

August

St Luke Union Church

Look who's



**Join us to celebrate
JOYCE'S 90TH
BIRTHDAY**

**Open House – Celebration Luncheon
for Joyce Pomrenke**

Saturday, August 15 from 11:30 am – 1:30 pm
at St. Luke Union Church

Please hold the date for this special 90th birthday
celebration! (Please, no gifts. Your presence is a gift
in itself) Thank you!

Many Thanks!

Thank you to Charlie Louck and Denny Redick
for your work edging and mulching the flower
beds. We appreciate all you do to keep the
church grounds looking great!



AUGUST 2026

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

01

02

Communion
Choir Prac. 10:00a
Worship 10:30a

03

Boy Scouts 7p

04

Mission Team
5:30p

05

Spiritual Growth
Team 5p

06

07

Men's Breakfast 7a

08

DAR Lunch 11a
Birthday Party
1p

09

Choir Prac. 10:00a
Worship 10:30a

10

Boy Scouts 7p

11

Resource Team
2p
Finance Mtg. 5p

12

Worship Team 5p

13

Crossroads Board 9a
SAR Dinner 3p

14

15

Joyce P.
Birthday Party
11:30a

16

RaiseRight
Choir Prac 10:00a
Worship 10:30a
Music Shoppe
Recital 4p

17

Boy Scouts 7p

18

Presbytery Mtg.
Springfield, IL
10a
VMC Meeting
5:30p

19

20

Faith Brews 5p

21

22

23

Choir Prac 10:00a
Worship 10:30a

24

Boy Scouts 7p

25

Lamplighters 7p

26

27

28

29

Spiritual Retreat
9:30a

30

Choir Prac 10:00a
Worship 10:30a

31

Boy Scouts 7p

Looking Ahead – Save the Date:

Women's Retreat @ Pilgrim Park.....September 11-13

Kick-Off Sunday..... September 20

Fall Group Sale..... October 2nd and 3rd

Happy Birthday! Phillip Blankenship, Ed Gottschalk 8/3; Laura Robison 8/4; Ryland Stolte 8/11; Joyce Pomrenke 8/13; Kevin Schaefer, CJ Wahmann 8/17; Marshall Davis 8/20; Mindy Feicke, Laura Hinthorn, Nicole Southwick 8/28; Jerry Turley, Chuck Yuriec 8/29; Sharon Stille 8/30; Dan Staver 8/31

Happy Anniversary! Jim & Judy Ferrier 8/1; Norm & Debbie Lopez 8/10; Dan & Carla Staver 8/18

A Special Spiritual Day Retreat with Rev. Michelle Olson

In the July edition of *New Directions*, Pastor Andy shared a heartfelt hope for his time away: “While I am away, it is my prayer that the people of St. Luke Union Church will grow as well.” To help us embrace this season of shared growth and renewal, we are excited to welcome Rev. Michelle Olson, Pastor Andy’s spiritual director, for a special spiritual day retreat.

When: Saturday, August 29th | 9:30 AM – 3:00 PM

What to Expect: A meaningful day featuring large and small group discussions, intentional time for individual spiritual reflection, and space to connect.

What to bring: your bible, journal, water bottle. Any creative project that you enjoy doing during personal reflection times (ie. knitting or painting)

What to wear: comfortable clothes. You will have the opportunity to be outside if you so choose during the free time.

Food: Of course, lunch and snacks will be provided!

How to Join & Connect:

There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall to secure your spot. There is no cost to you individually to attend.

If you have any questions, please see any member of the Sabbatical Team (Doug Ferrier, Sally Parry, Dan Staver).

Please check out the following personal message from Rev. Michelle as we prepare our hearts for this day together:

YouTube Link: [Rev. Michelle Olson – A Day Retreat With St. Luke Union Church](#)



Rev. Michelle Olson is an ordained minister in PC(USA) and a certified spiritual director running her own ministry Abiding Journey. In her ministry she works with individuals, groups, and leads retreats. She also works for the Synod of the Covenant as Pastor in Residence for the Cultivating the Gift of Preaching Initiative (CGPI). She lives in Spring Lake in Western Michigan with her husband and two older children. She received her M.Div. from Fuller Theological Seminary and earned her Certificate in Spiritual Direction from Christian Formation & Direction Ministries (CFDM). When not working, she enjoys being outdoors in nature, reading, board games and spending time with family.



