



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work.
Our hands.

Worship Services:

Sundays 9:00 am

Interim Pastor

Pastor Len Hoffmann

815-975-4740

prlen.hoffmann@yahoo.com

Church office hours:

Mon., Wed., Fri 6:30-11:30 AM

Parish Administrator

DJ Scott

prshadmin@gmail.com

Church Address:

PO Box 234 229 S First St

Pearl City, IL 61062

Church Phone:

815-443-2215

Building Hours:

The building will only be open
when the office is open

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

"Ever Loving, Caring Always"



Time After Pentecost

Pastor Len Hoffmann presiding

Blessing of backpacks and Prayers for the School Year

August 17, 2025

Large Print Bulletins are available from the ushers.

Please join us for a time of fellowship after the worship service in Luther Hall. Refreshments will be provided.

Serving Us Today

Presiding Minister: Pastor Len Hoffmann **Acolytes:** Jonah Schubert **Organist:** Kathy Hillmer **Lector:** Morgan Scharping **Assisting Minister:** Shawn Kuhlemeier **Greeter:** Joel & Lori Kempel **Ushers:** Chad & Jordy McPeek family **Counters:** Kathy Albrecht & Karen Bremmer **Sacristan:** Kathy Williams, Kris Liebenstein, and Nancy Trampel

P Pastor

C Congregation

L Lector

A Assisting Minister

Introduction to the Day

The word of God is a refining fire. Jesus is the great divide in human history. He invites our undivided attention and devotion. Today in worship we are surrounded by a great “cloud of witnesses.” In the word and in holy communion we are invited yet again to look to Jesus, “the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.”

PRESERVICE MUSIC & WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen

P Baptized into Christ, let us confess our sin.

(Silence is kept for reflection)

P Merciful God,

C you free us to love others, but we neglect our neighbors and follow our own way. You lead us by the Spirit of joy and peace, but we turn away from the abundant life you offer. You surround us with patience, kindness, and generosity, but we grow weary in doing what is right. In your mercy, forgive us. Do not give up on us. Heal us, break our bonds, and show us the path of life. Amen.

P You belong to Christ Jesus and you are God’s children through faith. In the cross of ☩ Christ, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven. Clothed with Christ, you are a new creation.

C Amen

GATHERING HYMN

“Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee”

ELW 836

GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray. O God, judge eternal, you love justice and hate oppression, and you call us to share your zeal for truth. Give us courage to take our stand with all victims of bloodshed and greed, and, following your servants and prophets, to look to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen

(Please be seated)

FIRST READING **Jeremiah 23:23-29**

Because Jeremiah preaches the unpopular message of God's judgment, he suffers rejection. Today's reading distinguishes between the true prophet, like Jeremiah, who speaks God's word, and the false prophet who misleads the people through dreams. One is like wheat; the other like worthless straw.

L A reading from Jeremiah, the twenty-third chapter.

L Am I a God near by, says the LORD, and not a God far off? Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the LORD. I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, "I have dreamed! I have dreamed!" How long? Will the hearts of the prophets ever turn back—those who prophesy lies and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart? They plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, just as their ancestors forgot my name for Baal. Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? says the LORD. Is not my word like fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

L The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM **Psalm 82**

L Let us say the Psalm responsively

L God stands to charge the divine council assembled, giving judgment in the midst of the gods:

C "How long will you judge unjustly, and show favor to the wicked?"

L Save the weak and the orphan; defend the humble and needy;

C rescue the weak and the poor; deliver them from the power of the wicked.

- L** They do not know, neither do they understand; they wander about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
- C** Now I say to you, ‘You are gods, and all of you children of the Most High;
- L** nevertheless, you shall die like mortals, and fall like any prince.’ ”
- C** Arise, O God, and rule the earth, for you shall take all nations for your own.

SECOND READING

Hebrews 11:29—12:2

The author of Hebrews presents us with rich stories of faith. In a long list of biblical heroes, we find examples of trust in God that enabled them to face the trials of life faithfully. In addition to this “cloud of witnesses,” we have Jesus, the perfect model of faithful endurance.

- L** A reading from Hebrews, the eleventh chapter

L By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.

And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death; they were sawn in two; they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains and in caves and holes in the ground.

Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

- L** The word of the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

(Please stand as you are able)

GOSPEL

Luke 12:49-56

Jesus delivers harsh words about the purifying and potentially divisive effects of obedience to God's call. The way of the cross often leads followers to encounter hostility and rejection, even from those they love.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke.

G **Glory to you, O Lord.**

P [Jesus said:] “I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already ablaze! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, ‘It is going to rain,’ and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”

P The Gospel of the Lord.

G **Praise to you, O Christ**

(Please be seated)

SERMON

REFLECTION SONG

“Jesus Loves Me”

ELW 595

(Please stand as you are able.)

APOSTLES' CREED

ELW PAGE 105

(Please be seated.)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A Let us pray for the church, the creation, and the whole people of God, for God is near.

