

East Balsam Beacon

July, August, September, 2023

Pastor's Corner

I read a fair number of books, but most of what I read is non-fiction. Things like commentaries, Bible dictionaries, articles, and books about theology, apologetics, leadership, and the Christian life. Of course, I read the Bible, too. I believe that reading is one of the most important skills we can learn. After all, God decided to write a book, which we call the Bible, and it is the primary way that he speaks to us. That fact alone should be enough to convince anyone that reading is important. But I've also found that reading is one of the best ways to learn new ideas, get smarter, and grow as a person.

That being said, even though I *know* reading is important, I've never particularly *enjoyed* reading. Some people love to read. I know a few people who are avid readers. I've wondered at times if they have a reading addiction (if that's even possible). There are certainly more destructive addictions that a person could have. I don't always love reading, but there is one thing that helps to reignite my love for reading, and that's reading good fiction. It might seem counterintuitive to say that *reading* ignites my love for reading, but it's true. Spiritually speaking, whenever I'm going through a "dry spell" and God seems far away, it's usually because *I've* been far away, meaning that I haven't been spending enough time in his word (or I've just been going through the motions with my Bible reading). Like I said, the Bible is the primary way that God speaks to us. And if your love for God has grown a little cold, and your desire to be in his word is lacking, there's no better way to fan the flame than to *read* the word.

That was a jumble of random thoughts that I have about reading, but it gives you a little context for what the rest of this "Pastor's Corner" will be about. You see, I could tell that my love for reading had grown cold recently, and I decided that I needed to give myself a boost in the arm by reading some good fiction this summer. For the last year or so I've been reading to our boys at bedtime. I started with *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien, and then read *The Lord of The Rings* trilogy. From there we moved on to the *Chronicles of Narnia* series by C.S. Lewis, and we are currently reading *Prince Caspian*. Those are all wonderful books, and they have helped me to remember how wonderful reading can be, and they gave me the motivation I needed to pick up a few books to read on my own. My wife was quite pleased with me when I went to the Balsam Lake Public Library to get my very own library card.

The book that I most recently finished is *Silence* by Shusaku Endo, and I'd like to share a few things about it. The story takes place in 17th century Japan, not long after Portuguese Catholics first introduced the Japanese people to Christianity. Catholicism initially grew rapidly in Japan, but then the government became wary of this "western" religion and began persecuting Christians. The story follows a Catholic priest (Jesuit, specifically) who traveled to Japan during the persecution, knowing that it would be dangerous, because he was so concerned for the Japanese Christians who had lost all their leaders.

The book is aptly named, since the major theme throughout the book is the “silence” of God. Now, like I said earlier, the primary way that God speaks to us is through the Bible, so I don’t think it’s ever fair to accuse God of being silent. He is constantly speaking to us through his word, but we are not always listening. However, there are times in life when it certainly *feels* like God is silent. And by that I mean (and I think it’s what Shusaku Endo was getting at) that God doesn’t always intervene in our lives the way that we would like him to, especially during times of suffering. In the story, the main character was arrested and mistreated and constantly pressured to apostatize. He also witnessed Christians being tortured and brutally murdered. Throughout these experiences, the main character questions why God is allowing so much suffering—why he remained “silent.”

Considering that the book is written from the Catholic perspective, it goes without saying that there are things that I do not agree with in the novel. For example, I do not believe that a person needs to be absolved of their sins by an ordained priest. But overall, the story resonated with me because when I have experienced suffering (or witnessed other people suffering) I have found myself asking the same questions that the main character in the story wrestled with. “Where are you God?” “Why are you allowing this?” “Why are you *silent*?” I think every Christian wrestles with these questions at different times in their lives.

And it is precisely at those times when we need to run to God and listen to his voice as he speaks to us through his word. Sometimes that is difficult to do. There are times when the words on the page feel empty. There are times when we don’t even want to open our Bibles or pray. There are times when our faith is weak, and the devil convinces us that the seeming “silence” and inactivity of God is proof that he doesn’t care about us. But that’s when we need the truth of God’s word the most. That’s when we need to turn to the word even if we don’t feel like it. That’s when we need our brothers and sisters in Christ (the local church) to walk alongside us and lift us up.

