

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**
Generous God, You have given us the gift of Sabbath rest and the joy of new beginnings. As we bring our offerings, we give not only our gifts but also our hearts, our time, and our talents. Bless these gifts, that they may bring freedom, healing, and hope to others. Use us to share Your love with students, teachers, parents, and all creation. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN** *God Be with You till We Meet Again*
UMH 672

***BENEDICTION** Rev. Jenny Lee

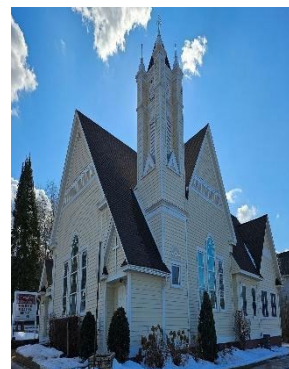
***POSTLUDE** Sharon Asp

NO. 2025-34
August 24th, 2025

Upper St. Croix Parish United Methodist Church

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

**“11th Sunday After Pentecost”
“Outdoor Blessing Service”**



Grantsburg-Central
Since 1897



Atlas
Since 1887



St. Croix Falls
Since 1859

JOINT SUNDAY SERVICE:
10:30 AM at Atlas Park
(Next to the Atlas Church Building)

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

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
August 24th, 2025
“11th Sunday After Pentecost”

*Please stand if you are able.

***PRELUDE**

Sharon Asp

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**

Lord of the Sabbath, You created the heavens and the earth,
and on the seventh day You rested.

We thank You for the gift of rest, freedom, and renewal.

Lord Jesus, on the Sabbath day You saw a woman bent over
and set her free.

Set us free from our worries, our burdens, and our fears.

Bless our students as they begin a new school year.

May they grow in wisdom, kindness, and courage.

Bless our teachers, parents, and caregivers.

May they guide with patience, love, and joy.

Bless our pets, who share our homes and bring us delight.

May we care for all Your creatures with compassion.

Lord of the Sabbath, make this day holy in our hearts.

**We rejoice in Your love and freedom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

***DEDICATING HYMN**

This is the Day

UMH 657

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Gracious God, we gather under Your open sky, surrounded by the
beauty of creation. On this Sabbath day, bless our worship, our
songs, our prayers, and our hearts. We bring our children,
teachers, parents, and even our pets before You, asking for Your

care and joy. Set us free to rest in Your love, to stand tall in Your
grace, and to praise You with thanksgiving. Amen.

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

Luke 13:10-17

(NRSV, p. 76 in the New Testament, and
p. 878 The Way- the Living Bible)

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

SERMON

“Set Free on the Sabbath”

Rev. Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Healing God, on this Sabbath day You remind us that rest is Your gift
and freedom is Your promise. As You set the bent-over woman free,
set us free from fear, worry, and heavy burdens. Bless our students,
teachers, parents, and pets with Your grace. Help us walk tall in Your
love, rejoicing in the new life You give through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

**BLESSING OF BACKPACKS, STUDENTS, TEACHERS,
PARENTS, AND OUR PETS**

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

AUGUST 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 the month of August Atlas will be collecting funds for UMCOR for US disaster response and recovery. Examples are Texas flooding and tornados in Minnesota.</p> <p>Thank you for your ongoing support!</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 for UMCOR as a delayed donation for World Refugee Day which was June 20, 2025. World Refugee Day IS the international day to honor people who have been forced to flee.</p>  <p>Together, we can champion their right to seek safety, build support for their economic and social inclusion, and advocate for solutions to their plight. 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 those affected by the flooding in Mexico</i></p> 
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Thank you for your support!

TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers All God's People
Rev. Jenny Lee

Joint Worship Service at Atlas Park

Blessing of the Backpacks, our Pets and our Students, Teachers and Parents.



Atlas

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

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS

Rachel Tooze 8/27
Landon Smestad 8/30



PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) **There is no Zoom service this week as our service is outdoors at the park.**
- 2) Our Sunday Sermons are on the website at upperstroixparish.org under Sermons!
- 3) We will also send you a weekly bulletin and written sermon through post mail (if requested) and email.
- 4) Please note that we send you the weekly **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: 11th Sunday After Pentecost. May God bless you!

Worship Service Schedule

8/24:	10:30 am	Atlas UMC
8/24:	3:00-5:00 pm	Family Game Night (G)
8/26:	6:00 pm	Ministry Task Force Meeting (G)
8/30:	1:00-3:00 pm	End of Summer Party for Kids (G)

Breakthrough Prayers:

Please pray for: Charles Wright (daughter, surgery 8/27, and for grandson, God's guidance), Cheryl Olson, (brother's surgery), Sharon Asp (friend, Jean's surgery), Karen Sciacca (mother in-law, lost property by fire), Lee Frederickson, (friend who's missing), Jim Andrews, (sister, Lancy's healing and comfort), Lynn Hanson (grandchildren), and God's peace in the USA and the world.

Praise the Lord with Joy and Gratitude: Kaylee Branstad (loved one, the result of the extra medical test, cancer free), UMW (wonderful time hanging out), Sally Aldorfer (husband Ron's birthday party, gift, and cake), Karen Sciacca (cleaned up after fire), and Sharon Asp (nephew's healing).

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

Next Sunday (August 31st):

Central -Grantsburg

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

Atlas

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

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



Upcoming Events & News

9/7:	Rally Sunday-Bible Presentation (A)
9/12-9/13:	Lay Servant Retreat at Luther Point Bible Camp in Chetek
9/14:	Infant Baptism (Giada- Giacomo and Megan Branstad Baglio)



August 24th, 2025
Luke 13:10-17

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

“Set Free on the Sabbath”

What a wonderful day God has made for us! We’ve gathered outside this morning under God’s sky, surrounded by the beauty of creation, with our whole parish together—students, teachers, parents, and even our pets. What a blessing it is to have this park next to our Parish church-Atlas! Today, we are reminded that the God who made all things also made time itself—and gave us the gift of Sabbath.

