

**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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**FEBRUARY 2023**

*A New Journey*  
Lutheran Parish  
Gary, Immanuel, Ness, &  
Our Savior's Lutheran Churches

*Mark your calendar and plan to attend the joint Parish worship at Immanuel on Sunday, February 5, at 10:00 a.m., which will include the Installation of Pastor René L. Mehlberg, followed by a potluck meal. All are encouraged to wear red, as red is the color of the day; and all are encouraged to bring a dish to share at the potluck lunch.*

**Feb 5 | 10AM**  
Immanuel  
Lutheran  
Church in  
Bejou, MN



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*Service of Installation: Rev. René L. Mehlberg*  
*Pastor Mission Developer*  
*A New Journey Lutheran Parish*

## **Pastor René's Day-off and Office Hours:**

As I try to get out and about throughout the parish, I am setting some office hours to see how that works. I will monitor and adjust as needed. Also know these hours are flexible depending on other pastoral care needs that arise, online meetings that may work best at home, winter weather impacting travel, or a fuller week than usual because of additional commitments, such as funerals. We will work to include my office hours in the weekly bulletin announcements.

My day off will be Friday. For February, office hours will be:

- Monday in Gary from 10:00 am-2:00 pm
- Tuesday in McIntosh from 10:00 am-2:00 pm
- Wednesday in McIntosh from 10:00 am-2:00 pm, except for Wednesday, February 15 when I will be in Bejou.

Know that I will travel to anywhere as needed or requested. You can always reach me on my cell phone (call or text) or by email.

As I keep saying, "We are figuring this out" and "We will learn together."

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## ***“Good Gossip”***

**Souper Bowl of Caring Offering:** For most of the last 14 years, youth in the Gary-Rindal Parish (and the last two years including Confirmation Students from Immanuel/Calvary/Our Savior's) have raised funds to Tackle Hunger by taking an offering during Worship the day of the Big Game.

Last year, we as a joint parish raised over \$614 to donate, split between 2 local food shelves. This year, we are upping the ante even more. We will split donations between 3 local food shelves (hosted at Grace Lutheran in Erskine, Helping Hands in Mahanomen, and Good Samaritan in Twin Valley) so that we can help folks in our entire mission field who are struggling with food insecurity.

This year our youth will be asking for monetary donations AND donations of shelf stable food at the end of Worship at all of our service locations on Sunday, February 12. Leaders of the food shelves sent the following list of items that are needed: Cereal, Canned soup, Spaghetti sauce, Crackers, Pancake mix, Syrup, Canned fruit, Pudding/Jello cups, Jelly, Peanut butter, Cake mix and frosting.

Folks are invited to wear their favorite jersey to Worship that day, in support of this mission and your favorite team. (If you would like to donate, but won't be in Worship on Feb. 12, please contact Katie to set up an offering pick up.)

Thank you for your continued support of folks struggling in our communities.

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

Dear Beloved Children of God:

*“Learning. Leading. Loving.”*

That is my mantra, motto, or guiding words for this year.

Some of you have heard me talk about these words already. And yes, I wrote about them in the annual reports. However, we often need to hear or read things multiple times before it becomes part of us. So, please read again as some things may be new.

**Learning:** There is much for me to learn and for you to teach me as I continue to get to know this part of northwestern Minnesota. I’m learning what makes each church and community unique and how those gifts can be used throughout the parish. I’m learning your stories, as you’re learning mine. We will learn much from one another. A great way for me to learn is for you to invite me to activities and events or for coffee or a meal.

**Leading:** I am called to lead and ask God to help me do my best. And, you are leaders as well, in both big and small ways. I know many of you have done some heavy, hard work over the past few years and even for many years (or decades) before. I also recognize and respect leaders needing to take a rest and step away. Leading and leadership can have many different looks. Perhaps we can dream and try new things to see what may work for us now.

**Loving:** When Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment, he responded with, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and your mind and love your neighbor as yourself.” Love, that is the greatest commandment. Often easy to say while sometimes very difficult to do. Loving means caring for those you have come to know in your churches and communities over the years. Loving means being out in the neighborhood, just as Jesus was. Loving means helping the least of these, as Jesus showed us how to do.

Now, I could add another “L” word...listening. I want to listen to your hopes and dreams, cares and concerns, stories of joy and sorrows, of whatever you want to share. However, three is a holy number, so listening will be part of the learning, leading, and loving.

As we all learn, lead, love, and listen, remember we will stumble along the way. Remember God’s forgiveness, grace, love, and mercy that makes us new and allows us to start over once again, as many times as it takes. As I extend it to all of you, I pray you extend it to each other and me as well.

