

The Echoes

a Publication of



June 2020

Hovering

*Devotional Submitted by
Pastor Adam Driscoll*

*Cornerstone Christian School
Moose Jaw, SK*

*"The earth was without form and
void, and darkness was over the
face of the deep . . ."*

Doesn't this feel a little like where
we are today?

Formless – all the familiar
structures and routines seem to
have evaporated.

We were doing just fine building our sand castles on the beach, thinking we were just out of range of the waves, and then *whoosh* . . . what was well-crafted now looks like rounded mounds.

Void – It would be one thing if we were just left with all the pieces we had, but it feels like something has been taken from us. We're not just rearranging the pieces – we're *missing* some. There's an *emptiness*. A hole.

Darkness – A cloud of confusion. Questions of uncertainty. Our foresight isn't what it used to be. Darkness is disorienting, in part, because we can't get our bearings. Where are we? Where are we going?

Where is God when life is formless, void, and dark?

And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."

I love that two verses into the Bible God is giving us a picture of his presence. It's almost like *He knew* that we were going to have moments like this in our lives. Genesis 1:2 is not a picture of a failed attempt at creation in verse 1. We could hardly imagine an author presenting a key concept in the second sentence of a book. Yet, God provides an insight foreshadowing the story ahead. Abraham in his waiting, Joseph in jail, the exodus, the wilderness, the exile . . .

I admit, I missed it for years . . . and still need to be reminded that there is an answer to the question, "Where is God?" when our entire world seems in disarray.

Hovering. God's presence is nearby. His Spirit is active and present and ready to bring shape to the formlessness, speak creation into the void, and bring light into the darkness. He is creator God, Elohim, *who speaks something from nothing.*

This is a much more hopeful and powerful promise than we've been conditioned to believe. We so often ask the question, "What is to be gained out of this? What is to be learned from this?" This keeps our focus on the situation. Do we see how futile this is? We're looking at a *formless, empty, darkness trying to get something from it.* No wonder we get frustrated and often disappointed.

God doesn't speak "out of" these things. *He speaks and creates into them.* He first calls out, "Let there be light . . . and follows to bring growth, and a world *teeming with life.* That is our prayer.

Instead of asking God to help us learn from this, let us pray: *God create in this.*

"Hovering Creator God, I give you my emptiness, my formlessness, and my darkness. Instead of searching these things for meaning, help me seek your creative, redeeming work. Thank you that you are God who speaks in and are not limited by what is or what is not. Amen."



With sadness, we regret to announce
that there will be

No Family Camp

at Elbow Lutheran Bible Camp this summer. National and Provincial Health Authorities have implemented regulations for camps, kitchen facilities, play structures and accommodations that limit their allowable usage. All of the regulations limit gathering sizes for unrelated households.

As camp is a very social area that requires numerous communities to operate, the Board agrees that there is no possible way the facility can be opened this season.

This was to be a celebration year as well for the Elbow Lutheran Bible Camp Association – 75 years! This achievement will be celebrated next year during camp week: July 3rd-10th, 2021.

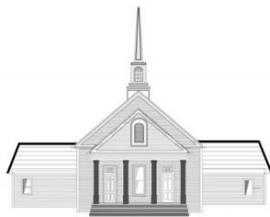




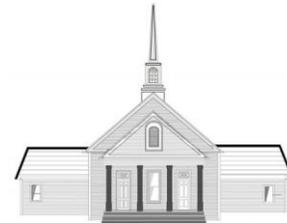
Congregational Submissions



Elbow Lutheran Bible Camp (ELBC) is supported by local Christian churches, numerous members and volunteers. Throughout this newsletter, you will find summaries from four of these churches regarding their parish activities since the last edition of *The Echoes* was sent out, in March 2020.



Bethlehem Lutheran Church Outlook, SK



Submitted by Bev Berntson

“...but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

Isaiah 40:31 (New International Version)

Not only will we renew our strength but we will receive many other benefits. We will make new friendships, our mental health will flourish, our friends and family will see the change in you and many more good things will come out of our works. Praise God!

In these very tumultuous times it is so easy to become complacent. We are so blessed at Bethlehem to have many people who take on God’s work with joy and thanksgiving.

