

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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Fertile, MN
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MARCH 2025



PRAYER LIST: *Mindy Aguilar, Jessie Beckman, Shawn Bendickson, Ron Dahl, Jayden Gensburger, Stephanie Gilbertson, Eric Grieve, Denise Halland, Diane Hamre, Jesse Hickman, Rosie Keller, Mae Knowles, Jesse Koch, Mark Larson, Violet Lee, Donna Lisburg, Julia (Pantaleo) Madoll, Gwen Meyer, Shaun Moritz, Roger Narum, Keith Olson, Lois Ostenaar, Susan Ruud, Anita Slater, Lily Thronson, Shirley Valen, Delores Warmesbecker, and Tiffany Winter. We pray for these individuals, along with their family and friends.*

Also, condolences to the family and friends of the following:

- *Rachel Carlson (Our Savior's) who passed away February 7*
- *Norman Hillstad (Ness) who passed away February 19*
- *Annie Lian (Our Savior's) who passed away February 22*
- *Franklyn Preisler (Immanuel) who passed away February 22*

LENT BEGINS:

Cross Examinations is the theme for our Lenten worship services. The series will give focus to the cross of Christ and its meaning for our life. The service will be built around a "Readers' Theatre" as ancient and contemporary characters confront one another and seek to discover how their Christian faith impacts on the issues in their lives.

The topics to be covered will include:

1. **The Grace of God Revealed** - how an instrument of torture became a symbol of God's mercy.
2. **A Matter of Death and Life** includes an interview with Pontius Pilate concerning the justice - and outcome - of Christ's crucifixion.
3. **Is the Cross Necessary?** - Annas and Caiaphas, Peter and Mark, Cyprian of Cathage and a panel of modern experts deal with the Problem of Christian suffering.
4. **Enemies of the Cross** appear not only at the foot of the cross then, but also in a restaurant and office today, anxious to remove the Cross from view.
5. **What is Missing in Christ's Sufferings?** - an extended interview with St. Paul concerning the meaning and the results of faithful cross bearing.
6. **The Marks of Christ** may still be evident in the lives of those who follow him today.

Plan now to make your own **Cross Examinations** at our Wednesday night Lenten services.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee-
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

As we have done in the past, we will rotate Wednesday night services throughout the parish.

March 5 - Ash Wednesday - Noon @ Our Savior's, 5p @ Immanuel, 7p @ Gary

March 12 - 7p @ Gary

March 19 - 7p @ Immanuel

March 26 - 7p @ Our Savior's

April 2 - 7p @ Ness

April 9 - 7p @ Gary

April 16 - 7p @ Immanuel

April 17 - Maundy Thursday - 7p @ Gary

April 18 - Good Friday - 3p @ Our Savior's

(Note: Sundal will have 4pm Lenten services March 5 & 19, April 2, and Maundy Thursday, April 17.

PULPIT SUPPLY:

Mary Jo Vik is a Gary area resident. She serves as a SAM (Synodically Authorized Minister) in the Oklee parish April through November. She heard we may be in need of some assistance, making the offer to preach twice per Sunday for the month of March, if need be. She will share her gift at Gary and Ness on March 2, 16 and 23. Please give her a warm welcome!

“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.

One of the things we heard Pastor René say regularly is to share the love and promises of Jesus with all we meet. You all SHOWED up to reflect the love she has shown (to us and everyone she met) here the last two plus years. Let us continue to show up for each other, our neighbors and all who we meet. God Bless You, Pastor René!



FINAL MESSAGE FROM PASTOR RENÉ L. MEHLBERG...

Dear Beloved Children of God:

By the time you read this, I will be in Menomonie, WI, getting settled as I begin my new call on March 1, preaching March 2.

The last month has flown by especially with two large funerals, wrapping everything up, fighting a cold, and multiple opportunities to say “farewell.” Thank-you for all the gifts and cards, potlucks and farewells. As much as I’d like to write each of you an individual note, I know that will not be possible. For all those I didn’t get the opportunity to see one last time, I apologize and I ask for your forgiveness. I did my best, even if my best may not have seemed “good enough” to some.

We are once again at a crossroads, a beginning and ending or ending and beginning. I share a slightly adapted version of Kate Bowler’s blessing, “for beginnings and endings” from her book, The Lives We Actually Have.

This life is made up of so many beginnings and so many endings. We start new jobs and leave old ones. We move to new cities and leave part of our heart behind with all the lives we’ve touched. We continue following God’s call on our life, following the Holy Spirit’s “what’s next?” while others are wondering what will be, perhaps worrying how it will all work out. Doing our best to “Let go and Let God.”

