

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**

How grateful we are, O God, that you have claimed us and provided for us, even when we have been unfaithful. In thanksgiving for your compassion, and in recognition of needs among your children that you call us to address, we bring our best in these offerings. Make us useful in your service. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN** *Marching to Zion* UMH 733 (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)

**Membership Caring Month
4th Sunday in Lent/UMCOR Sunday**



**Grantsburg-Central
Since 1897**



**Atlas
Since 1887**



**St. Croix Falls
Since 1859**

SUNDAY SERVICES:

**9:00 AM at Grantsburg with Online Zoom Service
(9:10 AM, Children's Time)
10:00 AM at Atlas (10:15 AM, Sunday School)
11:15 AM at St. Croix Falls**

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Parish Secretary Colleen Norenberg: centralumc2016@gmail.com
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www.upperstcroixparish.org
<https://www.facebook.com/UpperStCroixParishUMC>

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
March 30th, 2025
Membership Caring Month
4th Sunday in Lent/ UMCOR 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

***CALL TO WORSHIP** Responsive

Bless God at all times;
may praise of God be always in your mouth.

**Our souls make their boast in God;
the afflicted hear and are glad.**

O magnify our God with me,
and let us exalt God’s name together.

**We sought our God, who answered us
and delivered us from all our fears.**

Look to God and be radiant,
so your faces shall never be ashamed.

O taste and see that God is good!

Happy is the one who takes refuge in God. Amen.

***DEDICATING HYMN** *I Know Whom I Have Believed*
UMH 714 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

In poverty and in plenty we look to you, O God, the source of all good things. You have accepted us even when we cannot accept ourselves and have loved us when we are most unlovable. Help us in this hour to let go of all that separates us from you. Amen!

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON**

Romans 12:9-21

(NRSV, p. 162 in the NT, and p.975 in the Living Bible)

This is the word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God. Amen!

SERMON

“Marks of the True Christians”
(Membership Caring Month #5)

Rev. Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Gracious God, thank You for calling us to be a family of faith, bound together in love. Help us to honor one another, to rejoice with those who rejoice, and to weep with those who weep. Fill our hearts with Your peace, that we may seek reconciliation and extend kindness, even to those who challenge us. Teach us to overcome evil with good, reflecting Christ’s love in all we do. May our church be a place of genuine care, where every member feels valued and embraced. 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

MARCH 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 garden seeds for Jackson Area Ministries Gardening Project for our March Mission. Thank you for your support! Here are the suggested seed donations: Beans (pole and bush), beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, corn, cucumbers, lettuce, pumpkins, radishes, spinach, squash, turnips, watermelon.</p>  <p>February Mission Update: \$360 was raised for Heifer International last month. Heifer International is doing a 3x match right now, so our donation will have 3 times the impact. Details will be available in the April newsletter.</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!</p>  <p>Supporting the Salvation Army's "Happy Kids Back-Pack Program"</p>	<p>We will be collecting financial donations to support UMCOR US Disaster Response and Recovery. The fund allows UMCOR to respond quickly to meet the emergency needs in the United States.</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 Harbor House as they renovate their shelter.</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	Kayleen Branstad
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	Karen Sciacca
Usher(s)	Kathy Gionis
Counter	Peter Gionis
Bell Ringer	Jim Andrews
Flowers	Karen Sciacca
Fellowship	Admin Members

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAY'S

Emma Rahkola
3/31



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: Membership Caring Month (March), 4th Sunday in Lent/ UMCOR Sunday.
Let's love one another in action!

Worship Service Schedule

3/30:	9:00 am	Grantsburg with Zoom (9:10 am, Children's Time)
	10:00 am	Atlas (10:15 am, Sunday School)
	11:15 am	St. Croix Falls
3/31:	10:30 -1:30 pm	Harmony Choir Rehearsal at Rice Lake UMC
4/2:	5:30 -6:30pm	Go Fish (G)
4/3	5:00-5:40 pm	Lenten Soup Supper (SCF)
	5:40 -7:30pm	Lenten Bible Study (SCF)
4/6	2:00pm	Pastor Jenny Leads Worship at C.C.C.

Upcoming Events & News

***March: Membership Caring Month** (Take care of one another.)

***Lenten Bible Study every Thursday at St. Croix Falls**

5:00 pm (Soup Supper) & 5:40 pm (Lenten Study)
(Questions? Contact Pastor Jenny)

- 4/12: Spring Craft & Bake Sale at Atlas
- 4/13: Passion/Palm Sunday
- 4/17: Maundy Thursday Service, at 4pm at SCF
- 4/18: Good Friday Service, at 5:30pm at Grantsburg
- 4/20: Easter Sunday (Sharing of Life-plants & seeds)
- 4/26: Spring Sale and Lunch at Grantsburg-Central



Next Sunday (April 6th):

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	Colleen Adams-Schween
Usher	Sue Olson
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Cheryl Olson
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 Sciacca



Breakthrough Prayers:

Please pray for: Georgeanne Koons (surgery and healing), Ken Olson (at Pioneer Home), Ron Aldorfer (healing), Joy (healing & continuing care), Lynn Hanson (healing), Nancy Tober (surgery & healing), Shea Wojtowicz (healing), Sanci and Rifle Harshman (healing), Jameson Koser (healing), Jim Loomis (strength), those struggling with illness and/or addiction, undocumented immigrants and for the U.S.A and the world.



