

✚ Gathering

Words of Welcome

Prelude

*Canon in D*

Pachelbel/Smith

Advent Candle lighting

...even in the dark.  
**God is here.**

Prayer of the Day

\* Hymn 82

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus  
I Come, thou long-expected Jesus,  
born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us;  
let us find our rest in thee.*

*Israel's strength and consolation,  
hope of all the earth thou art;  
dear desire of every nation,  
joy of every longing heart.*

*2 Born thy people to deliver,  
born a child and yet a king,  
born to reign in us forever,  
now thy gracious kingdom bring.*

*By thine own eternal Spirit  
rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all-sufficient merit  
raise us to thy glorious throne.*

Prayer of Confession

**God of deep mystery,  
you are loving and gracious in all your ways.  
We confess that we struggle to trust you  
when the path ahead is hidden  
and when the night feels long.  
We admit that we prefer a bright, certain faith  
to the slow unfolding of your way.  
We rush to fill the silence  
and hurry past our fear,  
rather than resting in your presence**

**that meets us gently in the dark.  
Forgive us.  
Teach us to walk with courage,  
To trust what we cannot always see,  
and to find you even in the shadows.  
Let your light grow within us,  
small but steady,  
until hope dawns again...**

Assurance of Forgiveness

\* Passing of the Peace

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

\* Hymn 670

*From the Rising of the Sun  
From the rising of the sun  
to the going down of the same,  
the name of the Lord shall be praised.  
From the rising of the sun  
to the going down of the same,  
the name of the Lord shall be praised.  
So praise ye the Lord.  
Praise ye the Lord.  
From the rising of the sun  
to the going down of the same,  
the name of the Lord shall be praised.*

## ✦ Word

Time with the Children

Prayer for Illumination

First Reading

Luke 2:8–14

8 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,[a] the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,[b] praising God and saying, 14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!

Anthem

*Come, Emmanuel*

Besig

Second Reading

Genesis 1:1–5

**1** In the beginning when God created<sup>[a]</sup> the heavens and the earth, **2** the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God<sup>[b]</sup> swept over the face of the waters. **3** Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. **4** And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Sermon

Who’s Afraid of the Dark?

✦ Responding

\* Affirmation of Faith

*From Col 1:15–20*

**Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God,  
the firstborn of all creation;  
in him all things in heaven and on earth were created,  
things visible and invisible.  
All things have been created through him and for him.  
he himself is before all things,  
and in him all things hold together.  
He is head of the body, the church;  
he is the beginning,  
the firstborn of the dead,  
so that he might come to have first place in everything.  
For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,  
and through him God was pleased to reconcile all things,  
whether on earth or in heaven,  
by making peace through the blood of his cross. Amen.**

\* Hymn 836

*Abide with Me*

*1 Abide with me: fast falls the eventide.  
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide!  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,  
help of the helpless, O abide with me.*

*2 Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;  
earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;  
change and decay in all around I see.  
O thou who changest not, abide with me.*

*3 I need thy presence every passing hour;  
what but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?  
Who, like thyself, my guide and stay can be?  
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.*

*4 I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;  
ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.  
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?*

*I triumph still, if thou abide with me.*

*5 Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;  
shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.  
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;  
in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.*

## 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 primarily through our partners at Riverbend Family Ministries.  
Checks for offering are processed on the second and fourth Mondays of each month.*

## Prayer of Dedication

## Sharing Joys and Concerns

## Hymn 168

*Within Your Shelter, Loving God vv. 1, 4  
Within your shelter, loving God, my refuge and my tower,  
I safely walk by day and night beneath your guiding power.*

*As often as I call to you, you kindly hear my prayer.  
In times of trouble and distress I rest in your own care.*

## 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 840

*When Peace like a River*

*I When peace like a river  
attendeth my way,  
when sorrows like sea billows roll,  
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,  
it is well, it is well with my soul.*

*Refrain:*

*It is well with my soul;  
it is well; it is well with my soul.*

*1 Though Satan should buffet,  
though trials should come,  
let this blest assurance control,  
that Christ hath regarded  
my helpless estate,  
and hath shed his own blood for my soul. (Refrain)*

*2 He lives: O the bliss  
of this glorious thought.  
My sin, not in part, but the whole,  
is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more.  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul! (Refrain)*

*3 Lord, hasten the day  
when our faith shall be sight,  
the clouds be rolled back as a scroll,  
the trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall descend;  
even so it is well with my soul. (Refrain)*

\* Charge & Benediction

\* Postlude

*Jubilate Deo*

Handel/Blake

## ✝️ 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*.

## ✝️ 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.

 **Joy In Giving: Stewardship for 2026** As our church leaders plan for our ministries next year, we invite you to consider how God is calling you to give. Please return a pledge card in the offering basket, church office, or submit your pledge online at [lovejoyupc.org/pledge](https://lovejoyupc.org/pledge).