I love the way that the novel ends. The priest concludes, “...but our Lord was not silent. Even if he had been silent, my life until this day would have spoken of Him.” No, God is never *truly* silent. There are times in life when it feels like God is silent, but he is always speaking to us. He speaks through his Holy Spirit, he speaks through the lives of other Christians (as the priest concluded), he spoke through the life of his Son, and he speaks through the Bible, which is the final authority for determining what God is saying to us. Sometimes God has us go through seasons when he seems silent, and we often don’t know why. But next time you have an experience like that, instead of asking, “God, why are you silent?” try praying, “God, help me to listen.”

Submitted by Pastor Jonathon

COMING UP

Another Trip to Guatemala

This is an update on my Guatemala missions. Jackie and I will be taking our next trip on October 28th through November 4th. What we thought was going to be just a one trip a year thing turned into a little different story. God’s plans are sometimes (or most of the time) different from our plans in life.

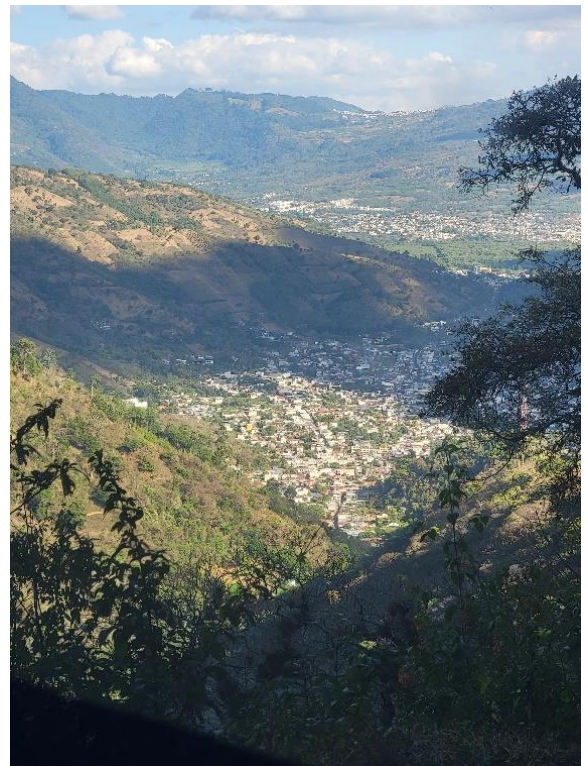
Most of you know that I accepted Christ into my heart a little later in my life. Looking back, I would have never thought He would have taken me to where I am today.





2014 was the year I turned on Joel Olsteen and God started working in me until one afternoon about one and a half to two years later I told Jackie we needed to find a Church. Well, most of you know the rest of that story. If you don't know, ask me about it.

Shortly after starting at East Balsam Baptist, I prayed to God, saying, "Here I am, put me to work." And to work He put us! I look back and can't believe how TRULY blessed we are. Not only blessed with all the Ministry things we have done and are doing, but blessed with a Church family as beautiful as you. On my last trip to Guatemala in March I met an 8-year-old beautiful little deaf girl who had down syndrome. We spent some time together playing and just enjoying each other's company. Daryl and I did many other things during the week such as fixing



wheelchairs, cleaning their shop, clinicals, work on their recently purchased orphanage building and the feeding program.

Our future plans are to take two more trips, one January 20th through the 27th where we will be taking another couple and one in March when I will be taking another gentleman with me. I thank you all for the support and prayers and we love you.

2 Corinthians 2 :14-17 But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.

The Larsons

ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC—

The annual church picnic will be held on Sunday, August 27th. The meal will be potluck. Watch the bulletin for more details.

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE—

Good Day to Everyone!

My name is Victoria Heichel. I was voted in as head of the Christian Education Committee back in May at the Annual Business meeting. I would like to give you a brief background look of myself. I graduated from Marantha Bible University with a degree in Humanities Letters and a History Minor. That was the end degree but over my college career I studied, Music and Elementary education. I have taught Conversational English in China, I have worked as a Camp counselor for Camp Chetek, WI, and Camp Shiloh, MN. I look forward to serving God, and the church as I pick up the torch from Kathy Thull in Christian Education here at East Balsam Baptist Church.

This Quarter was packed with the business of Vacation Bible School (VBS). The theme of the week was the Armor of God and its importance in our daily lives. The verses for the week were taken from Ephesians 6:10-18. I had the opportunity to work with the 3rd- 5th graders. They were an awesome bunch this year. Amy Zylstra and I had a class on average of 15 children. Our team's name was the Dragons.

The 1st-2nd graders class averaged 9 children. They were headed up by Jen Cox and Robin Anderson, with the aid of Lisa Lundquist. They were team Hawks.

