

The Echoes

a Publication of



March 2021

Please Note: This devotional was originally written by Pastor Dave in February of 2014. Thank you, Pastor Dave and Debbie, for allowing us to reprint it for *The Echoes*! ☺

God Cares

*Devotional Submitted by
Pastor Dave Hesje
"One-Tired Preacher"*

*Bethel Lutheran Church
Elbow, SK*

"And right now I'm so angry at God, and why He lets my Grandma, who has followed Him all her life, suffer... And why He won't come and get her?" This is a text message I received recently from a dear friend. Perhaps all of us have felt like this, or will feel like this at some point in our lives. We struggle, wondering, "Why?" I wish I could answer her "why" question, but I can't. But I do know it is right and normal to cry out, "Why?" When Jesus was beaten beyond human recognition, then nailed to a cross, and as life was slowly draining away He cried out, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" Jesus wouldn't have been fully human if He never. As God, He knew the answer; He had to go through this unbearable pain for a far greater good, the salvation of the world! So we cry out, "Why," knowing there are some questions that only God knows the answer to, and He – for our good – hasn't told us the answer. By faith we rest in that, knowing God is in control and He knows exactly what He is doing and why. Faith is not understanding. If we understood we wouldn't need faith. Faith is trusting God when we don't understand.

When the bottom is falling out of our world we tend to make it worse by dwelling on what we don't know, and will not know until heaven. Instead, we should focus on what we do know. We know God cares! "*Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.*" (1 Peter 5:7) The Greek word translated "cares" means, "He is interested in you, concerned for you, or it matters to Him." So we know God hasn't forgotten about my good friend or her Grandma because He is concerned about every aspect of our lives. Right now there is nothing that matters more to my friend than the suffering of her Grandma and I know there is also nothing more important to God. It matters to Him; God cares!

When I was my friend's Pastor, the parish gave me a picture of Jesus. They chose this picture of Jesus because of some very difficult times Deb and I went through as their Pastor. It is perhaps the most comforting picture of Jesus I have ever seen. The sky is ominous and Jesus is sitting on the ground, all alone, on the edge of a barren rocky mountain. His arms are clasped around his knees and His head is drooping down. There is no joy on His face but rather a look of pain and sorrow – a dejected look that says, "I have nothing to live for." The picture is called, "In the Wilderness." The Bible tells us that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. When He had fasted for forty days and forty nights the tempter came to Him. After forty days of no food, and being tempted by the devil, Jesus was worn ragged, tired of the struggle, the pain and suffering, and perhaps asking the, "Why" question. At the bottom of this picture is a verse: *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin."* (Hebrews 4:15) This picture hangs on my wall directly in front of my desk. My computer is right in the middle of this large picture. Every day I am reminded that Jesus knows my pain and suffering, and that He sympathizes with me. God cares. The Greek word for "sympathize" could have been translated, "to have compassion for," so God knows our pain and suffering and He has compassion for us. God cares! The fact that Jesus cares doesn't remove my pain and suffering, or answer the "Why" question – nor will it for my good friend – but I find it extremely comforting to know Jesus has been there. He knows pain, rejection and suffering and so He can relate to ours. Most of all I love knowing that in my tough times, God cares! When I suffer, it also gives me greater appreciation and sympathy for how much Jesus suffered for me. I don't know what it is, but I take comfort in your Grandma's suffering, that for hers as well there is a greater good.

God cares so much, that right now He is preparing a mansion for my friend's Grandma in heaven. The final touches are being added, it will soon be ready, and when it is, Jesus is coming for your Grandma. When Maxine sees her mansion she will confirm that it was worth waiting for, that there was a greater good, and that God cares!

*"The LORD is good, a refuge in
times of trouble.
He cares for those who trust in Him."
Nahum 1:7*



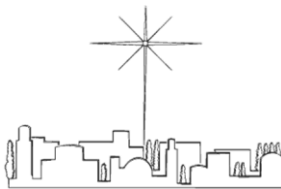
In His Grip, Pastor Dave



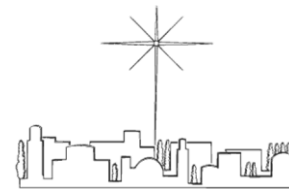
Congregational Submissions



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



Bethlehem Lutheran Church Hawarden, SK



Submitted by Linda Follick

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation for the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through Him you believe in God who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him and so your faith and hope are in God.

1 Peter 1:18-21

As we now turn our thoughts to the Easter season we are so thankful for the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross for our sins. What a blessing that is for us! Through this COVID time we need to remember that God is going through this with us and we need not live in fear. We have been blessed and thankful to continue to hold Sunday services. Pastor Adam Driscoll and Pastor Daryl Olson have been leading our services recently. We truly appreciate the way that they minister to us. In adult Sunday School classes, we are watching videos entitled, "That the World May Know" by Ray Vander Laan (Website: <https://www.thatttheworldmayknow.com/>). Discussion follows each video.

