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 2024



PARISH PRAYER LIST

Harry Aanden, Julian Affield and parents Gatlyn & Sara, Jessie Beckman, Shawn Bendickson, Kathy Christensen, Julius Dahl, Ron Dahl, Denise Halland, Kurt Halverson, Diane Hamre, Sam Haverkamp, Vangie Hillstad, Jeremy Holmvik, Sherry Jensrud, Nathan Kearns, Rosie Keller, Cindy (Wastweet) Kiester, Ann (Wastweet) Kukowski, Kathy Lampton, Violet Lee, Donna Lisburg, Julia (Pantaleo) Madoll, Gwen Meyer, Randy Moen, Marilyn Natwick, Gail Nephew, Keith Olson, Nick & April Ostenaa family, David Pinske, Franklyn Preisler, Susan Ruud, Todd Scheff, Anita Slater, Gina Tiokasin, Eileen Tommervik and Mary Ann Wastweet.

- Family and friends of Arnold Gunderson (Our Savior's) who passed away January 11.
- Dick Holen (Our Savior's) whose son John unexpectedly died January 13. Prayers also for John's wife and two young sons (ages 10 & 7) who are left behind.

<u>The Commissioning of Rachel Roggenbuck as a</u> <u>Synodically Authorized Minister (SAM) with ANJLP</u>

This is good news of great joy for A New Journey Lutheran Parish and beyond! Last year Rachel completed the process to become a Synodically Authorized Minister (SAM) with ANJLP, expanding capacity and care for God's beloveds throughout the parish. She was appointed by the Northwestern Minnesota Synod bishop in mid-September, focusing on caring ministry and now having the authority to preside at the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion when leading worship. Commissioning happens following appointment by the bishop, providing an opportunity for public recognition and celebration of Rachel's growing call into ministry. We are blessed and thankful for the many ways Rachel shares her gifts with ANJLP and beyond!

Mark your calendars for **Sunday, February 4, at 10:00am** for a parish-wide worship at Immanuel for The Commissioning of Rachel Roggenbuck. Pastor Rebel Hurd, Director of Evangelical Mission with the NWMN Synod, will preside at the commissioning service. A potluck will follow. Please bring something to share.

General Follow-up from Annual Congregational Meetings

Thank you to:

- the 2023 church leadership for leading and guiding their church throughout the year.
- all who completed reports for their church and the parish. Special shout-out to treasurers and financial secretaries pulling many numbers from throughout the year.
- Julie, Sue, and Anita the church secretaries for compiling and copying reports.
- all who showed up and participated in your church's annual meetings that were held throughout January. Thank you!

While this work isn't always easy or fun, especially when challenges of finances and involvement are front and center, we must speak it so people know and can come together to address it and see what is possible. It is necessary as we are church together, as congregations and A New Journey Lutheran Parish. It is necessary as we focus on worshiping God (in formal and informal ways) and loving one another.

If you weren't able to attend your annual meeting, reach out to a church council member, someone who was there, or Pastor René to find out what you missed. Copies of annual reports are available at each church. If you'd like a copy mailed/delivered to you, reach out to Pastor René.

Star Words for 2024: Did You Get Yours?

Throughout January, I brought a basket full of stars for the Holy Spirit to do what it does as people picked a star with a word to see what word will guide them throughout 2024. The basket was at staff and council meetings, annual meeting worship, and Wednesday night worship. I'll be taking the basket on visits and to the area nursing homes when leading worship there.

If you haven't received a Star Word, do not worry! Stars are available at each church. Feel free to pick one (or more) up for family or friends who may want their own. You can also contact me to send one to you.

The stories and power of these stars is already being felt. Someone who thought their time on council was done, picked the word, "leadership." After having some words with God and praying about it, they did say yes to another year on council. Someone who got the word, "travel" is considering attending Synod Assembly in Moorhead in May, and bringing another who also picked "travel."

My word is "encouragement." I have noticed this word while reading scripture, and it is something I try to do while working with so many.

I would love to hear what you're noticing, wondering, or wrestling about with your word. Please share when we're together! Remember to pray on and about your word, especially if you're not quite sure what it means for you.

The wild Holy Spirit is at work. Be alert to its power!

