

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
July 27th, 2025
“7th Sunday After Pentecost”

*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**

Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find;
knock, and doors will be opened to you.

**Those who ask receive, and one who seeks finds,
and to those who knock it will be opened.**

Come to praise the responsive love of God,
who meets us in our need, where we are.

**We come, rejoicing in God’s presence with us
and trusting God’s steadfast love to direct us.**

Seek the Holy Spirit to guide and protect;
God will give the Spirit to those who ask.

**We who know how to give gifts to our children
are confident of God’s gifts to us. Amen.**

***DEDICATING HYMN** *Seek Ye First* **UMH 405**

OPENING PRAYER **Unison**

Teach us to pray, loving God, that the longing of our hearts might
find words, and the intent of our spirits result in faithful deeds.
We would not dictate the manner of your appearance among us,
but would be alert and receptive to your surprises. Prepare us in
this hour for the joy of your presence and the fullness of life you
intend. Amen.

CHILDREN’S TIME (G) **UMH 191 (vs. 1)**

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Luke 11:1-13

(NRSV, p. 72 in the New Testament, and p. 874-875 in the Living Bible)

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

SERMON *“A Community That Prays”* **Rev. Jenny Lee**

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER **Unison**

Open to us your Word, gracious God, as we ask and seek and knock.
Wash us in the fountain of your truth, that we may be clean and trust
in your mercy. Bless us with fullness of life, and make us glad in your
presence. We join in thanksgiving for all the gifts of your love. 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**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** **Unison**

For your healing love, for the many blessings we enjoy, and for the
gift of life itself, we give thanks with these tokens of gratitude. Dwell
in us, that we may be moved to make all of life an offering to your
steadfast love. May we learn to give good gifts to all your children who
need what we have to offer. Multiply our efforts to be faithful as you
add others to our family of faith, in Christ’s name. Amen.

JULY 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>For July we will be collecting school supplies for children in need in our own community.</p>  <p>We will also be collecting peanut butter and jelly for the food shelf in July. Please leave your donations in the basket in the front of the church. Thank you!</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>This month will be collecting financial donations and school supplies for children in the Grantsburg community. The donations will be dropped off in August at Faith Lutheran Church where they will be distributed. Thank you for your support!</p> 
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ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh

<p>Food Shelf</p> <p><i>(Communion Sunday)</i></p> 	<p>Sailor Hat Offering:</p> <p><i>The Sailor Hat offering will go to support VBS in our Parish.</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
Mowing	Volunteer Needed
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	Volunteer Needed

Atlas

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

St. Croix Falls

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



THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS

Jim Andrews	7/28
Sally Schmitt	8/1
Reed Olson	8/1
Noah Dennison	8/2



PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) There is Zoom Service only at 9:00 AM.
- 2) Our Sunday Sermons are on the website at upperstcroixparish.org under Sermons!
- 3) We will also send you a weekly bulletin and written sermon through post mail and email.
- 4) 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: 7th Sunday After Pentecost. May God bless you!

Worship Service Schedule

7/27:	9:00 am	Central-Grantsburg UMC (with Zoom)
	10:00 am	Atlas UMC
	11:15 am	St. Croix Falls UMC
7/27:	10:00 am	Decorating for VBS (G)
7/28-7/31:	4:30-7:30 pm	2025 VBS (True North)
7/28:	10:30 am-1:30 pm	Harmony Choir Rehearsal at Rice Lake UMC



Breakthrough Prayers:

Please pray for: Kim Wheeler (healing & improving), Kayleen Branstad (friend, Tracy-surgery), Sharon Asp (daughter-Shea's health, and nephew's healing), Lynn Hanson (grandson, A J. and granddaughter, Harley), Sue Olson (great-grandson Rifle's transition and healing and granddaughter Sancí's healing), Sally Aldorfer (her husband Ron's healing), Barbara Loomis (recovery), God's peace in the world, and the 2025 VBS-volunteers and kids

Praise the Lord with Joy and Gratitude: Toni Koons (friend, Michelle-surgery went well and continued prayers for her recover), and The VBS volunteers and their training.

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

Next Sunday (August 3rd):

Central -Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Scripture Reading	Toni Koons
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Volunteer Needed
Mowing	Volunteer Needed
Counter	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	Volunteer Needed
Communion	Barbara Loomis

Atlas

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

St. Croix Falls

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Karen Sciacca
Usher(s)	Jim Andrews
Counter	Peter Gionis
Bell Ringer	Jim Sciacca
Flowers	Women of the church
Fellowship	Admin Members
Communion	Kathy & Peter Gionis



Upcoming Events & News

- 7/28-31: 2025 Vacation Bible School (Registration is open now)
- 8/4-8/6: Pastor Jenny attends Harmony Choir Concert at Ohio Conference (The 140 Anniversary Celebration of Korean Methodism)
- 8/8-8/9: Stewardship Conference via Zoom
- 8/24: 10:30 am, Joint Service at Atlas Park (Blessing of the backpacks, our animals, and our teachers)

Thank you very much for your dedication!



“A Community That Prays”

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: Three preachers were discussing the best positions for prayer while a telephone repairman worked nearby. “Kneeling is definitely best,” claimed one. “No,” another contended, “I get the best results standing with my hands outstretched to heaven.” “You’re both wrong,” the third insisted, “The most effective prayer position is lying prostrate, face down on the floor.” The repairman couldn’t contain himself any longer. “Hey folks,” he interrupted, “the best praying I ever did was hanging upside down from a telephone pole!”

