

THE BALSAM BRANCH

May 2022

Balsam Lutheran Church

1115 Mains Crossing
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Pastor's Pen

Dear People of God,

Happy Easter! Christ is risen!

Just a couple weeks ago, we celebrated Easter Sunday together in worship. For Christians, Easter is not just one day - it's a season of 50 days, seven weeks, derived in its length from the fifty days between Passover and Pentecost.

Easter season begins at sunset on the eve of Easter and ends with Pentecost, this year June 5th, the day we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church.

Eastertide is 10 days longer than the season of Lent and several weeks longer than the season of Advent. Which makes Eastertide unlike any other time of the year. So what is the purpose of Eastertide—the season following Easter Sunday?

This extended season gives us time to rejoice and experience what we mean when we say Christ is risen and that we, as the church, are the body of the Risen Lord. It's a season for focusing on the core principles and mysteries of the faith and for preparing for the ministries the Spirit has empowered us to undertake in Jesus' name.

Eastertide, fifty days of celebrating Jesus' resurrection — which we might notice is even more than the forty days of Lent, makes up roughly one seventh of the entire year, in effect a "sabbath" time for the year as a whole. The resurrection is so great a mystery, and calls for such a grand party, that merely one day won't do.

In this way, we can see together that Easter Sunday is not the end of Lent — it's the beginning of Eastertide, and in a

deeper sense, the beginning of Christian life. Easter is the pinnacle of the liturgical year. This forms the foundation of our faith and invites us to deepen our belief in the mysterious paradox that life follows death.

This season always makes me wonder anew, What could it mean to practice resurrection in my life? How have I witnessed new life flow from death? How do I experience the Holy Spirit's gifts?

Here are some practices I have found helpful and invite you to consider:

Pay attention to evidence of new life, in nature, relationships, people, or situations

Keep a gratitude journal, adding to it at the beginning or end of each day

Take up an Easter practice, in contrast to Lent, that promotes joy, freedom, celebration and rest.

Pray for "resurrection eyes" that allow you to see where God is wanting to do something new

May we go forth into this time of Sabbath and celebration remembering the true reason for the season: Christ is Risen! Thanks be to God!

Pastor Laurie –

Balsam Lutheran Church
*Unapproved Minutes of the Church
Council*

April 10, 2022

In Attendance: Steve Fredrickson, Gail Peterson, Jon Karsten, Betty Collins, Barb Friese and Pastor Laurie Kenyon Wood.

Absent: Ruth Hart, Sue Albright, Mike Judge and Brue Hammer.

The meeting was called to order. Gail Peterson led with devotions.

Secretary's Report: The minutes from the March council meeting were reviewed. A motion was made and passed to accept the secretary's report as presented.

Treasurer's Report: The church's financial accounts were reviewed and discussed. The general fund is growing. The prepay fuel has been depleted; we will need to pay for our next fill. There was no mortgage payment in April while the renewal paperwork is being completed. A check has been sent to continue our sponsorship of WPCA radio. A motion was made and passed to accept the treasurer's report as presented.

Committee Reports:

Anniversary: Planning continues. Recent discussion has been focused on having a congregational picture taken and the logistics involved with that including, but not limited to, arranging for a photographer.

Back Pack Program: Packing continues each week. The excess supplies from previous months are being used, so the stock on-hand is dwindling.

Property: Cemetery clean-up has been scheduled for Saturday, May 7th.

Social Ministry: The rummage sale will be held on the afternoon of Thursday, May 5th and all day on Friday, May 6th. Treats will be available on Thursday and a BBQ lunch on Friday. This ministry continues their work to support charitable organizations through financial giving.

Worship & Music: Services have been planned out for several months. The committee will meet again in June.

