on the clipboard)

- 3/4: Fat Tuesday Supper (G)
3/5: Ash Wednesday
3/9: 1st Sunday in Lent
3/25: SPRC Meeting via zoom



Next Sunday (February 23rd):

Central -Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Scripture Reading	Toni Koons
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Volunteer Needed
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 Gaffey

St. Croix Falls

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

Breakthrough Prayers:

Please pray for: Shea Wojtowicz (health screen), Peter and Kathy Gionis (safe trip), Mikala Hammer (safe travels), Dorothy Miller (healing), Lynn Hanson (strength and peace), Bakey Hanson's kids, those struggling with illness and/or addiction, and undocumented immigrants.



Praise the Lord in gratitude and joy: Don Anderson (recovered), Jim and Karen Sciacca (family reunion) and Judy Lien (moving to a temporary house after house fire).

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



February 16th, 2025
Deuteronomy 14:22-29

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



“Stewardship Month #3: Our Faith in God’s Ownership”

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: A man died and went to heaven. He arrived at the Pearly Gates, where St. Peter welcomed him and led him down the golden streets. As they walked, they passed by grand mansions and beautiful estates. But at the end of the road, they stopped in front of a small shack. The man asked St. Peter why he was given such a simple hut when there were so many magnificent mansions where he would be more comfortable. St. Peter replied, “I did the best with the money you sent us.”

The Gospel of Matthew says, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21, NIV). Some people understand this passage to mean that our offerings are like a savings account in heaven. Do you believe that?

How many of you have health insurance? What about life insurance? Most of us likely have some form of insurance. But what if we could have eternal life insurance? What if we could buy a ticket to heaven?

In the 15th century, the Roman Catholic Church practiced indulgences, which means “forgiveness of sins.” Originally, indulgences were granted to veterans who had participated in the Crusades as a way to comfort those suffering from trauma. However, over time, indulgences became a tool for encouraging financial contributions to the Church. Eventually, the Church began selling indulgences, claiming they could even save the souls of those who had already died. These funds were used to construct grand temple.

In 1517, Martin Luther protested against this practice, boldly stating, “We are saved through faith in Jesus Christ alone, by the grace of God.” His actions sparked the Protestant Reformation, leading to the establishment of many denominational churches, such as Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Baptist traditions. Today, we no longer believe that forgiveness can be bought with money.

Now, let’s talk about tithing. Many of us were taught that tithing means giving one-tenth of our income to the church. But I believe its meaning has been misunderstood. Before it’s too late, let’s uncover the true purpose of tithing. In today’s scripture, God commands His people to set aside a tenth of their harvest as an act of worship. Verses 22-23 say: “Set apart a tithe of all the yield of your seed that is brought in yearly from the field. In the presence of the Lord your God, in the place that He will choose as a dwelling for His name, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, your wine, and your oil, as well as the firstlings of your herd and flock, so that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always.”

Did you notice that this passage does not say to bring tithes only to the church? First, we set aside a tithe as an offering of gratitude to God, recognizing that He is our provider. The passage says that you shall eat the tithe in the presence of the Lord. What does this mean? The answer is in verses 27 and 29: “As for the Levites residing in your towns, do not neglect them, because they have no allotment or inheritance with you. The Levites, as well as the resident aliens, the orphans, and the widows in your towns, may come and eat their fill so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work that you undertake.” Tithing is about more than giving money; it is about generosity, justice, and care for others. It supports the work of God’s kingdom—feeding the hungry,

supporting ministry, and extending grace to the needy. True tithing is not just about Sunday offerings, but about how we live every day.

As a church, we do this well. We collect financial donations and food to support those in need. We contribute to missions and provide for church staff whose work is dedicated to ministry. Setting aside a tenth of what we produce is a confession of faith, made with gratitude and joy.

But here is something even more important: Tithing is not just about money. It is a declaration of God's grace, a confession of His ownership over our lives, and a commitment to faithful living. Do you think God's grace and ownership are only about money? God is the owner of our very lives. If we believe that, we should dedicate ourselves as living sacrifices, not merely give money. The Scripture Romans 12:1 says: "Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual act of worship."

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, preached in his sermon, *The Good Steward*:

"Everything you have is a gift from God, including your ideas, wisdom, understanding, imagination, money, and, of course, your body—your senses, sight, hearing, and even your loved ones. We should use everything to the glory of God. That is good stewardship. But when He requires our souls of us, we can no longer be stewards." This means tithing is not just financial. It includes our time, energy, talents, gifts, abilities, and wisdom. The Apostle Paul says: "The gifts He gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:11-12) In other words, we should dedicate ourselves to church ministry according to our gifts.

Let's make a plan to dedicate our tithe of time, energy, talent, ability, gifts, and resources to the glory of God. You can volunteer in your community, read the Bible, worship, pray, shovel snow for your neighbors, offer a helping hand, or take care of wildlife.

The first purpose of tithing is to confess that everything we have is a gift from God. The Israelites did not tithe out of obligation, but as a joyful recognition that their blessings came from the Lord. We do not tithe because God needs our resources; we tithe because we recognize that He has already provided for us. Tithing is not about paying a debt to God, but celebrating His love and faithfulness. When we give back to God, we acknowledge Him as the source of our provision and trust in His continued blessings. Our tithe is our testimony that He alone is the owner of our lives.

Let us not see tithing as an obligation, but as an opportunity to declare God's goodness, trust in His provision, and live as faithful stewards of His kingdom. I conclude with Malachi 3:10: "Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house. Put Me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing."

Thanks be to God. Amen!