Pastor René

## 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW BY KATIE DEMARAIS, SAM...

Greetings to you, my Siblings in Christ,

Looking back on 2022, we have accomplished many milestones and shared in God's ministry together. In November 2021, our five congregations took a leap of faith to enter into a joint venture named A New Journey Lutheran Parish. We called Pastor Keith Zeh to shepherd us during our interim time and call process. Pr. Keith brought a much appreciated stability and positivity, as we dreamed together, planned together, and learned how to be Church together. We met new friends and worshipped in new ways and spaces, continued to develop and utilize a wonderful Parish Staff, and learned to lean on God. We have laughed together at Church Ladies Night Out events, broken bread together and worshipped on Wednesday nights, praised God through song outdoors, and reached new children through VBS, Sunday School, Youth Group, and Family Playdates. We held each other in prayer during illnesses, diagnoses, and grief. Our Call Committee surveyed our thoughts and dreams, and guided by the Holy Spirit, vetted and called Rev. René L. Mehlberg to be our Pastor and Mission Developer. Please join me in welcoming her and joining her in our joint mission to spread God's Love and Light to all. On November 1, 2022, Gary, Immanuel, Ness, and Our Savior's officially joined together as A New Journey Lutheran Parish, and have been developing policies and procedures.

This chart is the pastoral acts and other milestones tally, beginning from Nov 1, 2021, when the joint Parish began and Pr. Zeh joined us. This is only a piece of our ministry over the last year. Numbers can only tell part of the story, so also included in the newsletter are photos that will give a more intimate look into the meaningful ministry done with and through our Parish in 2022.

<b>A New Journey Lutheran Parish Pastoral Acts (Nov. 1, 2021 - Dec. 31, 2022)</b>							
	Baptisms	Confirmations	Weddings	Funerals	New Members	First Communions	Senior Quilts
Gary	3	1		4	2	3	5
Immanuel	7	1	3	1	9	8	6
Ness	2			2			1
Our Savior's	2			5			
Sundal			1	1			
Totals:	14	4	4	13	11	11	12
		(*2 at Calvary)					

I give thanks to God for our shared ministry in 2022 and look forward with hope and anticipation to all that God may call us to do in 2023. This new year will bring us new opportunities, new challenges, and a new Pastor leading A New Journey, with the same loving God steering it all.

Your Servant in Christ, Katie DeMarais, Synodically Authorized Minister

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

### ***ANJLP Worship Life Coordinator***

2023- a new year and a new beginning and a new pastor! In January we welcomed Pastor René L. Mehlberg as our Pastor/Mission Developer. What is a Pastor/Mission Developer? The expectation of a Mission Developer is to develop evangelizing congregations that make disciples for Jesus Christ who use their gifts for the kingdom of God in the church and in the world. By the time you are reading this, she will have preached in all churches. If you missed her, don't worry, she will be back! Our first Parish event with potluck hors d'oeuvres and games was a hit, which means we will do it again! It was also the first opportunity for Pastor René to start putting faces with names.

*INSTALLATION of Pastor René is Sunday, February 5, at 10 a.m. hosted by Immanuel. The service will be followed by a potluck lunch. This is an exciting and important occasion for our parish as we welcome our new pastor! Come One, Come ALL!*

I don't know about all of you, but I feel like we have had so many events this past year! Do you know what that means? That we are growing-in our own faith and excitement. That we are sharing the love we have for Jesus with others. We will continue! When you tell others about activities that you like to attend, listen for their answer and invite them to attend with you next time. I have had some interactions like these, with friends on Facebook, with people that watch our online worship and with others. They comment about our activities and that it seems like an exciting place to be. It is!!

Looking ahead, Lent is right around the corner. Ash Wednesday is February 22<sup>nd</sup>, offering two services! Check out a noon service at Our Savior's and/or a 7 p.m. service at Gary Lutheran. Gary Lutheran will host a Soup and Sandwich Free Will Offering Fundraiser and Fellowship time starting at 6 p.m. Like last year, we will have one Lenten service a week. Watch the calendar for locations.

Your excitement is contagious!! Keep Sharing!

Peace and blessings,

Rachel Roggenbuck  
ANJLP Worship Life Coordinator

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

(January 18, 2023)

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Nelson at 6:08 p.m. Members present - Mike Nelson, Becky Olson, Karen Carlsrud, Jim Steinmetz, Kristi Skeie, Peggy Hanson, Pastor René, Stacey Knudson. Staff - Rachel Roggenbuck, Sue Gunderson. Devotions by Mike.

Secretary's report - a copy passed out - M/S/P - Jim/Kristi to approve the Dec 28, 2022, minutes.

Parish Treasurer report - copies passed out and reviewed. M/S/P - Becky/Peggy to approve.

