

## ✚ Gathering

Words of Welcome

Prelude

*What Star is This?*

Graham

Advent Candle Lighting

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

Prayer of the Day

\* 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.

Prayer of Confession

**God our help,**  
**you call us to trust you in both the good times and the hard times.**  
**We confess that we overlook your blessings in times of joy;**  
**and we fail to turn to you in our time of need.**

**In our fear and frustration, we look for help in all the wrong places:  
we turn to greed, to violence, to injustice.**

**Lord, have mercy upon us.**

**Heal us and forgive us.**

**Remind us that even in the depths of our sin,  
you meet us with mercy....**

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

Matthew 2:13–14, 19–23

13 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,

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[a] 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*

Besig

Second Reading

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters;[a]  
3 he restores my soul.[b]  
He leads me in right paths[c]  
for his name's sake.  
4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley,[d]  
I fear no evil;  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff—  
they comfort me.  
5 You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.  
6 Surely[e] goodness and mercy[f] shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
my whole life long.[g]

Sermon

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley...*

\* 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.**

Anthem

*Christ was Born to be Our King*

Callaway

Announcements

✦ Table

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.*

### The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### Sanctus Hymn 552

*Holy, Holy, Holy*  
*1 Holy, holy, holy Lord,*  
*God of power and might,*  
*heaven and earth are full of your glory.*  
*Hosanna in the highest.*  
*2 Blessed is he who comes*  
*in the name of the Lord.*  
*Hosanna in the highest,*  
*hosanna in the highest.*

### 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.**

### Communion

*Please come down the center aisle and receive a piece of bread and a cup of juice. If you wish to receive bread in your pew, the servers will assist you. If you're joining us online, please have bread and juice/wine available to celebrate with us. All who wish to know Jesus more deeply are invited to the table.*

### Communion Meditation

*Adagio*

Bach

### Prayer After Communion

\* Hymn 803

*My Shepherd Will Supply My Need*  
*I My shepherd will supply my need;*  
*Jehovah is his name.*  
*In pastures fresh he makes me feed,*  
*beside the living stream.*  
*He brings my wandering spirit back*  
*when I forsake his ways,*  
*and leads me, for his mercy's sake,*  
*in paths of truth and grace.*

*2 When I walk through the shades of death*  
*your presence is my stay;*  
*one word of your supporting breath*  
*drives all my fears away.*  
*Your hand, in sight of all my foes,*  
*does still my table spread;*  
*my cup with blessings overflows;*  
*your oil anoints my head.*

*3 The sure provisions of my God*  
*attend me all my days;*  
*O may your house be my abode,*  
*and all my work be praise.*  
*There would I find a settled rest,*  
*while others go and come;*  
*no more a stranger, or a guest,*  
*but like a child at home.*

\* Charge & Benediction

\* Postlude

*Wondrous Tidings*

Simone

## ✚ 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](http://lovejoyupc.org/pledge).

**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.

 **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, 10–Noon. 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).

**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!

#### **A Place of Grace Prayer Art Retreat - December 18, 2025 6:00 PM**

Von Dell Gallery & Studios, 102 E Ferguson, Wood River, IL

Join us for a new project this Advent season! RSVPs are required before noon on 12/12: <https://www.aplaceofgrace-juliegillo.net/upcoming-evens.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 (Eddie 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**  
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

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

Ann French, Director of Music

Joshua Bryant, Custodian & Groundskeeper