



**LoveJoy United**  
Presbyterian Church  
**THE OBSERVER**

Good friends,

As we enter into the season of Easter, I've been reflecting on what difference Easter makes. We usually focus on how Easter changes our death. That is one of the central claims of Easter: that Christ has been raised from the dead, therefore we will be raised with him. Death is no longer this empty abyss waiting to claim us at our last breath. Instead, death has been hollowed out by Christ's resurrection. Nothing – not even death – can now separate us from God's love and life. Easter has much to say about our death.

But I feel a more interesting, and perhaps more timely question, is this: what difference do Easter and the Resurrection make in our lives today? How do the truths we proclaim and celebrate this season reshape how we live on this side of death?

So many of our decisions in this life are driven by death and fear of death. Nations stockpile and then launch bombs and weapons. People hoard resources and food. We set up economic systems that ensure the lives of the wealthy at the expense of the poor. In our own personal lives (mine included!), we make choices out of fear that often have harmful consequences for our neighbors or for the Earth itself.

And yet, the life of discipleship that Jesus calls us to is a life not motivated by fear of death, but driven by faith in new life.

The lives of Jesus and his first disciples were marked by risk and danger: healing lepers, confronting injustice, feeding the poor, forgiving sinners, turning tables, even suffering death on a cross. Our calling as disciples today is no less risky, and yet that fear of death still hangs over us, driving our decisions, hampering our witness.

I wonder what it might mean for us as LoveJoy United Presbyterians to reclaim the boldness of the Easter promise this season? That we are life-driven and not death-defined? What would it mean for us to enact the gospel of resurrection life in this community, without letting our fears lead us? If that sounds hard, you're right! We are hardwired to let our fears control us. But let me remind you that you've overcome these fears as a church before. Elijah P. Lovejoy heeded Christ's call to free those captive in slavery. You have welcomed in those whom our society has deemed outcasts. You have made difficult decisions to leave behind church buildings in order to join with others in faith. Even just these last months, you have opened up your church home to our homeless neighbors on cold, winter nights. All of these carried risks and fears; and yet, you did not let those risks and fears dull your faithfulness to the gospel.

I give thanks for the ways we are growing together in boldness and in resurrection faith!

Easter blessings,

Daniel

# Holy Week and Easter

with A Place of Grace + LoveJoy United

## Palm & Passion Sunday

Sunday, March 29 at 10:15am

Worship will begin in the Fellowship Hall with the Palm Sunday celebration. We will then process into the Sanctuary for the Liturgy of the Passion.

## Good Friday

Friday, April 3 at 7pm

Good Friday worship, held outside under the front portico, marks the crucifixion and death of Jesus. This service, led by Pastor Julie Gvillo, will help us experience the crucifixion story in a new way.

## Maundy Thursday

Thursday, April 2 at 6pm

This potluck gathering (bring a dish to share, if you can!) will take the form of supper church. We will celebrate the gift of the Lord's Supper and remember Christ's commandment to love one another.

## Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 5 at 10:15am

Join us for the summit of the church year, the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ! Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

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## Holy Week and Easter

Holy week and Easter are the high point of the Christian Year. This year we'll be joining our ministry partners at A Place of Grace for both Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services. Palm Sunday is 3/22 at 10:15. Maundy Thursday (Potluck) is 4/2 at 6 PM. Good Friday is 4/3 at 7 PM.

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## Maundy Thursday Potluck Dinner

Sign up for the Maundy Thursday Potluck on April 2nd at 6pm. Meat and drinks will be provided. Please sign up for either a salad, vegetable or dessert. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex.

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## Easter Egg Hunt



Join us for an Easter Egg Hunt this Sunday after worship!!

# Creation Care



**SAVE THE DATE**

## LUPC WILL OBSERVE EARTH DAY ON APRIL 26

It has been said that “Earth Day should Be Every Day”, and certainly that is true. However, it is also beneficial to take a day each year to remind ourselves the importance for our responsibility to care for the planet we have been given for all our needs and to preserve it for all future generations.

LoveJoy United Church is an **EARTH CARE CONGREGATION**, and this status has been earned with the PC (USA) by tallying points awarded for a long list of criteria. **THIS IS OUR 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY FOR THAT STATUS !**

On **APRIL 26**, the Sunday morning Worship Service will focus on Earth Care Stewardship. Following worship, all are invited to a luncheon which will feature guest speaker, **Laura Lyons** from the Heartlands Conservancy.

### GARDENS AT LUPC

*Spring is in the air, and so is planning stages for our gardens.*

#### PRODUCE GARDENS

Look for the usual tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squash, etc. in the backyard raised gardens.

In addition, strawberries will be a new feature this year.

