



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:

Wed., Thur., Fri. 6:00-11:00 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"



Third Sunday of Advent

Pastor Len Hoffmann presiding

Special Music by The Now Worries Band

December 14, 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:** Brayden Heimerdinger **Organist:** none **Lector:** Leann Heimerdinger **Assisting Minister:** Karen Bremmer **Greeter:** Donnie & Michelle Miller **Ushers:** Brian Brudi **Counters:** Ron Bremmer & Chad Bremmer **Sacristan:** Kathy Williams, Kris Liebenstein, and Nancy Trampel

P Pastor

C Congregation

L Lector

A Assisting Minister

Introduction to the Day

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

PRESERVICE MUSIC & WELCOME

No Worries Band

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

C Amen

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

(Silence is kept for reflection)

P Long-expected God,

C we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.

P God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness.

☩ You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.

C Amen

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

CHILDREN LEAVE FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL IN LOWER LEVEL

GATHERING HYMN

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” (vs. 1,2 & 4)

ELW 279

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

KYRIE

ELW Page 138

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray. Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

Kolton Kampmeier

(Please be seated)

FIRST READING Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

L A reading from Isaiah, the thirty-fifth chapter

L The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp; the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

L The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 146:5-10

- L** Let us say the Psalm responsively
- L** Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help, whose hope is in the LORD their God;
- C** **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; who keeps promises forever;**
- L** who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger. The LORD sets the captive free.
- C** **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.**
- L** The LORD cares for the stranger; the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.
- C** **The LORD shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING

James 5:7-10

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

- L** A reading from James, the fifth chapter.
- L** Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.
- L** The word of the Lord.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW Page 142

(Please stand as you are able)

GOSPEL

Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

- P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.
- C** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

P When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

L The Gospel of the Lord

C Praise to you, O Christ

(Please be seated)

SERMON

REFLECTION SONG

“We Three Kings of Orient Are”

WOV 646

NICENE CREED

ELW PAGE 104

(Please be seated.)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

(A brief silence.)

A God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

A When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

A When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace,

C **hear our prayer.**

A When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. (*We pray especially for . . .*) In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith. God of grace,

C **hear our prayer.**

A When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant (*especially we pray for Global Refuge and Lutheran Social Services*). God of grace,

C **hear our prayer.**

A When people are unable to make it to worship, remember all who are confined to their homes and health care centers from our community and congregation. Today we pray for *Shirley Goldsmith, Richard Brinkmeier, Lori Miller, Janis Kampmeier, Mary Ellen Aurand, Verda Werkheiser, Carol Byers, Gina Boop, Jerry Harnish, Ron Fluegel, Louise Cuccio, Donna Freedlund, and Connie Melville*. God of grace,

C **hear our prayer.**

A As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith (*especially*). May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. God of grace,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

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.*)



St. John's Giving page QR code

OFFERING PRAYER

A Let us pray.

A Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come.

C Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

ELW Page 144

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. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. 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:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (SUNG)

ELW PAGE 144

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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.

P Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

C **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

P With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

P Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

C **Come, Holy Spirit.**

P All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

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

LORD'S PRAYER

ELW PAGE 154

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

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 Let us pray. God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

C **Amen**

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

P May God who comes among us, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always.

C Amen.

SENDING SONG “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear” (vs. 1 & 2) ELW 282

DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Keep awake.

C Thanks be to God.

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tress Liturgies Annual License #28059

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 35 backpacks each week.** The cost of supplies runs about \$8.00 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.

“Christmas Wishes Do Come True” collection for 73 children. PC Elementary School principal Brent Chrisman has 73 children (35 families) that the community is going to help make their “Christmas Wishes Come True”. Other churches are buying gifts and the St. John’s Women’s Gathering board has decided to help each of these children by collecting donations from the congregation and friends from November 23rd to December 12th at St. John’s. Our plan is to give each child a \$25 gift card from Walmart. It should help these families have a Merry Christmas. There will be a basket in the Narthex every Sunday to put donations or you can put your donation in the secure box by the office. Make checks out to Women’s Gathering. Thank you for your support!

Please fill out and return your time and talent sheets by December 14th! Challenge yourself to find a duty or committee you haven’t done in the past. All committees can use the help and we can always use more people to help out at the church.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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815-443-2215
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229 S First St
Pearl City, IL 61062

Wed., Thur., Fri. 6:00-11:00 AM

St. John's Website
www.stjohnspearlcity.org

This Week at St. John's

Sunday, December 14, 2025

9a Worship

10a Stewardship/Outreach committee meeting

10a Memorial/Finance committee meeting

10a Helping Hands meeting

6p 4-H meeting

Monday, December 15, 2025

6p Girl Scout meeting

Tuesday, December 16, 2025

5:30p Girl Scout meeting

6p Women's Gathering Christmas Potluck

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

3:15p Healthy Wolves backpack packing

3:15p Kids Klub meeting

7p Church Council

Sunday, December 21, 2025

Isaiah 7:10-16 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Romans 1:1-7 Matthew 1:18-25

