

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
January 11th, 2026

“Law Enforcement Appreciation Sunday”
“Baptism of the Lord”

*Please stand if you are able.

***PRELUDE** Toni Koons (G)/Sharon Asp (A & SCF)
***WATER OF BAPTISM**

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
PASSING OF THE GREETINGS

“Happy New Year” (Waive your hands at one another)

We Celebrate New Life in Christ

*** THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America,
and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God,
indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Amen.

***PRAYER OF SILENCE**

***CALL TO WORSHIP** Responsive (The Book of Worship)

Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,

Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory of God’s name,

Worship the Lord in a holy array.

The voice of the Lord is upon the water.

The God of glory thunders, the Lord upon many waters.

The voice of the Lord is powerful.

The voice of God is full of majesty.

Let us praise the name of the Lord! Amen.

***DEDICATING HYMN** America UMH 697 (vs. 1 & 2)

BLESINGS TO OUR NEW YEAR

(All members of the congregation are invited to receive a bracelet containing God’s Word.)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Holy and gracious God, as Jesus stepped into the waters of the Jordan, You named him Beloved and sent him in love. Today, we remember our own baptismal calling and give thanks for those who serve to protect and uphold justice. Bless law enforcement officers with wisdom, courage, and compassion. Renew all of us in your Spirit, that we may serve humbly, walk faithfully, and live as your beloved children. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Sacrament of Holy Communion

INVITATION FOR COMMUNION

Rev. Jenny Lee

CONFESSION AND PARDON Unison

Merciful God,

We confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.

We have failed to be an obedient church.

We have not done your will,

we have broken your law,

we have rebelled against your love,

we have not loved our neighbors,

and we have not heard the cry of the needy.

Forgive us, we pray.

Free us for joyful obedience,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(prayers in Silence)

Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;

that proves God’s love toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ,

We are forgiven!

Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

UMH 13-14 (or See insert)

THE LORD’S PRAYER

SHARING THE HOLY COMMUNION

COMMUNION SONG

TFWS 2260

COMMUNION PRAYER Unison

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his
disciples, and said: “take, eat; this is my body which given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it
to his disciples, and said: “drink from this, all of you; this is my blood
of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the
forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living
sacrifice, in union with Christ’s offering for us, as we proclaim the
mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

**(Together) Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on
these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and
blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood.**

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly
banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy
Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. **Amen.**

JANUARY 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>Suggested donation items: Spaghetti sauce, macaroni, peanut butter, pasta and rice. Please leave them in the basket at the front of the church!</p> 	<p>Atlas will be collecting funds for the Steck children who were involved in a car accident Dec 7 and lost both their parents. They will be moving in with family and the youngest child has extensive lifelong medical needs. Donations can be noted in the offering and we will coordinate with Deb Hammer to get the family the money.</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>Loving Support for the Steck Children.</p> <p>This January, our mission is to surround the Steck children with prayers, love and support in the wake of unimaginable loss.</p> <p>A devastating accident claimed the lives of both parents, Jeremiah and Erin. Their three beloved children, Eric (10), Lydia (8) and Levi (6), survived, though each suffered serious injuries. The road ahead will be long for this family. Your prayers and financial support are greatly appreciated.</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>The Sailor Hat offering will go to support the Steck family during this difficult time.</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)	Volunteer Needed
Fellowship	Volunteer Needed
Counter	Russ Hammer
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
Communion	Barbara Loomis

Atlas

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

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
Communion	Jim and Karen Sciacca

Thank you Volunteers

BIRTHDAY'S & ANNIVERSARIES

Kenneth Olson 1/13
Cindy Berenschot 1/14
Jim Loomis 1/14
Pauline Bistram 1/15
Vanessa Harmon 1/16
Peter & Kathy Gionis 1/16



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: **Law Enforcement Appreciation Sunday/ Baptism of the Lord**
Happy New Year!

Worship Service and A Week Schedule

1/11:	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
1/12:	8:00 pm	Harmony Choir Board Meeting via Zoom
1/14:	1:00 pm	UMW Meeting (G)
	6:00-8:30 pm	Youth Worship Night at Woodlake Camp (G)
1/16:	1:30 pm	Ad Council Meeting (A)
1/18:	12:15 pm	Ad Council Meeting (SCF)

Upcoming Events & News

- 1/19: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
1/20: 10:00 am Deadline to submit February Newsletter & Calendar Info

Next Sunday (January 18th):

Central -Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Scripture	Toni Koons
Acolyte(s)	Volunteer Needed
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	Cheryl Olson



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

Breakthrough Prayers:

Please Pray For: Deb Hammer (the Steck children), Sandre Erickson (son, Mike's health and granddaughter, Willow's recovery), Sally Alderfer (hospitalized), Pastor Jenny (Bob Determan's family).



Praise the Lord with Joy and Gratitude: We appreciate all the officers of Law Enforcement Department!

