



St. John's Lutheran Church

"EVER LOVING, CARING ALWAYS"

• **January 2025 Newsletter** •

Sunday Worship and Children's Church (K-6): 9am

229 S. First St, PO Box 234
Pearl City, IL 61062
815-443-2215

Pastor David Schweppe
Email: prshadmin@gmail.com
www.stjohnspearlcity.org

Dear St. John's Members and Friends,

Happy Epiphany!

(Wait a minute. Why not the usual Happy New Year? And what's "Epiphany"?)

I'll start with the first question. Given the current social, political, and economic conditions around the world, yeah, it's not going to be a "happy" year.

(So, then, what type of year do you think it will be?)

Well, let me first answer your second question – What is Epiphany? That word, epiphany, means "a sudden insight or intuitive understanding" or "a revelatory manifestation of a divine being" (*American Heritage Dictionary*). For the Church, Epiphany is a holy day as well as a church season. Epiphany Day marks the celebration of the visitation of the Magi (the three wisemen). The season of Epiphany marks the time when the Church lessons focus on the revealing of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God.

(Okay. I guess I get all that... though it was a little boring. But again, I want to know – what type of year do you think 2025 will be if not "happy"?)

Realistically, based on the economic stats and the political tensions around the world, I think 2025 is going to be a difficult one for most of us. And, specifically for the Church, I think 2025 will be a time of reflection which hopefully will lead to repentance and a return to the Church's true purpose – the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

(What do you mean? Are you saying that the Church has not done this?)

Over the past 35 years as a pastor, I have noticed more and more the Church in the West substituting other "gospels" for Jesus's message. This, I believe, has led to the Church becoming adrift in the waters of culture rather than in the baptismal waters of the Holy Spirit. But I also believe that God is setting up a moment – which may occur in 2025, perhaps later – when the Church repents of its current path and turns back to the Gospel Message, the message that gives the Church its breath, its life, its purpose, its direction.

So, do I think 2025 will be a tough year for society and for the Church? Yes, I do. But it also can become the year of renewal. It could very much be a year like 1517. But that can only when the Church confesses it cannot change direction except by the grace of God.

Think about it. Pray about it. Act on it.

And, a blessed Epiphany to you all!

- Pastor David Schweppe



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS!!

Sunday School continues the first and third Sunday of each month. This year we will be hearing more stories from the Old Testament and some from the New Testament. Each class includes stories from the Bible plus a craft or game for the kids. If you have any questions, please feel free to speak with Morgan Scharping or Theresa Snetcher.



The Annual Congregational meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 26th. It will be in Luther Hall immediately following worship on that day. Annual books will be available prior to that meeting. If you have an item for the agenda, reach out to Shawn Kuhlemeier or the church office.

The Stephenson County Veterans Pantry in Lena is in need of dish soap, laundry soap, paper towels, soups, mac & cheese, cans of fruit and vegetables, dry pantry foods, mittens, hats, and women's socks. Donations can be brought to Lena American Legion Home on Saturdays from 10-11 AM. It is located at 316 W. Main Street. All donations are welcome!



Are you interested in being a part of the Church Council? We are looking for four new members to replace the four members leaving council in January. Church Council meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the meeting room downstairs at the church. The meetings last between one and two hours each month. If you are interested in being a member of the Council, contact Shawn Kuhlemeier or the church office.

Don't forget that everyone is welcome to come to dominoes on the first Tuesday of every month from 9AM to noon. The next one will be January 7th! Invite others!



Cards and dominoes are played on the fourth Thursday of each month from 1:00-3:30 PM as well. The next date is January 23rd!



It is not too late to join the Chancel Choir this year! If you enjoy hearing the choir singing and think you would like to join, come and join the group! The next rehearsal date is Sunday, January 19th at 8:15 AM and the next time they will sing at worship will be on Sunday, January 26th. They will also rehearse at 8:15 AM prior to singing on the 26th. You don't have to be a great singer, you just have to want to have some fun singing and enjoy praising Our Lord in song!

