

East Balsam Beacon

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and Sarah Bowers for the
pictures

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PASTOR'S CORNER

Have you ever read a book that claims to offer steps to success in certain areas of life? For example, maybe you've read about how you can change your kids in five easy steps, how you can become the best version of yourself in seven steps, or how you can find financial freedom in seven steps. (Seven seems to be the magic number of steps in many of these sorts or books.) I have read books like this, and I have found some of them to be helpful, but I have also learned that merely completing steps doesn't always lead to the promised result. That's because steps can take us places, but they cannot change our heart, and without heart change we are likely to fall back into the same habits we had before.

Recently, I've been thinking more about our church's mission statement: *Igniting a passion for God and a love for people*. At first, I was thinking like the author of a self-help book. I was trying to come up with steps that we can follow to help us become even more passionate about God and more loving toward others, and how we can spread that passion for God and love for people in our community. But then I realized something. Our mission statement is not about where we want to go, it is about who we are and who we strive to be. Like I said, steps take us places, but a mission statement is not a destination, it is a marching order.

Think about this: when Jesus commanded his followers to "go and make disciples," was that a destination for the church to reach, or a marching order to obey until he returns? I think it was the later. Each local church should carefully develop its own mission statement in light of God's word and then develop its own "vision" about what it looks like to accomplish that mission over a certain period of time. Such a "vision statement" becomes a target destination for the local church to reach, and then steps can be developed to help the church move in that direction and measure its progress. So, a vision statement tells us where we are going, but a mission statement tells us who we are supposed to be.

Churches need both a vision and a mission. Mission statements generally don't change very often. They shouldn't, because they are supposed to summarize who we are as a church. And who we are is defined by God in the Bible, and that doesn't change. But vision statements should be updated every so often because what it looks like to fulfill a mission statement changes over time. For example, being passionate about God is no different today than it was one hundred years ago, but a church that is passionate about God today will do things a little differently than it would have in 1921.

At some point, the leadership of EBBC should develop a new vision for the future. We should think about who we are and dream about where we want to be in five years or ten years. The congregation should pray for their leaders and ask God to give them wisdom regarding the direction of the church. Then, after developing a vision, steps can be created to help us get to where we hope to be in the future. Developing a vision is an intimidating process, but an important one. Because without vision, churches become stagnant; they keep doing things the same way they've always done them. There are some things that should never change, of course, like our commitment to God's word. But as society changes, so must our ministry strategies. Just as Paul used different methods to reach different people in different places (1 Corinthians 9:19-23), so we must learn to adapt to our changing culture.

Nobody likes change. Our tendency is to resist it. We want things to stay the same, because "same" is comfortable and familiar. But churches that never change become irrelevant and eventually die. I believe that is why so many mainstream protestant churches are struggling in our country today. They have tried to stay "relevant" by catering to culture, but in doing so they have compromised the gospel. That is a mistake, because the gospel is always relevant. We need to keep proclaiming the gospel, but we also need to find ways to do evangelism, community outreach, and many other things in a way that will continue being effective in the future. Nobody wants their church to change, but nobody wants their church to die, either. Many churches that choose to stay the same end up closing their doors for good.

I don't have a compelling new vision to share with EBBC at this time. There is still much that I need to learn about this area of Wisconsin and the people of this church. Also, I don't believe that vision is something that one person should develop on their own. So, in the future I look forward to dreaming and brainstorming and praying with the other leaders of EBBC to craft a vision statement that represents where we think God is leading our church. Until that time, let's focus on our mission statement. Let's strive to be people who are igniting a passion for God and a love for people.