Pastor René



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. Souper Bowl of Caring Offering:

For most of the last 15 years, youth in Gary Youth Group (and the last three years including Confirmation Students and the A New Journey Youth Group) 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 \$830 to donate, split between 3 local food shelves: hosted at Grace Lutheran in Erskine, Helping Hands in Mahnomen, and Good Samaritan in Twin Valley. We are asking for your help, 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 11. 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. 11, please contact Katie to set up an offering pick up.)

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

A New Journey Youth Group

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR RENÉ L. MEHLBERG...

"Living into the "New" of A New Journey Lutheran Parish"

Dear Beloved Children of God:

As I write, three annual meetings done, one to go! All will be finished by the time you read this. Thank you to all who have shown up and attended yours to find

out about the life and health of your church and the parish. There has been much learning, accomplishments to celebrate, and decisions with budgets and leadership that have been made.

We are starting year two of this parish and my call as pastor/mission developer and are truly living into the "new" of our parish name. New can be exciting and scary. New can be realizing, "Oh, wait. This isn't what I or others thought this was going to be. What must we do now?" There is much learning, changing, and adapting when things are new.

New this past year was trying different outside the walls events of family fun afternoons and caring for our neighbors with Thanksgiving Blessing boxes. New was offering more summer Wednesday worship throughout the parish. New was promoting many local community events throughout the parish to help everyone see what's happening throughout our vast mission field while encouraging you to check it out!

New is also looking at the parish budget and learning more about individual churches' financial situations to better understand the financial foundation of the churches and the parish. True, money is considered one of those "taboo" subjects; and yet, money is needed for the ministry and mission of each church and the parish for staff, buildings, supplies, and more. Jesus talked a lot about money and generosity, and yet, we often don't. And we have to. Some churches have had some tough discussions and decisions in regards to finances, and people have stepped up in various ways. As we lean into church together as a parish, know that while the parish budget has been passed as presented, the parish council and parish staff will be monitoring and adjusting the parish budget throughout the year as well. Read more in the parish council minutes,

How will we continue to live into the "new" as 2024 unfolds? Is there a new idea or event you'd like to try to connect with those we haven't seen in a while or to invite new people in? Have new ways to fund ministry and mission? Might you be willing to try something new by sharing some time if asked?

"New" often includes "all the feels": exciting, scary, exhausting, and much more. We continue on this journey together as a church and as a parish. We need to keep communication open. We need to continue to build relationships with one another. While we don't know where we will be one year from now, God is with us. God is leading and guiding. Sometimes we must stop, listen, and pray as our world is noisy and busy.

Hold onto God, one another, and these words for the year ahead: "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." Our hope is in God.

Prayers and blessings for you~ Pastor René

A MESSAGE FROM KATIE DEMARAIS, SAM...

"Jesus answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself."" ~Luke 10:27

Dear Siblings in Christ,

As we said our goodbyes to the year 2023 and welcomed 2024, I asked people in Worship and in Confirmation Class to share with me what they were grateful for this past year. Unsurprisingly, "family, friends, God, community, and church" made the list in every location.

That is what we as A New Journey Lutheran Parish have tried to focus our attention and ministry on in 2023. We have done that by creating meaningful worship and fellowship opportunities for families, inviting the community and going out in service into the community. We have broken bread together and worshipped on Sundays and Wednesday nights, praised God through song outdoors, and reached new children through VBS, Sunday School, Youth Group, and Family Playdates. We blessed our neighbors with food, quilts, and donations. We held each other in prayer during illnesses, diagnoses, and grief.

As we enter into 2024, I hope and pray that we can continue to keep these things that we have deemed most important (family, friends, God, community, and church) at the center of our lives and our ministry, as we do as Jesus commanded: to love God and to love our neighbor.

Katie DeMarais, SAM

A MESSAGE FROM RACHEL ROGGENBUCK, SAM...

Worship Outside the Walls. WOW. When we started this journey together one of our goals was to worship outside the walls of our sanctuaries more. You all have been doing a great job at participating in opportunities presented to you. Maybe now you're wondering when you participate in something like that. If you attended January's Suncatchers class in Gary, caroling in December, and Ladies' Night Out then you are participating. These are just a few examples of opportunities! There may be others that you participate in like coffee time at a local coffee place, that are not arranged by the parish but still count.

