

New Directions March

St Luke Union Church



THANK YOU to everyone who generously donated to the book drive! We were shocked by how many books were donated. (This is probably only half of the books in the picture). They have been given to St Vincent De Paul and Rose Tylor Kunkes' little library at Pepper Ridge. A scout is KIND! 😊
Pictured: Book Drive, Little Library at Pepper Ridge Elementary School.

Easter Dates to Remember:

March 24 – Palm Sunday Service 10:30 am

March 25-29 - Morning Prayer 7:00 am

March 28 – Maundy Thursday Service 6:30 pm

March 31 – Easter Sunday

-Breakfast at 9:00 am

-Worship Service 10:30 am

Trivia: After the resurrection, the total number of witnesses who saw Jesus alive was about how many?



MARCH 2024

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

01

Men's Breakfast
7a

02

DAR Chapter Mtg
2p

03

Communion
New Members 9a
Sun School 9:30a
Choir Prac 9:30a
Worship 10:30am

04

Adult Ed 12p

Boy Scouts 7p

05

06

Spiritual Growth
& Srvc Ops Mtg
5p
Handbells 6p
Choir Practice 7p

07

08

09

Troop 19 Eagle
Court of Honor
1p

10

Choir Prac. 9:30a
Worship 10:30a

11

Adult Ed 12p

Boy Scouts 7p

12

Resource Team
2p
SAR Mtg 3p
Finance Team 5p

13

Worship Team 5p
Church Chat 6p
Handbells 6p
Choir Practice 7p

14

Crossroads 9a

15

16

17

Sun.School 9:30a
Choir Prac. 9:30a
Worship 10:30a
Pack 33 Cake
Bake 1p

18

Adult Ed 12p

Boy Scouts 7p

19

General Primary
Election

VMC Mtg 5:30p

20

Handbells 6p
Choir Practice 7p

21

Faith Brews 5p

PEO Mtg 6:30p

22

23

24

Choir Prac. 9:30a
Worship 10:30a

25

Morning Prayer
7a
Adult Ed 12p
Boy Scouts 7p

26

Morning Prayer
7a
Lamplighters 7p

27

Morning Prayer
7a
Church Chat 6p
Handbells 6p
Choir Practice 7p

28

Morning Prayer
7a
Maundy Thurs
Service 6:30p

29

30

31

Easter Sunday
Breakfast 9a
Sun School 9:30a
Choir Prac 9:30a
Worship 10:30a

Happy Birthday! Sloane Allison 3/1; Sandi Gifford 3/2; Zachary Staver 3/4; Tarynn Gifford 3/8; Kerry Modendricker 3/12; Patricia Parmenter 3/17; Carla Staver 3/20; Logan Moret 3/21; Rick Isaacson 3/25; Nancy Proctor, Robin Stevens 3/29

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) – what is it? You hear about it every year but do you know what it means?

It is a special offering we and churches of many denominations collect to share with those less fortunate by trying to end systemic racism and working to address climate change. By helping people here and around the world after disasters such as tornadoes, hurricanes, flooding, and earthquakes. By addressing public violence and helping people overcome hunger and homelessness. This is done to help people around the world, not only in the United States. OGHS is active all year around, not just during the aftermath of disasters. To accomplish this, we need to be sure we give some thought to what we give – SHARING.

The offering will be collected on Palm Sunday, March 24. Special envelopes will be placed in the pews for your use; if New Directions is mailed to you, one will be included with that. A display will be posted to give you more information. Additional information is available on each denominations' website for Presbyterian (USA) and the United Church of Christ.

Please consider what you can share with others through OGHS. Thank you from the Mission Team.

Join the Green Team

The Green Team is looking for volunteers!

The Green Team is responsible for maintaining the church's recycle center, which includes sweeping, dusting, sorting recyclables, boxing items, and transporting boxes.

If you are interested in helping foster environmental stewardship and sustainability within our faith community, please join us!

For more information, please contact Amie Keeton, 309.242.8871 or joelamiekeeton@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday April 6th, 2024 @ 9:00am

Women's Fellowship Spring Brunch

Speaker from the Salvation Army

Sign up starts March 17th!!

Come join us!!

