

A New Journey Lutheran Parish

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Ness Lutheran Church
Our Savior's Lutheran Church
Gary Lutheran Church
PO Box 96
Gary, MN 56545

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DECEMBER 2022



We are happy to report that the November 13 vote to call Pastor Renè L. Mehlberg passed and she has accepted our call! A message from Pastor Renè is included in this newsletter. The Parish council is working to complete the next steps.

- *Immanuel's Lutefisk & Meatball Supper will be Saturday, December 3, from 4-7 p.m. Starting Thursday, Dec. 1, we will need everyone's help with lefse making, other preparations and serving!*
- *Our Youth Group took 157 orders for DIY Gingerbread House kits to raise funds for the recent Youth Gathering in Alexandria & upcoming youth events. They want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported this project. The kits will be ready for pickup/delivery on December 7.*
- *PASTORAL COVERAGE: During the month of December, emergency pastoral care will be covered by Katie DeMarais and contracted local pastors. Please contact Katie with any pastoral needs, and she will line up a visit or other care.*
- *We are not scheduling worship services on Sunday, January 1; however, if any congregation wants to have a service, they are welcome to secure a worship leader.*
- *Parish Directory: We are developing a parish directory and need to update our membership contact info including names, cell numbers, mailing & email addresses. Please contact Sue Gunderson, Anita Roy or Julie Gevik with your current information.*

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Brady Bauer, Jessie Beckman, Shawn Bendickson, Craig Burslie, Ron Dahl, Alex Gullingsrud, Becky Halland, Tim & Diane Jagol, Ann (Wastweet) Kukowski, Violet Lee, Donna Lisburg, Julia (Pantaleo) Madoll, Gwen Meyer, Marla (Johnson) Miller, Kathy Motteberg, Marilyn Natwick, Stacey Prestegord, and Jean Uhler.

A MESSAGE TO PASTOR KEITH ZEH...

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As most are now aware, Pastor Keith will be moving on from here at the end of November. Below is a short message we wish to share with him.

Dear Pastor Keith (PK),

All members of ANJLP, as well as those folks from Sundal and Calvary, wish to extend you and the Synod a very grateful THANK YOU! The leadership you provided as we stepped into this Holy Experiment helped to shape where we find ourselves today. The grace and patience granted each of us was a model for us to emulate as we learn and grow together as a Parish.

We have been blessed to call you our Pastor for the past year, and believe that God has set in motion an exciting and invigorated ministry here in this Parish, which has happened under your leadership.

We pray that your continued service, as you leave this place, will be a blessing to others in all of your new missions, whatever they may be.

May God watch over each of us as we venture on, serving God and sharing the Love of Christ without fear, knowing that God has wonderful plans for us all!

In Christ,

Mike Nelson, President ANJLP

A MESSAGE OF THANKS FROM PASTOR KEITH ZEH...

Dear Ones in Christ,

There's an old saying that "Impression without Expression leads to Depression." There's no way I'm going to leave without expressing my heart-felt thank you to you and to God for you. Not to do so would lead me into a terrible depression. For there's much to express thanksgiving for in all the ways God has been at work in, with and through you. I thank God for your faithfulness, resiliency, and love, and have been deeply touched and privileged to serve with you as your interim pastor.

I have experienced such hope and kindness throughout the year. I was so thankful too for the opportunity for fellowship after worship on my final Sunday, when Immanuel graciously served cake and Our Savior's graciously shared a meal. I will not forget you dear folks. I'm filled with excitement about God's future for you and your participation in God's mission.

Forever Remembering You in Christ,
Pastor Keith

A MESSAGE FROM REV. REBEL HURD...
(Director For Evangelical Mission, NWMN Synod, ELCA)

Dear A New Journey Lutheran Parish Family,

Grace and peace to you all! Tis the season we are reminded of the greatest blessing ever given – the Christ Child. Out of that gift flows every blessing we enjoy as the people of God who are his, by faith in Christ. What a gift, indeed! We are reminded of God's wonderful gift in this Gospel of John (3:16-17).

