

**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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**SEPTEMBER 2023**



- **Youth Group** is open to all 6-12 Graders. All are welcome. Bring friends! In September, Jenna Radke (whose family are members at Immanuel and is a board game creator at Pops & Bejou Games) is coming to lead us in a night playing fun board games. Come join in for some games, food, and fun. Sunday, Sept 17. 5:00-7:00pm. Hosted at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Bejou.
- **Confirmation Meeting for Students, Parents/Guardians**, and Katie to meet and go through expectations, schedules, and information is set for Sunday, Sept.17, at 4:30pm at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Bejou. If you have an interested youth entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade or older, please contact Katie to sign up for Confirmation Class. Please plan to attend this meeting, as it will be a chance for all of us to begin the year on the same page. This meeting will take place just before the Youth Group board game night, so adults can either stay to play games or drop off their youth for Youth Group following the meeting. Contact Katie for more details: call/text 218-820-8287.
- **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.
- **ANJLP Council Meeting Minutes:** The parish council meeting was held August 28 (following printing of this newsletter) so minutes of that meeting will be included in the October newsletter.
- **Pastoral Care & Getting to Know God's Beloved People:**

Making visits and getting to know God's beloved people is one of the great joys of ministry. It gives us a glimpse into your space and home, what life is like for you, providing an escape from paperwork and other administrative duties that are necessary, but not always fun.

Visits come in many forms: before, during, or after a procedure or hospital stay; for those in care facilities or homebound; when you want to talk, share an idea, or need a listening ear; would like communion. They can be over coffee or a meal or with an adventure of fishing, kayaking, walking, or something else.

As ANJLP formed a little over a year ago, Pastor René is compiling a list of those who should be on a visitation list. This includes people who are in health care/assisted living facilities, those homebound, and anyone else for whatever reason.

Thank-you to those who have shared names and more help is needed to make sure no one is missed. If you know of someone who should be added to the list or contacted for a visit, let Pastor René know.

Parish staff appreciate when people proactively reach out to schedule a visit. We truly do! It's easy to call when we hear news of someone wanting a visit, but even then people vary in their desire for or expectations of pastoral visits.

In a perfect world, there would be 100% satisfaction in the quality and quantity of visits, but it is not a perfect world. And the parish staff are not perfect either. We do our best to get out, especially when requested. Again, please, reach out if you would like a visit, if you want to stop by one of the offices, or meet someplace else. It would be great to find time to be together!

■ **Synod Road Trip:** YOU are invited to meet the NWMN Synod Staff on Thursday, September 21, at Our Savior's! Just as Pastor René wants to get out and about, so does the Synod Staff! They are going to all 8 conferences throughout the synod and Our Savior's is hosting the Conference 3 gathering! All are welcome to attend for food and fellowship with synod staff and others throughout the conference. We hope you are able to attend, as it's in our parish, for some or all of the evening:

- 5:15-5:55 pm: Registration
- 5:30 pm: Meal
- 6:00 pm: Devotion, Synod Update, Q & A
- 7:30 pm: Sending Blessing

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## ***“Good Gossip”***

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

### **Vacation Bible School**

We held three opportunities for Vacation Bible School in our Parish this summer. What a blessing to be able to host three opportunities in three different locations, with varying lengths of time commitments and times of day, in order to reach as many families as possible. All together, we were able to share the message of “God's New Creation” with around 50 young people. Crafts, games, songs, Bible

stories and more all were used to let kids know that Jesus loves THEM and YOU! Offering was raised to support ELCA World Hunger at both Immanuel and Gary.

A huge THANKS goes out to all of our dedicated helpers, teachers, teen leaders, snack makers, staff, and to the adults who made it a priority to bring kiddos to VBS. VBS couldn't happen without you! Keep these and all kiddos in your prayers, that their faith may continue to grow, and that they love and serve the Lord.

And, if YOU have an idea for an upcoming "Good Gossip" column, let Staff 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!

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

*Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you. (Psalm 33:22)*

Dear Beloved Children of God:

I write this at the beginning of August, before leaving on vacation. By the time you read this, I'll be back, school has started for some with others preparing for day one, busy field work continues, and perhaps fall is in the air.

