

# INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

NO. 2025-17  
April 27th, 2025

## \*DOXOLOGY

UMH 95

## \*PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison

May the world be filled with the teaching of Jesus, O God, as we seek through these gifts to obey you and extend your love. Grant that we may improve rather than destroy the good earth you have given us to possess. Amen!

**We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another**

## \*CLOSING HYMN

*He Lives*

UMH 310 (vs. 1 & 3)

## \*BENEDICTION Responsive

You are children of God; live your heritage,  
Take refuge in God; serve with fear and trembling.

**We are witness to all God has done in Christ,  
and we intend to obey God rather than human beings.**

As God sent Jesus into world,  
so now Jesus sends you to witness and forgive.

**The Spirit is opening our eyes to the truth  
and teaching us to be faithful, believing people.**

Grace to you and peace from the One who is  
and who was and who is to come.

**God is the Alpha and the Omega, the Almighty One.**

**We trust God in the future as we have in the past. Amen!**

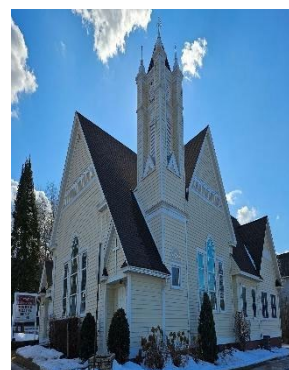
## \*POSTLUDE

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)***

**Church Love Month  
2nd Sunday of Easter**



**Grantsburg-Central**  
Since 1897



**Atlas**  
Since 1887



**St. Croix Falls**  
Since 1859

## SUNDAY SERVICES:

**9:00 AM at Grantsburg**

**(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

Rev. Jenny Lee: [jennlee1732@gmail.com](mailto:jennlee1732@gmail.com)

Youth Director Shayna Schmid: [snsnyder@gmail.com](mailto:snsnyder@gmail.com)

Parish Secretary Colleen Norenberg: [centralumc2016@gmail.com](mailto:centralumc2016@gmail.com)

Parish Office: 715-463-2624 St. Croix Falls Office: 715-483-9494

[www.upperstcroixparish.org](http://www.upperstcroixparish.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/UpperStCroixParishUMC>

**Upper St. Croix Parish**  
**Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls**  
**April 27th, 2025**  
**Church Love Month**  
**2nd Sunday of Easter**

---

\*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

This is the day the Lord has made;  
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

**We rejoice in this day, for God is sovereign over all.**

**His plan will stand, and His joy is our strength.**

The Lord is my strength and my song;  
He has become my salvation.

**God saves us and builds us on Christ, the firm foundation.**

**This is the Lord’s doing—it is marvelous in our eyes!**

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Happy are all who take refuge in Him.

**We trust in the steadfast love of the Lord.**

**Hosanna! Save us, O Lord—we praise Your holy name!**

**Amen.**

**\*DEDICATING HYMN** *Christ Is Risen* UMH 310 (vs. 1 & 3)

**OPENING PRAYER** Unison

Risen Lord, we gather in the light of Your resurrection, still echoing the joy of Easter morning. As You appeared among the disciples bringing peace, appear now in our midst and fill our hearts with hope. Breathe on us Your Holy Spirit, that we may believe without seeing and trust without fear. Renew our faith, strengthen our witness, and open our eyes to Your presence among us. Let this time of worship be

a celebration of life, grace, and victory over death. We offer ourselves to You with thanksgiving and praise. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

**CHILDREN’S TIME**

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

***Proclamation of God’s Word***

**\*THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON** Psalms 118:14-29 (G)  
(NRSV, p. 565-566 in the OT)

**\*THE GOSPEL LESSON** John 20:19-31 (A & SCF)  
(NRSV, p. 115 in the NT, and p.922 in the Living Bible)

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

Thanks be to God. Amen!

