

The Echoes

a Publication of



December 2022

Does GOD Let Bad Things Happen to Good People at Christmas Time?

Pastor Al Pinno

"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people..."

A SAVIOR has been born to you: He is CHRIST the LORD."

Luke 2:10-11

Praise the LORD He is giving us another Advent and Christmas to celebrate His first coming 2000 years ago and the promise of His soon return. Amen, come LORD JESUS.

All over the world His people will be celebrating and worshipping our LORD JESUS and thousands will be coming to know Him as their SAVIOUR during these coming weeks. Our hearts are filled with overflowing joy and praise as we contemplate His amazing goodness and mercy to us. Tragically, however, there is also much evil and suffering that will come into many people's lives during these same weeks. Temptations to sin of every kind, accidents, diseases, wars, etc. will impact many people in the upcoming days, including many of our own lives. When that happens, many will ask "Why does GOD allow bad things to happen to good people?" Some will go beyond the question to accuse GOD of being unjust and responsible for all of this evil. Instead of celebration there will be mourning and anger.

Does GOD let bad things happen to good people? Who are the "good people"? The concept of "good people" comes straight from the false teachings of secular humanists, who believe that all people are basically good. However, as GOD'S SPIRIT teaches us in His Word, the exact opposite is true. "There is no one righteous, not even one...there is no one who does good, not even one" (Romans 3: 10,12). JESUS, GOD'S SON said: "No one is good-- except GOD alone" (Mark 10:18). If we were like GOD and could read everyone's mind and know what everyone says and does in their private lives, we would more fully realize the truth that, "there is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of GOD" (Romans 3:23). If we think that we are good, without sin, "we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

What are "bad things"? There is a story that goes something like this: One day a man gave his son a horse. The man's neighbours said, "That's sure good news about your son getting his own horse." The man answered, "Good news? Bad news? Who knows?" The next day when his son was out riding, the horse threw him and broke his leg. The neighbours said: "That's sure bad news about your son's broken leg." "Good news? Bad news? Who knows?" he replied. A few days later war broke out and all of the healthy

young men went off to war. The neighbours said: "That's sure good news that your son didn't have to go to war." Good news? Bad news? Who knows?

Is suffering bad? Is death bad? The LORD wept over suffering and death in our world (Genesis 6:6; Luke 19:41; John 11:35). Nevertheless, He allows us, all of us, without exception, to suffer and die for His good eternal purpose for our life. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of GOD is eternal life in CHRIST JESUS our LORD." (Romans 6:23). Praise Him that in His mercy and grace through JESUS, to everyone who turns to GOD in repentance and faith, often in times of suffering and need, the LORD promises forgiveness for our sin and "that everything will work out for the good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).


For all of us who trust in the LORD: "we rejoice in the hope of the glory of GOD. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because GOD has poured out His love into our hearts by the HOLY SPIRIT, Whom He has given us." Romans 5:2-5

For the individual who truly believes in and loves the LORD JESUS, the sting of suffering and death is only a border crossing from the sufferings of this life to the experience of the abundant eternal life in the glorious presence of GOD, our Creator and Saviour.

There really is only one true example in all of history of something bad happening to someone who is truly good in every way. His name is JESUS CHRIST! GOD turned His SON'S suffering and death at the hands of our fallen degenerate human race into forgiveness, peace, and eternal life for all who believe.

The only really good news of great joy in our world is that JESUS was willing to enter our world and sacrifice His own body and blood on the cross in order to forgive every sinner who repents and trusts in His amazing grace. One day very soon He is coming back for all who love Him to take us into our eternal home where there is no more sin, evil, suffering and death, but only the experience of abundant life in His glorious presence. As the song says: "Rejoice! and again I say Rejoice!"

The LORD'S blessings of His joy and peace this Christmas and new year of 2023.



Mark your calendars now
for the annual Bible Camp
spring clean-up:
June 9-10, 2023
Many hands make light work!



Summer 2023: Head Cook and Kitchen Crew

We Are in need of a new head cook and kitchen volunteers to take the reins this coming summer! This is a vital part of our camp's ministry.

Interested, but not sure what this involves? No problem! Our former cooks (Katie, Carol, and Linda) have graciously offered their assistance with grocery shopping, meal planning, etc.

**For more information, please contact
Grant Lee at (306) 222-2776. Thank you!**



Elbow Lutheran Bible Camp is
looking for a

CARETAKER

June through August, 2022
(Starting Date is Flexible)

Duties include (but are not limited to) janitorial tasks, garbage removal, grass mowing, basic maintenance, and painting as required.

Salary: \$3,000 + per Month
Contract Work - No Deductions
Call Grant Lee: (306) 222-2776



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 September 2022.

Skudesnes Lutheran Church Loreburn, SK

Submitted by Joan Soggie

Greetings from Skudesnes Lutheran Church!

Harvest is finished, the season of gathering in the fruits of the earth is passed, and our world is swathed in white. After a dry year, we welcome the snow, just as we were grateful for the fine fall days.

