

# East Balsam Beacon

Summer 2014

## *Are We A Traditional Church?*

What do you think of when you hear the word "tradition?" Rules? Boring? Stuff? Fiddler on the Roof? The word tradition has both negative and positive connotations. If you have a family tradition that involved carving out a turkey every Thanksgiving and then taking a nap, you probably think of tradition as a good thing. Or if your family goes camping every summer, you probably think of tradition as a good thing. On the other hand, if your family had a tradition of spending a whole Saturday doing yard work every spring, you may think of tradition as a bad thing. (Unless of course you got paid at the end of the day!)

Traditions are neither inherently bad or inherently good. The word tradition simply means something that is handed down or a long-established or inherited way of thinking or acting. Every family has them. And every church family has them too. I can say this with confidence because every church is forced to plan, to make decisions, to develop a pattern in which they will operate as a church.

By definition, churches will develop their own traditions.

So how do we know if a tradition is a bad thing or a good thing? I think a good rule of thumb would be this: If a tradition does not help in fulfilling the mission of the church then the tradition should be changed. In other words, *mission trumps tradition if tradition does not fulfill the mission.* If that is confusing you, let me give you an example. Jesus said in Matthew 28, "Go make disciples of all nations." That is the mission. That is what the church should be doing. But if the church ignores that mission and carries on with a long established tradition (say singing Christmas Carols at midnight every Christmas Eve), then that tradition is actually doing more harm than good. The tradition is failing to accomplish the mission and therefore the tradition needs to be changed or eliminated altogether.

This is where the church needs crystal clear focus. Because, we can lose vision within a whirlwind of "good" activity and forget entirely what we are aiming at. We can work tirelessly to maintain traditions that do not accomplish the mission. And that is unrewarding and exhausting. Why? *Because Jesus does not empower us to maintain traditions.* He does not empower us to prop up patterns of ministry that have been passed down from generation to generation. He empowers us to be His

witnesses (Acts 1:8), to make disciples (Mat. 28) and to glorify His name. (Mat. 5:16). He empowers us to do the good works that He has set before us to do (Eph. 2:8-10). And to stay empowered by Jesus, we must stay close to the mission of Jesus.

So what does that mean for our church as we approach a new year of ministry. I think it means that we think hard about the mission of our church; that we do not burden ourselves doing things that do not support the mission of the church; that we offer our traditions on the altar of the mission and pray to God, "what would you have us do? How can your church better accomplish your plan to make disciples and to spread your great gospel. What traditions need to go? What traditions need to stay? And which traditions need to be changed?"

It was no accident that Jesus didn't give us a lot of specifics for how a church should be run. He did that for a reason: so that we would trust Him, depend on Him and lean on His Word. He wants us to love the mission, not the tradition. So let's love that mission together this year and offer this church to our great Leader again and again,

Pastor Gabe





**Bruce & Candice Beatham** –  
*Wycliffe Bible Translators, Mexico* –  
 The Beathams are back in Mexico and, with many helping hands, have their house cleaned of the mud and mold. Pray for them as they are getting back into translation work.

**Steve & Carol Jean Gallagher** –  
*Wycliffe Bible Translators, Papua New Guinea* –  
 The Gallaghers moved to Inver Grove Heights, MN the first weekend in May. Erin is living with them until she is married in October.

Erin and her fiancé, Mark, graduated from Bethel University on May 24<sup>th</sup>. They are both blessed to have jobs. Adam finished his Sophomore year at Princeton University and has employment in New Jersey for the summer.

Carol Jean and Steve plan to return to Papua New Guinea next January.

July 1<sup>st</sup> is their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. We will have open house at EBBC the afternoon of July 13<sup>th</sup> to celebrate. Closing time is still to be determined but the festivities will start at 2:00.

**Notes from Annual Meeting:**

**Budget** - The proposed Budget for 2014-2015 cut missionary giving in half to three couples (DeCleene, Schwarze, and Zinke); the total amount involved is \$2,100 for the year. After much discussion, the amount was restored to the same as in the past year. The reason for the proposed cut is because income was down last year. We are trusting God to provide the additional funds so that bills can be paid in the coming fiscal year.

**Church Anniversary** - In October EBBC will be 110 years old. We will celebrate that anniversary on October 12. At the June meeting, the Executive Board will select a committee to make plans. If you would like to be on the committee, please let someone on the Executive Board know prior to June 18.

**Report Books:** If you do not have a mail box at church and would like an Annual Report Book, please see either Joan or Dale Michaelson. If you would like to get a book electronically, contact Dale Michaelson at [dale.michaelson@outlook.com](mailto:dale.michaelson@outlook.com)

**Thank You** to the many who have served God at EBBC this past year. It takes people who use their various talents to keep the church moving forward. For anyone who wants to be involved in some way, contact Pastor Gabe or one of the church officers.

