

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

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison

Gracious and generous God, we thank You for all the blessings You have placed in our lives. As we bring these gifts before You, we offer not only our money, but also our time, talents, experiences, and lives. Take what we give and use it for Your kingdom and for the blessing of others. Help us trust Your providence and remember that nothing is wasted in Your hands. Multiply these gifts to bring hope, healing, and love to those in need. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

*CLOSING HYMN *God of Grace and God of Glory*
UMH 577 (vs. 1 & 2)

*BENEDICTION Rev. Jenny Lee

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

NO. 2026-33
August 16th, 2026

Upper St. Croix Parish United Methodist Church

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

12th 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
August 16th, 2026
12th 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, let us worship the God who called Abraham and remained faithful through every generation. God led Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, even when they could not see the whole picture.

We come to trust in the God who is faithful in every season.

We believe that God is with us, even when our path is unexpected.

Come, let us worship the God who was with Joseph in the pit, in prison, and in the palace. God transformed his suffering and used his life to preserve and bless others.

We bring our joys, struggles, and disappointments before God.

We trust that God can transform our experiences and use them for good.

Come, let us place our lives into God’s faithful hands.

Let us worship the God who is still writing our stories.

We will trust God when we cannot see the way.

We will worship with hope, knowing that nothing is wasted in God’s hands. Amen!

***DEDICATING HYMN** *Trust and Obey* **UMH 467 (vs. 1 & 2)**

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Gracious and faithful God, we come before You with grateful hearts. Thank You for bringing us together as Your beloved family. When our lives take unexpected turns, remind us that You are still with us

and still at work. Help us trust Your providence when we cannot see the whole picture. Take our joys, our struggles, our questions, and our fears, and place them in Your hands. Open our hearts to Your Word today, and fill us with hope, peace, and faith. We pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.

CHILDREN’S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God’s Word

***THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**

Genesis 45:1-15

(NRSV, p. 42 in the Old Testament, G & SCF Pew Bible,
and p. 42 - 43 in the Living Bible; Atlas Pew Bible)

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

Thanks be to God. Amen!

SERMON ***“Nothing Is Wasted in God’s Hands”*** **Rev. Jenny Lee**

We Respond to God’s Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Gracious God, we thank You for reminding us that You are with us in every chapter of our lives. When we cannot understand what is happening, help us trust Your providence. When we feel lost, remind us that You have not abandoned us. When we are suffering, give us strength to place our pain in Your hands. Transform our sadness into joy, our wounds into compassion, and our experiences into blessings for others. Help us believe that nothing is wasted in Your hands. Guide us to walk forward with faith, hope, and love. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

*After each prayer request:
Pastor: Lord, in your mercy,*

All: Hear our Prayer.

AUGUST 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



Suggested donation items: diced tomatoes, green beans, Chinese foods, saltine crackers, tuna without soy, spices, personal needs. Please leave them in the basket at the front of the church!

August Mission

Community Referral Agency
In August we will be collecting supplies for Community Referral Agency. They are especially in need of the following items:

- ✓ Stamps
- ✓ Bug spray
- ✓ Sun screen
- ✓ Pack N Play size sheets and mattress covers



Their general wish list will be posted on the mission board at church as well.

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".



August Mission: Pastor's Discretionary Fund
Our August Mission Focus is the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. Throughout the month, we invite you to make a financial contribution to this special fund, which Pastor Jenny uses to assist individuals and families facing unexpected financial challenges. Your generous gifts provide help when it is needed most and allow our church to extend Christ's love and compassion to those in our community.



ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh

Food Shelf

(Communion Sunday)



Sailor Hat Offering:



The Sailor Hat offering will support Pastor Jenny's discretionary fund.

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

Toni Koons
Toni Koons
Willow Nyland
Dave & Sharon Huff
Dave Huff
Russ Hammer
Sandra Erickson

Atlas

Pianist
Liturgist
Usher
Cleaning
Sunday School

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

St. Croix Falls

Pianist
Liturgist
Usher(s)
Counter
Bell Ringer
Flowers

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

Guests in the last Sunday: Doug & Lorrie Rogerson (SCF).

Prayers: Please Pray For: Kayleen Branstad (friend, Gina and Gary), Karen Sciacca (safe trip and mother-in-law), Kathy Gionis (rain), Barbara Loomis (recovery), Sandra Erickson (healing for her son, Mike and her husband, Jeff), Kay Lamphere (surgery 8/14), Lynn Hanson (daughter, Sara and son-in-law Mike), Sharon Asp (younger daughter Abby and her husband's mission trip).

