

# THE BALSAM BRANCH

March 2018

## Balsam Lutheran Church

1115 Mains Crossing  
Amery, Wisconsin 54001

*Dan Watland, Pastor*



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## Pastor's Pen

Lent is here. On Ash Wednesday, we received the ashes in the sign of the cross on our foreheads and hear the words, "Remember you are dust and to dust you will return." We are here for such a short time when you look at life from the perspective of God. Why are we in such a hurry to get through our time here?

Some have observed that for Lutherans, it's always Lent. And do you know what the word Lent means in French? It means slow. So it seems appropriate that we slow down for Lent. Bishop Margaret Payne, who has retired from the New England synod of the ELCA, talks about a "Slow Lent Movement."

It was inspired by the Slow Food movement which wants us to move away from the fast food addiction and re-learn the values of thoughtful shopping, local foods, time spent

in preparation and even more time spent in sharing food slowly with family and friends. The Slow Lent Movement has similar goals.

Bishop Payne asks:

How does our culture's addiction to hurry stand in the way of spiritual growth? Do we have too much 'fast worship'? How could this Lenten season provide an antidote to the weariness of too much to do? How could this Lenten season offer strategies for recovery?

Many of us have bought into the seduction of our culture's three A's: Accomplishment, Adrenalin, and Affirmation. We think our worth is based on how much we accomplish in our corner of the world. We enjoy the adrenalin rush that comes from having much to do and being needed by many people. And we like the affirmation that often comes from having our hands in so

many activities.

We say that we trust in God's grace. But still as Christians we base our self-worth on our accomplishments. We race around trying to fulfill the "shoulds" we carry inside our heads. We seek affirmation from our community even as we fake humility. We have bought into the "fast food" culture without seeing a need for a different way of life. How have you bought into the Three A's: Accomplishment, Adrenalin and Affirmation?

Here are Bishop Payne's Five Slow Disciplines for Lent that complement traditional Lenten disciplines.

Traditional: repentance. Slow: speak less, listen more.

Traditional: forgiveness. Slow: let go of one "should."

Traditional: catechesis (teaching). Slow: re-learn one basic of the faith.

Traditional: fasting. Slow: choose one way to 'unplug'.

Traditional: almsgiving (giving to the poor). Slow: simplify.

During Lent let's combine "Slow Food" with "Slow Lent". Let's take time to build relationships during the soup suppers. Then let us worship together as we listen to Moses talk about the 10 commandments.

## **Balsam Lutheran Church**

*Unapproved Minutes of the Church Council*  
January 9, 2018

In attendance: Bob LaBathe, Marlyn Bottolfson, Betty Collins, Sue Fougner,

Pastor Dan, Sue Albright, Vicki Hammer and Gail Peterson. Absent: Dawn Costello and Michelle Stone.

Bob called the meeting to order, determining a quorum.

Pastor Dan led in devotions.

**Secretary's Report:** Accepted as submitted.

**Treasurer's Report:** Accepted as submitted.

**Committee Reports:**

Worship & Music: Have been working on coverage for the first Sundays of the month and for when Pastor Dan will be on vacation. Lisa Carlson will be playing the organ at least one Sunday a month. There is a request to have microphones available for the prayers of the day, so the readers will be able to be heard.

Stewardship: Met on February 11th to discuss and make plans for the year. In March, stewardship members, along with confirmation students and Sunday school youth, will lead Palm Sunday/Kindermass worship (Balsam only) on March 25th. That afternoon, they will attend the Silent Messengers presentation in New Richmond; supper is at 5:00pm and the show in at 6:00pm. We would like this to be an intergenerational Field trip and have posted a sign-up sheet in the fellowship hall. The event is free, but donations to Grace Place/Serenity Home are welcome. Reservations are not needed, but are appreciated, so a group reservation will be submitted on February 25th. Please sign up if you are interested, drivers will be needed.

Contact Barb Friese with any questions.

Finance: Nothing to report.

Staff Support Will meet March 25th at 11:30 A.M. with staff from Balsam and Elim.

Property The dishwasher is fixed. We continue to do maintenance as needed.

Prayer Ministry/Adult Education: A Confirmation event is planned for March 18th. The Lutheran Course continues.

Witness & Outreach: Did not meet.

Social Ministry: Nothing to report.

Youth Education: YEC met on January 14th and February 11th. The online registrations for Luther Point will be conducted Sunday, February 18th and Sunday February 25th after worship. Families are encouraged to visit Luther Point's website to peruse the various camp options and make note of their 1st and 2nd choices prior to registering. Youth will lead Kindermass worship on March 25th, The 10:15 service. In January, the Confirmation students attended the Rising Together event in Amery and delivered the collected items to the Northwoods Homeless Shelter.

Confirmation students are asked to attend Lenten services in lieu of class. Youth families will host the soup supper prior to worship on March 7th. GYM youth continue to host coffee fellowship each month to support their Compassion child.

Memorial Fund: Did not meet

**Pastor's report:** Reviewed as submitted.

### **Old Business:**

1) Elim will host the Malawi Presentation here at Balsam with a potluck to follow. There will be no worship service at Elim that day.

2) Neil Pickard has not gotten back to us in regards to Indianhead Choir using Balsam Church for their practice.

### **New Business:**

1) Henrietta Swagger is transferring her membership back to Balsam.

2) Communion will not be held on February 18th because of the Malawi Presentation, it will be held on February 25th instead.

