

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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AUGUST 2023



- **Youth Group:** Bring your whole family to our Aug 27th Family Fun Event! We will not have a separate Youth Group event this month. All are welcome to come that evening. Any and all who would like to come help lead our last VBS of the summer on August 10th at Our Savior's in McIntosh, we'd love to have your help!
- **Confirmation Classes:** Confirmation will begin this fall (more info to come soon), and we need names and contact information for any youth entering 7th grade or older who have not completed the Confirmation program. Youth do not have to 'belong' to any of our congregations. Please send an email, text, or call to Katie to get on the mailing list. Letters with more information will be sent to families in August.
- **Confirmation Mentors:** As a part of the Confirmation program this year, we will need faithful, responsible adult mentors to be paired with the students. If you feel called to this important role, please reach out to Katie for more information. This is a wonderful experience to be able to be a positive force in a child's life.

“Good Gossip”

We don't share the GOOD things we do as much as we share gossip, so each month we'll lift up some good ministry being done throughout the Parish.

Praying for You/Greeting Card Ministry

We all know prayer is powerful, especially when illness, accidents, or death occurs. Prayer is something anyone can do, wherever they are, and is one way we are the body of Christ together, even when we are scattered.

ANJLP is thankful for Julie Gevik, secretary at Gary/Ness, for sharing her gifts by sending out cards weekly to those who have recently lost a loved one, been added to the prayer list, and to random people from the newsletter mailing list. You may have been a recipient or will be someday! What a great gift of receiving “real mail” in your mailbox! Know that the Spirit is truly at work in this ministry. Every so often

a recipient sends back a card or lets someone know how that the card came at the exact time the person or family truly needed prayer.

A big thank-you to Theresa McCollum for a Thrivent Action Team grant to cover the cost of this program for this year of postage and cards. (If YOU are a Thrivent member with access to an Action Team grant and am not sure how it can be used, let Pastor René know as she and parish staff have some great ideas!)

YOUR help is also needed! If you know of someone in need of a card, including those with birthdays or anniversaries coming up, reach out to Julie and let her know. You can email her at garyrindaloffice@gmail.com or text at 218-280-3356.

This ministry is a great way to let people know their Parish and Staff are thinking and praying for them.

And, if YOU have an idea for an upcoming “Good Gossip” column, let Katie or Pastor René know. We’d love to hear from you so we spread the news of the many ways God’s love is being shared throughout our mission field and beyond!

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR RENÉ L. MEHLBERG...

Dear Beloved Children of God:

This past week, I have been thinking about gifts a lot. Not the kind you give or receive on birthdays or holidays. I’m talking about the gifts, skills, talents, abilities that someone has that they then share with others and the world.

One reason I’m thinking about this is because of an Ephesians reading we recently had:

¹¹The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹⁵but speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.

Ephesians 4:11-12, 15-16

I preached on this text and asked people to think about, write down, and share the gifts they have and either currently share or would like to share with others in the church or parish. But you know what? I didn’t get anything back! This made me a little sad as I know people are sharing gifts, some I know and others I don’t. I also wonder who has a gift they’d like to share that I or others do not know.

“Many Gifts. One God” was the theme one day at VBS, which is another reason this is on my mind. From 1 Corinthians 12:4 we heard, “Now there are

varieties of gifts but the same Spirit.” As part of story time, I asked the children what gifts they had, such as being kind, singing, playing sports, sitting by someone who needs a friend. Sometimes the simplest things such as being kind, saying thank-you, sitting next to someone who is alone is truly a gift to the other person.

I’m also thinking about gifts as parish staff, specifically Katie, Rachel, and I continue to clarify and realign roles and responsibilities based on our spiritual gifts. If this sounds familiar, it’s because Katie wrote about it in the June newsletter when we first began. From this process, it has been determined that Katie will take the lead on Children, Youth, and Family Ministry and I will take the lead with pastoral care. We will help one another out, as needed and as requested. However, we as staff and you as members now know who is the lead on those things. We will continue to keep you updated as more gets clarified and defined.

The final reason I’m thinking about gifts is that sometimes a gift you have, grows, changes, and evolves over time. Sometimes someone has a gift for ministry that they have been sharing, that may be on the cusp of blooming and growing even more.

Following the Holy Spirit, in June Rachel completed her application to be a Synod Authorized Minister and had a successful interview with the Bishop. The next step is for the parish council to develop a covenant defining parish needs, Rachel’s responsibilities and expectations, how members will support her, and a financial agreement. This work is in progress, as discussions are happening with individual church councils.

