

JULY

St Luke Union Church



Funk's Grove Worship Service

The congregation enjoyed our annual worship service at Funk's Grove Church on Sunday, June 14th.
Even Reginald made the trip!

Fun Facts:

The official term for a 250th anniversary of the United States of America is the **SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL**.

Both Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, signers of the Declaration, died on July 4, 1826—the 50th anniversary of American independence.



JULY 2026

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			01 Spiritual Growth 5p	02 Church Office Closed	03 Men's Breakfast 7a	04
05 Communion Choir Prac. 10:00a Worship 10:30a Send Off Potluck	06 <i>Pastor Andy's Renewal Time Begins..</i> Boy Scouts 7p	07	08 Worship Team 5p Troop 19 Court of Honor 6p	09 Crossroads 9a	10 Music Shoppe Recital 7p	11
12 Choir Prac. 10:00a Worship 10:30a	13 Boy Scouts 7p	14 Resource Team 2p Finance Mtg. 5p	15	16 Faith Brews 5p @ Maggie Miley's	17	18
19 RaiseRight Choir Prac 10:00a Worship 10:30a	20 Boy Scouts 7p	21 VMC Meeting 5:30p	22	23	24	25
26 Choir Prac 10:00a Worship 10:30a	27 Boy Scouts 7p	28 Lamplighters 7p	29	30	31	

Happy Birthday! Jennifer Belletete 7/2; Yvonne Harrison 7/3; Paul Dehner 7/5; Diann Kamp 7/7; Ed Desmond, Debbie Lopez 7/8; Glenn Stille 7/9; Amanda O'Rourke, Wayne Warner 7/15; Tammy Desmond 7/18; Jacob Blankenship 7/19; Mindy Stille 7/20; Sheila Wells 7/21; Olivia Cheung, Norm Lopez 7/25; Marilyn Maffett, Adam Southwick 7/26; Anna DeBruine 7/27, Chuck Parlette 7/29

Happy Anniversary! Denny & Bonnie Redick 7/6; Marc & Stacy Herren 7/7; Rhett & Renee Stolte 7/13; Wayne & Lynn Warner 7/14

Mission Trip 2026 – Mount Gilead, OH



Lydia and Luke with their crew.



The team took a mid-week break to conquer an escape room.



Jake and Savana ready for Lacrosse.



Lillie protecting her clothes from paint.



Laura and Silas taping & painting.



Aiden and his crew building a ramp.

Send-off Potluck

Please join us for a potluck after church on Sunday, July 5th as we send off Pastor Andy for his sabbatical!

As you may recall, the sabbatical theme is "What Makes Your Heart Sing," a time where he will focus on rest, reflection, and spiritual renewal.

Potluck Details:

What to bring: A dish to share (sides, desserts, etc.)

Sign-up sheet: Located in Fellowship Hall

We hope to see you there!

Contact Information

Beginning July 6, 2026 Pastor Andy will begin his Clergy Renewal time. During those 17 weeks the VMC has called Reverend Susan Baller-Shepard to serve as worship leader and for pastoral care.

Her contact info is as follows:

Email: pastorsusan@stlukeunion.org

Or susanballershepard@gmail.com

Sabbatical Fun Fact:

Pastor Andy will be spending a week on the Island of Iona, a small island on the western shore of Scotland. For many Christians, Iona is often called "the cradle of Celtic Christianity" and is regarded as a place where prayer, learning, mission, and creation come together in a remarkable way. It is also considered a "thin place" in Celtic Christian tradition.



Congratulations!

We want to congratulate Tyler Herren who graduated this spring from the University of Tennessee and has stated a job with State Farm Insurance Company. Well done, Tyler!

Day Trip Invitation:

Laurie Vial and Marsha Hinthorn are planning a day trip to Indiana to visit Dianne Sherman. We will leave the church fairly early in the morning on Thursday, July 30, and go to Champaign to meet Laurie. Depending on how many want to go, we might need another driver. Please let Marsha Hinthorn know if you'd like to join us for a fun day!

