

**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

Non-Profit  
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**DECEMBER 2023**



**PARISH PRAYER LIST**

*Julian Affield and parents Gatlyn & Sara, Jessie Beckman, Shawn Bendickson, Julius Dahl, Ron Dahl, Denise Halland, David & Diane Hamre, Kenny Hillstad, Vangie Hillstad, Jeremy Holmvik, Nathan Kearns, Cindy (Wastweet) Kiester, Ann (Wastweet) Kukowski, Kathy Lampton, Violet Lee, Donna Lisburg, Julia (Pantaleo) Madoll, Gwen Meyer, Marla (Johnson) Miller, Randy Moen, Marilyn Natwick, Shiloh Ness, Keith Olson, Nick & April Ostenaar family, Franklyn Preisler, Todd Scheff, Anita Slater, Corky Syverson, Gina Tiokasin, and Mary Ann Wastweet. Condolences to the family and friends of Lorraine Rustad of Our Savior's who died Sunday, November 19, and whose funeral was Saturday, November 25. Condolences also to the family and friends of Wendy Bauer, daughter of Wally and Edna Nelson, Sundal. Wendy passed away on November 21.*

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***Soaring with the Holy Spirit at Parish-wide Worship***

Reformation Sunday was October 29 and parish-wide worship at Gary. The color of the day was red, signifying the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit that propelled Martin Luther to a new vision and understanding that grace, God's unconditional love for each and every one of us is a gift freely given to all. And it's this great gift that leads to our salvation.

Bibles were gifted to six young people, with the help of their families, and all gathered so they can read, wrestle, and wonder about God's word themselves.

We also "Soared with the Holy Spirit" by making and flying paper airplanes with peoples dreams for the church, three things they are grateful for, and how they'd like to see the church "REFORMED" in the next year.

Enjoy the word clouds of responses below. The larger the word, the more often it appeared in peoples' answers.

Thank you to Gary and Ness members who provided food (and served and cleaned up) for the meal as many stayed for food and fellowship following worship. Big shout-out to Alden Anderson and Karen Carlsrud for providing music and sharing their organ and piano debut with us all!

Parish-wide worship was held throughout ANJLP on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of a month, providing an opportunity to worship and fellowship together.



# ***“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.***

In November, our “Worship Outside the Walls” team organized a Blessing Box ministry. Over \$500 was raised from generous gifts given throughout our parish. Thank you to all who supported this with gifts, prayers, and time. Ten blessing boxes were assembled, including a turkey or ham, potatoes, veggies, rolls, a pie, and other ingredients to make a Thanksgiving meal. These ten boxes were delivered to families and individuals in and around our mission field. The families were chosen by suggestion, including folks experiencing a variety of circumstances, and kept anonymous.

The “Worship Outside the Walls” team will be giving the remainder of the money raised to support other hunger ministries in our area. Look for an update after the next “Worship Outside the Walls” meeting. If you have a passion for creative community ministry, please join the team. Contact Rachel for upcoming team meeting dates or how you can help with upcoming opportunities, including the next community Family Fun Night at Immanuel on December 10.

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

***“Our Finest Gifts We Bring”***

Dear Beloved Children of God:

Can you believe Hallmark started its “Countdown to Christmas” movies on October 20?!?! Some of you knew; I did not. I knew they started early, but didn't realize THAT early until looking it up.

It's easy to “eye-spy” signs of Christmas every place you go, with more to come! For many, there is comfort and joy in the sights and the sounds of the Christmas season.

I'm not trying to “hum-bug” your Christmas joy as I remind you that in our churches Advent comes before Christmas. Advent is the season of waiting, watching, and preparing for Christ's birth as we also wait, watch, and prepare for Christ to come again.

Advent begins four Sundays prior to Christmas. With Christmas Eve on Sunday this year, we will celebrate Advent 4 on Wednesday night, December 20.

Gift giving and receiving is one way we prepare for Christmas. A tradition perhaps stemming from the gifts the Wise Men gave to toddler Jesus. But perhaps it is also a reminder of the greatest gift God has given us: that of our Lord and Savior

Jesus Christ. For God coming to us in the flesh, teaching and showing us how to live and love, and be in relationship with one another.