Now you may be wondering why we do these things and what makes them worship. As a community of faith, we have recognized that not all members (or nonmembers) attend church regularly, so we use these opportunities to meet them where they are. They are also used as a way to build relationships with one another, help us all to feel like we are on the same mission of serving God, and share the love of Jesus with all we come in contact with.

Being together in a more relaxed scenario gives us time to listen to God, each other, and the people around us. We hear each other's stories and how the Holy Spirit has been at work in their lives. Knowing these stories connects us to each other and to God. It helps us to remember how real God is and how much impact God has had on our lives. Trying these new things as a community of faith is an action that is easier with others, if you will notice all of the WOW activities are group activities! When we have a good time with one another in these WOW activities we are more likely to share with others that were not there. In doing that you are touching another life with your own love and care and that love of Jesus Christ, as well.

Our next Worship Outside the Walls activity is to attend the hockey game in Bemidji on Feb 9 or 10. Join us!

Your Servant in Christ, Rachel Roggenbuck, SAM

Minutes - A New Journey Parish Council Meeting

(6:30 p.m. on January 22, 2024, at Immanuel Lutheran, Bejou, MN)

Council members present: Jim Steinmetz, Mary Preisler, Stacey Knudsen, Tanya Hamre, Karen Carlsrud, Jill Nelson and Teresa Werpy. Others: Pastor René Mehlberg, Katie DeMarais, Mike Nelson, Bonnie Werpy and Sue Gunderson.

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

<u>Secretary's Report</u>: Minutes of the December 11, 2023, meeting were distributed and reviewed. Motion by Teresa, second by Stacey and carried, to approve minutes of the December 11, 2023, meeting as presented.

<u>Treasurer's Report</u>: Financial reports were distributed by Jill and reviewed. The report reflected funds remaining at year-end. A motion was made by Mary, seconded by Stacey and carried, to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Staff Reports:

Katie indicated there was a good turnout at the January family play date. The next one is scheduled for February 8. There will be a Souper Bowl offering taken at worship on February 11 and the proceeds will go to the food shelves in Erskine, Twin Valley, and Mahnomen. Also on February 11, a Valentine's Day Family Event is planned at Our Savior's.

Pastor René's report included:

- Rachel is recovering well following her recent foot surgery.
- There is a fellowship opportunity for anyone interested in attending the women's hockey games between Bemidji and Wisconsin in Bemidji on February 9 and 10.
- With Moran's closed, we are looking for Ladies' Night Out options on the eastern end of the parish.
- She reported on her involvement in the Synod's Jeremy 29 Project.
- She will be attending a continuing ed event in Detroit Lakes February 5-9.
- The proposed Lenten worship schedule was reviewed.
- An annual review of our Parish Agreement was done.

Old Business:

Katie indicated the Tithely program (for parish contributions only) is now set up and will be included in online worship starting Sunday, January 28. Rachel will train us on how it works at the February parish council meeting.

New Business:

Pastor René reminded everyone that Rachel will be commissioned as a SAM at a parishwide worship service on February 4 at Immanuel, followed by a potluck lunch. A motion was made by Karen, seconded by Stacey and carried, to distribute the loose offering that day to our Parish, with a portion going to the Synod. The amount of offering to the Synod will be decided upon after the service.

Other Business:

Bonnie Werpy, Gary Lutheran President, reported on the lengthy discussion and decisions made during Gary's annual meeting concerning their budget and the parish budget. As they cut expenses from their budget and found other ways to cover benevolence giving, they felt it was important that the Parish also consider cutting some expenses. Bonnie also shared a committee was formed to address their financial situation. Mike shared they have already seen some increased giving. Karen indicated that Ness Lutheran felt the same way about the parish council relooking at the parish budget. Both churches did pass the parish budget as presented.

Throughout 2024, the parish council and parish staff will watch and look for opportunities to reduce expenses or new ways to fund important ministries of the parish. Also, following discussion and the fact that the parish had funds remaining at year-end 2023, a motion was made by Mary, seconded by Teresa and carried, to revise the \$5,000 upfront annual cost paid to the parish by each congregation to a flat \$2,500 in 2024. Jill will refund \$2,500 to the churches who have already paid \$5,000 this year.

The next ANJLP Council meeting will be held Monday, February 12, at 6:30 p.m. at Immanuel. A motion was made by Mary, seconded by Stacey and carried, to adjourn. The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Sue Gunderson, Parish Secretary

News from Gary Lutheran...

