

***DOXOLOGY**

UMH 95

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION Unison**

Gracious and generous God, we thank you for all the blessings you have provided. Receive these gifts as expressions of our gratitude and faith. Use them to share your love, serve those in need, and bring hope to our communities. Teach us to give not from fear or obligation, but with joyful and grateful hearts. May our gifts remind us that you are always with us and faithfully provide for us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

We Go Forth to Love God and Serve One Another

***CLOSING HYMN**

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

UMH 140 (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)

18th 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

(10:15 AM., Sunday School)

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
September 27th, 2026
18th 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, people of God! We gather today
remembering the God who has been faithful to us.

**We come with grateful hearts,
remembering all that God has done.**

When the Israelites were hungry,
God provided bread from heaven.

**When they were thirsty,
God provided water from the rock.**

When they did not know which way to go,
God guided them through the wilderness.

God was with them, and God is with us.

Come, let us worship the God who guides us,
provides for us, and walks with us.

**We come to worship our faithful God!
The Lord is among us! Thanks be to God! Amen.**

***DEDICATING HYMN** *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*
UMH 127 (vs. 1 & 2)

OPENING PRAYER Unison

Gracious and faithful God, we come before you with thankful hearts.
You have guided us through every wilderness and provided for us in
times of need. When we are afraid or uncertain, remind us that you
are always with us. Open our hearts to recognize your presence, even

when we cannot see the way ahead. Help us remember your blessings
and trust your faithfulness. As we worship today, strengthen our faith
and fill us with your peace. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME

UMH 191 (vs. 1)

Proclamation of God's Word

***THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**

Exodus 17:1-7

(NRSV, p. 64 in the Old Testament, G & SCF Pew Bible,
and p. 65 in the Living Bible; Atlas Pew Bible)

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

SERMON

“Is the LORD Among Us?”

Rev. Jenny Lee

We Respond to God's Word

RESPONDING PRAYER Unison

Faithful God, we thank you for being with us in every wilderness.
When problems come one after another, help us remember your
faithfulness and the blessings you have already given us. Forgive us
when fear makes us forget you. Teach us to trust you when we cannot
see the way ahead. Help us pause, breathe, pray, and remember that
you are already there. May we always answer with faith, “Yes, the
Lord is among us.” Guide us and strengthen us today. 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

SEPTEMBER CHURCH MISSIONS

ATLAS

Mission committee chair: Ashleigh Olson

INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:

Atlas collects and recycles ink jet cartridges 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!

For the month of September Atlas will be collecting funds for Moola for Milk-the Salvation Army Milk Voucher program.

This program provides milk vouchers to children and families in need.

Thank you for your ongoing support!



GRANTSBURG

Mission committee chair: Deb Hammer

INK JET RECYCLING PROGRAM:

We will be collecting and recycles ink jet cartridges year-round. Thank you for your support!



Our September and October Mission will be to support Operation Christmas Child.



Throughout the month, we will invite financial contributions to this special fund, and collect items for the shoeboxes. (UMW take care of the monetary donations to buy the items for shoeboxes.) Additional information will be available at church and on the Mission Board.

ST. CROIX FALLS

Mission committee chair: Kate Murtaugh

Food Shelf

(Communion Sunday)



Sailor Hat Offering:



The Sailor Hat offering will support the school backpack program at SCF.

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
Volunteer Needed
Russ Hammer
Dave Huff
Sandra Erickson



Atlas

Pianist
Liturgist
Usher
Cleaning
Sunday School

Sharon Asp
Colleen Adams-Schween
Sue Olson
Volunteer Needed
Josie Grimes

St. Croix Falls

Pianist
Liturgist
Usher(s)
Counter
Bell Ringer
Flowers

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

Guests last Sunday: We welcomed DS Rev. Peace Kim (A).

Prayers: Please Pray for: Sandra Erickson (her son, Mike, & her husband, Jeff), Toni Koons (her daughter, Renee in Spain to study), Barbara Loomis (healing and recovery), Sue Olson (safe travels), Lynn Hanson (her grandson, A. J. and Jameson, and her daughters, Becky and Sara), Bob Popham (50+ Club members' safe trip), Sharon Asp (her daughter, Shea), and Cheryl Olson (Lois Morrison).