In February we had our general meeting and had many step forward to take positions:

President	Leslie Hicks	Trustees	Ken Haugen
Vice Pres.	Heather Elliott		Mike Perry
Secretary	Janet Gross		Lorne Hovdestad
Treasurer	Shawn Follick	Education	Janice Bruynooghe
Deacons	Tia Woudwijk	Committee	Krystal LeBlanc
	Greg Reddekopp		Mario Karppinen
	Kirk Friggstad		

Leslie Hicks retired from putting out *The Proclaimer*. We thank her for her many years of doing this. Darcie Carlson has agreed to take it over and we are so thankful for this.

At the end of March, we said, “Goodbye” to Amy Reddekopp as Church Secretary and, “Hello” to Shelley Luedtke who has stepped back into the position.

Thanks be to God for all of these willing servants who have and will continue to do His work in whatever way they are able! We have so many who make all of the jobs lighter.

As you all know, the middle of March came upon us all like a bolt of lightning. How life has changed! We at Bethlehem have been very fortunate in that we have been able to continue with worship and most other activities. We have service every Sunday morning and Bible Studies continue via Zoom[®] or by other means. We have now started parking lot services where people can come together in their cars, following certain restrictions, to worship.

Praise God! Even when things seem insurmountable He takes care of us. May each of our fellow congregations stay strong. WE WILL go back to normal, but it will be a new normal... and I am sure it will be better.



Bethel Lutheran Church Elbow, SK



Submitted by Ashley Starnes, Administrative Assistant

*I will listen to what God the Lord says; He promises peace to his people,
His faithful servants – but let them not turn to folly.
Surely His salvation is near those who fear Him, that His glory may dwell in our land.
Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.
Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven.
The Lord will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest.
Righteousness goes before Him and prepares the way for His steps.
Psalm 87:8-13*

Greetings from Bethel! We are glad we have so many ways to connect in this time of being apart, and hope that you are all doing well! In this time of uncertainty, isn't it comforting to know that there is a God who gives us good things and prepares the way for us? There is not a lot to share in the way of news from Bethel... but we are happy to share what we can!

- March 6th Bethel was invited, along with all the churches in the area, to Elbow United Church to celebrate the World Day of Prayer. This year's theme was, “Rise, Take Your Mat and Walk!”
- March 14th The men had their last Prayer Breakfast together. I'm sure they are looking forward to when they can be together again!
- March 15th This was our last time worshipping together in the church building. There were few of us, but we enjoyed being together.

Throughout the winter, several Bible Studies as well as Confirmation Classes were held. We are fortunate that Pastor Dave Hesje is still having Bible Study on Facebook™ as well as continuing with Confirmation in a different way.

Pastor Dave is continuing to share a message each Sunday via Facebook™. Anyone is very welcome to look us up on Facebook™ as well as visit our website: bethelbow.church. We have so appreciated Pastor Dave sharing God's Word with us. No matter what is happening in our world God's Word is always constant!

Let's remember to pray for our leadership. We may not agree with all that they decide, but God is still on His throne and we can trust Him!

Please pray for those who are ill, lonely, grieving or struggling in any way. May God be their comfort and guide.

I have been reading through the Psalms during this time. I thought I would share a few that have been a great comfort to me and hope they will comfort you as well.

God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear... Psalm 46:1 and 2a

I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever. I will praise You forever because You have done it; And in the presence of Your saints I will wait on Your name, for it is good. Psalm 52: 8,9

Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me? Psalm 56:3,4

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trust in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by. Psalm 57:1

My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him, He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved. Psalm 62: 5,6

You crown the year with Your goodness and Your paths drip with abundance. Psalm 65:11

But I will hope continually, and will praise You yet more and more. Psalm 71:14

So we, Your people and sheep of Your pasture will give you thanks forever; We will show forth Your praise to all generations. Psalm 79:13

We will get through this time with God's help! May God bless you abundantly.





The Elbow Lutheran Bible Camp has a website:

<http://elbowlutheranbiblecamp.com>

Please visit often to learn more about the camp and see updates!

Who are your Bible Camp Board Members?



