***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** Unison

For your gracious faithfulness, for food and generous provision for all our needs, for every kindness we have received from your hand we give thanks, loving God. Use these expressions of our gratitude to wipe away tears, comfort those who mourn, and heal those afflicted in body or soul. Grant living water to extend our mutual ministry. Amen!

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN	Grace Alone	TFWS 2162
*BENEDICTION		Rev. Jenny Lee
*POSTLUDE	Toni Koons (G)/Sh	aron Asp (A & SCF)

NO. 2025-20 May 18th, 2025



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

5th Sunday of Easter







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 (Sunday School on Summer Break) 11:15 AM at St. Croix Falls

CONTACT INFORMATION

Rev. Jenny Lee: jennlee1732@gmail.com Youth Director Shayna Schmid: snssnyder@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

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

Upper St. Croix Parish Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls May 18th, 2025 5th 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

God is near to all who call upon God, to all who approach the Almighty in truth.

We look to God, who supplies our food and fulfills the desires of those who cry for aid. God is faithful and gracious in word and deed, raising and upholding those bowed down and fallen.

We seek God's kindness and justice amid our tears and our hopes.

With open hands God welcomes us and preserves us from wickedness.

Our mouths will speak the praise of God; let all flesh bless God's holy name forever and ever. Amen.

***DEDICATING HYMN**

Grace Greater than Our Sin UMH 365 (vs. 1 & 4)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Gracious and loving God, we gather in Your presence this morning, hearts open to Your Word and Spirit. As Jesus glorified You through love and humility, teach us to love one another as He has loved us. Help us to follow even when the path is uncertain, and to trust even when we don't understand. We echo the psalmist: "Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; His greatness no one can fathom." May our worship honor You, and may our lives reflect Your steadfast grace and compassion. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray, Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God's Word

*THE GOSPEL LESSON John 13:31-38 (NRSV, p. 108 in the NT, and p.914-915 in the Living Bible)

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

SERMON *"What if There were No Grace from God?"*

Rev. Jenny Lee

We Respond to God's Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Gracious God, thank You for the gift of Your amazing grace. Like Peter, we fall short—we deny, we doubt, we fail. Yet You come to us again and again, not with condemnation, but with love and a second chance. Teach us to love as You have loved us—with humility, forgiveness, and courage. Help us to extend grace to others as we have received it from You. May our lives reflect Your mercy, and may we walk each day in the power of resurrection hope. 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

MAY 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.	For May we will be collecting items for Community Referral Agency (CRA) in Milltown that provides shelter and services for survivors of domestic violence and assault. Items should be new or in good to very good condition. Please see the newsletter or bulletin board at church for a list of suggested items. Thank you!
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"

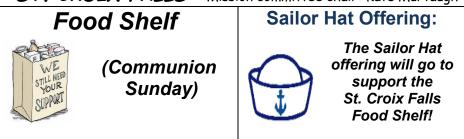


They are looking for specific supplies: Socks, dish soap, laundry soap, toilet paper, paper towels and Kleenex.

ST. CROIX FALLS Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh

In May we will be collecting financial donations and supplies for the Salvation

Army's Faith House in Siren.



Thank you for your support!

TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers All God's People **Rev. Jenny Lee**

Central -Grantsburg

Pianist Scripture Reading Acolyte(s) Fellowship Counter Cleaning	Toni Koons Toni Koons Willow Nyland Volunteer Needed Volunteer Needed Sandra Erickson	*THANK YOU
Cleaning Sunday School	Sandra Erickson Volunteer Needed	VOLUNTEERS

Atlas

Pianist Liturgist Usher Cleaning Sunday School

St. Croix Falls

Pianist Liturgist Usher(s) Counter Bell Ringer Flowers Fellowship Sharon Asp Mariah Gaffey **Cheryl Olson** Volunteer Needed Summer Break

Sharon Asp Karen Sciacca Jim Andrews Peter Gionis Kathy Gionis Kathy Gionis Admin Members

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS

Brad Rehbein 5/21 Emily & Daniel Rahkola 5/21 Sharon & Dave Huff 5/22 Wendell Hauble 5/22



