

# East Balsam Beacon

Oct, Nov, Dec, 2023

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Thanks to Cheryl Volgren,  
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Larson & John DeCleene  
for the pictures

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**East Balsam Baptist  
Church  
1816-108<sup>th</sup> St.  
Balsam Lake, WI  
54810**

## PASTOR'S CORNER

### Learning and Connecting

In recent weeks I've had two different opportunities to learn and connect with others, and I have another opportunity coming up later this week. I attended an event at Wood Lake Camp & Retreat Center called "Trailblazer Weekend" September 28-30, and I attended the Converge Great Lakes district conference called "Foundations" October 5-6, which was held at Valleybrook Church in Eau Claire this year. On Friday of this week (October 20), I will be heading to Bethel University for "Pastor Prayer, Coffee, and Chapel" with guest speaker Francis Chan. I'll share a little more about each of these.

### Trailblazer Weekend

Earlier this fall I received a postcard from Wood Lake advertising the Trailblazer Weekend event. I immediately thought that it would be a wonderful opportunity for our youth leaders here at EBBC to get away together for a few days to learn together, strengthen our unity as a team, and connect with other youth leaders in the area. I'm happy to report that (from my perspective) all three of those goals were achieved. Our group was the biggest group in attendance. Sarah Bowers (our Director of Youth Ministries), Travis Bowers, Danielle Panik, Holly Wood Webster, Christine Spading, and myself attended. The ladies had one cabin, and Travis and I shared a different cabin. I'm sure that the ladies had some good bonding time. Travis and I got to know each other better, and he even had the privilege of hearing me talk in my sleep (about fishing, of course)!

Each day we shared meals together, enjoyed some down time, and gathered for session. The food was great, and the sessions were filled with meaningful worship (lead by camp director Dan Hartke) and encouraging messages. The speaker for the weekend was Herb Bloomquist from Camp Shamineau in Minnesota, who has many years of experience working with youth. His first message focused on the importance of having friends and supporters and doing ministry as a team. His second message was about caring for the kids who have trouble connecting with others, and he encouraged us to remember that even the most difficult kids can be transformed by God's grace. His final message was about the Kingdom of God, and how our goal as youth leaders should be to give kids a glimpse of God's kingdom.

I had a fantastic experience at Wood Lake, and it seemed like the other leaders from our church did, too. I'm glad for the time I got to share with them, learning and growing together for the sake of our youth and for the glory of God. Even though I'm not the "youth pastor" at EBBC, I consider it a privilege to serve with the youth ministry. I enjoy spending time with the youth, and I want them to know that their pastor cares about them and considers them an important part of the church family. I don't see myself as having "graduated" from youth ministry, because the youth are just as much a part of the church as any other age group, and the Lord has called me to shepherd everyone who calls EBBC "their" church. So, I am thankful for Wood Lake, for EBBC's support of Wood Lake, and for the opportunity I had to be further equipped for ministering to the youth of our church.

## **Foundations Conference**

Since being called to EBBC in 2020, I've grown to appreciate our Converge Great Lakes district more and more. Before then, I didn't know much about Converge. I didn't know what a "LEAD Team" was, and I didn't know that our district had an annual conference and an annual business meeting. Back in 2017, I read something in an email from Converge (our denomination) about the value of coaching for pastors, and interested pastors were encouraged to contact their district office to learn more about coaching opportunities. I did so and received an invitation from our Regional President, Ken Nabi, to join a group he was leading, which he called a "leadership discipleship group." That was my first significant introduction to Converge. Since coming to EBBC, I've participated in our West LEAD Team, which includes of EBBC, Grace Church (Osceola), Living Waters Church (our new church plant in St. Croix Falls), Faith Fellowship (Luck), Trade Lake Baptist Church (Trade Lake), First Baptist Church (Falun), Grace Church (Grantsburg), First Baptist Church (Webster), and Cumberland Baptist Church (Cumberland). We often have our meetings at EBBC, since it is a more central meeting place. I'm grateful for the opportunities we have to meet together for prayer and encouragement, and to work together on shared efforts like church planting. Most of the pastors from our LEAD Team attended the Foundations conference.

