



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., Tues., Wed. 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"



First Sunday of Christmas

Pastor Len Hoffmann presiding

December 28, 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:** Karen Bremmer **Lector:** Joel Kempel **Assisting Minister:** Andrew Gronewold **Greeter:** Jayson & Kim Williams family **Ushers:** Brandon & Morgan Scharping family **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

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the “holy innocents” of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

PRESERVICE MUSIC & WELCOME

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

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

C Amen.

P Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

C We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight.

P Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

C We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.

P To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

C Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

GATHERING HYMN

“Angels We Have Heard On High”

ELW 289

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

SONG OF PRAISE

“Angel We Have Heard on High”

ELW 289

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray. O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen

(Please be seated)

FIRST READING

Isaiah 63:7-9

God does not delegate divine intervention to a messenger or angel. God's own presence brings salvation. The prophet and all who read these words join in celebrating God's gracious deeds. God trusts that God's people will not act falsely.

L A reading from Isaiah, the sixty-third chapter

L I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, “Surely they are my people, children who will not act deceitfully,” and he became their savior in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

L The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 148

L Let us say the Psalm responsively

L Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise God in the heights.

C Praise the LORD, all you angels; sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.

L Praise the LORD, sun and moon; sing praise, all you shining stars

C Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.

- L** Let them praise the name of the LORD, who commanded, and they were created,
C **who made them stand fast forever and ever, giving them a law that shall not pass away.**
- L** Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;
C **fire and hail, snow and fog, tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**
L mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;
C **wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds;**
L sovereigns of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the world;
C **young men and maidens, old and young together.**
- L** Let them praise the name of the LORD, whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.
- C** **The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants, the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING Hebrews 2:10-18

Through Jesus' suffering and death, the trail to eternal salvation has been blazed for us. We do not fear death, because he has conquered the power of death. Thus Christ, our merciful and faithful high priest, has the final say over the destiny of our lives.

- L** A reading from Hebrews, the second chapter.
- L** It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Here am I and the children whom God has given me." Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION "Go Tell It On the Mountain" (verse 3) ELW 290
(Please stand as you are able)

GOSPEL

Matthew 2:13-23

In a dream, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus from the jealousy of Herod.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

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

P Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.” When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.” When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazarene.”

L The Gospel of the Lord

C **Praise to you, O Christ**

(Please be seated)

SERMON

REFLECTION SONG

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

ELW 279

NICENE CREED

ELW PAGE 104

(Please be seated.)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A Empowered by the news of Christ’s birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

(A brief silence.)

A God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A God of righteousness, when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice, you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A God of life, you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ's siblings. Pour out your compassion in every place your people suffer, and protect them in the palm of your hand. (*We pray especially for . . .*) Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A God of compassion, you nurture children as the apple of your eye. As you sheltered your son Jesus from Herod's grasp, shelter all children in danger. As you comforted Rachel, comfort all who have lost children to violence. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A God of all, 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*. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones (*especially*). Even as we mourn, we offer thanks for those who have gone before us, trusting in your comfort and protection. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

P With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

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. God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior.

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

“Hark! The Herald Angel Sing”

ELW 270

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 God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!

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. Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us.

C **Amen**

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

P The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter,
✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.

C Amen.

SENDING SONG

“Go Tell It On the Mountain”

ELW 290

DISMISSAL

A Glory to God in the highest!

C And peace to God’s people on earth!

A Go in joy. Embody God’s redeeming grace.

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.

At the monthly zoom meeting for all call committees in the Northern Illinois synod, we met our new transitions leader. Our previous leader, Pastor Jen Beamsley, has taken a call in Washington, Il. That church has been without a pastor for five years. Our new transitions leader is Pastor Jen Henry. She lives in LeClere, Iowa. Pastor Jen is very excited to be part of NI synod’s call process and brings an abundance of knowledge and enthusiasm.

The entire meeting was taken up by all of us introducing ourselves and congregations to Pastor Jen. We did learn there are approximately seventeen congregations without pastors in the synod. There are no pastors looking to move right now as it is the Christmas season. Hopefully after the first of the year, there will be more pastors looking to move. Please keep all congregations, seminarians, and pastors discerning the call process in your prayers.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Interim Pastor
Pastor Len Hoffmann
815-975-4740
prlen.hoffmann@yahoo.com

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

Church Office
815-443-2215
Box 234
229 S First St
Pearl City, IL 61062

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

St. John's Website
www.stjohnspearlcity.org

This Week at St. John's

Sunday, December 28, 2025

9a Worship

Tuesday, December 30, 2025

9a Dominoes in Luther Hall

Friday, January 2, 2026

3p Rooted & Rising Retreat

Saturday, January 3, 2026

6a Rooted & Rising Retreat

Sunday, January 4, 2026

Jeremiah 31:7-14 Psalm 147:12-20

Ephesians 1:3-14 John 1:[1-9] 10-18

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. 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 the Brew & Chew in Pearl City. Please sign up in the lobby by December 28th at 11:30 AM! 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 Kuhlmeier. 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 6th and Joyce Kempel's funeral service on December 16th. 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.

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.

Mark you calendar! The Annual meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 25th right after worship! Annual books should be available by January 18th! We will be looking for people to help put that together the week before January 18th!

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. An extra Tuesday has been added to the schedule as well. We will be playing dominoes on Tuesday, December 30th at 9AM!!

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!

Date	Greeters	Ushers	Lector
Jan. 4	Rollin & Judy Nelson	Earl & Cindy Heimerdinger	Ethan Bremmer

Acolytes	Tech Support
Jonah Schubert	Arianna Schoenhard



Happy Birthday!

Beth Wilhelm Conor DeZell Blake Williams Sarah Hass

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!
