

New Directions

April

St Luke Union Church

Mark Your Calendars - Easter 2025

April 13 – Palm Sunday Service & One Great Hour of Sharing Offering 10:30 am

April 14-18 - Morning Prayer 7:00 am

April 17 - Maundy Thursday Service 6:30 pm

April 20 – Easter Sunday
 Breakfast 9:00 am
 Worship Service 10:30 am
 Easter Egg Hunt - after the service



One Great Hour of Sharing

On Palm Sunday, April 13, we will collect the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering. We collect this each year, along with many churches from around the world to aid many people & causes. Some include natural disasters like tornadoes, floods, wildfires and earthquakes, which may be increasing in number & severity due to climate change.

Outside the U.S., it has responded to wars/conflicts like Ukraine, Israel/Palestine, & Ethiopia. Countries with droughts & famine such as Rwanda, India, Angola & Malawi have benefited from OGHS offerings. Solar refrigeration has been implemented to assist in keeping fish longer in countries where fishing is a major industry. Installation of solar energy has helped other countries in developing wells for water.

OGHS also has helped low income communities deal with oppression & injustice. Along with Church World Service, OGHS doesn't leave after the immediate need is over, but continues activities as long as they are needed.

Please prayerfully consider how you might help with your donation to One Great Hour of Sharing. Special envelopes will be in the pews.



Easter Sunday Breakfast!
 Sunday, April 20, 2025
 9:00 am to 10:15 am




Join us for an Easter Sunday Breakfast Potluck. Please sign up to bring Breakfast Casserole, Breakfast Breads, Fruit or Juice. We also need help with clean up. There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall.

Pastor Andy Riddle: I have every color, but I'm not a rainbow. I can be sweet and sour. What am I?



APRIL 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		01 Consolidated Election	02 Spiritual Growth Team Mtg 5p Church Chat 6p Choir Practice 7p	03	04 Men's Breakfast 7a	05
06 Communion Choir Prac. 9:30a Worship 10:30a	07 Adult Bible Study 12p Boy Scouts 7p	08 Resource Team 2p Finance Meeting 5p	09 Worship Team 5p Choir Practice 7p	10 Crossroads Board 9a DAR Meeting & Dinner 5:30p	11 Viola/Violin Recital 4p	12 Viola/Violin Recital 2p Piano Recital 7p
13 Palm Sunday Sunday Sch 9:30a Choir Prac. 9:30a Worship 10:30a Crossroads Vol. Luncheon 11a	14 Morning Prayer 7a Adult Bible Study 12p Boy Scouts 7p	15 Morning Prayer 7a VMC Meeting 5:30p	16 Morning Prayer 7a Church Chat 6p Choir Practice 7p	17 Morning Prayer 7a Maundy Thurs Service 6:30p	18 Morning Prayer 7a	19
20 Easter RaiseRight Breakfast 9a Choir Prac 9:30a Worship 10:30a	21 Office Closed Boy Scouts 7p	22 Lamplighters 7p	23 Choir Practice 7p	24	25	26
27 Sunday Sch 9:30a Choir Prac. 9:30a Worship 10:30a	28	29	30 Choir Practice 7p			
Group Sale Set-Up 						

Happy Birthday! Sue Boerner, Debbie Harrison, Joel Keeton 4/1; Emily Desmond, Pierre Roussey 4/2; Brian Trower 4/12; Lillie Keeton 4/14; Caiden Dehner 4/16; Emma DeBruine 4/17; Cameron Luna 4/18; Lisa DeBruine, Dan Moret 4/19; Bryan Colee 4/21; Scott Luna 4/24; Elijah Rambo 4/25; Lauren Desmond 4/26; Sylvia Kruger 4/27 Carol Parlette 4/28; Ellie Dehner 4/29; Rhett Stolte 4/30

Happy Anniversary! Mike & Ginny Kolze 4/16

EASTER LILY ORDER OR SPECIAL PROJECT DONATION

I wish to order _____ Easter Lilies at \$17.00 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 West Bloomington Revitalization Project 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, April 13, 2025

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.

Spring College Student Care Packages

College Care Packages will be sent out at the end of April to our students in college. This is an appreciative gesture received by our students. We send snacks, a prayer card and some other "stress relief" items to let them know we are praying for them during this time.

