

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**

Generous God, we offer these gifts with grateful hearts. May they become living water, flowing to nourish your church, care for the weary, and bring hope to those in need. Bless our giving, not for our praise, but for your glory and the flourishing of your children. Use us, our hands, and these gifts to share your love freely. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN** *Freely, Freely* **UMH 389**

***BENEDICTION** **Rev. Jenny Lee**

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

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

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

**Membership Caring Month
“3rd 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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<https://www.facebook.com/UpperStCroixParishUMC>

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
March 8th, 2026

“Membership Caring Month”
“3rd 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, 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.

Come, all who are thirsty for living water.

Open yourselves to the One who supplies it.

**We would drink this day from the spiritual depths,
seeking to know and experience life’s meaning.**

Gather as people of faith, embracing renewal,
eager for reconciliation with God and humankind.

**We have assembled to hear for ourselves
the good news Christ brings to all people.**

God meets and accepts us where we are,

helping us to know ourselves as we are known.

**We will worship with enthusiastic expectation,
anticipating salvation in our lives and relationships. Amen!**

***DEDICATING HYMN** *Saranam, Saranam* UMH 523 (vs. 1 & 4)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Loving God, we gather in your presence, grateful for your living
water that renews our hearts. Open our eyes to see one another,
our ears to hear your Word, and our hearts to receive your grace.

As we worship today, fill us with your Spirit, that we may care for all
your children, bring hope to the weary, and live as a community of
love and belonging. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE GOSPEL LESSON**

John 4:4-42

(NRSV, p. 94-95 in the Old Testament, and p. 900-901 in the Living Bible)

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

Thanks be to God. Amen!

SERMON “Living Water That Flows to One Another”

(Membership Caring Month #2)

Rev. Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Gracious God, you see us, know us, and love us in our loneliness and
joy. Fill us with your living water, that we may care for one another,
pray for one another, and share your grace freely.

Help us to leave behind fear, shame, and isolation, and to invite all
into your love. Empower our hearts to be your hands and feet,
bringing hope and belonging to every member of your family.

We pray in Jesus’ name. 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	Sue Olson
Usher	Colleen Adams-Schween
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Cheryl Olson

St. Croix Falls

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Karen Sciacca
Usher(s)	Jim Andrews
Counter	Karen Sciacca & Jim Andrews
Bell Ringer	Jim Sciacca
Flowers	Lynn Hanson



THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAY'S AND ANNIVERSARIES

Steve Sylvester 3/8
Micah Belland 3/8
Mariah Gaffey 3/8
Colleen Adams-Schween 3/10
Wren Rae Grimes 3/12
Peter & Kayleen Branstad 3/14



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/3rd Sunday in Lent
May God bless you!
(Note: daylight Saving time starts)

Worship Service and A Week Schedule

3/8:	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
3/11:	10:00 am	UMW-Cleaning the church kitchen and having lunch
	6:00pm-8:30pm	Youth Group Worship Night at Wood Lake Camp
3/12:	5:30 pm	Lenten Soup Supper (SCF)
	6:00-7:30 pm	Lenten Bible Study at SCF and via Zoom
3/13:	1:00 pm	Korean Caucus Board Meeting via Zoom
3/14:	9:00 am	UM Men's Meeting (G)
3/15:	12:15 pm	Ad Council Meeting (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 (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.

March 28: Atlas Spring Bake and Craft Sale

Next Sunday (March 15th): UMCOR Sunday

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



Breakthrough Prayers:

Please Pray For: Sandra Erickson (healing for her son Mike and grandson Walden); Toni Koons (for her friend Michelle's healing); Sue Olson (for her son Troy's recovery); Paulie Kratchmer (for her brother Tom's healing); Barbara Loomis (for her healing and her daughter's peace), Cheryl Olson (for her cousin Ginger's surgery on Friday); Lynn Hanson (healing for her granddaughter Harley's and her daughter Sara); Jim Andrews (for his brother Joe's surgery); Kathy Gionis (for the Middle East, especially those serving in the military); and Deb Hammer (for peace in the world).

Praise the Lord with Joy and Gratitude: Deb and Russ Hammer (for a wonderful trip); Toni Koons (Georgeanne returning to church); Kayleen Branstad (celebrating her dad's 91st birthday); Barbara Loomis (husband, Jim's recovery), Sue Olson (Troy's surgery went well); Sharon Asp (her granddaughter's Celebration of Life service was meaningful); Betty Doolittle (her granddaughter starting a new business); and Karen Sciacca (time with her two grandsons).

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

March 8, 2026

John 4:5–42

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



“Living Water That Flows to One Another” (Membership Caring Month #2)

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: One day, a little girl is sitting and watching her mother do the dishes at the kitchen sink. She suddenly notices that her mother has several strands of white hair sticking out in contrast to her brunette hair. She looks at her mother and inquisitively asks: “Why are some of your hairs white, Mum?” Her mother replied: “Well, every time you do something wrong and make me cry or unhappy, one of my hair turns white.” The little girl thought about this revelation for a while and then asked: “Mumma, how come all of grandma’s hairs are white?”

