

January

St Luke Union Church

St Luke Union Church Congregational Meeting

The Congregational Meeting will take place on Sunday, January 25, 2026 following the 10:30 am Worship Service.

At the conclusion of the meeting we will host a potluck lunch for all to partake. At the annual meeting we will review 2025 and elect church officers to the Church Council (VMC), Personnel, and Nominating Committees. We will also elect the corporate officers of St Luke Union Church. The final bit of work will be the approval of the Pastor Terms of Call. This meeting will have a Zoom link provided for anyone unable to be in person and wished to participate. Please reach out to the church office for a link. Annual Reports will be distributed and mailed in January.



FREE Diabetes Prevention Program

Starting January 2026
Wednesdays, 3-4pm

YMCA of Bloomington/Normal in the Community Room
202 St. Joseph Drive, Bloomington

This free, year-long program offers:

- CDC-approved curriculum
- Trained lifestyle coach to guide and encourage you
- Support from other participants with similar goals
- Education and tools to manage stress, develop a healthier diet, lose weight and be more physically active

Lower
Your Risk
for Type 2
Diabetes!

Sign up now – spots are limited!

Call: (309)888-5954 or email: jennifer.neal@mcleancountyil.gov

Want to learn more first?

Join our Info. Session on Wednesday, January 7 at 3 PM at the YMCA.

Pastor Andy Joke: After service, a stranger approached the pastor and said, “I’d like you to pray for my hearing.” The pastor touched the man’s ears and said a passionate, earnest prayer. “How’s your hearing now?” the pastor asked. Surprised, the man said, “Well, it’s not until tomorrow. “



JANUARY 2026

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				01 New Year's Day Church Office Closed	02 Men's Breakfast 7a Camp Timber-lee WinterXtreme Jan. 2-4 	03
04 Communion Sunday Sch 9:30a Choir Practice 9:30a Worship 10:30a	05 Adult Bible Study 12p Boy Scouts 7p	06	07 Spiritual Growth 5p Church Chat 5p Handbells 6p Choir Practice 7p	08 Crossroads 9a	09	10 DAR Meeting 10a
11 Choir Prac. 9:30a Worship 10:30a	12 Adult Bible Study 12p Boy Scouts 7p	13 Resource Team 2p Finance Meeting 5p	14 Worship Team 5p Handbells 6p Choir Practice 7p	15 Crossroads Board 9a	16	17
18 RaiseRight Sunday Sch 9:30a Choir Prac 9:30a Worship 10:30a	19 Adult Bible Study 12p Boy Scouts 7p	20 VMC Meeting 5:30p	21 Church Chat 5p Handbells 6p Choir Practice 7p	22 Faith Brews 5p <u>@ Flingers</u>	23	24
25 Choir Prac. 9:30a Worship 10:30a Annual Congregational Meeting	26 Adult Bible Study 12p Boy Scouts 7p	27 Lamplighters 7p	28 Handbells 6p Choir Practice 7p	29	30	31

Happy Birthday! Matthew Staver 1/1; Ginny Kolze 1/3; Margaret Hawkins, Matthew Kubiak, Ruth Trower 1/4; Karlene Bledsoe, Larry Blum 1/5; Laurie Vial 1/6; Stacy Herren 1/7; Jan Paterson 1/11; Amie Keeton 1/12; Sherrie Belletete 1/13; Karen Walters, Susan Walter 1/14; Lydia Rambo 1/16; Tyler Herren 1/20; Judy Ferrier 1/21; Jim King, Mindy Klapp 1/25; Stephanie Dehner 1/28; Bonnie Redick 1/29

Happy Anniversary! Brad & Diann Kamp 1/18; Rodney & Margaret Hawkins 1/28

FOOD PANTRY SUNDAY IS ALWAYS THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

Our next Salvation Army food drive is on January 4

In choosing what to donate to the Salvation Army Food Pantry, let's make sure we help stock their shelves with what they need – and avoid what they don't need!

What they need:

- High priority: Canned Soup (pop-top preferred) and Macaroni and Cheese
- Canned fruit - preferably packed in natural juice
- Canned meat – chicken, ham, SPAM
- Canned fish – tuna and salmon
- Soups, Stews, Chili - either canned or packaged
- Boxed dinners – Mac & Cheese, Hamburger Helper
- Boxed cereals – preferably whole grain, low in sugar
- Canned beans – pinto, pork 'n beans, etc.
- Applesauce, Peanut Butter, Crackers, Granola Bars
- Instant mashed potatoes
- Pasta – spaghetti, as well as spaghetti sauce
- Rice
- Powdered milk

What they don't need:

- Anything that has to be baked
- Junk food
- Anything that needs a can opener -- (pop-top cans are best)
- Anything in glass containers or cellophane wrapping

In Honor of Heart Month: Wanted Low Sodium Food Donations

Food donations are an important asset to our community, yet many people with food insecurity have specific dietary needs for health conditions. Often, there is frustration when they cannot find access to the recommended foods for their health. If a patient with heart failure consumes too much sodium, they may retain fluid which can cause shortness of breath, swelling to their feet and legs, and/or an increase in fatigue. As a registered dietitian who educates and assists patients in need of low sodium food, I am asking you to donate low sodium items on Sunday February 15th. This is an extra food collection Sunday. The items collected will be donated to the compassion closet at Carle BroMenn Medical Center to fill food bags. These bags are given to food insecure patients that are in the hospital or in our outpatient settings. Recently five to seven bags have been given out weekly.

