

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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MAY 2023



“Good Gossip”

We don't share GOOD things we do as much as we share gossip, so each month we've been lifting up some good ministry being done in and through our Parish.

Did you know that when a new Child of God is baptized, the congregation makes promises to them? One of those promises is for all of us to support and pray for these new Children of God (of all ages). One way we are continuing to fulfill this promise is by an expansion of our Confirmation ministry to include congregational mentors.

During the Lenten season, our 11 Confirmation students were matched with an adult from our congregations to form a mentoring program. They met together on Wednesday evenings to get to know each other, learn how to ask questions, studied Psalms, and worshipped together. The hope is to continue this mentorship program as the first-year students continue next year, and to expand the program to include new students coming in the fall and beyond.

It was wonderful to see these students and adults connecting and beginning to support one another, even outside of our walls. A big THANKS needs to go out to these mentors for sharing their time, gifts, faith, and wisdom: Bridget Roggenbuck, Carrie Heisler, Jon Large, Darrel Lende, Linda Lende, Mary Nell Preisler, Mike Nelson, Rachel Roggenbuck, Pr. René Mehlberg, and Katie DeMarais.

You are encouraged to continue to keep these confirmands in your prayers and to support them in their faith journey. Four of these students have/will celebrate their Affirmation of Baptism in April/May: Teddy Moritz, Carigen Prestegord, Kadin Olson, and Kalli Roy.

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR RENÉ L. MEHLBERG...

Dear Beloved Children of God:

Jeremiah 29, is not just a chapter in a book of the Bible. It is also the name of a three-year synod-wide program. I am one of 10 pastors learning about entrepreneurship, how groups form and function, and many other things. One of the main goals of the program is to come up with a project to help the welfare of the community (or in ANJLP's case, communities) of where we are.

The project is based on Jeremiah 29. The Israelites have been forced from their homes, are living in exile, and want to get back home. We all would, right? However, the Lord tells them to settle in, plant gardens, have children; do not just survive, but flourish and thrive as you will be here for a few generations.

Not necessarily the word of hope we want to hear and a bit different from the situation we find ourselves in. We are not in exile, forced from our homes. But the underlying concept of seek the welfare of where we are, does very much apply to us today.

Much work has been done over the past three years to help open our eyes to what we **do** have in and throughout ANJLP. There are many assets throughout this parish, including people, resources, and much more.

Being part of the Jeremiah 29 project is really a continuation of the work done that birthed ANJLP. It's helping find ways to make our why of "*Sharing the hope that we find in Christ and the roadmap for a happy and healthy life*" a reality here in this place for us and for all who live in our mission field.

So, I leave you with a challenge, the same I gave the parish council and so far two other church councils to do. Read the adapted verse of Jeremiah 29:7. Then think and wonder about the questions that follow. I truly do want to hear from you. Email, text, call, let's set-up a time to meet for you to share your thoughts. Watch future newsletters and bulletins for updates to come.

But seek the welfare of the congregation and of the parish of which the Lord has created, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

- a. What is the welfare you seek?
- b. What is the welfare you dream about?
- c. What is it that you want to see/make possible?

Blessings and prayers for you always~
Pastor René

A MESSAGE FROM KATIE DEMARAIS, SAM...

“But Jesus called for them and said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.’”

Luke 18:16-17

As I sit down to write this article, I look outside and see the fresh fallen snow, making everything white. I think ahead to next weekend, when I’ll go celebrate Christmas with one part of my family. Then, I have to remind myself that it is the end of April, and this is my May newsletter message to you all. The snow is still falling, again, even though we’ve had First Spring already. This will melt, and Second Spring will be here tomorrow. I’m tired of the snow. I’m tired of worrying about folks out on icy roads, and folks struggling to pay to heat their homes. I’m tired of having to watch the weather constantly to see if we have to move or cancel events. I’m ready for sunshine, for Spring, for Summer, for the calendar to lighten up a bit or at least stay on track. Are you feeling this same way? ...

This is exactly how far in writing this message I was when my son came home from Kindergarten, all smiles. He excitedly told me about how he got to have a snow-ball fight today, with his teacher! I was reminded, in the way that only excited little children can, that my perspective is not the only one, and that the way in which I choose to look at a situation can color my perspective. To me, the snow outside was a hindrance, an annoyance. To him, it was an adventure, a memory that he’ll cherish of his wonderful teacher, classmates, and throwing snowballs in fun. I needed this reminder today, and maybe you did too. To view the snow and other issues in our lives through the eyes of children. To find the fun in the midst of the annoyances, to live in the moment, and not worry so much about plans. God wants this for as well, in our faith lives.