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.¹⁷ Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

As you gather to celebrate Jesus’ birth during this season of Advent, you also celebrate the upcoming welcome of Pastor René L. Mehlberg to your team and ministry. I celebrate with you, as it has been a joy to walk with your Call Committee over these past couple of months in this important work. I am so grateful for what God has already done and will continue to do with ANJLP. Together, you form a community of believers serving God in Word and deed, serving your neighbor, and caring for one another. Thank you to each of you, and a special thank you to those who serve week in and week out in the ongoing ministries of the church. You are each valuable in the church, and your participation is critical in the work we do together. I also share my gratitude to Pr. Keith Zeh for all the ways he led, nurtured vision, respected tradition, and was faithful to the call. Another gift, indeed! As I continue to think about the gifts, I leave you with my hopes for yours.

May you give and receive gifts that are relational, like time and memories.
May you spend less time and less money on things with less meaning.
May you be showered with reminders of God’s goodness all around you.
May you worship fully the true God who redeems, rescues, and restores.
And, may you feel His presence, His peace, and the assurance that there truly is a God who cares, and who meets you where you are at.

Merry Christmas,

Rev. Rebel Hurd
Director For Evangelical Mission, NWMN Synod, ELCA

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR RENÈ L. MEHLBERG...

Dear Beloved Children of God:

As we begin the season of Advent, the season of waiting, anticipation, & hope, and your waiting for who your pastor/mission developer will be, is over! We both anticipate the day that I move and begin. We hold onto hope for all the future will bring as we venture into this new parish together to continue the brave, faithful work you have already started by sharing God's love in new, creative ways. I am so excited and humbled to be joining you on this journey!

While you wait a little bit longer for me to move and join you (much of a life of faith is waiting...), here is a little bit so you can start getting to know me.

- I am a Wisconsin girl through and through. I grew up on a small family dairy farm in Caroline, a town of 300, in Northeast Wisconsin. I lived in Wisconsin my whole life until seminary. I often describe myself as "A Badger pastoring in Gopher country."
- My first career was in education, with most of it spent as a county 4-H youth development educator. Teaching, learning, and education are a core of my being.
- I love to travel and have been to the destination hot spots of Romania, Iceland, and the Holy Land.

I am a lifelong Lutheran, always being active in my church, whatever congregation that was. Back in college my campus pastor suggested seminary. My immediate response was: "I don't think so." He planted a seed, and it just took 16 years for the seed to germinate. Germinate it did, and you will be reaping the bounty of that harvest! Here are a few things that I believe in strongly:

- You are a beloved child of God who loves you no matter what.
- Relationships are at the core. God has been in relationship with God's people since the beginning including coming to us in the flesh as Jesus to show us how to live, love, and be in relationship with one another. This isn't always easy, but we're commanded to love God and love our neighbor, and to do our best along the way.
- Jesus always included, never excluded, and we are to do the same. Jesus included people that those of power and status of his time excluded: the sick, lame, women. Jesus went to great lengths to include all, teaching us as well, never turning anyone away.
- We are the body of Christ working together to bring forth the Kingdom of God here on earth.

The upcoming weeks, months, and years are an exciting time for us all. I ask for your prayers, patience, grace, guidance, support, and forgiveness along the way. All of which I also extend to you. We will go forward together knowing that God is watching over us, will bless us, and will guide us along the way.

I look forward to meeting all of you so very, very soon!

God's peace and blessings to you~

Pastor René

A MESSAGE FROM KATIE DEMARAIS, SAM...

“What if I stumble? What if I fall? What if I lose my step and I make fools of us all? Will the love continue when my walk becomes a crawl? Or what if I stumble? And what if I...?”

(Chorus of “What If I Stumble” by DC Talk)

I had a time travel experience last weekend. During the Middle School Youth Gathering, at which I was privileged to accompany six of our confirmation students and two of their grown-ups to Luther Crest Bible Camp in Alexandria, the Worship Collective band, made up of two synod pastors and their parishioners, led us in songs straight out of my junior high and high school youth gatherings. My soul remembered the lyrics and my body remembered the actions, even if I don't have the energy I had at 14 anymore.

