

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**

Great God, we give thanks that you have brought us out of our times of great difficulties to the enjoyment of many gifts we do not deserve. WE rejoice in all the good you have granted us and our loved ones. Our thanksgiving prompts our praise and gladness. Hear our joyful noise as we summon others to partake of the bread of heaven. Amen.

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN** Give Thanks TFWS 2036

***BENEDICTION** Rev. Jenny Lee

***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)

**“Christ the King/Reign of Christ Sunday”
“Thanksgiving Sunday”**



Grantsburg-Central
Since 1897



Atlas
Since 1887



St. Croix Falls
Since 1859

SUNDAY SERVICES:

9:00 AM at Grantsburg (with Zoom Service)

(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

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Youth Director Shayna Schmid: snsnyder@gmail.com

Parish Secretary Colleen Norenberg: centerlume2016@gmail.com

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

www.upperstcroixparish.org

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

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
November 23rd, 2025
Christ the King/Reign of Christ Sunday
Thanksgiving Sunday

*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

Come into God’s presence with gladness and singing,
for God has brought us safely to this day.

**God has been with us in all our travels through life,
even when we did not realize God’s care.**

God is the Author and Chief Actor in our life stories
and has given us all good things to enjoy.

**Though toil, affliction, and oppression,
we have known God’s steadfast love and faithfulness.**

In everything by prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving,
let your requests be made known to God.

**We are here to learn what we must do
to be doing the works of God. Amen.**

***DEDICATING HYMN**

What Gift Can We Bring UMH 87 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

When we remember all the good we have received from your
hand, Sovereign God, we are moved to deep thanksgiving and
praise. Our anxieties are turned to gratitude when we trust in you
to provide. You have given us the bread of life to nourish our
souls, even as we have received bread to eat from your bounty.
Grant us now pure thoughts and lofty motives as we seek the mind
of Christ. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

(NRSV, p.180-181 in the New Testament, and
p.178-179 in the Living Bible)

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

SERMON

“Remember Who Brought You Here”

Rev. Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

**Gracious and faithful God, thank You for the journey You have
brought us through—our families, our church, our community, and
our personal lives. Help us remember Your hand in every step.
Receive our thank-you cards as offerings of our gratitude and as
testimonies of Your goodness. Lead us forward with the same love
that has carried us so far. 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**

*(Please give special Thanksgiving offerings, and bring your thank you-
cards up to the front of the church where indicated)*

***DOXOLOGY**

UMH 95

NOVEMBER 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>We will be collecting Thanksgiving food items in November. Please leave them in the basket at the front of the church</p> 	 <p>Thank you to all who donated to Operation Christmas Child. We collected over 40 boxes (at last count) for children in need around the world.</p> <p>What a blessing!</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>We collected shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child through November 16th. Thank you to those who supported this wonderful cause.</p> <p>Mid November through December we will begin collecting financial donations for Interfaith Caregivers of Burnett Co Christmas for Kids.</p> 
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ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh

<p>Food Shelf</p> <p>(Communion Sunday)</p> 	<p>Sailor Hat Offering:</p> <p>The Sailor Hat offering will go to support families in need with Thanksgiving gift cards.</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
Counter	Russ Hammer
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson

Atlas

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Mariah Gaffey
Usher	Sue Olson
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Cheryl Olson

St. Croix Falls

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



Birthdays & Anniversaries

Bob Branstad	11/23
Haven Rehbein	11/23
Marjorie Broker	11/26
Donna Norman	11/28
Blake Reid	11/29



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: **Christ the King/Reign of Christ Sunday, and Thanksgiving Sunday!**

*Please prepare for thanksgiving Sunday special offerings,
Thanksgiving food to the food shelf and thank you cards for God!
May God bless you all!*