In three of our Gospels, we hear the story of Jesus and the little children. [I invite you to read it all in Luke 18.] That is how important it is for us to come to Jesus with the eyes and the faith of little children, who seem to have an easier time with believing that God does indeed love them. Before doubts and questions and frustrations colored our perspective, faith was easier. Let us strive to return to the perspective and faith of children. Amen.

~ Your Sibling in Christ, Katie DeMarais, SAM

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Brady Bauer, Jessie Beckman, Shawn Bendickson, Ron Dahl, Alex Gullingsrud, Denise Halland, David & Diane Hamre, Cindy (Wastweet) Kiester, Ann (Wastweet) Kukowski, Pat Larson, Violet Lee, Donna Lisburg, Julia (Pantaleo) Madoll, Gwen Meyer, Marla (Johnson) Miller, Kathy Motteberg, Marilyn Natwick, Trisha Nelson, Clarice Ose, Todd Scheff, Anita Slater, and Jean Uhler

A MESSAGE FROM RACHEL ROGGENBUCK...

ANJLP Worship Life Coordinator

I am excited for the coming months!! First because it might actually be Spring and Summer soon and I know we are *all* ready! Second, our parish worship team met at the end of March, sharing ideas for summer worship opportunities, as well as their excitement about the things we have already done! YOU can be on the Parish worship team to help shape these opportunities for your own church, as well as for the parish. Last year we enjoyed Beer and Hymns, a Sunday Revival and worship in the park. We are talking about doing these things again, and also planning to add floats in local parades, regular worship in the park and much more! We welcome everyone that wants to help plan these occasions, whether it is one, or more than one!!! Our next meeting is on May 16 at 6:30 p.m. at Immanuel in Bejou. Just as Jesus and his disciples met people where they were to share the Good News, these activities and events are that...meeting people where they are. Let us bring the Good News to the people, joyfully, with love and excitement!

In Peace, (and excitement!)
Rachel

Minutes - A New Journey Parish Council Meeting

(6:30 p.m. on April 12, 2023, at Immanuel Lutheran, Bejou, MN)

Council members present: Jim Steinmetz, Karen Carlsrud, Stacey Knudson, Peggy Hanson, Teresa Werpy, Mary Preisler and Wanda Stordahl. Others in attendance: Pastor René Mehlberg, Katie DeMarais, Rachel Roggenbuck, Mike Nelson and Sue Gunderson.

The meeting was called to order by President Jim Steinmetz followed by devotions led by Pastor René.

Secretary's report: Minutes were distributed. Motion was made by Mary, seconded by Wanda and carried, to approve the minutes of the parish council meeting held March 15, 2023.

Treasurer's report: Reports were not available but in Jill's absence, Mike indicated we are sitting okay and that a more thorough report will be provided in May.

Staff report:

Katie reported that 4 students completed First Communion training. Confirmation services are scheduled at Gary, for Gary and Ness students, on April 16, Immanuel on May 7, and Our Savior's on May 14. There are students who are showing an interest in attending Bible Camp this summer. As was done last year, a motion was made by Teresa, seconded by Mary and carried, to have the Parish pay for half of the registration fee for students going to Bible Camp in 2023. ANJLP participation in area baccalaureate services was reviewed.

Rachel reported that the ordered audio/visual equipment has arrived at her home and she is working on procedures for the use of that equipment. She indicated there were lots of good ideas suggested at the recent worship team meeting and there will be another meeting in May to further discuss acting on some of those ideas. She reminded everyone that the joint worship at Immanuel on Sunday, April 30, will be a little different and we are calling it "Food, Faith and Fellowship."

Pastor René mentioned updating the membership directories and suggested working toward individual congregational directories, as well as a parish-wide directory. On-line giving was reviewed, and it was noted that staff is researching options for on-line giving they will bring back to the Parish Council for review. Pastor René shared that this year's Synod Assembly will be hybrid, with people meeting in 4 different locations throughout the synod. Our closest places are East Grand Forks and Bemidji. Congregations/parishes are encouraged to attend the same location. She asked if congregations had reps selected. Peggy Hanson and Jenny Lien plan to attend; and Jimmy indicated Immanuel may have members attending. Pastor suggested that we try to put together a parish-wide annual congregation and community calendar of events; and that information can be forwarded to Sue Gunderson to assemble. Pastor is looking for a 2-drawer letter size file cabinet and filing supplies to have at Immanuel for official parish documents and also indicated it would be good to have the copier connected to Internet.

The Council read through the current Parish Agreement as a reminder to what the purpose and vision is of ANJLP.

