

***DOXOLOGY**

UMH 95

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**

With these offerings we would extend your love, O God, to those who have not experienced its healing power. May hatred be overcome and enemies turned from their evil intent. May the joy we know as we give flow out to those who benefit from our gifts. Amen.

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN** *Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore*
UMH 344 (vs. 1 & 2)

***BENEDICTION** **Rev. 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)

**Stewardship Month
7th 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 23rd, 2025
Stewardship Month
7th 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

Come near to the One in whom we can trust;
God will give us the desires of our hearts.

**God has provided for us day by day
and preserves us in the midst of life’s calamities.**

Dwell together in the security God offers
and fret not about the world’s standards.

**We would be still before the majesty of God
and wait patiently for the Spirit’s leading.**

Open yourselves, that God may equip you to love,
to forgive, and to serve.

**We seek to respond to the God who loves us
by loving as we wish to be loved. Amen.**

***DEDICATING HYMN** *I Stand Amazed in the Presence*
UMH 371 (vs. 1 & 5)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Loving God, lead us to take such delight in you that our thoughts
and desires become attuned to your will. Teach us the ways of
trust and commitment, so we can face with confidence all times of
trouble and distress. Reveal to us here your purposes and design,
so often hidden from us in our preoccupation with immediate

concerns. Open us to care as you have cared for us. Through
Christ. Amen!

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Matthew 25:31-40

(NRSV, p. 29 in the NT, and p.826 in the Living Bible)

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

Thanks be to God. Amen!

SERMON *“Jesus’ Mission and Our Mission”* Rev. Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Heavenly Father, thank You for calling us to be followers of Christ.
We are humbled that the name *Christian* is not just a title, but a
calling—to live, love, and serve like Jesus. Lord, help us to be more
than believers—make us true disciples. May our faith be seen in our
actions, our words be filled with grace, and our hearts reflect Your
love. Forgive us when we fall short, when we claim Your name but fail
to live by it. Strengthen us to love our neighbors, to serve the least
among us, and to shine Your light in a world that desperately needs
You. May our lives be a testimony so that when others see us, they
don’t just see us—but they see You. 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**

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	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 Grimes

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

Hannah Smestad	2/23
Dauntay Erickson	2/27

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.), 7th Sunday after the Epiphany.
God bless you all!

Worship Service Schedule

2/23:	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
2/25:	12:00 pm	Pastor Jenny attends GWWT Meeting at Library
2/26:	3:00 pm	Harmony Choir Executive Director Meeting via Zoom
	5:30- 7:30 pm	Youth Activity (G)
2/27:	11:00 am	Ministry TF Team Meeting of SCF (SCF)
	6:30-8:30 pm	Calm Psalms Group (G)
3/2	12:15 pm	AD Council Meeting (SCF)

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) Please see the signup sheet!
- 3/5: Ash Wednesday, Lenten Bible Study Kick-Off *(See signup sheets)*
- 3/9: 1st Sunday in Lent
- 3/25: SPRC Meeting via Zoom

Next Sunday (March 2nd):

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
Communion	Barbara Loomis

Atlas

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

St. Croix Falls

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

Breakthrough Prayers:

Please pray for: Shea Wojtowicz (surgery-2/18), Peter and Kathy Gionis (safe trip), Jim and Karen Sciacca (safe trip), Walden Erickson (healing), Indie and Lila Tooze (healing), Lynn Hanson (healing), Bakey Hanson's kids, those struggling with illness and/or addiction, and undocumented immigrants.



Praise the Lord in gratitude and joy: Don Anderson (thankful for all the care and many prayers), Judy Lien (thankful for many helping hands and prayers).

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



February 23th, 2025
Matthew 25: 31-40

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



“Jesus’ Mission and Our Mission” (Stewardship Month # 4)

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: A pastor asked a farmer, “If you had 100 cows, would you give 50 to the Lord?” The farmer said, “Of course!” The pastor continued, “If you had 10 cows, would you give 5 to the Lord?” The farmer nodded, “Absolutely!” Then the pastor said, “If you had 2 cows, would you give 1 to the Lord?” The farmer frowned and said, “Now, hold on a second, Pastor—you know I actually have only two cows!”

The Letter of James 2:19 says, “You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.” This verse teaches us that faith without action is dead. Simply believing in God is not enough—even demons acknowledge His existence. True faith is demonstrated through love and action.

Do you know when the word “Christian” was first used and why?