Many, if not all, of the ministry responsibilities Rachel is currently shepherding would become part of her SAM role. Additional responsibilities would include pastoral care and visitations and worship coverage with the ability to preside at Holy Communion and Baptisms.

As noted in the parish council minutes later in the newsletter, there is money in the approved 2023 parish budget to cover the additional costs of Rachel becoming a SAM for the remainder of this year.

How might affirming Rachel’s call into deeper ministry or the realignment of responsibilities based on spiritual gifts or even more people sharing their gifts help build up the body of Christ in the churches and throughout ANJLP? How might knowing the gifts and passions others have that you are willing to share also help share the love and promises of God? Perhaps only God knows, and it seems God is providing the opportunity for us to see what is possible.

As we work to encourage one another to share the gifts God has blessed us with, may we do so to build up the body of Christ, gangly as it may be, in God’s unconditional and deep abiding love for us all.

Pastor René

A MESSAGE FROM KATIE DEMARAIS, SAM...

“And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what really matters, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.” ~ Philippians 1:9-11

I have good news to share with you all this month, besides the true Good News that is always shared! At the beginning of June, our NWMN Synod Bishop Tesch sent a note to all who are serving as Synod Authorized Ministers (SAMs), inviting us to apply for a new partnership between the synods in our region and Luther Seminary in St. Paul. This partnership is creating and awarding 3 applicants per synod a full scholarship to a graduate certificate program in Christian Ministry through Luther, to better equip lay leaders to serve congregations. In July, I applied and was chosen as a full scholarship recipient. This program sounded like a wonderful way to fulfill many things in my calling:

- 1) To gain knowledge and insight in theology and ministry so that I can be the best SAM I can be to serve with you, like is written in Philippians.
- 2) To test the waters of my educational and call journey, as these classes will be applicable if ever I am ready and called to pursue a master's degree program.
- 3) To fulfill the educational requirements for my SAM call.

The details, if you are wondering...the program calls for one seminary course per semester, eight total over two years. I will be able to complete the majority of it online, through distance learning, but I will need to be on-campus in St. Paul for three days each semester (the first being September 20-22). This does NOT mean that I will be an ordained Pastor at the completion of this graduate certificate program. That would call for another number of courses, an internship, and the approval and backing of a Synod Candidacy Committee. These courses would count, however, towards that degree if ever I feel called to pursue that path.

I will continue in my current call with you all, which has been and will remain part-time. Even as our staff roles grow and shift, I will continue to focus on Children, Youth, and Family ministry, including Confirmation, as well as preaching and my other duties.

I am thankful to Pr. René, Rachel, parish staff, and parish leadership for their support while I embark on this new adventure. Please keep me and my family in your prayers for changing roles, time away, and most of all that I may soak up wonderful knowledge and be better trained to share God's message of Hope and Love.

Your Sibling in Christ,
Katie DeMarais, SAM

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Brady Bauer, Jessie Beckman, Shawn Bendickson, Ron Dahl, Denise Halland, David & Diane Hamre, Cindy (Wastweet) Kiester, Ann (Wastweet) Kukowski, Kathy Lampton, Pat Larson, Violet Lee, Donna Lisburg, Julia (Pantaleo) Madoll, Gwen Meyer, Marla (Johnson) Miller, Kathy Motteberg, Marilyn Natwick, Todd Scheff, Anita Slater, Gina Tiokasin and Elijah (grandson of Donna Lisburg of Gary).

A MESSAGE FROM RACHEL ROGGENBUCK...

ANJLP Worship Life Coordinator

In one of the School of Lay Ministry lectures I listened to last month, I learned about Small Town and Rural (STaR) congregations. It was like listening to the history of each of the churches in our parish. While I don't know all of the history and details of each church, I do know enough to realize that what I was listening to was exactly what has happened here. The decline in membership and attendance, the change in attitude toward church and church activities was spelled out. Many factors contributed to this change, and it happened over a number of years.

Now, you may be wondering why the Worship Life Coordinator is talking about this and what this has to do with our worship life. It has everything to do with it! These changes have shaped where we are today and what steps we need to take to live into our mission of loving one another and sharing the gospel with others.

How can we do this? We have already started! As each of you participates in worship and activities at *your* church, you are allowing the love of Jesus to continue to grow in you, which will show as you participate in activities in your communities. You are like a seed that is planted in good soil. The seed puts down roots, grows and blooms! It can be hard work and it can take a long time, but it is worth it!!