We become new people slowly (hopefully more grace filled, kinder, funnier, forgiving?) Dreams blossom and sometimes wither, only to dream once more. And we find ourselves here once again at the precipice of change. Afraid to let go, and afraid of what will happen if we don’t. Might this be a place of blessing too?

Blessed are we standing in the hallway, between closed doors and ones still to come, between the old and the new, between the worn-in and the doesn’t-quite-yet-fit, between who we were and who we might become.

God, make it remotely possible to grow and change, become open to new adventures and untethered to routine or to the same-old. Because we need your encouragement to step forward.

Blessed are we who take a minute to look over our shoulder at all we learned from what was, the people we became, the people who loved us into becoming, the peace that came with familiarity.

Blessed are we who trust this timing, and who open our hearts anew to change, to new friends and relationships, to hope. Nervous, maybe heavy-hearted, but **brimming with gratitude for a life so beautiful that it hurts to say goodbye.**

Blessed are we, turning our eyes ahead toward a new path not yet mapped. God, give us courage to take this next step. And enough for the one after that, too. Remind us that you have gone before, and behind, and around, and are with us now.

In our leaving, in our arriving, in our changes, expected or shocking, surprise us with who we might become. Amen.

Thank-you for the past 2 years as I have called this part of NW MN home. Thank-you for welcoming me into your hearts and homes, communities and churches helping me get to know and love you and the places you call home. While my time here was brief, it is now part of my story, and you will all remain in my heart forever. I am grateful for each of you and all the experiences that have continued to help me learn and grow in ministry.

Keep sharing God's love and promises! My prayers go with you~
Pastor René

A MESSAGE FROM RACHEL ROGGENBUCK, SAM...

God's peace be with you. Recently I attended a class via Zoom titled "Lutheran Confessions." At the end of each session, our instructor said "God's peace be with you." What he meant by that is to let God's rest, comfort, wholeness, and assurance go with you. It can also mean, one, peace, quietness, or peace of mind. As I write this, it has been just a few days since we said goodbye to Pastor René. Even though we just said our goodbyes, we have been wrestling with what does this mean now. Where will go from here? Maybe we are experiencing fear, uncertainty, anxiety, or wonder about the challenge ahead.

You are strong people, with good ideas and love for one another. We have work to do, making decisions and keeping the momentum we currently have. Jesus is here to address those fears, uncertainties, and anxieties to give us peace. Peace be with you is more than something we say when we share the peace in worship. It transcends the circumstance and can settle those out-of-control emotions we may be feeling. So, I say to you now, God's Peace Be with You.

Your Sister in Christ,
Rachel Roggenbuck, SAM

Minutes - A New Journey Parish Council Meeting

(6:30 p.m. on February 10, 2025, at Immanuel Lutheran, Bejou, MN)

Present: Teresa Werpy, Jill Nelson, Bonnie Werpy, Jim Steinmetz, Mary Preisler, Stacey Knudson, Kristi Skeie, Jane Aakhus, Karen Carlsrud, Mike Hagy, Rachel Roggenbuck, Pr. René Mehlberg, Pr. Genelle Netland, Cheryl Hagy, Sue Steinmetz, Anita Roy and Sue Gunderson.

Jim Steinmetz called the meeting to order at 6:30pm and Pr. René led devotions.

Pr. Genelle, Associate to the Bishop, introduced herself and led us in prayer with laying of hands on Pr. René as she departs work with our parish and then Pr. René left the meeting. Pr. Genelle went on to report on the exit interview held with Pr. René, Wanda Stordahl, Sue Steinmetz, Cheryl Hagy and Jill Nelson prior to this parish council meeting, including a description of the covenant and confirmation that Pr. René has been paid up to date.

Sue Steinmetz suggested that each congregation should decide what are our wants and needs as it relates to ongoing worship services. It was also suggested that discussions should be held in congregations as to their wishes as we near the end of our 3-year parish agreement.

Pr. Genelle was asked what the Synod can do for us and she indicated we have four options:

- Hire a Vice Pastor, who is an ordained area retired Pastor we can call on if we need help with funerals, visitations, etc. She may have a list of some who may be available.
- Pulpit Supply: She has a list available. Note: As of March 9, the Synod will have 8-9 written sermons available for our use.
- SAM: They have none available. This would be someone we raise up from within our parish area, or just outside of it.
- Interim Pastor: An ordained Pastor we can contract with for a temporary period of time. She has someone in mind that we may be able to contact. This appeared to be the favorite option.

Rachel provided a proposed Sunday worship schedule through May, and went on to assure everyone that she will do what she can to support us through this transition period. Pr. Genelle suggested that Rachel's job description should be updated to include any new duties she takes on and reflected in her salary.

