

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
March 15th, 2026
“Membership Caring Month”
“4th Sunday in Lent”

*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 from your exile
to meet the God who sets us free.

What does it mean to be free?

How can we make the choices freedom offers?

Com from lives of unfaithfulness
to encounter the God whose care is unceasing.

What does faithfulness require of us?

How can we, unworthy ones, accept God’s care?

Come from the shadows where you have hidden
to rejoice in the God who brings light and hope.

What will happen when our deeds are revealed?

How will our lives be changed by God’s truth? Amen.

***DEDICATING HYMN** *Grace Greater than Our Sin*
UMH 365 (vs. 1 & 4)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Gracious and loving God, we gather this morning with grateful hearts. You have called us from many places into one community of faith. Open our eyes to see your presence among us and open our hearts to receive your Word. Fill this place with your Holy Spirit so that our worship may be pleasing to you. As we sing, pray, and listen, renew our faith and guide us to serve others in love. We offer this time to you, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

John 9:1-12; 35-41

(NRSV, p.102-103 in the Old Testament,
and p. 908-910 in the Living Bible)

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

SERMON

“Everything is the Grace of God”
(Membership Caring Month #3)

Rev. Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Loving God, thank you for opening our eyes through your Word. You have seen us in our need and healed us with your grace. Send us now to serve in love. Help us notice those who feel unseen, reach out to those who are absent, and bring light to those who struggle. Give us willing hearts, caring hands, and faithful steps to follow Jesus. May our church be a community that serves, loves, and reflects your grace every day. 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

***DOXOLOGY**

UMH 95

MARCH 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>March mission at Atlas is Garden Seeds for Jackson Area Ministries Gardening Project.</p> <p>Suggested seeds are: beans (pole and bush), beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, corn, cucumbers, lettuce, pumpkins, radishes, spinach, squash, turnips, watermelon.</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>Central UMC's March mission will be collecting financial donations to help cover the funeral expenses for the Shellito family.</p> <p>Three members of the Shellito family tragically passed away in a house fire on Feb. 3rd. We would like to show our love and support by helping the family during this difficult time.</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 toward helping the homeless through the SCF Police Department with vouchers.</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	Colleen Adams-Schween

St. Croix Falls

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

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAY'S AND ANNIVERSARIES

Giada Baglio	3/16
Barry Norenberg	3/16
Paulie Kratchmer	3/18
Jameson Koser	3/18
Pam Clausen	3/20
Rene Wright	3/20



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: Membership Caring Month/4th Sunday in Lent
UMCOR Sunday!
May God bless you!

Worship Service and A Week Schedule

3/15:	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
3/16:	8:00 pm	Harmony Choir Board Meeting via Zoom
3/17:	6:30 pm	Ad Council Meeting (G)
3/18:	4:00-5:00 pm	Go Fish (G)
3/19:	10:30 am-1:00 pm	Pastor Jenny volunteers at Loaves & Fishes in Luck
	5:30 pm	Lenten Soup Supper (SCF)
	6:00-7:30 pm	Lenten Bible Study at SCF and via Zoom
3/20:		Celebration of Life Service for Shellito Family
3/21:	10:00 am-noon	Family Fun Day (G)
	2:00-3:30 pm	Jameson Koser's Birthday Party (SCF)

Upcoming Events & News

March is Membership Caring Month: Please check in on one another!

Bible Reading Challenge: Please pick the Bible Reading Planner card!

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

March 28: Atlas Spring Bake and Craft Sale

Next Sunday (March 22nd):

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	Sue Olson
Usher	Colleen Adams-Schween
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Josie Grimes

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

Breakthrough Prayers:

Please Pray For: Sue Olson (son Troy's therapy and recovery), Lynn Hanson (grandson, A.J.), Sandra Erickson (healing for her son Mike), Toni Koons (for her friend Michelle's healing), Jim Andrews (for his brother Joe's recovery), Kathy and Peter Gionis (safe trip), Deb Hammer (for peace in the world), and Karen Sciacca (for Wendy's healing).

Praise the Lord with Joy and Gratitude: Sharon Asp (God's answer to her prayers), and Karen Sciacca (family union).

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



March 15th, 2026
John 9:1-41

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



“Everything is the Grace of God” *(Membership Caring Month #3)*

I want to start with something funny I found on an internet site: A middle-aged woman has a heart attack and is taken to the hospital. While on the operating table, she has a near-death experience. During this experience, she sees God and asks Him, “Is this it?” God says, “No,” and explains that she has another 30 years to live.

Upon her recovery, she decides to stay in the hospital and have a facelift, liposuction, tummy tuck, and so on. She even has someone come in to change her hair color. She figures that since she’s got another 30 years, she might as well make the most of it.

After the last operation, she walks out of the hospital and is tragically killed by an ambulance speeding by. She arrives in front of God and complains, “I thought You said I had another 30 years.” God replies, “I didn’t recognize you!”

