

Generous and faithful God, every good gift comes from You, and we thank You for Your abundant grace. Receive these offerings as expressions of our gratitude, trust, and love. Bless them and use them to share Your hope, serve our neighbors, and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. As You guide us on life's journey, teach us to be faithful stewards of all You have entrusted to us. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN** *'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus*
UMH 462 (vs. 1 & 4)

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

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



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

8th Sunday After Pentecost



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

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www.upperstcroixparish.org

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

Upper St. Croix Parish
Grantsburg: Central, Atlas, St. Croix Falls
July 19th, 2026
8th Sunday After Pentecost

*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**

Bless the Lord, O my soul;
and all that is within me, bless God’s holy name!

**Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all God’s benefits.**

God forgives iniquity and heals disease
and crowns us with steadfast love and mercy.

**God satisfies us with good as long as we live,
so our youth is renewed like the eagle’s.**

God is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

**As the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is God’s steadfast love toward us.**

As parents pity their children,
so the Lord pities those who fear God.

**Bless the Lord, O my soul;
and all that is within me, bless God’s holy name! Amen.**

***DEDICATING HYMN** *This is My Song* **UMH 437 (vs. 1 & 3)**

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Gracious and loving God, we thank You for bringing us together
on this Lord’s Day. As we gather in Your presence, quiet our
hearts and open our minds to hear Your Word. When life’s
journey takes unexpected turns, remind us that You are always
with us, guiding us with Your wisdom and grace. Fill us with Your

Holy Spirit, strengthen our faith, and lead us to trust You more
each day. We worship You with grateful hearts, through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**

Genesis 28:10-19

(NRSV, p. 25 in the New Testament, G & SCF Pew Bible,
and p.24 in the Living Bible; Atlas Pew Bible)

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

SERMON ***“When God Interrupts Your Journey”*** **Rev. Jenny Lee**

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Faithful God, thank You for meeting us on the unexpected roads of
life, just as You met Jacob at Bethel. Forgive us for the times we have
trusted our own direction instead of Yours. When our plans are
interrupted, help us to trust that You are still guiding us with love and
grace. Give us eyes to recognize Your presence, hearts to follow Your
leading, and courage to walk by faith. We place our journey into Your
hands, 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**

JULY 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

We will be collecting Peanut Butter & Jelly for the Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry in Luck. Please leave your donations in the basket in the front of the church. Thank you!



SCHOOL SUPPLIES

In July we will be collecting school supplies for those in need in our own community.



Thank you for your continued generosity in supporting our many missions!

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".



SCHOOL SUPPLIES

In July we will be collecting financial donations and School Supplies for children in the Grantsburg community.



ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh

Food Shelf

(Communion Sunday)



Sailor Hat Offering:

The Sailor Hat offering will support the 2026 VBS Program.



TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers: All God's People
Rev. Jenny Lee

Central - Grantsburg

Pianist
Scripture Reading
Acolyte(s)
Fellowship
Counter
Mowing
Cleaning

Toni Koons
Toni Koons
Willow Nyland
Volunteer Needed
Dave Huff
Dave Huff
Sandra Erickson

Atlas

Pianist
Liturgist
Usher
Cleaning
Sunday School

Sharon Asp
Mariah Gaffey
Sue Olson
Volunteer Needed
Summer Break

St. Croix Falls

Pianist
Liturgist
Usher(s)
Counter
Bell Ringer
Flowers

Sharon Asp
Kathy Gionis
Lynn Hanson
Peter Gionis
Jim Andrews
Women of the church

Prayers: Please Pray For: Georgeanne Koons (healing for Kim Peterson), Barbara Loomis (Healing), Sandra Erickson (healing for her son Mike, her husband Jeff, and her grandson Dauntay), Kay Lamphere (healing), Dave Huff (Mr. Grimson passed away), Kayleen Branstad (missing a boy in Siren), Kay Lamphere (healing), and Pastor Jenny (John Myers, Colleen Norenberg's step-father, passed away).