The question we should all ask ourselves is not, "what must I do?" but "who should I be?" Being passionate about God is not something we do; it is who we are. And instead of thinking about how we can love others, we should focus on what it means to be the kind of person who loves others. Like I've been saying throughout our sermon series in 1 John, obedience is the evidence of faith. Our behavior is determined by our beliefs. We can do the things that people who are passionate about God should do, but if we have no love for others or passion for God in our heart, then what good is that? If we focus on being the people that God wants us to be, then doing the things that God wants us to do will come naturally. If we are passionate about God, then we won't have any trouble igniting that passion in others. But if the fire of passion for God has gone out in our own heart, then how can we be the spark that ignites a passion for God in someone else's life?

There is no seven-step plan to becoming passionate about God. If we want to be the kind of people who have passion for God and love for others, then we need to be people who hear God's word, believe God's word, and obey God's word. It's not complicated. In Galatians 3, Paul warns the Christians not to abandon the gospel. The people were being told that they needed to follow the law in order to advance to the next stage of Christianity, but that was wrong. Listen to what Paul says:

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?

You see, growing in Christ and becoming the people God wants us to be is not about following rules and checking boxes. There is no seven-step approach to becoming passionate and loving. The way that we advance in the Christian life is the same way that we began the Christian life—through hearing with faith. So, EBBC family, let's fulfill our mission to ignite a passion for God and a love for people by focusing on *being* passionate about God and *being* the kind of people who love others. And in order to be the people God wants us to be, we must hear and believe God's word.

Submitted by Pastor Jonathon Enger

COMING UP

Membership Class—

A MEMBERSHIP CLASS will be offered in January for anyone who is interested in becoming a member at EBBC. If you would like to participate in the class, please talk to Pastor Jonathon.

Baptism Class—

Pastor Jonathon will be teaching a baptism class soon. If you are interested in being baptized, talk to Pastor Jonathon to sign up for the class. Baptism is an important step of obedience that Jesus commands all his followers to obey. Baptism is also a requirement for church membership. If you would like to be encouraged and encourage others by publicly professing your faith in baptism, talk to Pastor Jonathon about joining the class.

Or, attend the class, then decide if you want to be baptized.

Winterfest Food Fight—



We will be taking donations for local food shelves for the FOOD FIGHT CHALLENGE as part of the Balsam Lake Winterfest and Luck Winter Carnival. Non-perishable food items, toiletries, and household items can be placed in the tubs in the fellowship area. Collections will take place through February 7th.

The competition is to collect as much food as we can for Food Shelves in our communities. The winning community gets a traveling trophy and the loser donates \$100 to food shelves. The winner is determined by the number of pounds of food collected.

Youth Mission Trip—

A Mission trip to Haiti is being planned for the youth (and adults to supervise) for next July. If you are interested in being a part of this trip, contact Sarah Bowers at sbowers@eastbalsam.com or (651) 324-3108. They will be working with Global Vision Citadelle Ministries, the organization Sarah worked with in the past.

Please be in prayer as plans are being made and for the trip next summer.

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

Operation Christmas Child

Two plastic boxes, one with tooth brushes and the other with erasers, were displayed for people to guess how many were in each box. Kathy Thull made a guess of 302 tooth brushes; this was the exact amount. Duane Lindh guessed 1,300 erasers; the actual number was 1,329.

EBBC filled 362 shoe boxes. Thank you to Cheryl and all the helpers who filled the boxes. Thank you, also, for all the people who brought items for the boxes, and those who gave money to pay postage (\$9 per box) to have them delivered to many countries in the world.



NOTE: A letter is posted on the bulletin board at church from a pastor in Namibia thanking the church for OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD BOXES that were distributed to children in his church.

Thanksgiving Eve Service—

Although 2020 has been a different and perhaps stressful year, people gathered at church or watched the Livestreaming on YouTube, for a time to give thanks to God for His blessings. No pie was served this year.

Thanksgiving Day dinner—

Don and Lisa Lundquist invited people to have dinner with them if they did not have other plans for the day. Lisa reports Gary and Theresa Nelson joined them at Lundquist's home. They also brought two dinners to Edie Osborn for her and her brother, Randy Hughes. Lisa reports that "Everyone else we contacted had family coming."