In July, we witnessed as children attended Vacation Bible School at Immanuel and then Gary (Our Savior's is August 10) learning about the Good Gifts that we can give to others thru ELCA World Hunger. I hope they also learned that those good gifts can be shared at home. I urge you to continue with the good work that YOU have started! I am thankful to share the Gospel of Jesus alongside of You!

Peace,

Rachel

Minutes - A New Journey Parish Council Meeting

(7:30 p.m. on July 10, 2023, at Immanuel Lutheran, Bejou, MN)

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

The meeting was called to order by President Jim Steinmetz followed by devotions led by Mary Preisler.

Secretary's report: Minutes were distributed. Motion was made by Mary, seconded by Teresa and carried, to approve the minutes of the parish council meeting held June 12, 2023.

Treasurer's report: Jill Nelson distributed and reviewed the financial reports. A motion was made by Peggy, seconded by Mary and carried, to approve the treasurer's report as presented.

Staff report:

Rachel indicated that VBS would start at Immanuel on Monday, July 17, and provided a flyer showing the schedule also for VBS at Our Savior's and Gary Lutheran. Rachel reviewed the guidelines she developed for use of the Parish's audio/visual equipment and noted that anyone wishing to use the equipment should contact her.

Pastor René reported on the nice turnout at the worship service held during the Mahnomen County Fair and the good feedback received. Work continues to be done on defining the roles and responsibilities for Pastor, Katie and Rachel.

In Katie's absence (on vacation), Pastor René reported that Katie has applied to attend a 2-year Luther Seminary graduate program and is waiting to hear back whether or not she has been accepted into the program. In addition, there is a fully paid scholarship that we hope she may get. (NOTE: At the time of the printing of these minutes, we have learned that Katie did receive the scholarship we were hoping she would receive.) Katie is working on VBS and developing a parish safety and abuse prevention policy for youth and volunteers.

Old Business:

Discussion was held on the needs of the parish as it relates to pulpit supply, member visitations, etc. and how those duties are covered by Pastor René, Katie and Rachel.

The discussion also went on to review Rachel's current application to become a SAM (Synod Authorized Minister) for the parish, what additional responsibilities this would include, and how that fits into the 2023 Parish budget. There are funds

within the approved 2023 parish budget for Rachel to become a SAM for the remainder of the year. A motion was made by Jane, seconded by Mary, and carried to approve Rachel as a SAM as of August 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023, pending review and approval by each of the four congregation councils.

Everyone was reminded that the updated membership numbers should be available to review at the August Parish Council meeting.

New Business:

The Council was asked what they wanted to do about worship services on Labor Day weekend (September 3). It was noted that Ness did not want a service that day, but a decision from the other congregations was not made.

There are plans being made for an afternoon/evening Family Fun Event at Immanuel on Sunday, August 27.

The next ANJLP Council meeting was scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on Monday, August 28, 2023, at Immanuel Lutheran, Bejou. A motion was made by Mary, seconded by Jane and carried, to adjourn. The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Sue Gunderson
Parish Secretary

News from Gary Lutheran...

Gary Lutheran Church Council Minutes--July 23, 2023

The Gary Lutheran Church Council meeting was held on Sunday, July 23, 2023, following 7 p.m. worship. Present were Bonnie Werpy, Gene Werpy, Teresa Werpy, Jenny Lien, Peggy Hanson, Gene Hanson, Carrie Heisler, Stacy Gunderson, Karen Tadych, Katie DeMarais and Pastor René Mehlberg.

Bonnie called the meeting to order. The item "Thrivent Usage" was added to Old Business and the agenda was approved. The secretary's report was approved as read. The treasurer's report showed an ending balance of \$32,348.44 at the end of June. It was also reported that there is \$1,707.85 in the Memorial & Improvements fund for building projects that need to be done. The treasurer's report was approved by motion from Gene Hanson, second by Gene Werpy and carried.

Old Business: It was reported from the synod council representatives that each church in the parish is to submit their confirmed member numbers by August. The added hymns were going well, and we will continue to add a familiar hymn at the beginning of each service. The professional posters with information about our

parish are on the staff to-do list for this summer. The sound system is on Katie's to-do list. Vacation Bible School will be held in Gary the week of July 30-August 3. Peggy reported that the caramel roll fundraiser held during the rummage sale went well and \$457 was raised for the Bible Campers fund. Peggy used her Thrivent Action Team funds for this project. A discussion was held about other uses for those with Thrivent Action Team funds. Some ideas were using funds to purchase food for the Harvest Lunch to raise money for a new sound system and/or church computer or using Thrivent Action Team funds to purchase supplies for layette kits for Global Health ministries. Carrie moved to use one \$250 action team grant for food for the Harvest Lunch and another \$250 for technology.