The 3yr old -1st grade had an average of 15 children. Brina Richter, Tya Volgren, Olivia Bowers, and Maureen Ekelund were the War Horses.

The week was filled with crafts, Bible verse memory, outside games, snacks, and worship. Each year we take an offering to support either a missionary, or organization. This year the offering went towards Operation Christmas Child (OCC). With the help of all the adults and children we were able to raise a grand total of \$1,517.32 for OCC. These funds will be used to help ship packages to children across the world.

Huge shout out to those who helped make the week possible:

Outdoor Activities: Sam Majeske, Graham Cox, Jonah Richter

Kitchen Staff: Lynda Hall, Maggie Cox

Sound booth: Seth Alen

Speaker: Jonathon Enger

I may be missing some who helped serve outside of the building. Thank you to Everyone! Praise God!

Submitted by Victoria (Vickie) Heichel

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Royal Fun Faire—May 7—Noon until 3:00 p.m.

This was a time to get the kids pre-registered for VBS. They would also get a sneak-peak at the VBS theme for this year, KEEPERS OF THE KINGDOM, and pick up their T-shirts. They had a picnic lunch, games, and prizes.

VBS—June 5-9—9:00 a.m. until Noon

The theme this year was KEEPERS OF THE KINGDOM. On Friday they had a program and had lunch together before being dismissed for the week.

VBS PHOTOS



VBS MINISTERS TO OCC—

Amy Zylstra and Cheryl Volgren put on their armor (to follow the VBS theme) to fight off the water balls thrown by the kids. The kids were challenged to raise \$1,000 for OCC to be able to throw water balls at us. They raised over \$1,500!

We shared what could go in shoe boxes. We had a guest speaker, Eric Ogren, come to VBS. Eric works for Billy Graham Ministry, and has been places when shoeboxes were handed out.

We had challenges of folding boxes; Pastor is really good at it! The kids also brought in items to put in the shoeboxes. Each of the shoe boxes represented \$10 and we had 150 boxes! They exceeded that amount and we had to add boxes!

Amy and I could not be more grateful for the opportunity to share this ministry with the kids so they can share it to the recipients of the boxes. We would like to thank all that gave to this ministry.

Looking forward to packing 600 boxes in November!!!

Submitted by Cheryl Volgren

GRADUATES—

On June 25th, Charlie O'Brien and Kaedie Schadow were recognized for their graduation from high school.

The EBBC Quilters gave each of them a quilt.



OPTIONS ON 8 FUND RAISER—

Baby bottles were distributed on Mother's Day and would be collected until Father's Day, or perhaps another Sunday or two after that. People are asked to fill the bottle with coins (or place a check or paper money in the bottle). This is the big fund raiser for Options on 8. The organization helps mothers save the lives of their babies.

The total offering from EBBC was \$1,378.

PLAYGROUND & PARKING LOT CHANGES

Last year concerns were brought up about child safety and the playground due to its proximity to the parking lot and the road. Initially it was suggested that a fence be built around the playground, but after receiving bids around \$10,000 for the fence, it was decided that it may be better to move it instead.

Another topic of discussion that had come up was about needing more parking, so a committee was formed to look at these issues and make recommendations. Ultimately the committee recommended moving the playground behind the church and expanding the parking lot by 50 percent. Three options for the parking lot expansion were drawn up, and bids were obtained for doing the work. A special business meeting was held after the service on Sunday, July 16th, where the low bid of \$10,000 to expand the parking lot and level the new playground site was accepted, and it was voted to allocate up to \$12,000 to cover this work. It was also approved to move the playground set to the back of the church, off the southwest corner of the sanctuary, where it is away from the parking lot and is visible from the fellowship hall so parents can keep an eye on the children.

Ground was broken for the parking lot on Wednesday July 26th. Initially the 100' x 116' expansion will be left as gravel, with the possibility of being paved in the future. A date to move the playground has not been set yet, but it is hoped to get volunteers together to do this sometime in August. Stay tuned for updates on the completion of these exciting projects!

Submitted by Dale Michaelson

OUR SYMPATHY—

To Donna Mabry on the passing of her mother, **Iris Nelson**, who passed away on June 17th. Iris had been a member of EBBC for many years and served faithfully in many ways. A Celebration of Life was held at church on Friday, June 30th.

To Brian and Ruth Matson on the death of Brian's mother, **Susan Matson**, on July 6th.