A slight change will be happening with the staffing of ANJLP as we work to finalize a covenant with Rachel Roggenbuck to commission her as a SAM for the remainder of 2023. We are hopeful that finances make it possible to keep Rachel in that role for 2024 and beyond.

The primary focus for Rachel in this position will be pastoral care/visitation. This would include creating a list from each church of the people (and their place) for ongoing visits and those when a life event happens (illness, death, etc.). The SAM would be the lead while working with the pastor/mission developer (myself), other SAM (Katie DeMarais), and lay leaders to connect with and care for those in need. Read the pastoral care article elsewhere in the newsletter.

As the faithful have since the beginning of time, we hold onto hope and onto God while asking for God's steadfast love to be upon us, to be felt by us, to be known by us, and to be shared through us.

May you feel God's steadfast love upon you each and every day!

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 again 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, Joyce Bendickson, Shawn Bendickson, Ron Dahl, Denise Halland, David & Diane Hamre, Rosie Keller, Cindy (Wastweet) Kiester, Ann (Wastweet) Kukowski, Kathy Lampton, Violet Lee, Pauline Leines, 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).*

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

***ANJLP Worship Life Coordinator***

Often, my articles look back at what we have done and how it is shaping where we are. We have done a fabulous job of continuing to meet each other where we are, growing together in community, and forging stronger relationships as we go forth to share the Good News. Do Not Be Afraid. Change is coming. It continues to come. About the time we get our feet under us and feel stable, something changes. Fall. Autumn. Harvest. These words are synonymous with change. We might also add School. Football and basketball games. A new job. Schedules will change. Do not be afraid.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus lays it on the line for the disciples. "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find." These are some heavy words for the disciples and for us. There isn't a story or parable that will tell this in prettier words. Do not be afraid. Clearly, to follow Jesus was never meant to be skipping down the yellow brick road. Even under the best circumstances, active Christianity is almost always inconvenient. At times it can be lonely and disappointing. And for most people in the world, these are not the best circumstances. We don't come to our small, rural church to get a pat on the head from Jesus. We come to be challenged and we are. Jesus has told us that the grave is not the end of the story for him or for us. He will conquer death so that we can conquer death. The work will be hard, but it needs to be done. Do not be afraid. There are many things we do not know, but what we DO know is that WE are equipped to do this work. This sharing of the gospel. Sharing time together in church, parish, and community events gives us opportunities and the strength to be disciples of Jesus.

In Peace,  
Rachel

## *News from Gary Lutheran...*

- Sunday School will start at Gary on Sunday, September 17, and will be held at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday, even the Sundays when there is no worship scheduled at Gary. Contact Teresa Werpy if you have any questions.

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

- Gary Lutheran Church Ushers/Greeters, including any midweek services in their timeframe. (NOTE: Please check to make sure the red Christ Candle gets extinguished after each service.):
  - Sept. 3: No Worship
  - Sept. 10 & 17: Bryan & Amanda Thronson, Gatlyn & Sara Affield
  - Sept. 24 & Oct. 1: David & Audrey Hanson
- Gary Lutheran Altar Guild for September: Jill Nelson

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

### **August 6, 2023 Council Meeting**

Meeting was called to order by Vice President Stacey Knudson. Pastor René opened up with devotions. Council members present were Marilyn Graff, Jane Aakhus, Kristi Skeie, Stacey Knudson, Tanya Hamre, Cindy Ostenaar, and Gordie Ostenaar. Others in attendance were Anita Roy and Pastor René Mehlberg.

Marilyn Graff made a motion to accept the June meeting minutes and 2<sup>nd</sup> it by Jane Aakhus. Jane Aakhus made a motion to accept the financial report and Tanya Hamre 2<sup>nd</sup> it.

### **Old Business**

-Stacey gave an update on the parsonage. She stated that the new lease was sent to them. Anita also reported that it had been returned by Svalens. The work on the parsonage garage door is done.

-Jane, Anita and Marilyn will work on the membership list to get it updated.

-On August 30<sup>th</sup> we will be cleaning and going through things again at church.

### **New Business**

-Discussion was held on the SAM position that Rachel Roggenbuck has applied for through our parish. Tanya Hamre made a motion to approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> SAM position through the end of the year and it was 2<sup>nd</sup> it by Jane Aakhus. Motion passed 6 yes and 1 no.

