

**RESPONDING PRAYER Unison**

Gracious God, from dust You formed us, and by Your breath we live. As we enter this holy season of Lent, humble our hearts and renew our spirits. Forgive us for holding too tightly to what is not ours. Teach us faithful stewardship of our time, talents, and treasures. Help us return to You with sincerity and trust. Shape us into people who live generously and love deeply. Through Christ our Lord. 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**

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**

Generous and faithful God, all that we have comes from You. From dust You formed us, and by Your grace we live and give. Receive these offerings as signs of our gratitude and trust. Use our gifts—our time, talents, and treasures—for Your kingdom's work. Shape us into faithful stewards who serve with joyful hearts. May our giving reflect Your love in the world. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another*

**\*CLOSING HYMN**

*Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus*

**UMH 514 (vs. 1 & 2)**

**\*BENEDICTION**

**Rev. Jenny Lee**

**\*POSTLUDE**

**Toni Koons (G)/Sharon Asp (A & SCF)**

Worship resource "Fresh Winds of the Spirit" by Lavon Bayler

 **Upper St. Croix Parish  
United Methodist Church**

The 2026 Parish Ministry Theme:  
**"Sent to Serve, Sent in Love" (Micah 6:8)**

**Stewardship Month  
"Ash Sunday/ First Sunday in Lent"**



**Grantsburg-Central**  
Since 1897



**Atlas**  
Since 1887



**St. Croix Falls**  
Since 1859

**SUNDAY SERVICES:**

**9:00 AM at Grantsburg (with Zoom Service)**

**10:00 AM at Atlas (10:15 AM, Sunday School)**

**11:15 AM at St. Croix Falls**

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**Parish Secretary Colleen Norenberg:** [centralumc2016@gmail.com](mailto:centralumc2016@gmail.com)

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

[www.upperstcroixparish.org](http://www.upperstcroixparish.org)

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

# Upper St. Croix Parish

Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls

February 22nd, 2026

“Stewardship Month”

“Ash Sunday/ First Sunday in Lent”

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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

Come, people of God, to know again who you are,  
return to the One who gives you life.

**We come as children of God,**

**longing for a closer walk with our Creator.**

The abundant grace of God  
is offered to all of us in Christ Jesus.

**We gather to receive that gift,**

**to learn and remember how best to use it.**

Let nothing distract you from that intent;

We have assembled that God may speak to us.

**We wait upon God, the Sovereign One,**

**who knows us as we are and loves us. Amen!**

\*DEDICATING HYMN *Hymn of Promise* UMH 707 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Holy and gracious God, we gather in Your presence with humble hearts. You formed us from dust and breathed into us the breath of life. As we enter this sacred time of worship, quiet our restless minds and open our spirits to Your Word. Renew us through Your mercy and guide us by Your truth. Help us offer ourselves fully—our praise, our prayers, and our lives—to You. May this worship draw us closer to You. Amen.

## Ash Service

PRAYER OF CONFESSION Unison

Merciful God, we cannot escape our transgressions. We have sinned against You and done what is evil in Your sight. We have tried to cover up our wrongdoing and have exaggerated our role in accomplishing good things. We have sought to lay up treasures on earth while neglecting eternal values and selfless commitment to causes greater than ourselves. Forgive us, we pray, and set us on a new course. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Pastor Jenny Lee

In steadfast love God is merciful and gracious, sparing us from the punishment we deserve and lifting us above the consequences of our sin. God washes away all the stains of our past to create in us clean hearts and a right spirit. We are reconciled to God! Let us rejoice in our salvation! Amen.

THANKSGIVING OVER ASHES Unison

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and repentance, so that we may remember that only by your gracious gift are we given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Please come to the front as directed, and receive the ashes on your forehead or back of your hand.

*Pastor: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*

*Receiver: Amen, I believe it.*

*Proclamation of God’s Word*

\*THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Joel 2:12-14

(NRSV, p.847 in the Old Testament, and p. 745 in the Living Bible)

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

*Thanks be to God. Amen!*

SERMON “From Dust to Life: Stewarding What Truly Matters”


*(Stewards of God’s Grace #4)*

Rev. Jenny Lee

# FEBRUARY CHURCH MISSIONS



## ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Ashleigh Olson

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:</b><br/>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>Suggested donation items:<br/>Spaghetti sauce, macaroni, peanut butter, pasta and rice. Please leave them in the basket at the front of the church!</p>  | <p><b>SOUPER BOWL OF CARING</b></p> <p>The idea is simple but powerful: SMALL GIFTS, BIG IMPACT. We will be collecting cans of soup and financial donations in February to support our local food shelf.</p>  <p>Thank you for your kindness and generosity!</p> |
|--|--|---|



