



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. 7AM-noon

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"



Ash Wednesday

Pastor Len Hoffmann presiding

Holy Communion

February 18, 2026

Large Print Bulletins are available from the ushers.

Serving Us Today

Presiding Minister: Pastor Len Hoffmann **Acolytes:** Arianna Schoenhard **Organist:** Kathy Hillmer **Lector:** Lori Kempel **Assisting Minister:** Theresa Albers **Greeter:** Joel & Lori Kempel **Ushers:** Ron & Karen Bremmer **Counters:** Chris Kempel & Kelly Lawler **Sacristan:** Kathy Williams, Kris Liebenstein, and Nancy Trampel

P Pastor **C** Congregation **L** Lector **A** Assisting Minister

Introduction to the Day

On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

PRESERVICE MUSIC & WELCOME

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you

C **And also with you**

P Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, 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

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Because of the coming Day of the LORD, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community reminds God of his gracious character and asks God to spare the people, lest the nations doubt God's power to save.

L A reading from Joel, the second chapter.

L Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near—a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.

Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD, your God?

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep. Let them say, “Spare your people, O LORD, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’ ”

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God’s reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.

L A reading from second Corinthians, the fifth chapter.

L We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, “At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying,

and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

(Please stand as you are able)

GOSPEL

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter

C **Glory to you, O Lord**

P [Jesus said to the disciples:] “Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. “So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

P The Gospel of the Lord.

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

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Just as I Am, Without One Plea”

ELW 592

P Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. Most holy and merciful God,

C we confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven, that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault, in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

P We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P We have shut our ears to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

C **Have mercy on us, O God.**

P Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

C **Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

(Please be seated.)

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

When ashes are to be imposed, those who desire to receive ashes come forward.

P Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C **Amen.**

P Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

C **that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

P By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,

C **bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

P Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

C **Amen.**

(Please be seated.)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

(A brief silence.)

A Guide your church, O God. Accompany all Christians in this season of repentance, and renew our faith in the riches of grace you give to us in baptism. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A Heal this earth, O God. Satisfy the needs of every parched place, every diverse ecosystem, every suffering creature. Though all return to dust, grant beauty and purpose to each living thing. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A Restore the nations, O God. Let your healing spring up quickly across the world. Give all in authority the will to loose the bonds of injustice and let any who are oppressed go free. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A Deliver your people, O God. Comfort any whose hearts are rent by grief, uphold any who are sick, bring food to those who hunger, and give housing to all without shelter. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A Bless this assembly, O God. Reconcile us to one another and to you. Strengthen our resolve to fast from evil, open our hands in sharing, and quicken our prayer. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A Be with all who believe, remember all who are confined to their homes or 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 Hold us forever, O God. We thank you for all who now know their treasure in heaven, and for (*Martin Luther and*) all who on earth proclaimed your abounding, steadfast love. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

P Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

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 HYMN

“Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful”

ELW 184

OFFERING

(Please stand as you are able.)

OFFERING PRAYER

A O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus’ name.

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. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. 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, God of pow'r and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna. Hosanna. 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, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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 death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory. Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

C Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

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

C Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

P God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

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 of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen

BLESSING

P Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity: God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation, ✚ bless you now and always.

C Amen.

DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy.

C Thanks be to God.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Interim Pastor

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Mon., Wed., Fri. 7AM-Noon

St. John's Website

www.stjohnspearlcity.org

This Week at St. John's

Sunday, February 15, 2026

9a Worship
10a Confirmation Class
10:30a Grace Meal

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

9:45a Women's Gathering meeting
5:30p Girl Scout meeting

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

10:30a Bible Study
3p Kids Klub ministry
7p Ash Wednesday worship service

Thursday, February 19, 2026

3:15p Healthy Wolves backpack packing

Sunday, February 22, 2026

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7 Psalm 32

Romans 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11

Women's Gathering invites the congregation/guests to eat out together. The next one will be on Sunday, March 1st at 11:30 AM at Route 20 Bar & Grill. Please sign up in the lobby by February 23rd! Car pooling will be set up!