The social ministry committee will start their Giving Tree collection on Dec. 1 for the Veterans Footlocker in Freeport. The giving tree will be in the narthex with paper ornaments attached. Each ornament will have an item listed that is needed for the Veterans Footlocker. Remove a paper ornament from the tree that has an item listed that you would like to purchase. Remove the paper ornament and replace it with one of the real ornaments next to the tree that is provided. Purchase the item and place it in the box next to the tree. All items will be taken to the Veterans Footlocker after the collection ends on January 5. Thank you in advance for providing these items for our veterans.



We would like to thank all the donors for our Community Christmas meal. They included, the Pearl City Hornets 4-H Club, Fischer Excavating, State Bank of Pearl City, Spahn & Rose, Pearl City Elevator, Pearl City Lions Club, Little John's Tap, Lena Vet Clinic, Hometown Motors, IES Drilling, Visel Construction, PC Collision Center, Kempel/Urish Construction, Loran Mutual Insurance, GT Auto Plaza, Solutions Bank of Kent, Musser Seed, BOCO of Pearl City, Johnson Appraisals, J&N Garage Doors, Rusty Liebenstein, Firehouse Seed Inc., F/S Stephenson Services, Scott & Marlyse Johnson, and Sullivans of Stockton. Thank you to all left donations when getting meals and all the community members who helped prepare and serve the meals!

Confirmation News. . .

Confirmation is in full swing, and we have started our study of the Lord's Prayer. I will have the sign-up sheet for Acolyte(ing) at the first meeting in December for January through May. We will continue meeting right after church, about 10:15, upstairs in the youth room on the first and third Sunday of each month. Please remember to bring your Bible with you as we will be using them at each class. Treats will be served and please bring your own drink. If you have any questions, contact Shawn Kuhlemeier.



Date	Acolytes	Tech Support
Jan. 5	Diem Gronewold Lucy Voss	Carlito Ramos Kolton Kampmeier
Jan. 12	Kolton Kampmeier Hudson Voss	Carlito Ramos Kolton Kampmeier
Jan. 19	Diem Gronewold Lucy Voss	Carlito Ramos Kolton Kampmeier
Jan. 26	George Snetcher Jonah Schubert	Carlito Ramos Kolton Kampmeier
Feb. 2	Kooper Kampmeier Welden Snetcher	Sawyer Williams Deim Gronewold

If you can not help when you are scheduled, please email the church office of who your replacement is. Thank you!
(prshadmin@gmail.com)

Duties of the Church for January 2025

Date	Greeters	Ushers	Lector	Worship Assistant
Jan. 5	Ron & Karen Bremmer	Rollin & Judy Nelson	Deb Bremmer	Lori Kempel
Jan. 12	Josh & Alison Hille	Stuart & Shawn Kuhlemeier	Chris Kempel	Kris Eden
Jan. 19	Chris Kempel	Bob & Darla Hasselman	Joan Stewart	Shawn Kuhlemeier
Jan. 26	Dennis Downs family	Chad & Deb Bremmer	Ethan Bremmer	Tracy Downs

Organist: Karen Bremmer/Kathy Hillmer

Counters: Chad Bremmer and Chris Kempel

St. John's members

I would like to thank everyone who dropped off treats, cards, and gifts to me in the office. I also want to thank the congregation for the card and cash given to me at the Christmas Eve service. I hope everyone is pleased with how things are going in the office and would be willing to let me know if there is something they would like to change/improve. This congregation never ceases to amaze me with their generosity!

DJ Scott

Men's Breakfast. . .

The Men's Breakfast is on the first Wednesday of the month, The next two are January 8th and February 5th. They are meeting at The Beltline Restaurant in Freeport at 7:30 AM. See you there!



Grace Meal News. . .

