

East Balsam Beacon

April, May, June
2020

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Thanks to Sarah Bowers
and Cheryl Volgren
for the pictures

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Pastor's Corner

As I write this, I'm sitting in my office at home self-isolating as much as possible. To my knowledge, I haven't been exposed to Covid-19 or any other virus, but I'm trying to be a good citizen and stay home as much as possible. But I just finished eating take-out pizza! It all feels a bit surreal. The most recent report I've found says there are still no known cases in Polk and Burnett Counties, or Barron County where I live. But we read of the 10,000 who have died in Italy, the thousands who are sick in New York and New Orleans and even very sick family members of some at East Balsam. Here, the experts say it's not a matter of if, but when.

As a nation, and a church, we've already taken unprecedented action. If someone had told me ten years ago that the government would mandate that all churches quit holding public services and that no one would challenge the order, or even complain, I would have said it was obvious that the tribulation had already arrived. Yet here we are, we aren't holding public services, I'm prohibited from doing some of the most important pastoral duties I know of; such as visiting the sick in the hospital, performing weddings and funerals (I actually am permitted to perform weddings and funerals; it's just that only eight other people can be there!) and so on. But, due to technology, creative thinking and the desire to continue being the church, we're coming up with ways to worship together, pray together, minister to young people and so on. The church will continue to be the church, we'll just have to adapt our practices to the times and circumstances.

But most of all, the church will continue being the church because it's not our church, it's God's church. In the first and second century, the church in Rome met in the catacombs-underground tombs. In Jerusalem, in the years after the Day of Pentecost, the church met together from house-to-house and in the temple courtyard. In the 20th century, in some places in eastern Europe, the church met secretly in wooded areas. Now we're meeting, at least for a while, by livestreaming and Zoom (other technical solutions will be added as we can). What's important is not how we meet, or how many of us gather in a particular place; what's important is that we continue to pray, we continue to study God's Word, we continue to fellowship (yes you can do that without a face-to face meeting), we continue to worship and we continue to share the Good News that Jesus died for our sins, that He was buried and that he rose again so that we can have new life in Him.

Good Friday and Easter are just around the corner. I was looking forward to gathering to remember Jesus' death on Good Friday and gathering together in joyful celebration of His resurrection. That is unlikely to happen as we had envisioned, but we will still be celebrating His death and resurrection. The circumstances of our gathering do not affect the truths that Jesus died for us, that He rose again and that through His sacrifice our sins are wiped away and we are new creatures in Christ. Palm Sunday is a week away as I write this, and Easter is two weeks away. I don't know yet how we will gather, but I know if Jesus hasn't returned for His church, and I'm physically able, I will be worshipping with other saints of God around the world. The Bible says that David encouraged Himself in the Lord. Now is certainly the time for all of us to do exactly that. Discouragement often comes from getting locked in on our circumstances, encouragement comes from focusing on the glory and majesty of God, and His love for us in the midst of circumstances. There is no time of the year that lends itself to that more than the Easter season. Check in often with the church website (www.eastbalsam.org), Facebook page (@EastBalsamBaptist), read the emails and text messages we're sending. The situation is constantly changing, we're trying to respond appropriately, and we take comfort in "Jesus, the same yesterday, today and forever". Until we meet again in person, may God bless you and keep you.

Pastor Ken

COMING UP

Usually this section would include a number of things on our church calendar. As Pastor Ken says in his article, keep checking in to the church website or Facebook. If you aren't connected to this modern technology, call someone you know has the ability to check for you. Even though we can't meet in person, obviously the church ministry is going forward. I've heard there will be a Good Friday service but don't know if the time has been set. The church annual meeting is usually held in May. Pray for the church leaders as they make decisions regarding this meeting.

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

GIVING ONLINE—EBBC now has the option of setting up automatic or one-time giving online. If you are interested, visit www.eastbalsam.org and click on "give". Do you have any questions? Contact Sarah at sbowers@eastbalsam.org. While you are there, check out the other new resources for our church family: newsletter copies, church calendar, and volunteer opportunities. Or, while we are not meeting at church, you can mail checks to the church. The address is on page 1.

UP-DATE ON PASTOR SEARCH—The pastor search committee has been busy trying to find whom God has for the next pastor of East Balsam. We have gone through the applications and narrowed it down. We had phone interviews with the top candidates. After spending a week in prayer as a church, we have narrowed it down to the final two candidates. Both of these men have a real desire to serve God and we think either one would make an excellent pastor. We would like to do an in-person interview as the next step but right now that is impossible. Please continue to pray for the search committee as we seek God's direction in choosing between these two very qualified candidates.

