

February

St Luke Union Church

Thank You

Thank you to all of our Church Family who prayed, sent prayer cards, get well cards, and who called and visited to wish me well during my recent illness. With the help from God, friends, and medical personnel, I am now beginning to recuperate. A special thank you to Sharon for all of her help and serving as my "personal nurse". God bless you. Thank you again and I'll see you in church!

-Glenn Stille

Many Thanks

Thank you to everyone who participated in Brightpoint (Adopt-A-Family). You provided a Bright and Merry Christmas for two of the many families Brightpoint serves.

FOOD PANTRY SUNDAY IS ALWAYS THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

Our next Salvation Army food drive is on February 1

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



FEBRUARY 2026

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|--|---|---|--|---|-------------------------------|
| 01 Communion Sunday Sch 9:30a Choir Practice 9:30a Worship 10:30a | 02 Adult Bible Study 12p Boy Scouts 7p | 03 Mission Team 5:30p | 04 Spiritual Growth 5p Church Chat 5p Handbells 6p Choir Practice 7p | 05 | 06 Men's Breakfast 7a | 07 Piano Recital 6p |
| 08 Choir Practice 9:30a Worship 10:30a | 09 Adult Bible Study 12p Boy Scouts 7p | 10 Resource Team 2p Finance Mtg 5p | 11 Worship Team 5p Handbells 6p Choir Practice 7p | 12 Crossroads 9a DAR Luncheon 11a | 13 | 14 |
| 15 RaiseRight Sunday Sch 9:30a Choir Prac. 9:30a Worship 10:30a | 16 Office Closed President's Day Adult Bible Study 12p Boy Scouts 7p | 17 VMC Meeting 5:30p | 18 Ash Wednesday Service 6 pm Choir Practice 7p | 19 Faith Brews 5p | 20 Cub Scout Blue and Gold Banquet 6p | 21 |
| 22 Choir Prac 9:30a Worship 10:30a | 23 Adult Bible Study 12p Boy Scouts 7p | 24 Lamplighters 7p | 25 Handbells 6p Choir Practice 7p | 26 | 27 | 28 |

Happy Birthday!

Susan Trower, Colter Gifford 2/6;
 Charles McLean 2/9; Michael Verplaetse 2/10;
 Seth Baker, HelenAnn Gray 2/18;
 Michael Kolze 2/21; Shauna Allison 2/23;
 Daniel Austin, Carol AuYeung, Miles Keeton,
 Marcia Nagy 2/24; Charlie Louck 2/26;
 Carson Schaefer 2/28

Valentine's Day Fun Facts

An estimated **145 million Valentine's cards** are exchanged annually.

Americans buy **over 58 million pounds of chocolate** for Valentine's Day each year.

About **250 million roses** are grown specifically for Valentine's Day worldwide.



**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

Stand Down for Veterans 2026 Wish List

Goodwill Industries of Central Illinois is already planning for Stand Down For Veterans 2026.

I asked what items they would like help with for 2026 and Johanna Wagner provided this list. We will collect **NEW, UNUSED (STILL IN THE ORIGINAL PACKAGING)**:

- **Socks**-typically white, grey, or black crew socks. Again, the target is 750 pairs (3 pairs per veteran).
In 2025 Stand Down served 289 veterans; so let's see if we can collect **867** pairs of socks!
- **Hand and Foot warmers**- Goodwill's target is **1500** (combined)
- **Washcloths** - this is a new item for us.
Target is **250**, but I'm guessing **289** is a more realistic number.
- **Female undergarments** - usually there are 25 female veterans.

Goodwill is not expecting us to provide **all** of these items, but they would like help with these.

The Stand Down donation bin is in the upstairs Fellowship Hall, by 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 2026** in the Memo line

THANK YOU for any help you can provide!
- James Munro



Yarn, Yarn, Yarn!

While cleaning out my Mom's house, we have accumulated a great deal of yarn. We are hoping that someone can use it. Please text Darlene Trower at 309 531-2223 if you're interested.

Save the Date!

The Spring Group Sale will be held Friday, May 1st and Saturday, May 2nd 2026.

Set up for the group sale will begin after worship on Sunday, April 26.





Hello Love Thy Neighbor Choir Members!