## 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>Souper Bowl of Caring will take place on February 8th, coinciding with Super Bowl Sunday, and aims to support local food charities through community involvement.</p> <p>We will be collecting cans of soup and financial donations that will go to our local food shelf in February. Thank you for your support!</p>  |
|--|--|

## ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Food Shelf</b></p> <p><i>(Communion Sunday)</i></p>  | <p><b>Sailor Hat Offering:</b></p> <p>The Sailor Hat offering will go to help a local church family with medical expenses.</p>  |
|--|--|

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> |
| Counter           | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> |
| Cleaning          | Sandra Erickson         |



## Atlas

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

## St. Croix Falls

|             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| Pianist     | Sharon Asp    |
| Liturgist   | Karen Sciacca |
| Usher(s)    | Jim Andrews   |
| Counter     | Peter Gionis  |
| Bell Ringer | Jim Sciacca   |
| Flowers     | Lynn Hanson   |

## BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Lila Tooze        | 2/22 |
| Scott Andrews     | 2/22 |
| Deb & Russ Hammer | 2/22 |
| Hannah Smestad    | 2/23 |
| Dauntay Erickson  | 2/27 |



## 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](http://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: Stewardship Month/Ash Sunday/First Sunday of Lent  
May God bless you!

## Worship Service and A Week Schedule

|       |                  |  |
|-------|------------------|--|
| 2/22: | 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                                  |
| 2/23: | 10:30 am 1:00 pm | North Harmony Choir Rehearsal at First UMC-Rice Lake |
| 2/24: | 5:00 pm          | Ministry Task Force Team Meeting (G)                 |
| 2/25: | 4:30-6:30 pm     | Youth Group Gathering (G)                            |
| 2/26: | 5:30 pm          | Lenten Soup Supper (SCF)                             |
|       | 6:00-7:30 pm     | Lenten Bible Study at SCF and via Zoom               |

## Upcoming Events & News

**2026 Lenten Bible Study:** *Seven Words: Listening to Christ from the Cross* by Susan Robb, on Thursdays at 5:30 pm with Soup Supper (2/26, 3/6, 3/12, 3/19, 3/26 and 4/2) at St. Croix Falls UMC and via Zoom. Register with Pastor Jenny.

3/5: Pastor Jenny will attend the lunch and conversation with Bishop and Korean Clergy at Annual Conference Center in Sun Prairie.

## Next Sunday (March 1st):

### Central -Grantsburg

|                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Pianist           | Toni Koons              |
| Scripture Reading | Toni Koons              |
| Acolyte(s)        | Willow Nyland           |
| Fellowship        | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> |
| Counter           | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> |
| Cleaning          | Sandra Erickson         |
| Communion         | Barbara Loomis          |

### Atlas

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

### St. Croix Falls

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

## Breakthrough Prayers:

**Please Pray For:** Paulie Kratchmer (Tom, brother's healing); Kay Lamphere (healing); Cheryl Olson (Ginger, cousin's healing); Lynn Hanson (grandchildren's healing and God's care); Deb and Russ Hammer (safe travels); Barbara Loomis (Jim's recovery); and Karen Sciacca (Wendy's healing and recovery).

**Praise the Lord with Joy and Gratitude:** Sally Aldorfer (cancer-free); Toni Koons (sharing eggs from her home chickens); Kayleen Branstad (a wonderful trip with her daughter and granddaughter); Sharon Asp (God's grace in answering prayers); and Karen Sciacca (time spent watching her grandsons).

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



February 22th, 2025  
Joel 2:12-14

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



**“From Dust to Life: Stewarding What Truly Matters”**  
**(Stewards of God’s Grace #4)**

I want to start with something funny I found on an internet site. I think I’ve shared this before, but it’s a good reminder as we have our Ash Sunday service:

After church, Johnny tells his parents he has to go talk to the pastor immediately. They agree, and the pastor greets the family.

“Pastor,” Johnny says, “I heard you say today that our bodies came from dust.”

“That’s right, Johnny, I did,” the pastor replies.

“And I heard you say that when we die, our bodies go back to dust.”

“Yes, I’m glad you were listening,” the pastor says. “Why do you ask?”

“Well, you better come over to our house right away and look under my bed, because there’s someone either comin’ or goin’!”

