

Balsam Lutheran Church
1115 Mains Crossing Avenue
Amery, WI 54001

Address Service Requested

**Lent starts with Ash Wednesday on February 14, with worship at
Balsam at 7:00, (no dinner)**

Walking Together is on February 17, 9-4, in Rice Lake

**Please get to Bonnie all changes in the last year to your phone,
e-mail or address. An updated directory will be in process.**

**You can e-mail her at home or church or put a note in the office
mailbox.**

THE BALSAM BRANCH

February 2024

Balsam Lutheran Church

1115 Mains Crossing
Amery, Wisconsin 54001

Pastor Laurie Kenyon Woods



Church Website:
www.balsamlutheranchurch.org
Church email: 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

Pastor's Pen

“Embracing Love as a Lenten Practice”

As we enter the season of Lent, a time marked by reflection, repentance, and renewal, my hope is that we intentionally center our spiritual journey on the profound practice of love. Let our focus be on cultivating a heart full of love, compassion, and kindness. This year, our journey begins on a unique note as Ash Wednesday coincides with Valentine's Day – a day traditionally associated with expressions of romantic love.

In the midst of chocolates and flowers, let our observance of Ash Wednesday remind us of the ultimate expression of love – the sacrificial love of Christ on the cross. This dual celebration of holidays

challenges us to integrate the themes of love, repentance, and renewal into our

daily lives throughout the Lenten season.

Lent is traditionally a time of self-examination and drawing closer to God. What better way to draw near than by making love a conscious and deliberate practice in our lives? Love, as expressed in the teachings of Christ, is more than a fleeting emotion; it is a transformative force that has the power to heal, unite, and bring about positive change.

This Lenten season invites us to extend love not only to those closest to us but also to strangers and those we find challenging to love. Reach out to those in need, offer a listening ear, or engage in acts of service. By doing so, we participate in the communal aspect of

love, creating a ripple effect that extends far beyond ourselves.



In the hustle and bustle of daily life, it's easy to forget the profound impact simple acts of love can have. This Lenten season, let us be intentional about sowing seeds of love, nurturing them with care, and witnessing the beautiful harvest that unfolds in our lives and the lives of those around us.

May this unique convergence of Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day inspire us to approach love as a profound and transformative practice. This Lent, as we journey together, may our hearts be open, our spirits be renewed, and our lives be a testament to the boundless power of love.

Blessings, Pastor Laurie

Balsam Lutheran Church

*Unapproved Minutes of the Church Council
January 14, 2024*

In Attendance: Pastor Laurie Kenyon Woods, Mike Christensen, Jon Karsten,

Ruth Hart, Steve Fredrickson, Bob LaBathe, Sue Albright, 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 2023 December secretary's report. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

December General Fund ending balance = \$49,576.31. The Marguerite E. Hallquist Memorial Fund CD earned \$2900 in interest. This CD has matured and these funds are now in the church savings account to be used toward church improvement projects. A motion was made and seconded to accept the December 2023 treasurer's report as presented. Motion passed.

Pastors Report

Busy December with Christmas services.

Funeral for Roxann Moltzer.

Sunday January 21st there was a baptism for the Wirth baby.

Craig and Jane Olson, Tyler and Erin Wirth, and Dianna Nelson joined the church the same day.

Committee Reports:

Memorial:

- Bathroom improvements – new partitions, wall vinyl tile, baseboard/molding, paint/wallpaper, labor. Estimated cost is \$10,000 to \$12,000. A motion was made and

seconded to proceed with this project. Motion passed.

- New kitchen sink and faucet - estimated cost is \$2000. A motion was made and seconded to proceed with this project. Motion passed.

- Digital piano/organ – Kawai brand is recommended. Cost is estimated at \$3600. A motion was made and seconded to proceed with this project. Motion passed.

- Pavilion in the park – estimated cost to build the structure is \$3200 - \$4400. Estimated cost to run electricity would be \$6000 with a minimum of \$36 to \$40 per month for the electric bill.

Recommendation was to proceed with the construction of the pavilion and utilize the generator for electricity. A motion was made and seconded to construct the pavilion only. Motion passed.

Property: south furnace has gone out and was replaced on Monday January 15th. Cost is \$6800. be ready for final approval until the change has been made to line items related to pastoral expenses. It was noted that various line items had increased.

Social Ministry: Made donations to Food Pantry, Salvation Army, Interfaith Caregivers, and Northwoods Homeless Coalition. Balsam Lutheran is known in the area as a very giving church.

Youth Education: Kinder Mass will be Palm Sunday.

