

✦ Gathering

Words of Welcome

Prelude

Christmas Joy

Dobrinski
Bell Choir

Advent Candle lighting

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

Prayer of the Day

Anthem

Brazilian Carol

Harlan
Linda Allen, drum

Prayer of Confession

**Shepherd of our souls,
we anticipate your coming but do not feel ready.
We have done too much, and not done enough.
We have focused too much on ourselves,
and not enough on others.
Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we might be saved...**

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

Scripture

Luke 2:1–20

2 In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. **2** This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. **3** All went to their own towns to be registered. **4** Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. **5** He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. **6** While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. **7** And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. **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!”^[c] **15** When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” **16** So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. **17** When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; **18** and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. **19** But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. **20** The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Poem

The Preparation

Anthem

Love Came Down at Christmas

Raney

Poem

Happy Christmas

Anthem

Such a Small King

Causey

Poem

This is a Special Night

Hymn 121

O Little Town of Bethlehem

1 O little town of Bethlehem,

*how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.*

*2 For Christ is born of Mary
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all on earth.*

*3 How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.*

*4 O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in;
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us; abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!*

✚ 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 110

Love Has Come

*1 Love has come: a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.*

*2 Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;
what is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.
Love! Love! Jesus, Emmanuel.*

*3 Love has come and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!*

Announcements

Offering our Gifts

*Give at 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 Tuesdays 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

Charge and Benediction

Choral Benediction

The Light of Christmas

Raney

* Postlude

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Mendelssohn/Smith

✦ 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.

Christmas Potluck Dinner: Today, after worship the Fellowship Committee is sponsoring a Christmas Pot Luck Dinner after worship. We will have an ugly sweater contest with prizes!

Longest Night Service: Today at 4 PM This service, held on the winter solstice, is for all those experiencing pain, doubt, or grief this season. We know that the holidays are not cheerful and joyful for everyone. You're not alone. Please join us and invite others who could use the company of God's people this season.

Christmas Eve Service: 5:30pm Fellowship, 6:30pm Worship Service with Communion and Song by Candle light. Our Christmas Eve offering will be split between the OWLs (Overnight Warming Locations) and Oasis Women's Center. You may give during the service or online at lovejoyupc.org/give.

Art Exhibit and Studio Announcement! - December 30, 2025 6:00 PM

Von Dell Gallery & Studios, 102 E Ferguson, Wood River, IL A Place of Grace Pastor and Certified Zentangle Teacher/Artist, Julie Gvillo, will be opening a studio at Von Dell Gallery & Studios in 2026! There will be events every week all day on Tuesdays, two Wednesday afternoons a month, and Thursdays by appointment for people of all ages and from all walks of life. Learn more <https://www.aplaceofgrace-juliegvillo.net/upcoming-events.html>

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, Becky & Rich Davis and Ray Bently (Friends of Linda Allen).

NURSING & RETIREMENT HOME RESIDENTS

The Cottages of Carlinville, Carlinville – Shirley Martin
Villa Rose, Bethalto – Beth Forrester
Cedarhurst, Bethalto – Mary Barnes, Linda Duncan, Lee McCoy
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

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

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

Tabitha Nail, Admin | admin@lovejoyupc.org

Ann French, Director of Music

Joshua Bryant, Custodian & Groundskeeper