If you would like to help with these packages, please bring the items to the church by April 13th. Some suggestions are:

Packaged Rice Krispie Treats, granola bars, stress balls, cocoa packets, gift cards (Starbucks, Dunkin', McD's etc.), lip balm, life saver mints, Microwave popcorn, bite size candy bars, fun size M&M packages, juice boxes.

We have 11 students included in the College Care Packages ministry.

The Mission Ministry Team appreciate your help!

SPECIAL PROJECT

West Bloomington Revitalization Project

In 2008, a decision was made amongst public, private, and nonprofit sectors to take significant steps towards revitalizing West Bloomington neighborhoods. This included the formation of the West Bloomington Task Force – a group focused on creating a comprehensive plan to achieve significant community development. The West Bloomington Task Force was made up of representatives from the City of Bloomington, the Economic Development Council of the Bloomington-Normal Area, State Farm Bank, service area companies, non-profit organizations and social service agencies, and the GAP and Olde Towne neighborhood associations.

It was then that we made commitments to the West Bloomington Revitalization Project with intent to serve as a model for change for other neighborhoods in the Bloomington-Normal area. Through our strategic planning, we were able to identify key themes in which we needed to focus our attention: economic development, safety, housing, youth, and education. These themes are highlighted in the various programs we offer today and we hope to continue evolving our efforts as we continue our mission.

Our programs include: Art & Beautification, Barbers with Books, Bed Blitz, Bike Co-op, Book Bike Little Free Library, Community Gardens, Tool Library, Veggie Oasis and Workshop Space. Please visit our website westbloomington.org for more information.



roots · pride · vision
West Bloomington
revitalization project

Pastor Andy Riddle Answer: Jelly Beans

2025 SPRING GROUP SALE & BAKE SALE

Friday, May 2nd – 9am – 5pm & Saturday, May 3rd – 9am – Noon

Ready, Set, Go!!! It is time to look through your Spring/Summer clothing, kitchen items, children's toys, books, linens, jewelry, knick-knacks and decide what gently used items you would like to pass on to someone else. There are so many in our community, now more than ever, who need affordable items. St. Luke Union Church Group Sale allows us to help the community by providing these items. The remaining items will be donated to local organizations.

We will begin set up after worship on Sunday, April 27th

Bring your items:

Monday, April 28th & Tuesday, April 29th – 8:30 am to 7 pm

Wednesday, April 30th – 9 am to NOON (please no items after noon)

Called to Serve – WE NEED YOUR HELP – Consider sharing your talents for a few hours, a day, or a few days. We also have “sit down” jobs. When you come to volunteer and are not sure where to start please see Karlene Bledsoe, Charlene Munro, or any of the ladies on the lower level, we will be happy to direct you where help is needed.

Workers are needed

- Sunday to help set up tables and bring in items from the garage.
- Monday – Thursday during the day and evening to help unpack, arrange and price items.
- Friday and Saturday to check-out, bag, help our customers and help keep everything organized.
- Saturday at noon to help pack up and load the Goodwill truck.


Sign up sheets for workers will be available Sunday, April 6th in Fellowship Hall.

Lastly, DON'T FORGET THE BAKE SALE!!! – Baked goods accepted during set up hours. Last call - Baked goods need to be at the church no later than 8:00 am on Friday and Saturday mornings to give the ladies time to package them. The bake sale is always a highlight of our sale!

Working together is a really great way to become better acquainted with other church members while providing items at a reasonable price for our community. We have a lot of fun and keep each other going!! We look forward to serving with you!

Blessings, Co-Coordination, Karlene Bledsoe and Charlene Munro.

Entertainment Opportunity:

Join the local Sound of Illinois Chorus for their annual show (A British Invasion) at Heartland Community College Astroth Theater Saturday, April 12 @ 2pm or 7pm. Order online or ask Jim/Doug Ferrier about tickets. 

New Quarterly Devotionals Available for April/May/June 2025

We have copies of the quarterly devotional, *These Days: Daily Devotions for Living by Faith*, available for you to pick up at the Welcome Table in Fellowship Hall.



