

## Gathering

Words of Welcome

Prelude *Sing We Now of Christmas* Bell Choir

Call to Worship  
Jesus says: I am coming soon.  
**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!**

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Hymn #84 v. 1  
*Creator of the stars of night,  
Your people's everlasting light,  
O Christ, Redeemer of us all,  
We pray you hear us when we call.*

Prayer

\* Hymn

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel  
O come, O come, Emmanuel, and with your captive children dwell.  
Give comfort to all exiles here, and to the aching heart bid cheer.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come within as Love to dwell.*

*O come, you Splendor very bright, as joy that never yields to might.  
O come, and turn all hearts to peace, that greed and war at last shall cease.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come within as Truth to dwell.*

*O come, you Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by your presence here.  
And dawn in every broken soul as vision that can see the whole.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come within as Light to dwell.*

*O come, you Wisdom from on high, from depths that hide within a sigh,  
to temper knowledge with our care, to render every act a prayer.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come within as Hope to dwell.*

Prayer of Confession

**God of Hope,  
Your love is good news for the oppressed, O Lord,  
and you bind up the brokenhearted.  
Forgive us, O God,  
when we think that your good news is only for us.  
Forgive us, O God,  
when we twist your gospel into something that fits  
comfortably into our lives.  
By your light,  
let us see you leading us beyond ourselves and into the  
world you love.  
By your grace,  
forgive us, and free us to try again...**

## Assurance of Forgiveness

\* Passing of the Peace    May the Peace of Christ be with you!  
**And also with you!**

\* Hymn 79 v. 3                    *Hope blooms in a weary world  
when creatures, once forlorn,  
find wilderness reborn.  
Hope blooms in a weary world:  
the promised green of Eden comes.*

*The trees shall clap their hands;  
the dry lands, gush with springs;  
the hills and mountains shall break forth with singing!  
We shall go out in joy,  
and be led forth in peace,  
as all the world in wonder echoes shalom.*

## Word

Time with the Children

Prayer for Illumination

First Reading

John 1:6-8, 19-28

**6** There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. **8** He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. **19** This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" **20** He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah."<sup>[a]</sup> **21** And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." **22** Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" **23** He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,  
'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"

as the prophet Isaiah said.

**24** Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. **25** They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah,<sup>[b]</sup> nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" **26** John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, **27** the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." **28** This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

## Second Reading

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and release to the prisoners;

**2**

to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;

**3**

to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

**4**

They shall build up the ancient ruins,  
they shall raise up the former devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many generations.

**8**

For I the LORD love justice,  
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;<sup>[a]</sup>  
I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

**9**

Their descendants shall be known among the nations,  
and their offspring among the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge  
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

**10**

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,  
my whole being shall exult in my God;  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

**11**

For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.

\* Affirmation of Faith

*from the Iona Community*

**We believe that God is present  
in the darkness before dawn;  
in the waiting and uncertainty  
where fear and courage join hands,  
conflict and caring link arms,  
and the sun rises over barbed wire.  
We believe in a with-us God  
Who sits down in our midst  
to share our humanity.  
We affirm a faith  
That takes us beyond the safe place  
into action, into vulnerability.  
and into the streets.  
We commit ourselves to work for change  
and put us on the line;  
to bear responsibility, to take risks,  
live powerfully and face humiliation;  
to stand with those on the edge;  
to chose life  
and be used by the Spirit  
for God's new community of hope.  
Amen**

\* Hymn 301

*Let Us Build a House*

1 Let us build a house where love can dwell  
and all can safely live,  
a place where saints and children tell  
how hearts learn to forgive.  
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,  
rock of faith and vault of grace;  
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:

Refrain:

all are welcome; all are welcome; all are welcome in this place.

2 Let us build a house where prophets speak,  
and words are strong and true,  
where all God's children dare to seek  
to dream God's reign anew.  
Here the cross shall stand as witness  
and as symbol of God's grace;  
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus: (Refrain)

3 Let us build a house where love is found  
in water, wine, and wheat;

a banquet hall on holy ground  
where peace and justice meet.  
Here the love of God, through Jesus,  
is revealed in time and space;  
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us: (Refrain)

4 Let us build a house where hands will reach  
beyond the wood and stone  
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,  
and live the Word they've known.  
Here the outcast and the stranger  
bear the image of God's face;  
let us bring an end to fear and danger: (Refrain)

Let us build a house where all are named,  
their songs and visions heard  
and loved and treasured,  
taught and claimed as words within the Word.  
Built of tears and cries and laughter,  
prayers of faith and songs of grace;  
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter: (Refrain)

## Responding

### Announcements

### Offering our Gifts

*Give at [lovejoyupc.org/give](http://lovejoyupc.org/give)*

*Loose cash offerings benefit our Good Samaritan fund, which helps our neighbors with essential needs on an emergency basis.*

### Sharing of Joys and Concerns

### Sung call to Prayer

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

Hymn 469

*Lord, listen to your children praying.*

*Lord, send your Spirit in this place.*

*Lord, listen to your children praying.*

*Send us love; send us power; send us grace.*

### Prayers of the People

### The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,**

**thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory, forever.**

**Amen.**

## Sending

\* Hymn 132

### *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

1 Good Christian friends, rejoice  
with heart and soul and voice;  
give ye heed to what we say:  
Jesus Christ is born today;  
ox and ass before him bow,  
and he is in the manger now.  
Christ is born today!  
Christ is born today!