Praise the Lord with Joy and Gratitude — Thank You, Lord, for: Sally Alderfer (picking up \$40 on the street), and Sharon Asp (school staff visited the food shelf).

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

PLEASE NOTE:

- 1) **There is Zoom Live Service 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: 18th Sunday After Pentecost.
God bless you all!

Worship Service and A Week Schedule

9/27 (Sun):	9:00 am	Central-Grantsburg UMC with Live Zoom Service
	10:00 am	Atlas UMC
	11:15 am	St. Croix Falls UMC
9/28 (Mon):	1:00 pm	Parsonage Inspection
9/29-10/1:		School for Leadership in Green Lake
9/30 (Wed):	6:00-8:00 pm	Youth Worship Night at Wood Lake Camp
10/1 (Thur):	4:00-5:00 pm	Go Fish (G)
10/3 (Sat):		Grantoberfest in Grantsburg
	9:00 am	UMM Meeting (G)

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAY'S & ANNIVERSARIES

Kristie Olson 9/28

LeAnn Sylvester 9/29



Next Sunday (October 4):

Central - Grantsburg

Pianist	Toni Koons
Scripture Reading	Toni Koons
Acolyte(s)	Willow Nyland
Fellowship	Volunteer Needed
Counter	Dave Huff & Russ Hammer
Mowing	Dave Huff
Cleaning	Sandra Erickson
World Communion	Together

Atlas

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Sue Olson
Usher	Colleen Adams-Schween
Cleaning	Volunteer Needed
Sunday School	Cheryl Olson
World Communion	Together

St. Croix Falls

Pianist	Sharon Asp
Liturgist	Karen Sciacca
Usher(s)	Jim Andrews
Counter	Peter Gionis
Bell Ringer	Jim Andrews
Flower	Women of the church
World Communion	Kathy and Peter Gionis



Upcoming Events & News

World Communion Sunday on October 4:

Please bring your own family bread or any unique bread to share for World Communion Sunday-see signup sheet.

Children & Youth Programs (G)

Children-Go Fish (K-4th Grade): 10/1, 10/15

Youth (5th Grade and up): 9/24, 10/8

Crex Carving: 10/28

Worship Night at Wood Lake Camp: 9/30

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



“Is the LORD Among Us?”

I want to start with something funny that I found on an internet site: A college student was in Philosophy class, where a class discussion about whether or not God exists was in progress. The professor had the following logic: “Has anyone in this class seen God?” Nobody spoke. “Has anyone in this class touched God?” Again, nobody spoke. “Has anyone in this class ever heard God?” When nobody spoke for the third time, he simply stated, “Then there is no God!” One of the students did not like the sound of this, and asked for permission to speak. The professor granted it, and the student stood up. “Has anyone in this class seen our professor's brain?” he asked.

From the perspective of non-Christians, Christians may seem like very strange people. We believe in a God whom we have never seen. We believe in Jesus, who was born in Israel—a place many of us have never visited. And we spend our lives trying to follow Jesus’ teachings and devote ourselves to Him.

What is even more remarkable is that we do all of this willingly, with joy and thanksgiving.

Jesus said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.” So, I hope and pray that you will believe that you are truly blessed people—not because you have seen everything with your own eyes, but because you have faith in the God whom you cannot see.

Today’s Scripture continues the story of the Israelites. They had experienced God’s miracles. They had received answers to their prayers again and again. Yet, whenever they faced another difficulty, they began to wonder, “Is the Lord really among us?” Even after experiencing God’s faithfulness so many times, they still struggled to trust that God was with them.

Last week, we traveled with the Israelites through the wilderness. Do you remember what happened?

They had left Egypt, where they lived as slaves. God had opened the Red Sea, so that they walked through Red Sea as dry ground. They praised God singing and dancing. God had led them with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. But then they came into the wilderness.

And there was no food. They became hungry. And what did they do? Yes, they complained. They totally forgot how God led them from Egypt and through Red Sea. They said, “Why did Moses bring us out of Egypt? At least we had food in Egypt!” But God heard them. And God provided ‘manna.’ God has rained bread from heaven. God was teaching them something very important: “Trust me one day at a time.” They did not need to store up everything for tomorrow. They needed to trust God for today.

