New Directions

November

St Luke Union Church



Honors and Many Thanks

St. Luke Union honored Karlene Bledsoe, Charlene Munro, and Lynne Wright, for their tireless work on the group sale over the years. Karlene and Charlene announced that the fall sale was to be their last as co-chairs, and Lynne stepped down as co-chair several years ago. We thought it only appropriate that they be acknowledged for all their hard work and dedication.

During services on Sunday, October 4, all three were presented with corsages and gift bags containing an angel statuette and some goodies from the group sale that aligned with their interests. There were also special cupcakes as part of the celebration.

Although they certainly can't be replaced, a committee of seven will be coordinating the group sale in spring 2027. The members are Ann Austin, Deb Harrison, Penny Kellogg, Ginny Kolze, Beth Louck, Martha Maney, and Sally Parry. We hope to carry on in their grand tradition.

Thanksgiving Riddle: If it took three cooks 4 hours to roast a turkey, how long would it take four cooks to roast the same turkey?



NOVEMBER 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
01 **Communion** Choir Prac.9:30a Worship 10:30a	**02** Boy Scouts 7p	**03** General Election Day Mission Team 5:30p	**04** Handbells 6p Choir 7p	**05** Spiritual Growth Team 5p	**06** Men's Breakfast 7a	**07**
08 Sun. School 9:30a Choir Prac.9:30a Worship 10:30a PEO Event 1:30p	**09** Boy Scouts 7p	**10** Resource Team 2p Finance Team 5p	**11** SAR Lunch 11a Worship Team 5p Handbells 6p Choir 7p	**12** Crossroads Board 9a	**13** Music Shoppe Recital 4p	**14** DAR Mtg 10:30a
15 **RaiseRight** Choir Prac.9:30a Worship 10:30a **Thanksgiving Potluck**	**16** Boy Scouts 7p	**17** VMC Meeting 5:30p Troop 19 Parent Committee Mtg 7p	**18** Handbells 6p Choir 7p	**19** Faith Brews 5p	**20**	**21**
22 **Stewardship Sunday** Sun. School 9:30a Choir Prac 9:30a Worship 10:30a **Decorate Sanctuary**	**23** Boy Scouts 7p	**24** Lamplighters 7p	**25** Handbells 6p Choir 7p	**26** Thanksgiving Day Church Office Closed	**27**	**28**
29 **First Sunday of Advent** Choir Prac 9:30a Worship 10:30a	**30** Boy Scouts 7p					

Happy Birthday! Ann Austin 11/3; Becky Blum, Madeleine Luna 11/5; Claire Benjamin 11/7; Gwen Yurieci 11/9; Jay Harrison 11/10; James Munro 11/13; Owen Keeton, Garrett Staver, Laura Brunton 11/16; Kyle King, Macey Sellberg 11/17, Marc Herren 11/18; Eric Verplaetse 11/19; Silas Luna 11/21; Lin Walton 11/22; Chuck Maney 11/24; Lori Blankenship 11/28; Mike Ball 11/29

Happy Anniversary! Pastor Andy & Sandi Gifford 11/3; Richard & Marcia Nagy 11/12; Larry & Marilyn Maffett 11/23

Riddle Answer: None - It's already roasted!

STAND DOWN FOR VETERANS 2026

The 18th Stand Down for Veterans was held in Peoria on Saturday, October 17. St Luke Union Church, through the Missions Team, has supported Stand Down since 2011, both by collecting items for distribution and cash donations. This year St Luke Union was recognized as a "Silver Level Sponsor."

Homeless and under-housed veterans participated in workshops, got haircuts, and received coats, boots, socks and other items. This year it looked like most of the women's items, including underwear, socks, and hygiene items were donated by St Luke Union.

Seven church members served at the event: Larry and Becky Blum, Mike and Ginny Kolze, Colton Mason-Barnes and Jim and Charlene Munro. Jim Ferrier also helped by transporting all of the donated items to Peoria in September.

135 veterans were served in person at Goodwill Commons, with another 141 receiving items through third-party organizations. This is in line with previous years. The need continues.

On behalf of the Missions Team, I thank everyone at St Luke Union for their donations. This is a group effort. It is a perfect example of what we can do together.

THANK YOU!!

Jim Munro





MILLION MEAL PACK

Volunteers gathered at CEFCU Arena (nee Redbird Arena) to pack 1 million meals for Midwest Food Bank. The meals consisted of rice, dried lentils and dehydrated vegetables that could be cooked to provide a complete meal.

More than 1,005,000 meals were packed. The meal packs are distributed to various groups in McLean County, including the Court Services Food Pantry.

John and Sue Boerner, Mike and Ginny Kolze, Brian and Darlene Trower, Charlene and Jim Munro, Marcia Nagy, Deb Harrison, and Nicole Southwick participated during the first (morning) shift. There were several shifts throughout the day.

A Thank You for Plastic Cap Donations:
Thank you to all who have donated plastic caps. We have put a stop to any new collections and are now gathering up what has been collected. I believe we have enough to make a good sized bench. Thank you so much for your donation.

--A student from Wesley Methodist Church

THANK YOU- I would like to thank everyone for the support I received during my tenure as the Group Sale Co-Chair. While I may have retired as a Co-Chair, I will still be around to assist with future Group Sales. I would also like to thank everyone for the great cookbooks that I will enjoy reading, the angel, the corsage, and the tasty cupcakes during Fellowship Hour. I am truly blessed by a wonderful church family.