**Church Officers for 2014-15:**

- |                   |                               |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Deacons:</b>   | <b>Financial Secretary:</b>   |
| Roger Peterson    | Lois Steege                   |
| Darrel Alen       | <b>Deaconess:</b>             |
| Chuck Steege      | Betty Bertram                 |
| Larry Michaelson  | Theresa Nelson                |
| <b>Trustees:</b>  | Joyce Gaydosik<br>(Alternate) |
| George Bertram    | <b>C.E. Board</b>             |
| Steve Volgren     | Velda Alen                    |
| <b>Secretary:</b> | Cheryl Volgren                |
| Joan Michaelson   | Donna Mabry                   |
| <b>Treasurer:</b> |                               |
| Phil Foster       |                               |

**SAINTS ALIVE**

Who are the Saints Alive? We are the ones that, because of our age and maturity, think we have all the answers, but are not sure what the questions are. Instead of going to see our children in the school play, we go to see our grandchildren in the school play.

We are not highly organized but do meet together for fellowship and fun. Sometimes we meet for a potluck meal and other times for a program. Some events are for the Saints Alive age only, and at times we make it a church event sponsored by the Saints Alive. Maybe we are a bit like the Minnesota small town volunteer fire department with the slogan "We'll know where we are going when we get there."

In early May a few of us met to come up with some tentative plans. On May 30<sup>th</sup> we sponsored the Annual Fish Fry. A progressive dinner is planned in August, September 7<sup>th</sup> will be a fun time on Bone Lake at the Foster home, and October 8<sup>th</sup> will be a pot luck meal and time to visit. The first or second weekend in December we are planning a dinner at Oak Forest as a Christmas event. Oak Forest is a Christian retreat center three or four miles north and east of Luck. They are well equipped to serve a group. These are some ideas we are working on and others are welcome. Further announcements will be made as the events get closer.

Submitted by David Michaelson

**Go Green!**



If you'd like to save a tree, ink, and a stamp, you can get this newsletter by e-mail! Let Jessica Bergman know, and she can add your address to the email list. [hatchetmans1997@gmail.com](mailto:hatchetmans1997@gmail.com)

# Church Survey Summary

Thank you to all of those who participated in the recent church survey. We had 60 replies, which contained a lot of great feedback. Overall, the responses were very positive with 96% overall satisfied with EBBC. Here is a brief summary showing those that were very satisfied or satisfied, if they were involved.

- 100% satisfaction with Women's Tuesday Morning Bible Study, church facilities and the Mom's group
- 96% satisfaction with sermon topics and overall satisfaction with EBBC
- 92% satisfaction with overall worship service, EBBC meeting Spiritual needs, and welcoming atmosphere to visitors
- 89% satisfaction with feeling like an important part of church body
- 86% satisfaction with adult fellowship activities and VBS
- 83% satisfaction with our worship music
- 79% satisfaction with our children's Sunday school and family fellowship activities
- 60% satisfaction with adult Sunday school
- 53% satisfaction with our community outreach activities
- 38% Comfortable with Elder model

It was extremely helpful to pinpoint areas that need improving while celebrating the things we are doing well as a church. Below is a brief summary of areas we would like to improve in as a church in the following year.

**Leadership Development.** We recognize that a healthy church needs to train new leaders to energize and strengthen current ministries. The specific question in the survey dealt with eldership but we want to broaden this to include other ministries of the church as well. Here are suggested steps in moving forward.

- I. Develop a training program for specific areas of ministry in our church. For example, we would like to have deacons in training, trustees in training, worship leaders in training, etc. The goal is to have every member of our church either serving in a specific area of ministry or being trained to serve in the future.
- II. Set aside funds for leadership training throughout the year. We believe that our church budget should reflect our priorities as a church. Because of that, we have allotted specific funds that would go toward training seminars, conferences, concerts, etc to be used for ongoing leadership development.
- III. Continue to teach and promote the importance of every believer using the spiritual gifts that God has given them. This means not only encouraging further involvement but also giving our people concrete ways of how to get involved.

