

Gathering

Words of Welcome

Prelude Linda Allen, harp solo

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

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

* Hymn 92 *While We Are Waiting, Come*

1 While we are waiting, come;
while we are waiting, come.
Refrain:
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
while we are waiting, come.
2 With power and glory, come;
with power and glory, come. (Refrain)
3 Come, Savior, quickly come;
come, Savior, quickly come. (Refrain)

Prayer of Confession **God of Hope,
in Jesus Christ, we have glimpsed the
dawning of salvation.
But we live as if we are still captive to darkness.
We have beheld a foretaste of your kingdom:
Where hungry ones are fed.
Where the sick are healed.
Where mourners are comforted.
Where the despairing receive good news.
But we confess that we choose to enact a different world:
Where hunger thrives.
Where conflict divides.
Where good news is withheld.
Where hope is hoarded.
Forgive us, God of Mercy.
Renew in us the light of your salvation
so that we might comfort a hurting world...**

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

Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news^[a] of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.^[b] **2**
As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,^[c]

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,^[d]
who will prepare your way;

3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight,’” **4** John the baptizer appeared^[e] in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **5** And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. **6** Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. **7** He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. **8** I have baptized you with^[f] water; but he will baptize you with^[g] the Holy Spirit.”

Anthem

Second Reading

Isaiah 40:1–11

Comfort, O comfort my people,

says your God.
2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.
3 A voice cries out:
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
4 Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
5 Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.
"6 A voice says, "Cry out!"
And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.
7 The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
8 The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.
9 Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;^[a]
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,^[b]
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
"Here is your God!"
10 See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Sermon

Hope Revealed

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 87

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

1 "Comfort, comfort now my people;
tell of peace!" So says our God.
"Comfort those who sit in darkness
mourning under sorrow's load.
To my people now proclaim
that my pardon waits for them!
Tell them that their sins I cover,
and their warfare now is over."

2 For the herald's voice is crying
in the desert far and near,
calling us to true repentance,
since the reign of God is here.
O, that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way.
Let the valleys rise in meeting
and the hills bow down in greeting.

3 Straight shall be what long was crooked,
and the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits God's holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
now on earth is shed abroad,
and all flesh shall see the token
that God's word is never broken.

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

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 106

Prepare the Way, O Zion

1 Prepare the way, O Zion,
your Christ is drawing near!
Let every hill and valley
a level way appear.
Greet One who comes in glory,
foretold in sacred story.
Refrain:
O blest is Christ who came
in God's most holy name.

2 He brings God's rule, O Zion;
he comes from heaven above.
His rule is peace and freedom,
and justice, truth, and love.
Lift high your praise resounding,
for grace and joy abounding.
Refrain:
O blest is Christ who came
in God's most holy name.

3 Fling wide your gates, O Zion;
your Savior's rule embrace,
and tidings of salvation
proclaim in every place.
All lands will bow rejoicing,
their adoration voicing.

Refrain:
O blest is Christ who came
in God's most holy name.

* Charge & Benediction

* Postlude


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.



Christmas Food Box

Our food pantry is providing a Christmas box to our patrons on Monday, Dec. 11. We will purchase ham or turkey, but we would like to collect a few extra items for their box. We have about 25 families. We need: 5lb bags of potatoes, Boxed Stuffing Mix, Onion Topping, Mushroom Soup, Canned Green Beans, Cranberry Sauce, Dinner Rolls, Butter. Monetary donations are also welcome. Please talk to Brenda Donohoo or Marilyn King if you have questions.



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.

Thank you to the Christmas Wonderland Volunteers!

I would like to thank all the volunteers who worked the Walk Thru Night at Christmas Wonderland in Rock Spring Park. It was a cold night, 39 degrees, but everyone was dressed very warmly and did a great job. There were 593 people who walked through the park and we collected \$816. Everyone was very generous since the entrance fee was only \$1 per person. Behavioral Health Alternatives had 9 volunteers and LoveJoy United had 12. Thanks to all of the following people: Pastor Daniel, Gary Conrad (a wonderful Santa Claus), Tanya and Rich Sisk, Rick and Alice Buzzard, Amy and Lucy Manker, Janet Barringer and Joe Phillips, David Norris, and Kent Barry. A fun night and a job well done! - Kathy Steinmann



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

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 In-Person or Zoom at 10:15 AM** - Join pastor Daniel and a number of others as we discuss the scripture readings for the upcoming Sunday.
- **Lunch Bunch gathers on Wednesdays at 11:30 AM**
- **Zoom Evening Prayer at 7 PM**

PRAYER CONCERNS

JoAnn Moss, Pat Fletcher, Katie Davis, Jessica Elledge, Terry French, John Gremling & the Gremling Family, Jeanie McCoy, 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 Shugert's Sister-in-Law).

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**

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Lisa Hemphill, Custodian