Like the event at Wood Lake, the Foundations conference included excellent food, meaningful worship, opportunities for relationship building, and time to learn. Our speaker for the conference was Chad Moore from Sun Valley Community Church in Arizona. The topics of his messages were the importance of humility in pastoral ministry, how discipleship must include obedience which can only take place in relationships, and the temptations of leadership. I also attended a few workshops that had to do with solo pastoring in small communities and counseling. It was great to visit with people who have helped me in my journey of learning how to be a pastor, like Ken Nabi, Glenn Herschberger, Gary Harrison, Pastor Tim Haugen, and Pastor Joe Basso. I also got to connect with one of our missionaries, John De Cleene, and make many new connections. It was an excellent conference, and I would like to say "thank you" to EBBC for your ongoing support, which includes money budgeted to help pay for opportunities like this.

## **Pastor Prayer, Coffee, and Chapel**

On Friday morning (October 20), I will drive to Bethel University for this free event that I was invited to attend. It will be a gathering of other pastors for prayer and networking, and to hear some updates about Bethel University. Additionally, we are all invited to attend the college chapel service that morning and hear from Francis Chan, who is the speaker that day. For those who don't know, Bethel University is the college that Anika and I attended, and Bethel is also the only university affiliated with our denomination, Converge. I have not been back to Bethel for many years, and I have not attended a chapel service since my senior year in 2008. Bethel has gone through some changes in the 15 years since I graduated, and I'm looking forward to learning more about Bethel today. I'm also looking forward to meeting other pastors and getting to hear Francis Chan during chapel.

Once again, I just want to say thank you to the church family at EBBC for your continued support. I know that October is "pastor appreciation month," but I also want you to know how much I appreciate you. Thank you for

caring for me and encouraging me to be connected with other pastors, to maintain a healthy work-life balance, and to keep growing as a leader and follower of Jesus.

I love you all.

Submitted by Pastor Jonathon

## **COMING UP**

### **Operation Christmas Child**

At this writing the number is 17 days until we pack! It amazes me the number of items in the corner for the boxes. When you look at it all it's hard to say what is needed. Every box we send represents 1 child, who has a family; God works in all their lives.

Sorting days are November 2 & 3, with packing on November 4<sup>th</sup>. Adult help is needed all three of those days.

EBBC is a drop off center this year. Those dates are November 13-20. Christine Spading is heading up this ministry. Volunteers are needed daily for those dates as well.

Thank you for your prayers and part in this ministry.

Submitted by Cheryl Volgren on October 17<sup>th</sup>

### **Christian Education Committee**

Good afternoon! Here we are amid the fall festivities and things are going well! I would first like to thank all the teens who have stepped up and took on the role of "Part of the Body of Christ". All praise goes to God! Like adults, teens are an integral part of the body of Christ. They are young, they have different perspectives, they are the future, perhaps not in our church body but another Church! They have filled positions in the Nursery and Sunday School! God Has blessed this church with Children and Teens. They "are a gift from God". Psalm 127:3.

We are also getting ready for the Christmas Program! Although we may be in the midst of fall we are preparing for the Christmas Program. The program will be held on December 17, 2023. The title of the play is "The Traditional Nativity." In this Production we will be looking at what the prophets had to say about the coming of Christ, Jesus Christ's birth and why He was born.

For Sunday school curriculum schedule, we have started on Vol. 9 of 12. In this section we are starting off with Jesus triumphant entry into Jerusalem and will end with Jesus Resurrection.

