

East Balsam Beacon

PASTOR'S CORNER

January, February,
March, 2022

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Thanks to Cheryl Volgren &
John Larson
for the pictures

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On January 16 I preached a sermon on Ephesians 5:15-21, and I addressed the topic of how we use our time. Verse 16 tells us that we should make the best use of the time, because the days are evil. I suggested that making the best use of the time means doing what pleases the Lord, and I urged us to be wise, careful, and intentional with how we use the time that the Lord gives us.

In hindsight, I wish that I would have also addressed the topics of rest and leisure. By not doing so, I may have given the impression that Ephesians 5:16 requires us to always be working for the Lord, every moment of every day. That is not what Paul meant in Ephesians 5:16. So, I would like to use this space to say a few things about work, rest, and leisure.

My suggestion to you is that you take some time on your own to review what the Bible says about these things. The danger for all of us is that it is easy to buy into our culture's philosophy of work, rest, and leisure. Many people think that work is a curse, that it's something we have to do so that we can do the things we really want to do. As the popular saying goes, "work hard, play hard." But the biblical understanding of work and play is very different.

For example, the Bible says that work is a blessing, not a curse. Consider Genesis 2:15. Work was part of creation when God called it "good," before sin entered the world. And consider Genesis 3:17. After the fall, God did not curse Adam, and he did not curse work. Instead, he cursed the ground. Adam's work would be more difficult from then on, but his work would still be good. God is a worker (see John 5:17) and he created us to be workers. Work is a blessing. How cool is it that God gives us the ability to create, build, repair, and invent? Somedays, work is not very enjoyable, but that's not God's fault. Work is difficult because of sin. If you think work is a curse that we just have to endure in this life, think again. The truth is that work is a blessing that we get to enjoy in this life (if we have the right perspective) and in the life to come. For the rest of eternity, we will get to create new and amazing things using the imagination and skills God has given us, and we won't be hindered by the curse of sin.

But there is more to life than work. Consider Genesis 2:2. After God created the world, he rested from his work. Life includes both work and rest. In Exodus 23:12, God established a pattern for work and rest, and he said that the purpose of rest was so that people can be "refreshed." This is the pattern that we should follow, and this helps us to decide what qualifies as "rest." Rest is something that refreshes us so that we can work more productively and joyfully. If work is always miserable for you, could it be that you are not getting the right kind of rest? John Piper says, "the restfulness of the diligent is received as a gracious reward for the gift of God-glorifying work and a pleasant preparation for renewed productivity." I think he's right. We work so that we can rest (reward), and we rest (renew) so that we can work (and work joyfully!).

Leisure and play and rest are good things that God gives us to enjoy. But those things can easily become idols. Paul Tripp says, “There is nothing wrong with enjoying pleasure and nothing immoral about working hard. But when your work or your pleasure have risen in importance until they have become your replacement messiah, then something is terribly wrong with the way you are living” (*Forever*, p. 159). If we are just living and working so that we can play, then leisure has become our idol. And if that’s true, then our work will always be a miserable sacrifice that we make to serve the god of leisure. Instead of working for play, we should live and work and rest for God. As it says in 1 Corinthians 10:31, “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

So, what should you do for leisure, and how much? That’s for you to figure out as you pray and study God’s word. But let me suggest that leisure should give you true rest. It should leave you feeling refreshed so that you can work more productively and joyfully. If you squeeze every last drop of leisure out of your weekend and still dread showing up to work on Monday morning, then your leisure probably isn’t rest. For example, when I was in high school and college, I played a lot of video games. And I mean *a lot*. But no matter how much I played, I still hated doing my homework. It was leisure, but it wasn’t rest. The things I find restful now are things I wouldn’t have considered to be “rest” back then. Things like working on my car, or untangling the line on my son’s fishing pole, or going on a sweaty hike with my family.

So, again, my encouragement to you is that you take some time to read the Bible and pray and ask God to help you think biblically about work and rest. Work and rest are both blessings from a good God who loves us and knows what’s best for us. Make the best use of your time. Be intentional to work and rest to the glory of God.