Thank you, Don and Lisa, for reaching out in this manner.

Tri-County Options for Women Christmas Crib Shower—

A bassinette was set up in the sanctuary by the Christmas tree for donations for the Options for Women program. People were asked to put donations in the bassinette until Christmas. In addition to the many gifts (see picture below), \$814 was donated. Thank you to everyone who contributed.



Christmas program—

A Christmas program was presented on Sunday, December 20th, during the worship time of the morning service. The program consisted of singing, both by the congregation and special music, and reading of Scripture.

Thank you, Kathy Thull and your helpers, for presenting this program.

Christmas Caroling—

Sarah Bowers reported about 40 people turned out to go caroling. They had three groups with each group going to about eight places.



Thank you, Carolers, for brightening the lives of so many.



Cookies—I don't know who donated cookies but there was a very nice selection. The families I delivered to very much appreciated and enjoyed getting the cookies. Thank you to the women who baked cookies, helped pack the boxes, and those who delivered them. I feel it was a success.

Submitted by Kathy Thull



Christmas Eve Service—

A 4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service was held in the sanctuary and Livestreamed on YouTube. We were reminded of the real meaning of Christmas—Jesus was born so that He could provide a way for us to have our sins forgiven. The rest of the story is told at Easter.

Youth Program—

We will start the Alpha Youth program on January 27 with the hopes of inviting more friends from outside our congregation to join us on Wednesdays. You can learn more about alpha at www.alphausa.org.

After spending the last three months of the year focusing on learning and sharing the gospel, the youth ended the year with some fun.

We had our annual Christmas party this year at the Bowers' home where there was four-wheeling, sledding, a bonfire, lots of food and a gingerbread house building contest. It was a great way to end the year!

Then in January, the church gave the youth the library to use as the youth group room. After some cleaning, painting, and gathering donations the room was ready for our first meeting in 2021. The youth now have a place to go that is just for them in the church.

****A note from Sarah****

I just want to thank the members and leadership of our church for helping to create a place that feels 'safe' and welcoming for our youth during such a tumultuous time. I know these last months have been hard for many of our youth, and knowing they have a place that will be a solace from the storms in addition to their homes, is a gift. Now adding in the room they have been gifted - you are speaking right to their hearts. I thank you on behalf of all of them.

Cupboard and Mail Boxes—

The cupboard that was in the Library with history items, has been moved to the west wall just south of the entry.

After much pondering about where to put the mail boxes, the word I received is that they are going to do away with the mailboxes because a lot of people don't pick things up. Things like the treasurer's report will be put on the back table in a pile and people can pick up one if they like.

I don't know if that will work for the newsletters. When I asked earlier if I should put the newsletters in the mail boxes, one person told me that was okay and one person asked me to mail a printed copy rather than getting it by e-mail. I plan to continue as I have since last Spring—via email and post office mailing. Joan Michaelson



Child Dedication—

Sunday morning, January 10th, Pastor Jonathon & Anika's daughter, Lucia Enger, was dedicated to the Lord.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Submitted by Lynda Hall

FLASHBACK! THE YEAR: 1973. ON STAGE: The Oak Ridge Boys singing--

Troublesome times are here
Filling men's hearts with fear.
Freedom we all hold dear now is at stake.
Humbling your hearts to God
Saves from the chastening rod.
Seek the way Pilgrims trod.
Christians awake!

As these words were brought to the forefront of my memory recently, I asked for the Lord's direction in finding someone who had lived through troublesome times from whom I could seek guidance for today. The Lord did not disappoint! He directed me to a book you may have read. I would like to summarize this man's story for you here--a bit of a departure from the normal "Getting to Know You" section, but I trust you will be encouraged by it.

The story of this man, though he was not in direct line to inherit the throne in his country, he was a prince in the ruling class. Though his nation was founded on what we call "Biblical principles," many of his countrymen had departed from following the nation's Constitution and the government had become subservient to foreign powers.

