

East Balsam Beacon

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Thanks to Cheryl Volgren &
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pictures

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Pastor's Corner

I would like to begin this “Pastor’s Corner” by saying thank you to the members of EBBC for making provision in the church budget for me to attend conferences and pursue other opportunities for training and professional development. Maybe some people think that I’m already good enough at what I do, and that it is a waste of the church’s money to send me to conferences. Others might think that I’ve got a long way to go and that the church should double (or triple, or quadruple!) the budget for “Pastor Education and Training.” Well, let me just say that regardless of what you think, I have a desire to keep learning and growing, and I very much appreciate the church’s support in that.

Recently, as many of you are aware, I attended the Converge Great Lakes (CGL) Annual Meeting and Foundations Conference in Fond Du Lac. Because EBBC’s budget made it possible for me to attend, and because our church is part of Converge Great Lakes, I thought it would be fitting to share some updates about our district, as well as some things that I took away from the conference.

For those who don’t know much about our denomination (Converge) or our district (CGL), here’s a brief summary: Converge does not have a top-down leadership structure. Our church is autonomous, and the denomination cannot *tell* our church what to do. Instead, our partnership with Converge is voluntary and it is based on shared beliefs and convictions. So, if Converge doesn’t exist to govern us, then why *does* it exist? As Converge’s slogan says, we are “better together.” CGL creates a partnership of like-minded churches, and the district staff are there to serve us (not govern us).

CGL serves our church in many ways. In just the last few years, CGL helped our church during pastoral transitions, including the search process that concluded with calling me (I’m so grateful for that!). CGL also assisted EBBC in conducting an assessment to better understand the unique characteristics and needs of EBBC, and that study aided the search process. CGL also provided coaching for me during my first six months at EBBC to help me transition into my new role. Further, as many of you are aware, Ken Nabi, Gary Harrison, and Glen Herschberger from the CGL district office have all been guest speakers at EBBC in the past two years. Finally, during the past two years I have met regularly with other CGL pastors in the area for prayer, support, and cooperation in church planting. This smaller group is called a “LEAD Team.” I have appreciated the fellowship and encouragement from these other pastors,

and together the churches we pastor are supporting a new church plant in St. Croix Falls.

I am glad that our church supports Converge Great Lakes financially, and I hope that we continue to do so. When Wood Lake Camp closed several years ago, CGL took over ownership of the camp. That was a huge burden for the district, both financially and for the district staff. Thankfully, Wood Lake is under new ownership and looking forward to reopening as a youth camp next summer. Unfortunately, Lake Ellen Camp, another former CGL camp, also closed in 2020 and our district assumed ownership of that camp as well. CGL is hoping to sell Lake Ellen, but in the meantime, it is a burden on the district, and the district needs our continued support. Lake Ellen resulted in a large financial loss for the district last year. As I outlined above, EBBC benefits from our partnership with CGL in many ways, and they are worthy of our support.

Another way that our church benefits from our partnership with CGL is through the fellowship and training that takes place at the annual meeting and conference. This year was the first time that I attended the conference, and I hope to attend again next year. Let me share a couple highlights.

Our Regional President, Ken Nabi, spoke during the first session about the history of Converge, and his vision for the future. In the past, Converge was mostly made up of Swedish immigrants. Today, there are very few Swedes left in CGL churches. So, if our ancestry is no longer the glue that holds us together, then what is? Ken proposed that it should be the principles set forth by the Swedish Pietists, who started our denomination long ago. Pietism was a reaction against the “dead orthodoxy” of the state church in Sweden. Pietists believed that the gospel should change the whole person, and not just lead to intellectual ascent. They also emphasized the importance of evangelism, which is a conviction that I share. Ken recently did some research on the Pietist movement for his doctoral program, and he said that he came to realize that he was a Pietist without knowing it! After Ken’s session, I am looking forward to studying Pietism myself.

For the sake of time, I’ll share just one more highlight. I attended a breakout session with a pastor named Andy Addis. He leads a multi-site church in Kansas. His breakout session was titled “Rhythms: Finding Rhythm in Ministry to Move You From Surviving to Thriving.” It was basically about the importance of making time for rest, family, one’s personal relationship with God, and to pursue personal interests. He shared numerous strategies to help pastors stay healthy (physically, mentally, relationally, and spiritually) and avoid burnout. One of my takeaways from that session was that I need to prioritize my personal relationship with God and my family, and I should not be afraid to take time for personal spiritual retreats and rest (through vacations, family time, etc.). I also left that session with a lot of gratitude for this wonderful church that God has called me to. I’m so happy to be in a church where I am allowed time off and encouraged to take care of myself and to spend time with my family.