**SERMON** *“Rejoice and Be Glad ”* Barbara Loomis (G)

*“Empathy”* Kathy Gionis (A & SCF)

***We Respond to God’s Word***

**RESPONDING PRAYER** Unison

Risen Christ, You are our strength and our salvation—our Cornerstone and our peace. Like Thomas, we long to see and believe, yet You meet us with mercy even in our doubt. Your wounds speak life, and Your breath brings us the Spirit of courage and faith. This is the day You have made, and we rejoice in it! Open our eyes to Your presence, and send us out with boldness to declare, “My Lord and my God!” May our lives proclaim Your steadfast love that endures forever. In the name of the Risen One, 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**

## APRIL CHURCH MISSIONS

### ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Ashleigh Olson

#### INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:

Atlas collects and recycles ink jet cartridges and cell phones year-round.



#### LOAVES & FISHES NEEDS OUR ONGOING SUPPORT

Requested items:  
eggs, milk,  
mayonnaise, coffee,  
tea, peanut butter,  
crackers, cookies.  
Personal  
Products for men &  
women.

We will be collecting  
supplies for the  
church in April.  
Thank you for your  
support!



Suggested/Needed Items:  
-Styrofoam coffee cups 8 1/2oz (no large ones)  
-Plastic drink cups 9oz  
-Small luncheon paper plates  
-Gallon plastic bags with twist ties  
-Furnace filters 20x16 (lasting 3 months or longer)

### GRANTSBURG

Mission committee chair: Deb Hammer

#### BE A "BACK-PACK BACKER"!

REMEMBER ...  
Every Sunday  
Is MAC 'N CHEESE  
SUNDAY!  
Supporting the Salvation  
Army's "Happy Kids Back-Pack  
Program"



**APRIL SHOWERS**  
We will be collecting  
supplies for the  
church in April.

Supply Needs: Please  
check the Mission Board and the April  
newsletter for a detailed list of items  
needed. Thank you for your ongoing  
support of our monthly missions.



### ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh

#### Food Shelf

(Communion  
Sunday)



#### Sailor Hat Offering:

The Sailor Hat offering will go  
to support the local  
community with  
SCF Police  
vouchers for  
homeless lodging.



Thank you for your support!

## TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers All God's People / Rev. Jenny Lee

### Central -Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Preach	Barbara Loomis
Scripture Reading	Toni Koons
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Counter	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>

Heartfelt  
**THANKS**  
TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

### Atlas

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Preach	Kathy Gionis
Liturgist	Sue Olson
Usher	Cheryl Olson
Cleaning	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Sunday School	Colleen Adams-Schween

### St. Croix Falls

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

## THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS

Rekha Roelfs	5/1
LuAnne Martell	5/3



## PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) **Online Zoom service is not available on April 27 and May 4<sup>th</sup>.**
- 2) Our Sunday Sermons are on the website at [upperstcroixparish.org](http://upperstcroixparish.org) under Sermons!
- 3) **Sunday's videos are not available April 27 and May 4<sup>th</sup>.**
- 4) We will also send you a weekly bulletin and written sermon through post mail and email with the weekly E-News. If you have any questions regarding the mailing weekly materials, please contact our parish secretary, Colleen Norenberg.

## This Week's Calendar:

Today: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter. Peace Be with You!

## Worship Service Schedule

4/27:	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
4/22-5/5:		Pastor Jenny on Vacation
4/30:	5:00 -6:00 pm	Go Fish for K-Up (G)
5/2-5/4		Youth Retreat at Wood Lake Camp

**Breakthrough Prayers:** Please pray for: Marina Peacock (health), Kenny Olson (strength), Jacqueline (Granddaughter of Wendell & Maxine), Ron Aldorfer (healing & strength), Lynn Hanson (healing), Sanci and Rifle Harshman (daughter and grandson of Sue Olson), Jim Loomis (healing), Ted (Jeff's Dad), Sue (a friend of Kathy Gionis), those struggling with illness and/or addiction, especially children, undocumented immigrants, for the U.S.A, for Myanmar (earthquake) and the world (God's peace).