Submitted by Victoria Heichel

## Another Trip to Guatemala

With the busy summer at Skonewood and the fall shutdown coming to an end we get to look forward to three trips to Guatemala—GOD Willing. Our first trip, scheduled for October 28th through November 4<sup>th</sup>, is a little over a week and a half away. Listening to what is happening in Guatemala with all the protests, and shortages of fuel, both for jets and vehicles due to the protests, our travel is unsure. Normally I would be a little anxious about something like this but I am not at this time. I do love spending time with the Hope for Home missionaries and kids, helping where needed. But I do know who is in control, and that is not me. Sometimes in life we look forward, making plans, and things do not work out the way we think they should. God has this all under control and we just need to put trust in Him. I want to thank all of you for the prayers and donations. We could not do this without your support.



May God bless each of you.

The Larson's – John & Jackie

Deuteronomy 13:4 *“It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him.”*

## CHURCH HAPPENINGS

### Youth

We have kicked off a new youth group year at EBBC. This year's focus is **Activating Authentic Faith**. We want to help the students truly own their relationship with the Lord and live a life of authentic faith. In doing so, we hope they will greatly impact our community for the Lord. We believe the Lord will use this year to reach all 2,974 teens in Polk County with the Gospel.

The year started with three new decisions to surrender to Jesus and eight people being baptized as an act of faith and obedience to Jesus. What a beautiful example from God of what Authentic Faith looks like.

One of the ways we are helping the students activate *authentic* faith is in our high school small groups. This year, we are creating multiple high school small groups that will be student-led, with an adult present to keep students on track and help answer questions. It is our hope that in having weekly transparent conversations with other students their own age, our high schoolers will grab ahold of all Jesus has to offer.

Here are some things our High School "leaders" are saying:

- There was some deeper sharing of personal struggles regarding time management and priorities, as well as the converse of having too much time to dwell in one's own thoughts. They have encouraged each other with ideas of what has worked for them, followed with prayer.
- Last week, we had some admit that their prayers are never answered, others admit that they struggle to want to follow God, others say they can't really hear his voice, and many say that they simply don't have

time to be with Him. However, they also dialogued through HOW to hear his voice, how to stay encouraged when your prayers aren't answered, and how to make time for him (including challenging each other to delete social media apps for a week).

- My group has talked about things they are struggling with, ways they have seen God at work and questions they have about faith. Currently they are also working to hold each other accountable when it comes to getting into Gods word every day, as they all expressed, they wanted to deepen their relationship with Him!

We are also spending the first hour of our time together in worship, prayer, testimony, and a large group teaching. Seth Alen and Ella Bowers are leading our worship team, working to bring others up front to share their gifts. The students seem to respond well to the messages shared during this time.

Our Seniors (all 14 of them) are trying to meet monthly while also discussing struggles and successes in our relationship with Jesus throughout the week via text message. We are also beginning to plan our Senior Trip in January to Atlanta, GA, for the Passion Conference.

This October, we also began a young adult group meeting on Wednesdays with the rest of the students. At this time, we have about 3-4 young women gathering and are hoping to create a space for individuals in this integral season of their lives.

We are very excited for what this next year has to hold and appreciate the support and prayers of our church family.

Submitted by Sarah Bowers

## **Pastor Appreciation Day**



On Sunday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, Pastor Jonathon was honored for the work he does at East Balsam. The plan was to have the entire family involved but Lucia was sick so Anica and the girls stayed home. We thank all of them for their involvement at EBBC.

Cake and ice cream was served during fellowship time.

## Child Dedication

Pastor Jonathon with Grant and Christa Richter and Norah Josephine Richter who was dedicated to the Lord during the worship service on Sunday, October 15.  
Submitted by LaVonne Richter



## MISSIONS

### **Bruce & Candice Beatham**—Wycliffe Bible Translators in Mexico

Hi! We are doing well! Since we're living near our linguistics center in Mitla right now, the things that we have been mostly focusing on are our jobs as supervisors of field teams and digital resource developer for the Mexico Branch.