In this season of gifts (that can too easily get out of control), I challenge you to consider what gift (or gifts) you could share with your church, the parish, your community. Now I fully realize, many of you are already doing this. There are many gifts and talents being shared. And I wonder, what other gifts are out there that people could share if they are asked? However, I or other parish staff, may not know the gifts you have that you wish to share.

Do you have a love of crafting or decorating? Cleaning through files or organizing? Calling or reaching out to people? Are you handy and could help with small projects? Perhaps a musical talent we do not even know about.

During worship in the Advent season, you will be encouraged to consider the gifts and skills you have and are willing to share. By knowing what people are good at and passionate about sharing allows parish staff to tap into the gifts already here. Sharing our gifts is another way we share God's love and promises with others.

We must remember that much of what we need is already here. Consider the song, "The Little Drummer Boy." He thought, "I have no gift to bring, that's fit to give our King." But that little drummer boy shared what he had, the best he could. And that made baby Jesus smile.

May we share the gifts we have with one another as we love God, love our neighbors, and make Jesus and each other smile!

Prayers and blessings for you and yours~

Pastor René

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

*“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have known sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that the person of God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.” ~ 2 Timothy 3:16-1*

This past month, we as a Parish have given 10 Holy Bibles to young people. We have helped families to fulfill one of the promises they made to the children in their lives at the time of the baptisms: to place in their hands the Holy Scriptures. I want to thank the people of this Parish for your support in this milestone. You help in the form of offering, encouragement of our youth and children, and your prayers for their continued faith formation.

I was chatting with a family before their young person received their Bible. The mom, grandma, and great-grandma all told the child how they still have their Bible they received from the church when they were young. They even have the Bibles of their ancestors who have since gone home to Jesus. We talked about how Bibles of older generations were used to record special dates such as their baptism, confirmation, weddings, and more. Folks underlined special verses and wrote in the margins. Funeral instructions, including favorite hymns, were tucked in the pages. Some of the pages became so dog-eared or worn out, that the verses were hard to read. How beautiful is that treasured inheritance: to see that your grandma’s, dad’s, or godparent’s Bible was so used that the cover is worn thin, and the comfort in getting to read through their favorite verses! Is your Bible so used? If yes, I’m so glad. If not, it is never too late to start. Dust off that Bible (or ask a staff member, and we’d be happy to give you one!). Read it daily. Underline verses. Ask questions. Write in the margins. Not only will your family receive a treasured inheritance, but you will grow so much closer to the Lord. The Bible is not just an old book, but the Holy Word of God, with so much to teach us.

Your Sibling in Christ,  
Katie DeMarais, SAM

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***A MESSAGE FROM RACHEL ROGGENBUCK, SAM...***

Wow! We have so much to be Thankful for in our community of faith. You all blew the “Worship Outside the Walls” team away with your generous donations. We were able to give 10 boxes to 8 households. Each household was beyond thankful to be thought of and to be the recipient of such a thoughtful gift! Our next event to join together as a community of believers is December 10<sup>th</sup> at 3pm at Immanuel. We are planning to sing carols, play games and eat food - it should be an amazing time!

Events are also planned for January and February - watch the newsletter and bulletins for more information on those!

As I write this newsletter article, Thanksgiving is in just a couple of days. There is much preparing to be done in order that we may share in a traditional Thanksgiving meal. No doubt we all have traditions that we pass on to younger generations, but today I want to share this story with you:

*On Thanksgiving Day, starting with the eldest, each person expressed some personal appreciation to the Lord for His hand in his life. Of course, they were a practical lot, and not wishing the food to get cold, they condensed their words. Someone would say, "I'm thankful for health." Another would add, "I'm thankful for family."*

*Everybody understood the rule -- except their five-year-old. As this was his first year to really get involved, he came armed. First, he gave thanks for mom who had cooked the turkey and dad who had brought it home from the store. So far, so good. But the boy wasn't done. He gave thanks for the grocery checker, who had rung up the bird, and the store, which had sold the bird, and the company, which had prepared the bird, and the farmer, who had raised the bird. The lad had the life of that turkey covered with thanksgiving. When he came up for air, he asked, "Did I forget anybody?" His older brother replied, "The only person you left out was God." And the five-year-old replied, "I was just getting to Him." And the Lord was thanked.*

***Praise the Lord! Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever! Psalm 106:1***

On this day and many more to come, I am thankful to be in this community of faith with each of you. For without just one of you, we would not be as strong as we are together.