TerraCycle Recycling Update

Amie Keeton, Janet Guaderrama and Deb Harrison packed up several boxes to be mailed out for Terra Cycling on June 26th. Thanks to all who continue to keep our recycling going.

Special note: Marcia Nagy, Sally Parry, Deb Harrison and Miles Keeton load up and recycle aluminum cans, Christmas lights, and miscellaneous electrical wiring every 4 to 5 weeks. So keep those aluminum cans coming. Thanks to Pastor Andy for loaning us the truck each time.

What Happens to All Those Leftover Books from the Group Sale?

I'm often asked that question, so I thought I'd provide a behind-the-scenes look. After the spring group sale, we had about 35 boxes of leftover books, CDs, DVDs, and VHS tapes. The most important part comes first and that's to sort what remains. The local agencies that we donate to usually have requests for what they can and cannot take, so some of the sorting is to recycle books and other media. Because we want to stay good partners with them, it's necessary to get rid of books that are torn, have water stains, broken spines, and/or have writing/underlining beyond a person's name on the inside fly leaf.

For children's books we need to make sure that in addition none of them have a "discard" or "withdrawn" stamp on them as that's not good for a child's well-being. The various media need to be checked to make sure that they're not cracked, that the cover and the film or music match, and that they're professionally recorded (as opposed to a personal recording). Some of this we do before the sale starts and they are put in a pile to be recycled (they need to be sent away for recycling). After all the sorting is done, it's necessary to identify what agencies might want the materials.

I keep a list and update it after every group sale. Here's where our donations went this year.

3 boxes to Normal Public Library (their sale of books supports the mission of the library)

8 boxes to Books to Benefit (their biannual sales support literacy in the community)

2 boxes to Book Bike (part of the West Bloomington Revitalization Project; they bring free books to children at various community events, including the Farmers Market)

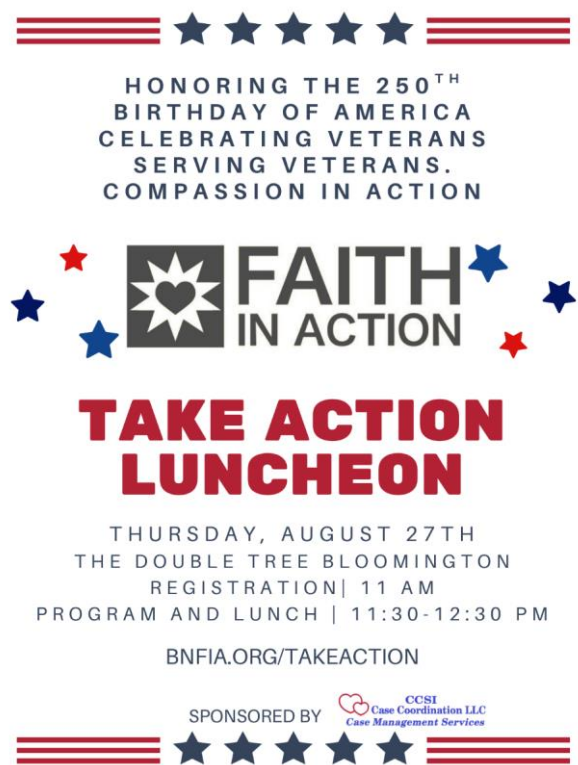
5 boxes to Merry Maids (they take CDs, DVDs, and VHS tapes to their various clients, including retirement communities to refresh their media holdings)

4 boxes to Operation Paperback (this organization sends books to active military and veterans)

Half dozen large print books to Luther Oaks, the retirement community.

It's great to be able to help so many organizations!

Sally Parry



Faith in Action Take Action Luncheon

Colleen Zerebny would like to invite you as her guest to the annual Faith in Action "Take Action" luncheon. Colleen is a volunteer for care receivers at this 20-year old, local non-profit organization, as well as a table host for the luncheon. While the luncheon is free, we ask for donations at the conclusion of the event to support the mission of Faith in Action.

Please contact Colleen if you're interested in attending, she is looking for about 8 people.

Phone: (815)761-8891

Email: colleen@zerebnyhomes.com

Calling All Women!

Please join friends and church family for an enriching weekend at Pilgrim Park.

Reserve 9/11-9/13 on your calendars for the 2026 Women's Fellowship Fall Retreat: Special Delivery –

Praying to God. This will be your chance to have a relaxing weekend, enhance relationships with each other and with God, and especially learn more about different ways to pray and listen/be aware of answers. If you've never visited the retreat center and chapel, you are in for a surprise!

