

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
January 18th, 2026
“2nd Sunday After the Epiphany”

*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

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and Mother,
and from the Sovereign Jesus Christ.

We hear God naming our names

and calling us to join the company of the saints.

We are God’s chosen ones, valued in our uniqueness
and commissioned for service to all.

**How can we be saints when our labor seems fruitless
or servants when our strength is spent for nothing?**

God does not measure our success
but rather our faithfulness.

**We will turn to God for the strength we need,
for greater knowledge and more eloquent speech.**

You are not lacking in any spiritual gift;

God is faithful, and will provide for us. Amen.

***DEDICATING HYMN** *We Are Called* TFWS 2172 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Gracious and loving God, we come before You with open hearts,
seeking Your presence. You know our longings even before we
speak them aloud. As we worship today, invite us again to *come
and see*—to stay with Christ, to listen for Your voice, and to be
shaped by Your love. Renew us through Your Word and Spirit, so
that we may be sent to serve and sent in love. In Jesus’ name we
pray. Amen.

CHILDREN’S TIME (G)

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

John 1:29-42

(NRSV, p.92 in the New Testament, and
p.898 in the Living Bible)

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

SERMON **“What Are You Looking For?”**

Rev. Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Lord Jesus, we hear Your question: **“What are you looking for?”**
We come as we are, seeking You with open hearts. Stay with us, guide
us, and fill us with Your Holy Spirit. Send us to serve, send us in love,
and root us in Your grace and love. May our lives reflect Your mercy,
kindness, and truth. In Your holy 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**

***DOXOLOGY**

UMH 95

JANUARY CHURCH MISSIONS

ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Ashleigh Olson

INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:
Atlas collects and recycles ink jet cartridges and cell phones year-round.



LOAVES & FISHES NEEDS OUR ONGOING SUPPORT

Suggested donation items:
Spaghetti sauce, macaroni, peanut butter, pasta and rice. Please leave them in the basket at the front of the church!



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.



GRANTSBURG

Mission committee chair: Deb Hammer

BE A "BACK-PACK BACKER"!

REMEMBER ...
Every Sunday
Is MAC 'N CHEESE SUNDAY!
Supporting the Salvation Army's "Happy Kids Back-Pack Program"



Loving Support for the Steck Children.

This January, our mission is to surround the Steck children with prayers, love and support in the wake of unimaginable loss.

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.



ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh

Food Shelf



(Communion Sunday)

Sailor Hat Offering:



The Sailor Hat offering will go to support the Steck family during this difficult time.

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

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	Kathy Gionis
Usher(s)	Lynn Hanson
Counter	Peter Gionis
Bell Ringer	Jim Andrews
Flowers	Women of the church



BIRTHDAY'S & ANNIVERSARIES



Briella Reid
1/21

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: **2nd Sunday After the Epiphany and Human Relations day!**
May God bless you in the New Year!

Worship Service and A Week Schedule

1/18:	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
1/18:	12:15 pm	Ad Council Meeting (SCF)
1/:19		Martin Luther King Jr. Day
	3:00 pm	GWWT meet having a chair yoga class at Faith Lutheran Church
1/20:	10:00 am- 1:30 pm	Pastor Jenny Volunteers at Loaves and Fishes in Luck
	6:30 pm	No Ad Council meeting in person but complete documentation(G)
	10::00 am	Deadline to submit February Newsletter & Calendar Info
1/21:	4:00-5:00 pm	Go Fish for Kids (from 5 years to 4th grade) (G)
1/23:	11:00 am	Special Ad Council Meeting (SCF)

Upcoming Events & News

February: Stewardship Month

2/8: Dedication Sunday for the Church Leaders

Next Sunday (January 25th):

Central -Grantsburg

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

Atlas

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Sue Olson
Usher	Cheryl Olson
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
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

Breakthrough Prayers:

Please Pray For: Julie Branstad (Sally Alderfer's healing and recovery), Paulie Kratchmer (brother Tom, open heart surgery), Charles Wright (veterans and those in service), Deb Hammer (Peace in the USA), Sandre Erickson (son, Mike's healing), Cheryl Olson (Dawn Bergstrom's healing and Lee Frederickson's recovery), Sharon Asp (brother, Dan's healing), Lynn Hanson (Robins' family), Kathy Gionis (protection to those who are involved in the protestant movement in the cities).

Praise the Lord with Joy and Gratitude: Pastor Jenny (Having a good vacation and getting back home safely).

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



January 18th, 2026
John 1:29-42

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



“What Are You Looking For?”

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site. Jesus and Moses were hanging out in heaven one day when they began talking about how bored they were. Moses said, “Hey Jesus, you know what we haven’t done in a while? We should go down to earth and perform some miracles.” Jesus thought that was a great idea, so they hopped onto a cloud and floated down to a city.

