

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Gracious God, as You guided Abraham's servant on the path to find Rebekah, Isaac's wife, we trust You to open the way before us today. Hear our prayers as we seek Your will in every step we take. Lead us with Your unfailing love, and give us hearts that recognize Your guidance. Unite us in faith as Your people, and help us walk in obedience and trust. May our prayers open doors only You can open. 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!

INVITATION/PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

***DOXOLOGY**

UMH 95

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**

Faithful God, just as You guided Abraham's servant to find a wife for Isaac, we trust Your loving guidance in our lives today. You provide before we even ask and lead us in ways we cannot see. As we bring our offerings, we do so with grateful hearts, acknowledging that all we have comes from You. Use these gifts to continue Your work of love, faithfulness, and blessing in this world. In trust and thanksgiving, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN**

Trust and Obey

UMH 467 (vs. 1 & 4)

***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)

"6th 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 5th, 2026
“6th 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

Come before God as a family of Christ’s people,
in whom our Risen Sovereign lives and serves.

**It is an awesome thing that God’s Chosen One
continues to minister through us.**

How blessed you are when you reach out
to do more than is expected.

**It is a joy to offer hospitality
and provide what others need most.**

Those who give support to the righteous
shall receive the reward of the righteous.

**The bonds forged by our faith call forth loyalty
that even our families cannot command.**

All who risk themselves for Christ’s sake
will find abundant life through the cross.

**Whether a cross or a cup of cold water is required,
We want to give ourselves to the tasks at hand. Amen.**

***DEDICATING HYMN** *Open My Eyes, That I May See*
UMH 454 (vs. 1 & 3)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Gracious God, we come before You with thankful hearts as we
gather for worship this Sunday. Open our minds to Your Word, open
our hearts to Your presence, and open our lives to Your will. Speak
to us through Scripture, song, and prayer, that we may be
strengthened in faith and renewed in hope. Draw us closer to You
and to one another in love. May everything we do bring glory to
Your name. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Sacrament of Holy Communion

INVITATION FOR COMMUNION
CONFESSION AND PARDON Unison
Merciful God,

Rev. Jenny Lee

We confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.

We have failed to be an obedient church.

We have not done your will,
we have broken your law,
we have rebelled against your love,
we have not loved our neighbors,
and we have not heard the cry of the needy.

Forgive us, we pray.

Free us for joyful obedience,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(prayers in Silence)

Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;
that proves God’s love toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ,

We are forgiven!

Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING UMH 13-14 (or See insert)

THE LORD’S PRAYER

SHARING THE HOLY COMMUNION

COMMUNION SONG

TFWS 2260

COMMUNION PRAYER Unison

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you
have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the
strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the
name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON** Genesis 24:1-27

(NRSV, p. 19-20 in the Old Testament, and p.18-19 in the Living Bible)

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

Thanks be to God. Amen!

SERMON “A Prayer that Opens the Way” Rev. Jenny Lee

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his
disciples, and said: “take, eat; this is my body which given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it
to his disciples, and said: “drink from this, all of you; this is my blood
of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the
forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living
sacrifice, in union with Christ’s offering for us, as we proclaim the
mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

**(Together) Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on
these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and
blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood.**

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly
banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy
Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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.

Thank you for your support!

TODAY'S SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Ministers: All God's People
Rev. Jenny Lee

Central - Grantsburg

Pianist
Scripture Reading
Acolyte(s)
Fellowship
Counter
Mowing
Cleaning
Communion

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



Atlas

Pianist
Liturgist
Usher
Cleaning
Sunday School
Communion

Sharon Asp
Colleen Adams-Schween
Sue Olson
Volunteer Needed
Summer Break
Sue Olson

St. Croix Falls

Pianist
Liturgist
Usher(s)
Counter
Bell Ringer
Flowers
Communion

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

Prayers: Please Pray For: Georgeanne Koons (neighbor Steve and friend Cathy), Sandra Erickson (healing for her son Mike, her husband Jeff, and her grandson Dauntay), Kayleen Branstad (her niece Lisa's wedding and honeymoon trip), Kay Lamphere (biopsy surgery, 7/7), Sharon Asp (those affected by the earthquake in Argentina), Kathy Gionis (for everyone to stay cool), and Pastor Jenny (VBS).

Praise the Lord with Joy and Gratitude — Thank You, Lord, For:

Kayleen Branstad (her niece Lisa's wedding), and Pastor Jenny (Harmony Choir received a \$10,000 grant for music camp).



"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.
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: 6th Sunday After Pentecost. God bless you all!

Worship Service and A Week Schedule

7/5:	9:00 am	Grantsburg-Central UMC
	10:00 am	Atlas UMC
	11:15 am	St. Croix Falls UMC
7/8:	1:00 pm	UMW Meeting-Annual Birthday Party (G)
7/10:	1:00 am	Korean Caucus Board Meeting via Zoom
7/11:	9:00 am	UMM Meeting (G)
7/2:	5:00 -7:00 pm	Last Training Day for all VBS Volunteers

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAY'S & ANNIVERSARIES

WE HAVE NO BIRTHDAYS OR ANNIVERSARIES THAT WE ARE AWARE OF TO CELEBRATE THIS WEEK. PLEASE LET US KNOW IF WE ARE MISSING YOUR INFORMATION.
HAVE A BLESSED WEEK!

Next Sunday (July 12th):

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	Sue Olson
Usher	Colleen Adams-Schween
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 Vacation Bible School: Theme is "Pool Party"

Registration is now available.