Now their journey continues. Exodus 17 begins, “From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded.” I want you to notice something. They were moving because the LORD commanded them to move. God was their perfect guide and navigator.

God guided them with a pillar of cloud during the daytime. When the pillar of cloud moved, the Israelites moved. When the pillar stopped, they stopped. Can you imagine that? What an amazing grace! They were not lost. They were not wandering because they had taken a wrong turn. They were simply following God.

Now, where did they arrive? Rephidim. And there was a problem. There was no water for the people to drink. No water. Can you imagine that? Imagine walking through the wilderness. You have been walking for days. The sun is hot. Your mouth is dry. Your children are thirsty and cried to you. And the people became angry. They came to Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” Moses answered, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?” But the people were thirsty. And their thirst became anger.

They complained against Moses. They said, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?”

Does that sound familiar? Just a little earlier, they had said, “There is no food!” And now they say, “There is no water!” “Why did you bring us here?” One problem comes after another.

When I first read this story about the Israelites, I thought, “How could they forget so quickly?” They had just experienced God providing bread from heaven when they were hungry. They had seen God open the Red Sea and lead them safely through it. How could they so easily forget what God had already done?

But then I suddenly realized: sometimes we are just like the Israelites. Have you ever felt that way?

The Israelites had experienced God’s grace again and again. God had delivered them from slavery, opened the Red Sea, guided them through the wilderness, and provided food for them. Yet when another difficulty came, they became afraid and asked, “Lord, what now?”

Isn't that sometimes our experience, too? One thing happens, and then another. Before we even have time to catch our breath from the first problem, another problem arrives. And suddenly, the problem right in front of us becomes so big that we forget what God has already done.

I have felt that way recently, too. I had a car accident, and suddenly my normal routine was disrupted. I had to deal with insurance, transportation, and finding another car. At the same time, the immigration department asked me to submit some documents again. Then I had to make two long trips to Chicago.

There were so many things to think about, and honestly, it was easy to focus on the problems right in front of me. For a moment, I could not see God’s blessings beyond those problems.

But later, I stopped. I took a breath. I prayed. And as I looked back, I realized something: perhaps this was also a time God was preparing something new for me. It turned out to be the perfect time to renew my medical examination, take care of my green card process, and even get a new car. What I saw as one problem after another, God was somehow using to lead me into the next chapter. What an awesome God!

Sometimes, we cannot see what God is doing while we are in the middle of the wilderness. But that does not mean God is not working. God is still there, even when we cannot see the blessing yet.

Let’s go back to the Israelite. Moses does something very important. Moses cries out to the LORD. He says, “What shall I do with this people?” He goes to God and asks for help. And God tells Moses what to do. God says: “Go on ahead of the people... Take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go.” And then God says something amazing: “I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb.” Did you hear that? “I will be standing there.” Yes, God is there for us. God does not abandon us in the wilderness. Moses strikes the rock with his staff, and water comes out of the rock.

And then comes the last verse. Moses calls the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD. And the question they asked was: “Is the LORD among us or not?”

That is really the heart of this story. They were not simply asking, “Where is the water?” They were asking, “Where is God?”

Sometimes we do the same thing. We know what God has done in the past. We can name God’s blessings. We can remember times when God answered our prayers. We can remember times when God carried us through difficult seasons. But then something difficult happens again. And we ask, “God, where are you?”

Perhaps some of us are asking that question today. Perhaps we are standing in our own wilderness. Maybe we are facing a health concern, a family problem, financial difficulties, loneliness, grief, or an unexpected situation that we never saw coming. And we may wonder, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

My family in Jesus Christ, the story of Exodus 17 reminds us of something important: Our circumstances may change, but God’s presence does not. The Israelites could not see water. But God was there. They could not see the answer. But God was there. They did not know what would happen next. But God was already standing on the rock before them.

So, remember this: God is with us even in the wilderness. When we have plenty, God is with us.

When we are thirsty, God is with us. When we understand what is happening, God is with us. And when we have no idea what comes next, God is still with us. The Israelites asked: “Is the LORD among us or not?” Today, we know the answer. Yes! Yes, the LORD is among us. And most of all, remember God's promise: “I will be standing there.” God has been with us. God is with us. And God will be with us.

Thanks be to God. Amen.