New Business: It was reported that Rachel Roggenbuck has requested to become a SAM for our parish. Currently this would not change our parish budget. Carrie moved to let our parish council representatives know that the Gary Council approves of adding a second SAM for the remainder of 2023 and see how the 2024 budget turns out. Second by Gene Werpy and motion carried.

The flooring and leaky roof in the entry by the office was discussed. Carrie volunteered to talk to Bryan or Byron to take a look at the floor to see how badly damaged it is under the carpet. We will put up heat strips for the ice dams before next winter.

Katie announced that she was accepted into the Luther Seminary Graduate program with a full scholarship.

It was decided to have only one worship service on Labor Day Sunday in a central location.

Carrie moved to adjourn the meeting, second by Teresa Werpy. Motion carried.

Jenny Lien, Secretary

- Anyone wanting to help with Vacation Bible School in Gary on July 30-August 3, should please call Katie.

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.):
 - August 6: Lynn & Diane Thordal
 - August 13-20: Nathan & Bridget Sather
 - August 27-Sept. 3: Dean & Pam Pederson
- Gary Lutheran Altar Guild for August: Stacy Gunderson & Diane Thordal

News from Our Savior's...

Vacation Bible School: VBS will be held at Our Savior's on Thursday, August 10, from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

News from Immanuel...

Summary of July 19, 2023, Immanuel Council Meeting

- Katie was awarded a full tuition scholarship for a Luther Seminary graduate certificate program.
- A youth protection policy is in the works.
- Thanks to Rachel for her work with VBS this week.
- An audio-visual policy is now complete.
- The new Sunday School doors should soon be installed.
- The Council approved issuing a call for Rachel to be a SAM within the parish.
- A donation of \$400 to ELCA World Hunger was approved (\$152 was collected at VBS special offering.)
- Sunday School will begin passing the "noisy bucket" offering again once a month.
- A committee was formed to update Immanuel's membership list.

Additional Immanuel Info:

- Condolences to the family and friends of Lucille Roragen, who passed away on Sunday, July 16. Her funeral will be held at Immanuel Lutheran on Friday, August 11, at 11:00 a.m., with visitation at 10:00 a.m.
- Ladies' Aid will hold their monthly supper on Wednesday, August 16, serving from 4:00-6:30 p.m. and the meal cost is a free will offering. Servers are Sylvia McCollum, Nikki McCollum, Doreen Turner and Lori Turner. (Note: Following Ladies' Aid supper, there will be a worship service at 7 p.m. & Immanuel Council meeting at 8 p.m.)

Vacation Bible School

Bible stories, snacks, crafts, games, and more! For children in pre-school - 6th grade, and 7-12th can be helpers. All are welcome at any of the 2 remaining opportunities for VBS this summer:

Sun-Thurs, July 30-Aug 3:
6-8pm hosted @ Gary

Thurs, Aug 10: 10am-3pm
hosted @ Our Savior's, McIntosh



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, August 22
6:30pm
Erickson's Smokehouse, Fertile



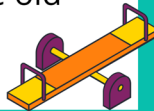
Family Playdate

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

Thursday, August 24

Come anytime between **4-6pm**

At the playground of the old Gary School



Youth Group @ the Family Fun Event

Youth Group is open to all 6-12 Graders. All are welcome. Bring friends! In August, we will celebrate Youth Group during the Family Fun Event. Bring your whole family for some games, food, and fun.

Sunday, August 27 ~ Afternoon / Evening
Hosted at Immanuel Lutheran Church
Bejou, MN

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 Sec.:

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

AUGUST 2023 WORSHIP SCHEDULE (denotes Holy Communion)**

WORSHIP	IMMANUEL (Bejou)	OUR SAVIOR'S (McIntosh)	GARY	NESS	SUNDAL
Sunday, Aug. 6 (green)	8:30 am – Worship**	10:30 am— Worship**	8:30 am – Worship		
Wed., Aug. 9 <i>7 pm WORSHIP at GARY CITY PARK</i>					
Sunday, Aug. 13 (green)	8:30 am – Worship	10:30 am-- Worship		10:30 am – Worship	
Wed., Aug. 16 (green)	7:00 pm – Worship				
Sunday, Aug. 20 (green)	8:30 am -- Worship	10:30 am - Worship	10:30 am – Worship**		
Wed., Aug. 23 (green)		7:00 pm - Worship			
Sunday, Aug. 27 (green)	8:30 am – Worship**	10:30 am – Worship**		8:30 am – Worship**	10:30 am--Worship**