



**LoveJoy United**  
Presbyterian Church

## THE OBSERVER

Dear Friends,

On Sunday, November 30, we began our journey through the season of Advent on our way to the coming of the Christ child. As ready as we may be for candy canes and Christmas carols, Advent begins in a different place. First, we join with the ancient ancestors of our faith, walking in deep darkness seeking the light of God's salvation.

God is light; that is true. But like the sun blocked out by a dark cloud, we do not always feel God's presence as fully as we wish. Challenges with health and doubt cast shadows upon us. The state of the world doesn't help much either. We light-loving people of faith don't always know what to do with things turn dark.

Barbara Brown Taylor, the Episcopal Priest and author, gives us an alternative metaphor of God's presence: a lunar one. There are times when the moon is so big and bright, you feel like you can see for miles. At other times, the moon is nowhere to be found. Most of the time, though, it is somewhere in between. But all of the time: the moon is there. God is there, too.

In her book, *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, Taylor explores how, throughout scripture, the God who is present in the light is just as present in the darkness. God is every bit as present in the darkness of Passover as God is in the light of the rainbow.

Taking our cue from Taylor's book, we'll be exploring this theme of learning to walk in the dark this Advent. Even as we long for the light of God's salvation, where can we find the joy, grace, mercy, love, and hope of God's presence in the dark along the way? Come learn to walk with us this Advent.

In Christ,

Daniel

## Learning to Walk in the Dark

Advent & Christmas  
at LoveJoy United

### Sunday, Dec. 7

10:15a Worship  
4p Christmas Lights Tour

### Saturday, Dec. 13

10-12p Christmas Bake Sale

### Sunday, Dec. 14

10:15a Worship  
11:15a Learn more about  
LoveJoy United

### Sunday, Dec. 21

10:15a Worship with Choir  
11:15a Christmas Potluck  
4p Longest Night Service

### Wednesday, Dec. 24

5:30p Fellowship  
6:30p Christmas Eve Worship

### Sunday, Dec. 28

10:15a Worship with Sandy  
Monroe Preaching!

## Remembering Herbert J. Peel, LoveJoy United's Poet Laureate

Our friend and brother, Herbert passed away on Wednesday, November 26. This was a tremendous shock to all of us. Herbert was instantly recognizable on a Sunday morning: just look for the red-clad man carrying a quill pen in one hand and a teapot in the other.

When Herbert first visited our congregation with his grandmother, Enid, he immediately felt right at home. Herbert believed deeply that God gives us each of us gifts, not for our own sakes, but for God's sake, and for the sake of God's community. UPC, and later LoveJoy United, welcomed all of Herbert's gifts. Herbert had the gift of humor; he loved to tease and joke. He was devoted to William Shakespeare, tea, and all things English. Herbert was especially talented with poetry, and having enjoyed his poems for years, LoveJoy United officially recognized him as our Poet Laureate in 2020. He was so proud of that title, and lived into that role with utmost sincerity. He wrote poems for this newsletter, for special church events, for people in the hospital, and for those who had lost loved ones. This poem, "Dream On," was the last Herbert shared with us. It is inspired by a new hymn we've been singing in worship.

In the last several years, Herbert had been honing his teaching craft by offering Children's sermons and teaching about the poetry of the Bible: the Psalms. He was a devoted member of the Stewardship Committee, inspiring others to share their gifts as generously as he shared his. He loved the Sunday Morning Live class with Mark Russell and Rich Sisk. And even in the last month, Herbert had begun to volunteer at Operation Blessing.

There were parts of Herbert's life that were not easy: his health, his living situation, and other challenges, too. But thanks be to God that Herbert found such rest, joy, and purpose in God's community at LoveJoy United. And thank, too, that God saw fit to bring Herbert to us. We will hold a memorial service for Herbert on December 20.

Give rest, O Christ, to your servant, Herbert, with all your saints, where sorrow and pain are no more.



### *Dream On*

*I shall think.  
I shall imagine.  
I shall dream of Peace, of  
Love, of Doing God's Work,  
of getting along with my  
neighbor.  
We shall dream of many  
things.  
We must see what God  
Dreams.  
We must do what God  
commands.  
Sometimes, our dreams are not  
God's dreams.  
Yes, we have dreams, but God's  
dreams are bigger.*

*Poet Laureate,  
Herbert J. Peel*

# THANKSGIVING

I have often said that I am thankful for November. Wedged between Halloween and Christmas, this month's focus is on one priceless thing: Thanksgiving—something we all should do every month!

This November I am very appreciative of a few special things that have happened in my life and in the life of our congregation. A special thank you needs to be given to:

Willing volunteers from the Fellowship Committee who provided our delicious meal for Movie Night last Sunday (Lisa and Chuck, Janet and Joe, Barb Pitt and Paula Raymond).