Go For It Grant - a request from Our Savior's to be reimbursed for the church get-together on July 13 at McIntosh - taco supper - the amount \$1,250. They will withdraw their request for a sound system, M/S/P - Jim/Karen - to reimburse them the \$1,250 from the Go For It Grant.

Staff report: Pastor René introduced herself - discussed briefly - Learning/Leading/Loving. Installation will be February 5<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m at Immanuel/Bejou followed by a potluck meal. Pastor Rebel will preach that Sunday. Discussion on the offering - offering will go to the parish and the council will decide. M/S/P - Stacey/Becky to give 25% of offering that day to Rural Revival.

Lent/Ash Wednesday discussion - Ash Wednesday - place and time yet to be decided. Lenten services will be rotated between the churches. M/S/P - Kristi/Peggy - the host church of Lent will decide where to give the offering.

Pastor René stated to let her know when visiting is required for someone - wants to get out and meet people. Discussion held on the software program - Sundays and Season Deluxe program. M/S/P - Jim/Kristi to approve the yearly subscription of \$429.

President Mike stated the old accounts are closed and balance transferred to ANJLP. We have yet to work on the Constitution for ANJLP.

Discussed the Sundal contracted services. Their balance will be paid back to them less services for November, December and January (pulpit supply/bulletins/newsletter). M/S/P - Kristi/Jim - to charge Sundal \$50 a month for bulletins/newsletter and they will pay for their pulpit supply starting in February.

An update on Pastor René's move - Jim stated it went well - she is living in McIntosh for January and February - \$500/month. Discussion held on possible locations for future - tabled until February meeting.

Clarification on Pastor René's insurance package - what the amount quoted (\$596) and what is actual (\$948) discussed. M/S/P - Jim/Becky - to cover from the slush fund and adjust for the 2024 budget.

President Mike stated it was 7 p.m. - election of officers still needed to be done, M/S/P - Becky/Kristi to adjourn the meeting and do election of officers at the February meeting. Next meeting - date to be determined.

Karen Carlsrud, Secretary – ANJLP

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### *News from Gary Parish...*

- Gary Lutheran will host an Ash Wednesday service at 7:00 p.m. on February 22. At 6:00 p.m. that evening, they will have a free will offering fundraiser Soup & Sandwich meal. All are welcome!
- Condolences to the family and friends of Selmer "Sam" Aanenson, who passed away on January 17.

### **Altar Guild, Usher/Greeters and Janitor Assignments**

- Gary Lutheran Church Ushers/Greeters (NOTE: Please plug in lamp prior to service & unplug after services.):
  - Feb. 5: Tom & Abby Stueness
  - Feb. 12 & 19: Gene & Bonnie Werpy
  - Feb. 26 & March 5: Ray & Stacy Gunderson
- Gary Lutheran Altar Guild for February: Shawn Halvorson & LeAnn Moen
- Ness Lutheran Church: None



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

## **Our Savior's Council Meeting Minutes – January 8, 2023**

Meeting called to order. Reports were given. Motioned to approve by Tanya and 2<sup>nd</sup> it by Marilyn.

Discussed the parsonage and the work that still hasn't been finished and what other work that needs to be done.

We will have our welcome dinner for Pastor René following our Annual Meeting on January 29<sup>th</sup>.

Discussed future fundraising and outreach ideas.

Marilyn made a motion to adjourn. Tanya 2<sup>nd</sup> it.

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

- Our Savior's will host an Ash Wednesday service at noon on February 22.
- Condolences to the family and friends of Wendy Ettl of McIntosh who died on January 16. Her funeral was at Our Savior's on January 27.

- Sunday, February 12 ~ 1:00-3:00pm ~ Our Savior's ~

All families are invited to come for an afternoon of family fun, decorating Valentine's cookies (to eat & to donate to the nursing home/assisted living residents), decorating Valentine's cards (to share with residents and home-bound members), and sharing in church family fellowship.

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

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## **PARISH PRAYER LIST**

*Brady Bauer, Jessie Beckman, Shawn Bendickson, 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 Uhlir.*

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## *News from Immanuel...*

### **Summary of January 18, 2023, Immanuel Council Meeting Minutes**

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

Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were provided and approved.

#### **Pastor René's & Staff's Report:**

- Ash Wednesday is February 22 and plans are to rotate Lenten worship services between parish congregations.
- Installation of Pastor René will be at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, February 5, at Immanuel followed by a potluck meal. Pastor Rebel will lead worship and members representing each parish congregation are being asked to be part of that installation service.
- The Youth Group is planning a "Souper" Bowl of Caring offering and food drive on Sunday, February 12.
- Immanuel's 2023 budget was reviewed and will be presented for approval at the February 22<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting.
- NWMN Synod dues were reviewed and approved.
- Pastor René expressed her appreciation to those who helped her move and for the great Meet and Greet event held at Immanuel.