Secretary's report was distributed. Mary made a motion to approve, seconded by Jane and carried. Treasurer's report was distributed and reviewed by Jill. Kristi made a motion to accept, second by Jane. Motion passed.

Old Business:

- No news from congregations' annual meetings.

New Business:

- Parish Council Members for 2025 include:
 - Ness: Karen Carlsrud and Mike Hagy
 - Immanuel: Jim Steinmetz and Mary Preisler
 - Gary: Jill Nelson, Teresa Werpy and Bonnie Werpy (sub)
 - Our Savior's: To be confirmed.
- Rachel was asked to review her duties and keep us posted if it gets to be too much for her to handle alone.
- Rachel reviewed a proposed schedule for Lenten worship services.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held March 10 at 6:30pm at Immanuel. Meeting adjourned. The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Sue Gunderson, Parish Secretary

News from Our Savior's...

- As we navigate these next steps, Our Savior's Lutheran Church will continue to have church services every Sunday.

News from Gary Lutheran...

Gary 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.)
 - March 2 (10:30am-no communion) & 5 (7:00pm Lenten service): Richard & Karen Tadych
 - March 9 (10:30am), 12 (7:00pm Lenten service-no communion) & 16 (10:30am-no communion): Gene & Peggy Hanson, Rick & Jenny Lien
 - March 23 (10:30am-no communion) & 30 (no worship): Joe & Carrie Heisler
- Gary Lutheran Altar Guild for March: Teresa Werpy and Bonnie Werpy

News from Immanuel...

February 19, 2025, Immanuel Council Meeting Highlights

Council members present: Jimmy Steinmetz, Terry McCollum, Becky Olson, Delane Schaumburg, Gloria Steinbrenner, Peggy Gunderson, Duane Gunderson, Darrell Lende and Mary Preisler (by Zoom). Also present were Rachel Roggenbuck and Susie Steinmetz.

Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were provided and approved.

Staff Report:

- Lenten services start on March 5 with Ash Wednesday. Worship that day at Immanuel will be at 5pm.
- At 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, March 30, there will be a joint parish worship service at Immanuel followed by a potluck lunch provided by Immanuel.
- On the days Rachel is not scheduled to lead worship, she will have a service available for someone to read.

Old Business:

- A discussion was held on the future of the parish.
- The house we are renting for pastor's use is paid up through March 15.
- New speakers will be purchased using Immanuel furnishing funds.

Additional Immanuel Info:

- A joint worship service will be held at Immanuel on Sunday, March 30, at 10:00 a.m. Immanuel will provide a potluck lunch for everyone following that worship service. We hope you will all join us.
- Ladies' Aid supper with free will offering will be held at Immanuel from 4-6:30pm (7:00pm Lenten worship and 8pm council meeting) on Wednesday, March 19. Servers are Sue Gunderson, Pam Johnson and Kathy Omang.

Wednesday Night Worship

hosted at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Bejou

Wednesday, March 19

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

Lenten Worship at 7:00pm

ILC Council Mtg 8:00pm

YOU are welcome at 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, March 25~ 6:30p

**The Deuce,
Erskine**

Ministers:	Members of the Congregations
Synodically Authorized Minister (SAM)	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

MARCH 2025 WORSHIP SCHEDULE (denotes Holy Communion)**

WORSHIP	IMMANUEL	OUR SAVIOR'S	GARY	NESS	SUNDAL
Sunday, March 2 (green)	8:30am-Worship** (RR)	10:30am-Worship	9:30am-Sunday School 10:30am-Worship (MV)	10:30am— Worship** (RR)	
Ash Wednesday, March 5 (purple)	5:00 pm—Lenten Worship** (RR)	Noon – Lenten Worship** (RR)	7:00 pm—Lenten Worship** (RR)		4:00 pm – Lenten Worship** (KD)
Sunday, March 9 (purple)	8:30 am – Worship (RR)	10:30am-Worship	9:30am-Sunday School 10:30am-Worship ** (RR)		
Wed., March 12 (purple)			7:00 pm—Lenten Worship (RR)		
Sunday, March 16 (purple)	8:30 am—Worship** (RR)	10:30am—Worship ** (RR)	9:30 am-Sunday School 10:30am-Worship (MV)	8:30 am – Worship (MV)	10:30 am – Worship** (KD)
Wed., March 19 (purple)	7 pm – Lenten Worship** (RR)				4:00 pm – Lenten Worship (KD)
Sunday, March 23 (purple)	8:30 am—Worship (RR)	10:30am—Worship ** (RR)	9:30am-Sunday School 10:30 am-Worship (MV)		
Wed., March 26 (purple)		7:00pm-Lenten Worship			
Sunday, March 30 (purple)	10:00am-Joint Worship** (RR) followed by lunch				