

**Balsam Lutheran Church**  
1115 Mains Crossing Avenue  
Amery, WI 54001

**Address Service Requested**

**Balsam Lutheran Church**  
**Annual Meeting**  
**Sunday, February 4, 2023**  
*Following Worship Service*

*Please submit committee reports to Bonnie by **January 23**, or before*

**January 21, 3:00: Talent Show and Potato Bar**

# THE BALSAM BRANCH

January 2024

## Balsam Lutheran Church

1115 Mains Crossing  
Amery, Wisconsin 54001

Pastor Laurie Kenyon Woods



Church Website: [www.balsamlutheranchurch.org](http://www.balsamlutheranchurch.org)  
Church email: [balsamlutheran@amerytel.net](mailto:balsamlutheran@amerytel.net)  
Balsam Branch Editor: *Bonnie Corcoran*

Church Phone: 715-268-9291  
Pastor's phone: 269-552-8245  
Pastor's e-mail: [pastorlauriekw@gmail.com](mailto:pastorlauriekw@gmail.com)

Greetings!

The Peanuts, particularly Snoopy, are favorites in our household right now. And I know many people love to watch the Peanuts Christmas Special every year. So when I came across this philosophy of Charles Schulz, the creator of the beloved 'Peanuts' comic strip, I wanted to share it with you all. You don't have to actually answer the questions. Just ponder on them. Read them straight through and you'll get the point.

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
4. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners.
5. Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

How did you do?

The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. And these are certainly no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause fades, awards tarnish, achievements are forgotten.

Now, answer these questions:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who made you feel appreciated and special.
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

I'll add a few of my own:

6. Name the person who first told you about Jesus.
7. Think of the people who pray for you when you really need it.

8. Name someone whose faith you look up to.

Easier to answer?

The lesson: The people who make a difference in our lives are not the most famous, or most accomplished, with the most money or the most awards. They are simply the ones who care the most. And as people of faith, it is the people who show and share Christ's love the most that make the biggest impact. It will always be connection, empathy and compassion that matter most.

As we start this new year, I encourage you in two ways. First, keep in the front of your mind the people you might have thought of above and let them know how much they mean to you, the impact they have had on your life. And second, resolve to live your life to be someone other people name when answering these questions. Extend grace and compassion, share God's love, and be patient, helpful, and kind.

Here's to a kinder, more connected 2024!

Pastor Laurie

## **Balsam Lutheran Church**

*Unapproved Minutes of the Church Council  
December 10, 2023*

**In Attendance:** Pastor Laurie Kenyon Woods, Jon Karsten, Ruth Hart, Steve Fredrickson, Bob LaBathe, Sue Albright, Bruce Hammer, Gail Peterson, Taunya Kobernick.

The meeting was called to order. Pastor Laurie led with devotions.

### **Secretary's Report:**

Correction was requested in the Pastors Report for November. Correction will read as follows in the November Council Minutes.

Attending a First Call Theological retreat in Wausau, WI. This conference is every year with first call pastors attending for their first three years of pastoral service.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the 2023 November secretary's report with the above correction. Motion passed.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

November General Fund ending balance = \$47,066.39. Offerings were good in November and the Turn up the Heat donations were good. The Marguerite E. Hallquist Memorial Fund CD has matured and these funds will be put into savings. Treasurer is still in need of 2024 budget requests from staff, council, and committees. A motion was made and seconded to accept the November 2023 treasurer's report as presented. Motion passed.

### **Pastor's Report:**

Participated in Amery Thanksgiving Service

Sunday Jan 7th there is a community service at Amery First Lutheran Church to pray for all involved in the Israel Palestinian conflict.

Sunday December 31st will be a carols and lessons service.

Sunday January 7th there will be a baptism for the Worth baby.

**Committee Reports:**

**Finance:** need 2024 budget information very soon. Council will need to approve the 2024 budget at the January council meeting.

**Property:** south furnace has gone out and will need to be replaced. Estimated cost is \$6000.

**Social Ministry:** – Sunday January 21st there will be a potato feed and a talent show. More details to come.

**Youth Education no classes 12/17, 12/24, and 12/31.**

**Old Business:**

Feed My Children – Polk County looking for volunteers and donations. There is a planning meeting January 8th 6:00 pm at Bethesda Lutheran Church.

Chair replacements – in process. Old chairs are being replaced as new ones are cleaned.

**New Business:**

By-Laws Updating – a committee will be established to co-ordinate this.

Annual Meeting is February 4th.

Memorial Projects-a motion was made and seconded to create an \$10,000 education career scholarship fund in memory of Marge Hallquist. \$1,000 would be available each year and would be divided among the qualified candidates. Motion passed.

There being no other business, a motion was made by and seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed.

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 December 31, 2023, was \$49,576.31. The general fund balance rose again this past month thanks to your faithful giving. Please remember that the costs of many of our church needs are going up so consider this as you contemplate your weekly giving.