(A brief silence.)

A Raise up faithful leaders for your church around the world. Inspire global missionaries with a spirit of accompaniment, as they walk alongside our partners in the gospel in solidarity, interdependence, and mutuality. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A Safeguard rivers and lakes from pollution. Sustain the work of conservationists, policy makers, and advocacy groups seeking to protect fresh water sources. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A Bridge divisions across partisan lines. Strengthen cooperative efforts among lawmakers who enact policies that protect our neighbors who are most vulnerable. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A Embrace all who suffer in isolation: for those who are incarcerated or detained, those who are fleeing from unsafe environments, and those who are sick or homebound (*especially*). Reassure them of your care in all times and places. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A Guide the leaders of this congregation. In these late summer weeks, inspire their planning for a new program year ahead. Kindle in us a spirit of collaboration and support for their work. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A Remember all who are confined to their homes and health care centers from our community and congregation. Today we pray for *Shirley Goldsmith, Carol Garnhart, Richard Brinkmeier, Lori Miller, Janis Kampmeier, Mary Ellen Aurand, Verda Werkheiser, Carol Byers, Gina Boop, Jerry Harnish, Ron Fluegel, Louise Cuccio, Donna Freedlund, and Ron & Connie Melville*. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A With thanksgiving, we remember the cloud of witnesses who surround us. By the example of their faith, enable us to run with perseverance the race set before us, until that day when we join their unending praise. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

P Confident in God's presence and promise, we entrust our prayers to the one who always receives them; through Jesus Christ, our wisdom and companion.

C Amen.

PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

P Let us share signs of peace with one another.

OFFERING

(Please stand as you are able.)

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS AND PRAYERS FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR

P Today, we have before us backpacks to be carried to and from school by the children and youth gathered here. These backpacks will contain work to be done, work that's been returned, books to be studied, tools to complete homework. Notebooks, pencils, pens, protractors, compasses, crayons, rules, scissors, glue sticks and other items used for school work will find their way in and out of these backpacks. Some days, so much stuff will fill these backpacks that the student may find it difficult to walk. Other days, they will be light and nearly empty. But on each and every day, these backpacks represent work required of the students gathered here. And, as in every aspect of our life, we bring these before God for blessing at this time.

Let us pray:

Gracious God, we lift to you today, these students. They stand here ready to receive your blessings and they commit themselves to study and learn in the school year ahead. We ask your blessing on each of them. Further, we ask your blessing on these backpacks. They will hold the schoolwork of each student and will be carried from home to school and back again. As these students carry these backpacks, may they be reminded of the love and care of this congregation that surrounds them each school day. We also bless our Healthy Wolves ministry that will nourish our children over the weekend. We pray as well for the teachers and administrators in our schools. May they also be sustained by your blessing. May they be reminded that this congregation embraces their call to teaching and learning and surrounds them with love and care as well. We pray in the name of Jesus who we seek to follow day by day. Amen.

OFFERING PRAYER

A Let us pray.

A Creator God, in your wisdom you bring forth all that is good and the harvest is plentiful. Strengthen us at your table with these gifts of the earth and our labor, that we may work for the good of all; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

C Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

C Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P Holy God, our Maker, Redeemer, and Healer, in the harmonious world of your creation, the plants and animals, the seas and stars were whole and well in your praise. When sin had scarred the world, you sent your Son to heal our ills and to form us again into one.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his acts of healing, his body given up, and his victory over death, we await that day when all the peoples of the earth will come to the river to enjoy the tree of life. Send your Spirit upon us and this meal: as grains scattered on the hillside become one bread, so let your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth, that all may be fed with the Bread of life, your Son. Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

C Amen.

P Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

LORD'S PRAYER

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P The kingdom of God is set before you. Eat and rejoice.

*Communion instruction – as we gather for Holy Communion, you will come down the center aisle, receive the bread and cup, and return by the side aisle. Wine is the dark liquid and grape juice is the light liquid in the center ring. **If you wish to receive gluten free, it is available. Please ask.** If you wish to only receive a blessing, please come forward with your arms crossed. This is a time where all God's people find unity.*

RECEIVING OF HOLY COMMUNION

P The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you. **Amen.**

COMMUNION BLESSING

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace.

C **Amen.**


POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

A Mothering God, you gathered us to your table and we drank deeply of your grace. Send us out by your Spirit to love our neighbors as ourselves and proclaim your love in Jesus' name.

C **Amen**

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

P The love of God abound in you; the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ fill your hearts; and the life of the Spirit  bless you and give you peace.

C **Amen.**

SENDING SONG

“We Are Marching In the Light of God”

W&P 148

DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Live by the Spirit.