Members of the Worship Committee who spent at least three hours last Monday (11/24) preparing the various areas of the church for Advent and Christmas.

Finally, I want to say a heartfelt thank you to the group or person who sent the lovely pastor appreciation card to me this month. I do believe it is the only pastor appreciation card I have ever received!

Rev. Dr. Linda Shugert

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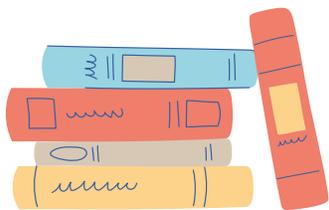
## **Learn more about LoveJoy United Sunday, Dec. 14 after worship.**

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).

## **Longest Night Service Dec 21 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.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## 2025 LoveJoy Lyceum Book List

12/17/25 Prodigal Summer by Barbara Kingsolver

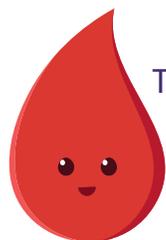
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## LYCEUM LINKS FOR DECEMBER

The Lyceum Book Club's selection for On Wednesday, December 17, the Lyceum Book Club will discuss Barbara Kingsolver's delightful novel Prodigal Summer. Kingsolver weaves together three stories of human love and humor amid the mountains and farms of southern Appalachia.

Join us after Prayer Group at 7:15 for a discussion of this book.

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## Red Cross Blood Drive

Thursday, December 4<sup>th</sup> 1pm - 6pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Register at

[LoveJoyupc.org/nextsteps](http://LoveJoyupc.org/nextsteps)



## Christmas Pot Luck Dinner: Sunday, December 21st

On Sunday, December 21st, 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!

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## ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

- 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.
- The Bible Class: Beginning 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.
- Lectionary Bible Study meets at 10:15 a.m. on Wednesdays. Join pastor Daniel either in-person or on Zoom for a discussion of the scripture readings for the upcoming Sunday's worship service.

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## Game Day



December 20th Game Day has been canceled.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## December Birthday's

- |                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1<br>Mason Inlow         | 16<br>Holly Rain      |
| 5<br>Faye Burke          | 19<br>Elizabeth Blair |
| Randy McKee              | Jordyn Whitten        |
| 8<br>Seth Slayden        | 20<br>Kevin Kerr      |
| Lucas Bristow            | 22<br>Dillan Plummer  |
| 12<br>Stephen Abraham    | 24<br>Brenda Tester   |
| Lois Thompson            | Don Chapman           |
| 13<br>Kailey BurtonTodd  | 27<br>Jason Gould     |
| 14<br>Chris St. Peters   | 28<br>Bradley Holt    |
| Marissa Leggett          |                       |
| Melissa Todd             |                       |
| Tanya Sisk               |                       |
| 15<br>Judy Collins       |                       |
| Taylor Drew<br>(Donohoo) |                       |

## October 2025 Financial Notes:

Checking Account Balance as 10/31/2025 \$108,266.76  
 Savings Account Balance as of 10/31/2025 \$11,324.17  
 Ending Balance as of 10/31/2025 \$119,590.93

Pledge Income Received:

YTD Pledge total \$162,267.78

Mission Market Fund: The current amount in the fund \$128,169.33 The interest rate is holding at 2.11 %

For questions, please contact Sarah Carnes or Tom Wyatt.

A Memorial Service for our friend Herbert Peel will be held at LoveJoy UPC on Saturday, December 20th. Time to be determined.

### Giving Tree

We will have our Warm & Fuzzy Tree again this year that will collect items for the Warming Centers in our area. We will collect hats, gloves, socks, scarves, blankets, etc.

In addition to these items, we have a family with 3 children that we would like to assist. We will provide details when they become available. Look for the Tree for more details.



### Food Pantry Needs:

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



# Thank You Letter from Operation Blessing for the \$2000 donation from the Good Samaritan Fund

## OPERATION BLESSING People That Care, Inc.

18 East Lorena  
P.O. Box 433  
618-251-5683  
Wood River, IL 62095



obfood@att.net

Executive Director  
Karen Wilson

November 11, 2025

Board of Directors  
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LoveJoy United Presbyterian Church  
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Wood River, IL 62095

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Debbie Hagen  
Paul Roberts  
Tom Stalcup  
Don Van Allman  
Gail Wallace

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your donation as follows:

\$2,000.00 check

Operation Blessing, People That Care, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) organization assisting low- and no-income households. We provide emergency food, clothing, small household items, toys and books to our clients. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. No goods or services were provided in return for this donation.