Worship Service and A Week Schedule

11/23:	9:00 am	Central UMC - Grantsburg (With Live Zoom)
	10:00 am	Atlas UMC (10:15 am, Sunday School)
	11:15 am	St. Croix Falls UMC
11/25:	10:00 am	December Newsletter & Calendar Info Due
	1:30 pm	Provisional Elder Mentoring Meeting via Zoom
11/26:	4:00 - 5:00 pm	Go Fish for Kids (G)
11/26-11/27:		Thanksgiving Holidays (Office Closed)
11/30:		1st Sunday of Advent (5th Anniversary of Prayer shawl Ministry)

Upcoming Events & News

11/30: The First Sunday of Advent

12/4, 12/11, 12/18 and 12/22:

Advent Bible Study

(The Women of Christmas by Liz Higgs)

Please sign-up by November 23rd.

Next Sunday (November 30th):

Central-Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Scripture Reading	Toni Koons
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Volunteer Needed
Counter	Russ Hammer
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson

Atlas

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

St. Croix Falls

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

Breakthrough Prayers:

Please Pray For: Sharon Asp (daughter and her family's safe trip), Sandra Erickson (son, Mike's healing), Colleen Adams-Schween (Sheryl Simon and Bob Determan's healing and God's peace), Kayleen Branstad (Coray's recovery).

Praise the Lord with Joy and Gratitude: Georgeanne Koons (the lost cat came back home), Paulie Kratchmer (Fall sale turned out successfully, and thanks to all the helpers and donors of good stuff to sale, having abundant turkey at Grantsburg Food shelf to share with those in need), Ashleigh Olson (Friend, Groovy Stancy's successful transplant), LeAnn Sylvester (daughter's successful surgery). Kathy Gionis (babysitting a newborn baby).

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



November 23rd, 2025.
Deuteronomy 26:1-11

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



“Remember Who Brought You Here”

I want to start with something funny I found on the internet: An old man in Chicago called his son in New York the day before Thanksgiving and said, “I hate to ruin your day, but I have to tell you that your mother and I are divorcing; forty-five years of misery is enough.”

The son screamed, “Pop, what are you talking about?” The father said, “We can’t stand the sight of each other any longer. We’re sick of each other, and I’m sick of talking about this, so you call your sister in Dallas and tell her.”

Frantic, the son called his sister, who exploded on the phone. “Like heck they’re getting divorced!” she shouted. “I’ll take care of this.” She called Chicago immediately and yelled at her father, “You are NOT getting divorced. Don’t do a single thing until I get there. I’m calling my brother back, and we’ll both be there tomorrow. Until then—don’t do anything. DO YOU HEAR ME?” Then she hung up. The old man hung up his phone, turned to his wife, and said, “Okay, they’re coming for Thanksgiving—and they’re paying their own way.”

What a joy and blessing it is when we can gather as a family for Thanksgiving! What do you expect at your family gathering? Of course—food, joy, laughter, games, stories about how everyone has been, and don’t forget the sharing of thankful stories!

Today we heard a beautiful scripture about gratitude—a gratitude that remembers. In Deuteronomy 26, God teaches the Israelites how to give thanks when they enter the Promised Land. They are to bring the first fruits of the harvest and say these words: “A wandering Aramean was my ancestor... the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand... and gave us this land.”

Notice this: Before they even place their basket of first fruits before God, they remember their story. They remember where they came from. They remember who rescued them. They remember who brought them to this moment. Gratitude begins with remembering. In the Bible, thanksgiving is not simply listing blessings. It is telling the story of God’s faithfulness.

I want to share with you the story of a gentleman I met in the hospital where I served as a chaplain. He was born and raised in a Christian family. He attended Sunday School as a child, was confirmed in the faith, served as a Sunday School teacher, sang in the choir, and served on church committees for many years. He memorized many scripture verses, including the Sermon on the Mount. What a perfect Christian! And he never doubted that he was—until he heard his diagnosis of cancer.

When he heard the news, he began to doubt his faith, wondering what he had done wrong in God’s eyes. He believed God was punishing him. He punished himself by refusing to eat, speak, or receive medical treatment. The nurse asked me to visit him because he had already refused several chaplains.