85th Annual Show by Sound of Illinois

Featuring favorite songs by British artists

Date: April 12, 2025 (Sat)
Time: 2:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. (2 shows)
**Place: Heartland Community College
Astroth Community Education Center**
General Admission: \$20
(Tickets from members or at the door)

Guest Quartet
ROOFTOP RECORDS
2019 BHS International
4th Place Bronze Medalist



STAND DOWN FOR VETERANS WISH LIST - UPDATE

The collection of NEW, UNUSED items is continuing. As of March 14, we have collected **366** pairs of men's socks. Goodwill's target is 750 pairs (enough to give each veteran three pairs), so we are still looking to get **384** pairs. Goodwill is looking for white, grey, or black crew socks.

We are also collecting:

Women's Crew Socks- black or white (target 75 pairs),

Diabetic Socks- black or white (target 300 pairs),

Hand and Foot warmers (target 250),

XL Gloves (target 10-15 pairs), and

Pillows- Standard-size (target of 250).

Additionally, Johnna said they can always use female undergarments. About 25 females usually attend the event. The Stand Down donation bin is located upstairs in Fellowship Hall near the staircase.

If you would prefer to donate money instead of items you can send checks to:

Goodwill Industries

Attn: Johanna Wagner

2319 E War Memorial

Peoria, IL 61614

(write **Stand Down 2025** in the Memo line)

THANK YOU for any help you can provide!

New Interpreter's Bible Commentary

The New Interpreter's Bible (NIB) is a 12 volume set of reference works that explore the contents of the New International and New Revised Standard Bible. It was published by Abingdon Press over a period of about five years beginning in 2003.

Each book of the Bible has a full introduction complete with notes on authorship, history, and structure. Multiple additional articles provide detailed evaluations of specific topics and historical perspectives. There are commentaries on each section of each book, as well as verse by verse notes.

This work is set apart from earlier commentaries by its intentional attempt to recognize and respect multiple points of view. Most earlier commentaries spoke with authority from the perspective of white, educated, European males. In this volume the voices of feminists, womanists, and the perspective of liberation and ecological theology are recognized.

Since I am no longer preaching and teaching on a routine basis, Pastor Gifford has accepted my offer to donate the commentary to the church for the use of the congregation. The set is now located in the church office.

-Chuck Maney



Hope's Team GCG, who finished runner-up in this year's ACG Cup Competition. From left to right are Michael Stechschulte, Alyson Kelly, Keegan McNamara and Daniel Ferrier

Three Hope Student Teams Place in Final Round of ACG Cup Competition; One Team Finishes as Runner-Up

Continuing a long tradition of strong finishes in this rigorous finance competition, ALL THREE of the Hope College teams placed in the top 8 with one team finishing as the runner-up. A record-breaking 39 teams from a variety of colleges and universities participated in the competition this year, providing a remarkable opportunity for our students to put their knowledge and skills to the test in front of a panel of finance professionals.

One of our competitors, Thomas DeVries, reflected on the challenge saying: "ACG provides an incredible opportunity to network, expand one's financial skillset, and gain real-world experience. I'd argue that the competition played a major role in securing both my investment banking internship and my now full-time role. In addition, I've built strong relationships with my teammates that I look forward to continuing in the future."

Join us in congratulating Michael Stechschulte, Daniel Ferrier, Alyson Kelly, Keegan McNamara, Mark Morris, Kyle Sytsema, Tyler Van Grinsven, Peter Standaert, Thomas DeVries, Benjamin Bush, Wyatt Schindeldecker and Jack Guerrero on a job well done!

Fun Fact:

There's a reason you probably eat ham for Easter dinner.

Historically, most early Easter celebrants would have eaten lamb for this special occasion since the holiday has its roots in Jewish Passover. But these days, many American Easter dinner now feature ham instead, because of the timing of the holiday. Years ago, hams cured over the winter months would have been ready to serve in the early spring.

Troop 19 Lends A Hand - April Update

If you are ever around the church on a Monday evening you will hear laughter, active learning and the voices of over 30 scouts and 10 to 15 leaders. The Scouting America Troop we sponsor is thriving thanks to the generosity of our church space and congregation.

Here are a few things they've been up to since January:

- *Cold-weather camping at the January Klondike in Peoria.
- *Five new scouts joined our troop.
- *Sean Garcia became an Eagle Scout (Project: Built a flight simulator at the Prairie Aviation Museum)
- *Theresa Kunkes (Adult Leader) received the District Award of Merit
- *Urban Campout (Chicago: Bean, Modern Art Museum, China Town, EL, etc.)
- *Rock Climbing at Upper Limits
- *Rebuilding of shelves in the scout shed to accommodate new patrol cook boxes
- *Cleaning of our Recycling Shed
- *and more!

