

Balsam Lutheran Church
1115 Mains Crossing Avenue
Amery, WI 54001

Address Service Requested

Balsam Lutheran Church
Annual Meeting
Sunday, February 2, 2024
Following Worship Service

*Please submit committee reports to Bonnie by **January 19**, or before,
via e-mail to church.*

THE BALSAM BRANCH

January 2025

Balsam Lutheran Church

1115 Mains Crossing
Amery, Wisconsin 54001

Pastor Laurie Kenyon Woods

Church Website:

www.balsamlutheranchurch.org

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Dear friends,
Happy New Year!

January always feels like a bit of a reset, doesn't it? A new year stretches out ahead of us, full of possibility. It's a time to take stock, dream a little, and think about where we're headed.

For some, that means making resolutions: reading more, getting organized, adding mindful movement into each day, spending more time with family, or simply drinking more water. (A good goal for all of us, really.) But as people of faith, this is also a time to reflect on how God might be calling us forward—not just as individuals, but as a church community.

Jesus reminds us in Matthew 5:14, "You are the light of the world." What a beautiful and challenging thought! As we consider our personal hopes for the year

ahead, let us also ask, "How can our congregation shine brightly in our community?"

We, as a church, have a unique opportunity to bring people together, offer hope, and embody Christ's justice and mercy in tangible ways. Whether it's through supporting local families in need, being stewards of creation, or simply offering a space for connection and care, the Holy Spirit is at work in us and through us. Big or small, these acts of love and care matter.

This year, I hope we can approach our life together with a sense of possibility. Where is the Holy Spirit nudging us? How can we be a source of hope, kindness, and connection in a world that needs all of those things? What can we do to be the light of Christ in new, brighter, and fuller ways?

Thank you for being part of this community. I'm so grateful for each of you, and I look forward to all the ways we'll grow, serve, and shine together in the year ahead.

With blessings and gratitude,
Pastor Laurie

Balsam Lutheran Church

*Unapproved Minutes of the Church Council
December 8, 2024*

In Attendance: Steve Fredrickson, Barb Friese, Mike Christensen, Bob LaBathe, Taunya Kobernick, Gail Peterson, Pastor Laurie, Charlie Cran, Bruce Hammer, Ruth Hart
The meeting was called to order. Mike Christensen led devotions.

Secretary's Report:

A motion was made and seconded to accept the November secretary's report. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report:

A motion was made and seconded to accept the November treasurer's report as printed. Motion passed.

Pastor's Report:

Thank you for the gift to the WAPO dinner theatre.
Pastor was able to go on vacation. Another vacation is scheduled for January so we'll need pulpit supply for January 19.
She also:
Took part in the community Thanksgiving service.
Rang bells for the Salvation Army.

Committee Reports:

Social Ministry: – gave money to the food pantry and Salvation Army.

Youth Education The Christmas program will be Sunday, December 15. There will also be a craft sale to raise money for campership and other needs.

Old Business:

UMOS - The signed five year contract has been returned.

There will be a Christmas concert by the St. Croix Valley Choir at 3pm on Sunday, December 8. Free will offering for the Salvation Army. The congregation will provide treats and coffee afterward.

Pastor Laurie responded to an email for us to be included in Christmas worship advertising.

New Business:

Gail handed out the proposed 2025 budget and explained areas of change. The council approved the proposed budget.

Steve has found possible candidates to replace him.

Tammy Olson has asked to use the kitchen the week of Dec 16. Ok'd by the council.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn to attend the congregation's Christmas potluck. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Ruth Hart, council secretary

Financially Speaking

Our general fund balance as of December 31, 2024, was \$48,235.00. 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 will be held very soon. 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 2024 records and have them to the church office by Sunday, January 19 for the audit. We need 3 volunteers to audit the records. Please contact Gail Peterson or Steve Fredrickson if you can help us out with the audit.**

The finance committee has completed the proposed 2025 budget. It was approved by the church council in December and will be presented at 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

January "Birth" days	
01 Connie Fredrickson	16 Bernice Fox
05 Char Swenson	29 Brad Fougner
09 Layla Lee	30 Nolan Lee

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 presentation! Everyone did a great job with the songs and readings and puppets! We at Balsam appreciate each one of you from small to tall!

Thank you so much for your overwhelming support of the Secret Santa Christmas Families program. We made Christmas very special for 7 children in 4 families from the Amery School District. Thanks to everyone who shopped for a child or donated funds towards purchase of gifts. Your generosity is simply awesome!

Thank you to everyone who sponsored a Christmas cross ornament or made a purchase from our youth craft sale. Because of your generosity, we were able to raise \$365 for the campership fund (crosses \$215 & crafts \$150). These funds enable church youth to attend camp sessions at Luther Point Bible Camp for a reduced

rate or, ideally, free of charge. Your ongoing support is greatly appreciated!

Thank you to Barb Friese and Sue Fougner 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. **(\$1000 from Social Ministry)**

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.

Thank you (WELCA) for your gift of **\$200**, 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 **\$500 (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) and \$200 (WELCA)**. 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.

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)**.

On behalf of the Amery Area Food Pantry, we wish to thank you for your generous donation of **\$200 (WELCA)**.

On behalf of the Community Referral Agency we wish to thank you for your kind donation of **\$200 (WELCA)**.

Annual Meeting

Balsam's Annual Meeting will be held after worship at 11:30 AM on February 2, 2025. All confirmed members who have communed and made a contribution of record to the church during 2023 and 2024 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 19**. If you are able, please submit your reports via e-mail (balsamlutheran@amerytel.net). Thank you for your attention to this.