

THE BALSAM BRANCH

June 2022

Balsam Lutheran Church
1115 Mains Crossing
Amery, Wisconsin 54001

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Pastor's Pen

Dear people of God,

This Sunday in worship, we celebrate Pentecost – the coming of the Holy Spirit to the people of God! We also now begin Ordinary Time in the church year, also called the season after Pentecost, which is both the longest and the last season in the liturgical year. In this season, we celebrate our role as the church in the ongoing life of Christ in the world, guided by the companionship and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is also a welcome time of connection to our sense of vocation and calling—the ways we are uniquely invited to shed Christ abroad in the world through the bearing of his image and name.

"Taking it to the Streets: Becoming a Public Church" was the theme for our 2022 Synod Assembly. At the assembly we discussed what our next most faithful

steps as Lutheran Christians in NW Wisconsin might be. It was a hybrid assembly with about 200 people attending in person in Eau Claire, and a little over 100 people attending on ZOOM. Those of us who attended online unfortunately had to deal with some technical difficulties that made some parts of the assembly more difficult, but even with technical problems, everyone, online and in person, was able to participate in worship and voting as a large group assembly. As Barb Frieze explained when she gave her report in worship the following Sunday, "Even when participating remotely, there's something so powerful about being part of a large group of devoted Christians who are worshipping and praising God together." And, I wholeheartedly agree!

Throughout the course of the assembly, seven congregations received the "Bright Spot Award" for the ways they are taking their faith and their congregation public,

showing up in their neighborhoods and communities with the good news of Jesus.

In addition, five resolutions were discussed and passed with near total support.

The first was a Care of Creation Resolution encouraging every congregation in the synod to establish a Green Team to teach ways of caring for God's good creation at home and in the church building.

And the second, which was a resolution on Loving Our Neighbors that encourages congregations to enter into intentional conversations about race, inclusion, and our call to love all our neighbors.

The other three resolutions were more procedural and included the synod's budget, minimum salary and compensation guidelines for the staff and clergy, and a synod constitution by-law change that allowed a congregation to move from conference to another.

Synod Assembly ended with the following words of worship. May they be our guide this Season after Pentecost as we follow the Holy Spirit here in our community.

Go to the streets. Be a public church.
Serve others with the love of Jesus.

We will go, guided by the Spirit. Thanks be to God!

Pastor Laurie

Balsam Lutheran Church

*Unapproved Minutes of the Church
Council*

May 8, 2022

In Attendance: Steve Fredrickson, Gail Peterson, Jon Karsten, Betty Collins, Ruth

Hart, Sue Albright, Bruce Hammer, Mike Judge, Barb Friese and Pastor Laurie Kenyon Wood.

The meeting was called to order. Ruth Hart led with devotions.

Secretary's Report: The minutes from the April 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. There was no loan payment in April due to the refinance process. A payment of \$950 was made for the accrued interest. The monthly payments moving forward will remain at \$2,033.64 and will end in 2027.

Committee Reports:

A resounding "thank you" was extended to all those who serve on the numerous committees at Balsam. Your dedication and servitude is greatly appreciated!

Anniversary: Planning continues. The confirmation pictures in the wall display are incomplete. If anyone has an image from one of the missing years, please let Betty Collins, Gail Peterson or Vicki Hammer know. Sue Saarem has offered to be a part of the program Saturday night.

Back Pack Program: Packing continues each week.

Property: Thank you to everyone who helped with the cemetery and grounds clean-up day on Saturday, May 7th. The furnaces have been turned off. A mowing schedule has been created. Summit

Siding has been called to fix the siding issue. There is a slight heave in the concrete in front of the main door. Yellow paint will be sprayed to make this uneven surface more noticeable.

Social Ministry: Thank you to everyone who worked on the rummage sale. \$1,800 was made from the sale and \$464 from the lunch that was served. The funds will be used to continue the ministry work of the committee.

Worship & Music: The committee is scheduled to meet in June.

Youth Education: The youth led the Kindermass/Palm Sunday service. The Easter breakfast and raffle brought in \$1,204. These funds will benefit the youth campership fund. Roadside cleanup was completed on Sunday, April 24th. Sunday school and Confirmation will end on May 22nd. 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 the completion of Holy Week and Easter, followed by some time off. She participated in Synod Assembly via Zoom on April 30th. She also announced that a ukulele group will starting at Balsam. They will meet on Tuesdays at 2:00.

Old Business:

- 1) Minutes from the 2022 Annual Meeting were reviewed. With one slight word edit, the minutes were approved for presentation at the 2023 Annual Meeting.

- 2) UAMOS intends to begin June 12th. Staff will arrive a few weeks early to set up. There is a need for housing and there is a need for staff. If you, or anyone you know, can assist in either way, please speak with Steve Fredrickson.
- 3) Gail Peterson presented information on the Amery area summer lake publication, called The Laker. The cost for the 7 summer publications is \$189. The final publication is August 26th. A motion was made and seconded to include a church posting in the upcoming summer issues. Motion passed.
- 4) No additional information was available for discussion regarding the purchase of the ELW hymnals. The matter is tabled until next month.
- 5) There is an on-going reminder that committees should resume their monthly meetings, if they have not already done so.

