

**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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**JANUARY 2023**



*We are happy to welcome Pastor Renè L. Mehlberg to our Parish and look forward to her leading worship beginning on Sunday, January 15.*

*Our first parish-wide Meet & Greet event with Pastor Renè will be held at Immanuel on Sunday, January 8, at 4:00 p.m. Plans are for potluck hors d'oeuvres, fellowship, games and lots of fun. All are welcome!*

- *Thank you to all who supported our ANJLP Youth Group fundraiser. We sold over 180 gingerbread kits and had a net profit of about \$1500. This covered the cost to bring 6 youth and 3 adults to the Middle School Youth Gathering, and to put some money in our new parish Youth Group fund for future events. Thank you to the Parish as well as individual congregations and Ladies Aids for their contributions toward the cost of attending the Gathering. Investing in our young people is money well spent! ~Katie*
- *Please take notice of the Annual Meeting dates in the calendar. Please begin getting your annual meeting reports to your congregational secretary as soon as possible. Please attend these meetings as it is our yearly chance to review, dream, and discuss our ministries. We need everyone's voices to make these important decisions.*

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**PARISH PRAYER LIST**

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

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## ***A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR RENÈ L. MEHLBERG...***

**The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.**

***John 1:14 (The Message)***

Dear Beloved Children of God:

I write as I prepare to move into your neighborhood - or at least much closer to it! Moving boxes replaced a Christmas tree in my house this year, but that is how it goes.

You may be wondering what neighborhood I will be in. To start, I will be house sitting for two months in McIntosh as we look for a more permanent neighborhood for me.

As I become part of the neighborhood and area that has become A New Journey Lutheran Parish, I want to get out and about to meet all the neighbors – those part of this community of faith and those who are not. I will need your help, so please invite me to come with you to activities and events. I look forward to getting to know you and others.

This verse also reminds me of the holy, faithful work ANJLP has begun. One of our goals is to be out in the neighborhood, just as Jesus was. We rarely hear about Jesus teaching in the Temple (Jesus' church of his time). We mostly hear about him being out, among, and with the people. You have started that with Worship without Walls, Ladies Night Out, Beer and Hymns, and I'm sure much more I still need to learn. AND more that we will dream and do together!

As I get moved, settled, and a schedule set, look for ways to connect with me. My first Sunday preaching will be January 15. My installation will be February 5.

I am very excited, humbled, and honored to be called into ministry **with** you in **your** neighborhood. With God leading and guiding us, great things are possible in 2023! Let's get out into the neighborhood and share God's love with all!

Pastor René

## *A MESSAGE FROM KATIE DEMARAIS, SAM...*

“Let there be light!” Aww... nothing. That is, though, how I turn on my lights in my house. I can walk in the door, hands full, and say, ‘Alexa, let there be light!’ and as if by magic, all of the lights in my house come on. We read in Genesis that those are the words that God spoke into the ‘Darkness, “Let there be light!” And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. We just enjoyed the Christmas Candlelight Service at each of our congregations, when we focused on and enjoyed different forms of light while worshipping the Lord and celebrating His birth.

Most folks say that the Candlelight Service is their favorite worship experience of the entire year. The tradition of turning off the lights, holding onto candles, singing “Silent Night” is something so treasured. Why is that? It is beautiful, yes, but is there something divine about creating darkness, and then small beacons of light fill the sanctuary, and we can focus all of our energy, our sight, and our hearts on Jesus? By creating darkness, we eliminate the distractions. We have to narrow our focus, and we become more aware of just ourselves, our hearts beating, and aware of how God is living within those heartbeats. By lighting and holding a candle, we are reminded that Jesus is indeed the light of the world, come for you and for me.

It is easier to believe those words, those promises of God’s love and salvation, as there is darkness all around us, and we are holding candles, swaying and singing of that holy night. When we can block out all of the distractions of the world, and focus just on the flame, we can feel God's presence, and we can believe those promises are indeed for us. But, when the lights come back on, when we walk out the sanctuary doors, when the twinkling lights on our Christmas trees are packed away for another year, then what? Do we still believe? Do we still feel the presence of Jesus in our heartbeats? I hope so, but honestly, it gets a lot harder, doesn’t it?

So, how do we take this feeling, this solemn candlelight feeling, and keep it with us all year long? I think it has something to do with that dark and light. When God created the Light, which he called good, he didn’t call the darkness bad, the darkness just is. Darkness is the natural state of the world. We as humans have created so many forms of technology to not have to sit in that natural state of darkness. Beginning with fire, to smart devices that turn on all the lightbulbs with a spoken command, we as humans don’t like to just be in the dark. But maybe we need to every now and then; maybe we need darkness to dim all the distractions, the stresses, the urges, the addictions, and just be. Feel your heart beat, focus on God’s love come to earth as that infant King, and pray. Spend some time conversing with God in the darkness, so that you are ready to see God’s light as it

is at work in this world. To see the normal, everyday beacons of light and hope that exist in this world and in each other. Not only ready to see God's light, but to BE God's light. For Jesus is the Light of the World, and we are called to be His hands and His feet. Until he comes again, we are commanded to love and serve our neighbors. We are to bring God's hope, love, and light to those who may only know the darkness, who may not feel God's presence in their heartbeats.