COMING UP

Men’s Leadership Group

The men will meet for the first time on Thursday, January 27th at 7:00 p.m. for an hour. Pastor Jonathon has copies of the book *Disciplines of a Godly Man* by R. Kent Hughes. The cost is \$15.

The purpose of the group is to create a place where men can help one another grow as leaders in the home, the workplace, and the church. Healthy churches and healthy families need faithful men who are capable leaders. If we want EBBC to remain a healthy church for generations to come, we need a legacy of leadership. We need to start training future leaders today.

Youth Group Events

Sunday, January 30th—Ice Fishing Contest

Sunday, February 6th—Ice Skating in St. Croix Falls

Wednesday, February 9th—6:00-8:00 p.m.—Worship Night—includes all ages, not just Youth.

Attention Married Couples

The plan was to begin a Marriage Small Group/Bible Study on Thursday nights in February. Because the Men’s Leadership Group will be meeting on Thursday evenings, the Marriage study will be held later. Reach out to either Casey or Trisha Crandall if you have questions. 701-799-2745 (Casey)—701-799-2670 (Trisha)

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

Illnesses/Accidents

Steve Volgren came home on October 29th, five months after being hospitalized for Covid. Bea orchestrated a “Welcome Home, Steve” by inviting people to line up in their cars at the Volgren home. Steve had a big smile on his face as they drove past the cars parked along their drive way.

Theresa Nelson also spent months in the hospital and is still experiencing after affects.

There have been many others who have had COVID with various degrees of illness. I won't put names in the newsletter as I would certainly miss someone. Continue to pray for those who are battling the virus.

Ana Trick was in church October 29th, the first time since being in a motorcycle accident on August 12th. She spent ten weeks in the hospital in Duluth. On December 14th she had surgery on her knee. Continue to pray for complete healing.

Pastor's Appreciation Sunday

October 31st was designated Pastor's Appreciation Sunday at EBBC. People were invited to bring cards to celebrate. Cake and ice cream was served during fellowship time.

Operation Christmas Child (Shoe Boxes)

As people have been shopping for gifts to pack in the shoe boxes, God has been finding bargains for them. Jen Jorgenson found some backpacks for what she thought was \$2 apiece. When she checked out with 85 backpacks, the cost was \$1 each!

Thank you to each of the people who have spent many hours so that 406 boxes could be packed and sent to countries around the world. God is in charge of getting the box to some boy or girl who wants/needs the contents of that box.

East Balsam Baptist Church has participated in Samaritan's Purse, Operation Christmas Child Shoebox program for several years. We started out with 25 shoeboxes, which seemed like a lot. It is a ministry that has grown to 406 this year.

Shopping starts with the new calendar year and continues to the day we pack! Packed in each box are essential items like school supplies; the rest are WOW items like toys, dolls, flashlights, sewing kits, card kits, fishing kits, Lego kits, bead kits.

These boxes are dropped off at a close drop off center, then transported to an area Distribution Center. At this center each box is opened to make sure everything is safe, then packed in cartons to be sent to a Warehouse to be stored until a full load is ready to be shipped to its destination.



Many items were donated as well as money to be used either for purchasing gifts or the shipping cost of \$9.00 a box. On Nov. 13th, 30 people gathered to pack the boxes, it is what we call organized chaos!

Our prayer is that each child receiving one of our shoeboxes will enjoy the love sent in each box as

well as the love of Christ and understand what He sacrificed for each of us. Submitted by Cheryl Volgren

Thanks to Jen Jorgenson and Cheryl Volgren for heading up this ministry, for the 30 people who helped pack boxes, and the many who supplied items to be put in the boxes.

Christmas Program

The Christmas program was presented on December 19th during the morning worship service. The title this year was *Just a Little Christmas*. According to the printed program, there were 35 participants, from the very littlest ones to adults. Thank you to everyone who took part in the program, and to another eight people who worked behind the scenes.

I was by the kitchen one Sunday when a young boy came to tell his mother he was going to be a Cow. It was such fun to watch his excitement. He kept repeating “I’m going to be a cow! The cow says ‘Moo’!” And, Donna Mabry had a cow costume for him.