2 Good Christian friends, rejoice  
with heart and soul and voice;  
now ye hear of endless bliss:  
Jesus Christ was born for this!  
He has opened heaven's door,  
and we are blest forevermore.  
Christ was born for this!  
Christ was born for this!

3 Good Christian friends, rejoice  
with heart and soul and voice;  
now ye need not fear the grave:  
Jesus Christ was born to save!  
Calls you one and calls you all  
to gain the everlasting hall.  
Christ was born to save!  
Christ was born to save!

\* Charge & Benediction

\* Postlude

*Dear Christians, One and All Rejoice*

Praetorius


## Worship Notes

Ann French is our Director of Music. Thanks to Michael & Robert Musgrave-Perkins and Alice Buzzard for their technology gifts. Thanks also to our liturgist for the day. Parts of today's service are adapted from *The Book of Common Worship* and *Call to Worship*. Advent Candle Liturgy by Carol Prickett at Deep Well Worship. This version of *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* is by Mark Belletini

## Land Acknowledgment

The LoveJoy United community gathers on the traditional land of the Tamaroa People, who have been its faithful stewards for generations. We acknowledge and honor the past, present, and future of the Tamaroa and other Indigenous peoples who have been displaced from their ancestral homelands.

## Announcements

Announcements marked with  are opportunities that relate to our Matthew 25 commitment.



### **Let Your Light Shine - Stewardship Season**

God has given each of us incredible gifts and resources to reflect God's light into the world: time, talent, and

treasure. Please prayerfully consider how your giving can support God's ministry at LoveJoy United in the upcoming year. A pledge is an estimate of what you hope to give, which help our church leaders plan responsibly for the future of our church's ministries. **We encourage everyone to pledge by filling out a pledge card, calling the church office, or pledging online at [lovejoyupc.org/pledge](https://lovejoyupc.org/pledge).** When each of us gives generously, we shine more brightly as God's church.



**The Christmas Joy Offering** has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years. Give at [bit.ly/christmasjoyLUPC](https://bit.ly/christmasjoyLUPC)



### **Warm and Fuzzy Tree**

In December, we be collecting various warm and fuzzy items and donating them to the Overnight Warming Center in Alton. We will collect hats, scarves, gloves, socks, blankets, etc. Anything that will bring warmth! Thank you for your donations.



### **Food Pantry**

We distributed 19 Christmas Boxes on Monday. Everyone was very appreciative of the extra items we were able to provide them. Thanks for all of your donations! Now, we are in need of soups and chili.



### **Sunday Morning Live (Adult Christian Education), Sundays at 9 AM in-person and on Zoom.**

Pour yourself a cup of coffee and join a group of adults in an informal conversation around the themes of Christian Practices. Join in the Fellowship Hall or via Zoom (<https://lovejoyupc.org/live> and click "connect via Zoom").

**Lyceum Book Club's** current book is DAEMON COPPERHEAD by Barbara Kingsolver. ZOOM on 12/20 7:15p. Our next book is THE COVENANT OF WATER by Abraham Verghese. It is a 2-month read therefore we ZOOM half of it on 01/20 @ 7:15p.

**Sewing and Craft Circle - Will be taking a break for the holidays and will resume on January 10.**



### **Wednesdays at LoveJoy United**

- **Lectionary Bible Study and Lunch Bunch will resume on January 10.**
- **Zoom Evening Prayer at 7 PM**

### **PRAYER CONCERNS**

JoAnn Moss, Pat Fletcher, Katie Davis, Jessica Elledge, Terry French, John Gremlí & the Gremlí Family, Connor, JoAnn Lamar, Trans folks in KY, TN, FL, MO, Mason Inlow, Kenny Slayden, Connie, Ched, Carol Foraker, Shelly Devore, Landon Stockhoff, Annabel Gibson, Mark Carter (Alice Carter's husband, back surgery), Scott Blass (Henson's Nephew, recent kidney transplant recipient), Spencer Slayden, Wendy Shugert (John and Linda Shugert's Sister-in-Law), Jack Jenkins (Friend of Linda Allen - Surgery).

### **NURSING & RETIREMENT HOME RESIDENTS**

**Integrity Healthcare, Wood River** – Herbert Peel

**The Cottages of Carlinville, Carlinville** – Shirley Martin

**Villa Rose, Bethalto** – Beth Forrester

**Cedarhurst, Bethalto** – Shirley Burris and Mary Barnes



**NEXT STEPS  
& SIGNUPS**

## LoveJoy United Presbyterian Church

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