Dr. Sally E. Parry, professor emerita in the department of English, will speak at Milner Library, Illinois State University, March 5 at 3 p.m. on Floor 2. Parry will share her experience writing, with Dr. Robert L. McLaughlin, *Broadway Goes to War: American Theater during World War II*, which was recognized as an Outstanding Academic Title from *Choice* (a publication of the American Library Association).

In addition to her talk, Parry will also show physical, primary source artifacts that aided in her research. The event and following reception are open to the public.

SAVE THE DATE!

Spring Group Sale
May 3rd & 4th.
Set-up for group sale
begins Sunday April 28th
after church.



Trivia Answer: 500+

Fun fact: The term 'Good Friday' seems a bit strange at first glance given that it is the day we remember Jesus' crucifixion and burial. Scholars continue to debate the correct origin of the word good; some attribute it as meaning Holy, or Pious, while others argue that it comes from a corruption of 'God Friday'.

EASTER LILY ORDER OR SPECIAL PROJECT DONATION

I wish to order _____ Easter Lilies at \$16.00 per plant
to be given to the glory of God and:

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

In celebration of _____

I wish to give a donation of _____ to Recycling Furniture For Families and to the glory of God:

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

In celebration of _____

Lilies may be removed from the sanctuary following the 10:30 service on Easter Sunday.

Deadline for Lilies: Sunday, March 24, 2024

Attached is \$ _____. Please make checks payable to St. Luke Union Church and put in offering tray. Payment must accompany order.

Signed _____
(as it will appear in the acknowledgement listing in the May New Directions)

Thank you for your donation.



On Scout Sunday, our Reverend Dr. Andrew Gifford was awarded the Celtic Cross Award for his continued ministry to youth and families. Congratulations!

SPECIAL PROJECT

Recycling Furniture For Families

Recycling Furniture for Families (RF4F) is a non-denominational charity serving families in need across McLean County. We are a subsidiary of Partners for Community, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt not-for-profit ministry and a member of McLean County's Continuum of Care Homeless Service Providers Network. We were founded in 2002 by Doug Poag—a visionary with a big heart—to assist victims of domestic violence. In 2003, we evolved into an 8,000 square foot furniture bank. The people we help can find housing through other social service agencies, but cannot afford new or even used furniture.

We give furniture to people living at or below the federal poverty line—\$14,580 in annual income for one person in 2023, plus \$4,720 for each additional person in their household. We often step in after times of crisis, such as house fires, domestic violence, and transitions from homelessness. The furnishings we offer free of charge are part of the process of making a family's house a home.

Last year (2022), we supported more than 250 families and distributed 4,182 pieces of furniture. We do not inventory small household items, but we know those homewares likely triple the number of items we are able to offer to families.

A thankful client explains, "I have nothing but wonderful things to say on you guys' behalf. I am more than grateful for the service I received. You guys just didn't help me with some furniture. You helped give me the boost in confidence to develop autonomy and independence and make it on my own. Everyone needs help sometimes and I am so happy you guys helped me when I needed it most. God Bless."



**Recycling Furniture
For Families**



On the Friday evening before the first week of Lent, the Spiritual Growth team hosted the first-ever St. Luke Union Mardi Gras Celebration. As part of our pre-lenten party, we celebrated the arrival of the wise men (Epiphany) with King Cake, learned about the history of Mardi Gras with Trivia, found commonality (outside St. Luke Union) with those at our tables by creating miniature marshmallow floats to recognize that unity, and broke bread (sweets/jambalaya/Cajun soup) with one another.

As part of our reflection, we watched clips from the movie *Chocolat* (2000). It is a story of a woman who moves to a small French town and opens a chocolate store. Her hospitality, empathy, and compassion for the people of the town change the town for good. (If you haven't watched it, you can find it on Amazon Prime.) In the story, a young priest was moved to give a sermon based on the invitation of the chocolatier to live life fully and how it could be a reflection of Christ's humanity:

Do I want to speak of the miracle of our Lord's divine transformation today? Not really, no. I don't want to talk about his divinity. I'd rather talk about his humanity. I mean, you know, how he lived his life, here on Earth. His *kindness*, his *tolerance*... Listen, here's what I think. I think that we can't go around... measuring our goodness by what we don't do. By what we deny ourselves, what we resist, and who we exclude. I think... we've got to measure goodness by what we *embrace*, what we create... and who we include.