To Gary and Theresa Nelson on the death of Gary's sister, **Janice Oeffler**.

To Doug Waller and his daughter Lisa Kelly on death of Doug's wife, **LuAnn**, on May 12th.

To Joyce Gaydosik and family on the death of her grandson, **Christopher**, on May 11th.

To Lisa and Don Lundquist on the death of Lisa's brother, **Charlie**, on May 13th.

MISSIONS

BRUCE & CANDICE BEATHAM—Wycliffe Bible Translators in Mexico

Bruce and Candice are traveling now so she asked me to take some information from their last Beatham Beacon.

On May 6th Benjamin and his future wife, Mikiah, graduated from LeTourneau University in Longview, Texas. Two days later they were married. They are now residing in Appleton, WI, where they both have employment.

When the mail arrived on June 24th, Marifer (mah-ree-FAIR) and Nathaniel got a big surprise. Marifer's United States permanent resident visa arrived. She is now allowed to leave the country and visit her family in Puebla, Mexico. When she left in May of 2022 to work for the summer, she didn't know she wouldn't see her family again until now.

Prayer Requests—

- Bruce & Candice are stepping away from working directly on the translation project for a couple of months this fall. The project will be in our co-translators' hands while they focus on other jobs and spend time seeking God's perspective and a renewed vision for this project that He began 20 years ago.
- Their family will be moving to Mitla for the school year so Abby can be in classes in-person for the first time ever for her senior year of high school.
- Their translation team, Valentin and Ernesto, the full-time translators, as they continue to do the work at the office in Teco. Pray also for God to provide more people from the communities willing to participate in different parts of the translation process.

JOHN & LORI De CLEENE—Mobilization Associates, Converge

“Start, Strengthen, Send” includes:

“Seek, Prepare, Go”

When someone is interested in serving globally, they assess if they are gifted and called. Next, they share their ministry with those who also seek the world won to Christ. When they are ready, they go!

STEVE & CAROL JEAN GALLAGHER—Wycliffe Bible Translators-Florida

Serving Bible translation teams

Steve has been making good progress on the translation guidebook, *Translators Notes*, for Exodus. This is a resource in simple English to help translation teams around the world find the best ways to express the meaning in their own languages. Some of his work is already available electronically for teams to use.

The Etulo language team in Nigeria has asked Steve to do the quality check for their translation of Genesis. He looks forward to working remotely with them again in the coming months. (Steve did the quality check for their final books of the New Testament last year.)

Seeking to fill vital roles in the work of Bible translation

Carol Jean’s team, Global Workforce Strategies, is nearing the end of a departmental reorganization. She will take on new duties as an admin assistant for talent acquisition (finding new people to fill vital roles in Wycliffe), while continuing some of her previous duties. Her team needs several more members to effectively achieve the team’s purpose.

As part of her role, Carol Jean has interviewed several people interested in working with Wycliffe. One of her bigger jobs now is managing logistics for an in-house training conference in September.

Praise God...

- That June’s Explore Bible Translation event for potential new missionaries was a success. Several of the 15 participants are taking steps to work with Wycliffe.
- For good progress for Steve and his team as they write *Translators Notes*.

Please pray for...

- The Etulo team in Nigeria as they work with Steve remotely to quality check their book of Genesis in the coming months. Pray that the Lord would use Steve to help them improve the translation and find the best ways to express the meaning.
- The Explore Bible Translation course in Colorado the week of July 31st with 17 participants. Pray that it would move people closer to joining Wycliffe.
- For many more people to join the mission to reach the Bibleless people of the world with God’s Word, both in the USA and overseas. Pray for God to fill the personnel needs on Carol Jean’s team.

We’re grateful to God for East Balsam’s faithful partnership with this ministry through your prayers and donations. You are making a vital difference in the work of bringing God’s Word to all people in the languages they understand best. Thank you!

Steve & Carol Jean Gallagher

GIL & NORENE ZINKE—Training Leaders International (TLI)

On July 14th, Gil sent a report on their Trip to Ethiopia. On July 1st Gil tested himself for COVID 19, which was positive. One man had meds for treating COVID so Gil taught all that day as it was too late to cancel that day, and they would take precautions. The following morning two men preached but Gil had canceled his speaking engagement. “That proved providential, as only two interpreters were available.”

“Prayer Requests

“1. Pray that the trainees will pass on Course 3 effectively to many others.

“2. Pray that I will efficiently complete expense reports and recruit for Oct.”

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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