Good morning, everyone! Today we begin the season of Lent—a time to slow down, reflect, and turn our hearts toward God. On Ash Sunday, we remember that **“from dust we came, and to dust we shall return.”** These words are humbling; they remind us that life is not ours to control.

As we start Lent, let us rethink stewardship. This month, we have reflected on stewardship not just in terms of money, but of **our lives, our time, and our relationships with God and with one another.** Stewardship begins with recognizing that all we have is a gift from God.

In Today’s scripture, **Joel 2:12–14** calls us to “return to the Lord with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning.” It’s a call to repentance and self-examination, asking us to consider what we hold too tightly in our lives.

At the beginning of Lent, I took last year’s palm leaves from Palm Sunday and made ashes from them. I remember how fresh and beautiful those palms were, and now they are dry, turned to ash. I displayed a couple of palm branches here so we can see how leaves fade and dry. While I was setting fire to the palm leaves, a scripture verse came to mind: **“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever”** (Isaiah 40:8). Yes, everything turns to dust—including humans—but the Word of God never disappears.

We mark ashes on our forehead or the back of our hand, and the minister says, **“From dust we came, and to dust we shall return.”** The ashes remind us of our mortality: we are dust, and everything we have is entrusted by God.

Stewardship begins with understanding that nothing ultimately belongs to us—not our time, talents, lives, treasures, family, children, grandchildren, church, or community. Everything is entrusted to us by God, and someday we will give an account before Him (Matthew 25).

We are thankful to God for Ash Wednesday and the Lenten season, because God intentionally gives us this opportunity for repentance and self-examination. The *Living Bible* (Atlas Pew Bible) says, “Turn to me now, while there is time. Give me all your hearts.” Indeed, God gives us the chance to turn back to Him. The season of Lent is a time for a spiritual reset.

Let us examine ourselves and reflect on where we have been selfish with our time, resources, or relationships. The word “Lent” comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten*, meaning “spring.” It is a season of preparation for celebrating Easter.

During Lent, Christians often fast or give up something as a meaningful expression of repentance and spiritual renewal. Lent lasts for forty days before Easter. Do you know why it is for forty days? Next to the number seven, forty occurs most frequently in the Bible. It represents a period of testing or preparation:

1. Rain fell for forty days and nights during Noah's time. It is preparation of new life in a new creation (Genesis 7:12, 17).
2. Moses was on the mountain of Sini with the Lord for forty days and forty nights, without eating bread or drinking water to receive the covenant of God (Exodus 34:28).
3. Elijah got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights to fulfill his mission (1 Kings 19:8).
4. Israelites wandered forty years in the wilderness to find the Promised Land (Numbers 14:33–34).
5. The spies Joshua sent searched the Promised Land for forty days (Numbers 13:25).
6. Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, 'Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown' (Jonah 3:4).
7. Jesus fasted and prayed in the desert for forty days before beginning His ministry (Matthew 4:2).

These examples guide our forty-day observance of Lent, incorporating fasting, prayer, reflection, reading Scripture, good deeds, volunteering, and other spiritual disciplines. It is a time to renew spirit, body, and soul, drawing closer to God.

We face many challenges in our faith journey: snowstorms, cold or icy conditions, physical weakness, struggles in relationships, and many other pressures. It is not easy to maintain our faith, adhere to church schedules, or follow Jesus consistently. Yet, despite difficulties, we are called to continue our journey in faith.

Ashes remind us that all humans come from dust and shall return to dust. God created humans in His image, using dust: **“God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being”** (Genesis 2:7). Adam comes from *Adama* in Hebrew, meaning “dust.” Disconnected from God, we are dust; connected through the Holy Spirit, we become living beings.

After sinning in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were punished to work for life. Yet God, in His love, made garments of skin for them and said: **“By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return”** (Genesis 3:19).

Stewardship is not only about what we give financially—it's about **how we live every day**. Imagine holding a handful of sand. You can grasp it tightly, but it slips through your fingers. Or, you can open your hand, letting some fall away—what remains is easier to hold and more can be shared.

This is Lent in a nutshell. God invites us to open our hands—not to lose, but to live fully and share generously.

This Lent, I invite each of you to take one step in stewardship:

- Reflect on what you are holding too tightly.
- Identify one way to give your time, talent, or treasure.
- Commit it to God, knowing that everything we have ultimately comes from Him.

As we go through this season, let our ashes remind us daily: **from dust we came, through God we live, and for God we give**. Thanks be to God. Amen.