I want to start with something funny I found on an internet site:

A child asked his mom, “Why does Pastor always close his eyes during prayer?”

The mom whispered, “He’s praying.”

The child frowned and said, “Hmm... then why does he close his eyes right after lunch too? Is that the Sabbath rule?”

Another little boy asked his grandpa, “Why do we have Sabbath rules?”

Grandpa thought for a moment and said, “Well, the Sabbath means rest. If we didn’t have rules, your grandma would still find a way to give me chores on Sunday!”

Do you have any Sabbath rules at home? Or did you grow up with any? My home church back in Korea, a Korean Methodist Church, had very strict Sabbath rules: no work, no buying, no selling—except for church ministry. I remember that most stores and restaurants in town were closed to honor the Sabbath. My younger sister and I served in Sunday School, sang in the choir, and helped give rides to church members. Even if we forgot something we needed for Sunday School, we couldn’t buy it from the store on Sunday. But we still worked hard at church all day. I taught children in the morning, youth in the afternoon, sang in the choir, and drove kids and adults to church. Meanwhile, my mother worked in the church kitchen with other women—cooking, serving, and washing dishes. Looking back, I realize that, for Christians, this wasn’t really a Sabbath rest at all. Some of you may have had similar experiences.

Here’s the opposite experience I had. When I visited Israel in 1994, I learned that Jews don’t open any stores or restaurants from Friday 6 p.m. until Saturday 6 p.m. We had supper at 4 p.m., and then we couldn’t get any food until the next evening! Yes, the Jewish Sabbath is observed from Friday at sundown to Saturday at nightfall. It is a holy day of rest, based on God resting on the seventh day of Creation (Genesis 2:2–3) and the commandment in the Torah (Exodus 20:8–11, Deuteronomy 5:12–15).

But here’s what I found interesting: even though Jews didn’t work themselves, they often hired non-Jews to work for them—cooking, cleaning, feeding animals, and giving rides. Do you see why I call this the opposite of my home church experience? While Christians worked themselves at church, Jews asked others to work so they could rest. Which is right? That’s the question. Let’s look for a more meaningful way to understand Sabbath.

In the Gospel of Luke chapter 13, Jesus heals a woman who had been bent over for eighteen years. This miracle took place on the Sabbath. And it wasn’t just about her healing—it was about what the Sabbath really means.

Why did God give us the Sabbath? From the very beginning, in Genesis, God created for six days and then rested on the seventh. Not because God was tired, but to show us how to live. We are not

machines. We are God’s children. We need rest for our bodies, minds, and souls. The Ten Commandments say, “Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy.” Why? Because it is a day to stop striving, to trust God, to delight in His goodness. Sabbath is God’s weekly reminder that we are not defined by how much we work, produce, or achieve. We are loved simply because we belong to God. Sabbath is a time to rejoice in God with a grateful heart. In other words, Sabbath is to remind ourselves who we are, not what we do. We are beloved children of God.

So, what may we do on the Sabbath? In Jesus’ day, religious leaders debated this endlessly. Their rules often became heavier than the gift itself. But Jesus shows us that Sabbath is not only about what we avoid—it is about what we embrace. The true Sabbath is a day to worship God, care for one another, and experience freedom. When Jesus healed the bent-over woman, He was saying: “This is exactly what Sabbath is for—setting people free, bringing healing, and restoring life.”

I also learned something when I was appointed as a pastor. The Wisconsin Conference gave all pastors guidelines for Sabbath. Every pastor must take one day off and one Sabbath day each week. It doesn’t have to be Sunday or Saturday—it can depend on church and personal schedules. For me, my day off is Monday, and my Sabbath is Saturday. As some of you know, I spend it playing pickleball, gardening, walking, biking, or knitting. Does that sound like work? Maybe—but not really. For me, it is a time to refresh my mind and soul, to prepare for Sunday. Not literally resting from everything, but meaningfully keeping it holy. And I am grateful to you for supporting me in this.

Back to the scripture: The woman had been bent over for eighteen years. Imagine the weight she carried—not just physically, but socially and spiritually. Many ignored her. She was an outsider— isolated, lonely, in pain. But on the Sabbath, Jesus saw her, called her, touched her, and set her free. The synagogue leader complained, but Jesus answered: “Shouldn’t she be set free on the Sabbath day?” The lesson is clear: the Sabbath is for liberation. It is God’s gift of freedom.

Today we gather with backpacks and books, teachers and students, parents and grandparents, dogs and cats—all of us carrying different weights. Some of us are bent over by stress, by worries about the new school year, by illness, grief, or anxiety. Even our pets sometimes carry burdens we don’t see. But Jesus still says: **“Come. Be set free.”**

The Sabbath is not just a pause from work—it is God’s invitation to stand tall, breathe deeply, and remember: we are loved, we are not alone, and we are free in Christ.

So, as we bless backpacks, students, teachers, parents, and pets, let it be a sign of Sabbath freedom. May these blessings remind us that God goes with us—into the classroom, into our homes, onto the playground, and yes, even on our morning walks with our pets.

Please remember: the Sabbath is God’s gift to us.

A time to rest in His love.

A time to be healed and freed.

A time to worship, rejoice, and stand tall again.

So today, hear the good news: Jesus sets us free—free to rest, free to live, free to praise.

Let us go into this new week—students, teachers, parents, pets, and all of us—walking in Sabbath freedom, praising God, and standing tall in His love.

Thanks be to God. Amen.