When this man was in his teens, a foreign power invaded his nation and sacked the capital city. Others have recorded the atrocities that were perpetrated in that war--by the inhabitants of the city on their own people and by the invaders. However, this man did not dwell on the evil. He believed the focus of his story should be on the God he served not the things he suffered. However, if one uses a sanctified imagination one can guess that his parents were likely murdered in front of him, he was arrested, taken in chains to a foreign country, placed in a re-education camp and possibly even underwent physical mutilation to render him unable to father children.

In this re-education camp he connected with several other young men his age. Together they committed they would learn the lessons being taught, but they would not participate in that which would mark them as identifying with the political/religious system of the nation. When confronted with the idea they must comply with the religious system or both they and their captors at the camp would be killed, he and his friends fasted and prayed. They devised and put forth a creative alternative to the guards. Their creative alternative was accepted by the guard. It kept them from identifying with the political/religious system and proved the superiority of their God. Thus, the lives of their captors were preserved, they gained favor with the king, and were elevated to important positions in government administration.

The king served by these men experienced a seven-year bout with mental illness that rendered him incapable of ruling. This man and his friends could have seized the moment to organize a coup to seize power and free their countrymen. Rather, they banded together to maintain the government in operation until the king recovered from his insanity. Their faithfulness resulted in the king's coming to recognize the God these men served and many in the kingdom came to know and serve God.

From time to time, this man's faith and the faith of his friends was challenged as they were threatened with death because they would not identify with the religious system of the nation. On a number of occasions they were placed in situations designed to end their lives, but they experienced miraculous deliverance by God.

This man faithfully and without compromise served in the government administration of the country to which he had been carried away as a captive. He lived to see that government fall as well and lived to serve the successor king. Toward the end of his life, after being a faithful prayer warrior and carefully studying the Scriptures, he realized that God intended to deliver his countrymen from their captivity. Before his death he rejoiced to see his people re-patriated to their national homeland, though it is doubtful he was able to make the return trip himself due to his advanced age.

Have you read the book of Daniel? It was an eye-opening experience for me to "Get to Know" the prophet Daniel--beloved of God. Three take-aways I got from the Prophet Daniel for living in these troublesome times are:

1. Identify with Christ and Christ alone.
2. Persevere in the environment in which God has placed me, doing all for the glory of God.
3. Lift up my head, redemption draweth nigh.

Jesus is coming soon--
Morning or night or noon.
Many will meet their doom.
Trumpets will sound.
All of the dead shall rise--
Righteous meet in the skies
Going where no one dies.
Heavenward bound!

Heavenward bound!

MISSIONS

Bruce & Candice Beatham—Wycliffe Bible Translators in Mexico

Received 1/12/2021

We are sharing in your cold, snowy existence this winter as we've been in MN/WI since early December. We were to return to the sunny mountains of Oaxaca (wah-HAH-kah) on January 8, but Bruce and Abby tested positive for Covid-19 so we are still here and hope to fly out on January 23. Abby only lost her sense of smell but Bruce was actually quite sick for a couple of weeks. He's on the road to recovery but please be in prayer for my dad, Glen Brown, as he also has Covid-19 and we are concerned for his health!

This is already proving to be an interesting year for us – delayed return to Oaxaca, Candice helping teach an online course on Coaching mid-January (first time!), Ernesto (our only full-time co-translator) working this entire year in his village as town secretary, and us not knowing how our work will be as there has been a resurgence of cases of Covid-19 in many parts of Mexico. Does God know how this year will look? Absolutely! We can and do trust Him with every step.

When we return to Mexico:

- We'll be printing and presenting the **book of Mark** to the village (as God allows!)? We can't wait!
- Also, we published **10 literacy books** this past year and have 50 copies of each waiting for us to start to distribute in the language area (again, as God allows!).