**Congregational Meeting to Elect Church Officers - Today after worship.**

All members of the congregation are encouraged to attend as we elect elders, deacons, and nominating committee members to serve as church leaders for the upcoming terms. Zoom voting will be available for those unable to attend

in person.

 **Red Cross Blood Drive:** December 4th at 2-6pm. Sign up at [lovejoyupc.org/nextsteps](http://lovejoyupc.org/nextsteps).

**Christmas Lights Bus Tour:** On Sunday evening December 7 starting at 4:00 p.m. the Fellowship Committee is sponsoring a Christmas Lights Bus tour. A sign up sheet is in the hall. **Deadline for participants names is November 30.**

 **Food Pantry Needs:** Personal Care Items. Shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, etc. Your donations allow us to help others and are always appreciated.

 **Christmas Boxes:** Please see our Christmas Food Box display in the narthex and take a flier if you'd like to donate.

 **Christmas Bake Sale** – Our Christmas Bake Sale will be December 13th. Save The Date!

 **Learn more about LoveJoy United** – Sunday, Dec. 14 after worship. Interested in learning more about the congregation? Considering joining as a member? Join pastor Daniel and a couple of others as we share more about our life of faith together and answer any questions you may have. Please let Daniel know you're interested: [daniel@loveoyupc.org](mailto:daniel@loveoyupc.org).

**Game Day:** December Game Day is 12/20 from noon (12:00) to 3:00 or whenever.

**Christmas Potluck Dinner:** On Sunday, December 21, the Fellowship Committee is sponsoring a Christmas Pot Luck Dinner after worship. Sign up sheet is available in the narthex. We will have an ugly sweater contest with prizes!

#### **A Place of Grace Walk to Bethlehem - November 30 - December 24**

On the first Sunday of Advent, we will embark on our annual trip to Bethlehem with the practice of embodied prayer. Each day, you'll receive a meditation by email or in the private Facebook Group. You are asked to report your mileage each day with 2000 steps equaling one mile or 20 minutes of movement equaling one mile. Collectively, our goal will be to get to Bethlehem by Christmas morning. RSVP by 11/29!

#### **Adult Christian Education on Sunday Mornings at 9 AM**

- **Sunday Morning Live** Is an informal, conversational class that seeks to connect scripture, theology, and faith to our lives and world. Each Sunday at 9:00, they meet in the Love Room and on Zoom. They relate current events to Scripture to create thought-provoking discussions via The Wired Word.
- **Bible Class: New Advent Sunday School Series starts November 30 at 9AM**, The Rev. Dr. Linda Shugert lead us as we begin a series called "Through the Wilderness: Healing for a Weary World." Join us as we hear the prophet Isaiah speak into our own weary world.

#### **Wednesdays at LoveJoy United**

- **Lectionary Bible Study** In-Person or Zoom at 10:15 AM - Join pastor Daniel as we discuss the scripture readings for the upcoming Sunday.
- **Lunch Bunch** gathers on Wednesdays at 11:30 AM
- **Zoom Evening Prayer** on Wednesday nights at 7 PM.

#### **PRAYER CONCERNS**

JoAnn Moss, Pat Fletcher, John Gremler & the Gremler Family, Connor, JoAnn Lamar, Trans folks, Kenny Slayden, Connie, Ched, Mark Carter, Tom and Jupiter, Kristi Doering, Shelly Devore (Brenda and Deb's niece), Brittany, Bill Lester, Lanny Harris, John Kennedy, Renee Lynn, Kathie Luke (Julie Spurgeon's Sister), Forrest, David Hemphill, Linda Duncan, JoJo, Terrye Mock (Valerie Freeman's Sister-In-Law), Gary Chappell and Laurie Chappell (Edie Chappell's son and her daughter-in-law), Cathy Lister (Karen Auston's sister), Barb (Linda Smith's daughter), Paula Blair, Jeane Slayden, Mike Carnes, Eli (The Paddock's grandson), David Norris, Jo Carter, Julie Spurgeon.

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

Integrity Healthcare, Wood River – Herbert Peel  
The Cottages of Carlinville, Carlinville – Shirley Martin  
Villa Rose, Bethalto – Beth Forrester  
Cedarhurst, Bethalto – Mary Barnes  
Liberty Village, Jerseyville – Shirley Burris  
Villas of Holly Brook – Jeane Slayden



**NEXT STEPS  
& SIGNUPS**

## LoveJoy United Presbyterian Church

2550 Rock Hill Rd, Wood River, IL 62095

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Tabitha Nail, Admin | [admin@lovejoyupc.org](mailto:admin@lovejoyupc.org)

Ann French, Director of Music

Joshua Bryant, Custodian & Groundskeeper