We have two more scouts who are approved to complete work on their Eagle Scout Projects: Brendan Hall (Refreshing the outdoor basketball court at Northpoint School) and Eli Moore (creation of a fire fighting training facility in Danvers - a memorial to his father).

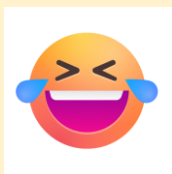
To St. Luke Union: Our ministry to the youth of Central Illinois extends our reach of Christ's love. Thank you for your continued support, grace, and love.

And thank you to Troop 19 for all you do. We'll see you at the spring group sale.



CHURCH BULLETIN BLOOPERS

- Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.
- For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
- The rosebud on the alter this morning is to announce the birth of David Alan Belzer, the sin of Rev. and Mrs. Julius Belzer.



Church Camp

Have you thought about providing your child, grandchild, or yourself the opportunity to attend church camp this summer? If you haven't, please do!

Many of us have a fondness for Pilgrim Park Camp and Conference Center which containing 155 acres of forest and prairie land located about 80 miles north of Bloomington-Normal in Princeton, IL. Our family became acquainted with Pilgrim Park back in 1986 when we hesitantly dropped off our first-born at Tenderfoot Camp, a two-night camp for children who completed K-2 grades. Our son had a blast, talked highly of his initial camp experience, and returned the following summer bringing friends in tow. For years, he, as well as our two daughters, looked forward to attending summer camps at Pilgrim Park. Once she became old enough, our youngest worked as a Pilgrim Park summer staffer for several years and is currently a co-director for one of its summer camps.

This year, Pilgrim Park is offering three Summer Camps. If you know of someone who has completed grades K-3, consider sending them to Spirit Tenderfoot Camp on July 17-19. I will, once again, be a counselor during this 2-night camp and would absolutely love to help your special someone make new friends, learn about God, and enjoy all that this facility has to offer.

The 5-night Spirit Camp is ideal for those who have completed grades 3-10. It runs from July 14-19. Youth at this camp also make new friends, support one another in numerous group activities, and enjoy nature all while growing in their faith.

Pilgrim Park also has Making Memories Camp (formerly called Grandparents and Me) on July 7-9. This intergenerational camp is for any combination of adults and children—grandparents/grandchildren, parents/children, aunts & uncles/nieces & nephews... Anyone ages 4 and up are welcome to make memories together. I attended in 2023 with our two youngest grandsons, and, last year, Chuck joined in on the fun! Our grandsons enjoyed swimming, archery, paddle boating, crafting, making new friends, talking about God, and just hanging out with us. It was a really special time for all of us!

In addition to Pilgrim Park, the UCC Illinois Conference has connections with Tower Hill in Sawyer, MI. It contains more than 60 acres of forested landscapes and has a private Lake Michigan beach. This summer, Tower Hill also has church camps available—one intergenerational and four youth camps.

Did you know that Pilgrim Park and Tower Hill aren't just for youth? Both camps have events for adults, as well. The fall Illinois Conference Women's Retreat at Pilgrim Park is a two-day, one night get-a-way for women of all ages scheduled for October 3-4. It's a great way to meet women outside our area!

I pray that you will find ways to use our camps whether it be a scheduled event or to just take a day's hike and enjoy God's beauty.

For more information about our Outdoor Ministries and to register for a camp, please visit:

www.pilgrimparkcamp.org

www.towerhillcamp.org

Martha Maney



I often sit down each month and do my best to construct a newsletter article that will bring inspiration and perhaps some new insight into a select part of scripture. This month I have thought to bring you each into a different part of my mind. To let you in on some of my found ironies or foibles of life. This month is more about musings and hopefully will make you laugh or even reflect on the craziness of life.