- Finish responding to the consultant's suggestions for the **book of John** and publish it. (Book number two!)
- We'll look over the back-translation of **Luke** and send it to the consultant to check. (Book number three!)
- We have been approved to receive funding to record and make the **Luke video** in the Mixtec in which we are working! There is much to be done, but we are trusting the Lord to do this in 2021!

Thank you so much for your prayers, encouragement and financial commitment to take the Word to the Mixtec people. We are grateful to God for you!

Blessings, Candice, Bruce, Abby, and Benjamin

John & Lori De Cleene—Mobilization Associates, Converge

Received 1/14/2021

Things are going well for Lori and I, praise the Lord. Personally, we had a great Christmas. We got to see three of our four kids and families, and, are seeing the fourth this week. My (John) Mom turns 99 on January 18, and, her Assisted living facility is getting their first round of vaccinations on the 20th.

I am writing this from the most recent "Launch," training for Converge appointees. One couple is headed to Birmingham England to work churches that are strengthening their evangelistic outreaches. Another couple is joining the Converge Southern Cone Initiative (Specifically Brazil), moving to a major metropolitan area where there are less than 4% evangelicals. They are gifted in planting churches and turning them over to local leadership. One attendee is joining Converge Mobilization, raising her own support, to work with Converge Internships. Short term missions will now more effectively direct teens to the field or, stronger service in the U.S.

In the past month two appointee couples have reached 100% of their support. One is heading to Indonesia, the other to Thailand. This month three couples are at a one-month training, in residence, in preparation to moving overseas. One couple is headed, Lord willing to Japan this summer. The other two couples are headed to Poland. One, Lord willing in March, the other before the end of the year.

There are so many great mission organizations that Converge churches partner with to send global workers overseas. Thank you for being such an important part of sending Converge global workers to the least reached around the world.

Serving together with you...John and Lori De Cleene

Steve & Carol Jean Gallagher—Wycliffe Bible Translators-Florida

Received 1/16/2021

Steve & Carol Jean thank East Balsam for its faithful part in their Wycliffe ministry through prayers and giving. They especially thank the church for increasing their donations in 2020.

Steve is nearing completion of his remote consultant check of the book of Genesis in the Mandara language of Papua New Guinea. Next he will check the books of 1 & 2 Peter in the Enga language.

Normally Wycliffe mobilizers (part of the recruitment team) would be visiting college campuses to promote working in the Bible translation movement. COVID restrictions led to a change in strategy. Carol Jean has been helping the team of Wycliffe mobilizers use the *Handshake* online platform, where college students and alumni search for jobs. Wycliffe now has access to many more campuses than they could reach in person. They can post open positions, interact with students at virtual job fairs, and invite students to attend webinars. (Check out the webinars at www.wycliffe.org/events/explore-wycliffe.)

Please pray:

- That God's Word would touch the hearts of people in the four language groups that Steve consulted for in 2020.
- That more people would join the Bible translation movement.
- That doors would soon open for translation consultations and recruitment events to happen in person.

Gil & Norene Zinke—Training Leaders International (TLI)

Gil is still working in the U.S. training pastors as he has not been able to return to Ethiopia. There is a lot of unrest and rioting in Ethiopia. Please pray for the Christians in that country.

Received 1/7/2021

We deeply appreciate your faithful prayer and financial support during this past challenging year. They helped sustain our lives and ministry. We are grateful to God for His provision for us through you. May you experience Christ's peace and joy as we enter 2021.

With grateful hearts, Gil & Norene Zinke

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

Sunday Worship – 9:00 A.M.

9:30 A.M. – Children's Church

Tuesday – 9:00 A.M. - Women's Bible Study

Wednesday – 5:45 P.M. - Jr. High & Sr. High

Saturday, 7:00 A.M. – Men's Bible Study

Other meetings and activities announced in the bulletin & on the web site

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