

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**

Generous God, we offer these gifts with grateful hearts. As Christ ascended and entrusted his mission to the church, so we dedicate our lives and resources to your work in the world. Use these offerings to bring hope where there is despair, healing where there is brokenness, and light where there is darkness. Teach us to live as faithful witnesses of your love, trusting your Spirit to guide and sustain us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN** *Leaning on the Everlasting Arms*
UMH 133 (vs. 1 & 2)

***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)

“Ascension Sunday”



Grantsburg-Central
Since 1897



Atlas
Since 1887



St. Croix Falls
Since 1859

SUNDAY SERVICES:

9:00 AM at Grantsburg (with Zoom Service)

(9:10 AM, Children's Time)

10:00 AM at Atlas

(Sunday School-summer break)

11:15 AM at St. Croix Falls

CONTACT INFORMATION

Rev. Jenny Lee: jennlee1732@gmail.com

Youth Director Shayna Schmid: snsnyder@gmail.com

Parish Secretary Colleen Norenberg: centralumc2016@gmail.com

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

www.upperstcroixparish.org

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

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
May 17th, 2026
“Ascension Sunday”

*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**

Our human scene has been caressed
by visit from the Eternal.

**God’s realm has broken into our history
and revised all our possibilities.**

Clap, shout, and sing praises.

God reigns over all the earth.

**The Risen One has become head of all things
and we are moved, as disciples, to worship.**

This is a time to bless God and rejoice

in the fulfillment of law, prophet, and psalms.

**We join the innumerable company of the saints
in praise, thanksgiving, and witness. Amen.**

***DEDICATING HYMN** *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*

UMH 89 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER **Unison**

Gracious God, on this Ascension Sunday we gather in awe and trust. As your Son was lifted into the heavens, teach us to live faithfully between mystery and mission. When we look for certainty, turn our eyes toward your calling. When we feel uncertain or afraid, fill us with the promise of your Spirit. Lift our hearts beyond what we cannot see into the hope of your presence with us always. Send us as your witnesses, grounded in love. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON**

Acts 1: 6-11

(NRSV, p. 118 in the New Testament,
and p.926 in the Living Bible)

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

SERMON

“In-Between Moment”

Rev. Jenny Lee

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER **Unison**

Risen and ascended Lord, we thank you for meeting us in the in-between places of our lives. When we are uncertain, strengthen our trust; when we are waiting, renew our hope; when we are fearful, remind us of your promise. You have not left us alone but have sent your Spirit to guide us. Make us your faithful witnesses in word and action. Lift our eyes from worry to your calling, and send us forward in peace and courage. 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

MAY CHURCH MISSIONS



ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Ashleigh Olson

<p>INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:</p> <p>Atlas collects and recycles ink jet cartridges and cell phones year-round.</p> 	<p>LOAVES & FISHES NEEDS OUR ONGOING SUPPORT</p> <p>Suggested</p>  <p>donation items: Spaghetti sauce, macaroni, peanut butter, pasta and rice. Please leave them in the basket at the front of the church!</p>	<p>Heifer International</p> <p>Heifer International's mission is to end hunger and poverty while caring for the Earth. For 80 years, Heifer has been working to empower impoverished families by providing them with the tools and resources they need to thrive. Your donation will help us provide small-scale farmers and communities worldwide with livestock, training, and related services to create sustainable solutions to poverty and hunger. ALL DONATIONS WILL BE MATCHED. Please see the May newsletter or Mission bulletin board for more details. Thank you!</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>We will be collecting supplies and or financial donations for CRA. Community Referral Agency (CRA) provides safe shelter, advocacy, and support to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and their children, helping them rebuild their lives. Current needs: Shelf stable milk, juice, coffee sugar, pickles, ketchup, hot dogs, Hamburger Helper or one box meals, size 6 & 7 diapers, Tampons, sanitary pads, bath towels, sweat pants L & XL, bleach, Lysol Wipes, Lysol spray, liquid laundry soap, deodorant (Men & Women's), dish soap, kitchen garbage bags, Mr. Erasers, postage stamps, 9-volt batteries.</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 support the St. Croix Falls Food Shelf.</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	Volunteer Needed
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson

Atlas

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Sue Olson
Usher	Cheryl Olson
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Summer Break

St. Croix Falls

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

Prayers:

Please Pray For: Linda Hokanson (lost loved one), Kay Lamphere (strength), Barbara Loomis (strength), and Deb Hammer (Jodi Elmgren).