There are four main churches that support and run our Bible Camp. Listed, by church, are the current members of the Camp Board:

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Hawarden, SK**
Grant Lee (President)
Neil Haaland

**Skudesnes Lutheran Church
Loreburn, SK**
Ron Savidan

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Outlook, SK**
Rob LeBanc
Daryl Olson
Pastor Mac de Waal

**Bethel Lutheran Church
Elbow, SK**
Dale Hundebly
Rob Peterman
Pastor Dave Hesje

Thanks to all of you for your servant leadership!



From the Editor

We want to hear from YOU! If you have any comments, questions, suggestions, or submissions for future issues of *The Echoes*, please email them to Dena (Hundebly) Michaelis at:

jeffdena@xplornet.com

Thank you!



Our next Family Bible Camp Week runs from **July 3 - 10, 2021.**

We want to see you there!

**Skudesnes
Evangelical**



**Lutheran
Church**

Loreburn, SK

Submitted by Maxine Follick

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened,
and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.
Joshua 1: 9*

Greetings from Skudesnes. In these unprecedented days of uncertainty, fear and a seemingly unending stream of bad news, the time has come for us to fully embrace and believe this verse from Joshua where God is lifting Joshua up and encouraging him in all he is going to do. More than ever, we need to hold fast to God's promises that He will give us the strength and courage to face difficult times and that He will never leave our side.

Our church services (along with the rest of the world) came to a sudden halt on March 15th! Our ever resourceful Pastor Sonje (Finnestad) stepped in immediately, and is posting the Sunday service on YouTube™ so that we can hear and read along with the Sunday readings, say the Apostles' Creed and Lord's Prayer with her, and listen to her encouraging sermons. "Thank you" goes out to Tracy Dieno from Davidson for playing hymns, and having the words posted so we can sing along.

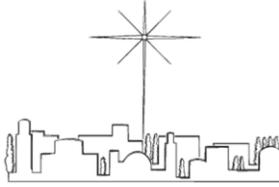
The good news is that I have not heard of any members of Skudesnes or anyone else in our community who has contracted COVID-19. We continue to pray for the health and safety of all our members, and especially for all the health care workers and others who are doing necessary jobs to serve us.

The sad news I have heard is that Bible Camp is being cancelled for this year, along with a myriad of other functions we are used to having go on in our communities during the summer months. We continue to pray for the Bible Camp Board and the difficult decisions they have to make. May they stay strongly focused on God and the plans He has for our camp.

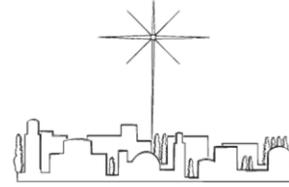
I love the hymn, "**Standing on the Promises.**" It has such good words for these days. Listen to all (20 or more!) versions on YouTube™!!

God's Blessings and Peace to you all.





Bethlehem Lutheran Church Hawarden, SK



Submitted by Linda Follick

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in His presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and He knows everything.” 1 John 3:16-20.

Since we last reported, we have been watching the video sermons from Pastor Paul Donison of Christ Church in Plano, Texas. Now that the pandemic has prevented us from meeting, we have been watching online services in our homes. We look forward to the time when we can once again meet as a congregation.

We pray especially for the shut-ins who are not able to go out, those who are mourning the loss of loved ones, and especially Linda Lee who continues to recover at home. The farmers are busy seeding in the fields after some left-over harvest that needed to come off. We thank God for the sunshine and pray for some timely rains for our crops and pastures.

Treasurer's Report



Since the Last Echoes Publication, Donations have been Given In Memory of these Loved Ones:

Brad Barton

Submitted by Linda Follick

A sincere, “Thank you!” is extended to all who are able to faithfully donate to our Bible Camp. We appreciate every donation, large or small!

Our Bible Camp has always run on free will donations. Donations are gratefully accepted in two ways:

By mail, to:

Elbow Lutheran Bible Camp
c/o Linda Follick
Box 776
Outlook, SK
SOL 2N0

Through the Bible Camp website:

Click on "Support" --> *then*

Click on the blue, "Donate Now through Canada Helps.org:" button and follow the prompts.