Cemetery Meeting

The Gary Lutheran & North Wild Rice Cemetery Association will have its Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 11th, following Worship at Gary Lutheran Church. Worship begins at 8:30 a.m., with the meeting to follow at approximately 9:30 a.m.

Follow-up from Gary's Annual Meeting

Thank you to all who attended and doing the hard work of finalizing a tight budget. Cuts were made, volunteers stepped up, and a committee was formed to help with fundraising and financial vitality. Their first meeting is Monday, January 29.

Thank you also to those who have given more generously after this meeting. Watch for a mailing to Gary members to learn more about what's happening, what's needed, and how you can be involved in this community of faith for you and your families.

Council leadership for 2024: Bonnie Werpy, President; Lori Thronson, Vice President; Peggy Hanson, Secretary; Jill Nelson, Treasurer; Merlyn & Gwen Meyer, Financial Secretaries. Trustees: Joe Heisler, Teresa Werpy, Gene Werpy; Deacons: Gene Hanson, Stacy Gunderson, Karen Tadych. ANJLP Parish Council Reps: Jill Nelson & Teresa Werpy.

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.):
 - Feb. 4: Parish-wide worship at ILC. Please join us.
 - o Feb. 11-18: Leonard & Linda Engen
 - Feb. 25-March 3: Harriet Andersen and Doug Andersen
- Gary Lutheran Altar Guild for February: Shawn Halverson and LeAnne Moen

News from Ness...

February Quilting at Ness

No date was chosen because of unknown winter weather. Quilters will be contacted directly once a plan is made.

Follow-up from Ness' Annual Meeting

Thank you to all who attended. Budgets were passed as presented. No President or Vice-President was nominated or elected. Remaining church leadership positions will stay as in 2023. Another ANJLP Parish Council Rep would be appreciated. Cheryl Hagy and Shirley Valen expressed interest in serving as Synod Assembly delegates. The Stewardship Committee has been renamed, "Outreach: Quilters at Ness".

Thank you to those who provided the lunch following the meeting.

News from Our Savior's...

January 13, 2024 Council Meeting

-Council members present were Jane Aakhus, Stacey Knudson, Tanya Hamre, Marilyn Graff, via phone Wanda Stordahl. Cindy and Gordie Ostenaa joined late via phone. Others in attendance were Pastor René Mehlberg.

-Pastor René led us in devotions.

-December minutes approved.

-Financial Report approved.

-Old Business

-Parsonage report--need to get it appraised. Still has some work that needs to be done before selling it.

New Business

-Changed council terms from 3-years to 1-year terms; and president and vice president will be elected from those on council.

-Approved letter to go out to members.

-Valentine's Family event will be held Sunday, Feb. 11th 1:00-2:30.

-Furnace update. Will get new thermostats. Have had lots of problems with the electrical part this winter.

-Zoom will be offered for the Annual Meeting.

-Memorial Day fundraiser again for 2024.

-Ash Wednesday--we will host service at Noon that day Feb. 14th and then we will host again March 6th.

Follow-up from Our Savior's Annual Meeting

Thank you to all attending. After much discussion, budgets were approved as presented. One open council position to be filled: 1-year term. Council members for 2024: David Stordahl, Wanda Stordahl, Marilyn Graff, Gordie Ostenaa, Tanya Hamre, Kristi Skeie, and Jane Aakhus.

News from Immanuel...

Summary of January 17, 2024, Immanuel Council Meeting

Council members present: Peggy Gunderson, Mary Nell Preisler, Cindy Large, Duane Gunderson, Darrell Lende, Jim Steinmetz, Becky Olson, and Delane Schaumburg. Others present: Katie DeMarais and Pastor René Mehlberg.

- Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were given and approved.
- Immanuel's 2024 budget was reviewed and approved.

Staff Report:

- Super Bowl Sunday, February 11th food shelf donations will be received. Wear your favorite jersey!
- Rachel's commission to SAM will be held February 4 at Immanuel at 10:00 a.m. This is a Parish-wide worship. Potluck will be held afterwards.
- Thanks for all everyone does!
- Lent starts February 14th. Watch for schedules. Services at Immanuel will be 3rd Wednesday.
- Easter is March 31st.
- Continue to work on communication with all.
- Copier need to make decision at next Parish meeting.