The annual meeting is quickly approaching. We will need to audit all the financial records prior to the annual meeting. I am asking treasurers of WELCA, Youth, Cemetery, Social Ministry, and Scrip program to finalize their 2023 records and have them to the church office by Sunday, January 21 for the audit. We also need 3 volunteers to audit the records. Please contact Gail Peterson or Steve Fredrickson if you can help us out.

The finance committee has completed the proposed 2024 budget. It will now go to the church council for approval and then on to the annual meeting for your approval. We are facing increases in many areas of our budget this year so please prayerfully continue your generous contributions to the general fund.

Thank you for your continued financial support of Balsam Lutheran and our mission.

In Christ,  
Gail Peterson, Treasurer

## Talent Show and Potato Bar

Jan 21 @ 3 (Sunday) in the afternoon we'll have our first ever annual Balsam Lutheran Variety Show followed by a Potato Bake Feed, Please sign up to share your talents.....and feel free to recruit talented friends, too!! There are also sign-up sheets for ingredients. Since this is sponsored by the Social Ministry Committee, all funds raised will go toward helping local folks in need.

January "Birth" days	
01 Connie Fredrickson 05 Char Swenson 16 Bernice Fox	22 Jeff Johnson 29 Brad Fougner

**THANK YOU!**  
*THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!*

**Thank you** to everyone who donated items for the **Operation Christmas Mitten Tree**. It was a much merrier Christmas for many families due to your kind and generous gift giving!

**Thank you to the youth of Balsam** for the wonderful Christmas program! Everyone did a great job with the songs and readings! Thank you, also, to the bell choir and to the girls' trio for embellishing the program with your talent! I appreciate each one of you from small to tall! I hope families had a wonderful holiday season; Sunday morning sessions resume January 8th. I would also like to extend a thank you to **those who helped with set**

**up, sound, projection and taping.** You are all appreciated, as well! Blessings ~ Barb Friese

**Thank you to Barb Friese** for all the time, talent and love you invested in the wonderful Christmas program and our children of Balsam!

**On behalf of the Amery Area Food Pantry**, we wish to thank you for your donation to our pantry. Because of your generosity, we are able to provide food assistance to the many families in need in the Amery area. We are serving about 115 households each month at the present time. **(\$750 from Social Ministry) and 567 pounds of food.**

It is with deepest appreciation that we acknowledge your donation. We are very blessed to have your support. Your donation will assist many families in our area and please know that they are very appreciative of your kindness and generosity.

**Thank you (Social Ministry)** for your gift of **\$500**, for your generous support helping people in our community live longer and happier at home, through **Interfaith Caregivers**.

On behalf of **The Salvation Army** and the families who will benefit from our services here in Polk County, we want to **thank you** for your gift of **\$750 (Social Ministry)**.

The **Northwoods Homeless Shelter** would like to **thank you** for your support of our shelter program through your generous gift of **\$500,00 (Social Ministry)**. We appreciate your support as we continue our effort to stabilize the

homeless families with whom we work and move them into permanent housing.

**Thank you** for your gift of **\$200.00 (WELCA)** to ELCA World Hunger. The glory of God shines through you.

**Thank you** for your gift of **\$200.00 (WELCA)** to Lutheran World Relief. When you love your neighbors with your generous gift to LWR, you change lives in amazing ways.

## Annual Meeting

Balsam's Annual Meeting will be held after worship at 11:30 AM on February 4, 2024. All confirmed members who have communed and made a contribution of record to the church during 2022 and 2023 are welcome to attend.

## Annual Reports Needed

It's time to put together your Annual Report information. All committees and church organizations should submit a report to Bonnie Corcoran no later than **January 25**. If you are able, please submit your reports via e-mail ([balsamlutheran@amerytel.net](mailto:balsamlutheran@amerytel.net)). Thank you for your attention to this.

## A Prayer for Peace

Gracious Lord, we dream of a world free of poverty and oppression, and we yearn for a world free of vengeance and violence. And we pray for your peace.

When our hearts ache for the victims of war and oppression, help us to remember that you healed people simply by touching them..., and give us faith in our ability to comfort and heal bodies and minds and spirits that have been broken by violence.

When the injustice of this world seems too much for us to handle, help us to remember that you fed five thousand people with only five loaves of bread and two fish..., and give us hope that what we have to offer will turn out to be enough, too.

When fear of the power and opinions of others tempts us not to speak up for the least among us, help us to remember that you dared to turn over the tables of money changers..., and give us the courage to risk following you without counting the cost.

When we feel ourselves fill with anger at those who are violent and oppressive, help us remember that you prayed for those who killed you..., and give us compassion for our enemies, too.

When we tell ourselves that we have given all we can to bring peace to this world, help us to remember your sacrifice..., and give us the miracle of losing a little more of ourselves in serving you and our neighbors.

Walk with us, Lord, as we answer your call to be peacemakers. Increase our compassion, our generosity and our hospitality for the least of your children. Give us the courage, the patience, the serenity, the self-honesty and the gentleness of spirit that are needed in a world filled with turmoil and terror. Amen.

~ written by Jack Knox, pastor of Salem (Oregon) Mennonite Church. Posted on Glocal Christianity: the blog of Matt Stone. <http://mattstone.blogs.com/>