Charlene Munro

Thanksgiving Dinner Potluck

Join us for Thanksgiving Dinner after worship on Sunday, November 15
at 12:00 pm.
Turkey, ham, stuffing, gravy, and drinks will be provided. Please bring a side dish, salad, or dessert to share. There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall.

Stewardship Sunday

During worship on Sunday, November 22, there will be a special time to dedicate your 2027 pledge to the Lord. Join us in worship this special Sunday as we look forward to what God has in store for St Luke Union Church.

Community Thanksgiving Worship Service

The faith communities of Bloomington/Normal will host a community worship service.
November 22, 2026 at 3:00 pm
at the Bloomington/Normal YMCA.
This year's theme: **Intentional Gratitude.**
All are welcome!

Brightpoint: Brighten A Family 2026

Again this year we will take part in Brighten A Family through Brightpoint. Your generosity is more than giving gifts - it is helping make the holiday season a little brighter for two small families in our community. We are able to help families facing financial challenges, that are looking for a hand up not a hand out. Because of you they can experience the joy of receiving gifts chosen especially for them. Thank you for sharing your blessings.

This year we have two small families:

1) Mom, who grew up in foster care supported by her grandmother. She is working on her degree in sociology. Dad is working full-time. They have a 4-month old daughter.

2) Mom, struggling to find work, is doing doordash for now. Dad is working full time. They have a 5-month old daughter. This family is struggling financially and grateful for anything they receive.

The Brighten A Family table will be set up Sunday, November 8th. **Items will be due November 30th.** Information will be available regarding items purchased. If you don't want to shop, donations are welcome. See Karlene Bledsoe for questions. Thank you for sharing your blessings.

Paper Products Drive to Benefit Dreams Are Possible Sunday, December 13

Several weeks ago, Mary Campbell, director of Dreams Are Possible, spoke to our congregation about her organization.

Dreams are Possible is an organization that empowers women by expanding their employment opportunities. It is based in West Bloomington and helps prepare women for employment in fields with family sustainable wages. A series of classes and workshops prepare them to enter the workplace or transition to the community college for additional training.

In addition to volunteering and funding their work, one of the things that was suggested was a paper products event where we would collect non-food items such **as toilet paper, dish detergent, laundry detergent, tissues, shampoo, soap, deodorant, etc.** These non-food items are expensive for the students to purchase and they never get enough donated for them to take home after their classes. They have a small on-site food pantry but rarely have these non-food items to distribute.

St. Luke Union will be hosting such a drive on Sunday, December 13th. if you would be able to bring these items for this drive, it would be very helpful in supporting the work of this worthwhile organization.



Camp Carew – Update

I probably should have sent an update before now, but here goes. For a little background, Kemmerer Village acquired ownership of Camp Carew, located in southern Illinois just south of Carbondale by Little Grassy Lake, from Southeastern IL Presbytery just over five years ago. The camp was established in 1952, and I attended there in the mid 1960's when I was in high school.

The main lodge has been needing some updates, so they had an evaluation by an engineer last spring. Much to our surprise and dismay, Calvin Hall was found to be structurally unsound. Due to the seriousness of the situation and the threat of collapse, all summer camps had to be canceled. Since then, we've had an estimate and trusses are already being stabilized. We are hopeful that the camp will be fully operational by next spring.

The good news is that we have a donor who has offered to triple donations that come in before year end, up to $50,000. That means a total of $200,000! If you are looking for a good destination for your donation dollars, this would be a very worthy cause. I can help you navigate the website if you'd like to send in a donation online. If you write a check, please put Camp Capital Campaign in the memo line.

If you have any questions about Camp Carew or Kemmerer Village, you can talk to Marsha Hinthorn or Dan Austin. KV is working on a new flyer and I will have copies in a few weeks.

Thanks for your consideration!
-Marsha Hinthorn

You can support the campaign by mailing a
check payable to Camp Carew Capital Campaign to:
950 N 2500 East Rd
Assumption, IL 62510

You can also make a donation online using the link below.

Thank you for helping us make a difference in the lives of children
and ensure Camp Carew continues to be a place where faith and memories grow!

Donate to Camp Carew Capital Campaign!

Restored and Renewed: A Look Back at
Our Spiritual Practice Retreat

What Makes Your Heart Sing? This question has been at the center of spiritual growth journey. As part of the Lilly Grant, on Saturday, August 29, over 40 participants gathered at St. Luke Union Church for a transformative Spiritual Practice Retreat led by Rev. Michelle Olson (from Spring Lake, Michigan). Centered around the comforting truths of Psalm 23, the day offered a meaningful pause from the busyness of daily routines to focus on slowing down, listening, and receiving.

While many arrived unsure of what to expect, participants were delightedly surprised by the rich variety of spiritual practices provided. The gathering blended shared fellowship with meaningful individual focus, featuring group reflection, guided prayer, and nearly two hours dedicated to intentional, purposeful personal prayer. Stations set up throughout the space offered diverse pathways to connect with God, including breath prayers inspired by the Good Shepherd, finger labyrinths, image-based reflections, Examine journaling, and guided invitations to Sabbath rest and silence.

The spiritual journey continued into Sunday morning, where Rev. Olson preached on Jesus' parable of the vine and the branches from John 15:1–9. She reminded the congregation of our ultimate calling to simply abide in Christ—allowing ourselves to be continuously nourished and restored by His presence so that we can step back out into the world to serve and act in love.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for this special weekend of refreshment and community. We look forward to walking together in the renewed peace and purpose gained from our time with God!

God is still speaking to us. How will you respond?

Soli Deo Gloria,

Doug Ferrier

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.

- **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