

✚ Gathering

Words of Welcome

Prelude

* Call to Worship

O come, let us sing to the Lord and
shout with joy to the rock of our salvation!

**Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving,
singing joyful songs of praise.**

* Prayer of the Day

* Hymn 648

Amazing Grace

*1 Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
that saved a wretch like me!*

*I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.*

*2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved.*

*How precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!*

*3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come.*

*'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.*

*4 The Lord has promised good to me;
his word my hope secures.*

*He will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.*

*5 When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,*

*we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun.*

Prayer of Confession

**God of Christmas, we would never have thought to find your Savior
in an innocent baby. We confess we would have expected a warrior**

with a great army. We would not have thought to find your kingdom to be one of service, obedience and humility. We confess we would have expected, maybe even wanted, a kingdom that reflected our own values and self-interests. Lord, forgive us when we quickly leave Christmas behind and neglect to live lives worthy of our calling as followers of our Lord, the Prince of Peace. By your Holy Spirit, help us turn to you and live according to the values of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

* Passing of the Peace

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

* Hymn 798

All with Joyful Exultation

Refrain:

*All with joyful exultation
let us sing to God our praise;
to the rock of our salvation
loud hosannas raise.*

*1 Lord, we sing with joyful voices;
your great power can lift and save;
by your healing touch, revive us;
life restore beyond the grave. (Refrain)*

*2 Praise to you, our sure salvation,
you, the Holy One above.
End the night so dimmed by anguish,
with your light of peace and love. (Refrain)*

*3 Change our sorrow to rejoicing;
clothe with gladness all despair;
cause unsteady feet that stumble
now to dance beneath your care. (Refrain)*

*4 Dry our tears we shed in mourning;
give us steadfast hope always;
fill our hearts with expectation;
fill our songs with thanks and praise. (Refrain)*

✙ Word

Time with the Children

Prayer for Illumination

First Reading

Isaiah 63:7-9

I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord,
the praiseworthy acts of the Lord,
because of all that the Lord has done for us,
and the great favor to the house of Israel
that he has shown them according to his mercy,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.
8 For he said, “Surely they are my people,
children who will not deal falsely”;
and he became their savior
9 in all their distress.
It was no messenger[a] or angel
but his presence that saved them;[b]
in his love and in his pity he redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Second Reading

Matthew 2:13-23

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” 14 Then Joseph[a] got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, 15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”
The Massacre of the Infants
16 When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men,[b] he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men.[c] 17 Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:
18 “A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”
19 When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 20 “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” 21 Then Joseph[d] got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. 23 There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazorean.”

Anthem

Come, Emmanuel

Third Reading

Psalm 148

Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens;

praise him in the heights!

2 Praise him, all his angels;

praise him, all his host!

3 Praise him, sun and moon;

praise him, all you shining stars!

4 Praise him, you highest heavens,

and you waters above the heavens!

5 Let them praise the name of the Lord,

for he commanded and they were created.

6 He established them forever and ever;

he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.[a]

7 Praise the Lord from the earth,

you sea monsters and all deeps,

8 fire and hail, snow and frost,

stormy wind fulfilling his command!

9 Mountains and all hills,

fruit trees and all cedars!

10 Wild animals and all cattle,

creeping things and flying birds!

11 Kings of the earth and all peoples,

princes and all rulers of the earth!

12 Young men and women alike,

old and young together!

13 Let them praise the name of the Lord,

for his name alone is exalted;

his glory is above earth and heaven.

14 He has raised up a horn for his people,

praise for all his faithful,

for the people of Israel who are close to him.

Praise the Lord!

Sermon

Elder, Sandy Monroe

✦ Responding

* Affirmation of Faith

(From the Confession of 1967)

In Jesus of Nazareth, true humanity was realized once for all. Jesus, a Palestinian Jew, lived among his own people and shared their needs, temptations, joys, and sorrows. He expressed the love of God in word and deed and became a brother to all kinds of sinful men and women. But his complete obedience led him into conflict with his people. His life and teaching judged their goodness, religious aspirations, and national hopes. Many rejected him and demanded his death. In giving himself freely for them, he took upon himself the judgment under which everyone stands

convicted. God raised him from the dead, vindicating him as Messiah and Lord. The victim of sin became victor, and won the victory over sin and death for all.

* Hymn 634

To God Be the Glory

*1 To God be the glory;
great things he has done!
So loved he the world
that he gave us his Son,
who yielded his life
an atonement for sin,
and opened the life-gate
that all may go in.*

Refrain:

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord;
let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord;
let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father
through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory:
great things he has done!*

*2 Great things he has taught us;
great things he has done,
and great our rejoicing
through Jesus the Son;
but purer and higher
and greater will be
our wonder, our transport,
when Jesus we see. (Refrain)*

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 Mondays of each month.*

Prayer of Dedication

Sharing Joys and Concerns

Hymn 839

Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine!

1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!

*Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.*

Refrain:

*This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.*

*2 Perfect communion, perfect delight,
visions of rapture now burst on my sight.
Angels descending bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love. [Refrain]*

*3 Perfect submission, all is at rest.
I in my Savior am happy and bless'd,
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love. [Refrain]*

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 661

Why Should I Feel Discouraged?

*1 Why should I feel discouraged?
Why should the shadows come?
Why should my heart be lonely
and long for heaven and home,
when Jesus is my portion?
My constant friend is he:
his eye is on the sparrow,
and I know he watches me;*

*his eye is on the sparrow,
and I know he watches me.*

Refrain:

*I sing because I'm happy, (I'm happy)
I sing because I'm free, (I'm free)
for his eye is on the sparrow,
and I know he watches me.*

*2 "Let not your heart be troubled,"
his tender word I hear,
and resting on his goodness,
I lose my doubts and fears;
though by the path he leadeth
but one step I may see:
his eye is on the sparrow,
and I know he watches me;
his eye is on the sparrow,
and I know he watches me. (Refrain)*

*3 Whenever I am tempted,
whenever clouds arise,
when song gives place to sighing,
when hope within me dies,
I draw the closer to him,
from care he sets me free:
his eye is on the sparrow,
and I know he watches me;
his eye is on the sparrow,
and I know he watches me. (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.

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

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Ann French, Director of Music

Joshua Bryant, Custodian & Groundskeeper