Praise the Lord with Joy and Gratitude: Thank you, Lord!

Sandra Erickson (son Mike is cancer free), Julie Branstad (joyful time at retirement gathering), Kathy Gionis (grandchildren's play), Donna Norman (newborn baby) and Sharon Asp (Perry Saito award).

New Guests: Sandy Heinz (SCF)

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



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: Ascension Sunday! God bless you all!

Worship Service and A Week Schedule

5/17:	9:00 am	Central UMC - Grantsburg (with Live Zoom)
	10:00 am	Atlas UMC (Sunday School-summer break)
	11:15 am	St. Croix Falls UMC
5/17:	12:15 pm	Ad Council Meeting (SCF)
5/18:	6:30 pm	Northwest New Ministry Committee meeting via Zoom
	8:00 pm	Harmony Choir Board meeting via Zoom
5/21:	2:00 pm	UMW Meeting and visit Continuing Care Center (G)
	4:30-6:00 pm	Youth Gathering (G)
5/24:		Pentecost Sunday (Dress code: Red)

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAY'S & ANNIVERSARIES

Mary Lou Wright 5/17
 Brad Rehbein 5/21
 Sharon & Dave Huff 5/22
 Wendell Hauble 5/22



Next Sunday (May 24th):

“Pentecost Sunday” (Dress code: Red)

Central -Grantsburg

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



Atlas

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

St. Croix Falls

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

Upcoming Events & News

2026 Vacation Bible School: Theme is “Pool Party”

Registration opens June 6th

VBS Dates: Five Wednesdays from July 15th to August 12th

Pool Party: August 16th

Pentecost Sunday: May 24th-Dress code red

May 31st: Joint Worship Service & Lunch at St. Croix Falls UMC

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

2026 Wisconsin Annual Conference: June 4- 7 at Madison Marriott West in Madison, WI (Parish Delegates: Sue Olson and Sharon Asp)



“In-Between Moment”

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: A 21-year-old is hired by a hardware store. He shows up for his first day of work at 8:00 AM sharp. The boss welcomes him, then hands him a broom. “First, sweep out the store. Then I’ll show you where the window-cleaning equipment is.” “Sir,” the young man protests, “you can’t be serious. I’m a college graduate.” “Oh, sorry,” says the manager, pointing to the broom. “No problem. I can show you how that thing works.”

Today is Ascension Sunday — a day that often feels a little strange in the church calendar. Christmas has a baby Jesus. Easter has an empty tomb. Pentecost has fire and wind. But Ascension Day? Do you know what Ascension Day is? Yes, it is the day Jesus rises into the clouds and disappears from sight. It can feel mysterious. Ascension Sunday is about living in the in-between — between the clouds and the calling, between what was and what will be, between Jesus leaving and the Spirit arriving, between certainty and trust. In other words, it is the moment between Jesus’ Ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The disciples are standing in that very place in today’s Scripture. They have completed three years of training as disciples of Jesus. It is almost like their graduation. Jesus gave his long farewell speech, and then he is gone into the clouds. He disappears. So, what’s next? What should they do? They stand there looking up into the sky. It is like time has paused. It is like they are frozen.

When Jesus died on the cross, they felt it was the end of the world. They were disappointed because they expected Jesus to create a new world, a new kingdom on earth. However, Jesus rose from the dead. He spent forty days teaching them, eating with them, and appearing among them. The disciples must have thought, ‘Now things will finally make sense.’

So, they ask: “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” In other words: “Is this the moment everything gets fixed?” It makes sense to us, doesn’t it? We ask it too. ‘Lord, is this the moment healing will come?’ ‘Is this the time grief will ease?’ ‘Is this the season when life will finally settle down?’ ‘Is this when justice will come? When peace will arrive? When the future will become clear?’