Submitted by Larry Michaelson

FOOD SHELF DONATION—EBBC donated all the food collected in our food drive to the Balsam Lake vs. Luck food fight. Balsam Lake won the food fight (810 lbs. to 600 lbs.) so a total of 1440 lbs. of food was distributed to Balsam Lake food shelves. Thanks to everyone who supported this food drive.

MARRIAGE SEMINAR—

In January of this year we held a seminar open to the public based off the study by Gary Chapman, 'The Marriage You've Always Wanted'. We had about 12 couples join for the two-day seminar, of which at least half were from outside the church. The study talked about all subjects related to marriage from communicating love to how to deal with the difficult seasons of marriage. It was a time of blessing and fellowship that was well received by those who came.

Submitted by Sarah Bowers



WORSHIP NIGHT—Wednesday, February 5th, Anna O'Brien led a time of worship. The focus was on how we can use worship to fight our battles. It has been said that people are either coming out of a battle, in the midst of a battle, or heading into a battle. There was also a time of fellowship and prayer.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD is all year long at EBBC. There is a tub in the library under the church mailboxes for these donations. If you find something on sale that is appropriate for the shoe boxes, you can purchase it now and bring it to church while you are thinking about it—well, when we get back to meeting at church!

In a book called Prayer Point, put out by Samaritan's Purse, I learned that Franklin Graham went to Saipan, an island about 6,000 miles west of the U.S., after Typhoon Yutu struck that island. While there, he realized God was calling for Samaritan's Purse to provide OCC shoeboxes to children on 1,000 Pacific islands—more than half a million kids.

In February, Franklin and his wife, Jane, were in Saipan distributing 125 shoeboxes at Grace Christian Academy. The principal said, "Our students are from South Korea, Japan, China, the Philippines, and various island nations." After receiving a shoebox, the children are invited to their follow-up discipleship, The Greatest Journey. Many children and their families find Jesus as their Savior through these Bible studies.

SOUP & SALAD LUNCH—On Sunday, February 16th, we had a Soup & Salad lunch after the worship service. There was lots of good food to eat and a time for fellowship. Following the meal, the quarterly business meeting was held and the Search Committee met to discuss the next steps in finding a pastor.

QUILT—Sunday February 16th

Betty Bertram, Jerry Baxter,
Theresa Nelson

The quilt was given to Jerry when he had surgery.



VALENTINE DINNER—On Thursday, February 20th, the Saints Alive sponsored a Valentine dinner at Village Pizzeria in Dresser. Thirty-nine people attended. Two people on the Pastor Search Committee presented a comedy titled *How Much is That Preacher in the Window?*. Larry Michaelson was a salesman in a store and Lisa Lundquist was a customer who came in to buy a Preacher! She looked at many different models and ended by saying, “This minister shopping is exhausting.”

On a more serious note, Dave and LaVonne Richter told how God brought them together. LaVonne told of the things God did in her life to prepare her for meeting Dave. She had dated different men and none of them seemed right, but when she met Dave she was at peace and sure he was the right man for her. Since she was a little girl she had wanted to be married and have children. She was praying that God would give her a widower with children. Little did she know God would give her a husband with nine children!

After Dave’s first wife passed away from cancer, he felt a need for someone to share his life with and to be a mother to his children. Several friends were involved in the process of Dave and LaVonne getting to meet. Dave commented that if any of these people had not followed God’s leading, he and LaVonne may never have met.

Their testimony is certainly one that shows God’s leading and answering prayer.