Thank You!! to everyone who helped in the preparation of the Community Christmas Meal. The meal consisted of Ham, mashed potatoes, gravy, green bean casserole, Jell-O with applesauce and red hots, Hawaiian Bun, and all-time Favorite Dessert. A total of 237 meals were served, 17 deliveries, 30 dine-in, 190 curbside pickups. The community outreach response for donations was outstanding. This is a Community project of the following Pearl City area Churches.

The January Grace Meal will be on Sunday, January 19th. Meals can be picked up between 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. on the 19th. Reservations are due in the church office by Thursday, January 16th. The menu for the January Grace Meal will be Meat loaf, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, applesauce and a dessert. This meal is possible with a grant from the Pearl City Lions Club and Community donations.

Do you have an account with Thrivent? Maybe an investment account? Maybe an insurance account? If so, would you be willing to apply for a Thrivent "seed money" card to help with the Grace Meal. Contact DJ Scott or Marge Roiland on how to do that and find out what months we need of funds. If you are a member of Thrivent this comes at no cost to you.

The Grace Meal committee would like to thank the congregation for stepping up and making financial donations to help this great ministry continue serving meals each month.



Have you ever wondered what goes on at the Church Council meetings each month? All the papers and forms discussed at each month's meeting are posted on the bulletin board right outside of Luther Hall! Check it out and ask questions if you have them.

Worship Services. . .

Worship services will continue to be held at St. John's in our sanctuary and live on Facebook. You are welcome to stop at the church on Friday or Saturday before worship and pick up a bulletin. The worship service online will be a complete service. The upcoming bulletin and the past three weeks of bulletins and announcements are now online at <http://www.stjohnspearlcity.org/bulletins-sermons>.

If you have a Facebook Account: You will be accessing the church's Facebook at St. John's Lutheran Church. (You will see the 125th Anniversary Quilt.) **If you Don't have a Facebook Account:** You may access the livestream via the St. John's website at www.StJohnsPearlCity.org. On the top right of the website has our Facebook page icon and you may click on it there.

Church Giving. . .

The church's ability to do ministry is dependent upon your regular gifts. St. John's is able to continue in the mission of the Church because of your faithfulness and financial commitment. While you may be joining us from worship at home, you can give online here:

<http://www.stjohnspearlcity.org/giving> Other easy ways to give can also be found on our website by clicking on the GIVING tab. *"We love because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19*



Financial Committee Report . . .

The large expense listed in the chart below in the Improvement Fund for the month of February was due to the purchase and installment of the new boiler system. The large deposit in the Improvement Fund for the month of April is the payment we received from the insurance company for the replacement of the roof. It was deposited in a CD at the bank until it is needed to pay for the roof replacement.

Income vs Expense Comparison by Month

Current Fund	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Total
Income	12,825	11,061	15,973	9,710	11,178	10,190	8,728	11,440	12,866	17,266	9,744	130,981
Expense	9,755	8,737	14,962	7,699	7,829	8,252	6,668	7,697	16,448	8,888	14,158	111,093
Difference	3,070	2,324	1,011	2,011	3,349	1,938	2,060	3,743	-3,582	8,378	-4,414	19,888

Improvement Fund	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Total
Income	4,936	2,003	801	53,672	830	2,220	1,028	985	1,220	3,900	49,080	120,675
Expense	0	18,950	0	937	306	695	615	0	31,293	0	72,184	124,980
Difference	4,936	-16,947	801	52,735	524	1,525	413	985	-30,073	3,900	-23,104	-4,305

A big thank you to all who helped with the Food Pantry in September. We needed extra workers as the Pantry is now receiving local foods from Jo Daviess County (meats, dairy, eggs and seasonal garden produce) each month to share with the patrons. Thank you to all who volunteered and those who said yes when called on to help. The next time we will be manning the pantry will be in February 2025. Any questions please contact Doris Kness or Janet Ferguson.



Our Friends at Home . .

