

THE BALSAM BRANCH

July and August 2023

Balsam Lutheran Church

1115 Mains Crossing
Amery, Wisconsin 54001

Laurie Kenyon Woods, Pastor

Pastor's phone: 269-552-8245

Church Website: www.balsamlutheranchurch.org

Church email: balsamlutheran@amerytel.net

Balsam Branch Editor: *Bonnie Corcoran*



Church Phone: 715-268-9291

Pastor's e-mail: pastorlauriekw@gmail.com

Pastor's Pen

Happy Summer!

I was scrolling through my social media feed the other day, when I came across a post from my seminary down in North Carolina. I was shocked to see that they had included something I had written back in 2017 while I was a student there and enrolled in a class about creative liturgy and worship where we wrote and crafted different prayers, poems, litanies, and similar things for use in worship.

That semester I was in the course overlapped with the time I was really in the thick of discerning whether ordination, the path to become a pastor, was for me. I had started seminary knowing I wanted to do some kind of ministry, but at that time I was pretty resistant to the idea of pastoring a church. God has a sense of humor sometimes, am I right?

This one particular poem was me trying to make sense of listening for, and

responding to, the call of God in my life. Whatever that call might have been.

My poem that was posted made me travel back down memory lane and made me curious who exactly from the school had kept it all these years, and why. Turns out it was from the Admissions Department whose job it is not only to help students get into seminary, but to also help any and all prospective students who were discerning their own next steps in ministry generally.

That being said, I believe this could be a useful prayer for all of us baptized Christians, all of us who called to be ministers and messengers of God's good news in our own unique ways. I hope you will carry these words with you and pray "I am here, Lord, send me".

I AM HERE, LORD, SEND ME?

I've heard of your servant Samuel-called by you to speak truth to your people.

Could I be like him - mistaking your voice
for the call of others?

I was not there, though, I cannot ask
him how he knew that voice was you.

I've heard of your servant Mary-
I wish I could be like her,
her bravery in partnering with you,
her radical birthing of justice and love in
our world.

But, was she as afraid,
as nervous and unsure as I am?
I was not there, though, I cannot ask
her how she gave birth to you.

I've heard of your servant Peter-
such passion and belief.
What made him step out on that water to
walk towards you?
Could I be like him-
wanting to stand with you,
but afraid to fall, to sink, to drown?
I was not there, though, I cannot ask
him if he would still step out again.

I don't know where you're calling me,
but, in faith, in trust, I say,
here I am, Lord, send me.

Blessings,
Pastor Laurie

Balsam Lutheran Church

Approved Minutes of the Church Council
March 12, 2023

In Attendance: Pastor Laurie Kenyon
Woods, Steve Fredrickson, Gail Peterson,
Bob LaBathe, Jon Karsten, Mike
Christensen, Sue Albright, Taunya
Kobernick

Absent: Bruce Hammer, Ruth Hart,

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

Secretary's Report: The minutes from
the February council meeting were
reviewed. The following corrections were
made to the February minutes.

- Correction in spelling of name to Mike Christensen.
- \$640 instead of \$600 was made from the talent show.
- The Social Ministry committee should take up and donate to the earthquake relief fund. Corrected to – A request will be made to Social Ministry to donate to the earthquake relief fund.

□ Script cards are sold to the church
at a discount and the church then sells to
the congregation at full face value.
A motion was made and seconded to
accept the February secretary's report
with the corrections above. Motion
passed.

Treasurer's Report: \$800 was donated
to the earthquake relief fund. General fund
is down due to recent significant bills.
Offerings are down due to winter weather,
but Easter will bring an increase in
offerings. The general fund balance is
\$48,374.82. A motion was made and
seconded to accept the treasurer's report
as presented. Motion passed.

Pastor's Report: For Lent, Pastor Laurie
has been conducting services at other
churches. Unfortunately, Ash Wednesday
services had to be cancelled due to
weather. Two funerals were conducted at
Elim. She is working ahead for Holy
Week. Pastor is on vacation the week of
April 16th. It was decided instead of
bringing in a substitute pastor we will
cover the service that week ourselves.
Baptism for her son Peter will be May 21.

Committee Reports:

1. Adult Ed/Prayer - Bible Study is on
every Wednesday.

2. Finance – We have until April 30th to utilize our prepay quantities of propane. Any gallons remaining after April 30th will be applied as a dollar credit on our account.

3. Memorial - The church has received a letter and a donation of \$200,000.00 to establish the Marguerite E. Hallquist Memorial Fund. The letter is included with these council minutes and will be read to the congregation by Mike Christensen on March 19th. At some point the congregation will be asked to make recommendations in writing on the use of the funds. The use of the funds will of course be in accordance with the wishes of Marguerite E. Hallquist.