Old Business:

Jimmy reminded everyone that work should continue on updating each congregation's membership list. Rough membership numbers should be available for discussion at the ANJLP council meeting in August.

Ness Lutheran still does not have a second representative to serve on the Parish Council.

Mike reminded everyone about the Henriksen Fundraiser and noted that workers are needed to help at the fundraiser.

Jimmy also reminded everyone that he has butter and hamburger that he is willing to donate for events.

New Business:

It was suggested that professional posters listing ANJLP information be developed for posting around the area.

Discussion was held on Thrivent funds that are available to Thrivent consumers.

It was noted that members like Wednesday evening services, especially those who are not able to attend Sunday morning worship. Plans are to continue with the Wednesday services during the summer months, and ideas for where those summer services may be held were discussed.

The next ANJLP Council meeting was scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Monday, May 15, 2023, at Immanuel Lutheran, Bejou.

The meeting adjourned and we closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

Sue Gunderson, Parish Secretary

News from Gary Lutheran...

- Sunday, May 21, will be Senior Quilt Day at Gary Lutheran.

Altar Guild, Usher/Greeters and Janitor Assignments

- Gary Lutheran Church Ushers/Greeters, including any midweek services in their timeframe. (NOTE: Please plug in lamp prior to service & unplug after services.):

- May 7-14: Kurt & Shawn Halverson
- May 21-28: Dennis Jacobson and Jay Gunderson

- Gary Lutheran Altar Guild for May: Karla Tommervik & Renee Olson



News from Our Savior's...

Our Savior's Council Meeting Minutes – April 16, 2023

Meeting called to order by President Wanda Stordahl. Pastor René Mehlberg opened up with devotions.

Tanya Hamre made a motion to approve the March council meeting minutes, 2nd it by Jane Aakhus. Motion passed.

Kristi Skeie made a motion to approve the financial report, 2nd it by Marilyn Graff, motion passed.

Wanda Stordahl gave the parish update. Pastor Rene gave the pastor's report.

Stacey Knudson gave an update on the parsonage and Wanda also provided us some numbers regarding costs of various expenses throughout the year. Jane Aakhus made a motion to raise the rent at the parsonage to \$800.00 per month effective July 1st, 2023, 2nd it by Tanya Hamre, motion passed. Motion was made by Kristi Skeie and 2nd it by Jane Aakhus to proceed going forward of the selling of the parsonage by July 2024 if the congregation votes in favor of it at the May 21st congregational meeting. Following church services on May 21, 2023, there will be a congregational meeting and vote regarding the selling of the parsonage.

Kristi Skeie gave an update about the Memorial Day lunch we are hosting that day. It was decided we would have it as free will donation and we need to get signs up to advertise it around the community.

Installation of new council members will be on Sunday, May 21, during the service.

Motion by Marilyn Graff and seconded it by Tanya Hamre to adjourn the meeting. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Additional Our Savior's Info:

- Everyone is welcome to stay for lunch following worship at Our Savior's on Sunday, May 14, to help Kalli Roy celebrate her Confirmation.
- SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: This is your notice of Our Savior's special congregational meeting following worship on Sunday, May 21, to vote on selling the parsonage.
- MEMORIAL DAY INFORMATION: McIntosh will be holding a Memorial Day parade on Monday morning, May 29, beginning at 10:15 followed by a program at the Community Center at 10:30 and a lawn service at 11:00. Our Savior's will start serving lunch at the Community Center about 11:20.

News from Immanuel...

Summary of April 19 , 2023, Immanuel Council Meeting Minutes

Council members present: Jim Steinmetz, Peggy Gunderson, Gloria Steinbrenner, Becky Olson, Cindy Large, Jon Large, 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. It was noted that money made from the Mother/Daughter Brunch goes into Immanuel's general fund.

Pastor René's report:

- She focused on Jeremiah 29 and asked all Council members to think about and answer the following questions: What is the welfare you seek? What is it you dream about? What is it you want to see or make possible?
- Ideas for summer worship have been discussed and plans will be decided and made in the near future.
- If you are a Thrivent member and can apply for Thrivent funds that may benefit the Parish, please reach out to Pastor René.
- Plans are still being made to do a Parish Community Calendar.
- Parish Agreement handed out for review.

Katie's report:

- May 7th – Confirmation at Immanuel.
- Immanuel will have 5 students going to Bible Camp. Half of the registration fee will be paid by ANJLP and half will be paid by Immanuel Ladies Aid for our 5 students.

Rachel's report:

- Video equipment is here.
- Worship team has met and had lots of great ideas.
- Rachel will be gone the weekend of the auction sale.