This is not camping, but staying in rooms with 1-3 beds (your choice of roommate or not - bring a friend) and private bath. The dining hall will serve 4 delicious meals during the weekend, and we will conclude with a communion service on Sunday morning. Watch for more details in the September New Directions. Contact Marsha Hinthorn for advance information.



Known for their tight four-part harmonies, dynamic vocals, and engaging stage presence, the group blends timeless style with fresh, modern energy. This quartet is a favorite of CJ Wahmann, and she would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

FOOD PANTRY SUNDAY IS ALWAYS THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

Our next Salvation Army food drive is on August 2

UPDATED LIST!

The Salvation Army Food Pantry has provided us with an updated list of their most needed items.

Let's make sure we help stock their shelves with what they need.

Most Needed Items List: (as of 7/1/2026)

Ramen Noodle Packages (all flavors)
Tuna (cans or pouches)
Chicken (cans or pouches)
Canned "Ready-to-Eat-Meals" (Progresso soup, Chunky soups, Ravioli, Spam, corned beef hash etc.)
Hamburger Helper/Tuna Helper
BBQ Sauce (in plastic bottles please)
Gravy mix packets (brown, chicken, sausage etc.)
Taco Seasoning Packets
Corn Muffin Mix (Jiffy etc.)
Brownie Mix

Note: Canned food items DO NOT have to be pop-top.

Stand Down for Veterans 2026 ONLY 2 MONTHS TO GO!

Stand Down for Veterans 2026 will take place on October 17, 2026, which means we will be delivering items to Goodwill around SEPTEMBER 17. Time is getting short!

As of Sunday July 19 we have collected:

- 517 pairs of **men's socks** (an increase of 66 pairs; our goal is 867, so we are still 350 pairs short)
- 60 pairs of **men's diabetic socks** (no change from last month)
- 100 pairs of **ladies socks** (an increase of 36 pairs)
- 42 pairs of **ladies diabetic socks** (an increase of 4 pairs)
- 711 pairs of **hand warmers** (an increase of 11)
- 0 pairs of **foot warmers** (goal is 1500 hand and foot warmers)
- 207 **washcloths** (an increase of 60; 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

SAVE THE DATE! Fall Group Sale & Bake Sale

Friday, October 2nd 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Saturday, October 3rd 9:00 am - Noon

Plenty of time for you to start gathering your gently used items that you no longer want or use!

"Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place; and I did not know it.'" –Genesis 28:16

Dear Friends,

I write this the first week of working with you all and this Scripture from Genesis has been rattling around in my head. It's from the text I'll be preaching on July 19th, and it begs the questions:

Where do we see God?

Where do we claim God's activity?

Or, where would we say God has chosen to be inactive? Or has God?

Lectio Divina is a process in which we read Scripture and reflect on those things which stand out to us in the texts. We read, reflect, respond, and rest in the Word of God. To that end, I wanted you to have the texts I'll be preaching from until the end of September. I'd really enjoy hearing how the texts move you, what you hear and see in the texts, as each of us bring different lenses through which to view these sacred texts. What images or stories do these texts evoke for you? How do they encourage you?

The bold texts below are the ones I'll be preaching from, but both will be read at church. I welcome your emails, your insights, your reflections, as we together seek God in this time and place. Each Sunday we will include a *Spiritual Challenge* exercise you can consider.

July 19 Romans 8:12-25, **Genesis 28:10-19**

July 26 Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52, **Romans 8:26-39**

August 2 Matthew 14:13-21, **Genesis 32:22-31**

August 9 Genesis 37:1-4, **Matthew 14:22-33**

August 16: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8, **Matthew 15:21-28**

August 23 Romans 12:1-8, **Matthew 16:13-20**

August 30 Spiritual Retreat Weekend & Rev. Michelle Olson Preaching

Sept 6 Matthew 18:15-20, **Romans 13:8-14**

Sept 13 Kick Off Sunday Genesis 50:15-20, **Matthew 18:21-35**

September 20 Exodus 16:2-15, **Matthew 20:1-16**

September 27 Exodus 17:1-7, **Matthew 21:23-32**

I pray for our time together that we might all grow and attune our ears to God's call to us.

Blessings,
Pastor Susan

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

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