No one likes to be inside all the time. However we have many friends and members who are unable to attend services or activities with us. Please take a few moments to remember them by sending a small note, or a phone call. Let them know we are thinking of them. It only takes a few moments to brighten up someone's day. Contact the office at 815-443-2215 or email at prshadmin@gmail.com for address info.

Richard Brinkmeier	Tom Purple	Connie Melville	Mary Ellen Aurand	Ron Melville
Janis Kampmeier	Lori Miller	Carol Garnhart	Shirley Goldsmith	Verda Werkheiser
Louise Cuccico	Carol Beyer			

PEARL CITY HEALTHY WOLVES FOOD PROGRAM

Provides backpacks filled with nutritious meals and snacks for school aged children K-12 for the weekend.

We are currently sending 25-30 backpacks each week. The cost of supplies runs about \$7.50 per backpack, per week. **Donations of financial support are needed.** Please contact Theresa Albers if you have any questions.

TO DONATE ONLINE: <http://www.stjohnspearlcity.org/giving> Scroll down to these instructions: **On-line Giving:** Click [here](#) to give now in the form of a credit or debit card to St. John's. This is a safe, secure and quick method to give to our ministries from anywhere at any time. On-line giving offers you the ability to do a onetime transaction or set-up a recurring transaction. This option allows members and non-members alike to give to the ministries of St. John's. You will be able to select "Healthy Wolves" for your gift designation. If you would like to help back the backpacks, the group meets downstairs in the

Healthy Wolves room in the new basement every Thursday at 3:15 PM! **Items of particular need are individually wrapped full size bars of soap, or monetary donations?**



Women's Gathering Ministries . .

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard – bring BABY WIPES

Food Pantry donations: Cream soups—chicken, mushroom, celery

Starting the EMAIL Prayer Chain: To start the email prayer chain, contact Karen Bremmer at [\(815 443 2478\)](tel:8154432478) or [815 821 4698](tel:8158214698)) or email at rkbremmer@gmail.com. You may also contact the church office at [815 443-2215](tel:8154432215) (please leave a message as they are checked after hours, etc.) or email at prshadmin@gmail.com. If you are not receiving the Prayer Chain email and would like to be included, please contact the church office.

*Women's Gathering has dish cloths for sale. They are \$1.50 each. Contact the church office or Lynda Palmer if you are interested. There are 20 dozen dishcloths available!

*Prayer Shawl Outreach on Sunday, January 5th at 10 AM in Luther Hall. Start a shawl/quilt or work on one already started. Someone will be available to help.

*Thank you to the generous donations for the 61 children receiving gift cards for Christmas. St. John's is so blessed to have so many willing to donate!

*The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 21st. 9:45 fellowship and coffee in Luther Hall, 10:00 Bible study led by Karen Bremmer. Co-hostesses are Kris Eden and Janet Ferguson.

Do you have any accounting experience? Have you ever used QuickBooks? Joan Stewart is having surgery in March and we will be in need of someone to take over her accounting duties for the church beginning in March. She is willing to work with anyone interested in helping out during January and February to show them what needs to be done. If this is something that you are willing/able to do, please reach out to Joan or contact the church office.



All kids in grades K-5 are invited to a new community program called **Kids Klub!** It is a monthly adventure supported by Pearl City area churches and offers a safe and supportive environment where children will enjoy bible stories, crafts, games, and snacks. It will meet for the next time at St. John's on January 15th from 3:15-5:00 PM. It will continue to meet on the third Wednesday of each month. For more information or to register your child, contact Roger Bronkema at rbrankema18@gmail.com or call 815-291-6261.

Council Corner: Hello from your Church Council.

Pastor Schweppe has signed a contract with an extension through April, 2025. We look forward to his continued strength and positive attitude to get us through until we can find a new pastor.

We are looking for four new council members to fill the spots that will be open after the January Annual Meeting.

We would like to thank Carlito Ramos for agreeing to fill the youth opening for the year 2025. If you feel that this might be something you are interested in, please speak with one of the council members.