New Members

On January 9th, the deacons came forward and prayed a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing upon the new members. Roger Peterson is the only deacon showing in the picture. The new members are Trisha and Casey Crandall, Maureen and Ken Eklund, and Emily Chadwick.



Mission Trip



John and Jackie Larson planned to go on a mission trip together. However, Jackie had surgery on her ankle and has not healed enough to make the journey. She explained there would be a lot of climbing mountains and walking on uneven ground. John left for Antigua, Guatemala, on January 15th and returned on the 22nd. The following is John’s report.

I had a great eye-opening trip. The first day out we got to lay hands on and pray over a gentleman who was not responsive. His 13-year-old daughter was there and he was her only family left. After praying for him we prayed for her. The main guy, Daryl at Hope for Home, had to give this little beautiful 13-year-old girl, Clara, the news that her dad would not make it much longer; later that night he did pass away.

I didn’t work in the orphanage at all. We were out doing rural ministry in villages bringing formula for both babies and mothers and checking in on families. Wednesday, we went to the village of Aceituno to serve soup

and brought in formula. Here is where I met this beautiful little girl that just came up to me smiling like she knew me forever and poked me in the belly. As this little girl stood there trying to talk to me all I could do was smile at her through my mask. She touched me deeply with just her beautiful smile. I did get to take this picture with her at the end of the day.

On Thursday morning I woke up and while praying, the emotions and the tears were rolling down my face. I was able to get into the van and leave this place but these people had to stay there.

The last day we went to see a 20-year-old lady who has Scoliosis so bad that it is encroaching on her heart and lungs. This sweet young lady, Dora, has a beautiful face but a body that does not match. Without surgery Dora will not make it. Guatemalan doctors as well as doctors from the U.S. will not do this surgery. Dora's faith is so strong that she says "I am ready for the LORD to take me HOME", and she says this with a smile on her face.

As tears roll down my face again this morning, while writing this article, I just have to think there is so much more we can do. I just have to say this truly was eye opening and a hard but great week. If you get the chance to make a mission trip like I have just made, I encourage you to take it.

Matthew 5:14 *You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.*

5:15 *Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.*

5:16 *In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

Galatians 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Submitted by John Larson



On January 9th, Pastor Jonathon and the Deacons (Brian Matson, Roger Peterson, and Steve Volgren) prayed for John Larson as he was to leave on a mission trip to Guatemala on January 15th.

YOUTH

These past few months have been full of activities and a growing group.

We've been answering the questions that are pressing on the hearts of our youth: from the importance of our words to what does a Christian relationship look like? We have grown in number from 22 at the end of last year to an average of 32 students.

In November we held a full-day conference at the Bowers' house with Dare2Share Ministries. The focus of the day was on the importance of sharing the gospel with our friends and people in our communities. We were given tips, encouragement, and scripture support and then sent out to share the gospel. Our group went to Wal-Mart and shared the gospel with people there using hot chocolate packets as an ice breaker.

Our December meetings were full of activity. We held an Advent Prayer night where the kids were encouraged to Make Room for Jesus with 5 hands-on prayer stations. We gathered the following week to bless a local hospital and some of our church members with Christmas carols. The final week before Christmas we held a party where we had 40+ kids come for fun and a movie.

We also took four of our seniors on a Senior Celebration Trip to Atlanta, Georgia to partake in the Passion Conference. This conference gathered together 60,000+ young adults ages 18-25 to be encouraged by multiple speakers, preachers, and worship leaders. We hope to make this an annual event.

These next few months are also full of fun and growth as we walk through a new curriculum: GROW. We are currently working through a series on Identity and will follow that up with a series on Justice and then on Spiritual Habits. We are planning a few fun events: ice skating, a pizza-themed game night, and a weekend retreat to Wood Lake Bible Camp.

Thank you for praying for our youth - we couldn't do it without you.

Submitted by Sarah Bowers

CHURCH PLANTING

A letter was received from Gabe and Melonie Brennan last Fall with an update of their lives. They are living in White Bear Lake, MN. Gabe has been an independent painting contractor for the last two years.