FOOD PANTRY SUNDAY IS ALWAYS THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

Our next Salvation Army food drive is on July 5

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

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship will host a gathering on Saturday, July 25, 2026 at 2:00 pm. We will enjoy a Sundae Bar! More details to come.



Stand Down for Veterans 2026 UPDATE

TIME IS FLYING BY! Stand Down for Veterans 2026 will take place on October 17, 2026. We will need to bring donations to Goodwill Peoria around September 15, so we only have about three months to collect. As of now we have collected:

- 451 pairs of **men's socks** (an increase of 100 pairs; our goal is 867)
- 60 pairs of **men's diabetic socks** (no change from last month)
- 64 pairs of **ladies socks** (an increase of 64 pairs)
- 38 pairs of **ladies diabetic socks** (no change from last month)
- 711 pairs of **hand warmers** (an increase of 11)
- 0 pairs of **foot warmers** (goal is 1500 hand and foot warmers)
- 147 **washcloths** (goal is at least 250)

We are collecting **NEW, UNUSED** products in the **ORIGINAL** packaging. The Stand Down donation bin is in the upstairs Fellowship Hall, near the staircase.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO MAKE A MONETARY DONATION, please send your checks to:

Goodwill Industries
Care of Tim O'Malley
2319 E War Memorial
Peoria, IL 61614

Make checks payable to "Goodwill Foundation" and put "Stand Down 2026" in the memo line. As always, I suggest adding a note that you are from St Luke Union Church; Goodwill knows who we are and appreciates our work!

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

Isaiah 30:15

"For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength."

In just a few days, I will begin the sabbatical time that you have so graciously blessed me with. Thanks to the Lilly Foundation grant that was awarded to support this endeavor, there will be many opportunities for learning and discovery. My primary focus, however, will be spiritual growth and renewal.

Over the years, I have often explained that pastoral ministry consists of three parts. The first is church administration and all that it entails: personnel management, facility upkeep, finances, contract negotiations, and program oversight. The second is the work of theology, teaching, worship leadership, and pastoral care. The third area is spiritual practice. If we imagine these three parts as the legs of a three-legged stool, all three are necessary for stability. If one leg is missing or weakened, the person sitting on the stool will eventually fall. In my twenty years of ordained ministry, I have learned that I am fairly strong in two of these areas. Spiritual practice is the area on which I will be focusing during my time away.

As part of that growth, I have intentionally begun stretching myself in ways that are personally challenging. Last year, I began meeting with a spiritual director, Rev. Michelle Olsen, who will be leading a Saturday workshop in August and preaching the following Sunday. She has guided me through practices and experiences designed to deepen my relationship with God. It is my hope that when I return, we can work together to strengthen this leg of our shared faith journey.

While writing the grant application, one of the guiding questions was, "What makes your heart sing?" That question allowed me to bring together my personal passions and my love of God. Many of you know that I find peace outdoors—hiking, fishing, sailing, and hunting. Much of my sabbatical will involve what Sanae Ferrier describes as "forest bathing."

My plans include competing in my 35th Chicago-to-Mackinac sailboat race, spending a week at a remote abbey on the Island of Iona in Scotland, hiking the Scottish Highlands, exploring the fjords of Norway, and enjoying several fishing excursions throughout the Midwest.

My goal is to establish a rhythm of life centered on Sabbath and solitude, helping me grow in a deeper relational practice with God. This season will be an opportunity to step away from the demands of administration and theology and to create space to listen more intentionally for God's guiding Spirit.

While I am away, it is my prayer that the people of St. Luke Union Church will grow as well. I pray that you will deepen your relationship with God and with one another; that you will care for and encourage one another in ways that strengthen the church while proclaiming God's Word. Rather than simply holding things together until I return, I hope each of you will look for new ways to serve and participate in the life of our congregation.

Thank you for this wonderful opportunity and for the gift of your love and support. St. Luke Union Church is a wonderful place to serve as pastor, and I am grateful to share this ministry with you.

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!



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
 - **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)
 - **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.

Updated 6-2-2026