Lent is a time of perennial self-assessment to let go of that which is of this world and repent (turn back to God). As we do, we mustn't lose sight of God's calling to embrace life as He gives it to us. For goodness isn't determined by what we don't do or whom we exclude, but rather by what we embrace, create or include in our lives. What a way to share the Gospel, through our hospitality, our humanity and our messy, yet beautiful lives.

So as we march into this Lenten season and embrace its rich tradition will you give up (chocolate, meat, etc.) or take on something new (making a meal for a friend, starting a morning devotional, or simply listening to one another and loving them for whom they are)? Whatever you do, keep Christ at the center of it all. And when we arrive at the cross on Easter morning, let us revel in the full joy of what this season of life, death and glorious resurrection means.

Amen!

Each Sunday morning we are called by God to get ourselves out of bed, fix something for breakfast, and dress in a manner that we deem appropriate for attending church. This activity is more of something that God does rather than completely controlled by us. You see it's the Holy Spirit that lives in our hearts that draws us together to worship as a community of faith. Church each Sunday morning is very important for those of faith. It's a place that we can come to receive encouragement and forgiveness, a place we can offer praise or deal with the emotions of our hearts. It's a place that we can surround ourselves with people who care for one another and share in the trials of life. Worship on Sunday morning is our corporate gathering to bring perspective to our lives and how Christ calls us.

What about the other six days of the week? How do we find encouragement and the hope of our faith? When we are at work or running around town how is it that we can still manage to walk our faith? Do we get enough on Sunday morning to get us by until the next Sunday? Well, for many of us, church each Sunday morning is the only spiritual life we participate in. I would like to encourage us to move our relationship building with Christ beyond one morning a week.

We are now in the heart of Lent. Forty days of preparation as we walk with Christ to the cross but our journey does not end there. We need to travel to Easter morning when the tomb is found empty and the proof that Christ has raised and is alive. When we do this relationship building with Christ we can arrive at a, "living worship," mentality. Living worship is something that needs to take place every day. Here is how this can happen. In the beginning of this Lenten season the forty days of devotions were distributed. Many of you have been diligent in reading those and praying each day. We also have a prayer chain with a list of special people for who we can pray. There may also be others that you have added to your personal list. After Lent I would encourage you to continue in this practice of prayer and conversation with God. I would also suggest that you include a time of regular scripture reading. This practice will allow each person to build upon their relationship with Christ beyond their regular attendance in Sunday worship.

If you need help determining what scripture to read each day I suggest subscribing to the Presbyterian Church's daily lectionary found at; <http://www.pcusa.org/devotions/lectionary>

Worship of our Lord occurs at other times then just Sunday morning, I encourage you to seek a way to participate.

Peace Rev. Dr. Andrew Gifford

CONTACT US!

Rev. Dr. Andrew Gifford, Pastor

agifford@stlukeunion.org

Susan Walter, Office Manager

swalter@stlukeunion.org

Website:

www.stlukeunion.org

Facebook

Like our Facebook page for updates on church news, events & Reginald's whereabouts! Sunday Worship will go Facebook LIVE at 10:30am!

www.facebook.com/stlukeunionchurch

YouTube

Search: [St Luke Union Church](#)

Church Office Hours:

Monday: 9a – 3p

Tuesday: 9a – 3p

Wednesday: 9a – 3p

Thursday: 9a – 3p

Friday & Saturday: Closed

Worship

Online + In-Person

Sunday 10:30am!



St Luke Union Church

2101 E Washington St Bloomington, IL 61701

(Corner of Regency Drive and Washington St – open 24 hrs/7 days a week)

TerraCycle Programs & Other Collections

Collection is in the garage behind the church where collection containers are labeled;
if you do not see a container, please DO NOT leave it.

ARM & HAMMER® and OxiClean®: ARM & HAMMER and OxiClean plastic pouches. (Must be these brands only)

Bausch + Lomb ONE Contact Lens Recycling: All brands of contact lenses, plus foil and blister packaging.

GoGo SqueeZ Baby Food Pouches Recycling: All baby and toddler food plastic pouches and caps (such as Go-Go Squeeze, Ella's, Earth's Best, etc.). **Please - Leave caps on to reduce smell and mold.**

Brita® Recycling Program: Brita pitchers, individual filtration bottles, filters, foil filter packaging, and faucet filtration systems. (Must be this brand only.)

Burt's Bee Recycling: Burt's Bee products packaging. (Must be this brand only.)