Old Business:

• Field trip to Bemidji Hockey game is February 9 (6:00 p.m.) and February 10th (3:00 p.m).

New Business:

• Father/Son Banquet is scheduled for March 9th at 5:00 p.m.

Additional Immanuel Info:

Ladies' Aid supper on Wednesday, February 21, serving from 4-6:30 p.m. Meal cost is a free will offering. Servers are Mary Klinkhammer, Sarah Dahl and Gloria Steinbrenner. (Note: Confirmation at 6:30 p.m., Lenten worship service at 7 p.m. & Immanuel Council meeting at 8 p.m.)

Follow-Up from Immanuel Annual Meeting:

Immanuel Council Leadership includes: President Jim Steinmetz, Vice President Duane Gunderson, Secretary Delane Schaumburg, Treasurer Peggy Gunderson, Financial Secretary Cindy Large, Deacons--Becky Olson, Gloria Steinbrenner &

Other Parish-wide Events:

<u>Annual Bejou Blood Drive</u>: Mark your calendar and consider helping us out! The Vitalant Blood Bank from Fargo will be at the Bejou Community Center (Lean-To) to collect blood on Friday, February 9, from 9:30am-2:45pm. For more information or appointment, please contact Sandy Holmvik at 701-730-1492.

Parish Fellowship Opportunity: As many of us know, Pastor René loves hockey - particularly Wisconsin women's hockey! On February 9 and 10, Wisconsin plays Bemidji at the Sanford Center (1111 Event Center Dr NE, Bemidji). This is a great time to check out this beloved sport and spend some time with your church family. If you would like assistance with finding a ride, please contact Rachel at 701-741-0976. The hockey games are Friday, February 9, at 6pm and Saturday, February 10, at 3pm. General admission tickets range from \$10-15 and can be bought at the door. See you there!





Hosted at Gary Lutheran Church Open to ALL kiddos & their families





A NEW JOURNEY LUTHERAN PARISH & OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, MCINTOSH Family, Valentine's Day, Event

Sunday, February 11 ~ 1:00-2:30pm ~ 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. 8, so we can have supplies ready. ALL FAMILIES OF ALL AGES ARE WELCOME.





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

Tuesday, February 27th 6:30pm Erickson's Smokehouse, Fertile



Theme: "I Saw God Today" Unless listed, services will begin at 7:00pm. Watch bulletins & announcements for possible meals or snacks hosted before Worship. Confirmation students & mentors to meet at 6:30pm.

2/14: ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES: NOON AT OUR SAVIOR'S L. CHURCH 7PM AT GARY LUTHERAN CHURCH

2/21: IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

2/28: SUNDAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

3/6: OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

3/13: NESS LUTHERAN CHURCH

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3/20: IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

3/28: MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE: 7PM GARY LUTHERAN CHURCH

3/29: GOOD FRIDAY SERVICES: 3PM IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH 7PM OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH



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

FEBRUARY 2024 WORSHIP SCHEDULE (** denotes Holy Communion)						
WORSHIP	IMMANUEL (Bejou)	OUR SAVIOR'S (McIntosh)	GARY	NESS	SUNDAL	
Sunday, Feb. 4 (green)	10:00 am – Joint Worship** including SAM commission of Rachel followed by potluck lunch					
Sunday, Feb. 11 (green)	8:30 am – Worship	10:30 am—Worship followed by Council Mtg	8:30 am – Worship followed by cemetery meeting 9:30 am – Sunday School	10:30 am – Worship		
ASH WEDNESDAY, Feb. 14 (purple)		Noon-Ash Wed. Worship**	6pm-Soup/Sandwich Supper 7pm-Ash Wed. Worship**			
Sunday, Feb. 18 (purple)	8:30 am – Worship**	10:30 am – Worship**	9:30 am – Sunday School 10:30 am-Worship** with Baptism			
Wed., Feb. 21 (purple)	7:00 pm – Lenten Worship**					
Sunday, Feb. 28 (purple)	8:30 am – Worship	10:30 am—Worship	9:30 am – Sunday School 10:30 am-Worship	8:30 am – Worship**		
Wed., Feb. 28 (purple)					7pm-Lenten Worship**	