Praise the Lord with Joy and Gratitude — Thank You, Lord, For:
Dave Huff and Sharon Huff (preparing coffee fellowship), Sharon Asp (enjoyed family union)



Thank you for your support!

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

PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) **There is a Zoom Live Service at 9:00 am this Sunday.**
- 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.
- 4) 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: 8th Sunday After Pentecost. God bless you all!

Worship Service and A Week Schedule

7/19:	9:00 am	Grantsburg-Central UMC
	10:00 am	Atlas UMC
	11:15 am	St. Croix Falls UMC
7/19:	12:15 pm	Ad Council Meeting (SCF)
7/20:	8:00 pm	Harmony Choir Board Meeting via Zoom
7/21:	10:00 am	August Newsletter & Calendar information Due
	2:00-5:00 pm	Pontoon Party supported by Grantsburg Rotary Club
7/22	6:30 pm	Ad Council Meeting (G)
	4:00-5:00 pm	Children Summer Program (G)

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAY'S & ANNIVERSARIES

John Little 7/19

Mark Harmon 7/20

Betty Doolittle 7/24



Next Sunday (July 26th):

Central-Grantsburg

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



Atlas

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

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

Upcoming Events & News

2026 Summer Special program for Children

- **Due to low registration of the VBS, we have a special summer program for children instead of VBS: July 15, 22, 29, Aug. 5, 7, 16, 23 and 28.**
- **see separate paper for detailed schedule.**

Bible Reading Challenge: Please pick up the Bible Reading Planner card! We encourage you to read the Bible using the reading card.



“When God Interrupts Your Journey”

I want to start with something funny that I found on the internet: One pastor told a story about driving on the freeway when another driver suddenly cut her off and then slowed down. She was about to honk, wave (not with all five fingers), and express her frustration... when she noticed a bumper sticker that read: **“Jesus loves you, and I’m trying.”**

As I have told you many times, I have a terrible sense of direction. I used to get lost whenever I drove somewhere unfamiliar. Whenever I realized I had taken the wrong road, I often drove all the way back to where I had started and began again. Of course, that usually made me late.

If I was driving alone, taking a detour wasn't a big problem. The real problem came when I was traveling with someone else because my mistake affected them too. Sometimes I don't know where my confidence came from! Even when I was going the wrong way, I was convinced I knew the correct route.

If my passenger said, “I think we’re going the wrong way. We should turn back,” I would confidently reply, “No, I know this road. This is the right way.” Then I would keep driving until we finally reached a dead end. By then, we had wasted time and arrived late. After that happened many times, I gave up being the driver for our carpool.

Thankfully, I no longer worry about getting lost because I have a GPS app on my phone. Even now, there are times when I think I know a better route than the GPS suggests. As I continue down the wrong road, the GPS calmly says, *“Recalculating... recalculating...”*

It never gets upset with me. It never argues with me. Instead, with a gentle and patient voice, it simply keeps saying, *“Recalculating... recalculating...”* until I return to the right road or until it finds another route.

What an amazing piece of technology! As long as I have my GPS, I'm no longer afraid of losing my way. But what about the journey of life? Most of us have learned that life doesn't always go as planned. We make plans, but illness comes. We imagine retirement one way, but it turns out very differently. We expect to grow old with the person we love, and then we find ourselves walking alone.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had a GPS for life's journey? The good news is that we do. As Christians, we have the greatest GPS of all. Can you guess what it is? Yes, it is the Bible—the Word of God. It is the compass that guides us through life. Psalm 119:105 says, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Most Christians know this verse.

The problem is not that we don't have God's guidance. The problem is that we don't always follow it. Sometimes we forget that God has already given us the perfect guide for our lives. Other times, we become so confident in our own direction that we ignore His voice, just as I sometimes ignore my GPS.

Yet here is the wonderful news of God’s grace. Even when we lose our way, even when we choose our own path instead of God’s, God is always ready to guide us as if the GPS recalculate a new route. Our merciful God never gives up on us. God never says, “I'm done with you.” Instead, He patiently waits for us to return. And when we turn to Him in repentance, He recalculates our route with forgiveness, grace, and love.