PLEASE NOTE:

1)	An Online Zoom Service is scheduled for this Sunday only at 9:00 am. 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=SDZIeFNubmEvaD
	BIcytTRzVxMFIIZz09
	Phone: +1 312 626 6799,
	Meeting ID: 841 4780 8460, Passcode: 568271
2)	Our Sunday Sermons are on the website at upperstcroixparish.org under
	Sermons!
3)	Sunday's video may be uploaded on late Sundays!
	https://www.facebook.com/UpperStCroixParishUMC
4)	We will also send you a weekly bulletin and written sermon through post mail and email.
5)	Please note that we send you every week USCP Weekly E-News with Photos
	& Sunday Worship Materials through email. If you have any questions
	regarding the mailing weekly materials, please contact our parish secretary,
	Colleen Norenberg.

This Week's Calendar:

Today: 5th Sunday of Easter. God bless you!

Worship Service Schedule

5/11:	9:00 am	Grantsburg with Zoom (9:10 am, Children's Time)
	10:00 am	Atlas (Sunday School-summer break)
	11:15 am	St. Croix Falls
5/18:	12:15 pm	Ad Council (SCF)
5/21:	10:00 am	Korean Caucus Zoom Meeting
	5:30-7:30 pm	Youth Activity (G)
5/22:	10:300-1:00 pm	Pastor Jenny volunteers at Loaves and Fishes in Luck
	3:00 pm	T. F. Team Meeting (SCF)

Breakthrough Prayers:

Please pray for: Barry Norenberg (step-father's passing), Frankie (Toni's friend's daughter), Indie Tooze (health), Harley Koser (surgery, 5/23), Becky Hanson and her children (health), those struggling with illness and/or addiction, especially children, undocumented immigrants, for the U.S.A, and for South Korea (new presidential election). **Praise the Lord with Joy and Gratitude**: Julie Branstad (great son and good neighbors), Karen and Jim Sciacca (family reunion), Pastor Jenny (good vacation) and Kayleen Branstad (family reunion).

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

Next Sunday (May 25th):

Central -Grantsburg

Pianist Scripture Reading Acolyte(s) Fellowship Counter Cleaning Sunday School

Toni Koons Toni Koons Willow Nyland *Volunteer Needed* Sandra Erickson *Volunteer Needed*



Atlas

PianistShaLiturgistSueUsherCollCleaningVoluSunday SchoolSur

Sharon Asp Sue Olson Colleen Adams-Schween **Volunteer Needed** Summer Break

St. Croix Falls

Pianist	Shar
Liturgist	Kare
Usher(s)	Jim A
Counter	Pete
Bell Ringer	Kath
Flowers	Kath
Fellowship	Adm

Sharon Asp Karen Sciacca lim Andrews Peter Gionis Kathy Gionis Kathy Gionis Admin Members

Upcoming Events & News

- 5/20: 10:00 am June Newsletter & Calendar Info Due
- 5/26: Memorial Day
- 5/27: SPRC Meeting via Zoom
- 6/1: Joint Service at St. Croix Falls UMC at 10:30 AM



May 18th, 2025

John 13:31-38

Pastor Jenny Lee, Ph.D.



Upper St. Croix Parish UMC

"What if There were No Grace from God?"

I want to start with something funny I found on a website: A man dies and goes to heaven. Of course, St. Peter meets him at the Pearly Gates. St. Peter says, "Here's how it works. You need 100 points to make it into heaven. You tell me all the good things you've done, and I will give you a certain number of points for each item, depending on how good it was. When you reach 100 points, you get in."

The man says, "Okay, I was married to the same woman for 50 years and never cheated on her, even in my heart." "That's wonderful," says St. Peter, "that's worth three points!"

"What, three points?" he says. "Well, I attended church all my life and supported its ministry with my tithe and service." "Terrific!" says St. Peter. "That's certainly worth a point."

"One point?" he says, I started a soup kitchen in my city and worked in a shelter for homeless veterans." "Fantastic, that's good for two more points," he says. "Two points?" Exasperated, the man cries and says, "At this rate, the only way I'll get into heaven is by the grace of God." "Bingo, 100 points! Come on in!"