**Praise the Lord in gratitude and joy:** John Little (New member -Central-Grantsburg), Shea Wojtowicz (healing), Rifle Harshman (God works), New born baby-Giada (a daughter of Megan and Giacomo Baglio)

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

## Next Sunday (May 4th):

### Central -Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Preach	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Toni Koons
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Counter	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>



### Atlas

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Preach	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Sue Olson
Usher	Colleen Adams-Schween
Cleaning	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Sunday School	Josie Grimes

### St. Croix Falls

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

## Upcoming Events & News

**\*April: Church Love Month**



4/22-5/5: Pastor Jenny's Vacation

4/27: Pulpit Supplies: Barbara Loomis (G); Kathy Gionis (A & SCF)

5/4: Pulpit Supplies: Sharon Asp (All three churches)

5/5-5/6: Provisional Elder Workshop at Pine Lake Camp

5/11: Communion/Mother's Day

## MUSINGS ON EMPATHY

Empathy had been on my mind for the past month or two, ever since I heard some commentators discussing Elon Musk's view on empathy when he reportedly stated in an interview that, "The fundamental weakness of Western Civilization is empathy. The empathy exploit." This is not the first time that Musk had expressed this view, but it was the first time I had ever heard such an outrageous statement. He has expressed this view before, that empathy is not an asset, in other interviews and in counseling his family members.

Then, to heap more fuel on this fire, I listened to the view of a conservative clergy person that empathy is particularly harmful to Christian women, because Christian women are vulnerable to be taken advantage of and need to be protected from those who would prey upon the women being taken in by (apparently) empathetic propaganda.

This got me to thinking about empathy and that Jesus was a prime example of the empathetic soul. I started searching my memory for examples of Jesus demonstrating empathy. Jesus, as God's son, exemplifies empathy through his actions and teachings. His compassion for the marginalized, his healing of the sick, and his willingness to suffer with others demonstrate the importance of empathy in Christian life. Empathy is not just about feeling for others but is about acting on those feelings to alleviate suffering and meet the needs of others. This is demonstrated in passages like Luke 10:30-35 where the Good Samaritan shows empathy and compassion when he comes upon a man who has been attacked and robbed and left to die. He bandages the man's wounds by pouring oil and wine on them and takes the man to an inn on the Samaritan's own donkey and pays the innkeeper to look after the man. Jesus contrasts this against the Priest and Levite who passed by the man and did not offer any help.

Jesus had compassion on large crowds, often healing the sick and providing for their needs. Jesus healed the blind, restored hearing, cured those unable to walk. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and thus demonstrated his profound empathy for his friend and the grieving sisters.

Some people view Empathy as a core Christian value, shining a light on the importance of understanding and sharing in the suffering of others. Furthermore, Jesus acted upon his understanding others' needs and pain, alleviating suffering and offering healing.

Scriptural passages emphasize the importance of empathy, such as is in Romans 12:15, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep", and 1 Peter 3:8, "Be like minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate, and humble."

So, it is amazing that the passing of Pope Francis has brought forth the description of the Pope in almost every news article and tv and radio commentary as being widely known for his deep sense of empathy and compassion, which he consistently demonstrated throughout his papacy. He championed the marginalized, the poor and those facing injustice, showing a particular concern for migrants, refugees and those in need. He spoke out against inequality and oppression and advocated for the poor and needy. He spoke out against poverty and discrimination. He spoke out about his concern for the human cost of migration, advocating for compassion and understanding toward those seeking a new life. I heard a quote from the Pope this week that I wrote down: "I refuse to see any human being as a problem." This stands in stark opposition to what is going on in our country regarding our government's unwelcoming actions toward migrants, students, and even people here legally but who are not citizens.

This past week I heard a part of a broadcast that really struck home. Apparently the government is once again failing to honor our treaties with the Native American people. It was pointed out that non-native people here today are the "migrants" of yesterday. We have short memories, and faulty ones at that.

Empathy is a path to love and unity. Empathy fosters understanding and connection between people, leading to greater unity and love within the Christian community. By practicing empathy, Christians can better love and serve others, reflecting God's love and compassion for the world.

So my musings on empathy of few weeks ago came to the forefront this past week with the passing of the Pope who stands as an example for all of us to express our love for our brothers and sisters, to be empathetic and act when we are able to improve the lives of people who are less fortunate and to embrace compassion and empathy. Empathy is a core value of the Christian faith, and those that say anything differently don't know any better, and that's sad for them. But, I feel like I have it straight now in my mind and I will continue to believe that empathy is a virtue to be acquired and makes us all better people.

Amen