Sometimes, when we refuse to recognize that we are on the wrong road and continue going our own way, God lovingly interrupts our journey—just as a GPS recalculates a new route. That is exactly what happened to Jacob in today’s scripture. Jacob had taken a wrong turn in life.

In today's Scripture, Jacob is running away from his brother Esau. Jacob desperately wanted the blessing of the firstborn son. Earlier, he had persuaded Esau to trade his birthright for a bowl of stew. Later, he deceived his father Isaac and stole Esau's blessing.

Because of his actions, Jacob became a fugitive. His life became filled with fear, conflict, and hardship until he finally returned to God and received the new name **Israel** (Genesis 32:28). If Jacob had known that God had already planned to bless him and make him the heir of the covenant, he might never have deceived his father or cheated his brother. If he had trusted God as the perfect navigator of his life, he would not have needed to force God's promises to happen. But Jacob didn't know what we know. So, he relied on his own plans and became a wanderer. Nevertheless, the God was still with him, finally interrupted his journey.

In a dream God appeared and said, "I am the LORD, the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of your father Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and your offspring." Doesn't that sound familiar? These are the very promises God gave to Abraham when He called him to leave his homeland. Now God speaks those same promises to Jacob. God interrupts Jacob's journey because Jacob has lost his way.

Imagine Jacob. He was a quiet man who preferred staying among the tents and cooking. Suddenly, he is sleeping alone in the wilderness with a stone for his pillow. His entire life has changed. But God begins to recalculate Jacob's journey. God says, "Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land." (Genesis 28:15)

Isn't that beautiful? God is the best navigator for our lives. Whenever we lose our way, God promises to bring us back. Wherever we go, God is with us. Then God makes another promise:

"I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." (Genesis 28:15) God is recalculating Jacob's life at Bethel, which means **"the house of God."**

Perhaps some of you feel that life has not gone according to your plans. Maybe you are facing injustice. Maybe you have received a difficult medical diagnosis. Maybe you are dealing with addiction, depression, disappointment, or an unexpected loss. Perhaps God is interrupting your journey—not to punish you, but to guide you onto a better road. God is not finished with you yet. This is not the end of your story. God will bring you back to the right path according to His purpose. So, keep praying. Hold on to God until He brings you through your difficulties.

Like Jacob, I have also taken many detours in my own life. After I came to the United States, I almost lost my way. At that time, I was serving a newly planted church in Chicago while studying for my Ph.D. I believed that my highest priority should be my academic studies. Gradually, I focused more on my education than on ministry. I often felt overwhelmed trying to balance both.

Eventually, I told the senior pastor that he should find someone else because I wanted to concentrate only on my studies. That very night, God spoke to me in a dream, just as He spoke to Jacob. In my dream, I was reading the story of Gideon and the three hundred soldiers in the Book of Judges in the Old Testament. God asked me, "How do you think I chose those three hundred men out of thirty-two thousand?" I couldn't answer. Then God said, "Yes, I chose them Myself. I can accomplish My purposes however I choose. Suppose I never use your Ph.D. degree. What would you do? I need you now for My people."

When I woke up, I prayed God for forgiveness. Instead of leaving ministry, I devoted myself to serving the Conference for Korean-American Young Adults. Every year, more than four hundred young adults and forty staff members gathered together. I loved serving there. While faithfully serving God's people, something amazing happened.

God enabled me to complete my Ph.D. as well. I still don't know exactly how I managed both. But I know that God did it. Serving God's people did not prevent God's plan for my life—it became part of God's plan. That ministry drew me closer to God and shaped me into the pastor I am today.

My beloved family in Jesus Christ, keep holding on to God in prayer until He brings you back to the right path. If it seems that God is interrupting your journey, perhaps He is simply recalculating your route. Trust Him. God is the greatest Navigator of our lives.

And above all, remember the words of Jesus: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) May we trust Him to guide every step of our journey.

Thanks be to God. Amen.