“What miracle would you like to perform first?” Moses asked. “I think I’ll walk on water,” replied Jesus. “Last time I did it, the people really went wild.” So, Jesus walked to the edge of a lake surrounded by hundreds of people, stepped onto the water—and promptly sank. Confused, He stepped out of the water and tried again, but once more He sank.

Turning to Moses, Jesus said, “I don’t know what’s wrong. Last time I did this, it worked like a charm.” Moses replied, “Well, Jesus, you have to remember—last time you did this, you didn’t have holes in your feet.”

Did you catch what Jesus said to His first disciples in today’s Scripture? The first words Jesus speaks in the Gospel of John are not a sermon, not a command, and not a doctrine. They are a **question**: “What are you looking for?” In the Living Bible (our Atlas pew Bible), it says, “What do you want?”

Jesus is the One who answers our prayers. In Matthew 7:7–8, the Gospel tells us:

“Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.”

After Jesus’ baptism, John the Baptist introduces Jesus to his disciples, declaring, “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” Two of John’s disciples begin following Jesus. They are curious, hopeful—maybe unsure. And Jesus turns and asks them not who they are, not what they believe, but **what they are seeking**.

This question still echoes today. What are **we** looking for as individuals? What are **we** looking for as a church, standing at the beginning of a new ministry year? Notice that Jesus does not correct the disciples. He does not test their theology or faith. He does not assign them a task.

He starts with their **desire**. Because faith does not begin with duty—it begins with longing or curiosity. We come to Jesus searching for many things: meaning, healing, belonging, direction, hope, friendship, fellowship, or simply rest.

Jesus knows that before we can be **sent**, we must first be **seen**. Before we can **serve**, we must know why we are seeking Him at all. When the disciples answer, “Rabbi, where are you staying?”—were they really just curious about Jesus’ address? Probably not. They were asking for time, for relationship, for presence. They might want to stay with him.

And Jesus responds simply: “**Come and see.**” Not “Come and understand everything.” Not “Come and prove yourself.” Just—come and see. Yes, when you invite your loved ones to church, you can simply say to them. “Come and see how God works for you.”

Do you remember what you were looking for from Jesus when you first came to Him?
Did you find what you were looking for—or are you still searching?

When I met Jesus in a hospital in 1990, I wanted my body healed—my broken spine. I promised Him, “If You heal me, I will do whatever You ask, and wherever You send me, I will go.” He healed me and enabled me to walk again. And as I promised, I was sent in His love—to seminary, to church planting, to the United States, and finally to the Upper St. Croix Parish here in Wisconsin.

My point is this: I didn’t know much about Jesus at first. But once I met Him, I came to know Him as my Savior and my Healer through my experience—and that is why I follow Him. So whether you feel you know Jesus well—or barely at all—just come as you are. Ask Him honestly for what you seek.

John tells us that the disciples went and **stayed** with Jesus that day, even though they did not yet fully know Him. Discipleship begins not with action, but with presence. Before we are sent out, we are invited to stay in—to remain with Christ. This matters deeply for our ministry theme this year: “**Sent to Serve, Sent in Love.**” Serving without staying leads to burnout. Love without rooting in Jesus leads to exhaustion.

Micah 6:8 reminds us: “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” Notice the order. We **walk with God**, and from that relationship flows justice, kindness, and humble service.

After Andrew spends time with Jesus, something changes. He does not keep the experience to himself. He goes to his brother Simon and says, “We have found the Messiah.” Andrew doesn’t have all the answers. He doesn’t preach a sermon. He simply shares what he has encountered. This is how the church is sent—not as experts, but as witnesses.

When we truly stay with Jesus, we are naturally sent:

- Sent to serve, not to be seen
- Sent in love, not in judgment
- Sent humbly, not forcefully

So here is the question for us this year: **What are we looking for?**

Are we looking for pews filled with people?

Are we looking for growth—or faithfulness?

Are we looking for healing—or reconciliation?

Are we looking for success—or service shaped by love?

Jesus asks this question because what we seek shapes how we serve. If we seek status, our service becomes heavy. If we seek Christ, our service becomes love in motion. Church, as we step into this new year, Jesus stands among us and asks again: “**What are you looking for?**”

And if we are honest, we may not yet have a perfect answer. But Jesus still says, “*Come and see.*”

Stay with Him. Walk humbly with Him—through prayer, Scripture, worship, and fellowship. Then justice and kindness will flow through us and through this church—joining mission projects, reaching out to others, and welcoming all with hospitality, so that they may know we are Christians by our love.

And then—go where He sends you: into your communities, your workplaces, your schools, and your homes. But first, God has sent you **here**, to this very church, to stay with Him through worship, Scripture, prayer, and fellowship.

Then—sent to serve. Sent in love. Rooted in the love of Christ.

Thanks be to God. Amen.