We, as well our clients, are much appreciative of your assistance in serving those who come through our front door in need.

Sincerely,

Karen Wilson, Executive Director

# Christmas Food Boxes

Supporting families in need this season

Our Food Pantry plans to provide a Christmas box to our patrons again this year. In addition to a ham (which we will purchase), we would like to collect these five extra items for their box. We have approximately 25 families. Of course, monetary donations are always welcome.

- Stuffing Mix
- #5 Bag of Potatoes
- Dinner Rolls
- Dessert {Brownie/Cake}
- Canned Fruit

These will be distributed on Monday, December 8th and 22nd. We thank you for your generous donations throughout the year! If you have any questions, you may contact Brenda Donohoo or Marilyn King.





# Christmas Bake Sale

**Saturday, December 13  
10 AM to 12 PM**

**LoveJoy United Presbyterian Church  
2550 Rock Hill Rd., Wood River, IL  
618-254-5880**

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**Select your favorites from a wonderful  
variety of sweet treats that will be sold  
at \$10 per pound or as priced.**

**Proceeds from this sale benefit  
Riverbend Family Ministries.**

[www.lovejoyupc.org](http://www.lovejoyupc.org)

# December

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<p>1</p> <p>10am - Mat Weaving Group 5:30pm - LJ Host's Christmas Wonderland Tour</p>	<p>2</p> <p>9am Bell Choir 11am - Staff Meeting 6pm - Mission and Outreach Meeting</p>	<p>3</p> <p>10:15am - Lectionary Bible Study 11:30am - Lunch Bunch 7pm - Evening Prayer</p>	<p>4</p> <p>1pm - Red Cross Blood Drive</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Saturday Cafe'</p>
<p>7</p> <p>Communion Sunday 8:45am Choir Rehearsal Fellowship Committee Meeting 9am - Adult Formation: Bible 9am - Adult Formation: Sunday 10:15am - Worship 11:30am Fellowship Committee 4pm - Christmas Light Tour</p>	<p>8</p> <p>9am - Food Pantry 10am - Mat Weaving Group 11:30am Worship Committee Decorates</p>	<p>9</p> <p>9am Bell Choir 11am - Staff Meeting 6pm - Worship Committee</p>	<p>10</p> <p>10:15am - Lectionary Bible Study 11:30am - Lunch Bunch 6pm - A Place of Grace Mission Madness 7pm - Evening Prayer</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Bake Sale</p>
<p>14</p> <p>8:45am Choir Rehearsal 9am - Adult Formation: Bible Class 9am - Adult Formation: Sunday 10:15am - Worship 11:15am - Prospective Member Gathering</p>	<p>15</p> <p>10am - Mat Weaving Group</p>	<p>16</p> <p>9am Bell Choir 11am - Staff Meeting 6pm - Finance Meeting</p>	<p>17</p> <p>10:15am - Lectionary Bible Study 11:30am - Lunch Bunch 7pm - Evening Prayer 7:15pm - LoveJoy Lyceum Book Club</p>	<p>18</p> <p>6:30pm - Session Meeting</p>	<p>19</p> <p>2pm - ACE Committee Meeting</p>	<p>20</p> <p><b>Canceled</b> - 12pm Game Day Memorial for Herbert Peel</p>
<p>21</p> <p>Christmas Cantata 8:45am Choir Rehearsal 9am - Adult Formation: Bible Class 9am - Adult Formation: Sunday 10:15am - Worship 11:30am - Christmas Potluck Dinner 4pm - Longest Night Service</p>	<p>22</p> <p>9am - Food Pantry 10am - Mat Weaving Group 11:30am Worship Committee Decorates</p>	<p>23</p> <p>9am Bell Choir 11am - Staff Meeting</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Christmas Eve 10:15am - No Lectionary Bible Study 11:30am - NO Lunch Bunch 5:30pm - Coffee Bar before Service 6:30pm - Christmas Eve Worship 7pm - NO Evening Prayer</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Christmas Day</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>28</p> <p>8:45am Choir Rehearsal 9am - Adult Formation: Bible Class 9am - Adult Formation: Sunday 10:15am - Worship 11:30am - Christian Formation</p>	<p>29</p> <p>10am - Mat Weaving Group</p>	<p>30</p> <p>9am Bell Choir 11am - Staff Meeting</p>	<p>31</p> <p>New Year's Eve 10:15am - NO Lectionary Bible Study 11:30am - NO Lunch Bunch 7pm - NO Evening Prayer</p>	<p>New Year's Day</p>		



**LoveJoy United**  
**Presbyterian Church**  
A WELCOMING, NURTURING,  
PRAYING COMMUNITY OF FAITH

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Fax: 618-254-1288

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