If we were counting on our good deeds on earth to get us into heaven, no one would get it by their good works. The Apostle Paul says, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-not by works so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 3:8-9). Yes, we can attend worship, give offerings, share our gifts and talents, and serve others—but ultimately, it is God's grace that saves us. Even our health—physical and spiritual—is a gift of grace.

What if we were judged solely by our abilities to determine our salvation? What if our failures defined us forever? What if love had to be earned, and was not freely given?

In John 13, we find Jesus speaking to His disciples just after Judas leaves to betray Him. Jesus, knowing the cross is near, gives them a new commandment: "Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." But how did Jesus love them? How did He love Judas—the betrayer? How did He love Peter—the denier? Jesus loved them to the end.

Let's reflect on our own lives through the life and ministry of the disciple Peter, and witness just how amazing God's grace is. Peter, often called the "best" or most prominent disciple, was born in Bethsaida (John 1:44) and was originally named Simon. A fisherman by trade, he was introduced to Jesus by his brother Andrew. Along with Andrew and the brothers James and John, Peter left everything to follow Jesus.

When Simon confessed his faith—saying, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)—Jesus gave him the name Peter (Greek: *Petros*, meaning "rock";

Aramaic: *Cephas*). Peter was the first to declare Jesus as the Christ. He was the one who stepped out of the boat to walk on water. The one who swore he would never leave Jesus' side.

And later, he became a foundational leader in the early church (Acts 2), preaching at Pentecost, where thousands were baptized. He performed healings, defended the gospel, and was the first to welcome Gentile believers (Acts 10, the story of Cornelius).

Many Christians believe Peter holds the keys to heaven (Matthew 16:18–19). He is considered the first bishop of Rome in Catholic tradition and is often viewed as the first pope. According to tradition, Peter was martyred in Rome under Emperor Nero, crucified upside down because he felt unworthy to die as Jesus did.

But let's not forget: in this very same chapter (John 13), Jesus predicts Peter's denial.

Three times, Peter would say, "I do not know Him." Without grace, that would be Peter's legacy: A man who failed his friend in His darkest hour. But because of grace, Peter's story didn't end in shame. Because of grace, the same man who denied Jesus became the one who preached at Pentecost. Because of grace, a broken fisherman became a cornerstone of the Church.

Jesus said, "As I have loved you, so you must love one another." (John 13:34). That kind of love isn't easy. We can love those who love us—but how can we love those who hate us, betray us, or deny, reject, and ignore us? Can you love them as Jesus loves us? I said, "as Jesus loves us." Do you think only Peter and Judas denied and betrayed Jesus? We, too, may deny or betray Jesus in our everyday lives—often without even realizing it. You may not think so, but sometimes we do complain in our hearts and minds when we face trials in daily life. And if you've ever done that—don't worry. Because God gives us a second chance. That is amazing grace.

After His resurrection, Jesus came to Peter on the shore of the Sea of Galilee and asked him: "Do you love me?" (John 21) Jesus didn't throw Peter away. He invited him to try again. If we had no grace from God, we could never fulfill this new commandment. We'd be too busy proving ourselves. Too afraid to admit failure. Too guarded to truly love. But grace frees us. Grace says: "You are more than your worst moment." Grace says: "Come back. Feed my sheep." Peter's life became a living testimony of grace. He was a man forgiven, who learned to forgive. He preached boldly, welcomed outsiders, and eventually died for his Lord—upside down, not because he had to, but because he was so transformed by grace.

What if there were no grace from God? Then Peter's story would have ended in fear. Then we'd all be stuck in the brokenness of chapter 13. But because there is grace, we move forward—into resurrection, restoration, and renewal.

Jesus didn't just command love—He modeled it. He washed the feet of the one who would betray Him. He restored the one who denied Him. And now He gives us grace, so that we can give it to others. We have endless potential for learning and growing in God. And it is by the grace of God that we become fully who we are meant to be—beloved, forgiven, and free.

Thanks be to God. Amen.