Peace,  
Rachel Roggenbuck, SAM

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

(6:30 p.m. on November 20, 2023, at Immanuel Lutheran, Bejou, MN)

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

Jim called the meeting to order and Pr René led devotions and prayer.

Secretary's Report: Minutes were distributed and reviewed. Motion by Mary, second by Wanda and carried to approve minutes of the October 16, 2023, meeting as presented.

Treasurer's Report: Reports were distributed and discussed. A motion was made by Peggy, seconded by Teresa and carried, to approve the treasurer's report as presented.

Staff Reports:

Rachel reported on the ten Blessing Boxes presented to and well received by families in the area. Rachel is reaching out to members in numerous ways, including random texts, phone calls, visitations and sending Christmas cards.

Katie reported that she attended the recent Synod Middle School Youth Gathering in Alexandria with two parish youth and the cost was covered in the parish budget. Two additional mentors are needed for confirmation that involves meeting with confirmands for 2 hours every third Wednesday. Ten Bibles were distributed to students in third grade and up.

Pastor René reminded the Council she has moved into Bejou and reviewed some of the events she has attended in the area in her mission development role. She also talked about her pastoral care role that she coordinates with Rachel.

She reported that quilters from Our Savior's and Ness have been busy and Pastor will highlight some of that work in the December newsletter.

Old Business:

All four congregation councils approved the proposed 2024 parish budget, after answering questions regarding Bible Camp and funding of the second SAM position.

Pastor René proposed an additional expense line of \$600 to the NWMN Synod Mission Support. A motion was made by Mary, seconded by Peggy and carried to approve that addition.

An online giving program, called Tithly, was discussed as an additional means of giving to the parish. Rachel will handle implementing this program for our use.

New Business:

A tentative schedule for each congregation's annual meeting was reviewed and will soon be finalized. The reports from parish staff and the parish treasurer's report will be provided to each congregation for their annual reports.

The next ANJLP Council meeting will be held Monday, December 11, at 6:30 pm. at Immanuel. The meeting adjourned and closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Sue Gunderson, Parish Secretary



## *News from Gary Lutheran...*

**Sunday School Singing:** Don't miss the Sunday School singing Christmas songs during Worship on December 17. All are welcome to stay for cookies and coffee following 10:30 a.m. Worship.

**Harvest Lunch Success!** Thank you to all who helped in any way (cooking, serving, decorating, cleaning up, eating, donating) to make Gary's annual Harvest Lunch a huge success! The food was great, fellowship divine, and just over \$2,300 taken in. Final total will be shared after all bills are paid. Money raised is designated for technology needs. Thank you all for your support!

### **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.):
  - Dec. 3-10: Aaron & Kayla Werpy
  - Dec. 17-24: To be determined
  - Dec. 31-Jan. 7: Rhonda Bennefeld, and Jeff & Whitney Roske
- Gary Lutheran Altar Guild for December: Gwen Meyer, Bridget Sather

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## *News from Ness Lutheran...*

### **Quilters Gift 24 Quilts!**

On Sunday, September 24, 54 quilts were blessed during worship at Ness. Quilts were made by members of Ness, Sundal, and community members. Twenty-four of them were then taken to the Moorhead/Fargo area by Shirley Valen. Recipients included Churches United, Rape and Abuse Center, and the veterans. Those that remain will be given locally, including to the newly baptized and high school graduates.

The quilters will meet on Wednesday, December 13, starting at 11:30 am in the Ness basement. You are invited to join them!