Earlier this fall we were reminded to be grateful for something we often take for granted: the peace and safety of our communities. A calm September weekend was shattered by alerts, as everyone across the province was warned to lock doors, and those at Weldon and the James Smith Cree Nation were told to “shelter in place.” The perpetrator of a series of knife attacks was at large. One of the victims was a former parishioner of Pastor Sonje, Wes Peterson, “a good, kind man.” Pastor Sonje Finnestad touched our hearts that Sunday (as she so often does) with her message, reminding us that such terrible days are a small part of a much larger story – a story of exploitation and injustice – and that even during this tragedy there were many acts of love and forgiveness. There is no place so dark that God’s love does not reach.

As individuals or a congregation, we are blessed to be able to help Pakistan flood victims or Haitian refugees or those in need in our own country.

The golden days of October brought Thanksgiving and many young folks “home” to share a joyous celebration of good food, fall colors, garden produce, and family.

On October 30th there was no service at Skudesnes as we joined worship with Redeemer in Davidson. The following Sunday, November 6th, morning worship had to be cancelled as winter made a sneaky early entrance with freezing rain and snow, bringing treacherous driving conditions.

Pastor Sonje took the final week of her holidays in late November, and in her absence, Maxine Follick brought the message on November 20th – the last Sunday

before Advent, Christ the King Sunday. Maxine led us on a journey looking back on how God has led and guided us all year.

On November 13th, "Take Five" (Carol Dieno, Doris Stamnes, Donna Russel, and Alf Richardson) presented an evening of Gospel music at Redeemer. On November 20th, Larry Krause presented a cowboy campfire evening of gospel and Christmas music at Skudesnes, with the offering going to the local food bank.

Skudesnes Church council met on October 27th, and again on November 21st. Often the questions dealt with are earthly (e.g. how to get the cistern cleaned out?) but the answers are invariably divine. We thank God for those willing hands, clever minds, and kind hearts that keep our congregation going.

Condolences to the families and friends of former members of our community who in recent weeks have gone to their eternal home: June Stronski, Les McLean, Marg Langager, Doreen Friesen, Reuben Bahnman, Martin Christensen, Myrna Kyle, Audrey Langager. God bless their memory.

Every month or two the decorations and cloths in the fellowship hall and sanctuary change, all by themselves. (At least, I've never seen who does it. Maybe - an angel?) The pastels of summer give way to golden autumn tones and then suddenly, there they are - bright reds and deep greens, poinsettias, and Christmas trees. Although the shortest day of the year is approaching, Christmas will soon be here.



Advent is another reminder that no time is so dark that God's love does not shine. Thanks be to God!

Do YOU know a great speaker, teacher, or leader??

We need YOUR help!

Planning for next summer's camp begins NOW! If you have a recommendation for a Speaker, Bible Teacher or Youth leader, please notify the Bible Camp Board by contacting your local Bible Camp Board Member or Grant Lee at (306) 222-2776. Thank you!





Bethlehem Lutheran Church Outlook, SK



Submitted by Shelley Luedtke

Greetings from Bethlehem Lutheran in Outlook!

We are very pleased to have Seth Hansen with us, a young man from Alberta who began an eight month internship with us in September. The internship is through CLBI (Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute) in Camrose. It has been good to have him in our midst as he discerns a call to ministry.

Our church continues with its focus on discipleship and we had new groups starting up this fall. What a wonderful gift it is to walk alongside each other as we grow in faith.

Every Tuesday morning we gather at 9 am for a time of prayer. We pray for needs here and around the world and it has become a very special time.

On September 18th, we had a delightful day enjoying a turkey dinner and all the trimmings. Heather Elliott made all the arrangements and all we were asked to do was bring salads and desserts. We had a marvellous time enjoying a fantastic meal together. Heather wanted to include as many of our church family as possible so she made arrangements to have meals packaged up and delivered to shut-ins to let them know they are thought about and cared for.

On Reformation Sunday we were treated to a play called "Luther's Pigtailed" presented by four members of our congregation under the direction of Lila de Waal. It was an entertaining and eye-opening look at Martin Luther, his work and sacrifice, and his wife Katie. It was a delightful addition to our service.



trick or treating to a bunch of vehicle

That afternoon, our Sunday School organized a Fall Family event that included wagon rides (Mark Gross brought his horses and wagon), a bonfire, s'mores, games, a bouncy castle and snacks. It was a great time of visiting and fun.

On October 31st, our church once again hosted Trunk or Treat. There were about 112 trick or treat-ers who came to the church parking lot, went

trunks that were decorated, and also received invitations to Sunday School. Good conversation was happening throughout the event so we give thanks for this great outreach.

Six and a half years ago our church sponsored a refugee family from Eritrea and we have watched them build a life here in Canada. The girls are now living in Saskatoon pursuing education and employment. In October they were sworn in as Canadian citizens. We celebrate that news with them! As well, their father received his permanent resident's card renewal and that is good news, too!

We rejoiced when word came that our next refugee family has an arrival date! At the beginning of December we will welcome these precious people into our midst. The committee (that has already been doing a great deal of work) kicked into high gear and started moving furniture into one of the places where they will be living. We recognize God's hand in the timing of all this and praise Him for all He has done and will continue to do.