They are now looking forward to planting a new church. They are in a Church Planting Residency with Christ Redeemer Church in Woodbury. It will be a year-long residency with the goal to publicly launch a new church in the fall of 2022. They need to raise \$40,000 for the residency. They also hope to raise additional funds to help with church startup costs. If you care to contribute, you can send a check to Christ Redeemer Church, P.O. Box 25854, Woodbury, MN 55125. On the memo line put Church Planting Residency or visit their website: newchurch.squarespace.com, click on "Give", then select fund: "Church Planting Residency". East Balsam took an offering that amounted to \$1,360.

Please be in prayer for Gabe and Melonie as they move forward in this endeavor.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Emily Chadwick, one of the newest persons welcomed into the membership of East Balsam Baptist Church, is no stranger to our area. She grew up in Polk County, Wisconsin, albeit a little closer to the St. Croix River than some of us. Emily has an older brother and two younger sisters who are twins.

Emily's journey of faith began as a young child. Her first impression of hearing the gospel was a conversation she had as a young child with her older brother. The two of them shared a bedroom and slept in a bunkbed. One night her brother told her that if she didn't accept Jesus as her Savior, she would go to hell. Terrified and in tears, Emily ran upstairs to find her mother who explained the gospel to her and prayed with her to trust Christ as her Savior. Yet Emily's understanding was still in an infant stage.

As she grew in her understanding of the gospel, Emily expressed a desire to be baptized. At that time, her mother again explained the gospel and asked her if she knew she was a sinner. While admitting to her mother that she knew she was a sinner, Emily was inwardly thinking, "I'm still a pretty good kid."

A major step in her spiritual growth came following a time of deep sadness in her life. She does not characterize it as a depression, just sadness. Emily came to realize that her thoughts and desires had been centered around self and she could not be good enough to earn her way into heaven. In what could be called a re-dedication of her life, she got on her knees and confessed that Jesus Christ alone could save her. The sadness was lifted from her, never to return again.

Following her graduation from high school, Emily attended three semesters of college at what is now Maranatha Baptist University in Watertown, Wisconsin, then transferring to UW-Superior to complete her degree in elementary education in 2016. Following her graduation, she returned to this area, looking for employment as a teacher's aide at Valley Christian School until a real teaching job came along. Much to her surprise, she was hired as a full-time teacher for the second and third grades.

Emily is a first-time home buyer having purchased a cute house on County Road G just west of the Freer Farm. She shares her home with four cats and two dogs. The chickens inhabit one of the out buildings. Emily chose to worship at EBBC for the convenient location. She also knew Pastor Gabe from Valley Christian School and the Richter family.

When asked about her most memorable experience living in the country as a first-time home owner, Emily recounted her bear story. It was approximately 10 p.m. one evening. Emily had turned in for the night, but was reading by the light of a lamp in her bedroom. Suddenly, two gunshots rang out. She quickly turned off her light, not knowing what to think and called 911 to report shots fired near her home. Come to find out, local law enforcement had been called out to put down a bear that had been hit by a motorist near her house. This is her, "Welcome to Balsam Lake" story.

Thank you for sharing with us, Emily, and welcome to East Balsam Baptist Church!

Submitted by Lynda Hall

(Emily is on the right of the picture of New Members.)

MISSIONS

Bruce & Candice Beatham—Wycliffe Bible Translators in Mexico

We had an amazing Christmas as we had three of our kids with us – Nathaniel came from Okinawa, Japan (where he has just 6 months left to serve in the Marine Corp); Benjamin came from LeTourneau (he’s in his junior year there) and, of course, our Abby! Then, Nathaniel’s girlfriend (from Puebla, Mexico) and Benjamin’s (from Colorado, also attending LeTourneau) came to spend New Year’s with us too. House and hearts so full!

We are now in our linguistics center in Mitla because Bruce has board meetings and Candice has meetings for her job in supervision of teams. Meanwhile, Abby gets to attend school in person for these weeks before we head back to Teco and she’ll be online again.