Acts 11:26 says, “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” The word *Christian* means “a follower of Christ.” Interestingly, the believers in the Antioch church did not give themselves this name—outsiders did. People observed how they lived, noticed their love, faith, and service, and realized they were different. So, they called them *Christians*.

Today, many call themselves Christians, but a true Christian doesn’t just believe in Jesus—they live like Jesus. It’s not about church attendance, but it’s about Christlike action. It’s not just about knowing the Bible, but it’s about loving people. Faith without action is meaningless, just as saying you love someone, but never caring for them is empty. Even demons believe in God (James 2:19), but they don’t obey Him. To be a Christian means: Loving like Jesus – even when it’s hard. Serving like Jesus – even when no one sees. Forgiving like Jesus – even when it’s undeserved. The world is still watching us today. Would people recognize us as Christians by the way we live?

Today, as we conclude our stewardship sermon series, I want to talk about “Jesus’ mission and our mission.” If we are Christians—followers of Christ Jesus—we must understand both His mission and our own. Last Sunday, we reflected on how God’s stewardship begins with our confession that God is the owner of our very lives. This includes our abilities, time, ideas, skills, money, family, friends, loved ones and all of creation. God entrusted these gifts to us to manage well.

Genesis 1:27-28 (TLB) tells us: “So God made man like his Maker. Like God did God make man; Man and maid did He make them. And God blessed them and told them, ‘Multiply and fill the earth and subdue it; you are masters of the fish and birds and all the animals.’” Did you catch that? God made human beings in His image and entrusted them with authority over creation. However, humanity failed to keep God’s commandments and sinned by eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Since then, all people have sinned, and creation itself has suffered due to human greed and overuse.

Because of this, God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to save not only humanity, but all of creation. As John 3:16 reminds us: “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever

believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Jesus obeyed God completely, even to the point of dying on the cross. Philippians 2:6-7 says:

“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”

Jesus’ mission was one of healing, caring, reconciliation, and service. Now, it is our turn.

If Jesus came to serve and not to be served, then He calls us to do the same. As Christians, our mission is to care for everything God has entrusted to us—our abilities, time, ideas, skills, resources, relationships, and even creation itself—for the glory of God, until Christ returns. But what does this actually look like?

Today’s scripture gives us a powerful example. Jesus, the Son of Man (NRSV), the Messiah (TLB), will return in glory with His angels to judge all nations, separating them like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. Are you confident that you will be on the right side of the Lord, among the sheep?

Jesus tells us: “Then the King will say to those at His right hand, ‘Come, you that my Father blesses, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you welcomed Me; I was naked, and you gave Me clothing; I was sick, and you took care of Me; I was in prison, and you visited Me’” (Matthew 25:34-36). The righteous will ask: “Lord, when did we see You hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, or in prison and care for You?” And the King will answer: “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of My family, you did it to Me.”

In this passage, Jesus defines true discipleship, not by what we say or believe, but by how we live. He identifies His followers by their acts of compassion—feeding the hungry, welcoming strangers, clothing the needy, caring for the sick, and visiting prisoners. Jesus’ mission was to bring the Kingdom of God to earth, not just in words, but in action. He healed, fed, welcomed, and suffered alongside the broken. His mission wasn’t about power or prestige—it was about stewarding God’s love in a way that transforms lives.

If Jesus is our Shepherd, then we are called to be under-shepherds—caretakers of His mission. Stewardship isn’t just about giving money—it’s about living as disciples. It means: Our time is not just ours—it’s an opportunity to serve. Our resources are not just ours—they are meant to bless others. Our church is not just ours—it is a lighthouse for the lost.

Jesus says something profound: “Whatever you did for the least of these, you did for Me.”

Imagine how differently we would live if we truly saw Jesus in the faces of the hungry, the homeless, and the forgotten. When we welcome the stranger, we welcome Christ. When we share what we have, we honor Christ. When we advocate for justice, we walk with Christ. Stewardship is not a duty—it’s a privilege. It’s an invitation to join Jesus in His mission and see His face in places we never expected.

So, what does it mean to be a steward of Christ’s mission? Living generously with our time, talents, and treasures. Serving faithfully by loving the least and the lost. Following boldly as we see Christ in those in need. The Good Shepherd calls us to not just believe, but to act.

May we be found among the sheep—not because we sought our own gain, but because we loved as He loved. Let’s go forth as stewards of Jesus’ mission. Thanks be to God. Amen.