Thank you to the many hands cutting, sewing, and tying God's love into these quilts for those who will receive them.

### **Marian Gorder turns 100!**

Marian's birthday is Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup>! You are encouraged to send her a card at Fair Meadows Nursing Home at 300 Garfield Ave SE, Fertile MN 56540 or stop by for a visit to wish her well.

We give thanks to God for Marian's long life and all caring for her now.

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

### **November 12, 2023 Council Meeting Summary**

Council members present were Wanda Stordahl, Jane Aakhus, Kristi Skeie, Stacey Knudson, Tanya Hamre, Marilyn Graff, Gordie Ostenaar and Cindy Ostenaar. Others in attendance were Anita Roy and Katie DeMarais.

- October 2023 meeting minutes approved.
- Financial report approved.
- Thanksgiving Eve Service update to be held Wed., November 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 pm at Our Savior's Church.
- Safety deposit box update.
- Reviewed and approved 2024 Parish Budget.
- Church decorating for Christmas will be Nov. 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> starting at 2:00 pm on the 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Pastoral and Parish reports given by Katie.
- Closed with Lord's Prayer.

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

- There will be a 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party for Carole Burslie on Saturday, December 2, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at Our Savior's Lutheran Church. Cake & coffee will be served, and all are welcome!

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## *News from Immanuel...*

### **Summary of November 15, 2023, Immanuel Council Meeting**

Council members present: Jim Steinmetz, Duane Gunderson, Peggy Gunderson, Mary Nell Preisler, Cindy Large, Jon Large, Gloria Steinbrenner, Terry McCollum, Darrell Lende, Joyce Bendickson and Delane Schaumburg. Also present: Pastor René Mehlberg, Katie DeMarais and Rachel Roggenbuck.

- Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were given and approved.

### **Staff Report:**

- Ten random households will receive Blessing Boxes.
- There were no students attending the first Sunday School at Immanuel.
- A parish-wide Family Fun Winter event will be held at Immanuel on Sunday, December 10. All are welcome.
- There is a Synod Middle School Youth Gathering in Alexandria on November 18 & 19.
- Mentors for our confirmation students are still needed.
- We are researching options for our copy machine.

Old Business:

- Our lutefisk supper is December 2 and we are asking for volunteers. The meal price was set at \$25 per person. Lendes are handling the advertising.
- Thank you to Terry McCollum for putting up additional confirmation boards.

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**Additional Immanuel Info:**

- Ladies' Aid supper on Wednesday, December 20, serving from 4-6:30 p.m. Meal cost is a free will offering. Servers are Sandy Holmvik and Samantha Deschene. (Note: Confirmation at 6 p.m., worship service at 7 p.m. & Immanuel Council meeting at 8 p.m.)
- In order to be successful, many volunteers are needed to help with our upcoming Lutefisk & Meatball Supper. Here is a tentative schedule:
  - Thursday, Nov. 30: early morning--men peel potatoes; make meatballs & gravy; cook potatoes for lefse.
  - Friday, Dec. 1: make coleslaw, make & cool lefse balls; fry lefse & cleanup
  - Saturday, Dec. 2: early morning--men peel potatoes; cook & mash potatoes; cook meatballs & gravy; butter buns & lefse; set up dining room, serving room & kitchen; make lemonade & coffee; cut desserts; melt butter; cook carrots; prepare & bake lutefisk; servers needed for tables; kitchen helpers needed to fill bowls/platters/coffee carafes/wash dishes and when everyone has been fed, we need everyone to stay and help with cleanup.
- Two beautiful quilts will be raffled off at our Lutefisk supper on December 2. Tickets for \$2 are currently being sold by Immanuel members.

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## Church Ladies' Night Out



### Church Ladies Christmas Party!

All ladies are welcome! Bring a friend!

The Christmas Party will be Potluck: bring an appetizer OR dessert to share.

If you would like be part of the Gift Exchange Game, bring a \$5-\$10 gift.

**Tuesday, December 12th**

**6:30pm**

**Immanuel Lutheran Church, Bejou**



## Family Playdate

We are going to continue indoors Family Playdates through the Winter.