We praise God for *Valentin*, who continues to work in the office on translation and we pray that *Ernesto* will join us at the translation desk again soon after he served his community all of 2020 as town secretary. We pray that we can continue to work with our village friends (which was all but stopped with the pandemic) to check the books of Luke and John with them. A lay pastor, *Simitrio*, has just started to show some interest in the Scriptures in his language and has given some helpful comments as to how he thinks some things should be translated. Because of this (and because he would be someone who would actually use the translated Scriptures), we have decided to back up and stop the presses (so to speak) for publishing these two books after we’ve taken his ideas into consideration.

God has been gracious and we have been healthy and able to continue to work God started almost 20 years ago! Thank you for your partnership with us in providing God’s Word in the Mixtec language!

Blessings!

Candice, Bruce, Abby, et. al.

John & Lori De Cleene—Mobilization Associates, Converge

Please continue to pray for John and Lori as they work with missionary candidates who are getting ready to move to a foreign field.

Steve & Carol Jean Gallagher—Wycliffe Bible Translators-Florida

Carol Jean is serving as an administrative assistant for Mobilization with Wycliffe Bible Translators. Recently she served as registrar for Pathways, an online mobilization event that is designed to give participants a view into the world of Bible translation. Over 45 participants took the course from January 18-27.

- Praise God for the participants in Pathways and for technology that makes it possible.
- Pray that God would use the Pathways course in mighty ways in participants’ journeys toward serving the Bibleless.
- Pray that additional content would be ready for this summer’s Pathways course.
- Pray for more mobilizers and recruiters for Wycliffe. We could reach more future workers for the Bible translation movement if we weren’t understaffed ourselves.
- Pray for the leadership of the team as they work on strategies that will increase the effectiveness of mobilizing people to join with Wycliffe and its key partners.
- Pray for wisdom in planning in-person events.

Steve is continuing his work remotely on three projects - consultations for the Saliba (PNG) book of Romans and the Etulo (Nigeria) book of Hebrews, and authoring the guidebook for mother-tongue translators (Translators Notes) on the book of Exodus. He hopes to travel to PNG in the second half of the year for some in-person consultations with teams, but plans for this trip are not yet certain.

- Pray for wisdom for Steve to have good communication with the Saliba and Etulo teams, so that he can effectively help them improve their translations of God’s Word.
- Pray for clear thinking and good progress on the Translator’s Notes volume of Exodus.
- Pray that he will work well with his mentors on this important project.

Gil & Norene Zinke—Training Leaders International (TLI)

A Thank You note received 1/14/22:

Thank you for your ongoing support of Gil's ministry with TLI in Ethiopia this past year. Your prayers and financial gifts are making an eternal difference.

With grateful hearts, Gil & Norene Zinke

An update on Gil’s travels was received January 18th. They had a very enjoyable Thanksgiving with their family. Their son and his family who live in Tennessee flew to Minnesota so the entire family was together for three days.

The end of November Gil wondered if the January trip to Ethiopia would be possible. There was a civil war going on in northern Ethiopia, but a ceasefire was agreed upon. They also wondered about getting visas. Gil traveled to Iowa to pick up passports from two of his teammates. Others were delivered to Gil’s house that day. On January 5th Gil flew to Washington DC to the Embassy to get their visas. God provided so all their paperwork was in order. As flights were being delayed and cancelled all over the nation because of staff shortages and snowstorms in Minneapolis and DC, Gil’s flights were on time.

The team has been in Ethiopia since January 11th; they will be returning on the 30th provided they are all free of COVID.

MY NAME IS “I AM”

If you live in the past,
It will be very hard,
For I am not there.
My name is not I WAS.

And if you live in the future,
It will be very hard,
For my name is not I WILL BE.

But if you live in the present,
It is not hard,
For my name is “I AM”.

John 8:58 *“Jesus said unto them...I AM”*

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. Youth Group

Thursday, 7:00 P.M. – Men's Leadership Group

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

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

www.eastbalsam.org

To get to livestreaming,

our YouTube address is [youtube.com/eastbalsambaptist](https://www.youtube.com/eastbalsambaptist)

OR

on the church website,

scroll down to SERVICES, move your cursor right and click on YouTube.

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