- Did you know that this year's election will take place on April 1st, also April Fool's Day.
- The puppet Reginald gets his name as a variant of the Illinois State University mascot, Reggie the Redbird. His name was determined by Doug Ferrier and I moments before our first introduction of Reginald 15 years ago. Reginald was purchased by me before I was ordained for the purpose of children sermons, but I was never able to speak to the puppet and offer a message at the same time. It wasn't until I arrived at St Luke Union that Doug and I came up with the bit, with both of us wishing to be the puppet because it is definitely the more fun part. It was eventually decided that the pastor should be the straight man.
- Here's an interesting fact: The founder of AA asked for whiskey on his deathbed. The nurse refused.
- I recently had an appointment with my cardiologist for my annual check-up. After looking at my very good cholesterol numbers the doctor decided to reduce one of my medications. I offered to eat more bacon and sausage instead. She did not agree, and Sandi affirmed.
- In my college days I was able to dunk, but not a basketball only a golf ball. The ability to jump well was observed by the Iowa Men's Swim Team and they challenged the Gymnastics Team to a game of basketball. We declined because I was the tallest gymnast on the team at 5' 10" and every swimmer was well over 6 feet tall. Plus, gymnasts are notoriously uncoordinated outside of the gym.
- If you order a taco in Japan, you are likely to get octopus.
- Both my sons, Ben and Seth work in the oil industry. Two year ago I seized the gear box on my lawn mower, the reason was that it ran out of oil. I am now regularly lectured on the importance of proper lubrication in machinery.
- My college roommate was named Randy, I was then dating Sandi, things often became confusing.
- In one of the most interesting irony examples, the most shoplifted book in America is the bible.

Luke 6:21

Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

May you laugh today and enjoy the ironies of life.

Peace and Blessings,
Pastor Andy

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

Phone:

309-663-7437

Worship

Online + In-Person

Sunday 10:30am!



TerraCycle with St. Luke Union Church

TerraCycle collection is in the garage in the back of the parking lot
2101 E Washington St, Bloomington, IL 61701
Collection containers are labeled - please sort all items.
Open 24 hours

ITEMS ACCEPTED

- **ARM & HAMMER™ and OxiClean™:** Plastic Pouches
- **Contact Lens Brigade:** Accepts all brands of contact lenses, plus foil and blister packaging.
- **Baby Food Pouch Brigade:** Accepts all baby and toddler food plastic pouches and caps (such as Go-Go Squeeze, Ella's, Earth's Best, etc.). Please leave the cap on to reduce smell and leaking.
- **Brita® or PUR Brigade®:** Accepts all brands of pitchers, individual filtration bottles, filters, foil filter packaging, and faucet filtration systems.
- **Burt's Bee Brigade:** Accepts any Burt's Bee products packaging (must be this brand only).
- **Cigarette Waste: NO DROP OFF– PLEASE EMAIL AMIE, joelamikeeton@gmail.com FOR MORE INSTRUCTIONS.** Accepts cold extinguished cigarettes, cigarette filters, loose tobacco pouches, outer plastic packaging, inner foil packaging, rolling paper and ash.
- **Colgate® Oral Care Free Recycling Program: Accepts all brands** toothpaste tubes and caps, toothbrushes, floss containers, mouthwash bottles and caps.
- **Drink Pouch:** Recycle all brands of drink pouches.
- **Entenmann's Little Bites Pouches Program:** Accepts only Entenmann's brand Little Bites plastic pouches and clear Entenmann's Minis packaging.
- **eos Brigade:** Packaging from eos brand only.
- **Febreze Air Care Program:** Accepts all brands of air freshener cartridges and plus, packaging and flexible film packaging, and trigger heads (plastic bottles/cans go in regular curbside recycling).
- **Garnier® Program:** Accepts all Garnier brand packaging.
- **GOLDTOE Sock Program:** Accepts all brands of LAUNDERED socks for recycling.
- **Late July® Snacks:** Late July® Snacks packaging and chip bags (must be Late July brand)
- **Kroger® Brands Program:** Recycle flexible plastic packaging from Kroger® brands through this program.
- **Gillette Razor Brigade:** All brands of blades, razors, and plastic packaging.
- **Garnier Skin & Hair Care Brigade:** Garnier® skin care and hair care packaging.
- **Swiffer® Recycling Program:** Recycle Swiffer refills (must be Swiffer)
- **Takis® Snacks Recycling Program:** Recycle Takis Snack packaging (must be Takis)
- **Tom's of Maine Recycling Program:** Recycle all Tom's of Maine packaging (must be Tom's of Maine)

Additional items collected (not TerraCycle):

- **Lion's Club collection:** Cell phones; home computer printer cartridges (no business-size cartridges); eyeglasses; hearing aids; keys.
- Christmas/Holiday light strands
- Aluminum