We'll read a short Bible story, do a craft, have a snack, and play games.

**Thursday, December 14**

Come anytime between **4-6pm**

Hosted at Gary Lutheran Church

Open to ALL kiddos & their families



## Wednesday Night Worship

Wednesday, December 20  
hosted at Immanuel Luth. Church, Bejou

Ladies Aid Supper served from 4:00-6:30pm

Confirmation Class 6pm

Worship at 7pm

YOU are welcome at Wednesday Night Worship:  
The Word proclaimed! Music sang! Fellowship shared!

### Other Parish-wide Events:

#### **Suncatcher Class:**

All are welcome for an afternoon of fun, fellowship and creativity as we learn how to make suncatchers with Elizabeth Rockstad of Studio 4:13. The class will be held at Gary Lutheran Church at 2 pm on Saturday, January 20. If you are interested, please call or text Jenny Lien (218-556-1228) so we know how many materials we will need. The cost of the class will be \$20. All are welcome!

## Other Area Community Events:

**Saturday, December 2:**

### Santa Claus Day at Gary Legion Hall

11:30am-1:00pm: Visit with Santa, get a treat & have fun with crafts; lunch served (free will donation) by Gary Lions

1:30pm: Bingo for Booster Bucks

### A Very Merry McIntosh

4:00pm: Sausage Contest at Neil's

4:30pm: The Shoppes of McIntosh Open with Holiday Spirit throughout the downtown



A NEW JOURNEY LUTHERAN PARISH

**FAMILY  
FUN**  
**Christmas  
Event!**

**SUNDAY  
DEC 10**



**STARTS  
AT 3PM**

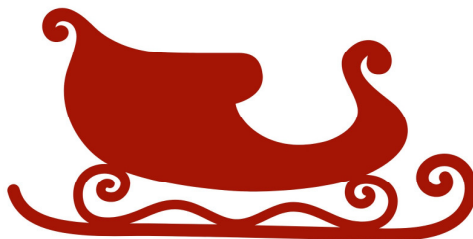
***Immanuel Lutheran Church  
400 Roosevelt Ave, Bejou MN***

**SOUP, SANDWICHES, & SWEETS SERVED AROUND 5PM**

**WE WILL BE CAROLING, SLEIGH RIDES, AND HAVING OTHER FESTIVE FUN!**

**THIS EVENT WILL ALSO BE YOUTH GROUP FOR DECEMBER. BRING YOUR FAMILY!**

**\*ALL PARISH AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE INVITED!\***





<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>SAM</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>

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

<b>WORSHIP</b>	<b>IMMANUEL (Bejou)</b>	<b>OUR SAVIOR'S (McIntosh)</b>	<b>GARY</b>	<b>NESS</b>	<b>SUNDAL</b>
<b>Sunday, Dec. 3</b> (blue)	8:30 am – Worship** 9:30 am – Sunday School	10:30 am – Worship**	8:30 am – Worship** 9:30 am – Sunday School & Confirmation	8:30 am – Worship**	
<b>Sunday, Dec. 10</b> (blue)	8:30 am – Worship	10:30 am—Worship followed by Council Mtg	8:30 am – Worship 9:30 am – Sunday School		10:30 am – Worship**
<b>Sunday, Dec. 17</b> (blue)	8:30 am – Worship** 9:30 am – Sunday School	10:30 am – Worship**	10:30 am – Worship** with Christmas Program	8:30 am – Worship	
<b>Wed., Dec. 20</b> (blue)	7:00 pm – Worship**				
<b>Sunday, Dec. 24</b> <b>Christmas Eve</b> (white)		4:00 pm – Worship**	9:00 pm – Worship**	10:30 am – Worship**	
<b>Monday, Dec. 25</b> <b>Christmas Day</b> (white)	10:00 am – Worship**				
<b>Sunday, Dec. 31</b> <b>New Year's Eve</b> (white)	8:30 am – Worship	10:30 am—Worship	10:30 am—Worship		