One of the songs that most resonated with me was a song that actually came out when I was only 7 years old, first recorded by DC Talk, one of the first Christian rock groups to go mainstream (and before Toby Mac went solo). The chorus is above, and I encourage you to listen to it fully online if you can. This song spoke to the fears in my soul. Both in my individual life and in our collective Christian community, there are times when my fears get the best of me. I hesitate to make a hard decision, because, what if I fall? So, I don't make any decision at all. I keep on keeping on because, what if I screw up and embarrass not only myself, but this Parish to which I am blessed to be called? What if I make fools of my family or my friends, or even God? Will God still love me if I fall?

In this community, there are times that I have heard the actual words: “What if?” What if now that we are officially one parish, one congregation raises an issue? What if the finances don't work out? What if those you have called to serve you stumble? What if...? There are so many fears, some very real and rational, but if we really do believe as we preach, as we sing, and as we read in our Bibles, that God is with us, loves us, forgives us, no matter what if, if we fall, if we screw up, if we crawl, if we fail to love our neighbors, then we need to find our hope in Jesus and the cross. DC Talk's answer to the questions they posed was this: “I hear You whispering my name. You said, ‘My love for you will never change.’” Don't just take their word for it, look up Isaiah 54:10.

Your Servant in Christ,

Katie DeMarais, SAM

A MESSAGE FROM RACHEL ROGGENBUCK...

Worship Life Coordinator -- ANJLP

I am excited for the things to come! A couple of weeks ago, those interested in contributing to our Parish Worship Team met!! SO many great ideas came from that meeting!! Not only did we name what is liked at worship, but also ideas for meeting people where they are outside the walls of the church!! We are starting with three of these ideas. A Blue Christmas service is scheduled for Sunday, December 18, at 7 pm at Gary Lutheran. As I write this, Christmas Caroling is being planned for late afternoon on Sunday, December 11. We will also schedule a date and time for potluck hors d'oeuvres, but add games, music and more!!

As we look into the future, we will schedule more events outside of worship and change what is happening in worship including adding a more contemporary service. I am confident there will be even more ideas when our new pastor shares ideas and experience!

Katie and I will be working with each congregation planning Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. Please let us know if you want to help! What a joyful and wonderful time as we anticipate the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ!

Rachel Roggenbuck
Worship Life Coordinator, ANJLP

Ministers:	Members of the Congregations
Synodically Authorized Minister (SAM)	Katie DeMarais (218) 820-8287 or demarais.katie@gmail.com
Worship Life Coordinator:	Rachel Roggenbuck (701) 741-0976 or athomerachel@gmail.com
ANJLP Secretary:	Sue Gunderson (218) 280-8678 or immanuel@gvtel.com
Gary/Ness Secretary:	Julie Gevik (218) 280-3356 or garyrindaloffice@gmail.com
Our Savior's Secretary:	Anita Roy (218) 849-3791 or oursaviors@gvtel.com
Parish Website:	anewjourneyparish.org

Minutes - A New Journey Parish Council Meeting at Immanuel

(November 16, 2022)

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Nelson at 6:15 pm. Members present - Becky Olson, Mike Nelson, Karen Carlsrud, Marilyn Graff, Peggy Hanson, Jim Steinmetz, Anita Roy, Kristi Skeie, Jill Nelson. Staff - Rachel Roggenbuck.

Devotions by Mike Nelson.

M/S/P - Jim/Kristi - to approve the minutes from the October 12, 2022, meeting and the special meeting October 19, 2022.

Jill reviewed the treasurer's report thru October. M/S/P - Becky/Peggy.

Staff report - Rachel reported on a few events discussed at their worship meeting along with - caroling - assistance from Pastor Ragan and Pastor Brooks - Christmas eve/day services – a Blue Christmas service at Gary - and welcome/greet for the new pastor.

Update on establishing a new parish - work in process.