New Business:

- 1) The council will examine how we can better support and implement Synod recommendations. Oftentimes, there is no follow-through.
- 2) The council will look into starting a Green Team in our congregation. The group would investigate sustainability in our church as it relates to our faith and our role as stewards of God's creation.
- 3) It was suggested that gift baskets be given to welcome new families into the community.

- 4) All area camps are in need of counselors. Please spread the word to high school and college age youth who might be interested.

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 remained stable in May. The unofficial balance as of May 31 (waiting for the bank statement and need to reconcile) is \$69,260.45. We also made it through the heating season with our prepaid propane supply! Thank you for taking time to return thermostats to the preset temperatures before leaving the church.

As noted last month, we have renewed our building loan with Bremer. The monthly payment will be the same. The loan balance prior to the June payment was \$111,157.07. 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 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

150th Anniversary Celebration— October 22-23, 2022

Balsam Lutheran will celebrate its 150th Anniversary on October 22-23, 2022. Our theme is "150 Years...Our Story is Still Unfolding". If you haven't already done so, please put this on your calendar and share it with family and friends.

October will be here sooner than we realize. 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 so lucky that our church historian, Marge Hallquist, recorded and archived so much of our church history but we need to pull this all together for the celebration. Please contact the committee chairs if you can help us out.

In addition, we would love to have one of our talented friends create a banner and logo with our celebration theme. Please contact any of the committee chairs if you can help us or just create one and send it to us!

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.

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 "150th 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

YOUTH NEWS

Thank you to Bob LaBathe and Dawn Costello for planning and executing the Easter breakfast. It takes a lot of preparation and is a great fundraiser for the Luther Point campership fund. Your time and effort each year is greatly appreciated!

Our Sunday morning youth sessions have concluded for summer break. Thank you to all parents, grandparents and guardians

for supporting our youth in their faith journey. It has been an absolute joy in working with them throughout the year. Thank you, also, to those individuals who have helped out by substitute teaching, working in the kitchen, supervising activities and lending a hand in any way. The support and love of the congregation is a crucial part of our youth's faith formation. This year, Tammy Polta will be resigning as Sunday school teacher. I am grateful for the time she has committed in working with our younger grades. Her presence on Sunday morning will be missed, but I'm sure it will be nice for her to rejoin worship with her Elim family. Tammy is one of the many people who have committed their time and talent to our youth.

I want to reiterate my appreciation to those who have dedicated themselves to the youth in both teaching and serving on the youth education committee. (Numbers represent years teaching and serving on the committee since I started as SS Superintendent in 1999.) Kristi Friese (5/5); Karlee Friese (8/4); Taunya Kobernick (6c); Michael & Lisa Markee (8c + Luther League); Tammy Polta (8/7); Sue Fougner (8/22); Tammy Olson (9/17); Crystal Fougner (13 classroom helper); and Dawn Costello (13/15). Also serving as teachers and helpers in recent years, for shorter terms, Caressa Fougner, Amie Costello, Cady Costello, and John Costello. Thank you to ALL individuals who have worked with, and supported me, in providing our youth with religious education and experiences based in faith and stewardship. I have been incredibly blessed to work with so many people during my service and I truly appreciate each and every one. If you are interested

in assisting with our youth services, please let me know.

As of this publication, Day Camp dates are still pending. Information will be emailed to families once session details are finalized.

Finally, there is still time to sign up for camp at Luther Point. For a complete listing of session dates, please visit their website at: lutherpoint.org

Blessings to all!
Barb Friese,
Sunday school superintendent

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

My son Nicholas and I (Ruth Ernat) wish to thank you all **for your prayers**. God and ayer kept my son alive and returned him to us. Nick has more surgeries to go, but he is healing. We both also appreciate the prayer shawls. We both use them daily.

Thank you so very much and may God Bless you all. Ruth Ernat and Nicholas

A BIG THANK YOU to everyone who gave to the **rummage sale** and/or worked at it! The Social Ministry is glad to have about \$2500 to use to help the needy of our area. A lot of contributions and work went into the sale, and we are very grateful.

Connie F, Chairman

To the congregation and youth families: Thank you for the **beautiful plant and gift card**. I appreciate the thoughtfulness. I consider it a blessing to journey with our youth in faith.

With gratitude, Barb Friese

On behalf of the **Amery Area Food Pantry**, we wish to thank you (Social Ministry) for your generous **donation of \$200 and 7 pounds of food**. Because of your generosity we are able to continue to provide food assistance to the many families in need in the Amery area. We are serving approximately 150 households at the present time.

It is with deepest appreciation that we acknowledge your donation. We are blessed to have your support. Please know that we are very appreciative of your kindness and generosity.

Cheryl Bowman,
Amery Area Food Pantry

Thank you from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for your gifts of **\$100 to ELCA World Hunger and \$120 to Lutheran Disaster Response**. You are creating new beginnings. Thank you for sharing the hope of new life and the fullness of Christ's joy.

June "Birth" days	
06 Peter Markee 16 Kay Arne 18 Gail Peterson 20 Ture Duden	22 Karlee Friese 27 Ruth Hart 28 Bob LaBathe

Without Pentecost the Christ-event - the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus - remains imprisoned in history as something to remember, think about and reflect on. The Spirit of Jesus comes to dwell within us, so that we can become living Christs here and now.

— Henri Nouwen