We will eventually be adding remote work in the translation project to our daily routine here as well. Meanwhile, we're praying for God to renew our strength and the vision for how He is calling us to be involved in each of the aspects of the work that He has planned for us. We're also praying that during this time the two Mixtec translators we work with will grow in taking more ownership of the translation project, growing in the confidence and willingness to continue the steps in the project that they are actually better at doing than we are. They recently finished a total of 5 weeks of workshops covering the book of 1 Corinthians – it has been quite a marathon! We continue to monitor their progress and support them from here, and are planning a trip to visit with them as a team at the beginning of November. We appreciate your prayers for that trip and for good plans and decisions to result from that meeting.

Blessings,

Candice and Bruce



## John & Lori De Cleene—Mobilization Associates, Converge

John and Lori have been blessed to be visiting so many of their partnering churches these past few months as well as many weeks ahead during the Fall. Seeing and hearing about the many ways each Converge church reaches their community, county, WI, the nation, and the world is invigorating and inspirational.

In these past few weeks three new Converge appointees have begun building their partnership teams. One couple will be both helping the Converge national prayer effort as well as coaching churches to focus their gifting toward service. One young man from Oshkosh will serve for two years in Poland in the Converge Residency program. (Ask us for details!)

Once again Lori was able to attend, and, bring a speaker to the Converge Great Lakes northern women's gathering. Meredith Henderson spoke about the need for the gospel among the deaf throughout the world. Meredith just reached full partnership, and, will finish a task or two and be our next newest Converge Global Worker.

Serving together with you,

John De Cleene

Mobilization Specialist, Deployment Advisor

Mobile: 920-241-5917

<https://converge.org/missionary/john-lori-decleene>



Meredith Henderson

## Steve & Carol Jean Gallagher—Wycliffe Bible Translators-Florida

We've launched a new website: <https://gallaghers.life/>! Here you can check out our [newly released, personal video](#), latest updates, prayer points, and timeline of our ministry history. The content is being updated regularly, so be sure to check back again.

Please share the website and video link with others who would be interested.

On September 11-15, forty-five Wycliffe mobilizers, recruiters, church relations personnel, and other Wycliffe representatives from around the country gathered in Orlando for training on September 11-15. Carol Jean was the logistical coordinator. After months of working hard arranging housing, catering, shopping, airport shuttles, and other planning, it was great to see it come together so well. The participants had a good time together as they were updated on Wycliffe's strategies and personnel needs. After several 15-hour days for Carol Jean, we were glad for a chance to relax and recover with a week of vacation the following week.

On October 10-17, Steve and his colleagues on the *Translator's Notes* development team came together for three days to improve their skills. Then over 400 colleagues from around the world gathered in person, with hundreds more online, for the Bible Translation conference focusing on "Quality in Translation."

**Please pray...**

- For us to grow closer to God and to follow Him in all our ways.
- For more people to join Wycliffe to fill key roles in the Bible translation movement.

- 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.
- That the Etulo New Testament would soon be published and made available to the people.
- For God to provide all of our needs.

Thank you for being part of the ministry, through your prayers and finances, of reaching people with God's Word in the languages that best speak to their hearts.

### **Gil & Norene Zinke—Training Leaders International (TLI)**

Gil sent an update on October 14<sup>th</sup>. He gave some stories about learning different ways to peel mandarin oranges. A Japanese woman challenged him to get the skin off in one piece. When he was showing Scott how to do that, Scott said, "This is about the structure of the fruit, not your skill." Gil compared this to the teaching they do in Ethiopia. They teach the trainees to find the original author's message and intent, summarize it succinctly, apply it faithfully, and deliver it passionately.

Gil left on October 15<sup>th</sup> for nearly a month in Africa. Prayer requests are: (1) That the Holy Spirit will work in and through Americans, Mentors, Trainees and Hosts, (2) Safe travel and they will remain healthy. (3) Pray for their families while he and the other Mentors are away.



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 – 9:30 A.M. - Women's Bible Study

Wednesday – 6:00 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](http://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](mailto:east.balsam.baptist.church@gmail.com),

or contact Val Rowe at 715-268-7424 or

Joan Michaelson at 715-405-4055