Youth Education: Youth have resumed reading the responsive Psalm during worship. Acolyte duty will remain on hold until the fall. Two separate groups participated in packing food with the Feed My Starving Children mobile food pack on April 7th and 9th. The Palm Sunday/Kindermass service will be April 10th with an Easter egg hunt following worship. Youth families are strongly encouraged to assist with the Easter breakfast as the money raised will be applied to the youth campership fund. Roadside cleanup for youth families and congregation members will take place on Sunday, April 24th following worship. We have one student who will be confirmed at Elim on Sunday, June 5th. Day Camp is being planned for the summer months.

Pastor's Report:

Pastor Laurie reported that Wednesday night Lent services are done and she is finalizing Holy Week and Easter Sunday services. She will be taking a few days off (April 18 – 20) following Easter. Her pastoral care visits have continued and

she is currently preparing for an upcoming funeral. She continues to lead Wednesday morning Bible study each week (although there will be no study on the 20th). Pastor Laurie is taking vacation time the first week of July, including Sunday, July 3rd. Worship on that date will likely be moved to a different week. The final item mentioned was the purchase of used ELW (cranberry) hymnals from Bone Lake. There are about 75 available and they are selling them for \$10 each. Elim will purchase some, as well.

Old Business:

- 1) Minutes from the 2022 Annual Meeting were not readily available for review. This matter has been tabled until the May meeting.
- 2) Raffle tickets for the Easter Breakfast were distributed. More are available from Dawn Costello or Bob LaBathe. Anyone wanting to donate a theme basket, or money towards a theme basket, can contact Betty Collins. A sign-up sheet for food donations and assistance with service has been posted. All proceeds benefit the youth campership fund.
- 3) Committees are reminded and encouraged to resume monthly meetings

New Business:

- 1) Advertisement in two different publications was discussed. In regard to The Shoreline, a motion

was made and passed to place a ½ page ad in this publication for \$195. In regard to The Laker, more information is needed before a decision can be made. Further discussion was tabled until next month.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned. We reviewed member and neighborhood prayer concerns and closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Barb Friese, Church Council Secretary

Financially Speaking

Thank you everyone for your continued support of our church and mission. Our general fund balance increased in April! The unofficial balance as of April 27 (waiting for the bank statement and need to balance) is \$69,869.83. Some of this increase in the fund balance was due to not having to make a mortgage payment in April as we were negotiating a loan renewal.

We have renewed our building loan with Bremer. The monthly payment will be the same. We worked very hard to get this balance to under \$113,000 prior to the negotiations! Please consider giving to the debt reduction (in addition to giving to the general fund) by noting that on your offering envelope. Every extra amount given to debt reduction makes a significant difference in our interest expense.

I think spring is here—maybe—finally! We have used all our prepaid propane supply with the tanks topped off at the end of April. Please pray that we stay warm and don't need to call for fuel again until fall. We will have the Turn Up the Heat campaign again to help with this expense for the next heating season.

As I have noted before, we have created a fund in the in/out accounts to help defray expenses for our upcoming 150th Anniversary celebration in October. The increased expenses for the celebration that we anticipate include printing, advertising, food, and our scheduled highlight—Paul Oman with Drawn to the Word. Please consider giving to this fund in addition to your general fund giving.

Thank you again for your continued financial support of Balsam Lutheran.

In Christ,
Gail Peterson, Treasurer

W/ELCA

Even though our numbers were down a bit for our spring salad luncheon on April 23rd this year, it was wonderful to have lots of ladies back at Balsam!

Our special speaker was "our own" Sue Saarem! Her talk was loosely based on the book, "A Tale of Two Biddies." There was much audience participation and among all the laughter, we learned about "growing old gracefully!"

The salads were delicious, as always! Bev Getshel donated a quilt for the

raffle, again! We all worked hard and had fun, as always!

Most of the group went home with a raffle prize or door prize and a good time was had by all!

The luncheon brought in 472, the raffle brought in 325, for a total of \$797.