Cigarette Waste Recycling Program: NO DROP OFF - PLEASE CONTACT AMIE (joelamiekeeton@gmail.com or 309.242.8871) FOR MORE INSTRUCTIONS. Program accepts cold extinguished cigarettes, cigarette filters, loose tobacco pouches, outer plastic packaging, inner foil packaging, rolling paper and ash.

Colgate/Tom's of Maine Dental and Deodorant Recycling: All brands toothpaste tubes and caps, toothbrushes, floss containers, mouthwash bottles and caps, plastic deodorant containers and caps; also, clear plastic cover from toothbrush/dental floss packaging (remove cardboard backing and put in city recycling first). **Please note: no aerosol cans which go into regular city recycling.**

Honest Kids Drink Pouch Recycling Program: Flat, flexible aluminum/plastic drink pouches and their straws. Any brand accepted. Must be completely empty.

Entenmann's Little Bites Pouches Recycling Program: Entenmann's brand Little Bites plastic pouches and clear Entenmann's Minis packaging. (Must be this brand only.)

eos: eos lip, lotion and shave packaging. (Must be this brand only.)

Febreze® Air Care Recycling Program: All brands of air freshener plastic cartridges, plugs, packaging and flexible plastic film packaging, trigger heads and Mr. Clean Deep Cleaning Mist bottles and trigger heads. **(Aerosol spray cans go into city recycling).**

Garnier® Personal Care & Beauty: Emptied Plastic Garnier personal care or beauty product containers, tubes and lids. (Must be this brand only.)

Gerber®: Gerber baby food packaging and small and large hook Gerber Baby clothing hangers. (Must be this brand only.)

Gillette® Razor Recycling Program: All brands of razor blades; plastic and metal razors; flexible plastic bags and rigid plastic razor packaging. Clean and dry before donating.

GOLDTOE® Socks: All brands of used, clean socks.

Kroger - Our Brands Recycling Program: Kroger flexible plastic packaging. (Must be this brand only.)

Late July® Snacks Recycling Program: Late July® brand plastic snack packaging and chip bags. (Must be this brand.)

PopSockets® & Cell Phone Cases: Grips, mounts, wallets, and similar phone accessories, this program is brand-specific, which means you can only collect PopSockets products. However, you can collect **phone cases from ANY brand** for recycling.

Swiffer® Recycling Program: Swiffer refills: Sweeper, Duster and WetJet pads. (Must be this brand only).

Takis® Snacks: Takis Snacks, Takis Rolled Tortilla Chips, Takis STIX, Takis POP!, Takis Waves, Takis Kettlez, and Takis Crisps flexible plastic bags and containers. (Must be this brand only).

Tide Free Recycling Program: Fabric care products and packaging from brands Tide, Gain, Downy, NBD & Dreft, including plastic components (dispensing cup, bag, nozzle clip) and plastic packaging wrap, flexible plastic bags, rigid plastic tubs and lids and Tide To GO pen. (Must be these brands only).

Toys & Games: VTech and LeapFrog electronic learning devices and electronic toys program and Hasbro

Toys and Games: For the full list of accepted items, [view the VTech & LeapFrog FAQ](#) and [Hasbro](#) list of accepted items. (Must be these brands only.)

Additional Recycling Collections at the St Luke:

Aluminum Can Recycling: Please put cans in the Large labeled wooden box in the front and center of the garage. Please consider recycling your ALUMINUM cans with us instead of just putting them in city recycling. We recycle locally to get money for charity.

Holiday-Type Light Strands & Cords/Wire/Cable Recycling: Twinkle light bulbs ok to leave on; larger light bulbs should be removed and can be recycled at the lighting section of our local Menards, Lowes or Home Depot. Please remove any other plastic or metal decor before donating light strands.

Lion's Club box: Cell phones; small printer cartridges (**from home use only**); eyeglasses; hearing aids; keys. (ok to drop small items at Common Ground). Lion's Club volunteers manage this for charity. (ok to drop small amounts at Common Ground).

***Please - ONLY leave the items listed above.**

TerraCycle Volunteers:

Amie Keeton joelamiekeeton@gmail.com, Janet Guaderrama jquader@gmail.com,
Melanie Ziomek mziomek@my.heartland.edu Marcia Nagy trek2ak@frontiernet.net