The disciples want a roadmap. They want certainty. They want answers. And yes, we also want God’s clear answers. But Jesus does not give them a timeline. Instead, he gives them a calling. “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:7–8)

And then he disappears into the clouds. He ascends into the heaven. Is that all? “Lord! That’s not the answer to what we asked!” We may even complain, saying, “Lord, you should tell me when the world will be fixed, when will my life become good enough.”

But, notice what Jesus does here. The disciples are focused on *when*. Jesus redirects them to *who* they are called to be. When we face difficult situations or painful circumstances, we often forget who we are.

Here is my story. After experiencing God’s healing of my broken spine, I was baptized, graduated from seminary, and planted a new church. I was convinced that God was my supporter, my provider, my guide, my rock, and my helper. Whatever I asked of God, I trusted God would do for me. And God did provide somehow. The church was growing, the preschool was doing well, and my back became healthy. My blessings seemed to grow day by day.

But then my mother passed away unexpectedly. I was disappointed in God. I did not understand why God had taken my mother away. It felt as though my life had paused. It felt like the end of the world.

I decided I would wrestle with God through fasting and ask why He had taken my mother away. I did not eat anything. I felt depressed and hopeless. Then I continued fasting for 40 days, reading the Scripture, trying to understand why God had taken my mother. The more I fasted, the more strength I gained. I trusted the words of Jesus: “If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.” (John 14:14). But instead of receiving the answer I wanted, I rediscovered who I was and how God had brought me to this place. Yes, God had healed me and called me to serve God and God’s people. Then I confessed: whether I live or die, I will live for Jesus Christ. Finally, I could move forward in ministry.

In today’s Scripture, the disciples want information, but Jesus gives them vocation. They want clarity about the future, but Jesus calls them to faithfulness in the present. And then — before they can ask another question — he is lifted up into the clouds.

Can you imagine that moment? The disciples stare upward, frozen between wonder and loss. And honestly, who could blame them? Sometimes we stand looking upward too. We stare into the clouds of uncertainty, waiting for direction, waiting for answers, waiting for God to explain things that do not make sense.

There are seasons in life that feel suspended: A family waiting beside a hospital bed. A church wondering about the future. A graduate stepping onto an unknown road. A grieving heart trying to rediscover joy. A person praying for guidance but hearing only silence.

The Ascension takes place in that uncomfortable space called waiting. And waiting is hard. We prefer resolutions. We prefer certainty. We prefer immediate answers. But faith often grows in the in-between places.

The disciples do not yet know what Pentecost will look like. They cannot yet imagine the Spirit descending like fire. They do not yet know how the Gospel will spread across the world. All they know is this: Jesus is gone from their sight, and they are standing beneath the clouds. Then suddenly two messengers appear and ask: “Why do you stand looking up toward heaven?”

It is a redirection. Do not remain frozen here. There is work to do. There is a Gospel to share. There is a hurting world waiting for hope.

Ascension is not the story of Jesus abandoning the earth. It is the story of Jesus entrusting the mission to his people. And perhaps that is the calling for us today — not to remain staring into the clouds of fear or uncertainty, but to move forward in trust. We may not know everything about the future, but we know who walks with us. We may not have every answer, but we have the promise of the Holy Spirit. We may live in an in-between season, but in-between seasons are not empty. God is present there too.

The beautiful truth of Ascension Sunday is this: Christ is no longer confined to one place. Before the Ascension, Jesus walked beside a few disciples on dusty roads. After the Ascension, through the Spirit, Christ can be present everywhere — in every church, every hospital room, every kitchen table, every prison, every grieving heart, every place where love is needed.

And so, the disciples eventually stop staring upward. They return to Jerusalem. They pray. They wait together. And slowly, faithfully, they prepare for what God will do next. Maybe that is where some of us are today — standing between the clouds and the calling. Not fully certain. Not fully ready. Still waiting. If you are waiting for answers, feeling as though your life is paused or frozen, don’t give up. Instead, pray continually. And yet Christ meets you there. Because even in the waiting, even in the uncertainty, even beneath the clouds, God is still at work for you.

Thanks be to God. Amen.