Our Sunday School is preparing for their Christmas Concert which will be held Sunday, December 18th at 7:00 pm.

We will be having a "Longest Night" Service on December 21st at 7:00 p.m. Our Christmas Eve Candlelight service will be at 7:00 p.m. On Christmas Day we will have two services; one at 9:00 a.m. and one at 11:15 a.m. We welcome anyone who may not have a service in their area to please come join us.

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow.
Merry Christmas!



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 (Hundeby) Michaelis at:

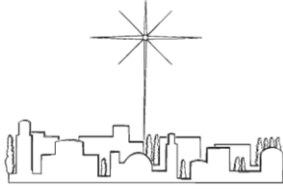
jeffdena@xplornet.com

Thank you!

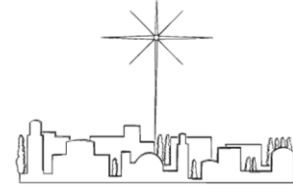


Our next Family Bible Camp Week runs from **July 1 - 7, 2023.**

We want to see you there!



Bethlehem Lutheran Church Hawarden, SK



Submitted by Linda Follick

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this."
Isaiah 9:6-7

We have been blessed to have Pastors Daryl Olson, Adam Driscoll, Al Pinno, Paul Donison (sermon videos), and Arlin Olson speak to us over the summer at our morning worship services.

Our LCW (Lutheran Church Women's Group) has met monthly at the church using our Bible Study entitled, "Behold Our God."



It was good to have Pastor Adam share pictures from his trip to Romania in the summer, and Pastor Daryl shared pictures with us on his trip to Israel. On Thanksgiving Sunday, Pastor Al led our service and all enjoyed a roast beef dinner following the service.

The Johnson family gathered in the cemetery in October to intern the ashes of Gloria Olson (Johnson) – daughter of Luther and Eunice.

As we enter into this Advent season let us take time to reflect on all that God has done for us, sending his Son to be born in a stable, to live a sinless life on earth and to die on the cross for our sins. What great love that is! And as we gather with friends and family at Christmas let's not forget the real reason we are celebrating – JESUS!!

We continue to pray for Roy Olson and Sylvia Sundby who are undergoing medical tests, and for Tre Archibald who is having monthly treatments.

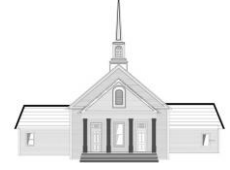


**Need to reserve a cabin for camp
next summer?**

Contact Grant Lee at (306) 222-2776.



Bethel Lutheran Church, Elbow, SK



Submitted by Ashley Stamnes, Administrative Assistant

*But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord;
I will wait for the God of my salvation.
My God will hear me.
Micah 7:7*

As we approach Advent, we are anticipating the wonderful time that we remember His birth as well as anticipating what is ahead...His glorious return. May He find us ready!

It has been good to get back to the routine of the fall!

September:

- 11th Both adult and children's Sunday School began. Our service time also changed back to 10:30
- 14th Ladies Wednesday morning Bible study resumed. They have spent the fall studying John's Gospel
- 21st Wednesday evening Bible study resumed.
- 22nd There was a regular WMF (Women's Mission Fellowship) meeting.

October:

- 2nd In anticipation of our refugee family arriving, Arlin and Ruth Olson led an orientation meeting. They were able to share a wonderful video and some great questions and discussions were had (there was another meeting on the 16th for those who could not make this one)
- 3rd There was a regular WMF meeting
- 16th The children began their Christmas play practice. We have more children this year than we have had in quite some time! So exciting and such a blessing!
- 23rd This was Membership Sunday. We had two congregants, Brad Norrish and Doris Beaton, become members. We are so thankful for both of them!



November:

- 10th There was a Samaritan's Purse Christmas Box Packing Party!! This was originally scheduled for the 7th, but due to the snow storm, it was moved. What a fun way to bless others!

- 13th This was the last day to bring Operation Christmas Child boxes. Pastor Dave prayed for all the boxes that were dropped off. May each and every one bring the gospel message to a special child!

We ask for prayer for all those who are grieving and hurting.

We praise God for His faithfulness in our times of trouble and of joy.

We ask for prayer as we welcome our refugee family into our community. May their adjustment be as smooth as possible and may they feel our love and God's love.

Please also pray for our upcoming Christmas Play. May many hearts be touched with the message of God's love for us!



Treasurer's Report

Thank you so much for all the donations that have come in. Without them we could not continue with the general upkeep of the camp or any improvements that need to be made.

Thank you to those who are sending their donations to camp using our on-line banking by sending e-transfers to lindafollick@hotmail.com.

I am still getting a few donations through Canada Helps. However, if you use a stamp and mail a cheque to the following address, you will get a receipt for the full amount instead of having 3.5% taken off your donation.

Elbow Lutheran Bible Camp
Box 776
Outlook, SK S0L 2N0

Memorial Gifts received since the last issue of *The Echoes*:

Muriel Akre
Trudee Gaber
Martin Christensen

Einar Rinholm
Margaret Langager
Tony Kubashek