When I was serving as a hospital chaplain, I received a call around midnight from a nurse. She said, “I wonder if you could help my patient. She was just diagnosed with cervical cancer. Since hearing the diagnosis, she has refused to eat. She refuses medication and therapy. She must begin chemotherapy, but she won’t even see the doctor. She does not want to see anyone. She just cries. If you could do anything for her, I would appreciate it.”

I thought, ‘How deep her pain must be.’ As I walked toward her room, I prayed, “Lord, how can I help her?” The nurse stopped me before I entered and said quietly, “Several chaplains have already tried to see her. She refused them all. If she rejects you, don’t take it personally.”

Her room was dark. She was lying in bed. When she heard I was a chaplain, she turned her back to me. But she did not say, “Leave.” So, I sat near her bed and prayed silently. Then I said gently, “I know I cannot fix this. I cannot imagine how painful this is. But I came because I want you to know someone is praying for you. And as long as someone is praying for you, God has not given up on you.

Even if you feel like giving up on yourself — God never gives up on you.” She did not respond. I shared briefly how God healed my broken spine. Then I placed a prayer shawl near her pillow and said, “If you see this, remember someone is praying for you. You are not alone.”

When I read today’s Scripture from Gospel of John, I thought of that patient. The Samaritan woman also did not want to be seen. She came to the well at noon — the hottest part of the day — when no one else would come. In the ancient Middle East, women gathered water in the cool morning. But she came at noon to avoid people. She was isolated even among her own people.

And then something unexpected happened. A Jewish man — Jesus — sat at that well and said to her: “Give me a drink.” He crossed every boundary: Jew and Samaritan. Man and woman. Religious insider and social outsider. He did not begin with judgment. He began with a request. With vulnerability. With relationship.

As we observe Membership Caring Month, we might think about numbers, attendance, or participation. But today’s Scripture teaches us something deeper. Membership begins with being seen. The Samaritan woman had long been unseen—misunderstood, whispered about, defined by her past. She had been married several times and was now alone, isolated, an outsider. Yet Jesus saw her completely—and stayed. When Jesus said, “You have had five husbands,” he was not shaming her. He was naming her wound in order to heal it.

How many people are sitting quietly among us, carrying invisible wounds? Some come at “noon” — at times when they will not be noticed. Some serve faithfully but are spiritually thirsty. Some feel ashamed of illness, failure, addiction, or broken relationships.

Some have slowly withdrawn, but still long for belonging. Membership care means that we do not let people carry

their jars alone. Think of those among us who try to remain unseen.

Jesus told her: “Those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” Living water is not stagnant water. If fresh water sits too long, it spoils. Living water flows. God’s love must flow — or it becomes stagnant in us.

The Samaritan woman came alone. But after encountering Jesus, she left her water jar behind and ran back to the city. The woman who avoided people became the one who invited people: “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done!” That is what happens when someone experiences grace. They move from isolation to invitation. From shame to testimony. From silence to belonging.

Going back to the story I shared at the beginning: my patient called me the next morning. When I entered her room, she was sitting up and said, “I thought someone came to me in a dream. But then I saw this prayer shawl, and I remembered every word you said. Maybe God sent you to me.”

She had cut off her friends and family because she felt ashamed of her diagnosis. She imprisoned herself emotionally and spiritually. But when she saw that shawl, she realized:

‘I am not alone.’ Eventually she began chemotherapy. Six months later, she was free of cancer. She returned to work. She even sent me a portrait she drew with a note of gratitude.

What changed? Not the diagnosis overnight. What changed first was this: She knew someone cared. She knew God had not abandoned her. That is membership care. It is sitting in the dark room. It is praying when someone cannot pray. It is leaving a shawl, a card, a message. It is saying, “You are not alone.”

Jesus told the Samaritan woman: “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” Spirit means no social boundaries. Truth means no pretending.

In Christ, everyone has access to God. Everyone has the right to grace. Everyone belongs.

So what does Membership Caring Month ask of us?

It asks:

- Who is coming at noon, and who is coming in the darkness?
- Who is hiding in shame?
- Who needs a prayer shawl?
- Who needs a phone call?
- Who among us needs to hear, “God has not given up on you”? Who needs to be reminded, “God loves you—and so do I”?

The church is not just a place we attend; it is a community where living water flows from one member to another. If we keep grace to ourselves, it becomes stagnant. But when we pray for one another, visit one another, and encourage one another, the water of love flows.

Jesus says, “This kind can come out only through prayer.” (Mark 9:29) Prayer is how living water moves. Prayer is how chains begin to loosen. Prayer is how isolation begins to break. As long as you pray for someone, God remembers them. God loves them more than you do. God is already working. The Samaritan woman left her jar. My patient left her despair.

What jar might we leave behind? And whose jar are we called to help carry? May we be a church where no one drinks alone. May we be a church where living water flows freely. May we care for one another as members of Christ’s body. We are one family in Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God. Amen.