What a blessing!
Sue Albright, President

Youth News

Thank you to those who were able to volunteer for the Feed My Starving Children mobile food pack. It was an enjoyable opportunity and was time well spent packing meals for hungry children in need. To learn more about this Christian-based organization, please visit www.fmssc.org.

Thank you to all the youth who led the Palm Sunday/Kindermass worship service. You all did a wonderful job! We are blessed to have such an amazing and faithful group of youngsters. Thank you to all of the adults who assisted behind-the-scenes with the service, the fellowship time and the Easter egg hunt. All of the help and support is greatly appreciated!

For those who showed up to assist with the roadside clean up project, THANK YOU! We collected a dozen bags of garbage, a tire and several miscellaneous items. As good stewards, it is our responsibility to care for our earthly home, so thank you for volunteering your time.

The last class session for Confirmation and Sunday school will be on Sunday, May 22nd. Youth will participate in worship that morning.

Any youth who are interested in attending camp at Luther Point this summer should speak with Barb Friese for more information.

THANK YOU!
THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

We would like to thank **everyone who assisted with Easter breakfast-** whether it was donations of food, prep the day before or helping at the event, we could not do it without you all. We served about 86 people and brought in 729.00 for the breakfast. The raffle brought in another \$475.00 dollars for a total of \$1204.00. All proceeds will go to youth campership fund to help defer the cost of all youth going to Luther Point.
Dawn & Bob

Thanks for your giveBIG donation to **Interfaith Caregivers**. Your gift of **\$150 (from Social Ministries)** will be matched, and make double the difference for people in our community. Because of YOU, there is a place for our neighbors in need to call for help. Because of YOU there are no-cost services for our most vulnerable in Polk County. Because of YOU, seniors and adults with disabilities are happy, healthy, and living safely and independently at home. Thank YOU!
Thank YOU!
Mickey, Interfaith Caregivers

The **Northwoods Homeless Shelters** would like to thank or your support of our shelter program through your generous financial gift during the giveBIG event. Because of a generous matching grant, your donation of **\$150 (Social Ministry)** has doubled! We appreciate your support as we continue our effort to stabilize the homeless families with whom we word and move them into permanent housing, We thank y ou for partnering with our agency to serve the homeless in our county. Your support of this program is a blessing!
Virginia Ormsby,
Northwood Homeless Shelters

Thank you for your generous gift of **\$50 to Lutheran World Relief’s Quilt and Kit Shipping Fund!** Life in the covid era has been so hard for so many of our neighbors, and we know the needs are only growing as conflict, natural disaster and other crises often affect those who are already suffering. Rlght now, a quilt or kit might be the one item of comfort someone may have when they are facing poverty, disaster or war. I am so grateful that you are loving these neighbors by ensuring they’ll receive these critical items just when they need them most.

On behalf of the **Salvation Army** and the families who will benefit from our services at our Family House Shelter Serving Polk and Barron Cou9nties, we want to thank you for your donation of **\$150 (Social Ministry)**. May your experience a special peace knowing this thoughtful gift will enable the Salvation

Army to continue offering Christ’s blessing to our neighbors in need,
Duana Bremer, Salvation Army

Thank you for your generosity. Your gift of **\$50 to Feed My Starving Children** through the Polk County MobilePack in Osceola is sending 208 MannaPack meals to those around the world who need it most. Hope is greater because of you.

Mark Crea, FMSC

May “Birth” days	
08 Kinsley Kobernick	18 Marisa Olson
11 Sue Bird	23 Allan Moltzer
13 Karen Ford	23 Jane Karsten
17 Steve Frederickson	27 Dewey Peterson
	29 Taunya Kobernick
	30 Susan McElfresh

Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in spring-time.

~ Martin Luther

Jesus did not die on the cross just so we could live comfortable, well-adjusted lives. His purpose is far deeper: He wants to make us like himself before he takes us to heaven. This is our greatest privilege, our immediate responsibility and our ultimate destiny.

~ Rick Warren

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

-1 Peter 1:3