-The Synod Road Trip will be at Our Savior's on Thursday, September 21, 2023, starting at 5:15 pm. Marilyn will ask a ladies' aid group to bring some desserts for this.

-Our fall dinner will be on Sunday, September 17, 2023, starting at 11:30am with free will donation. Gordie will get hold of some men to help with it again and Cindy will call around for food donations towards it. We are also going to have a booth at the McIntosh Harvest Festival on Saturday, September 16. Stacey will be in charge of organizing this.

-Discussed youth/ family events opportunities for this upcoming year. If you are interested in helping with organizing an event, please contact Anita.

### **Pastoral Report**

Pastor René Mehlberg gave her report. She reported that Katie would be here on August 13<sup>th</sup> and Rachel on August 20<sup>th</sup>. Discussed working together to come up with an order of service that would be more streamlined like we had for worship in the park that Sunday.

Motion made by Jane and 2<sup>nd</sup> it by Gordie to adjourn. Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

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## *News from Immanuel...*

### **Summary of August 16, 2023, Immanuel Council Meeting**

- Council members present: Jim Steinmetz, Duane Gunderson, Peggy Gunderson, Mary Nell Preisler, Cindy Large, Terry McCollum and Delane Schaumburg. Also present: Rachel Roggenbuck.
- Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were given and approved.
- Family Fun Event at Immanuel on August 27 at 5:00 p.m. Hamburgers and brats will be provided and others are asked to bring a potluck item to share.
- Proclaim event planned on Sept. 2 in Solway. If interested in attending, contact Rachel.
- We are looking for places to hold a revival in 2024.
- Thank you to those who are working on updating our 2023 membership list!
- The new classroom doors have been installed and look great.

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### **Additional Immanuel Info:**

- Ladies' Aid supper on Wednesday, September 20, serving from 4-6:30 p.m. Meal cost is a free will offering. Servers are Andrea Bendickson, Jean Uhler and Erica Holmvik. (Note: Worship service at 7 p.m. & Immanuel Council meeting at 8 p.m.)
- Calendar Info: Immanuel's Fall Festival will be held on Sunday, October 1.
- Watch for future information about the start of Sunday School at Immanuel.





## 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, September 14**  
Come anytime between **4-6pm**  
At the playground of the old Gary School

## Youth Group



Youth Group is open to all 6-12 Graders. All are welcome. Bring friends! Jenna Radke, board game creator at Pops & Bejou Games, is coming to lead us in a night playing fun board games. Come join in for some games, food, and fun.

**Sunday, Sept 17 ~ 5:00-7:00pm**  
**Hosted at Immanuel Lutheran Church**  
**Bejou, MN**

## OUR SAVIOR'S FALL FESTIVAL MEATBALL DINNER

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17**  
**11:30 AM – 1:00 PM**

**Serving: Meatballs, Mashed Potatoes & Gravy, Peas, Dinner Roll, Beverage and Dessert**  
**Free Will Offering**

## Wednesday Night Worship

Wednesday, September 20  
hosted at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Bejou  
Ladies Aid Supper served from 4:00-6:30pm  
Worship at 7pm

All are welcome to participate in Wednesday Night Worship:  
The Word proclaimed! Music sang!  
Fellowship shared!

## 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, September 26**  
**6:30pm**  
**Moran's Supperclub, Winger**

Thursday, Sept 21: Our Savior's  
5:15pm - 7:30pm (with a meal)



## Synod Road Trip '23

The Synod Staff is coming to you;

mark your calendars now!

