

# THE BALSAM BRANCH

September, 2023

## Balsam Lutheran Church

1115 Mains Crossing  
Amery, Wisconsin 54001

Pastor Laurie Kenyon Woods



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## Pastor's Pen

Dear church family,

As we're nearing the end of summer, I've been a little sad about how little time I've spent in water this year. All my life I have loved swimming in lakes, oceans, pools, rivers, you name it. I'm so looking forward to spending Peter's childhood instilling the same love in him too.

We haven't done swimming lessons yet with Peter, but in our little bathtub at home we've started laying some groundwork to make it all easier for him down the line. And one of those things we've worked on with him is getting more comfortable laying on his back in the water. Learning to float is essential for swimming and for safety in the water.

I was thinking about all of this when I came across this passage in a book I was reading about ministry and it compared the life of our faith to floating:

"Spiritually speaking, learning to float is learning to believe we are beloved and to

trust that we belong. When we feel well loved, affirmed, and accepted by others and by God, we develop a kind of spiritual buoyancy that will be there for us in the long haul ahead. We will be able to take breaks and rest, letting go of our striving for a time without falling into despair. Our attitude will become less frantic, our strokes more relaxed, as we realize we can pull and glide rather than thrashing endlessly around.

Floating needs to be learned from the inside out. It is not something you can learn theoretically. You can look at happily floating people all day long and still have no idea how to make it happen to your own body. The same with love, it is not enough to know what love looks like; you need to feel it within. Still, an encounter with someone who feels well loved, whose spiritual buoyancy is plain for all to see, can be inspiring."

We Lutherans have a particular perspective on what faith is and that goes all the way back to Martin Luther himself. For Luther, faith was more than just simply a thing we think about in our heads, or a list of things we agree to, or even the dearly loved beliefs

that we hold. No, Luther would say that faith is better understood as trust - "a living, bold trust in God's grace". Trusting enough in God's love to know we can float above the waves of life.

Even though this summer my family and I didn't get to spend as much time swimming and floating in the water as we'd like, we continued to trust in God's grace and increase our own spiritual buoyancy.

My prayer for you all as the warm and inviting summer waters eventually turn frozen and icy cold, may we all continue to float in God's grace.

Blessings, Pastor Laurie

## **Balsam Lutheran Church**

*Unapproved Minutes of the Church Council  
Meeting  
August 13, 2023*

**In Attendance:** Steve Fredrickson, Bob LaBathe, Jon Karsten, Mike Christensen, Sue Albright, Bruce Hammer, Gail Peterson, Taunya Kobernick  
The meeting was called to order. Steve Frederickson led with devotions.

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

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

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor was on vacation.

### **Committee Reports:**

Adult Ed/Prayer: Bible study will start in September

Property: • Entry way concrete raising is now scheduled for September.

• Looking into better road signs to give the church more visibility. The signs should

include the Sunday service time and Sunday School time.

• UMOS conducted a radon test which tested a little high. Bob has purchased a test kit and will test to verify.

• Looking to replace the old three tub kitchen sink to make the sink easier to use.

Information has been given to Mike Christenson for the Memorial Committee to review.

• Looking into new partitions in the restrooms. Information has been given to Mike Christenson for the Memorial Committee to review.

Witness & Outreach: Fall dinner is October 1

Youth Education: The Amery Congregation Group is bringing their youth together for Youth Education. This will be for all ages and most likely separated into age groups. Balsam Lutheran is being included in this.

### **Old Business:**

Old Hymnals – they will be put out in the fellowship area for people to take.

Other – question on where we are in receiving the directory. Steve Frederickson will follow-up.

### **New Business:**

Menomonie Singers request to do a concert Saturday Nov 4th - A motion was made, seconded, and approved to not have this concert.

UMOS – current contract is about up so we need to put together a committee which will make recommendations on terms for the new contract.

Other – Prebuy for winter propane is due August 21st. We will buy 3000 gallons at \$1.52 per gallon. We have a substantial credit at Synergy from last year so our expense for this prebuy will be approximately \$2400.

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

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jon Karsten, Church Council Secretary

Financially Speaking

Our general fund balance as of August 31, 2023, was \$40,787.61. Our general fund balance has gradually fallen since the beginning of the year even though we no longer have a mortgage payment. We prepaid (about \$2400) for our upcoming propane needs in August. We did not use all the funds from last year for propane so that amount helped to reduce this large payment.

We have over \$10,000 in our In/Out accounts. These accounts are where we hold funds earmarked for a particular need or expense. These funds are held in the church checking account so that they can be easily accessed when the funds are requested. Please contact me if you would like more information about these funds.

The finance committee will begin working on the proposed 2024 budget soon. If you are responsible for an area/service that is included in the church budget, please get any requests for changes to the committee as soon as possible. If we don't hear from you, we will assume that the budgeted amount is sufficient and continue with that amount. Finance committee members are Vicki Hammer, Gail Peterson, Bob LaBathe, and Marlyn Bottolfson.

At the end of September, I will be sending in funds for support of missionary family. We have pledged \$1000 for 2023. If you would like to contribute, please add funds to your weekly offering and note the additional funds as "Missionary Support" on your envelope. Thank you for your continued financial

support of Balsam Lutheran and our mission.  
In Christ, Gail Peterson, Treasurer

**YOUTH:** Sunday morning youth sessions will begin on September 10th starting at 8:30 AM. All youth, preschool through 8th grade, are invited to participate. Please contact Barb Frieze at (715) 222-8272 with any questions. Thank you!

September "Birth" days	
15 Marlyn Bottolfson 22 Mike Christensen 22 Bruce Hammer	24 Julaine Berglund 24 Barb Henck 28 Crystal Fougner

Fall Dinner

It's that time again! Our annual Fall Dinner will be held Sunday, October 1. Yup, it's a bit earlier this year but we decided to stick with our traditional first Sunday in October date. So, mark your calendar and invite family and friends for this fantastic meal! As in the past, we will also have our craft and bake sale. So, start working on those crafts and handiwork items. Plus, pull out those great bake goods recipes. Breads (yeast and quick), cookies, candy, and pies are always popular with our visitors. Signup sheets for food donations as well as help for this huge event will be posted soon. Lots of volunteers are needed to set up on Saturday, serve, manage the dining room, and, of course, for cleanup. We also welcome monetary donations. Oh, did I forget to mention, we need lots of pies too! Gail Peterson for the Witness and Outreach Committee