



# 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](mailto:prlen.hoffmann@yahoo.com)

## Church office hours:

Mon., Tues., Fri. 6:00-11:00 AM

## Parish Administrator

DJ Scott

[prshadmin@gmail.com](mailto: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"



## Fourth Sunday of Advent

Pastor Len Hoffmann presiding

Chancel Choir sings

December 21, 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:** Hudson Voss **Organist:** Kathy Hillmer **Lector:** Jane Boop **Assisting Minister:** Lori Kempel **Greeter:** Blake & DeAnne Voss family **Ushers:** Stuart & Shawn Kuhlemeier **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

*Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.*

## PRESERVICE MUSIC & WELCOME

### 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 Come, O Come Emmanuel" (vs. 7 & 8) ELW 257

## 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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

*(Please be seated)*

### FIRST READING **Isaiah 7:10-16**

*An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!*

**L** A reading from Isaiah, the seventh chapter

**L** The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

**L** The word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## PSALM

**Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19**

**L** Let us say the Psalm responsively

- L** Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
- C** **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up your strength and come to help us.**
- L** Restore us, O God; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
- C** **O LORD God of hosts, how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**
- L** You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have given them bowls of tears to drink.
- C** **You have made us the derision of our neighbors, and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**
- L** Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
- C** **Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one you have made so strong for yourself.**
- L** And so will we never turn away from you; give us life, that we may call upon your name.
- C** **Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

## SECOND READING

### Romans 1:1-7

*Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.*

- L** A reading from Romans, the first chapter.
- L** Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**L** The word of the Lord.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*(Please stand as you are able)*

## GOSPEL

## Matthew 1:18-25

*Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."*

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

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

**P** Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

**L** The Gospel of the Lord

**C** **Praise to you, O Christ**

*(Please be seated)*

## SERMON

## REFLECTION SONG

**"Touched By a Child"**

**Chancel Choir**

## 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** In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us. God of grace,

**C** **hear our prayer.**

**A** The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth. God of grace,

**C** hear our prayer.

**A** You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace,

**C** hear our prayer.

**A** When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill (*especially*). God of grace,

**C** hear our prayer.

**A** Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace,

**C** hear our prayer.

**A** 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** We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your love. 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

“Joy To the World”

ELW 267

### DISMISSAL

**A** Go in peace. Keep awake.

**C** Thanks be to God.

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tress Liturgies Annual License #28059

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### 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.

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“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 23<sup>rd</sup> to December 12<sup>th</sup> 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!

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**Please fill out and return your time and talent sheets by TODAY!! 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

Interim Pastor  
Pastor Len Hoffmann  
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prlen.hoffmann@yahoo.com

Parish Administrator:  
DJ Scott  
E-mail: prshadmin@gmail.com

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*Mon., Tues., Fri. 6:00-11:00 AM*

St. John's Website  
[www.stjohnspearlcity.org](http://www.stjohnspearlcity.org)

## This Week at St. John's

### Sunday, December 21, 2025

**9a** Worship

**10a** Confirmation Class Christmas party

### Wednesday, December 24, 2025

**5p** Christmas Eve service

**9p** Christmas Eve candlelight service

### Thursday, December 25, 2025

**10a** Community Christmas meal

### Friday, December 26, 2025

## **JANUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

Sunday, December 28, 2025

Isaiah 63:7-9 Psalm 148

Hebrews 2:10-18 Matthew 2:13-23

**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 21<sup>st</sup> right after the church service. We will not meet again until January 18, 2026. 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.

Don't forget that we are still playing dominoes on the first Tuesday of each month at 9AM. The next date is Tuesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>. 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 8<sup>th</sup>. An extra date of dominoes has been scheduled for Tuesday, December 30<sup>th</sup> at 9AM in Luther Hall.

## ***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 4<sup>th</sup>. 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

\*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 6<sup>th</sup> and Joyce Kempel's funeral service on December 16<sup>th</sup>. We appreciate the donations and for all the help in planning, serving and clean-up. Thanks!

\*A big THANK YOU to everyone who donated toward the Christmas gift cards for 73 children from Pearl City School. Women's Gathering will still be collecting through the end of the year. If we collect more than \$1825, we will donate the balance to the Food Pantry.

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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.

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The Social Ministry committee will start their Giving Tree collection on November 30<sup>th</sup>. 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 4<sup>th</sup>. 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 4<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for taking part in this important ministry.

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We will be taking down the Christmas decorations (except for the garland and lights on the bar) after worship on Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup>. 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!

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\*Women's Gathering invites the congregation/guests to eat out together. The next one will be on Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup> at the Brew & Chew in Pearl City. Please sign up in the lobby by December 28<sup>th</sup>! Car pooling will be set up!

Date	Greeters	Ushers	Lector
<b>Dec. 24</b>	Jenaro Ramos & Jean Lutz family (5PM) Mike & Lynda Palmer (9PM)	Larry & Kathy Albrecht (5PM) DJ Scott (9PM)	Kim Williams (5PM) Lynda Palmer (9PM)
<b>Acolytes</b>		<b>Tech Support</b>	
Carlito Ramos (5PM) Kolton Kampmeier (9PM)		Kooper Kampmeier	



*Happy Birthday!*

*Gertrude Heimerdinger Paige Hille Dailynn Kittoe*

### **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 25<sup>th</sup>. Meals can be picked up between 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Reservations are due in the church office by Monday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**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!**

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 21<sup>st</sup>. 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.