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

Pool Party: August 16th

Donation and volunteer signup sheets are available at each church.

North Central Jurisdictional Conference, 7/13-16 in Chicago

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



“A Prayer that Opens the Way”

I want to start with something funny. You may know this story, but it's a new version: Two men were walking through a game park when they came across a lion that hadn't eaten for days. The lion immediately started chasing them. They ran as fast as they could, but one of the men began to tire. In desperation, he prayed, “Lord, please turn this lion into a Christian!”

He glanced back and was amazed to see the lion kneeling on the ground. Delighted that his prayer had been answered, he turned around and walked toward the lion.

As he got closer, he heard the lion praying, “Thank You, Lord, for the food I am about to receive. Amen.”

How many of you have received answers to your prayers?

Now, how many of you have ever felt that your prayers were never answered?

Today, I want to talk about “Prayer.” We pray every day—somehow in every moment and on every occasion. You may have heard that prayer is a key that opens heaven. Do you believe that's true?

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8).

It sounds like prayer is a master key that brings us closer to God in our everyday lives.

You know this story, and I use this verse in our insert alongside the prayer requests. When Jesus' disciples failed to cast out an evil spirit from a boy and asked Him, “Why could we not cast it out?” Jesus said, “This kind can come out only by prayer.” Therefore, prayer is a key that helps us find the way we are looking for.

In today's Scripture reading, we meet Abraham again. Last week, we learned about Abraham's final test from God. God asked him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. Through this test, the angel of the Lord said to him, “Now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” Abraham passed God's test. Afterward, he came to a firm belief: “God will provide-Jehovah Jireh.” This meant a great deal in Abraham's life. An unshakable faith in “God will provide” was established through his lifelong experience with God.

Today, Genesis chapter 24 tells the story of how Abraham sought a wife for his only son, Isaac. In this story, we can see how strong Abraham's faith in God had become.

Abraham had lived a long and eventful life. At the age of seventy-five, he left his parents, his home, and his homeland because God said to him, “Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you” (Genesis 12:1-2).

Abraham immediately obeyed God and left his homeland, trusting in God's promise. Yet even though God had promised him a son, he remained childless until he was eighty-five years old. Thinking this might be God's will, Abraham had a son, Ishmael, through Hagar. Finally, when Abraham was one hundred years old, God fulfilled His promise, and Isaac was born.

Along the way, Abraham's family experienced many struggles—conflict between Sarah and Hagar, tension between Isaac and Ishmael, and heartache within the family. At God's instruction, Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away. Later, God tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac. Once again, Abraham

obeyed God without hesitation. After Abraham passed this test of faith, God blessed him in every way (Genesis 24:1).

He is now old and advanced in years. But he still had work to do. Like many parents, Abraham thought about his son Isaac's marriage before he died. Since Isaac was the son God had promised, choosing the right wife was important. Abraham followed three principles, all based on his firm belief that "God will provide."

First, she must come from his own relatives and his father's family (24:4, 38). Second, she must be willing to leave her homeland and come to Canaan, the Promised Land (24:5–8, 39–41). Third, Abraham trusted that God Himself would provide the right wife for Isaac (24:7, 50).

Abraham was too old to make the long journey himself, so he sent his trusted servant to his homeland. Before sending him, Abraham made the servant swear that he would follow these three principles. His servant asks him, "If she does not want to come over here, should I bring Isaac back to the country you were from?" But Abraham's answer was firm. He says, "Do not take my son back there. The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and the Land of my birth, and who spoke to me and swore to me, 'I will give this land to your offspring.'" So, Abraham's faith is steadfast on God's promise. It is not negotiable at all. If the woman was unwilling to come, Abraham believed she was not the one God had prepared for Isaac.

Through Abraham's faithfulness, the servant had also learned to trust in God. He also had a very specific way of seeking God's guidance. He prayed that the right young woman would not only give him a drink of water but would also willingly draw water for all of his camels. Such kindness and generosity would reveal the person God had chosen. Through the prayers in detail, the Abraham's servant tried to find God's will.

How about you? How do you know whether a decision is God's will? Yes, I know you pray to God. When we face an important decision, we naturally pray. If we are still uncertain, we may ask God for a sign, just as Abraham's servant did.

I believe that God cares for each one of us personally, not in exactly the same way. The Holy Spirit may come to one person like a dove, to another like fire, and to another like the wind.

God knows each of us perfectly and leads each person in the way that is best for them.

Moses also asked God for a sign when God called him to lead the Israelites. God told him to throw down his staff, and it became a snake. Then God said that this sign would help the Israelites know that the Lord had truly appeared to him (Exodus 4:1–5).

Our faith should be practical. There are good days and difficult days. Sometimes we don't feel that God is with us. Sometimes it seems that our prayers go unanswered, or we feel alone. During those times, we can ask God to show us a sign of His presence.

Just as we pray for our daily bread in the Lord's Prayer, we need fresh spiritual nourishment every day. We meet God in prayer, in His Word, in our relationships with others, and in the beauty of His creation. I sometimes sense God's presence as I watch the birds at my bird feeders or work among the vegetables in my garden.

I have also received wonderful feedback about our Prayer Shawl Ministry. Some people who have received a prayer shawl have told me that it made them feel warm and at peace, as if God were embracing them. God is present in many ways, often in the ordinary moments of our daily lives, if we have eyes to see and hearts to recognize Him.

God may be much closer than you realize. I hope you will experience His presence in your everyday life. And may your prayers open the way that God has prepared for you.

Thanks be to God. Amen!