



**Upper St. Croix Parish**  
**Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls**  
**October 12th, 2025**  
**“18th Sunday After Pentecost”**

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\*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**

From our busy world, with all its temptations,  
We gather to listen and renew our commitment.

**This is not a place of rest, but of refreshment;  
in this community of faith we are challenged.**

God’s steadfast love is before our eyes;

Let us walk in faithfulness before our Creator.

**With Christ we are called to die, but also to live;**

**With Christ we can endure, that we may also reign.**

God is faithful and ready to show mercy;

God restores and heals; let us give thanks.

**Sing aloud a song of thanksgiving;**

**Let us tell of all God’s wondrous deeds. Amen.**

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

**OPENING PRAYER**    **Unison**

Gracious God, we gather this morning with hearts full of  
gratitude, thankful for the gift of life, the breath of Your Spirit,  
and the love You pour into our lives. Open our minds to Your  
Word, our hearts to Your grace, and our hands to acts of  
generosity. May our worship today honor You in spirit and truth,  
and may Your presence guide us in all we do. Amen.

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

**Proclamation of God’s Word**

**\*THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON**

**2 Corinthians 9:5–8**

(p.183-184 in the New Testament, NRSV (G and SCF’s Pew Bible)  
and p. 1005-1006 in The Way- the Living Bible (Atlas Pew Bible)

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

**Thanks be to God. Amen!**

**SERMON**

*“Planted to Grow: Grace in Action”*  
**(Stewardship Month #2)**

**Rev. Jenny Lee**

**We Respond to God’s Word**

**RESPONDING PRAYER**    **Unison**

Generous God, we thank You for the gifts You have planted in our  
lives. Help us to respond with grateful hearts, trusting You to grow  
the seeds we offer. May our time, our talents, and our resources be  
used to bless others and extend Your love. Teach us to give freely,  
serve joyfully, and live boldly in faith. May our lives reflect Your  
grace, and may Your kingdom flourish through us. 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**

# OCTOBER CHURCH MISSIONS

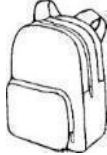


## ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Ashleigh Olson

<p><b>INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:</b> Atlas collects and recycles ink jet cartridges and cell phones year-round.</p> 	<p><b>LOAVES &amp; FISHES NEEDS OUR ONGOING SUPPORT</b></p> <p>Requested items: eggs, milk, mayonnaise, coffee, tea, peanut butter, crackers, cookies. Personal Products for men &amp; women.</p>	<p><b>MOOLAH FOR MILK</b></p>  <p>For the month of October Atlas will continue collecting funds for Moolah for Milk-the Salvation Army program to raise money to supply milk vouchers for the Backpack program. We will also begin collecting shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. Information is available at church. Thank you for your ongoing support!</p> 
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## GRANTSBURG

Mission committee chair: Deb Hammer

<p><b>BE A "BACK-PACK BACKER"!</b></p> <p>REMEMBER ... Every Sunday Is MAC 'N CHEESE SUNDAY! Supporting the Salvation Army's "Happy Kids Back-Pack Program"</p> 	<p><b>Trick or Treat for UNICEF &amp; Operation Christmas Child</b></p>  <p>We will be collecting financial donations for both Trick or Treat for UNICEF and Operation Christmas Child along with shoebox donations for Operation Christmas Child.</p> 
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## ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh

<p><b>Food Shelf</b></p> <p><b>(Communion Sunday)</b></p> 	<p><b>Sailor Hat Offering:</b></p> <p>The Sailor Hat offering will go to World Communion and will be split between the African Agriculture &amp; Student Scholarship programs.</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	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Mowing	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Counter	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>

## Atlas

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

## St. Croix Falls

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



## Birthdays & Anniversaries

Sue Olson	10/12
Barb Loomis	10/13
Amy Harmon	10/15
Briana Olson	10/16



### PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) Live Zoom service will be at 9:00 am through the Grantsburg-Central Service.
- 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 (if requested) and email. 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: **18th Sunday After Pentecost – Stewardship Month**

May God bless you!

