

# THE BALSAM BRANCH

July and August 2022

**Balsam Lutheran Church**  
1115 Mains Crossing  
Amery, Wisconsin 54001

*Laurie Kenyon Woods, Pastor*  
*Pastor's phone: 269-552-8245*



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## Pastor's Pen

Dear people of God,

Summer has arrived! With warm days, relaxed schedules for the lucky, and sunshine to burn, many of us experience new schedules, new priorities, and new rhythms in the summer. Myself included. And for that I say, thank goodness!

One new thing I look forward to in the summer is participating in the synod's Summer Book Club. Each month, we meet over Zoom and a different leader from the synod staff opens and guides a discussion. Book Club is open to all in the synod— not just pastors— so let me know if you'd like more information to get involved!

This last week, we met for our June book, [Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership](#) by Ruth Haley Barton, and despite its rather business-sounding title,

this was exactly the book I needed to read as I begin a summer where I am trying to focus on finding my rest and rhythms in God's presence and peace. As a spiritual director, Barton invites her readers to consider the question, "is it well with your soul?" and to seek God in moments of silence and reflection.

And by a lovely coincidence (or perhaps by the movement of the Holy Spirit), I found myself reading and discussing this book just days before leaving to attend a one-day spiritual retreat. Early on a Saturday morning, I gathered in a small group with others in prayer and contemplation before we were each sent out in our own kayak to sit in holy silence seeking God's presence. The openness of the lake, the gentle movement of the water, and the peaceful sounds and sights of nature were a wonderful way to experience divine grace.

This summer, I hope to continue to find some big and small ways to find rest and

rejuvenation in God's presence. And I invite you to do so as well! In daily prayer and study, in silent walks, in connection with loved ones, and heck, maybe even while on a kayak! But no matter what the means, I hope you are able to recognize and rest in God this summer!

Blessings,  
Pastor Laurie

P.S. Adam and I feel so blessed by all of your well wishes, prayers, and shared joy with us after we shared the news that our family is growing! Thank you all.

## **Balsam Lutheran Church**

*Unapproved Minutes of the Church Council*  
June 12, 2022

**In Attendance:** Steve Fredrickson, Gail Peterson, Mike Judge, Barb Friese, Sue Albright, Pastor Laurie Kenyon Wood.

**Absent:** Jon Karsten, Betty Collins, Ruth Hart, Bruce Hammer

The meeting was called to order. Steve Fredrickson led with prayer.

**Secretary's Report:** The minutes from the May 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 annual benevolence payment to Lutheran Social Services and to Luther Point Bible Camp were paid. Payments to the Synod will continue to be made on a quarterly basis. A motion was made and passed to accept the treasurer's report as presented.

**Pastor's Report:**

Pastor's leadership of the weekly Bible study has concluded for the summer. The Amery ministerium is also on hiatus for the summer. The Polk County Mental Health Task Force had their second meeting and will take a break during the summer months. Pastor continues to make pastoral care visits. She will be presiding over a wedding in July and has begun to meet with the couple. She will be participating in the Summer Book Club that the Synod is hosting. She will be on vacation July 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>, so will not be present for the July 3<sup>rd</sup> worship service. A supply pastor will be contacted to cover worship. In addition, she will be attending the Churchwide ELCA Assembly in Ohio from August 8<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> and would appreciate a supply pastor for the August 14<sup>th</sup> service as the week at assembly will likely leave little time for planning and preparation.

### **Committee Reports:**

Anniversary: The committee is looking for people to help with the planning and organizing of this event. Please talk to Gail Peterson if you able to assist. The event is scheduled for October 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Sunday lunch will be catered. There has been a good response regarding attendance from previous pastors.

BackPack Program: The weekly packing sessions have concluded for the summer. There is a good supply of product on hand for startup in the fall.

Property: The exterminator came and sprayed for mites which have been an on-going issue. He is willing to come back and spray, if needed. The cost was \$150. We will need 2 loads of trap rock for the driveway. The cost is \$800.

Social Ministry: A donation of \$300 was given to the Salvation Army Back Pack program.

Worship & Music: The committee has decided to focus on “big picture planning” (church seasons, special services, speakers, etc) instead of concentrating on the specifics of each service. They are planning an outdoor worship service on August 28<sup>th</sup>. “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday will be observed on September 11<sup>th</sup> and will be the focus of worship. Stewardship opportunities will be encouraged throughout the weekend.

Youth Education: Regular Sunday morning youth sessions are done for the summer and will resume on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Confirmation service for Michaela Polta was held at Elim on June 5<sup>th</sup>. A handful of youth have signed up for summer camp at Luther Point. Youth are encouraged to sign up for Psalm reading throughout summer. Day Camp is currently on hold pending “workable” dates for youth families.

### **Old Business:**

- 1) No action was taken regarding the purchase of ELW hymnals. Pastor, Steve and Mary Lou need to meet for discussion. The matter is tabled until next month.
- 2) UMOS is here and working on setting up classroom spaces. If you are able to assist with the programming or with housing for staff, please speak with Maria (or Steve Fredrickson).
- 3) All area camps are in need of counselors. Please spread the word to high school and college age youth who might be interested. Also, to encourage increased registrations,

some camps are offering various discounts. Families are encouraged to check the website(s) for more information.