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



January 11th, 2026
Matthew 3:13-17; Micah 6:6-8

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

“Sent to Serve, Sent in Love”

Happy New Year to all of you! Today is a beginning. A new Sunday. A new year of ministry. When we stand at a beginning like this, it is natural to ask a simple question: What is your New Year’s resolution? At the beginning of every year, we make decisions and create a New Year wish list. But in this moment, I would like to invite you to pause and consider a different question: **What does God desire from us?** Not just from this church as an institution—but from us as people who are trying to follow Christ in this place and time.

That question is not new. God’s people have asked it for centuries. And from the prophet Micah (6:6–8), we hear one of the clearest answers in all of Scripture:

“With what shall I come before the Lord?” “Shall I come with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?” “Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand of rivers of oil?”

In other words: What is enough, God? What do you want from us? And then comes the answer—simple, direct, and life-shaping: “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”

It is not grand religious performance. Not dramatic sacrifice. But a way of life.

Today, as we reflect on what it means to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God, we also pause to recognize **Law Enforcement Appreciation Sunday**. This is a day to acknowledge those in our communities who are sent to serve in difficult, complex, and often unseen ways—men and women who step into situations most of us hope to avoid, carrying responsibilities that weigh heavily on both body and soul. Doing justice is not simple work. It requires discernment. Loving kindness is not easy in moments of conflict or fear. Walking humbly demands restraint, wisdom, and the courage to act without certainty of thanks or safety.

Many in law enforcement live at the intersection of these calls every day. They are asked to uphold justice, protect life, and serve the common good—often under pressure, scrutiny, and risk. Today, we give thanks for their service, acknowledge the burdens they carry, and pray for God’s wisdom, protection, and peace to surround them and their families.

On the last Sunday of 2025, it was a snowy, stormy day. I received an “Avoid travel” notice from the Grantsburg Police Department’s Facebook page, and also from parishioners who knew my travel plans. As a result, our church service was canceled. Still, I decided to drive toward Wisconsin Dells to attend the Korean Caucus Family Retreat.

However, within 30 minutes, I began to regret not listening to the advice I had received. As snowstorms came toward my car, fear set in. I kept asking myself, ‘What am I doing here?’ ‘Why didn’t I listen?’ ‘Should I turn back?’ As I struggled through the storm, I saw many cars stuck in ditches—and police vehicles stopped to help them. Officers stood beside dangerous roads so others could be safe. When I saw those police cars, I felt a sense of relief. I thought, ‘If something goes wrong, they might help me.’

In that moment, I wondered who they were—and why they did what they do.

Remember this: like all of us, they are not defined only by what they do. They, too, are beloved children of God—claimed by grace before performance, before success or failure, before public judgment. They courageously take risks to serve others. They are people in need of prayer, compassion, accountability, and community.

“Do justice. Love kindness. Walk humbly with God.” This is not a checklist to earn God’s favor. This is a description of how people live when they already know they belong to God.

That truth becomes even clearer when we turn to the Gospel story of Jesus’ baptism.

Matthew tells us that Jesus comes to the Jordan River, where John is baptizing. John is calling people to repentance—to turn their lives back toward God. When Jesus steps forward, John is confused. “I need to be baptized by you,” John says, “and you come to me?” John knows what we know: Jesus has no sin to confess, no repentance to make. And yet—Jesus steps into the water anyway. Before he preaches. Before he heals the sick. Before he calls disciples, confronts injustice, or walks the road to the cross—Jesus steps into the river with the people. He does not stand above them. He does not separate himself from them. He joins them in the world’s dangers, taking the risk to serve his beloved people.

And when Jesus comes up out of the water, the heavens open, the Spirit descends like a dove, and a voice says: “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

Notice the order. Jesus has not yet begun his ministry. He has not yet done the work we remember him for. And yet God calls him *Beloved*.

This is so important for us to hear at the beginning of a new year and a new season of ministry. God’s blessing comes before the sending. God’s love comes before the serving. Jesus is not loved because of what he will do. He serves because he is loved. And that is where our parish theme for 2026 is rooted: “**Sent to Serve, Sent in Love.**”

We are sent—but not pushed. We are sent—but not pressured. We are sent because, in baptism, we are first named and claimed as God’s own. In baptism, God speaks over us the same promise spoken over Jesus: “**You belong to me. You are my beloved.**”

Baptism is not just about forgiveness of sin. It is about being drawn into a new covenant—a life shaped by Christ’s way in the world. To be baptized is to be marked not only with grace, but with purpose. In Micah’s words:

- **We are sent to do justice**—to pay attention to who is hurting, who is overlooked, who is pushed to the margins.
- **We are sent to love kindness**—not as an occasional gesture, but as a way of being, rooted in God’s steadfast, covenant love.
- **We are sent to walk humbly with God**—not rushing ahead, not claiming all the answers, but trusting that God walks beside us.

This is what it means to be sent to serve. And we are sent in love—not our own strength, not our own goodness, but the love that first met us at the waters of baptism and still flows through our lives.

As we begin this year together, we do not begin with a list of everything we must accomplish. We begin where Jesus began: Standing in the water. Listening for God’s voice. Remembering who we are. Beloved. Blessed. And sent.

So may we step into this year gently and faithfully— Doing justice. Loving kindness. Walking humbly with our God. And may we go from this place, **sent to serve, sent in love.**

Thanks be to God. Amen.