Confirmation: We continue to meet on the first and third Sunday of the month. We are into the study of the Apostles' Creed and are looking into the second section of the creed which is about Jesus Christ. Just a reminder that our Christmas party will be on Sunday, December 21st right after the church service. We will not meet again until January 18, 2026. I have asked a few of you to read about the lighting of the Advent Candles during the church service. I am looking for two more confirmands to help out on December 21st and the 24th. Let me know if you can help out. If your child is not going to attend confirmation, please text me at 630-965-2016 prior to our meeting so that we are not waiting for them to show up. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.—Blessings, Shawn Kuhlemeier

Sunday School: As we enter the holiday season, we have a bit of a different schedule for Sunday School. We will meet on December 7, 14, and the 21. We will **not** meet on December 28 or January 4 but will reconvene on January 11 with a lesson on Jesus' Baptism. We would still welcome volunteers to help out with teaching Sunday School. If you have any questions, please speak with Morgan Scharping, Theresa Snetcher, or Grace Heimerdinger-Baake.

*Women's Gathering invites the congregation/guests to eat out together. The next one will be on Sunday, January 4th at an unknown place. Please sign up in the lobby by December 28th! Car pooling will be set up!

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 meet on Sunday, January 4th. Start a shawl/quilt or work on one already started. Someone will be available to help.

*The next bible study will be on Tuesday, January 20th at 9:45 a.m. - refreshments (served by Kris Eden and Janet Ferguson) 10 a.m. - bible study led by Shawn Kuhlemeier. Sit N Sew will be at noon.

*Women's Gathering invites all ladies to the Winter Wonderland Potluck & Fun Night in Luther Hall on Tuesday, December 16th at 6PM. Enjoy an evening of good food, fellowship, Christmas bingo and gift exchange. Table service, coffee, hot cider, and water provided. Please bring a wrapped "White Elephant" gift for the exchange. Make sure it is something you have—don't purchase anything! Invite others. Sign up by Sunday, December 14th on the lobby bulletin board.

The Healthy Wolves backpack ministry is very thankful for your continuing financial support. Without you, we would not be able to supply weekend meals for those in need. The number of students needing help is twice the amount of last school year. You are indeed a blessing to our community.

The Social Ministry committee will start their Giving Tree collection on November 30th. We will be collecting children's gloves for Pearl City School and we will also be collecting shelf stable food, paper products, and toiletries for The Veterans Footlocker. The collection will run through January 4th. To take part in this collection just remove a paper ornament from the tree of an item you would like to donate. Put a regular ornament (provided) on the tree in the spot where you removed the paper ornament. Regular ornaments are in a box by the elevator. Purchase the item listed on the paper ornament. Bring the purchased item to church and place it in the donation box next to the tree. All items will be delivered after January 4th. Thank you for taking part in this important ministry.

Don't forget that we are still playing dominoes on the first Tuesday of each month at 9AM. The next date is Tuesday, January 6th. Cards and dominoes are still on for the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 1PM as well. The next date is Thursday, January 8th.

We will be taking down the Christmas decorations (except for the garland and lights on the bar) after worship on Sunday, January 4th. We hope to have as many people helping take them down prior to Epiphany. Many hands make the work light! Hopefully the elevator is working by then!

The Women's Gathering funeral lunch committee thanks everyone who donated food and for money donations for the lunch following Carol Garnhart's funeral service at St. John's on December 6th. We appreciate the donations and for all the help in planning, serving and clean-up. Thanks!

Date	Greeters	Ushers	Lector
Dec. 21	Blake & DeAnne Voss family	Stuart & Shawn Kuhlmeier	Jane Boop
Acolytes		Tech Support	
Hudson Voss		Kooper Kampmeier	



Happy Birthday!
Joan Klatt Keith Albers

Grace Meal News. . .

A special thank you to the Pearl City National Honor Society who helped with the November Grace Meal: Kameron Downs, Xander Krolow, Mackenzie Lotz, Oscar Ugalde-Sanchez, Scarlett Snyder and Nataleigh Todd. Also, a special thank you to Theresa Albers, Cara Brinkmeier, Dennis Downs, Kris & Marion Eden, Randy & Sandy Faust, Grace Heimerdinger-Baake, Jim Heimerdinger, Lois Hunsaker, Joan & Marvin Klatt, Judy & Rollin Nelson, DJ Scott, Marilyn Smital and Marge & Bob Roiland. We had a total of 283 meals served. There were 35 deliveries and 248 picked up curbside. The December Meal will be a community meal on Christmas Day, December 25th. Meals can be picked up between 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. on the 25th. Reservations are due in the church office by Monday, December 22nd.

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!

If you are interested in purchasing a poinsettia for the Poinsettia Garden, there is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex now. The plants will be purchased from DeVoe floral and the cost will be \$16. Orders will be due no later than Wednesday, December 10th. Checks should be made out to DeVoe Floral and put in the secure box by the office. The poinsettias should be on display for the December 21st worship service and for the Christmas Eve services.

Ron and Kay DePrisco would like to invite everyone to an Open House at their place at 1314 W. Lincoln Boulevard in Freeport on Sunday, December 21st. This Open House will coincide with the annual Luminary Walk in Freeport. The Open House will start at 4 PM and will offer food, snacks, hot chocolate, and refreshments. The Luminary Walk begins at 4:30 PM that day. If you have questions, contact Ron at 815-297-7724.