### **New Business:**

- 1) A supply pastor will be sought for the July 3<sup>rd</sup> and the August 14<sup>th</sup> worship services. (see pastor’s report) In addition, we will need to make arrangements for pastoral coverage while Pastor Laurie is on maternity leave later this year.
- 2) The Town of Apple River will be contacted regarding the signage on Mains Crossing west of County Rd H.
- 3) An invitation was extended to council members – and to parishioners – to travel to Jeremiah’s Bullfrog Fish Farm (Menomonie) on July 10<sup>th</sup> for fellowship and fun. Ridesharing encouraged.
- 4) A motion was made and seconded to skip the July 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Motion passed. If action by the council is necessary, a special session will be called. The next scheduled council meeting will be held on August 14<sup>th</sup>.

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. The

unofficial balance as of June 30 (waiting for the bank statement and need to reconcile) is \$68,247.88. The balance has dropped some in the past month which reflects the change in worship attendance in the summer. However, our bills continue to come in and need to be paid!

Our loan balance prior to the July payment was \$109,209.11. We are now paying about 3x's more in principal than interest! Please consider giving to the debt reduction (in addition to giving to the general fund) by noting that on your offering envelope. Every amount given to debt reduction, no matter the size, makes a significant difference in our interest expense.

As I have noted before, we have created a fund in the in/out accounts to help defray expenses for our upcoming 150<sup>th</sup> 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

### **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration— October 22-23, 2022**

October will be here sooner than we realize. We need some help! The anniversary committee is looking for some

help in completing the details of this event such as preparing the church history, press releases, banners, etc. We are planning an evening meeting after the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. Please contact the committee chairs if you can help us out.

Just a reminder of what the weekend will offer:

1. Saturday, October 22 evening event with Paul Oman and Drawn to the Word. We will have music and readings as we enjoy the fantastic artistic talent of Paul. We will end the night with coffee and treats. Please start looking at any music or readings you may like to share and let Gail Peterson know that you would like to participate. Lisa Carlson will be arranging a rehearsal time for anyone that needs a piano accompanist.
2. Sunday, October 23 will feature a special worship service at our usual time. The bishop will be participating. We have also heard from many of our former pastors who would like to participate in the service.
3. We are looking at securing a photographer for a congregation picture after the service and perhaps some informal shots during the dinner and fellowship time.
4. We are looking at a catered meal after the service and picture so that we can all enjoy this time rather than work in the kitchen! It will be followed by an informal time of sharing and fellowship.

Unfortunately, all these events will incur some additional expenses. You can make donations to help cover celebration costs

by designating them on your weekly offering to the “150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund”.

Again, please contact anyone of us if you can help us with in any way with the planning and details of this wonderful celebration.

Anniversary Committee Chairs—Gail Peterson, Vicki Hammer and Betty Collins

**Day Camp 2022  
"All God's Creatures"**

June 27, July 25, August 15 // 4:00-8:00 in outdoor worship area by church.

Bring brown bag supper, water bottle, Bible, bug spray & sun screen.

An RSVP regarding who is attending would be greatly appreciated.  
Barb (715.222.8272 or balsamyouth@yahoo.com)

July “Birth” days	
13 Vicki Hammer 15 Caleb LaBathe 19 Cady Costello	22 Zoey Duden 25 Lila Christensen
August “Birth” days	
02 Herb Johnson 05 Betty Collins 07 Beverly Getschel	07 Sue Fougner 24 Bev Gerber 29 Krista Markee

**The deadline for donating to the annual Salvation Army backpack fundraiser is July 31, 2022. Any dollar amount helps.**



**APPLE RIVER CONFERENCE  
WELCA  
AUGUST 20TH**

Balsam WELCA ladies are hosting the Fall Gathering of the Apple River Conference. 80 to 100 ladies are expected to attend on the morning of Saturday, August 20th.

Sandy Kosmos, a retired Lutheran pastor, is the keynote speaker. She has an interesting summer job...working at a bird sanctuary in Tomah, WI! Also, the conference will conduct its fall meeting and elect new officers for the next two year term. Balsam planning meetings will start soon; so, start thinking about what we can serve for lunch!”

**School Bags**

When school supplies go on sale, start buying the items needed for the school kits we complete every year to go to Lutheran World Relief;

Each kit needs the following items:

- 4 70 sheet notebooks of wide or college-ruled paper
- 1 30 centimeter ruler, or a ruler with inches on one side and centimeters on the other.
- 1 pencil sharpener
- 1 pair of blunt scissors (safety scissors with embedded steel blades work well)
- 5 unsharpened # 2 pencils with erasers (secure together with a rubber band)

5 black or blue ballpoint pens (no gel ink) (secure together with a rubber band).

1 box of 16 or 24 crayons

1 2 ½ inch eraser