3) Bonnie has applied to Thrivent Financial Funds, to help with the Easter Breakfast. They would be used for a meat raffle to help with the youth events. We would like to use WELCA's raffle license for this. Gail Peterson made a motion to hold a meat raffle for the youth and Betty Collins seconded it. Motion passed.

4) The organ and piano need to be tuned. Will contact Juliane and find out who has done this for us in the past.

5) Election of Council Officers. Gail Peterson made a motion to keep the same officers if they were willing to continue their duties. Betty Collins seconded it. Current Officers agreed. Motion Passed. The Officers are: Council President- Bob Labathe, Vice President- Marlyn Bottolfson and Secretary- Sue Fougner.

6) Installations of the Church Council will be held on February 25th.

We reviewed area prayer concerns and closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Fougner, Church Council Secretary

### **SUNDAY YOUTH SCHEDULE**

04: Youth Sessions 8:30 – 9:45 AM  
11: Youth Sessions 8:30 – 9:45 AM  
GYM Youth serve for coffee fellowship  
18: Youth Sessions 8:30 – 9:45 AM  
25: Youth Sessions 8:30 – 9:45 AM  
(Kindermass practice)  
Youth lead Kindermass worship at 10:15 AM

### **CONGREGATIONAL FIELD TRIP!**

The Silent Messengers will be presenting “Celebrating a Savior” on March 25th at Faith Community Church in New Richmond and the Stewardship Committee is encouraging all ages to sign up and participate in this intergenerational outing. Family and friends are encouraged to join us, so please extend the invitation. Their show (6:00) will be preceded by a dinner (5:00). Your free will offering will benefit Serenity Home and Grace Place. A sign-up sheet has been posted in the fellowship area. A head count is appreciated, so please sign up on or before Sunday, March 4th. Please contact Barb Friese with any questions. Thank you!

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

Thank you to all for your generosity during our special Malawi Celebration. Your gift of time, food, items and money are greatly appreciated. You can still make a donation by identifying your gift for Malawi and

placing it in the church offering. Karalyn Littlefield



**Balsam’s Spring Salad Luncheon** will be on Saturday, April 7. The program will be a talk by Eleanor Ostman, who was the St Paul Pioneer Press recipe specialist for many years. Bev Getschel donated a beautiful quilt for the raffle. Sign-up sheets will be going up for volunteering and bringing food. Please be thinking of items to donate for the raffle and door prizes. Please invite your friends and family.

### **W/ELCA CONVENTION**

April 20-21 at Bethany Lutheran Church, Rice Lake, WI  
THEME: “Transformed Anew”  
Bible Verse: “Be renewed in the Spirit ...”  
Ephesians 4:23

The convention committee invites YOU to attend the 2018 SWO Convention at Bethany Lutheran Church, 35 W Messenger Street, Rice Lake, WI 54868 on April 20-21, 2018. There will be singing, praying, fellowship, laughter, keynote speakers, awareness sessions, Taking Faith Home Action Tables and more! The convention is at a new location because of the closing of the Plaza Hotel in Eau Claire. Bethany Lutheran Church in Rice Lake has graciously offered to host us. COME ... JOIN US!!!  
Cost – only \$35 until April 7th. Late registration and same day registration \$40.

## Youth Camp Raffle

Youth will be holding a raffle to raise funds to help defer the cost of going to Bible camp and youth programs. The goal is make sure all programs can be attended with lower cost or no cost to families when church sponsored. You will have a chance to win one of 5 bags of assorted meats valued at \$50.00 each. Please support this raffle to help make it possible that all youth have the opportunity to attend the programs that our church sponsors. Turn all raffle tickets and money in to Bob LaBathe. Raffle tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5.00.

**Save the date: Walking Together will be on March 17 in Eau Claire.** This day of learning and workshops is designed each year for people from around the synod to worship and collaborate, hear about best practices in congregations, get inspired and experiment with new and creative ministries, and gain some helpful tools to use in their congregations. Registration can be done on-line or there is a form on the bulletin board. It is only \$20 for a day of presentations and for lunch. Folks usually car-pool.

## Church Directory Time

Please get to Bonnie C. by March 6 all changes in addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses. Also lists of who is on the committees. Schedules for altar guild, acolytes, ushers, greeters, lectors, offering counters, coffee makers and birthday

servers are also needed. Please have this information to Bonnie by March 6.

## Collection items for back-packs:

March: bar soap

April: deodorant

May: shampoo

April: toothpaste

March "Birth" days	
01 David Berglund	14 Marge Hallquist
03 Scott Ward	16 Lynn Johnson
09 Mary Peterson	17 Adam LaBathe
10 Norman Fougner	18 Brady Kobernick
11 Vivian Moltzer	20 Lisa Duden
12 Chris Stream	22 Aricka Stream
13 Carlene Swanson	31 Janice Petersen

**Balsam Lutheran Scrip: Every Sunday**



following the worship service, someone is available for you to order or pick up your Scrip certificates. Need extra scrip for Easter celebrations? Spring

planting and projects will be coming (Dragon Fly, Amery, Amery Hardware Hank, Menard's, etc.)

## Social Ministry

Social Ministry will sponsor a Rummage Sale on May 3 and 4. You can start bringing your donated items to the church library after Easter. What a great opportunity to clean the excess stuff out of your homes and garages! All funds raised go to help the needy in Polk County. Please also mark your calendars to help on May 2, afternoon, and May 5.