“So—what do you think is the best position for prayer? We often teach our children a prayer posture: kneeling, putting their hands together, and closing their eyes. That might be the best position we’ve learned for prayer, right?”

“Actually, the position doesn’t matter all that much. What truly matters is how we build a meaningful relationship with God. Some people say, ‘I think I’m good with God, but I don’t know how to pray or where to begin.’ That’s true for many of us. We know—and we feel—that we should pray, but sometimes we simply don’t know how.”

I serve as a mentor for a group preparing for ordination. I’m often asked by pastors, especially those serving in cross-cultural ministry, “How do I pray?” They come from different cultural, linguistic, and liturgical backgrounds and often feel unsure. As a cross-cultural minister myself, I understand. But if prayer were only about language or liturgy, many of them would pray better than I do!

The truth is—prayer isn’t something we measure by performance or comparison. It’s something deeper. Something sacred. That’s why so many people—even lifelong Christians and pastors—still wonder how to pray or worry whether they’re doing it “right.” But this is not a new concern. Even the disciples of Jesus had this question.

One day, Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of His disciples said, “Lord, teach *us* to pray.” That request didn’t come from nowhere. The disciples had seen how Jesus prayed—not just the words, but the rhythm of His life, the intimacy He had with the Father. Prayer was the heartbeat of Jesus’ life. And notice—the disciple doesn’t say, “Teach *me* to pray,” but “Teach *us* to pray.” That small detail is powerful: Prayer is not just personal—it’s communal. We are called to be a community that prays.

In fact, in Korean, our language doesn’t emphasize the individual as much as English does. We often say “our father,” “our house,” “our community,” even when we’re referring to something personal. So, when I began learning English, it felt strange to say “my father” or “my house.”

Jesus taught His disciples to pray: ‘Our Father who art in heaven... Give us our daily bread... Forgive us our trespasses... Lead us not into temptation...’ This prayer is not written in the language of ‘I’ or ‘me,’ but in the language of ‘us.’ From the beginning, prayer was never meant to be a private achievement. It’s a shared practice. We grow in prayer together—in small groups, in worship, around dinner tables, and in hospital rooms. Jesus doesn’t just give a formula—He gives us a pattern for life. A pattern rooted in relationship—with God and with one another. Yes,

God is not only *my* Father—but our Father. We are a family who shares One Father. We are a community that prays to the One who created and loves us all.

Jesus tells a parable about a man knocking on his neighbor's door at midnight, asking for bread. It's awkward. It's bold. It's persistent. Imagine the whole family sleeping together in one small room without beds. When one person moves, everyone stirs. I remember that from my childhood—seven of us in one room. If my younger brother needed to go to the bathroom at night, he would end up stepping on someone's foot or leg, and then the whole family is woken up in the middle of the night.

Jesus gives us that kind of image for prayer. Prayer wakes up the whole household. It disturbs us. It involves us. It invites us all in. That's the kind of prayer Jesus teaches—not polished, but persistent. Not polite, but real. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened." This isn't just about personal needs—it's about interceding for others.

A praying community doesn't give up easily. We keep showing up for each other. We pray for the sick until healing comes. We pray for the brokenhearted until comfort arrives. We pray for justice, for peace, for the kingdom to come—**together**. We don't approach God as isolated individuals—we come as a family. And the man in Jesus' story wasn't asking for bread for himself—he was asking for someone else. He interceded. That's what prayer does.

This is why we share joys and concerns in worship. This is why we pray for our youth, for VBS, for the lonely, the grieving, and the forgotten—because God listens, and God answers.

Imagine a prayer circle in a hospital: people from different backgrounds, holding hands, lifting a single name to God. In that moment, they become a spiritual family.

So, when you pray, don't pray only for yourself. As you say, "*Give us today our daily bread,*" think of someone else's hunger, grief, or need.

Jesus reminds us: God is not reluctant. God is not stingy. God is generous. "Which of you, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake?" "How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask?" We don't pray because we have the right words. We pray because we trust in a good God. And when we struggle to believe, the community reminds us of that truth. Sometimes your prayer gives me strength when I'm too tired to pray. Sometimes my prayer carries hope for you when you're burdened. That's the power of a praying community: We carry each other. We hold each other up. We do not pray alone.

What would it look like for our church to be known as "A Community That Prays"?

Not just a place with a prayer list—but a people who: Begin every meeting and moment in prayer; Pray for our neighborhood, not just our membership; Create safe space for people to bring their real joys and griefs before God; Teach our children not just how to say prayers—but how to live prayerfully

Let us not just say, "I'll pray for you"—let's actually pray, together. Let our homes and sanctuaries echo with the voices of people asking, seeking, and knocking on behalf of one another and the world. Jesus didn't just give us words—He gave us a way of life: A way of trusting the Father; A way of forgiving each other; A way of asking boldly; A way of being filled with the Spirit as one body. Prayer is not just what we do—it's how we become the people God calls us to be. This week, pray the Lord's Prayer every day. But don't just pray it alone—pray it thinking of us—our hopes, our needs, our world. Call a friend and pray together. Hold a child's hand and say it slowly. Join your church family in becoming a community that prays.

Thanks be to God. Amen!