Thanks again, EBBC, for giving me the opportunity to attend the Converge Great Lakes conference and thank you for being a loving and supportive church family. It is a joy to serve as the pastor of this church!

Submitted by Pastor Jonathon

COMING UP

Operation Christmas Child—November 10 & 11—get tables set up for packing shoe boxes on November 12.

John Larson & Zech Foltz’s trip to Guatemala—November 5-13

Glory Bound Concert—December 3rd

White Christmas Gala—December 4—for Ladies & Teen Girls—more details coming later

Feed My Starving Children event in Coon Rapids, MN—December 10—11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. See John Larson for details.

Christmas Program—December 18—during morning worship

Operation Christmas Child—Packing Day is November 12th

Help is needed November 10 & 11 to set up tables and sort items according to age and gender. Adults are also needed to help at each table on packing day. Please let Cheryl know if you can help any of these days.

If you would like your picture included in a box, please see Jen Jorgenson.

There is a tub on the table in the back full of toothbrushes. Guess the right amount for a prize!

Remember to pray for each box that goes out and for the child receiving it.

Some Eternal Results: (1) In a closed country in Asia, where many people were possessed by demons, 140 children heard the Good News and 80 of them signed up for The Greatest Journey, a follow up Bible study. (2) In Moldova a church with only a few elderly adults, invited 150 boys & girls to receive shoe boxes. Dozens of children and their parents began coming to church, and a new Sunday School was started. **PTL!**

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

Youth Activities

Each summer I spend time seeking the Lord on his focus for the coming youth group year. As I did so this past year, I was continually led to the importance of relationships in our walk of faith. I was also plagued with the ongoing 'exodus' of youth from the church. As I put the two together and prayed over our youth group year, I realized that we must do something different.

For most of the prior year, Travis and I felt the stirring from the Lord that we needed to do things differently if we really wanted to reach the kids. The programming we followed (food, worship, large group, small group) was what most youth group schedules looked like...but it was falling short for us. We couldn't help but look into the crowd during our group time and feel we weren't using our full potential to reach these youth we so dearly love.

We know that most kids spend 5 days a week in a classroom, listening to someone else tell them information. Even if they are homeschooled, they spend their entire day taking in information. When we thought about it, we realized the youth group program we had in place was more of the kids having to do the same thing they'd been doing all day. No wonder many of them were exhausted and seemingly unengaged.

So we have decided to change the programming.

This year we will rely heavily on our small groups. We will do so because we believe real change happens in relationship and relationship happens in smaller settings. We will show this new change mainly through our Wednesday night programming and in our budget.

Wednesdays will now look different. We will have the kids eat with their small groups to build that and give everyone a place to "belong" during mealtimes. After that, we will move directly into small group discussions. During this time, we will allow the small group leaders to decide the topics their small groups will discuss. During that time, Sarah will be available to counsel students 1:1. After small group time, the youth will have the option to participate in a worship experience or use the remaining 30 minutes to spend time with friends.

On top of our normal Wednesday night gatherings, we will encourage relationships throughout our church family. We will continue with the Pray For Me and the Fill The Bleachers campaigns to encourage connections

with our youth and the adults in our church. We are encouraging the youth to get connected to serve in other parts of our church as well, from helping in the sound booth to serving food in the kitchen.

What does success look like for this year's ministry - that every student feels more loved, seen, and known.

Do you have an idea on how we can pursue the hearts of our youth? I'd love to hear about it.

Submitted by Sarah Bowers



Deacons Praying for Youth Leaders

September 2022

Maggie Alen (student leader), Charlie O'Brien (student leader), Brina Richter (student leader), Danielle Panik (leader), Holly Wood Webster (leader), Travis & Sarah Bowers (leaders), Larry Michaelson (Deacon) Roger (Deacon) & Vickie Peterson (coleaders), Steve Volgren (Deacon)

Not Pictured: Jonathon Enger (leader), Gideon Schmidt (student leader), Zech Foltz (coleader), Mandi Wolgemuth (coleader)

John Larson & Zech Foltz's Guatemala Trip

Our next trip to Guatemala is all set for 11/5 to 11/12. As most of you know I will be taking a young man, Zech Foltz, with me. I am hoping this trip will open Zech's eyes to how wasteful we live as Americans and also to see how we as Christians do not have to sit back and just watch but we can get up and help whether that neighbor is across the street or on the other side of the world. I often wondered why anyone would have to go to another country to help. I figured there was enough to work on right here in our own backyards. This is how I am sure this is God's leading. This is the second time that I thought I was going one way and He turns and leads me in a different direction.