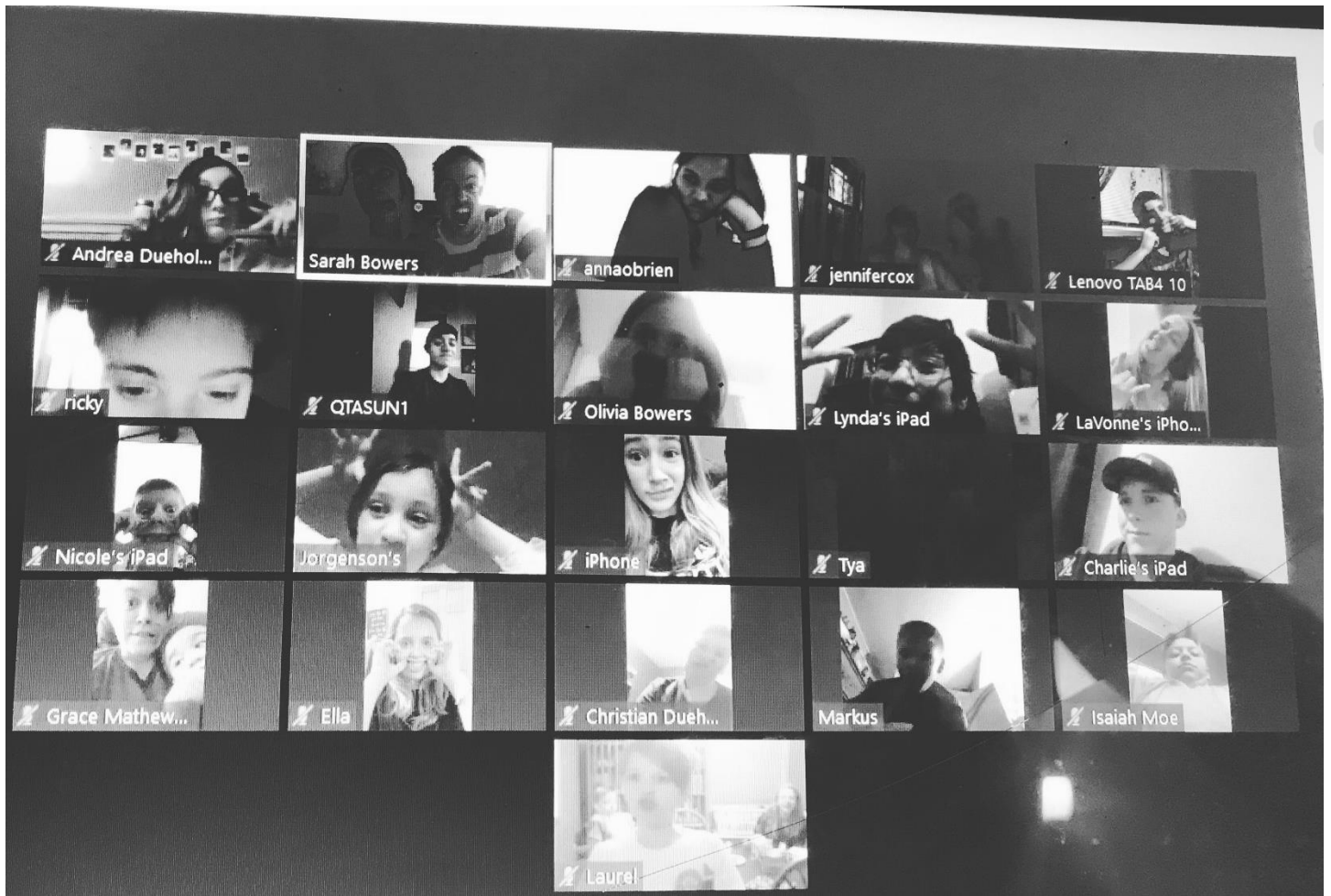
YOUTH—Ignite Youth Group kicked off the new year with a Q&A session with Pastor Ken. During this session the youth were able to pre-submit questions to Pastor that he answered during our large group time. This was a time of gaining wisdom regarding many of the questions our youth (and adults) have been wondering for some time. After that session we started our Apologetics series, answer more questions that will help our youth be able to go out into the world confident about their faith. We’ve discussed questions such as 'What about science?', 'What is truth?' as well as the differing world views.

We were also joined by David Michaelson as he shared with the youth about the Gideons and handed out Bibles to the youth. Many of the youth asked for a second Bible to hand out to friends and his message was an encouragement to our youth.

Since the recent changes regarding Covid-19 has forced us to cancel our in-person meetings we have begun to meet via Zoom as a group. On Wednesday we all gather together for a time of fellowship and study and then on Saturdays we have been joining for a time of fun in trying different online gaming platforms for groups.

