

Gathering

Words of Welcome

The Winter Rose

Joseph Martin Choir

All Choral Music today is excerpt from the cantata "The Winter Rose"

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 119

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king.
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful all ye nations, rise;
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"

2 Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail the incarnate deity,
pleased in flesh with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"

3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"

Prayer of Confession

**God who dwells among us,
we hear Jesus knocking on the doors of our hearts,
but we confess that we do not always let him in.
If we're honest, we make room in ourselves
for all kinds of things:
busyness and haste,
worry and fear,
self-interest and self-gratification.
But we struggle to make room for Jesus.**

**Forgive us, O God.
Help us to set aside all that clutters our hearts,
so that we may be filled with joy, hope, peace, and love
of Jesus...**

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

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

7 Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, **2** the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." **3** Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

4 But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: **5** Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a

house to live in? **6** I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. **7** Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders^[a] of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" **8** Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; **9** and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. **10** And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, **11** from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house.

16 Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me;^[a] your throne shall be established forever.

Anthem

Every Valley

Joseph Martin

Second Reading

Luke 1:26-38

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, **27** to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. **28** And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."^[a] **29** But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. **30** The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. **31** And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. **32** He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. **33** He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." **34** Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"^[b] **35** The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born^[c] will be holy; he will be called Son of God. **36** And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. **37** For nothing will be impossible with God." **38** Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Sermon

Hope Embodied

Rev. Daniel Ervin

* 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 100

Canticle of the Turning

1 My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain:

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn.

2 Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame,
and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn. (Refrain)

3 From the halls of power to the fortress tower,

not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears
every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,
for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread; every mouth be fed,
for the world is about to turn. (Refrain)

4 Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which holds us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
who is turning the world around. (Refrain)

Responding

Announcements

Offering our Gifts

Give at 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 134

Joy to the World

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Let earth receive her king;

let every heart prepare him room,

and heaven and nature sing,

and heaven and nature sing,

and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!

Let all their songs employ,

while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains

repeat the sounding joy,

repeat the sounding joy,

repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3 No more let sins and sorrows grow,

nor thorns infest the ground;

he comes to make his blessings flow

far as the curse is found,

far as the curse is found,

far as, far as the curse is found.

4 He rules the world with truth and grace,

and makes the nations prove

the glories of his righteousness

and wonders of his love,

and wonders of his love,

and wonders, wonders of his love.

* Charge & Benediction

Look to the Rose

*Postlude

Jubilate Deo

Handel/Blake

Notes on the *Winter Rose* by Joseph and Pamela Martin

From the earliest Christian times, the rose has been a symbol of divine love. It gently reaches across the ages in ancient illuminations and freely spills from the pens and brushes of countless poets and artists.

Echoing through our sanctuaries in the melodies and texts of many beloved carols, it brings to life the beautiful visions of biblical prophets and the hope of early Christian pilgrims.

Today, the rose remains a vital expression of love and peace both inside the Church and the outside world. Her appearance in the garden is a treasured harbinger of the coming of spring's abundance. As a gift, the rose's delicate beauty is usually reserved for the most meaningful expressions of the heart. No flower holds our dreams of love more beautifully than she.

It is in that same spirit that the present work was conceived and written. It is our sincerest prayer that as Christ, the Rose of Sharon, opens before you this Christmas, your spirit will be encouraged by the beauty of

God's greatest gift. Let the words and music of these works remind you that even in the deepest winter, we are people of joy and life... children of the garden


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.

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.** 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

Food Pantry

The food pantry needs canned soups and chili. Your donations are always appreciated.

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.

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").

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

Join our new social gathering on Wednesday afternoons from 2–4 p.m. We have a lot of talented people in our church. Let's get together and work on our projects in a relaxing environment. You can bring your own drink and snacks if desired. If you have any questions, ask Paula Blair or Janet Barringer. We'll be moderating this fellowship time to make sure we don't get off track.

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 Gremli & the Gremli 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 (Jack and Dottie Kleinert's grandson, Scott and Kelly Slayden's oldest son, deployed to Middle East), 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

2550 Rock Hill Rd, Wood River, IL 62095

www.lovejoyupc.org | (618) 254-5880

Rev. Daniel Ervin, Pastor | daniel@lovejoyupc.org

Tabitha Nail, Admin | admin@lovejoyupc.org

Ann French, Director of Music

Lisa Hemphill, Custodian