Below are some of the most needed low sodium foods.

- Low Sodium tuna packets
- Peanut Butter or other nut butters
- Low sodium Nut packets
- No Salt added canned vegetables (pull tab if available)
- Low Sodium V-8 juice
- Reduced sodium canned beans
- Canned fruit in lite juice/fruit cup in lite juice
- Unsweetened applesauce
- Tub Oatmeal

Blessings,
Sandra Gifford

Kartoon Korner



New Year Traditions Worldwide

Some global traditions you may see trending for 2026:

- **Spain:** eating 12 grapes at midnight
- **Denmark:** smashing plates for good luck
- **Japan:** ringing temple bells 108 times
- **Brazil:** wearing white for peace

What are your New Year's Traditions?

January 2026

At our house over the years I am often given a hard time about not putting my whole heart and spirit into decorating for Christmas. You see it's not that I don't think that Christmas decorations are nice, it's just that I really don't like crawling up a ladder to pull them down and then later putting them all away for next year. "Bah-Hum-Bug," is what you are all thinking. That is what Sandi tells me, for me the festive attitude actually doesn't arrive until I'm on the couch following Christmas Eve worship. Then the Christmas joy seems to run away faster than its October arrival. Where does the magic of Christmas go and why do we look into the New Year with fear and uncertainty? In Advent we prepared and with the arrival of Christmas, Jesus comes to us as a child bringing; Hope, Peace, Love and Joy. Now the New Year is here, we can admire the blessings we received and the accomplishments we achieved, but what will 2026 bring into our lives? What challenges will we face and overcome? New years can be a time of uncertainty and the inevitability of change. New Years is also a time when we can be certain that God's love is strong enough to see us through. These words of Isaiah speak to God's love, God's grace and the redeeming power that came through His Son Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 63: 7-9

⁷ I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us, and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely"; and he became their savior

⁹ in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

As we look forward to 2026 and reminisce about the events of 2025 we can find the assurances that come through our Savior, Jesus Christ. I would challenge each of you to remain focused on where God calls you in your vocation and to see God's hand in the opportunities laid before you.

Peace to you all and have a blessed NEW YEAR!

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

Phone:

309-663-7437

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.

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- **ARM & HAMMER™ and OxiClean™:** Recycle ARM & HAMMER and OxiClean brand only plastic pouches
 - **Contact Lens:** Accepts all brands of contact lenses, plus foil and blister packaging.
 - **Brita® or PUR:** Accepts Brita or PUR brand only pitchers, individual filtration bottles, filters, foil filter packaging, and faucet filtration systems.
 - **Burt's Bee:** Accepts Burt's Bee product packaging (must be this brand only).
 - **Cigarette Waste: NO DROP OFF– PLEASE EMAIL AMIE, joelamiekeeton@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: 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:** Accepts only Entenmann's brand Little Bites plastic pouches and clear Entenmann's Minis packaging.
 - **eos:** Packaging from eos brand only.
 - **Febreze Air Care:** 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).
 - **Gillette Razor: All brands** of blades, razors, and plastic packaging.
 - **GoGo squeeZ® Food Pouch: Accepts all brands** of 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.
 - **GOLDTOE Socks:** Accepts GOLDTOE brand socks. Please launder.
 - **Hasbro:** Recycle Hasbro brand toys and games.
 - **Kroger® Brands:** Recycle flexible plastic packaging from Kroger® brands through this program.
 - **LimeLife by Alcone:** Recycle LimeLife by Alcone skincare and cosmetics packaging
 - **Stanley Black & Decker Tools:** Recycle DEWALT®, CRAFTSMAN®, BLACK+DECKER®, STANLEY®, IRWIN®, LENOX®, MAC Tools®, PORTER-CABLE® and Bostitch® branded tools.
 - **Swiffer®:** Recycle Swiffer refills (must be Swiffer).
 - **Takis® Snacks Recycling Program:** Recycle Takis Snack packaging (must be Takis)
 - **Tide Free:** Recycle Tide, Gain, Downy, Bounce, NBD., and Dreft fabric care packaging.
 - **Tom's of Maine:** Recycle all Tom's of Maine packaging (must be Tom's of Maine)
 - **VTech® & LeapFrog®:** Recycle VTech and LeapFrog electronic learning devices and electronic toys.

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. Lion's Club volunteers manage this for charity.

***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