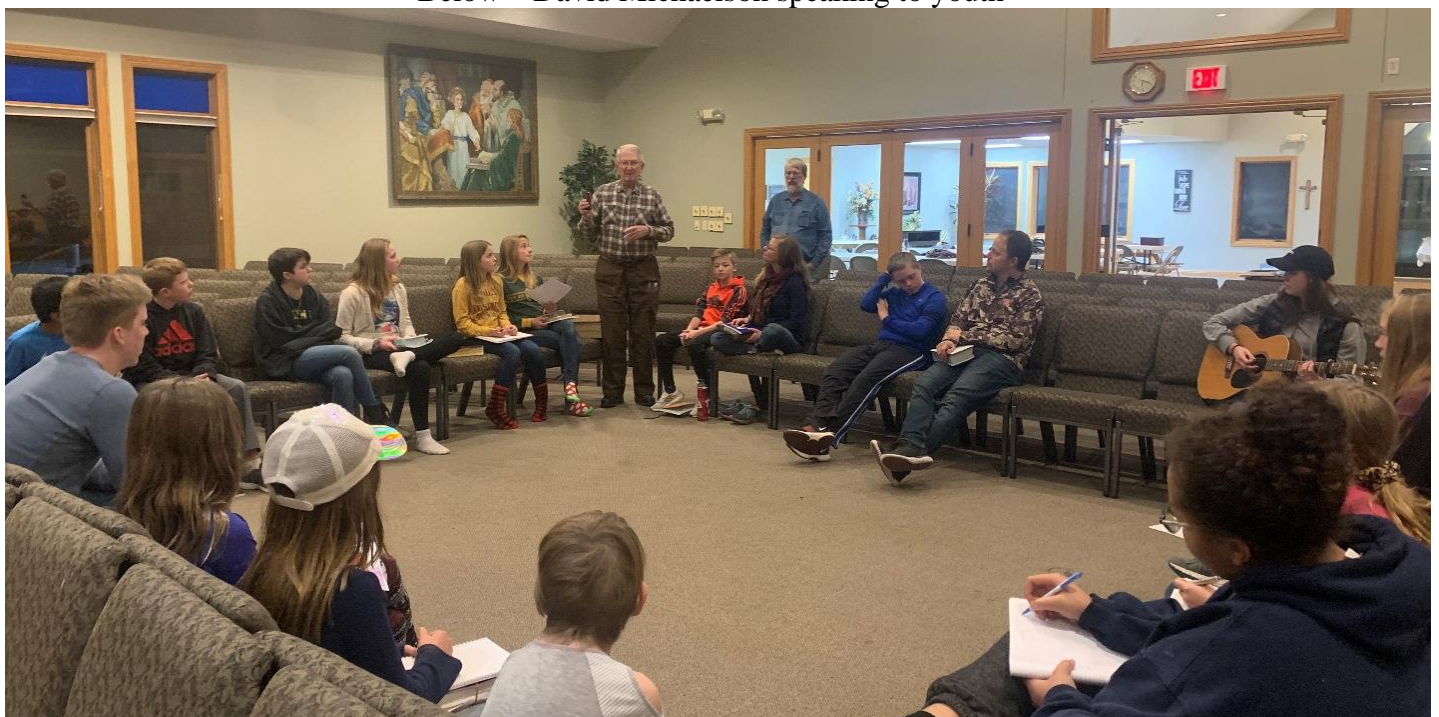
This summer we hope to bring the youth to a summer camp together as well as implement more ways we can cement our relationships in Christ and build one another up in our faith.





Above—The youth and staff involved in the Zoom meeting

Below—David Michaelson speaking to youth





Ella Bowers is using her New Testament given to her by Friends of the Gideons, to explain the helps and plan of salvation.

MISSIONS

Bruce & Candice Beatham—Wycliffe Bible Translators in Mexico

The coronavirus has not really hit our area yet. We are waiting, though, with bated breath for it to hit as there are only 12 beds and 1 respirator in the entire hospital that must serve at least 100,000 people! We are still young and healthy so we aren't worried about us getting it. Meanwhile, we are quarantined in our house in Tecomaxtlahuaca (Teco) because of having just gotten here a few days ago from Mitla.

We are disappointed because Candice's parents had to cancel their trip to Mexico.

Jerimiah and Abbie are doing fine in Ohio. Abbie is an emergency room nurse so is getting a lot of contact with the virus. We pray for them daily.

Nathaniel is still in Japan. He is part of the worship team in the church on base and loves that. He also has a girlfriend. She's Mexican from Puebla. We met her and her family over Christmas break. Such a nice Christian family. God is good.

Benjamin was on a mission trip to Mexico when the pandemic started so when he got back to LeTourneau, he and the whole team were quarantined in an empty dorm for two weeks. Benjamin's girlfriend is from Colorado so he offered to drive her home. He will stay there a few days and then go to Minnesota. He will stay with Candice's sister and continue the semester online.

Abby is finishing the school year; next year she'll start high school! She misses having her brothers here as they used to distract her since she has no friends here either.

We can do some of our work here in the house and it is a beautiful 80+ degrees here with no humidity so it's a great climate in which to be 'stuck'! 😊

Candice and family

John & Lori De Cleene—Mobilization Associates, Converge

Praise the Lord the De Cleene clan is well from my 98-year-old mother to our 6-month-old grand-son, and, all siblings, cousins and grand-kids in-between! We're praying for families who are struggling with illnesses as well as those waiting/wondering what their health future holds.