### Worship Service and A Week Schedule

10/12:	9:00 am	Grantsburg-Central UMC
	10:00 am	Atlas UMC
	11:15 am	St. Croix Falls UMC
10/12:	2:00 pm	Pastor Jenny will lead Worship at C.C.C.
10/14:	6:00pm	Ministry Task Force Team Meeting (G)
10/15:	10:00 am	Korean Caucus Task Force Team Meeting via Zoom
	4:00-5:00 pm	Go Fish (Kindergarten to 5th Grade) (G)
	6:00 -8:30 pm	Youth Group Worship Night at Wood Lake Camp
10/16:	10:30 am-3:00 pm	New Ministry Strategy Board Meeting at Southeast District
10/17:	1:30 pm	Ad Council Meeting (A)
10/19:	10:30 am	Joint Service-Laity Sunday at Central-Grantsburg

### Upcoming Events & News

- 10/19: Laity Sunday: Joint Service at Central UMC-Grantsburg  
*(10:30 am, Lunch will be provided by Central)*
- 10/20-21: Pastor Jenny attend Provisional Elder fall Workshop at Pine Lake Camp
- 10/26: Stewardship Campaign Sunday

### Next Sunday (October 19th):



### Joint Service at Central -Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Liturgist	Jenny Lee
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Luncheon by CUMC
Mowing	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Counter	Russ Hammer, Sue Olson, Peter Gionis
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Sunday School	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>

### Breakthrough Prayers:

**Please pray for:** Willow Nyland (Uncle Mike's improving health), Dave and Sharon Huff (going south, safe trip), Pastor Jenny (Endoscopy, 10/6), Sharon Huff (Gaza area's God's peace).



**Praise the Lord with Joy and Gratitude:** Deb Hammer (Thanks be to God that the Pie & Ice Cream Social at Grantoberfest turned out well), Mary Lou Wright (daughter, Renee going back to work and moving in her new house) Kathy Gionis birth of grandson) and Karen Sciacca (staying with grandson during the weekend).

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

October 12th, 2025

2 Corinthians 9:5–8; Mark 4:26–29

Rev. Jenny Lee, Ph.D.

Upper St. Croix Parish UMC



## **“Planted to Grow: Grace in Action”**

### **(Stewardship Month #2)**

I want to start with something funny I found on an internet site: A little boy brought two quarters to church. His mother told him, “One is for the offering, and one is for ice cream after church.” He was walking to church, flipping the quarters in his hands, when one slipped out and rolled into the storm drain. He gasped and said, “Well, there goes God’s quarter!”

Isn’t that how we sometimes treat generosity? We plan to give—but only if nothing else comes up. But God calls us to a deeper trust—to give first, to plant first, and to trust that God will provide the rest. When we live that way, we find freedom, not fear. Because generosity grows joy.

Last Sunday, on World Communion Sunday, we brought many kinds of bread to the Lord’s Table and collected numerous loaves to send to the St. Croix Falls Food Shelf. The bread from our three churches filled the car of Sharon Asp, the Director of the St. Croix Falls Food Shelf. She said, “I deeply appreciate our parishioners for their generosity. We’ve never had such good, fresh bread to share with those in need. Surely, they will be so happy to receive it.”

Our stewardship journey began with gratitude at the Lord’s Table and overflowed into our community to feed the hungry. Gratitude begins when we recognize that everything we have—our lives, our gifts, even our very breath—comes from God. It’s not ours to keep; it’s God’s to share.

Today, we take the next step. Gratitude is the root, but generosity is the fruit. Our theme this morning is “*Planted to Grow: Grace in Action.*” We’re moving from thankfulness to trustfulness, from receiving to releasing. When gratitude fills our hearts, grace begins to overflow through our hands.

We saw that truth in action just last Sunday. We came to the Lord’s Table with grateful hearts, giving thanks for God’s amazing grace. And that same grace moved us—it opened our hearts and our hands—to share the bread of life with others through the Food Shelf. That’s how grace works. It starts at the table of gratitude and flows outward into acts of love.