4. Property - The church needs to have maintenance done on the fire sprinkler system to comply with insurance requirements. This must be scheduled when snowpack has been reduced enough to have access to the sprinkler pump system. A company by the name of MidWest Loop will review our sanctuary and give a presentation for the installation of a hearing loop system to improve the hearing and clarity for our church attendees who have hearing aids. It was recommended that someone from the congregation should try the loop system in other churches before an approval is made to purchase. There is a church in Rice Lake and one in Baldwin that have the system.

□UMOS has asked that they be allowed to install a shade umbrella in the playground behind the church. UMOs has been informed this could be dangerous due to wind and was turned down on the request. Other options, such as a tent,

that can be secured to the fence, are being investigated.

5. Social Ministry - Rummage sale is coming up on May 4th and 5th.

6. Staff - A staff support committee will consist of the pastor and president of council. Also, two people selected by the council.

7. Witness and Outreach - No new business

8. Worship and Music - There was discussion on outdoor services this summer and if people still want them and if so when would the services be held. No decisions were made, and it will be discussed more in future council meetings.

9. Youth Ed - Looking for help for the Easter breakfast.

Old Business:

- Approve annual meeting minutes - A motion was made and seconded to accept the annual meeting minutes. Motion passed.
- Guests and visitor's cards: Card stock will be purchased, and the church will create the guest and visitor cards.
- Synod delegates – Bonnie and Ruth will be going to the Synod conference.
- Hearing assistance information – see notes on loop system under Property Committee above.

New Business:

- 1) Menomonie Singers concert April 15th - The WELCA luncheon is also April 15th. It was felt that having this concert the same day as the WELCA luncheon would not work due to time constraints and lack of volunteers to assist the singers. This concert will be cancelled.

- 2) Concert committee – There was discussion about forming a concert committee to co-ordinate concerts such as the Menomonie Singers and for our internal concerts and activities such as the talent show. No committee was formed at this time.
- 3) Pastors vacation April 16th – see notes under Pastors Report above.
- 4) Mike C Good News – Mike read the letter from JoAnn Hallquist to create the Marguerite E. Hallquist Memorial Fund.
- 5) Other
 - Paper bulletins are being kept for approximately 10 years. It was decided to keep bulletins for only three years with bulletins older than three years kept digitally.
 - Council meetings will be the first Sunday in April and May.

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, Jon Karsten,
Church Council Secretary

Balsam Lutheran Church

Approved Minutes of the Church Council
April 2, 2023

In Attendance: Pastor Laurie Kenyon Woods, Steve Fredrickson, Gail Peterson, Bob Labathe, Jon Karsten, Mike Christensen, Sue Albright, Taunya Kobernick, Bruce Hammer, Ruth Hart

The meeting was called to order. Bob LaBathe led with devotions.

Secretary's Report: A motion was made and seconded to accept the secretary's report as presented. Motion passed

Treasurer's Report: A motion was made and seconded to accept the treasurer's report as presented. Motion passed.

Pastor's Report:

- The Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) hymnal books have been received. Fifty will go to Balsam Lutheran and 20 will go to ELIM.
- Working with the church website company to update and streamline the website. Would also like to be able to post the church calendar on the website.
- Conducting a non-member wedding on 8/12.
- Barb and Pastor Laurie are basically covering for Bonnie.

Committee Reports:

1. Adult Ed/Prayer - No Bible study the next two weeks.
2. Finance – - In accordance with wishes of Marguerite E. Hallquist the church mortgage was paid off and \$25,000 was directed to the cemetery. This leaves \$106,245.08 in the Marguerite E. Hallquist Memorial Fund. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to put these funds into a 9-month CD. This will provide time to collect recommendations from the congregation for the use of the remaining funds, review the recommendations, collect the necessary information such as quotes, and then put into place the congregational voting required to utilize the funds.
3. Property –
 - \$1610 will need to be spent for repair and maintenance of the fire sprinkler system. Additionally, the yearly inspection will cost \$1225.

- UMOs has purchased a tent type cover for the back playground. Bob LaBathe will supervise the installation to make sure it is safe.

5. Social Ministry Outdoor services will be held one Sunday a month starting this summer.

6. Youth Ed

- Youth served the soup supper on Wednesday March 29th.
- Youth lead the Kindermass service on April 2nd
- First communion for Kinsley Kobernick
- Discussion for Campership funds

Old Business:

Guests and visitor's cards – These can be created at the church. The church is in need of a volunteer to work on this.

New Business:

Pastors Vacation April 16th – we will have a substitute pastor.

Solar Question - estimate is \$54,000 with a \$20,000 rebate off of that. The solar panels would be ground based panels in the back of the church. More discussion and research needed.