To those alone, struggling, and afraid, if we live reflective of God's light, then others may be drawn to it, and find the promises of salvation offered to them as well. So I end this message how I started it, "Let there be Light!, but let it begin with me and with you."

Your Servant in Christ,

Katie DeMarais, SAM

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***A MESSAGE FROM RACHEL ROGGENBUCK...***

***Worship Life Coordinator -- ANJLP***

Caroling, Caroling...what fun we had! A worship bus filled with smiling faces and joyful voices sharing the wonder of Christmas! We spent the beautiful afternoon and evening going door to door in our parish, as well as nursing homes and assisted living facilities. We are looking forward to next year! Our Blue Christmas service landed on a bitterly cold night, but we enjoyed our time inside hearing a heartfelt story of love and faith. These were the first of many 'outside the walls' activities that our worship team named.

December was such a busy month it can be hard to take in all the wonder, joy, peace and promise of the season. I hope you found a moment or two to fill your cup with these feelings. In January, we will invite everyone in the parish to bring an hors d'oeuvre, then spend time visiting or playing games with others in the parish. Look for these details soon!

Happy New Year! I trust 2023 will be a year to remember!

In peace,

Rachel

Worship Life Coordinator, ANJLP

# *Minutes - A New Journey Parish Council Meeting at Immanuel*

(December 28, 2022)

The meeting was held at Bejou and called to order by President Mike Nelson at 6:04 p.m. Members present - Becky Olson, Mike Nelson, Karen Carlsrud, Marilyn Graff, Jim Steinmetz, Kristi Skeie. Staff - SAM Katie DeMarais, Rachel Roggenbuck. Devotions by Mike.

Secretary's report - M/S/P - Jim/Marilyn, to approve minutes from November 16, 2022, meeting. Treasurer's report - copies passed out and reviewed. M/S/P - Jim/Becky, to approve the report thru November, 2022.

Staff report - Rachel and Katie commented caroling went well - blue service was good but cold so poor attendance. Pastor Renè's first service is January 15, and installation service for her is February 5 at Immanuel. Mike gave an update on paperwork being completed for the new parish.

New Business - Proposed budget for 2023 was discussed - total at \$180,000.00. M/S/P - Becky/Kristi - to approve the 2023 budget. Copies will be passed out to all churches requesting approval at each individual church annual meeting.

Pastor Renè transition - her first service is January 15 - - several individuals will be moving her on December 30 - short term housing will be in McIntosh for 2 months. Discussion held on future locations. Wait and discuss with Pastor Renè in January.

Other business - Go For It Grant - looking into a portable sound system - cost approximately \$2,000. Discussion held on updating sound systems in the churches involved in this parish. It was decided to table until another meeting.

It was suggested by the Synod to form a Ministry Support Team for Pastor Renè. Cheryl H., Mike N., Sue S. and Wanda S. will serve on this team and meet with Pastor Renè as needed.

Discussion held on officers for the Council for 2023. Election will be held at the January meeting.

Next meeting - January 18, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at Immanuel in Bejou.

No further business - President Mike called for a motion to adjourn at 7:00 p.m. M/S/P - Becky/Marilyn.

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.):
  - Jan. 8: Linda & Leonard Engen
  - Jan. 15 & 22: Harriet & Doug Andersen
  - Jan. 29 & Feb. 5: Tom & Abby Stueness
- Gary Lutheran Altar Guild for January: Linda Engen & Kim Knutson
- Ness Lutheran Church: None

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## *News from Our Savior's...*

### **Our Savior's Council Meeting Minutes – December 11, 2022**

Meeting called to order. Secretary's report was given. Motion to accept by Marilyn and 2<sup>nd</sup> it by Wanda.

Financial Report reviewed. Stacey made a motion to accept and Marilyn 2<sup>nd</sup> it.

Stacey will check on a raffle ticket fundraiser for this spring.

Marilyn made a motion to get a Bose Bluetooth speaker and Wanda 2<sup>nd</sup> it.

Annual Meeting is set for January 29<sup>th</sup> following church. We will also have a light lunch following the meeting, everything will be provided.

Stacey made a motion to adjourn the meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> it by Marilyn. Next meeting will be following church on January 8<sup>th</sup>.

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### **Additional Our Savior's Information:**

- Quilters meet every Wednesday at 1:00 p.m.

## *News from Immanuel...*

### **Summary of December 28, 2022, Immanuel Council Meeting Minutes**

Council members present: Jim Steinmetz, Peggy Gunderson, Joyce Bendickson, Becky Olson, Gloria Steinbrenner, and Delane Schaumburg. Others in attendance: Katie DeMarais, Rachel Roggenbuck and Susie Steinmetz.

Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were provided.

