

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

## **Address Service Requested**

### **3rd Annual Talent Show and Baked Potato Feed**

**Sunday, Feb. 16—show starts at 3 pm with the dinner at 4 pm.**

**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 2025

## Balsam Lutheran Church

1115 Mains Crossing  
Amery, Wisconsin 54001

Pastor Laurie Kenyon Woods



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## Pastor's Pen

Dear Friends in Christ,

February is often called the month of love, and as we journey through it together, we are reminded of the profound words of 1 Corinthians 13: "Love is patient, love is kind... it does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful... Love never ends." It is fitting these are the words appointed as our epistle reading for the first Sunday of February. Even though these verses are often read at weddings, the apostle Paul wasn't just talking about romantic love. He was speaking of the kind of love that shapes Christian community—the love that reflects God's own heart.

This month, as Valentine's Day approaches, love is celebrated in many ways. But as followers of Jesus, we are called to a love that goes deeper than

sentiment. Christian love is a commitment to seeing and honoring the image of God in all people. It is a love that forgives, that seeks justice, that builds bridges where there is division. That's what love looks like in the body of Christ. It's not just about warm feelings—it's about choosing patience when we're frustrated, kindness when we could be critical, and humility when we'd rather be right. It's the love that Jesus showed us, the love that transforms lives.

Love, as Paul describes it, is not passive—it actively seeks the good of others. This month calls us to love in action. Love that listens, learns, and works for justice. Love that acknowledges pain and celebrates resilience. And so, it is also fitting that Paul's words on love also bring us into Black History Month, a time to reflect on the struggles and contributions of Black

Americans and to recommit ourselves to the work of justice. Jesus' love was always on the side of the marginalized—he saw those whom others ignored, spoke up for those who had been silenced, and lifted up those who had been cast down. If our love is to be Christ-like, it must be active, inclusive, and deeply rooted in justice and truth. So, as we move into this new month, let's ask ourselves: How are we showing love? Not just to family and friends, but to neighbors, to those who are struggling, to those we may disagree with? Love, Paul tells us, is the greatest gift we can give. And in a world that often feels divided, our love—rooted in Jesus—can be a light.

You are deeply loved, just as you are. And you are called to share that love in ways big and small. May we be a church that serves and speaks boldly, forgives freely, and lifts one another up all in love.

With you in Christ's love,  
Pastor Laurie

## **Balsam Lutheran Church**

*Unapproved Minutes of the Church Council*  
January 12, 2025

**In Attendance** Steve, **Barb, Bob, Bruce, Charlie, Gail, Pastor, Taunya.**  
The meeting was called to order. Bob LaBathe led with devotions.

Treats of thank you from Steve for his last Sunday with us on council

## **Secretary's Report**

no changes, approved

## **Treasurer's Report**

End of year- stayed under budget in most places, had some unique expenses including anniversary contribution to Luther Point, convention costs above budget, increase in insurance (as many are experiencing). New budget compensates for changes in the later two. All 2024 bills paid, with the exception of taxes which is always the following year-January cost. Books are coming in for audit. Approved

## **Pastors Report**

Christmas went well, Epiphany Prayer Walk on January 11th had about a dozen in attendance. A good event, utilized our new pavilion space, bonfire and even snow! Have thoughts for improvements next year. Blue Christmas-Good service, attendance a bit low. Plan to have both services next year.

Pastor on vacation next week.

Today we had 3 baptisms.

She attended the conference meeting this past week for the Northwest Synod-Neighbor to Neighbor program that reaches out to our Hispanic community. Boundary Training next week.

## **Committee Reports:**

Property: Ran out of propane last week in furnace for sanctuary, have now been filled and sensors installed that will alert the company when we are at 30%.

Reminder - we have 8 furnaces in the building. One of them went down this week, Maxwells came out to check on it and found the fan had fallen off right at the motor. Discussed a yearly maintenance plan on the furnaces with them, Bob will be in contact with them.

On a side note many enjoyed the impromptu "unplugged of sorts" service last week in the narthex as it had a cozier feeling where we could see each other and use the hymnals. Maybe need to do some planned ones of these?

Thermostats have been reset and new batteries set.

Pavilion--will finish up last things in the spring, anxious to see the congregation and others use it! Services, perhaps reach out to cemetery committee to let families know it's available for use for gatherings or services for delayed events.

Building washing-looking to contract for the spring.

Social Ministry: Rummage Sale in the spring, start looking for items!

Youth Education Christmas service went well. Craft sale at service also went well, about \$316 into campership fund from donations. Can collection money also going into this fund soon. Current group will be holding our Kindermass service. Luther Point Family Camp coming back the first week in August for anyone interested.

Staff: working on evals

WELCA-Spring Salad date is April 5<sup>th</sup>

### **Old Business:**

2025 budget-adjustments as mentioned above along with devotion books

### **New Business:**

Annual Meeting-February 2nd, reports due 1/19/25. Election-Steve has 1 or 2 people willing to run.

Variety show/Potato Bake-looking at end of February

Pastor Clarificaiton-continuing Ed that falls on a Sunday does not count as a vacation day she must take.

Motion made and passed to contribute \$1,000 to our Global Missionaries for the year, Stephen and Bethany Friberg..

Concerns and prayers  
Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,  
Ruth Hart, secretary (Taunya Kobernick, acting)

## **Talent Show and Potato Bake**

Build your own yummy loaded baked potato!! Contact Steve Fredrickson if you wish to share your talent(s). Sign up sheet is up on bulletin board for items that we need for the dinner. We will also greatly appreciate \$\$ donations to help defray costs. Donations can be given to Gail Peterson. Be sure to invite your friends and family!

## Financially Speaking

Thank you everyone for your continued financial support of Balsam Lutheran and our ministry. Our general fund balance as of January 31, 2025, was \$46,764.21. Our January expenses remained on course to the usual monthly expenses despite the need to repair a furnace. We do have a couple significant expenses coming up in February. These are our workers' compensation insurance premium and our next quarterly premium for our property insurance.

We face increases this year in expenses much the same as we are all experiencing in our own households. The hope is that we can continue our financial stability in 2025. 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	23 Croix Wirth
15 Dawn Miller	24 Les Markee
22 Sue Bergren	26 Cherae Wilson
	28 Craig Olson

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

**Thank you for your gift of \$200 to ELCA World Hunger.** Your generosity is getting at the root causes of hunger and poverty in over 60 countries, including the United States. It provides access to clean water, health care, agriculture, livestock and education and it advances peace and justice.

We have successfully completed yet another year of Operation Christmas. We were able to provide gifts for 185 families (463 children). **Thank you from Operation Christmas.**

**Thank you for your gift of \$350 to Lutheran Disaster Response.**

I know I speak for every one of our neighbors in Hurricanes Helene and Milton paths, when I say **THANK YOU.** **Your \$350 emergency gift to Lutheran World Relief** is a godsend to families in desperate need. Thank you for being someone neighbors can count on – and we can count on—when disaster strikes at home and abroad. Your act of compassion reminds families that they are not alone. You remind them that they are loved.

## **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](mailto:botolson@amerytel.net).