Other – discussion on a new baptismal font which would be made of glass and larger than the one we currently have. Fresh water could be kept in it at all times to be used for functions such as blessings. Cost is approximately \$1500. More discussion and research needed particularly around what is needed for the font base.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.
We reviewed member and neighborhood prayer concerns.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.
Respectfully Submitted, Jon Karsten,
Church Council Secretary

Balsam Lutheran Church

*Approved Minutes of the Church Council
Special council meeting on baptism font
April 9, 2023*

In Attendance: Steve Fredrickson, Gail Peterson, Bob LaBathe, Jon Karsten, Sue Albright, Bruce Hammer, Ruth Hart
The meeting was called to order.

The council discussed purchasing an additional baptism font using funds from the script program. The script fund is currently at \$3500. A motion was made and seconded to use these funds to purchase the font. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted, Jon Karsten,
Church Council Secretary

Balsam Lutheran Church

*Approved Minutes of the
Special council meeting on baptism font
April 30, 2023*

In Attendance: Steve Fredrickson, Gail Peterson, Bob LaBathe, Bruce Hammer,

Meeting called to order and the only business was a proposal to purchase a new baptismal bowl for the church. Motion made and seconded to purchase a frosted bowl from Menards. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned.

Balsam Lutheran Church

*Approved Minutes of the Church Council
May 7, 2023*

In Attendance: Pastor Laurie Kenyon Woods, Steve Fredrickson, Bob LaBathe,

Jon Karsten, Mike Christensen, Sue Albright

The meeting was called to order. Steve Frederickson led with devotions.

Secretary's Report: A motion was made and seconded to accept the April 2023 secretary's report as presented. Motion passed.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Baptismal Font April 9th, 2023 secretary's report as presented. Motion passed.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Baptismal Font April 30th, 2023 secretary's report as presented. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: A motion was made and seconded to accept the April 2023 treasurer's report as presented. Motion passed.

- A significant donation was made to the building/repair fund to repair the entrance way cement.

This will raise the cement to eliminate the uneven area.

- A substantial amount is in the in/out account for camperships.

- Five Sunday offerings in April have increased the general fund balance.

- \$2000 is left in the propane account.

Pastor's Report:

- Synod Assembly will be two days next year. Cost will increase to \$280 per person plus travel expenses.

- Conducted a burial on 5/6/23

- Would like to organize a volunteer day in September. ELCA encourages this.

Committee Reports:

1. Memorial – suggestions are being received for uses of the remaining Marguerite E. Hallquist Memorial funds. Initial suggestion is to create an area in

the church to honor Marge with historical materials.

2. Property

- Refrigerators, stove, and hood have been inspected for UMOS. Additionally, a water sample has been sent to the state for testing. UMOS pays for all of this.

- General Sprinkler will be on site May 15th to repair and test the system.

3 Social Ministry – \$2000 was made from the rummage sale and \$300 on food. \$500 of this will go to the Backpack Program.

4. Youth Ed

- Last youth session was Sunday 5/7/23

- Roadside cleanup will resume in late fall

- LPBC – no youth confirmed but some interested

- Options being discussed for Day Camp

- Acolyte will resume in the fall and will be combined with Psalm readings

- Next meeting 5/29/23 at 9:30

Old Business:

Guests and visitor's cards – Steve is working on the cards.

Old Hymnals - discussion on what to do with them such as other churches or recycle. Further research is being made.

New Business:

- Pay for when Pastor is gone and we conduct the service ourselves - a motion was made, seconded, and approved to pay \$50 to anyone who fills in for Pastor when we do not use an actual substitute pastor. Elim is doing the same.

- Summer Ad in the Sun – a motion was made, seconded, and approved to spend \$203 to place an ad in the the Sun Lake publication.

- UMOs – tentative date for UMOs is to arrive June 5th with school starting on June 12th.

Other- The congregation can now resume the shaking of hands (if they want) during the Sign of Peace.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Council reviewed member and neighborhood prayer concerns.

Council closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted, Jon Karsten,
Church Council Secretary

Balsam Lutheran Church

Unapproved Minutes of the Church Council
June 11, 2023

In Attendance: Pastor Laurie Kenyon Woods, Bob LaBathe, Jon Karsten, Mike Christensen, Sue Albright, Ruth Hart, Gail Peterson, Taunya Kobernick, Bruce Hammer

The meeting was called to order. Mike Christensen led with devotions.

Secretary's Report: A motion was made and seconded to accept the May 2023 secretary's report as presented. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report A motion was made and seconded to accept the May 2023 treasurer's report as presented. Motion passed. General fund is down due to the decrease in offerings in the summer. Also, there were extra ordinary expenses paid (gravel, sprinkler repair, and the new hymnals).

Pastor's Report:

- Bible Study is on hold for the summer and will start back in the fall.
- Conducting visits to congregational members.