Jesus tells a story in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 4, that’s easy to overlook. It’s not as famous as the parable of the sower or the mustard seed, but it holds a quiet, beautiful truth about how God works. He says: “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how” (Mark 4:26–27). The farmer plants the seed and then goes about his life. He doesn’t dig it up to check if it’s working. He doesn’t rush the process. He trusts that something is happening underground—something hidden, sacred, and alive. That’s the mystery of grace. We don’t make it grow—God does. We simply plant the seed.

Have you ever planted a seed and wondered if anything would really come of it? Sometimes it feels like such a small, insignificant act. You tuck it into the soil, cover it with dirt, and wait. That’s what generosity feels like sometimes. We give, we serve, we pray—and we might wonder if it makes any difference. But every time we give out of love, every time we act with compassion, every time we plant a seed of kindness—we are joining God in the quiet miracle of growth. Our part is planting; God’s part is growing.

We plant, we water, we give, we serve—but ultimately, it is God who gives the growth. As

Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 3:6, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.” Our acts of generosity are like seeds in God’s hands: they may seem small, but God’s grace makes them grow into something far greater than we can imagine.

In today’s scripture, Paul captures this same truth in 2 Corinthians 9:6–8: “The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows generously will also reap generously.” He’s not talking about material return. He’s talking about spiritual abundance—the joy, peace, and blessing that come when we live open-handedly. Paul adds this promise: “God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work” (v. 8). In other words, God provides enough for us to be generous. God doesn’t bless us so that we can keep more—God blesses us so that we can give more. When grace takes root in us, it grows outward into action. If you hold a seed in your hand, it remains just a seed. But if you plant it—if you release it into the soil—something miraculous happens: it multiplies. It’s the same with grace. When we give—our time, our prayers, our money, our service—we are planting seeds in God’s garden. We may never see the full harvest, but we can trust that something is growing. A kind word planted in someone’s heart today might blossom into faith years later. A Thanksgiving meal or Christmas Child shoebox shared with a neighbor near or far might grow into love and hope. A mission fund we give in faith—like collecting loose change for *Moola for Milk* or *UNICEF*—might become the very means God uses to touch lives we’ll never meet.

I want to share a story I learned at the Spiritual Formation Academy in Tucson. Two pastors were friends who often challenged each other in life and ministry. One day, one of them bought an old house and spent time renovating it. Excited, he invited his friend to see the result. When the friend walked in and saw the beautiful home, he said, “I’m so glad God provided you with such a beautiful house.” The homeowner smiled and replied, “Well, you know, God may have given me an old house, but I made it beautiful.” The friend laughed and said, “Ah, isn’t it amazing that God made this house beautiful—with you?”

My dear family in Jesus Christ, isn’t that the essence of stewardship? We are given gifts, resources, and opportunities from God. Sometimes we see them as “ours” to manage, fix, or perfect on our own. But the truth is—God works *with* us. God gives us what we need, but also calls us to participate—to take the gifts of life, time, and resources and make them prosper.

When we approach stewardship with gratitude—recognizing that all we have comes from God—our generosity becomes a collaborative work with God. We don’t just give; we join God in making something beautiful in the lives of others. Just like that old house became a home, our gifts, no matter how small, can be transformed into blessings for others when we give with thankful hearts. Gratitude opens our eyes, but generosity opens our hands—and together, God makes the work prosper.

So how do we move from gratitude to grace in action? It begins with trust. We trust that what we give matters—no matter how small. We trust that God’s abundance will provide for our needs. We trust that when we sow generously, we will also reap joyfully. Gratitude opens our hearts to see God’s goodness. Grace moves our hands to act on it. It’s like breathing in and out: We breathe in gratitude—“Thank You, Lord”—and we breathe out generosity—“Here, Lord, take and use this.” That’s the rhythm of stewardship: receiving and releasing, blessing and being blessed.

Stewardship isn’t just about money. It’s about the way we live—how we plant our lives into the soil of God’s love. We plant our time when we serve others. We plant our words when we encourage someone. We plant our resources when we give to God’s mission. And we trust that God will make it grow—in our church, in our community, in our own hearts.

As Paul said, “God is able to bless you abundantly, so that you will abound in every good work.” May we be a people of gratitude, grace, and generous hearts—planted deeply in God’s love, growing in every good work. Thanks be to God. Amen.