Our next trip is not set yet. We are thinking of the end of January or in February with Jackie hopefully going this time.

I want to thank everyone for all the support whether in donations or in prayer.

Galatians 5:13 *"You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love."*

Jesus showed the ultimate selflessness in laying down His life to set us free. We must always seek to imitate His selfless love by serving others instead of simply serving ourselves.

Submitted by John Larson

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

If you have been involved in VBS, are attending the Tuesday morning ladies Bible Study, the small group meeting at the Lundquist home on Wednesday evenings, or the Not Your Average Marriage class, chances are you have already met Ken and Maureen Ekelund. But just in case you haven't, let me introduce them to you.

Ken's mother and father were separated when he was young. While his father still played a role in his life, Ken was primarily raised in a Christian home by a godly mother who prayed for him. Ken doesn't remember the exact timing of his receiving Christ as his Savior, but he believes he was six or seven years old.

Maureen's father was in the military. Consequently, she and her family lived in many parts of the world and moved every three years or so. One constant in her childhood years was that no matter where the family lived, Maureen attended private Catholic schools or Catholic mission schools. Maureen loved studying about God but had serious questions about the teachings of the Catholic church--even as a child. She wondered: "Why can't I just talk to God the way I want to?" "Why do I have to memorize prayers?" "Why do I have to go to confession? Can't I just confess my sins to God?" "Why am I not allowed to read the Bible?"

Ken met Maureen when Maureen was still in high school. They lived in the same neighborhood in St. Paul, MN, at the time and the two of them began seeing each other. (Ken's mother had some reservations about their relationship as she knew Maureen was Catholic. However, Ken's mother took her reservations to God in prayer, never saying anything to Ken about them.)

The relationship between Ken and Maureen was put on hold briefly when Ken joined the U.S. Army toward the end of the Viet Nam war. Ken reconnected with Maureen in a phone call and the two of them were married first by a justice of the peace while Ken was stationed at Fort Wolters, Texas. Later they were married in a small wedding ceremony at the Army Post Chapel by a priest in order to please Maureen's mother.

Ken was transferred from Texas to North Carolina where he completed his Army career and then moved back to the Twin Cities area to finish his last year of college. Upon completion of his education, he made the decision to pursue a career in the U.S. Coast Guard. Ken and Maureen's household goods were to be moved by the military from the Twin Cities to Pensacola, Florida. However, the moving van caught on fire on the trip and their worldly possessions were destroyed. Ken and Maureen were compensated \$10,000 for their belongings which they used to purchase a piece of property on the North Shore near Duluth where Ken built a house. I'll leave it to Maureen to tell you of their adventures in the North Woods!

Up until this time, Ken and Maureen's attendance at church during their married life had been sporadic. However, it was about this time the Lord began speaking to Maureen about her need for a Savior. Maureen was converted through the television ministry of Billy Graham. She responded to his invitation to write for the information packet he offered to all who had accepted Christ. At Billy Graham's suggestion, she and Ken began looking for a Bible-believing church to attend where they could grow in their faith. And, while they did grow in their faith and were privileged to find wonderful churches in the various towns in which they lived thereafter, Maureen's mother disowned her daughter believing Maureen had become a member of a cult. As Maureen's life began to reflect the image of Christ, her brother, Bob, went to bat for her to their mother and the Lord brought reconciliation to the mother-daughter relationship.

Maureen had opportunity to minister to Ken's mother in her later years of life. During that time, Ken's mother confided to Maureen that she had faithfully prayed to the Lord on behalf of Maureen for her salvation.

In these, the Golden Years of the Ekelund's lives, they would like to encourage younger persons and couples to give attention to daily devotions, personal Bible study, and prayer—with special emphasis on never doubting the power of prayer to impact the lives of people we love.

Submitted by Lynda Hall

MISSIONS

Bruce & Candice Beatham—Wycliffe Bible Translators in Mexico

Greetings from Mexico City! God has been so gracious to us and we are now at a digital Scripture use conference in Mexico City where Bruce is teaching about a program that helps people get literacy and Scripture booklets in their languages. I have been helping with some of the logistics.