New Business - update from Mike on the call for a new Pastor. The Definition of compensation, benefits and responsibilities worksheet completed.

2023 Budget - reviewed by Mike and Jill - budget amount for 2023 \$180,000.00.
M/S/P - Becky/Jim.

Housing options - the various options discussed - more to follow.

Mike reported a letter thanking Pastor Keith will be in the bulletin on Sunday.

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 p.m. M/S/P - Jim/Becky - followed by joining hands for the Lord's prayer.

Karen Carlsrud
Secretary - Joint Parish Council

News from Gary Parish...

Altar Guild, Usher/Greeters and Janitor Assignments

- Gary Lutheran Church Ushers/Greeters (NOTE: Please plug in lamp prior to service & unplug after services.):
 - Dec. 4 & 11: Richard & Karen Tadych
 - Dec. 18 & 24: Gene & Peggy Hanson
- Gary Lutheran Altar Guild for December: Gwen Meyers & Bridget Sather
- Sundal Lutheran Church Ushers/Janitors/Altar Guild for December:
 - Myron & Karen Stene
- Ness Lutheran Church: None

News from Our Savior's...

Our Savior's Council Meeting Minutes – November 13, 2022

Meeting called to order by Kristi. Secretary's report was given. Beth made a motion to accept it and Stacey 2nd it. Tanya made a motion to accept the Financial Report and 2nd it by Beth.

Stacey made a motion to move forward with purchasing a smart tv for downstairs, 2nd it by Wanda.

Sunday, November 27th we will decorate for Christmas following Worship services that day.

Christmas Eve service will be held at 4:00 pm that day.

Annual Meeting set for January 29th.

Tanya motioned to adjourn and 2nd it by Wanda.

Additional Our Savior's Information:

- Sunday School at Our Savior's is currently on pause until further notice; however, we encourage you to watch for upcoming info including fun family-friendly events. The first of these events is a Family Gingerbread House Decorating Event, from 2-3:30 pm on Sunday, Dec. 11. All families are welcome. This will also be the Youth Group event for December, so... Youth, bring your families! If you have an interest in having your child attend Sunday School, please contact Anita.
- Quilters meet every Wednesday at 1:00 p.m.

News from Immanuel...

Summary of November 16, 2022, Immanuel Council Meeting Minutes

Council members present: Jim Steinmetz, Peggy Gunderson, Becky Olson, Gloria Steinbrenner, Delane Schaumburg, Duane Gunderson, Terry McCollum and Darrell Lende. Others in attendance: Katie DeMarais and Rachel Roggenbuck.

Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were provided.

- There will be a Christmas Day service at Immanuel at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 25.
- There will **not** be a worship service at Immanuel on Sunday, January 1.
- There will be Blue Christmas service at Gary Lutheran on Sunday, December 18, at 7:00 p.m.
- Katie and Rachel will be leading worship services in December.
- Plans are being made for Christmas caroling as a parish in December.
- Reminder that the lutefisk supper is December 3 and volunteers are needed.
- It was reported that as a result of the parish vote, a call is being made to Pastor Renè L. Mehlberg.
- We are tentatively changing our church insurance to North Star Mutual Insurance through Lindfors Agency.
- Cake and coffee will be served after worship on Sunday, November 20, for Pastor Keith's last Sunday with us.
- Six youth, four from Immanuel, will be going to the November 19-20 Youth Gathering in Alexandria.

Additional Immanuel Info:

- Ladies' Aid will hold their monthly supper on Wednesday, December 21, serving from 4-6:30 p.m. and the meal cost is \$5. Servers are Sylvia McCollum, Nikki McCollum and Doreen Turner. (Note: Worship service at 7 p.m. & Immanuel Council meeting at 8 p.m.)

Holiday Hope Open House

Anderson Family Funeral Homes

4-7:00 p.m

Mahnomen --Sunday, Dec. 4

Twin Valley-Wednesday, Dec. 7

Everyone is welcome to enjoy holiday refreshments & gather info on simple, creative, & empowering ways to manage the holiday season when you are missing loved ones.