Old Business:

- Sunday School doors need to be replaced with glass in the windows and sound proofing. Jim will check into this.
- Please keep selling raffle tickets.
- If you have items for the auction, please contact Jimmy, Terry or Darrell.
- Goal is to start background checks by next school year for people who work with children.

New Business:

- Kendra Miller and Jonathan Moritz are Immanuel's High School Seniors.

Additional Immanuel Info:

- Ladies' Aid will hold their monthly supper on Wednesday, May 17, serving from 4:00-6:30 p.m. and the meal cost is a free will offering. Servers are Candace Kulzer, Susan Bendickson and Sherry Pederson. (Note: The final confirmation class will be held at 6:00 p.m., worship service at 7 p.m. & Immanuel Council meeting at 8 p.m.)



**Wednesday
Night Worship**

Wednesday, May 17~ 7:00pm
Immanuel Lutheran Church
Ladies Aid Supper served from 4:00-6:30pm
Confirmation Class 6pm

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



Family Playdate

All are welcome to attend a
monthly family playdate!
As the kids play, the adults can chat,
have some snacks, and/or relax.

Thursday, May 18
Come anytime between **4-6pm**
At the playground of the old
Gary School



Youth Group

Open to all 6-12 Graders.
All are welcome. Bring a friend!
Service project event: we will go to the
parks in Gary and do some clean up, pick
up garbage, and paint and hide rocks for
kids to find this summer.

Sunday, May 21
5:00-7:00pm
Gary Lutheran Church
(and then around Gary)



Church Ladies' Night Out

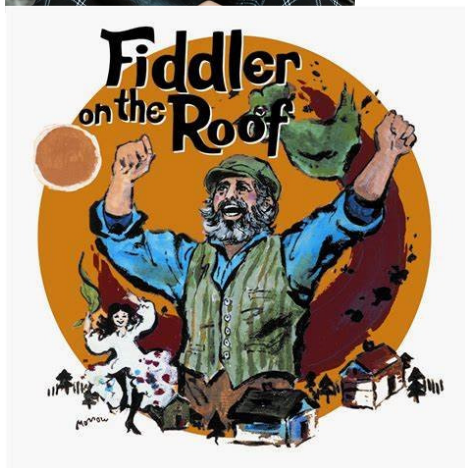
All ladies are welcome! Bring a friend!
Each month we will gather at a local
restaurant for food, fellowship,
and fun.

Tuesday, May 23
6:30pm
Erickson's Smokehouse, Fertile

ADDITIONAL ANNOUNCEMENT:



Our own Bridget Roggenbuck (member at Immanuel in Bejou) plays Hodel in Thief River Falls Area Community Theater (ACT) production of Fiddler on the Roof. Tickets are on sale now and projected to sell out! Performance dates are June 6, 7, 8, 9, 12 and 13 at Northland Community and Technical College in Thief River Falls. All performances begin at 7 p.m. General Ticket information:



ACT is very excited to sell tickets online for its upcoming shows this season. Tickets are also available for sale at the door on the evenings of performances. Box Office opens at 6 p.m. The link for purchasing

online: <https://www.onthestage.tickets/show/thief-river-falls-area-community-theater/63d97f099940a70e5b554515>

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| Ministers: | Members of the Congregations |
| | Pastor René Mehlberg (218) 308-7898 pastor.rene.mehlberg@gmail.com |
| 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 |
| Find Us Online: | linktr.ee/anewjourneyparish |

MAY 2023 WORSHIP SCHEDULE

| WORSHIP | IMMANUEL (Bejou) | OUR SAVIOR'S (McIntosh) | GARY | NESS | SUNDAL |
|---|---|---|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Sunday, May 7 (white) Communion | 8:30 am – Worship with Confirmation 9:30 am – Final day of Sunday School | 10:30 am - Worship | 8:30 am – Worship 9:30 am – Final day of Sunday School | 10:30 am - Worship | |
| Sunday, May 14 (white) Mother's Day | 8:30 a.m. -- Worship | 10:30 a.m.-- Worship with Confirmation | 8:30 a.m. -- Worship | | |
| Wed., May 17 (white) | 7:00 pm - Worship | | | | |
| Sunday, May 21 (white) Communion | 8:30 am – Worship | 10:30 am - Worship with Council Install, followed by special cong. mtg & council mtg. | 10:30 am – Worship with Sr. quilts & Council Install, followed by council mtg. | 8:30 am - Worship | |
| Pentecost Sunday, May 28 (red) | 8:30 am – Worship | 10:30 am - Worship | | | 10:30 am – Worship with Communion |