Praise the Lord with Joy and Gratitude — Thank You, Lord, for: Sharon Asp (nephew's wedding), Jim Andrews (grandson, Andy's 8th birthday), Pastor Jenny (new guests, Doug & Lorrie).

"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: 12th Sunday After Pentecost. God bless you all!

Worship Service and A Week Schedule

8/16 (Sun):	9:00 am	Grantsburg-Central UMC (with zoom)
	10:00 am	Atlas UMC
	11:15 am	St. Croix Falls UMC
	12:15 pm	Ad Council Meeting (SCF)
	1:00-3:00 pm	Pool Party at Community Pool (G)
8/17 (Mon):	10:00-3:00 pm	Korean Caucus Picnic Day at Devil's Lake
8/18 (Tue):	6:30 pm	Ad Council Meeting(G)
8/20-8/23:		Burnett County Fair
8/20 (Thur):	10:30 am-1:00 pm	Pastor Jenny volunteers at Loaves & Fishes in Luck
8/22 (Sat):	2:30-5:00 pm	Pie & Ice Cream Social (G)

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAY'S & ANNIVERSARIES

Valetta Walton
8/20

Adeline Dauer
8/22



Next Sunday (August 23th):

Central-Grantsburg

Pianist
Reading Scripture
Acolyte(s)
Fellowship
Counter
Mowing
Cleaning

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



Atlas

Pianist
Liturgist
Usher
Cleaning
Sunday School

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

St. Croix Falls

Pianist
Liturgist
Usher(s)
Counter
Bell Ringer
Flowers

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

Upcoming Events & News

2026 Summer Special Program for Children (Semi-VBS)

*A special summer program for children: Remaining dates:
Aug. 16 (pool Party) and 28 (Potluck). (Contact: Shayna Schmid).*

Pie & Ice Cream Social at Central UMC

There is Pie and Ice Cream Social from 2:30-5:00 pm on Saturday, August 22nd.

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

Summer Joint Worship at Atlas: Joint Service will be at 10:30 am on August 30th at Polk County Park next to Atlas UMC.



“Nothing Is Wasted in God’s Hands”

I want to start with something funny that I found on the internet: Two little boys were best friends at church, but they both had a reputation for getting into trouble. One Sunday, one of the boys was home sick, but the other boy, not wanting to let his friend down, was twice as bad as usual.

As he was running through the sanctuary after church, the pastor grabbed him and angrily asked, “Where’s God?!” The little boy was frightened and didn’t know what to say. The pastor continued, “I want you to go home and think about it, and I don’t want you to come back until you can tell me where God is.”

The boy went home and called his sick friend on the telephone. “Guess what,” he said. “They’ve lost God, and they’re trying to blame that on us, too!”

Where is God? Have you ever wondered where God is? Sometimes, we specifically wonder where God is when we experience something unexpected and difficult. Have you ever experienced something in your life that you never expected? Of course, at some point in your life, you have. You had a plan. You had a dream. You thought you knew where your life was going. And then, suddenly, something happened that changed everything. Maybe it was an illness. Maybe it was the loss of someone you loved. Maybe it was a broken relationship. Maybe it was a financial problem. Maybe it was a disappointment you never saw coming. And when something like that happens, we may ask: “God, where are you?” “Why is this happening to me?” Sometimes, in the middle of suffering, we may even feel that God has abandoned us.

But today’s Scripture gives us a beautiful reminder: God may be working even when we cannot see what God is doing. And today I want to share this message with you: “Nothing Is Wasted in God’s Hands.” Before we look at today’s passage, let us step back and look at the bigger story. For several months, we have been walking through the book of Genesis together. We began with Abraham. God called Abraham and said, “Leave your country, your people, and your father’s household and go to the land that I will show you.” (Gen. 12:1). Abraham didn’t know exactly where he was going. But he trusted God and left for the Promised Land. God promised Abraham: “I will bless you, and you will be a blessing.” Abraham probably could not imagine what God was going to do through his family.

Then came Isaac. Isaac was the child of promise, born when Abraham was 100 years old. But even Isaac’s life was not easy. He experienced conflict, uncertainty, and family struggles. Yet God remained faithful to the promise.

Then came Jacob. Jacob’s story is certainly not a perfect story. He made mistakes. He deceived his father and brother. He struggled with his family. He ran away from home. He wrestled with God.