Our sympathies and prayers go out to the Sundby / Blosky families on the passing of Stephen on December 4th. He is survived by his wife Carren, their sons Eric (Nicole), Dylan and Jayden, parents Ray and Edith Blosky, mother-in-law Sylvia Sundby, and several Blosky / Sundby siblings.

Pastor Adam came for our Candlelight Service on December 23rd. The offering taken up that evening went to Ends of the Earth Couriers for Christ (EECC Website: <http://eecchrist.com>) This is Pastor Al Pinno's ministry. The Lutheran Church Women (LCW) went to the Long Term Care ward at the Outlook Health Center on Christmas morning. The ladies sang for the residents and read the Christmas Story. It didn't sound like the carolling that we usually do together, but they seemed to really enjoy it and it was wonderful to see their smiling faces. Restrictions required us to be in the entryway using a microphone, which sent sound into the dining hall. Christmas was certainly different for everyone this year with the restricted gatherings, but large or small we could still celebrate the birth of Jesus on our own.

Tate Vermette is now going to the Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute (LCBI) in Outlook, SK. (LCBI Website: <https://lcbi.sk.ca>) Tate is attending Grade 9, joining Cassidy Haaland in Grade 10 and Cadence Haaland in Grade 12. We need to remember our youth in our prayers. We had to cancel three different services this winter due to the cold and snowy conditions. The LCW has continued to meet monthly and go through lessons from the "Don't Follow Your Feelings" series. This is a Bible study written by Linda Korhonen. (A description of this study is available on the following website: <https://www.afic.org/women/resources/bible-studies>)

We wish God's blessing on Roy Olson who turned 95 years young on February 14th! He was able to go to his sister Audrey's to celebrate his special day. He has been isolating in his condo in Saskatoon.

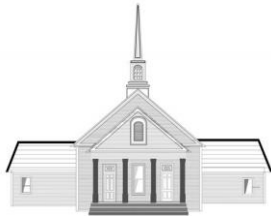
Prayer Requests: We continue to remember our seniors who are in isolation. We pray God's blessings on them for good health and also that they would feel His presence with them at all times. We also remember Tre Archibald and his family as they seek medical treatment.



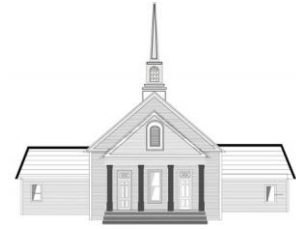
Shelley Luedtke is our newest regular contributor to **The Echoes!** We thank Bev Berntson for her years of faithful service in reporting the goings-on at Bethlehem



Lutheran Church in Outlook. Now, Shelley will be taking the reins going forward. Shelley Luedtke is married to Delwyn and they are the parents of two girls; Vandana, who is in the Philippines studying Nursing, and Madalina who is working and living at home, hopeful she can pursue her educational plans that have been put on hold because of the pandemic. Shelley spends her mornings working as the Administrative Assistant at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Outlook, and her afternoons at The Outlook, writing columns and articles, and running the newspaper's front office.



Bethlehem Lutheran Church Outlook, SK



Submitted by Shelley Luedtke

Since March 22, 2020 we have been live streaming worship services from Bethlehem at bethlehemoutlook.com. It has been wonderful getting cards and emails from people in communities far away who say they have been joining us for worship, along with our own congregation.

During the weeks of Advent, people were encouraged to send in pictures which were scrolled prior to the start of the service. Thanks to different themes each week, we got to see beautiful and unique Advent wreaths, Nativity scenes, and Christmas decorations. At a time when we aren't visiting in each other's homes, it was a wonderful glimpse into many different Christmas celebrations.

On Christmas Eve we held a live stream candlelight service and provided luminaries to each of our families, so that at the completion of the service the luminaries could be set outside to show that Jesus is the Light of the world. On Christmas Day, we had a service of music and message featuring many members of the congregation who submitted videos of musical performances and Scripture readings and prayers—several in different languages.

Prior to Christmas, our Sunday School prepared a concert that was pre-recorded and presented on Zoom. It was wonderful seeing the faces of the children and hearing them proclaim the good news of Christmas. We even had some grandparents join the Zoom concert from the east coast!

Confirmation classes, Bible studies, Discipleship groups, Youth group, Young Adults and Sunday School have been able to keep meeting at various times throughout the year either in-person, by video conference, or a combination of the two. It has required some creativity and flexibility to be sure, but we are thankful for the ways in which we can stay connected.

During Lent we will be holding two in-person services each Wednesday; one at noon and one at 7:00 pm. Some men in our congregation will be presenting monologues from a key figure in Holy Week, so we are looking forward to that as we focus on the saving work of the Cross of Christ.

*Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour,
and my hope is in you all day long. Psalm 25:5*



The Elbow Lutheran Bible Camp has a website:

<http://elbowlutheranbiblecamp.com>

Please visit often to learn more about the camp and see updates for 2021!