All the reports from our meeting each month are on the bulletin board outside the office. And as always if you have any questions, please speak with one of your council members.

Blessings, Shawn Kuhlemeier

Call Committee Update

At this point, the call committee has not received any candidates to interview. Fewer seminarians and a greater number of retiring pastors make this a challenging time. Take heart however, as several churches in our synod have recently interviewed and called pastors to their churches. These churches were ones that have had a longer vacancy than St. John's so there is hope for us. Please keep faith in the process as it is working. God has a plan for us.

There is a right candidate for St. John's. We must be patient and trust in God. Thank you for all the prayers for those in the call process, seminarians, and all call committees across the United States.

Dear St. John Members,

You are such a gracious congregation!

Lynne and I thank you so much for the Christmas gift from the congregation. You are so kind, and it means so much to both of us.

We also want to thank Lee for inviting us to her home for supper between the Christmas Eve services. And we thank all of you who gave us cards, cookies, treats, and gifts. Again, being remembered means so much to both of us.

Take care. God bless. And may each of you have a very blessed new year!

- Pastor Dave Schweppe

The American Legion Auxiliary will be holding the annual Pie Baking Contest on Saturday, February 1, 2025. Fruit pies should be delivered to the American Legion Home in Lena by 10:00 and judging will be at 11:00. Pies will be judged and cash prizes will be awarded. They need ladies and gentlemen to get out their rolling pins and submit a pie for judging.

They will also be hosting a Soup Tasting on Sunday, February 2, 2025. It will occur from 11:00-2:30. The Annual Soup tasting will feature over fifteen different soups and desserts. The cost is \$9 for adults and \$3 for children under 10.

The American Legion Home is located at 316 West Main Street in Lena—across from the historical water tower. If you have any questions call 233-9078 or 369-4684

January 2025

See an updated and complete calendar throughout the month at www.stjohnspearlcity.org

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29 9a Worship	30	31	Jan. 1	2	3	4 10a Luther Hall rented
5 9a Worship & Sunday School 10a Grace Meal meeting 10a Property Meeting 10a Prayer Shawl Outreach 10:15a Confirmation Class	6 7p 4-H Meeting	7 9a Dominoes	8 7:30a Men's Breakfast 5:30p Lion Cub Scout meeting	9 10a Worship & Music committee meeting 3:15p Healthy Wolves backpack packing 6p Girl Scout Meeting	10	11
12 9a Worship 10a Stewardship/Outreach Meeting 10a Memorial/Finance Meeting 10a Christian Education Meeting 10a Helping Hands meeting 6p 4-H Meeting	13 6p Girl Scout meeting 6p American Legion Auxiliary meeting	14	15 3:15p Kids Klub ministry 3:15p Healthy Wolves backpack packing 6p Historical Society meeting 7p Church Council Meeting	16	17	18 9a Grace Meal prep
19 9a Worship & Sunday School 10:15a Confirmation Class 10:30a Grace Meal	20 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	21 9:45a Women's Gathering meeting	22	23 1p Cards & Dominoes 3:15p Healthy Wolves backpack packing 6p Girl Scout Meeting	24	25
26 9a Worship 10a Annual Congregational meeting	27 6p Girl Scout meeting	28	29	30 3:15p Healthy Wolves backpack packing	31	Feb. 1

January Birthdays

1	Blake Williams	13	Linda Erbsen	26	Alex Brinkmeier
3	Sarah Hass		Benjamin Hass	27	Lane Kempel
4	Lee Block	19	Richard Brinkmeier	28	Laura Gray
	Claire Rees	20	Stuart Hershey	29	Myles Freedlund
5	Jan Voss		Deaken Hofmaster		Sawyer Williams
9	Austin Block	21	Mark Melville		
	Shirley M. Goldsmith	22	Lincoln Voss		
12	Brooke Hass	25	Nicole (Lawler) Lavanway		