And yet God continued to work in Jacob’s life. God changed Jacob’s name to Israel. And through Jacob, God continued the promise.

And then we come to Joseph. Joseph was one of Jacob’s sons. And Joseph’s life seemed to take a completely unexpected direction. He was loved by his father. He had dreams about his future. But then his brothers became jealous of him. They took his beautiful robe. They threw him into a pit. And eventually, they sold him as a slave.

Joseph’s story continued to go in unexpected directions. He became a servant in Egypt. Then he was falsely accused and thrown into prison. One disappointment followed another. If we had stopped Joseph’s story there, we might have said: “What a tragic life.” But Genesis doesn’t stop there. God was not finished. Joseph eventually became second in command in Egypt.

And now, in Genesis 45, something extraordinary happens. The whole land of Egypt and the surrounding region is suffering from a severe famine, and Joseph’s brothers have come to Egypt to buy food. Now, they are standing right in front of Joseph. And Joseph finally reveals who he is. He says: “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt”

(Gen. 45:4). Can you imagine that moment? His brothers are terrified. They remember what they did, and they are afraid that Joseph will punish them.

But Joseph says something they never expected: "Do not be distressed or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life." (Genesis 45:5) What a remarkable statement! Joseph does not deny what happened. His brothers really did sell him. His suffering was real. His pain was real. Even his years of separation from his family were real. But now Joseph can see something that he could not see when he was in the pit. God had been working all along. Through Joseph, God provided food and preserved his family—the Israelites—from the devastating effects of the severe famine.

And when we step back and look at the entire book of Genesis, we begin to see something even bigger. God was not only working in Joseph's story. God was working through generations. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph could not see the whole picture. But God could.

These stories remind me to recall my mother. My mother lost her father during the Korean War. He was a soldier who was forcibly drafted into the war, but he never came home. My mother was the oldest daughter in her family, with two younger brothers. Because of the difficult circumstances after the war, she could not attend public school, and there were times when she did not have enough food to eat. During the day, she worked in the fields, and at night, she sewed to earn money and help support her family.

One day, someone invited her to a church. There, she received a meal and began learning to read and write in Korean and English. She was eventually baptized by an American missionary and experienced a completely different world through the church. She was deeply grateful to God. And she prayed that one day she would become a channel of blessing to others, just as God had promised Abraham: "I will bless you, and you will be a blessing."

However, after she married my father, she could no longer attend church. My father's family was a very traditional Confucian family, and they did not accept her going to church. Her life became even more difficult. She continued working in the fields during the day and sewing at night to support and care for her in-laws. She also had to prepare for ancestral worship every month, preparing large amounts of food for the extended family and the community.

Then, one day, my mother became ill. During that time, someone invited her back to church.

She remembered the church she had attended when she was young—the place where she had first experienced God's love and grace. So, she went back to church. There, she repented for having forgotten God and prayed. She also prayed for her entire family-in-law. Eventually, her whole family-in-law came to faith in Christ. And she placed my life in God's hands because she did not want her daughter to experience the same kind of life she had experienced. Perhaps, deep in her heart, she was praying that I would become a channel of blessing, just as she had once prayed for herself. That is why, when my mother was nearing the end of her life, one of her last wishes for me was: "Go to America and become a pastor."

Looking back now, I can see something I could not see then. God was working through my mother's story. God took her suffering, her prayers, her faith, and even the difficult circumstances of her life, and somehow wove them into a larger story. When I was younger, I could not understand my mother's suffering. I did not know about her prayers or the hopes she carried in her heart. But now I realize that her prayers and her suffering were not wasted. She placed them in God's hands, and God used them in ways she could never have imagined.

My beloved family in Jesus Christ, maybe you are in a joyful season today. Give thanks to God. Maybe you are in a difficult season. Hold on to God. Maybe you are in a season you don't understand. Trust God. Because one day, you may look back and see something you cannot see today.

So, remember: Your tears, struggles, waiting are not wasted. Even your painful experiences are not wasted. When we place them in God's hands, God can redeem them. God can transform our sadness into joy. God can transform our wounds into compassion. God can transform our stories into testimonies. And God can transform our stories into testimonies.

So, whatever you are carrying today, lift it into God's hands. Trust the God who was with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. And trust the God who is with you in every chapter of your life. You may not understand your story today. But remember: God sees the whole story. And because God is still at work—Nothing is wasted in God's hands.

Thanks be to God. Amen!