#### MONARCH WAYSTATION

Some clean-up and restoration will be done at the Monarch Butterfly Waystation out front.

#### 3 SISTERS GARDENS

Authentic Native American seeds will be used for planting this year.

#### PIECE OF PRAIRIE POLLINATOR GARDEN

New native prairie plants will be added, and grooming the gardens, located behind the paper recycling bin. Observe the numerous birds and insects around the garden.



# Bobby Jo Valentine Free Concert

Come join us for an evening of  
Award-Winning, Modern Folk music.  
that deeply resonates with people  
from all walks of life.



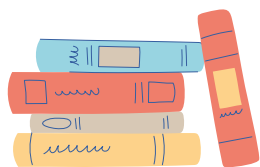
[lovejoyupc.org/concert](https://lovejoyupc.org/concert)

**Join us for a wonderful evening with  
Bobby Jo Valentine**

**May 15, 2026, 7pm, (Reception to follow)  
LoveJoy United Presbyterian Church  
2550 Rock Hill Road, Wood River, IL  
[lovejoyupc.org](https://lovejoyupc.org)**

***A free will offering will be collected in support of the  
Overnight Warming Locations (OWLs)***

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## 2026 LoveJoy Lyceum Book List

- APRIL 15: *The Women* by Kristin Hannah  
MAY 20: *The Briar Club* by Kate Quinn  
JUNE 17: *The Last American Road Trip* by Sarah Kendzior  
JULY 15: *Empire of the Summer Moon* by S.C. Gwynne  
AUGUST 19: *The Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict & Victoria Christopher Murray  
SEPTEMBER 16: *All the Colors of the Dark* by Chris Whitaker  
OCTOBER 21: *Traveling Mercies* by Anne Lamott  
NOVEMBER 18: *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver  
DECEMBER 16: *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon

## Red Cross Blood Drive

Thursday, April 9th  
1pm - 6pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Register at  
[LoveJoyupc.org/nextsteps](https://LoveJoyupc.org/nextsteps)

It's that time again. We will be hosting our next Red Cross blood drive on **Thursday, April 9**. If you are able, please donate to improve the quality of life for the donor, or potentially saving a life following an accident or surgery.

## ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

- Adult Christian Education on Sunday Mornings at 9 AM  
Sunday Morning Live (Love Room & Zoom) Is an informal, conversational class that seeks to connect scripture, theology, and faith to our lives and world. They relate current events to Scripture to create thought-provoking discussions via *The Wired Word*.
- The Bible Class (Fellowship Hall & Zoom), led by Sandy Monroe, is exploring the lectionary readings using the curriculum, *Feasting on the Word*.
- 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.

## Game Day



Join us for Game Day  
**Saturday, April 25th**  
**from 2-4pm** in the  
Fellowship Hall

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## April Birthday's

1	13
Austin King	Justin Carnes
Susan Musgrave	Michael Baum
2	14
Evie Bristow	Mary Trudell
Hayden Lindquist	15
Jill Goewey	Hayden Panyik
3	17
Diane Alford	Emmett
JoAnn Moss	Cunningham
6	20
Sebastian Panyik	Ashley Panyik
Debbie Suerig	Lucy Manker
Joey Gremling	22
8	Chase Bauer
Julie Spurgeon	26
10	Cozy Lindquist
Mackenzie Cerny	Sherry Davis
Amy Manker	28
Valerie McCoy	Addison Plummer
11	Paige Jacquin
Phyllis Pierson	Joyce Fleming
12	30
Dan Miller	Tony Levan
Ryne White Blair	

## February 2026 Financial Notes:

Checking Account Balance as 2/28/2026 \$45,005.17  
 Savings Account Balance as of 2/28/2026 \$32,430.05  
 Ending Balance as of 2/28/2026 \$77,847.22  
 Pledge Income Received:  
 YTD Pledge total \$24,061.58  
 Mission Market Fund: The current amount in the fund  
 \$118,805.68 The interest rate is holding at 2.00 %

For questions, please contact Sarah Carnes or Tom Wyatt.



## Earth Day celebration at LoveJoy UPC on April 26! Save the date.

The theme will be a quote from Rachael Carson, "Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts." There will be a lunch, etc. More details to follow in further LUPC communications.



### Food Pantry Needs: Toilet Tissue

# Poem

## *The Lord is with Me*

*The Lord is with me,  
Whatever I do  
My daily routine,  
At church, during worship  
the lord watches over me  
For he is my Father  
For he is my Teacher  
God commands my heart  
And I follow my heart For  
the lord loves me.*

Poet Laureate  
Herbert J. Peel



# A Place of Grace

To keep up with A Place of Grace Events go to  
<https://www.aplaceofgrace-juliegvillo.net/upcoming-events.html>

## A Place of Grace - Walk to Jerusalem

We have one more week to make our goal of Jerusalem by Easter. It's not too late to join us! Talk to Julie Gvillo to learn how!