Confirmation: Confirmation continues with the study of the Apostle's Creed. We are also studying the twelve apostles as well as bible verses. At this point, we only have four more meetings as our last meeting is May 3rd and we do not meet on Easter Sunday. Next year our study will be the Ten Commandments, the church service and the bible. I will be looking into how many new confirmands will be joining us for the 2026-27 year so that bibles can be ordered prior to our first meeting in mid-September.

Sunday School: Sunday school is going well, and the kids seem to really enjoy the videos as well as all the information they are learning from the lessons. The curriculum is working well. The final three months have been filled with teachers and if anyone cannot make it, Shawn will fill in as a sub. The last Sunday School will be May 10th which is Mother's Day and then we will resume in September. We will revisit the curriculum during the summer months. The computer and TV are working great and easy to use. A few supplies are needed so we will be purchasing some markers, colored pencils, tacky glue sticks, and pencil sharpener with the larger end. Theresa may have one at home but will check it out before we order. Sunday school will not be meeting on Easter or the week that the school has Spring Break.

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, March 1st. Start a shawl/quilt or work on one already started. Someone will be available to help.

*The next bible study will be on Tuesday, March 17th at 9:45 a.m. - refreshments (served by Lynda Palmer and Lee Frey) 10 a.m. - bible study led by Karen Bremmer on the promise of God's name "I Am" bread, vine and light: Abiding with us. We will be making Easter cards! Sit N Sew will follow at 11:00. Bring a sack lunch.

*Thank you to the Women's Gathering for voting to give a \$100 donation to the PC Post Prom Committee.

*Lenten Lunches during Lent will be at the Methodist Church on Wednesdays at noon on February 28th, and March 4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th. St. John's will provide the meal on Wednesday, March 18th and Pastor Len will give the message. There will be a free will offering for the lunches. Women's Gathering receives the donations for March 18th.

Do you have a child/grandchild that is interested in taking his/her first communion? Do you know someone who does? Pastor Len is going to hold a **First Communion Class** for anyone interested during the month of March. The classes will be held right after worship on March 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th. This class is aimed at children in grades three and below, but it is open to anyone who feels their child is ready. The child and parents should plan on attending each meeting right after worship in the conference room downstairs. If you plan on attending these classes, please contact Pastor Len or the office so materials can be made for each participant.

Pastor Len will be hosting a bible study discussing the book of John on Wednesdays during Lent. It will be held at 10:30 AM beginning on Ash Wednesday (February 18th) and continue every Wednesday through Lent. If you are interested in coming, please sign up in Luther Hall so materials can be made for each participant.

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.

Date	Greeters	Ushers	Lector
Feb. 22	Mike & Lynda Palmer	Jeff & Linda Erbsen	Kathy Hillmer
Acolytes		Tech Support	
Arianna Schoenhard		Brayden Heimerdinger	



Happy Birthday!

Brian Brudi Kayla (Albrecht) Schimetz Austin Little

Grace Meal News. . .

A special thank you to everyone who helped with the January Grace Meal: Theresa Albers, Kathy & Larry Albright, Dennis Downs, Kris & Marion Eden, Randy Faust, Grace Heimerdinger-Baake, Jim Heimerdinger, Cathy Hoffmann, Lois Hunsaker, Juma and Junior, Joan & Marvin Klatt, Craig Lindquist, Judy & Rollin Nelson, Marge Roiland, DJ Scott, Angie & Wayne Niehaus, and Dee Voss. We would also like to thank Mike Klatt for his work at the Christmas meal and Pearl Valley Eggs for the donation of 15 dozen eggs for the January meal. We served a total of 270 meals, 35 deliveries, and 235 curbside pickups.

The February Grace Meal will be on February 15th. To reserve your meals for that day, contact St. John's Lutheran Church by Thursday February 12th (815-443-2215). Meals can be picked up between 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. on the 15th. The Menu for the February Grace Meal will be ham salad on a croissant, macaroni salad, potato chips, and dessert.

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!

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.

In order to strengthen relationships and make everyone feel known and welcome, Worship and Music has designed and made name tags for all members. Beginning, Sunday, February 22nd, the name tags will be hanging in the Narthex. We ask that you grab yours and wear it during worship each Sunday and return it to the peg board before going home.