**Adult and Children Sunday School.** First off, thank you so much to those who have faithfully served as teachers during Sunday School. You are greatly appreciated! The question we have been asking regarding Sunday School is this: How do we best use the Sunday School hour to make disciples? That is our main goal. And that means we need to think creatively about how to best accomplish that mission. Here are a few steps in moving forward:

- I. Use the Sunday School hour to offer 2-6 week classes on various topics. This gives people the option of attending Sunday School without feeling "stuck" in a long term commitment. It also allows us a church to hone in on specific areas that need to be taught on.
- II. Use the Sunday School hour for more brunches or fellowship events following the service. It is important that people can connect with each other in a relaxed environment. The Sunday School hour provides a great opportunity for hanging out and getting to know each other.
- III. Take a few Sundays out of the year to have a "Strategy Meeting" following the service and fellowship time. This would give our people a chance to hear about upcoming events, pose questions or concerns and get re-energized toward our church's mission of making disciples

**Outreach.** This was almost a unanimous decision: we want to be doing more outreach! Outreach is important to all of us because it lies at the very heart of God's character as a Seeker of lost people. We also know that it's very easy to bite off more than we can chew in this area. So we are proposing taking small steps toward better serving our community through local outreach. Here are a few:

*CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE*

- I. Having a pizza and movie night every fall. We have done this in the past and had good success. We want to make this a regular part of our church's calendar and offer movies that present the gospel in understandable and riveting ways.
- II. March Madness Fun Night. This was a blast last March! We had a great turnout and it seemed that kids and adults alike we're ready to get out of the house for a bit and have some fun! This provides a great opportunity to open up the church to our neighbors and to give people a glimpse of what joy in Christ looks like.
- III. Vacation Bible School. By God's grace, that last 2 years of Bible School have been fantastic. We want to continue to build on previous years and make this a more effective outreach event.
- IV. Set events on the calendar ahead of time. The year tends to go by very quickly and because of this, we want to plan ahead for outreach.
- V. Continue to explore ways to do local outreach and to serve our community

**Worship.** Our team does a tremendous job leading us into worship week after week! They are also committed to learning and introducing new songs to the congregation so that our worship time is fresh and exciting. The areas of improvement are mainly related to leadership development and including some of the older hymns into the rotation. Here a few steps in moving forward.

- I. Along with new songs including some of the older hymns to reflect our age demographic. The hymns are gifts the church and we want to tastefully include them into our regular worship set.
- II. Developing and training younger musicians to help lead our worship. This would include having "leaders in training" who would participate in the Sunday morning service to gain some experience.
- III. Adding in special music at various times. We want our people to feel free to share a meaningful song with the congregation. This may include planning a music night where kids and parents can come and perform special music.
- IV. Dedicating an entire Sunday to worship and music and offering kids the chance to try out various instruments after the service.

*In summary*, these ideas and plans are only the beginning point. Our hope is that some of these steps will help us as a church gain momentum as we continue to serve Jesus together. To help accomplish these ideas and to sustain the many activities we do have, we need your help. What is your passion and interest? Your ideas and suggestions are always welcome! To God be the glory!

## **CHRISTIAN WOMEN**

### **June Meeting: Beauty No Matter What**

Monday, June 16, 2014

11:30 a.m. Luncheon

Immanuel Lutheran Church

37515 Park Trail

Center City, MN

651-583-2340

Music & Speaker: Mary Roelofs: "No Matter What"

Special Feature: Brenda Stritzuk, Lakeside Greenhouse: "The Beauty of Potting a Plant"

### **July Meeting: "Renew, Restore, Rejuvenate"**

Monday, July 21, 2014

11:30 a.m. Luncheon

Camp Oak Forest

2824 130th Street

Frederic, WI 54837

715-327-4500

Music: Mary Matz will lead a patriotic sing-along

Special Feature: Sally Mackie, "Junk Restoration"

Speaker and Music: Kimberly Nyborg, "Hope: The Promise of Restoration"

*Congratulations to:*

- ★ Pastor Gabe and Melonie Brennan on the birth of their son, Clive Immanuel! Born March 27, weighing 8 lbs, 3oz.
- ★ recent high school graduate, Carly Holin, granddaughter of Orra Holin.



**Women's**  
*Ministry*

The Tuesday morning Women's Bible study are now in the books of I, II, & III John. They are finding that John wrote some deep truths to the early Christians, and those

## Church Financial Update

The May EBBC financial statement will be in a new format. It will list our expenses by our major ministries of worship, preaching and teaching, youth ministries, adult disciple making, fellowship and social time, congregation care, local outreach, global outreach and operations. Hopefully this new format will better highlight our ministries and the corresponding expenses.

We completed our fiscal year ending April 30, 2013 with general fund income of \$107,634 and expenses of \$113,567. Our general fund cash balance decreased to \$3814. In our new fiscal year beginning May 1 we are planning on general fund income to be \$114,100 with expenses of the same amount.

We completed the month of May with general fund income down and expenses up a bit. As a result, our general income cash balance decreased to \$2600. Of our planned \$114,100 in expenses for this year, about 90% are fixed payments each month (e.g. pastor's salary and benefits, mortgage, missionaries).

*One item not fully funded in our budget this year which needs repair is our parking lot.* We have established a designated fund offering for recoating of our parking lot which needs to be done soon. Any additional contribution above your general fund donation to this would be appreciated. You make the check payable to East Balsam Baptist Church and indicate in the memo portion "parking lot".

