

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Pastor Jenny Lee

In steadfast love God is merciful and gracious, sparing us from the punishment we deserve and lifting us above the consequences of our sin. God washes away all the stains of our past to create in us clean hearts and a right spirit. We are reconciled to God! Let us rejoice in our salvation! **Amen.**

THANKSGIVING OVER ASHES Unison

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and repentance, so that we may remember that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Please come to the front as directed, and receive the ashes on your forehead or back of your hand.

Pastor: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Receiver: Amen, I believe it.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*DOXOLOGY

UMH 95

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison

For all the riches you bestow, for all the good you supply, for the guidance you offer day by day, we give thanks, gracious God. All that we give we owe to you, and life itself is a gift from your hand. We dedicate our lives with our offerings, to your honor and glory. **Amen.**

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN *Here I Am, Lord* UMH 593 (vs. 1 & 2)

*BENEDICTION Rev. Jenny Lee

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

Worship resource "Refreshing Rains of the Living Word" by Lavon Bayler

NO. 2025-10
March 9th, 2025

Upper St. Croix Parish United Methodist Church

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

Membership Caring Month 1st Sunday in Lent



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
March 9th, 2025
Membership Caring Month
1st Sunday in Lent

*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**

God is our refuge and habitation,
present in times of trouble and responsive when we call.

**God has given us an inheritance
and led us from times and places of oppression.**

The Most High delivers those who love God
and protects those who know God’s name.

**God’s word is on our lips and in our hearts
as we come together for worship and renewal.**

You shall worship the Sovereign One, your God,
and God only shall you serve.

**We know we do not live by bread alone,
so we open ourselves to the Spirit’s leading. Amen.**

***DEDICATING HYMN** *God is Here* **UMH 660 (vs. 1 & 2)**

OPENING PRAYER **Unison**

Gracious God, source of life and all the gifts that add meaning to our days, we rejoice in your goodness and give thanks for your saving activity among us. You have heard our cries and provided the help we need. You guide our decision-making when we seek your aid. Make us conscious of your presence in this time and place, that we may be for one another channels of your righteousness and deliverance. Amen!

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON**

Ephesians 4:1-15

(NRSV, p. 193-194 in the NT, and p.1022 in the Living Bible)

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

SERMON

“The Unity of the Body of Christ”
(Membership Caring Month #2)

Rev. Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER **Unison**

Lord Jesus, thank You for the unity we have in You. Help us to walk in humility, gentleness, and love toward one another. May we care for each other deeply, using the gifts You have given us to build up Your body. As we reflect on our membership, may we grow in maturity and be a witness of Your love to the world. In Your precious 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!

Ash Service (A & SCF)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION **Unison**

Merciful God, we cannot escape from our transgressions. We have sinned against you and have done what is evil in your sight. We have tried to cover up our wrongdoing and have exaggerated our role in accomplishing good things. We seek to lay up treasures on earth, while neglecting permanent values and selfless commitment to causes greater than ourselves. Forgive us, we pray, and set us on a new course. Amen.

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> 
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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 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><i>The Sailor Hat offering will go to support the Harbor House as they renovate their shelter.</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
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	Sue Olson
Usher	Colleen Adams-Schween
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Cheryl Olson

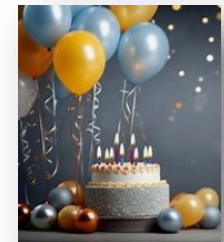
St. Croix Falls

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



THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAY'S & ANNIVERSARIES

Colleen Adams-Schween	3/10
Dorothy Miller	3/11
Wren Rae Grimes	3/12
Peter & Kayleen Branstad	3/14



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), 1st Sunday in Lent.
Daylight Saving Time starts!
God bless you all!

Worship Service Schedule

3/9:	9:00 am	Grantsburg with Zoom (9:15 am, Sunday School)
	10:00 am	Atlas - Ash Service (10:15 am, Sunday School)
	11:15 am	St. Croix Falls - Ash Service
3/11:	1:30 pm	Korean Caucus Zoom Mtg with Rev. Barb Certa-Werner
	3:30 pm	Provisional Elder Mentoring Meeting via Zoom
3/12:	1:00 pm	UMW Meeting (G)
	3:00-5:00 pm	Lenten Bible Study (G)
	5:30-7:30 pm	Youth Activity (G)
3/13	8:00 am-12:00 pm	New Ministry Strategy Board Meeting in Milwaukee
	5:00 pm	Lenten Soup Supper (SCF)
	5:40 pm	Lenten Bible Study (SCF)

Upcoming Events & News

***March: Membership Caring Month**

(Take care of one another.)

***Lenten Bible Study every Wednesday at Central; every Thursday at St. Croix Falls**

(Questions? Contact Pastor Jenny)

3/25: SPRC Meeting via Zoom; 3/29: VBS Staff Training



Next Sunday (March 16th):

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	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

Breakthrough Prayers:

Please pray for: Kay Lamphere (in ICU), Calvin Mcuay (surgery on 3/5), Sanci and Rifle Harshman (healing), Ron Aldorfer (strength), Chrystal Murrie (recovery), Megan Baglio (expectation day, 3/8), Mary Kuyawa (critical illness), Jim Loomis (strength), Lynn Hanson (healing), Isaiah and Megan Hanson (protection for baby), A. J. Hanson (God's peace and guidance), 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: Sheryl Simonsen (new family in Atlas), Nikko Rico (welcome back)

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



March 9th, 2025

Ephesians 4:1-15

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



“The Unity in the Body of Christ”

(Membership Caring Month #2)

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: Sam shows up at a revival meeting, seeking help. “I need you to pray for my hearing,” he tells the preacher. The preacher puts his fingers on Sam’s ears and prays and prays. When he’s done, he asks, “How’s your hearing now?” “I don’t know,” says Sam. “I don’t go to court till next Tuesday.”