Visit: <https://www.aplaceofgrace-juliegvillo.net/upcoming-events.html>

## Easter Vigil Retreat - April 4, 2026 7:00 PM

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

Join A Place of Grace for an Easter Vigil Retreat! Bring your lawn chairs -- we'll start outside and move indoors as the service progresses. It's a great opportunity for families!

RSVP Visit: <https://www.aplaceofgrace-juliegvillo.net/upcoming-events.html>

## Grace at the Gallery - April 7, 2026 7:30 AM

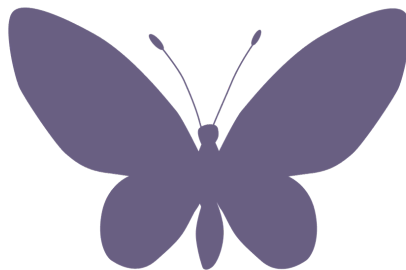
Von Dell Gallery & Studios, 102 E Ferguson, Wood River, IL

The next seven weeks of retreats begins at Von Dell Gallery & Studios on Tuesday! Pick your time!

Please RSVP ahead: <https://www.aplaceofgrace-juliegvillo.net/upcoming-events.html>.

## Mission Madness Workshop Retreat - April 8, 2026 6PM

LoveJoy United Fellowship Hall - Come get your craft on! Bring scissors. Bring friends. Come craft with a purpose! [juliegvillo.aplaceofgrace@gmail.com](mailto:juliegvillo.aplaceofgrace@gmail.com)



# APRIL



# 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			<b>1</b> 10:15am - Lectionary Bible Study 11:30am - Lunch Bunch 7pm - Evening Prayer	<b>2</b> 6pm - Maundy Thursday Dinner 7pm - Maundy Thursday Worship	<b>3</b> 7pm - Good Friday Worship	<b>4</b> 11am - Worship Committee Decorates
<b>5</b> Communion Sunday Easter Sunday Easter Egg Hunt 8:45am Choir Rehearsal 9am - Adult Formation: Bible Class 9am - Adult Formation: Sunday Morning Live 10:15am - Worship	<b>6</b> 10am - Mat Weaving Group 7pm - Fellowship committee	<b>7</b> 9am Bell Choir 10am - Staff Meeting 6pm - Mission and Outreach	<b>8</b> 10:15am - Lectionary Bible Study 11:30am - Lunch Bunch 6pm - A Place of Grace Mission Madness 7pm - Evening Prayer	<b>9</b> 1pm - Blood Drive	<b>10</b> 2pm - PEO Bunco Luncheon Setup	<b>11</b> 9am - PEO Bunco Luncheon
<b>12</b> 8:45am Choir Rehearsal 9am - Adult Formation: Bible Class 9am - Adult Formation: Sunday Morning Live 10:15am - Worship	<b>13</b> 9am - Food Pantry 10am - Mat Weaving Group 6pm - Discussion Group	<b>14</b> 9am Bell Choir 10am - Staff Meeting 6pm - Worship Committee Meeting	<b>15</b> 10:15am - Lectionary Bible Study 11:30am - Lunch Bunch 7pm - Evening Prayer 7:15pm - LoveJoy Lyceum Bookclub	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 2pm - ACE Committee Meeting	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> 8:45am Choir Rehearsal 9am - Adult Formation: Bible Class 9am - Adult Formation: Sunday Morning Live 10:15am - Worship 11:30am - Fellowship Hour	<b>20</b> 10am - Mat Weaving Group	<b>21</b> 9am Bell Choir 10am - Staff Meeting 6pm - Finance Meeting	<b>22</b> 10:15am - Lectionary Bible Study 11:30am - Lunch Bunch 7pm - Evening Prayer	<b>23</b> 6:30pm - Session Meeting	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 2pm - Game Day
<b>26</b> 8:45am Choir Rehearsal 9am - Adult Formation: Bible Class 9am - Adult Formation: Sunday Morning Live 10:15am - Worship	<b>27</b> 9am - Food Pantry 10am - Mat Weaving Group 6pm - Discussion Group	<b>28</b> 9am Bell Choir 10am - Staff Meeting	<b>29</b> 10:15am - Lectionary Bible Study 11:30am - Lunch Bunch 7pm - Evening Prayer	<b>30</b>		



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

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2550 Rock Hill Road  
Wood River, IL  
62095  
Phone: 618-254-5880  
Fax: 618-254-1288

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