Looking Ahead...

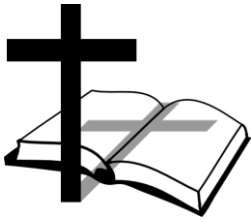
A decorative banner consisting of a string of alternating red and green triangular pennants, tied with light blue bows at each end.

Our Bible Camp Board met on February 16th to discuss possibilities for this year's camp. There are so many "unknowns" going into the summer! IF we are able to hold camp, it will most likely be in a different format than we are used to... Please be patient! We will communicate more details as they become available. Thank you!



Camp Clean-up

We need your help in June! It's important that we take care of our camp no matter what happens this summer. Clean-up, maintenance, or new projects... it all matters! Please stay tuned for specific dates to come. Many hands make light work!



Bethel Lutheran Church Elbow, SK



Submitted by Ashley Starnes, Administrative Assistant

*Let all that you do be done in love.
1 Corinthians 16:14*

The Bible verse above is a good reminder during these difficult times. Everywhere we look there are different opinions, thoughts, and feelings about what is going on in our world. It is important to see what Scripture has to say about these things and even when the specific topic is not addressed, we can point people to Jesus by doing our best to answer in love.

Bethel has been blessed to be able to continue to have services with 30 people attending. How good it is to fellowship together! The last few months have definitely not been as busy as usual, but we had a few things going on!

December:

- 5th Congratulations to Doug and Carol Wankel on their marriage! They were married at Bethel with a small reception in Saskatoon to follow.
- 6th This was the day we had the opportunity to show our love through a love offering to Pastor Dave and Debbie for serving our congregation!
- 6th This was also a special Sunday, as the Sunday School led the whole service through songs, recitations, and a play. Although we were disappointed with the restriction in numbers that came into effect the week before the performance, God had everything well in hand as all the families, those helping, and Pastor Dave and Debbie brought our numbers to exactly 30! We were able to share the message of Jesus' birth with others through Facebook™ live stream. The morning was a blessing!
- 20th This was the Sunday that our Christmas Cheer boxes were delivered. Although we could not share home baking, several businesses in our community were called on for safely prepared treats and goods. A special thanks to June Evans and Corry Downie for organizing and putting this plan



- together as well as to all those who delivered the packages!
- 24th We were able to have our Christmas Eve service as usual, just with a few less people. It was a lovely time of worship and celebration!
 - Bethel again had our Giving Tree up for people to donate warm clothing to be delivered to Interval House in Saskatoon. This is a transition home for women and children escaping domestic violence. Thanks to all those who donated!
 - Larry Rinholm spearheaded our “Bethel Odd Job Squad.” This is a voluntary service to help those who find they have jobs they need assistance with. What a special way to be God’s hands and feet to those who may have a tangible need we can help with!

January:

- 19th The Congregational Annual Meeting was held. It was a hybrid meeting with some social distancing in person with others attending by Zoom. All in all, it was a very successful meeting!
- 28th The ladies Women’s Mission Fellowship (WMF) held their Annual Meeting in the same hybrid manner as the congregational one. A special thanks to these ladies for all they organize for our congregation!
- 31st Pastor Dave concluded his messages on the book of Romans. We had been studying and learning from Romans since the summer and so appreciate Pastor Dave leading us through this!

February:

- 7th Debbie Hesje was celebrating a special birthday on this day, so she and Pastor Dave had the weekend off! In their absence, we were blessed to have Wes Olmstead join us to bring the message. As always, we learned a lot and appreciated him being with us. This particular time, we appreciated him even more than usual as he drove in such cold conditions!

We have seen many answers to prayer over the last few months and we are so thankful to our faithful Father! We also know that many are struggling and hurting. May we continue to pray and ask God to intervene and bring comfort and healing.

*May the God of hope
fill you with all joy
and peace as you trust in him,
so that you may overflow with hope
by the power of the
Holy Spirit.*
Romans 15:13

Treasurer's Report

Submitted by Linda Follick

Thank you for the many donations that continue to come in! Since our last report, **memorial gifts** have been given in memory of Steve Blosky, Kevin Dyrland and George Cooper. A gift was also given **in honour** of Roy Olson's 95th Birthday.

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
S0L 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.



"A joyful heart is good medicine..."
Proverbs 17:22a

The Holy Family

A Sunday School teacher asked her class why Joseph and Mary took Jesus with them to Jerusalem. A small child replied, "They couldn't get a baby-sitter."

To Church

A little girl, dressed in her Sunday best, was running as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Bible class. As she ran she prayed, "Dear Lord, please don't let me be late! Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!"

While she was running and praying, she tripped on a curb and fell, getting her clothes dirty and tearing her dress. She got up, brushed herself off, and started running again!

As she ran she once again began to pray, "Dear Lord, please don't let me be late... But please don't shove me either!"

Source: <https://ministry-to-children.com/funny-church-jokes/>