- Conducting a wedding on July 12th. The reception will not be held at the church.
- On vacation August 7th – August 14th.

Committee Reports:

1. Memorial – • Suggestions for use of the Marguerite E. Hallquist Memorial funds have been received and sent to members of the Memorial Committee. This committee will meet to discuss. The Memorial Committee will then discuss with the council. Council will need to make decisions on how to proceed on projects and assign resources to projects.

2. Property

- Fire sprinkler has been fixed.
- New roasters for the kitchen will be purchased as the ones we have are old and do not regulate temperature correctly.
- The contractor for the raising of the concrete at the front entrance way cannot do the work until the end of July or early August.

3. Youth Ed

- 2023 – 2024 Youth sessions will be 9/23/23 to 5/20/24
 - Psalm readers will continue through the summer
 - Day camp is on hold
 - Confirmation – PowerPoint rotation in the fall
 - Bible Camp – 2 confirmed attendees
4. Witness and Outreach: Discussion around sending invitation cards to new residents in the area.

Old Business:

- Old hymnals – nobody wants so they will need to be recycled.
- Accompanist pay – retroactive from June 1st increasing to \$75 per service.

New Business:

- Discussion around renting another 3 or 4 acres for tillage. If approved this

would be for the 2024 planting season.

- UMOs begins school Wednesday June 14th.
- Visitor book is in place. A request was made for Pastor to mention the visitor book with announcements prior to service.
- July council meeting is cancelled.
- UMOs – tentative date for UMOs is to arrive June 5th with school starting on June 12th.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Council reviewed member and neighborhood prayer concerns.

Council closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted, Jon Karsten,
Church Council Secretary

Financially Speaking

Our general fund balance as of May 31 was \$46,155.15. Our general fund balance has gradually fallen since the beginning of the year even though we no longer have a mortgage payment. We have had some significant expenses that were incurred. These include the repair/maintenance of the fire sprinkler system, gravel for the driveway (this had been postponed from last year), and workers' compensation insurance.

Unfortunately, we have seen a consistent increase in our electric usage this year even when UMOs has not been here. Please make sure to turn off lights when you leave, turn thermostats back to preset temperatures, and be sure that we only use the necessary refrigerators. At one time, all three refrigerators were running

with very little food in each! The large refrigerators use significantly more electricity than our small refrigerator.

Summer is a busy time for everyone as we often go on vacation or are gone for other events on Sundays. Please consider mailing in your weekly offering or playing catchup on your offering the next Sunday that you are back. Please prayerfully continue your generous contributions to our general fund and special projects. All is so much appreciated.

In Christ, Gail Peterson, Treasurer

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 Bev Getschel	07 Sue Fougner 29 Krista Markee

Missionary Support

Each year, Balsam Lutheran pledges to support our missionary, Dr. Friberg. We have an annual pledge of \$1000. I send off a portion of this every quarter when I submit our benevolence to the synod and will be sending a payment at the end of June. If you would like to contribute to the support of our missionary, please add this to your Sunday offering and note it on your offering envelope.

Thank you for supporting our missionary.
Gail Peterson

Backpack Bash

The Backpack Bash went off like a bash. It wouldn't have been possible without the compassionate members of this congregation. Thank you Social Ministry and WELCA for your very generous donations. Thank you to Mary Peterson for doctoring up the Beans. They were delicious once again. Thank you to my food servers Mike and Lila and Les and Eileen. We still miss the Ashleys! Thank you to Lisa (Peterson) Fresl for the potato chip donation. Thank you to Gail Peterson for helping with the committee.

We made close to \$19,000.00. including sponsorships \$60,000.00 totally. Our goal was \$70,000.00 But inflation and covid are still influencing our area.

THANK YOU! FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART!

Betty Collins, The Cut Above Hair Studio

Fall Dinner

I know it is hard to think of fall when it is so hot and dry, but our Annual Fall Dinner will be upon us before you know it! **Mark your calendar for Sunday, October 1.** The Packers do not play that day so we should be very busy and have lots of help!

APPLE RIVER CONFERENCE WELCA AUGUST 12

The August WELCA gathering will be at First Lutheran Church in Amery. The special speaker is Moira Kneer from Eau Claire. She includes things like life lessons from the Peanut Gang and Seuss for Seniors.

The gathering always begins with coffee and treats at 8 AM. And of course, the day is not complete without the noon 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

Help Wanted

Pastor Laurie is looking for volunteers to help her organize our church's upcoming day of service. GWOH Sunday will be September 10th and it is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the ELCA – one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor.

From the ELCA: "Service activities offer an opportunity for us to explore one of our most basic convictions as Lutherans: that all of life in Jesus Christ – every act of service, in every daily calling, in every corner of life – flows freely from a living, daring confidence in God's grace."