We have selected the Love Thy Neighbor Choir Concert date for 2026! Please save the date -**Sunday, April 12...3:00-4:30pm**

Over the years, many people from local churches and community organizations have participated in the concert. We are contacting you now to invite your choir members or anyone who likes to sing to be a part of the 2026 event.

The concert and all rehearsals will be held at Wesley United Methodist Church in Bloomington. If you have performed in the concert in the past, you already know that it is a fun and rewarding experience. We hope that you will encourage some of your fellow choir members or friends to join you this year. By doing so, you will be donating your time and talents to help raise money for an organization whose mission is to provide decent and affordable housing to those who need it the most.

All the individuals performing in this year's event will be singing approximately 10 selections together, some of them from previous concerts. You will have to put some time in on your own learning the pieces. However, there will be four rehearsals prior to the concert.

Love Thy Neighbor Choir Concert 2026 Rehearsal Schedule

Location: Wesley United Methodist Church (Sanctuary) 502 E Front St Bloomington

- Entrance on the East side of the building under the canopy
- **Rehearsal Dates:**
 - **Saturday, February 28- 9:00 am – Noon**
 - **Saturday, March 14 - 9:00 am – Noon**
 - **Saturday, March 28- 9:00 am – Noon**
 - **DRESS REHEARSAL Saturday, April 11- 9:00 am – Noon**
- Parking instructions and arrival times for the day of the concert will be provided later.

If you are interested in participating as a member of the Habitat for Humanity Choir, please contact Judy Ferrier-asap. (The organizers need to know approximately how many singers will be on stage before they order the music!)

- I will need your name, email address, and phone number.
- If you are a member of St Luke Union Church, I will KNOW that. If you have a friend who wants to sing on April 12, that is FINE. I will put them on the SLUC list....or list their church's name. (They usually list all the church or "other" chorus/choir members in the program. Singers do not have to live in Bloomington/Normal.)
- Doug and I have sung at this concert. (as members of the State Farm Chorus or The Sound of Illinois Chorus...but we always list St Luke Union Church too) It is a wonderful way to meet other singers in the community, and support the important work of the Habitat for Humanity Organization which builds homes for our Neighbors.
- This is a fund-raising event...but I don't know if it will be a ticketed event, or if it will be a "donations-only" this year. More information to follow.

Judy Ferrier

309-824-4788 (text or call)

Jaf8170@gmail.com

*James 1:5 “ – If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God...
and it will be given.”*

I have truly been having a difficult time trying to get my mind around all that is happening in Minneapolis of the last several weeks. My struggle is not about who is right and who is wrong but rather how there has been no attempt at any form of resolution. People just seem to be yelling louder as a rubric of success. I have come to heed a particular wisdom when it comes to potential conflict. It was a lesson my father taught me as a youth. His words were, “Walk the other way, don’t put yourself in poor situations, avoid the trouble maker.” That has always been good advice. Today there is a term known as situational awareness. It is the act of being aware of your surroundings and any potential danger you may face. It explains if you observe a dangerous situation then do what you can to avoid the situation. Do not run into it screaming or expelling pepper spray. With all the news feeds and sound bites that discourage a calmer more Christ like approach, there is hope and things happen every day that show people do want to get along and live in community. There are many of us who don’t understand the distrust and look for common ground for resolution.

Here is a real example: St Luke Union has offered recycling services since the 1980’s. Over the years, things have changed with demand for specific material. The common goal is to keep things out of the landfill and perhaps generate money that can be funneled back into the community. One such service is our co-mingled dumpster. This dumpster unfortunately sometime finds un-recyclable trash placed in it. When this occurs we are charged an extra fee for it’s removal. A fee which would make our service unsustainable. When this occurs the Green Team searches the trash for a name or address and mails the individual a letter of explanation. The letter is not mean or accusatory, it simply explains our policy and service and then asks that one be more careful in the future. In the year since the team has begun to mail letters there has never been a negative response. Just a few weeks ago we even received a letter in return thanking us for the service we provide, apologizing and giving a contribution check.

This is the way we are called to work together. This is the way we are called to make resolution. This is the way we offer the patience and grace of Jesus, because when we lack wisdom, we are called to ask God and that wisdom will be given.

Let hearts of God prevail.
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](http://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.
 - **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