In the world we live in today, looks are valued so highly that we could call it **appearance supremacy**. Appearance is often the first criterion for dating or choosing a marriage partner., even getting a job. Even if it’s not appearance, external factors—such as education, financial ability, or occupation—are considered important. It is natural to consider these things, because education, wealth, and occupation play a significant role in life.

However, the most important thing is not someone’s appearance or external conditions, but the center of the person. If God judged us by outward appearance or worldly status, we would never be able to come to God or receive eternal life. Thanks be to God, because God never judges us according to appearance or external conditions, but according to our faith in Jesus Christ. I am so grateful that we are saved in the faith of Jesus Christ by the grace of God.

Today, we reflect on the story of the man born blind in John 9:1-41. This man had never seen the face of his parents or friends, nor known the beauty of a sunrise or sunset. In his society, he was considered a sinner—whether for his own supposed faults or those of his parents.

Yet, as Jesus walked by, He saw this man, who did nothing to draw attention to himself. Unlike many who came to Jesus shouting to be healed or touching His robe, the blind man was passive and unnoticed by others—but not by Jesus. Jesus stopped, noticed him, paid attention to him, and acted with love and care. This is the **prevenient grace of God**—the grace that comes first, reaching us even when we do not yet know God or do not know what to ask for. God’s love is open to everyone, and God sees each of us in our need.

Jesus sees what we often miss. The disciples asked, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (John 9:2). They assumed that misfortune was punishment. But Jesus said, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him.” Well, we don’t always understand, just like the disciples. Even if it is for God’s work and glory, we may still ask, “Why me? Why my family?” It can feel as though we are disconnected from God when we struggle with family matters.

Jesus knew what we need. He focused on what the man needed: healing, restoration, and connection. In our own lives, there are people in our church family who may feel unseen—those who have been absent, those struggling quietly, or those disconnected for any reason.

In this **Membership Caring Month**, God calls us to open our eyes, as Jesus did, to see those who may feel overlooked. To notice them, to reach out in love, and to remind them that they are cherished members of God's family.

We have learned from Jesus to love God and to love our neighbors. But love is shown through action—through our hands and feet. These actions flow from **the grace of sanctification** as we grow in faith. Make a call, send a card, or schedule a visit. Even small gestures of care can shine God's light into someone's life, just as Jesus brought light to the blind man. Jesus' healing was both personal and active. He used mud and water in a surprising way, sending the blind man to wash in the Pool of Siloam, whose name means "Sent." This act reminds us that God **sends us into the world to serve**, just as the man was sent to receive healing.

Our 2026 theme, "**Sent to Serve and Sent in Love**," calls us to action. We are sent to care for our neighbors, to support one another, and to participate in God's work of healing and restoration. Service is not just about programs or events; it's about living as God's hands and feet in everyday life. Please pray with these questions: Who is God calling me to serve this week? How can I bring love and light into their life?

The blind man was not only physically healed but also spiritually awakened. Jesus' love transformed his life. Likewise, when we serve in love, we participate in God's transformative work. Love deepens faith, restores relationships, and strengthens the body of Christ.

As we celebrate **Membership Caring Month**, let us remember that love is action. Reaching out to others, even in simple ways, reflects the grace of God in tangible ways. It reminds those who may feel forgotten that they are seen, loved, and valued.

I want to share a story I used in my doctoral dissertation, from Katie Cannon's essay "*Remembering What We Never Knew*." There was a renowned organist giving a grand performance. After a standing ovation, he praised himself aloud. A black man who worked behind the scenes, helping the organ, quietly said, "We are doing a wonderful job tonight." The maestro angrily dismissed him. When the second half began, the organ would not play. The maestro realized that without the unseen worker, there was no music. He publicly acknowledged the man, apologizing and honoring his role.

This story reminds us that God's work often happens through hidden hands. In our church, many "behind-the-scenes" efforts sustain ministry: those who pray, support, volunteer quietly, or reach out to members. Each act of service, whether seen or unseen, is part of God's work.

Even though we may not always recognize your efforts or your hidden work, God knows everything you have done and continue to do. Without your commitment and volunteer service, our church ministry could not move forward. We deeply appreciate our volunteers and hidden workers in our church ministry!

Today's scripture teaches us that Jesus sees the unseen, heals the broken, and sends us to serve in love. In 2026, God calls us to live out our theme: **Sent to Serve and Sent in Love**. Remember that Jesus said, "We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4). Therefore, let us reach out to those who have been absent, uplift the weary, and share God's grace in tangible ways while we still have the opportunity.

Let us open our eyes to the people around us who need care, encouragement, and love.

Just as the blind man obeyed Jesus and received healing, may we also respond faithfully to God's call—serving with our hands, loving with our hearts, and walking together as a caring community of faith. May God open our eyes to see, our hearts to love, and our hands to serve. Everything is God's grace! Thanks be to God. Amen.