Staff report:

- Youth group will be meeting at Immanuel in January.
- Annual meeting was set for Sunday, January 22, after 8:30 a.m. worship with potluck brunch to follow.
- Pastor Renè's installation is scheduled for Sunday, February 5, at Immanuel with worship time to be determined. Potluck meal to follow.
- Discussion was held on replacing the office and Sunday school doors with ones with windows and better sound proofing.

Funds in the Luther League account are being moved to a Joint Youth Account; and the Sunday School account is being moved from Mahnomen to Winger.

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### **Additional Immanuel Info:**

- Condolences to the family and friends of David Sweep who passed away December 28, and whose funeral was held at Immanuel on December 31.
- Ladies' Aid will hold their monthly supper on Wednesday, January 18, serving from 4-6:30 p.m. and the meal cost is \$5. Servers are Gloria Steinbrenner, Joyce Bendickson and Susan Burdik. (Note: Confirmation & Parish Council Meeting at 6 p.m., Worship service at 7 p.m. & Immanuel Council meeting at 8 p.m.)



# *“Good Gossip”*

We are beginning a new section of our newsletter in which we will lift up one of the lesser-known ministries in our parish/congregations to highlight each month. January's ministry spotlight is a parish **Greeting Card Ministry**. The Parish, led by Julie Gevik from the Gary/Ness office, sends greeting cards to folks who are experiencing the loss of a loved one or have been recently added to the prayer list. Each week there are also names randomly drawn from our newsletter mailing list to receive surprise "we are praying for you" cards. There are also birthday cards sent to the older folks in what used to be the Gary-Rindal Parish. We would like that to extend to the whole new Parish, if we can pull together birthdays! This ministry has been a great way to let folks know that their Parish and Staff are thinking about them and praying for them.

Let's start to spread “Good Gossip” about the wonderful ministries taking place throughout our community.

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*Wednesday  
Night Worship*

Wednesday, January 18~ 7:00pm  
Immanuel Lutheran Church  
Ladies Aid Supper served from 4-6:30pm  
Confirmation Class 6pm

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

# Youth Group



Open to all 6-12 Graders.

All are welcome. Bring a friend!

Come watch a movie, eat popcorn and  
snacks, hang out with friends,

AND MEET PASTOR RENÉ!

**Sunday, January 22**

**5:00-7:00pm**

**Immanuel Lutheran Church**

# Church Ladies' Night Out



All ladies are welcome! Bring a friend!

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

**Tuesday, January 24**

**6:30pm**

**Peachy's Pub, Bejou  
(Formerly Stump's)**

**Ministers:**

**Members of the Congregations**

**Pastor Renè Mehlberg (218) 308-7898**  
[pastor.rene.mehlberg@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.rene.mehlberg@gmail.com)

**Synodically  
Authorized  
Minister (SAM)**

**Katie DeMarais (218) 820-8287 or**  
[demarais.katie@gmail.com](mailto:demarais.katie@gmail.com)

**Worship Life  
Coordinator:**

**Rachel Roggenbuck (701) 741-0976 or**  
[athomerachel@gmail.com](mailto:athomerachel@gmail.com)

**ANJLP Secretary:**

**Sue Gunderson (218) 280-8678 or** [immanuel@gvtel.com](mailto:immanuel@gvtel.com)

**Gary/Ness  
Secretary:**

**Julie Gevik (218) 280-3356 or** [garyrindaloffice@gmail.com](mailto:garyrindaloffice@gmail.com)

**Our Savior's  
Secretary:**

**Anita Roy (218) 849-3791 or** [oursaviors@gvtel.com](mailto:oursaviors@gvtel.com)

**Parish Website:**

[anewjourneyparish.org](http://anewjourneyparish.org)

# ***HAPPY NEW YEAR!!***

<b>JANUARY 2023 WORSHIP SCHEDULE</b>					
<b>WORSHIP</b>	<b>IMMANUEL (Bejou)</b>	<b>OUR SAVIOR'S (McIntosh)</b>	<b>GARY</b>	<b>NESS</b>	<b>SUNDAL</b>
<b>Sunday, Jan. 1</b>					
<b>Sunday, Jan. 8</b> (white)	8:30 am- Worship	10:30 am-Worship followed by Council Meeting	10:30 am-Worship	8:30 am-Worship	
<b>Sunday, Jan. 15</b> <b>Communion</b> (green)	8:30 am – Worship 9:30 am-Sunday School	10:30 am – Worship	8:30 am – Worship 9:30 am-Sunday School		10:30 am-Worship
<b>Wed., Jan. 18</b> (green)	7:00 pm – Worship				
<b>Sunday, Jan. 22</b> (green)	8:30 am – Worship followed by annual meeting and potluck brunch	10:30 am – Worship	8:30 am – Worship 9:30 am-Sunday School	10:30 am-Worship followed by annual meeting	
<b>Sunday, Jan. 29</b> <b>Communion</b> (green)	8:30 am -- Worship	10:30 am – Worship followed by annual meeting and lunch	9:30 am-Sunday School 10:30 am – Sunday School Program & Worship followed by annual meeting	8:30 am – Worship	