#### **Additional Immanuel Info:**

- Condolences to the family and friends of Roger Dahl, who passed away January 12.
- Ladies' Aid will hold their monthly supper on Wednesday, February 15, serving from 4:30-6:30 p.m. and the meal cost is a free will offering. Servers are Mary Jo Klinkhammer, Sarah Dahl and Hailey Dahl. (Note: Confirmation & Parish Council Meet at 6 p.m., Worship service at 7 p.m. & Immanuel Council meeting at 8 p.m.)
- Ladies' Aid Members: If you are unable to serve on your designated month, please switch with someone or find someone to serve for you.



## **Lent Begins Ash Wednesday, February 22**

We will gather Wednesdays during Lent. On Ash Wednesday, we will try something new with a Noon service at Our Savior's and a 7:00 p.m. at Gary. Watch next month's newsletter for the rest of the schedule.

### **What is Lent?**

Lent marks the forty days leading up to Easter, mirroring the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness. It is a practice that began during the 4<sup>th</sup> century as a way to prepare Christians for the holiest days of the year.

During Lent, we ask God to show us the world as it is. We begin with the reality of our finitude rubbed on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday—from dust we were made, to dust we shall return. Then, we walk through that reality in a kind of dress rehearsal. It's the downward slope of God—the Great Descent, where the whole Church walks toward the cross.

### **A prayer as we start on this year's Lenten journey:**

God, on my best days when I feel capable and unwavering, remind me of my dependence on you. And on the days when I feel inside out with inadequacies and anxieties, remind me of your enoughness for today. Though my days and moods and fears and circumstances seem always in flux, you remain. Amen.

*Taken from "Bless the Lent We Actually Have" by Kate Bowler.*

TACKLE



HUNGER

A New Journey Youth Group will be taking a Souper Bowl of Caring Offering to support local food shelves.

Sunday, Feb. 12 during all Parish Worship Services

You are invited to bring monetary or shelf-stable food offerings.

Offerings and food will be split between three local food shelves.



Wear your favorite jersey to Worship to support our mission & your team!



**A NEW JOURNEY LUTHERAN PARISH**

## *Family Valentine's Day Event*



**Sunday, February 12 ~ 1:00-3:00pm ~ Our Savior's L. Church**  
**All families are invited to come for an afternoon of family fun, decorating Valentine's cookies (to eat & to donate to the nursing home/assisted living residents), decorating Valentine's cards (to share with residents and home-bound members), and sharing in church family fellowship.**  
**This is a free event and will include everything needed.**

**Please RSVP to Anita by Feb. 9, so we can have supplies ready.**

**ALL FAMILIES OF ALL AGES ARE WELCOME.**

# Wednesday Night Worship

Wednesday, February 15~ 7:00pm  
Immanuel Lutheran Church  
Ladies Aid Supper served from 4:30-6:30pm  
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 ice skating or sledding, have some pizza and snacks, & enjoy time together.

Rides can be arranged from McIntosh, Bejou and/or Gary! Equipment is free & available there. Food will be provided!

**Sunday, February 19 ~ 5:00-7:00pm**  
**Fertile Ice Skating Rink & Sledding Hill**  
**Fertile, MN**

# 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, February 21**  
**6:30pm**  
**Erickson's Smokehouse, Fertile**

**Ministers:**

**Members of the Congregations**

Pastor René 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)

**Find Us Online:**

[linktr.ee/anewjourneyparish](https://linktr.ee/anewjourneyparish)

## FEBRUARY 2023 WORSHIP SCHEDULE

WORSHIP	IMMANUEL (Bejou)	OUR SAVIOR'S (McIntosh)	GARY	NESS	SUNDAL
<b>Sunday, Feb. 5</b> <b>Communion</b> (red)	10 am-Joint Parish Worship & Pastor René Installation at ILC followed by Fellowship & Potluck Meal				
<b>Sunday, Feb. 12</b> (green) including a "Souper" Bowl of Caring offering & food drive	8:30 am- Worship	10:30 am-Worship followed by Council Meeting	8:30 am-Worship 9:30 am-Sunday School	10:30 am- Worship	
<b>Wed., Feb. 15</b> (green)	7:00 pm – Worship				
<b>Sunday, Feb. 19</b> <b>Communion</b> (white)	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>Ash Wednesday,</b> <b>Feb. 22</b> <b>Communion</b> (purple)		Noon – Lenten Worship	6:00 pm – Soup & Sandwich (free will offering) 7:00 pm – Lenten Worship		
<b>Sunday, Feb. 26</b> (purple)	8:30 am -- Worship	10:30 am – Worship	9:30 am-Sunday School 10:30 am –Worship	8:30 am – Worship	
<b>Wed., March 1</b> (purple)		7:00 pm Lenten Worship			