Sometimes we miscommunicate because of cultural differences, paradoxical idioms, different accents, or different meanings of words we use—just like the funny story. I know some of you still have difficulties understanding my accent, but I deeply appreciate your patience, love, and care for me in Jesus Christ.

As we observe March as Membership Caring Month, we focus on nurturing relationships within our church family and reminding ourselves of the unity we share in Christ.

Ephesians 4:1-15 is a powerful passage that calls us to walk in unity, humility, and love. As the body of Christ, we are all interconnected, and it is only in Him that we find true unity. Let’s dive into these verses and reflect on what it means to be one in Christ.

Ephesians 4:1-3 says: “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to live a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

The Apostle Paul begins with a call to live in a manner worthy of the calling we have received. We are called to humility, gentleness, patience, and love. These virtues aren’t just good suggestions—they are the foundation for unity. When we walk in humility, we acknowledge that we are not better than one another. When we walk in gentleness, we recognize the fragility of our relationships and seek to nurture them. Patience and love allow us to endure the challenges that come with living in community.

In Membership Caring Month, this is a timely reminder for us. Our church is not just a collection of individuals but a family. And just like in any family, we must care for one another, forgive one another, and seek to maintain the bond of peace. This month invites us to reach out, care for, and strengthen our bonds as members of the same body of Christ.

Some people believe that Christians are always blessed with abundance, well-being and prosperity, and that we should be at peace and harmony with everyone. Yes, we try to do so, and pray for it. But, as Christians, we may face more challenges than non-Christians. To tell you the truth, since I started my faith journey, I have faced many challenges in my life. After graduating from seminary, I planted a new church in 1996. My father passed away the day I started my ministry at the new church, and four years later, my mother passed away in 2000. However, the difference is that I was not alone, even as I walked through dark valleys. Of course, God was always with me, and my family in Jesus Christ was there too. The church family is like the visible presence of God's angels and grace.

Ephesians 4:4-6 says: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”

The Apostle Paul emphasizes that our unity is not built on personal preferences or opinions but on the shared foundation of one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God. This is the bedrock of our unity in Christ. We are united not because we are all the same, but because of who we share in common—Jesus Christ.

As we reflect on Membership Caring Month, let us remember that every person sitting beside us in the pew is part of the same body, the same family. We share the same hope in Christ, the same Lord who saved us, the same baptism that marked us as children of God, and the same Father who unites us. This truth compels us to care for each other, as we are all one in Christ.

Ephesians 4:7-12 tells us: “But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift. 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.”

In our unity, God has gifted each of us uniquely for the building up of the body of Christ. These gifts—whether they are roles like apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers, or gifts of service, hospitality, or encouragement—are meant to equip us for ministry and strengthen the church.

As members of the body, we are not passive recipients of God’s grace; we are active participants in God’s mission. Each one of us has a role to play in building up the church and contributing to the unity of the body. Membership Caring Month is an invitation to reflect on how we can use our gifts to care for one another and contribute to the health and growth of the body of Christ.

Think of yourself. What gift does God give you? Someone may say, “Well, I think I don’t have any gift or talent.” I thought the same. I thought I didn’t receive any gift or talent from God, and I saw many around me with great gifts and talents. One day, a pastor’s sermon came to me: “The gift and talent given from God may be small, like just one talent. If you pick up trash on the street and put it in the garbage can while others never care for it, you are gifted to care for nature and talented to clean the places of God. And if you find it and develop your talent, it will grow just like the one with five talents or ten talents.” After that, my father said, “I would be a custodian at church.” A custodian is a greatly gifted and blessed person to take care of God’s house.

You may know that since I came to Wisconsin, I started gardening, and people told me, “You have a green thumb.” I also learned knitting from the UMW group in 2021, and now whenever I make a prayer shawl, people tell me, “You are so talented.” We all are given gifts and talents from God, but some may not be recognized or developed yet. Let’s find what we have been given from God, and develop and grow into Christlikeness.

Our goal as members of the body is maturity in Christ. Unity in the body is not just about agreeing on everything or avoiding conflict; it is about growing together into the fullness of Christ. As we mature in faith, we begin to look more like Jesus—full of grace, truth, and love.

Maturity also means speaking the truth in love. This is vital for maintaining unity. We will have disagreements and challenges in community, but how we handle them is crucial. We speak the truth, but always with love, because we are all part of the same body. Our growth together as a church should reflect Christ’s love and character.

This unity is built on our common foundation in Him—one Lord, one faith, one baptism. We are called to live in humility, gentleness, patience, and love, caring for one another as members of the same body. Let us use the gifts God has given us to build up the body of Christ, speaking the truth in love, and growing together into the fullness of Christ.

May our church be a reflection of the unity we have in Jesus, and may we, as His body, grow in love and service to one another. Thanks be to God. Amen!