We flew here shortly after we returned from the US where we were celebrating our son Nathaniel's marriage to Marifer Torres, who is from Puebla, Mexico. It was such a joyous occasion having the whole family together. The only sad part was that Marifer's parents and sister could not come because they couldn't get visas.

Ernesto and Valentin are still working away at the translation desk while we celebrate with family and help train others in the things that we have learned over the years.

Please pray for us as we continue to serve the Lord and as we try to find time to rest and rejuvenate. We love and appreciate you all!

Blessings,

Candice, Bruce, Abby and the rest



John & Lori De Cleene—Mobilization Associates, Converge

I don't have a recent update from John & Lori. Continue to pray for the appointees as well as John & Lori as they minister to the appointees.

Steve & Carol Jean Gallagher—Wycliffe Bible Translators-Florida

Thank you for praying for Steve during his trip to PNG in September! The quality checking of the Yamap Gospel of Luke and Malei Psalms 73-150 is now complete. It was a blessed time of working in unity with people who are eager to have God's word in their language.

In addition to confirming that their Scripture translations are communicating accurately, clearly, and naturally, they made hundreds of improvements along the way. These improvements make the translations more readable and express the meaning in their languages more effectively. After the teams engage in some further work on their own, these Scriptures will be ready for publishing. Yamap communities will soon be able to hear and read the Good news of Jesus Christ as Luke told it, but now in their own language for the first time. And Malei communities will be able to express the cry of their hearts to God with the book of Psalms in their language. Praise God for all that he enabled them to accomplish!

Sadly, our long-time close friend and missionary colleague, Amy Lindstrom, was diagnosed in Minnesota last month with incurable ovarian cancer. She passed away on October 7th. Amy and her husband John have been the project advisors for the Malei translation team since 1992. Amy had been working with Steve recently on proposed refinements to the Malei book of Psalms, which the team continues to process without her.

Carol Jean was at Cedarville University in Ohio in early October with a team of 11 Wycliffe missionaries. The Wycliffe speakers made presentations to over 700 students in 26 classes to inform, inspire, and invite them to join the Bible translation movement. Carol Jean's job was to record contact information for the 217 students who signed up to receive further information (24% of those who attended the classes), and 11 students signed up to talk to a recruiter!

Praise:

- Praise God for the Yamap and Malei translation checking that was completed.
- Praise God for the opportunity to share about Bible translation at Cedarville University and for the interest shown by students.
- Praise God that our house received no damage during Hurricane Ian.

Prayer Requests

- Pray that many Cedarville University students will follow God's leading into missions, especially for the cause of Bible translation.
- Pray for Amy Lindstrom's family as they mourn her passing.
- Pray for Steve as he prepares for his next remote consultation – with the Etulo translation team of Nigeria.

Thank you all so much for being a part of this vital work through your prayers and support.

May God's grace and peace be with you all.

Steve & Carol Jean Gallagher

Gil & Norene Zinke—Training Leaders International (TLI)

Gil is in Ethiopia at this time. The team left on the 29th of September and won't return until the 7th of November.

This is from a report from Gil dated October 3rd:

"I landed in Addis Ababa on Saturday morning. Many of the streets were closed for parades as the largest tribe in Ethiopia, the Oromo tribe asserted its identity in its annual Irreecha Festival. The streets were decorated with red, black and white bunting, and marchers were wearing the same colors. Since the Irreecha Festival is centered on the city of Bishoftu, where I had planned to go that day, my hosts wisely urged me to stay two nights in Addis Ababa and travel to Bishoftu on Monday morning instead.

"So Saturday I settled into a hotel in Addis Ababa, worked on documents and took a nap. I was awakened at 2:30 pm and requested to speak to a ladies' group at 4 pm. I spoke to 15 ladies on God's work in Ruth Chapter 1. The next morning I preached from the same chapter at a Baptist Church in Dima, a town southwest of Addis Ababa. On Sunday evening I met up with Pastor Tesfaye, the national coordinator of TLI's trainings in the Rift Valley.

"Monday, the first day of the Mentor training in Bishoftu, went well. Eight of the nine Mentor Candidates invited showed up. Tomorrow we may be down to six men, as one has a wife about to go into labor, and another has to teach a class in the capital, Addis Ababa.

"The Rosemary Hotel, where our team had reservations, disregarded our reservations and sold our rooms to some who came to Bishoftu for the Festival, so we are in the less nice Pyramid Hotel. Wi-Fi does not work in the rooms, but to my surprise it is working fine in the restaurant.

"Grateful for your prayers."

Gil 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. Youth 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