Praise the Lord in gratitude and joy: Megan Baglio (birth of a baby girl), Peter & Kathy Gionis (family birthday party)

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

March 30th, 2025
Romans 12:9-21

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



“Marks of the True Christians”
(Membership Caring Month #5)

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: “If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale, and gave all my money to the church, would I get into heaven?” a teacher asked the children in her Sunday School class. “No!” the children all answered. “If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would I get into heaven?” Again, the answer was, “No!” “Well,” she continued, “then how can I get to heaven?” A five-year-old boy shouted, “You gotta be dead!”

At the beginning of my faith journey, I misunderstood the idea that as long as we believed in Jesus, we would be saved and gain eternal life, regardless of how we lived. After all, we are taught that salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ, not by our good works. Because of this, I struggled when I saw many Christians who faithfully attended church services and activities yet still displayed self-centeredness and ignored non-Christians—even other church members. In such cases, I wonder what it truly means to be a Christian and how it differs from being a non-Christian.

Today, as we conclude Membership Caring Month, I want to reflect on “The Marks of True Christians.” What sets Christians apart from non-Christians? Yes, above all, our eternal destiny is different—as Matthew 25 reminds us, we will either go to heaven or hell. But that is not all. Christians should live differently because we are saved through Jesus’ death and sacrifice. If we believe that salvation is only about faith without transformation, we are ignoring the meaning of Jesus’ death.

Imagine a church where every member genuinely loves one another, where kindness overcomes division, and where people serve with joy and sincerity. This is the vision the Apostle Paul presents in Romans 12:9-21—a picture of what it means to be a true Christian. During Membership Caring Month, we reflect on what it truly means to be a member of Christ’s body. Being a part of the church is more than just attending service- it’s about living out our faith through love, service, and humility.

Today, we’ll explore three marks of true Christians found in this passage and how they call us to care for one another as members of Christ’s family. First, a true Christian starts with genuine love and devotion. Verse 9 says, “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.” The Apostle Paul begins with love, the foundation of the Christian life. But not just any love—it must be sincere, not fake or self-serving. Caring for church members starts with authenticity.

How do we show sincere love? Verses 10-13 say: “Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.” This passage beautifully reflects the heart of Christian love and service, making it a perfect foundation for Membership Caring Month!

Do we honor and value one another, treating fellow believers as family? Caring membership isn’t passive—it’s active! According to Scripture, a true Christian serves with passion, rejoices in hope, remains patient in suffering, perseveres in prayer for others, contributes to the needs of the church family, and extends

hospitality. True care goes beyond Sunday; it means opening our homes, hearts, and hands. This week, how can you genuinely love and serve someone in the church and community?

I appreciate the loving and caring spirit of our church, especially in maintaining a discretionary fund to support those in need and in contributing to community organizations through monthly mission projects. When we considered a discretionary budget to assist those in need, we grappled with concerns such as whether people might go from church to church seeking help or if the funds could be misused to sustain harmful habits, such as alcohol or drug addiction. However, our duty is not to judge but to extend help to those in need.

When we have been able to assist people through the discretionary fund, I have often heard them say that ours was the only church that responded to their request. The Gospel of John says, “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you love one another” (John 13:34-35). Remember, Jesus loved us first—even when we were still sinners. Let us extend that love through hospitality, monthly mission projects, and the discretionary fund. This is the very reason the church exists.

Secondly, let’s open our hearts and minds to grace in relationships. Verse 14 says, “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.” Being part of a church family means we will not always agree. People will sometimes disappoint us. But the Apostle Paul reminds us that true Christians respond to conflict with grace. We rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. We put aside pride and embrace unity, seeking peace. In family and church ministry, conflicts may arise because we live together with different personalities, gifts, and talents. However, conflict is not the end of the world—it can be a growing point, a moment that requires the grace of God. Remember, we are saved by Jesus’ priceless love and the grace of God.

I truly appreciate that you have accepted me as your pastor, even though I am different from you, your culture, and still have more weaknesses than strengths. Let’s open our hearts and minds with empathy. Look around—is there someone in the church with whom you need to seek reconciliation? This week, take a step toward healing relationships through a conversation, an apology, or an act of kindness.

Lastly, let’s overcome evil with good. Verse 21 says, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” The Apostle Paul ends with a radical challenge— “Love even your enemies.” Instead of retaliation, we respond with kindness, reflecting the love of Christ.

If we only love those who love us, how are we any different from those who don’t know Jesus’ love? Jesus showed His love even to those who hated Him, betrayed Him, and ignored Him. Likewise, we are called to love those who oppose us, hurt us, and disappoint us. We trust in God’s justice rather than seeking revenge. We show kindness to our enemies—through a meal, a supportive word, or a prayer—because these acts can break down walls. We do not let bitterness take root; instead, we allow God’s love to shape our responses. Who in your life needs an unexpected act of kindness? How can you reflect Christ’s love in difficult relationships?

Today’s scripture, Romans 12:9-21, calls us to live as true Christians by demonstrating: Genuine love and devotion, grace in relationships, and radical kindness and forgiveness. As we conclude Membership Caring Month, let’s commit to being a church that truly cares—not just in words, but in actions. May our love be sincere, our service joyful, and our relationships filled with grace! Thanks be to God. Amen!