During these troublesome times, Converge International Missions continues to strengthen missionaries on the field, help those get back to the States who need/want to return, and work with appointees still seeking to go to the Unreached. There are two families literally sitting and waiting to go to Africa. God's timing is perfect. We wait and trust in Him.

Converge Appointees are using this time to push through on training and reading. While most work full time, meet potential partners 'on-the-side,' and minister in their local churches, many tasks get pushed to the side. God has given them a chance to catch-up. More than ever they are reaching out to each and every team partner and asking how they can pray for them - happily, in one way or the other, serving.

We're rejoicing together with you as EBBC plans to burn it's mortgage. We're praying for your continued ministry through Pastor Ken and all your leaders as well as praying for your search team. God's plans are perfect!

Serving together with you...John

Steve & Carol Jean Gallagher—Wycliffe Bible Translators

Steve is assigned to continue his work as a translation consultant, and Carol Jean will be an administrative assistant for a Wycliffe recruitment team. We're still hopeful that Steve will be able to make a consulting trip to PNG in the second half of the year if the pandemic subsides enough by then. We're eager to begin our work, most of which can be done remotely. This can only happen when we have a complete team of partners who have committed to cover 100% of our ministry budget. We currently lack \$1,100 per month.

We are currently in New Jersey, staying with Steve's mom. We had been planning to speak at our supporting churches, but we were only able to speak at one church before the pandemic changed everything. Thankfully technology is enabling us to proceed with at least one other church presentation online. One way or another we hope to share about our ministry with you at East Balsam.

It's good that we're here to help Steve's mom, Elsa, as she undergoes radiation treatments for lung cancer, which will begin on April 1st for 3 weeks. After that she will need a lumpectomy for the unrelated breast cancer.

We want you all to know how thankful we are for your ongoing prayers and financial partnership in our ministry with Wycliffe Bible Translators.

Steve & Carol Jean Gallagher

Contact Information: steve_gallagher@sil.org or 863-280-9149

Katherine Taylor—Teacher with CAMA, Laos

Katherine returned to the U.S. for two reasons: (1) to help get her mother, Emily Taylor, settled into a memory care facility. (2) because the borders are closed for all of the southeast Asian countries because of COVID-19. The school where she taught and the rehab center where she ministered to patients are both temporarily closed.

Katherine arrived in the Twin Cities the day after Emily had been transferred to the care facility. Emily is in lockdown because of COVID-19 so Katherine can't see her mother. This is a hard time for her so please uplift her in your prayers.

Gil & Norene Zinke—Training Leaders International (TLI)

Thank you and an update received in February:

“With God’s enabling grace and your prayers and monthly offerings, Gil completed 13 trainings and preached 11 times in Ethiopia this past year. We deeply appreciate your faithful support of his ministry with TLI. We hope many of you have been (or will be) encouraged by the Jesus in Athens DVD we sent last summer. Praise God for the way He is working throughout the world! Gratefully, Gil & Norene Zinke”

Trip to Ethiopia:

Gil has recently returned from a trip to Ethiopia. He flew out of Chicago on February 17th and returned on March 14th.

On March 10th he was told that two Protestant churches had been burned down the day before. This is part of a pattern. Five churches have been burned down in the last three months, two by the Orthodox Church and three by Muslims. The Ethiopian government officially recognizes only Orthodox Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

Please pray for the believers as they witness, cope and rebuild, that their faith and courage will be strengthened by grace.

They were short of trainers but God provided by Gil and his team teaching mentors so they could teach pastors and church leaders.

Since returning home Gil has been in a two-week self-quarantine. TLI has canceled all trips for April and May.

As of March 28th, Ethiopia had 12 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and no deaths. Pray the virus can be contained as Ethiopia lacks medical infrastructure to combat it.

Both of their sons and their two daughters-in-law can work from home. Both daughters-in-law are expecting in June. Pray all will go well.

Gil ends his report with,

“Thank you much for your prayers! Grateful to Christ for you! Gil Zinke”

East Balsam Baptist Church
1816 – 108th Street
Balsam Lake, WI 54810

Sunday Worship – 9:00 A.M.
Services are currently being live-streamed.

Contact information: Church website: www.eastbalsam.org

Facebook: @EastBalsamBaptist

Send Prayer Chain requests to **east.balsam.baptist.church@gmail.com**
or contact Val Rowe at 715-268-7424 or
Joan Michaelson at 715-405-4055