C **Thanks be to God.**

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tress Liturgies Annual License #28059

CONTACT INFORMATION

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815-443-2215

Box 234

229 S First St

Pearl City, IL 61062

Mon., Wed. , Fri. 6:30-11:30 AM

St. John's Website

www.stjohnspearlcity.org

This Week at St. John's

Sunday, August 17, 2025

9a Worship (backpack blessing)

10a Youth/Young Adult Committee meeting

10:30a Grace Meal

Wednesday, August 20, 2025

7p Church Council meeting

Sunday, August 24, 2025

Isaiah 58:9b-14 Psalm 103:1-8

Hebrews 12:18-29 Luke 13:10-17

Sunday, September 14th is Rally Sunday! We are asking everyone (kids and adults) to wear their favorite school t-shirt. It could be a high school, college, or any kind of school t-shirt as we kick off the beginning of Sunday School at St. John's!



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 20-25 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.

Women's Gathering News ...

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

*Prayer Shawl Outreach will not meet on Sunday, September 7th. Start a shawl/quilt or work on one already started. Someone will be available to help.

*The Women's Gathering and Pearl City Methodist church hosted a lunch on Thursday, August 14th for the Pearl City School teachers and staff. Thank you to Theresa Albers for donating salsa, Carla Personette for baking cookies, and Carla, Jan Voss, DJ Scott, and Karen Bremmer for setting and serving the meal. God's blessings on the teachers and staff as the school year begins.

*Thank you to everyone who attended our Women's Gathering Ladies Night Out on August 12th. Deb Mather gave a wonderful program on making and showing her baskets. Kathy Hillmer did a beautiful job with the decorations and sharing music and sunflower information and the board members (Kris Eden, Janet Ferguson, Lynda Palmer, Kathy Hillmer, and Karen Bremmer) for preparing and serving the dinner. It was a fun night and we appreciate all who were at the Ladies Night Out!

*The 36th Annual Convention of the Women of the NI Synod will be on Saturday, September 20th at First Lutheran in Rockford from 9 AM to 3 PM. The theme is "Rescue, Redeem, Restore". Register by August 20th for \$50. Forms are on the lobby bulletin board and \$25 scholarships are available.

*Women's Gathering will be printing the September 2025-August 2026 booklet the first week of September. Please let Karen Bremmer know if you have changes to your phone number.

Check out the two White Pines shows available this fall. "Getting Better With Age" on October 8th and "Scrooge the Comedy" on December 10th. **Both shows have limited tickets available** and a deadline about a week before each show. Get signed up in the lobby and turn your money in at the office or in the security box by the office door.

Sunday School We will be on hiatus through the summer months but will meet up again on Sunday, September 14th which is Rally Sunday. If you have any questions, please contact Morgan Sharping or Theresa Snetcher.

Pastor Len will be hosting another bible study on Sunday, August 24th at 10:15 AM and the topic will be Living Faith in Daily Life. There will also be another bible study on Wednesday, August 27th at 6:30 PM. The topic on the 27th will be the book of Revelation. Even if you haven't been to the previous bible studies, come to these and bring your bibles. Each bible study will last about an hour!

Confirmation There will be an informational meeting on Sunday, September 14, 2025 right after the church service. This is Rally Sunday and we would like to see everyone at worship that day! As always, if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact Shawn Kuhlemeier.

Date	Greeters	Ushers	Lector
August 24	Tracy Downs family	Jerilyn Strohecker	Lori Kempel
Acolytes		Tech Support	
Carlito Ramos		Welden Snetcher Lucy Voss	



Happy Birthday!

*Jacob Kempel Lucas Kempel Kali (Albers) Montgomery
Linda Albright Logan Kempel Brianne Freedlund Jay Butson*

Grace Meal News. . .

A special thank you to everyone who helped with the July Grace Meal: Bonnie Dittmar, Dennis Downs, Kris & Marion Eden, Randy & Sandy Faust, Gertrude Heimerdinger, Jim Heimerdinger, Grace Heimerdinger and Kids, Cathy Hoffmann, Lois Hunsaker, Judy & Rollin Nelson, Angie & Wayne Niehaus, and DJ Scott. We served a total of 252 meals, 37 deliveries, and 215 curbside pickups.

The August Grace Meal will be on August 17th. To reserve your meals for that day, contact St. John's Lutheran Church by Thursday August 14th (815-443-2215). Meals can be picked up between 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. on the 17th. The Menu for the August Grace Meal will be lasagna, cole slaw, Italian bread, and brownie.

The Grace Meal Committee would like to thank the congregation for stepping up and making financial donations to help the great ministry continue serving meals each month. If you think you can help prepare or serve a meal talk to Kris Eden, Marge Roiland, or Lois Hunsaker!

Beginning on Rally Day (September 14th) Pastor Len and the Christian Education committee would like to offer Sunday School every Sunday instead of just the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month. In order to make that happen, we will need more volunteers to help teach Sunday School. The hope is to get a total of four or five interested volunteers so that each could commit to one Sunday per month. Those volunteers will be given materials to teach and could ask questions before teaching. If this is something you would like to do to help out, please reach out to the office or talk to Shawn Kuhlemeier.