When I entered his room, he didn’t even look at me. I greeted him, “Hello, I am Chaplain Jenny.” Without looking at me, he said angrily, “I am one hundred percent Christian.” I knew he was rejecting me, as if to say, “I don’t need you.” But I gently challenged him: “I don’t think you are a one hundred percent Christian. Maybe fifty percent—or a little more.” Suddenly, he looked at me with anger and asked, “Where are you from—India or the Philippines?” I answered, “I am from South Korea. What about you—where are you from?” He was Caucasian, so the question wasn’t necessary, but I asked it instinctively. And that question became the key that opened his heart. He paused, and then he began to tell his story: He was a second-generation German immigrant. Beginning with the words, “I am a German American,” he shared about his upbringing in a strict

Christian home. It placed a heavy burden on him—he believed that if he was not perfect, he would be punished. He believed in a God of judgment, without forgiveness or love.

I shared with him about the God of forgiveness and love who brought me to the United States, and about the God of healing I have experienced. After hearing my story, he cried at the good news of God’s love. I prayed with him that he might meet the God of grace. That night he confessed with tears, “I met God. I met Jesus Christ, who loves me and forgives me, even though I am not perfect. I am born again in Christ. Whether God heals me or not, I am okay—but I will receive treatment.” He renewed his faith, think of who he was—and later he became cancer-free.

Remembering who you are—what brought you here to the United States, to this community, and to this church—helps you recover your faith. We easily forget. We settle into comfortable houses, gather plentiful harvests, enjoy blessings, and slowly forget the God who brought us here.

So God says: “When you bring your offering, tell the story. Remember that your ancestor was a wanderer. Remember the pain of slavery. Remember the wilderness you survived. Remember every step where God carried you. Remember who brought you here.”

Today we brought our thank-you cards to God—each one a small, handwritten offering of gratitude. These cards are not just a list of blessings. They are your story. When you write, “I am thankful for this church,” you are remembering how God has carried our congregation through another year. When you write, “I’m thankful for my family,” you are remembering God’s grace in your relationships. When you write, “I’m grateful for health, strength, or healing,” you are remembering the God who sustains you day by day. And maybe some cards say, “I’m thankful even during hard times,” because faith remembers God even in the wilderness. Your thank-you card is your own grateful testimony—your own story of “where you came from, and how God brought you here.” It is the story of how God met you, helped you, and brought you to this very Sunday of worship and thanksgiving.

As a congregation, we also remember our shared story: how God sustained our ministries this year—how God touched lives through worship, missions, youth, Sunday School, Bible study, UMW and UMM, even sales, and prayers. We remember answered prayers, unexpected blessings, new friendships, and deepened faith. Each ministry moment is like holding up a basket of first fruits and saying, “Look what God has done!”

Just as Israel remembered their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, we remember the journeys that brought us here. Some of us came to this country generations ago. Some came recently. Some came searching for opportunity, safety, or a new beginning. Some came unexpectedly—by marriage, calling, work, or God’s mysterious leading. But no matter the path, we stand here today because God has been guiding our steps.

Just as the Israelites remembered their long, difficult journey... and just as the Pilgrims remembered how God brought them across stormy seas... we too remember that God has led us across oceans, across seasons of struggle and seasons of blessing, to this place and this community. None of us stands here by accident. We are here because God has been faithful.

When the Israelites spoke their thanksgiving aloud, it reminded the whole community: “God brought us out. God blessed us. God is still with us.”

This Thanksgiving, may we keep remembering: Who gave you strength this year, who walked with you through fear, who comforted you in grief, who gave our church a mission and a future, and who brought you here—to this place, this life, this season.

And as you bring your thank-you card forward, place it before God as Israel placed their basket of first fruits. Let it be your testimony: “God carried me. God blessed me. God brought me here.”

Thanks be to God! Amen.