We all look forward to seeing what is being served for snack after worship. Many thanks to everyone who has provided these delicious treats, helped serve them, or stayed to the clean-up. All the participation is greatly appreciated.

This time of fellowship gives our congregation a chance to visit one another, forming lasting relationships and building that strong backbone every church needs. You are all encouraged to keep signing up to share your wonderful treats. Please remember, if you are unable to participate in this way, donations to help toward supplies are always welcome. Thank you for all your hard work.

Kathy Thull

### *A Word of Encouragement to Those Who May Need an Uplifting Word*

For a long time I have been thinking strongly about this whole subject of encouraging others. It seems to me that now days, we constantly hear about negative things, whether in the media or where ever we are. Either that we aren't doing enough, and should always be doing more, having more meetings, etc. I know some of these things are needed, but sometimes we are put down for not being involved in everything.

Personally, I have found much joy and blessings from being able to do little things for others. There are so many things we can do for others, including our own families, that don't take much time or money. I have found it rewarding to write a note or send a card to various people. It only costs a stamp and a little time. Whether it be to children or adults, we can do little things. I know my grandson in California likes to get mail from his grandma.

Even little children like to be noticed and talked to. I think we all have an inner need to feel wanted and cared for. I believe God can use little things in our lives to be a blessing. That is my prayer. If we tell people we will pray for them, we need to remember to do so.

As I've gotten older, I've often felt like there isn't much of worth that I can do. But, I thank God for the blessings and joy of being able to do little things for people of all ages. One of my favorite verses in the Bible is Lamentations 3:22-24: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness, I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion, therefore I will wait for him."

This verse reminds me again that God is always faithful.

Grace Alen

### Quilting News

This spring, Betty and Theresa taught a quilting class to nine women. The class was a stack-n-whack called Lemoine Star

After many quilting sessions, each woman finished her quilt. East Balsam Baptist Church was the gracious host for this class.

It was amazing to see the variety of fabrics and how each quilt block came together. Every step in the process was exciting, whether it was cutting, piecing, or finishing. Each design emerged and changed like a pattern in a kaleidoscope. The women were very creative in their designs from setting blocks, sashing, and placing borders.

This group of women is thankful to EBBC for the opportunity to fellowship in such a bright and open workspace.



### June

Cedric Cloutier 10  
Joan Michaelson 14  
Tashia Calhoun 15  
Benjamin Beatham 16  
Maggie Conlan 18  
Bethany Volgren 20  
Clif Gustafson 26  
Khloe Bertram 27

### July

Ron Bertram 1  
David Swanson 4  
Myrna Weik 4  
Heidi Johnson 7  
Don Jensen 9  
Judah Stoltzman 9  
Brittney Cloutier 10  
Vincent Stoltzman 10  
Steve Volgren 11  
Bruce Peterson 12  
Lumiana Haney 21  
Benjamin Stoltzman 22  
Darrel Alen 23  
Carly Bjork 25  
Steven Pomerleau 26  
Marc Wallin 26  
Shirley McClain 28  
Edie Osborn 28  
Vincent Cloutier 29

### August

Aliese Bergman 2  
Juanita Holin 7  
Lindsey Stoltzman 9  
Velda Alen 11  
Roxanne Osborn 12  
Laurel Moe 16  
Kim Dulas 17  
Lois Steege 18  
Ryan Alen 21  
Emily Grace Swanson 21  
Kayla Johnson 24  
Kelsy Johnson 24  
Markus Majeske 24  
Barb Michaelson 26  
Brad Peterson 26  
Iris Nelson 29  
Grace Alen 30  
David Michaelson 31

## Upcoming Events

### June 1, 2014

- **“Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream”** This is a 6-week video-based series that explores the meaning of biblical discipleship.

### June 4, 2014

4:30 to 8:00 p.m.

- **Worship in the Park, Apple River Community Church** \*Music, food, and games for the kids.  
*Everyone is invited!*

***Save the Date! October 12, 2014***

***110th Year Church Anniversary***

*If you would like to be on the planning committee, please let an Executive Board member know prior to June 18th.*

East Balsam Baptist Church  
1816 108<sup>th</sup> St./Co. Rd. I  
Balsam Lake, WI 54810  
[www.eastbalsam.org](http://www.eastbalsam.org)

*Sunday Worship—9:00 a.m.*

*Sunday School—10:35 a.m.*

*Tuesdays—Women's Bible Study—9:00 a.m.*

Pastor Gabriel Brennan—[gabriel.brennan@gmail.com](mailto:gabriel.brennan@gmail.com)

If you no longer wish to receive the EBBC newsletter or would like to receive it by e-mail, please contact [hatchetmans1997@gmail.com](mailto:hatchetmans1997@gmail.com)