A NEW JOURNEY LUTHERAN PARISH

Family Gingerbread House Event



Sunday, December 11 ~ 2:00-3:30pm ~ Our Savior's L. Church

All families are invited to come for an afternoon of family fun, decorating gingerbread house, enjoying snacks, and sharing in church family fellowship.

This is a free event and will include everything needed to assemble and decorate gingerbread houses. Please RSVP to Anita by Dec 9, so we can have supplies ready.

ALL FAMILIES OF ALL AGES ARE WELCOME.
THIS WILL ALSO BE OUR DECEMBER YOUTH GROUP EVENT.

Caroling Roadtrip **Sunday, December 11**

Join A New Journey Lutheran Parish for some good, old-fashioned caroling. Let's spread some Christmas cheer. We have a "praise bus" hired, so we can enjoy some fellowship during the drive.

Want to do the whole route? Get on the bus at Immanuel at 4pm.

1st stop: Gary Lutheran to pick up folks and carol around Gary.

2nd stop: Our Savior's to pick up and carol around McIntosh.

3rd stop: Immanuel to pick up folks and carol around Bejou.

Get on at any location and participate as long as you can.

We'll use the parish text chain to let folks know ETA for each town.

Have a suggestion of who would appreciate a song or two?

Contact Rachel to get a stop on the route. (701) 741-0976

All voices welcome!



Church Ladies' Night Out



All ladies are welcome! Bring a friend!

Each month we gather at a local restaurant for food, fellowship, & fun.

Church Ladies Christmas Party!
Bring a \$5-\$10 gift. We'll play a game to pick gifts!

RSVP to Katie by 12/10 please.

Tuesday, December 13 ~ 6:30pm
Moran's Supperclub, Winger

Wednesday Night Worship

Wednesday, December 21~ 7:00pm
Immanuel Lutheran Church
Ladies Aid Supper served from 4-6:30pm

All are welcome to the
Wednesday Night Worship!
The Word proclaimed! Music sang!
Fellowship shared!

Blue Christmas Worship A Service of the Word for Comfort & Healing

Sunday, December 18 ~ 7pm
Gary Lutheran Church

This worship service will recognize the loss and loneliness that can be felt during the holidays due to death, illness, poverty, or abuse. Through scripture, music, community, and a special message, space will be made for individuals to experience their grief and struggles, so that God may offer a promise of hope.

Eric Johnson, Director of Alumni Relations at Concordia College, will offer a special message of finding hope and light amidst grief. Please share an invitation to any one who you know in need of a time of sharing one's burdens. Let us come together as a community of faith, especially with those who feel lost and lonesome.



"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30



Advent season is upon us and we want to make sure you take note of the plans made for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship services. All are welcome to come to any of the services that fit with you and your family's schedules.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

DECEMBER 2022 WORSHIP SCHEDULE					
WORSHIP	IMMANUEL (Bejou)	OUR SAVIOR'S (McIntosh)	GARY	NESS	SUNDAL
Sunday, Dec. 4 (blue)	8:30 am- Worship 9:30 am-Sunday School	10:30 am-Worship	9:30 am-Sunday School 10:30 am-Worship with communion		8:30 am-Worship with communion
Sunday, Dec. 11 (blue)	8:30 am- Worship with communion	10:30 am-Worship with communion followed by Council Meeting	9:30 am-Sunday School 10:30 am-Worship	8:30 am-Worship	
Sunday, Dec. 18 (blue)	8:30 am – Worship 9:30 am-Sunday School	10:30 am – Worship	9:30 am-Sunday School 10:30 am – Sunday School Christmas Program 7:00 pm-Blue Christmas Worship		
Wed., Dec. 21 (blue)	7:00 pm – Worship with communion				
Saturday, Dec. 24 Christmas Eve (white)		4:00 pm -- Worship	9:00 pm – Worship with communion		
Sunday, Dec. 25 Christmas Day (white)	10:00 am -- Worship			10:30 am – Worship with communion	