**For ALL Conference 3 Congregations  
Come meet your Synod Staff!**

<b>Ministers:</b>	<b>Members of the Congregations</b> Pastor René Mehlberg (218) 308-7898 <a href="mailto:pastor.rene.mehlberg@gmail.com">pastor.rene.mehlberg@gmail.com</a>
<b>Synodically Authorized Minister (SAM)</b>	Katie DeMarais (218) 820-8287 or <a href="mailto:demarais.katie@gmail.com">demarais.katie@gmail.com</a>
<b>Worship Life Coordinator:</b>	Rachel Roggenbuck (701) 741-0976 or <a href="mailto:athomerachel@gmail.com">athomerachel@gmail.com</a>
<b>ANJLP Secretary:</b>	Sue Gunderson (218) 280-8678 or <a href="mailto:immanuel@gvtel.com">immanuel@gvtel.com</a>
<b>Gary/Ness Sec.:</b>	Julie Gevik (218) 280-3356 or <a href="mailto:garyrindaloffice@gmail.com">garyrindaloffice@gmail.com</a>
<b>Our Savior's Secretary:</b>	Anita Roy (218) 849-3791 or <a href="mailto:oursaviors@gvtel.com">oursaviors@gvtel.com</a>
<b>Parish Website:</b>	<a href="http://anewjourneyparish.org">anewjourneyparish.org</a>

~~~~~ PRAYER ~~~~~

*Prayer is nothing else than being on terms of friendship with God.*

~ Teresa of Avila

Prayer is something that is both personal and public, and something that can be done anywhere, anytime, by anyone. There are also many different ways to pray, including the breath prayer. We don't take enough time to pause and breathe in God's presence and to breathe out all that is not of God. Take a couple of moments to try the following breath prayer to see how it feels for you.

**A Prayer to Breathe: By Sarah Bessey**

Breath prayer is an ancient form of prayer easily adaptable for anyone. Simply choose one or two lines to meditate on, and inhale and then exhale through them. Once common form of breath prayer is known as the Jesus Prayer:

*From Matthew 11:28-30*

Inhale: Humble and gentle One,

Exhale: you are rest for my soul.

*From John 15*

Inhale: True Vine and Gardener,

Exhale: I abide in You.

*From Romans 8:38-39*

Inhale: Nothing can separate me,

Exhale: from the love of God.

*From Psalm 46:10*

Inhale: Be still

Exhale: and know you are God.

*From Matthew 6:10*

Inhale: On earth

Exhale: as it is in heaven.

*From 2 Corinthians 12:9*

Inhale: Your grace

Exhale: is enough for me.

*From 1 John*

Inhale: There is no fear

Exhale: in your Love.

*From Psalm 23*

Inhale: I will not be afraid

Exhale: for You are with me.

*From Psalm 46:1*

Inhale: You are our refuge

Exhale: and our strength.

*From Psalm 74:16*

Inhale: Both day and night

Exhale: belong to you.

*From Psalm 91:1*

Inhale: I find rest

Exhale: in Your Shelter.

*From Psalm 103:4-5*

Inhale: You surround me with love

Exhale: and tender mercies.

Inhale: You fill my life

Exhale: with good things.

*From Philippians 4:7*

Inhale: Peace of Christ,

Exhale: guard my heart and mind.

Start with ten good breaths in and out, with the words that are most meaningful or steadying to your soul.

*From A Rhythm of Prayer: A Collection of Meditations for Renewal*

**SEPTEMBER 2023 WORSHIP SCHEDULE (\*\* denotes Holy Communion)**

| <b>WORSHIP</b>                       | <b>IMMANUEL<br/>(Bejou)</b>                   | <b>OUR SAVIOR'S<br/>(McIntosh)</b>                    | <b>GARY</b>                                    | <b>NESS</b>           | <b>SUNDAL</b>      |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Sunday, Sept.3</b><br>(green)     | NO WORSHIP<br>SERVICES AT ANY<br>CONGREGATION |                                                       |                                                |                       |                    |
| <b>Sunday, Sept. 10**</b><br>(green) | 8:30 am – Worship                             | 10:30 am—Worship<br>followed by Council<br>Mtg        | 10:30 am—Worship<br>followed by Council<br>Mtg | 8:30 am –<br>Worship  |                    |
| <b>Sunday, Sept. 17**</b><br>(green) | 8:30 am – Worship                             | 10:30 am—Worship<br>followed by Fall<br>Festival Meal | 8:30 am – Worship<br>9:30 am—Sunday<br>School  |                       | 10:30 am – Worship |
| <b>Wed., Sept. 20</b><br>(green)     | 7:00 pm – Worship                             |                                                       |                                                |                       |                    |
| <b>Sunday, Sept. 24</b><br>(green)   | 8:30 am -- Worship                            | 10:30 am - Worship                                    | 9:30 am – Sunday<br>School                     | 10:30 am -<br>Worship |                    |