Staff: will meet after annual meeting

Old Business:

Feed My Children – April 25th – April 27th. Polk County looking for volunteers and donations.

Youth Plans – there will be a middle school youth gathering on April 13th, 2024. Theme is “In Courage”.

New Business:

Talent Show and Potato Feed January 21st at 2:00 pm – will look at moving this to February next year due to how busy January is with tasks such as budget and annual meeting preparation.

Annual Meeting – February 4th

- Memorial Proposals for Annual Meeting

A report of the 16 projects being considered or already approved will be provided to the congregation at the annual meeting.

The project of glass partitions and doors between the sanctuary and fellowship area will be presented to the congregation for vote. Cost is \$21,425.

- Council nominations for 2024 – voting for Ruth Hart, Sue Albright, and Gail Peterson will be held at the annual meeting. They currently serve on the church council.
- Budget proposals – reviewed proposed 2024 budget lines. A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2024 proposed budget with discussed adjustments. Motion passed.

Luther Point Anniversary – this is the 75th anniversary. An auction will be held Friday August 2nd through Sunday

August 4th to raise funds. There will also be a worship service on Sunday August 4th.

There being no other business, a motion was made 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

Thank you everyone for your continued financial support of Balsam Lutheran. Our general fund balance as of January 31, 2023 is \$46,448.69. We have had some significant expenses that were incurred and paid in January. This included a new furnace and some annual expenses that are due in January. Our worker’s compensation insurance premium will be another large annual expense that will be paid out in February.

We face increases this year in expenses much the same as we are all experiencing in our own households. I hope that we can continue our financial stability in 2024. Please prayerfully continue your generous contributions to our general fund and special projects. All is so much appreciated.

Many of you give donations and/or memorials in addition to your giving to the general fund. Please remember to

identify or designate a purpose or project for these additional funds. Without your direction, we will deposit these funds into our undesignated memorial fund.

In Christ,
Gail Peterson, Treasurer

February “Birth” days	
03 Robbie LaBathe	22 Sue Bergren
12 Julie Hammer	24 Les Markee
14 Jon Karsten	26 Cherae Wilson
15 Dawn Miller	28 Craig Olson



We would like to thank everyone who: donated food, worked, and came to the potato bar. It was a wonderful day!! Enjoyed by all!
Thanks again, Mike & Lila

A Big Thank You to all those who helped make the second Variety/Talent Show and Potato Feed a huge success. It took the efforts of everyone from the kitchen crew to the performers and we thank you all. It was a great afternoon enjoyed by everyone and a wonderful meal that followed. We raised over \$800 which will go to local needs. Pray that we’ll be able to continue this great project.

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 **\$200 (WELCA).**

2nd Annual Variety Show and Baked Potato Supper

Thank you so much to everyone that participated in and helped with our second annual variety show and baked potato supper. We have such talent in this congregation and friends of our congregation, and we really showed it off to our audience.

Special thanks to Steve Fredrickson for recruiting our talent and serving as the emcee.

A big shout out and thanks to Lila Christensen for setting up and managing our baked potato supper.

Thanks to everyone who donated food, made food, and helped serve the supper.

Thanks to our youth and families who worked in the dining room as well.

The supper was a big success with \$855 raised for Social Ministry projects. So, start working on your talent act for next year!

New Members

So we can all learn their names to greet them: our new members include Craig and Jane Olson (they have been attending for a while), Dianna Nelson (sister of Ruth Ernat, now living with her), and Erin and Tyler Wirth with their little boy Croix and infant girl Calla (Tyler and Croix have often been joining us for worship while Erin stayed home with baby Calla. Calla was baptized here on January 21).

Prayer Ministry

Prayer Shawl Ministry – Please let Pastor Laurie, Bonnie Corcoran at 268-9881 or Nancy Bottolfson at 268-8244 know if there is someone in need of personal prayer, a visit and a prayer shawl. You are also welcome to take a prayer shawl or pocket prayer to folks in need of care; you can then pray with them.

Prayer Requests – Prayer Chain, please contact: Nancy Bottolfson at 268-8244 or email her at botolson@amerytel.net.

Walking Together is an annual event intended to assist with resource sharing, best practices in ministry, new initiatives, and collaboration. This year we will explore the theme "I Love to Tell the Story."

February 17, 2024

9:00 - 4:00

Bethany Lutheran - Rice Lake

\$25 per participant

You can register and pay online if you go to [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin | Walking Together & EPIC \(nswwi.org\)](https://www.nwswi.org)