



The Elim Waterfall

April - June 2025

From the Pastor:

*"Deck the harrs with bows of horry, Fa ra ra ra ra ra ra ra ra!
'Tis the season to be jorry, Fa ra ra ra ra ra ra ra ra!"*

I love that scene in *"A Christmas Story!"* They're in a Chinese restaurant on Christmas night because some dogs stole their turkey! And there they sit being serenaded by three Chinese waiters struggling to pronounce the letter 'L.' Not exactly politically correct, but funny, nevertheless.

**At the first sight of spring, the
state flower can be seen
blooming on every roadside.**



And yes, in case you're wondering, I realize that this is the month of April, not December. The Christmas season has passed. Pothole season has arrived! So, I propose changing the lyrics of that song to this, *"Wreck the cars with lots of potholes! Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la. 'Tis' the season to be jostled, fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!"* Catchy, don't you think? Why just the other day, my little red Focus hit a pothole so deep...I know I wasn't in China, but I could see it from there! By the way...do you know what Scooby Do said when the Mystery Van hit a pothole? **"Rut Road!"**

Okay, enough with the jokes! Because according to AAA, the average cost for pothole-related vehicle damage is \$406. Nothing funny about that, is there? Let the truth be known. Hitting a pothole is more than just a nuisance. It poses a danger...a danger to your vehicle and a danger to you! Hit a pothole and you might find yourself derailed on the side of the road, or perhaps even worse!

But then, to make our journey through this world even more interesting, we also have those potholes we face in life. Like a pothole in the street, we just didn't see it coming! A physical pothole. A financial pothole. A relationship pothole. Those doggone potholes! They come in all shapes and sizes! And while some can be avoided, others can't.

But here's the thing! Hitting a pothole doesn't have to stop us. It can start us. It doesn't have to damage us. It can strengthen us. Think about the Apostle Paul! How many potholes did he hit in his life? He even lists some of them in his second letter to the Corinthians, chapter 11, verses 23-27. He says, *"I have been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods,*

once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea...I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea...I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked." 2 Corinthians 11:23-27.

Wow! That's a lot of potholes! But does Paul stop traveling? Does Paul take an early retirement? No, Paul just takes a licking and keeps on ticking! Because he sees those potholes, his suffering, as the means by which God grows his faith. In the very chapter (2 Corinthians 12:8-10), Paul tells us what he's learned from hitting potholes. *"God's grace is sufficient for me, for His power is made perfect in my weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."*

I've been a member of AAA since 1989. I have used and appreciated their services many times. But when it comes to life's pothole, I highly recommend to you the services of GHH. GHH not only helps you AFTER you hit a pothole, it helps you AVOID a pothole. GHH (God's Heavenly Hotline) is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And you will find GHH to be helpful in taking care of all your needs-physical, relational, emotional, and spiritual. He's never met a pothole, He couldn't patch!

Sermon **SCHEDULE**

April 6, "Making Sense of It All"

April 13, "Making Sense of It All: Sight"

April 20, "Making Sense of It All: Touch"

April 27, "Making Sense of It All: Smell"

May 4, "Making Sense of It All: Hearing"

May 11, "Making Sense of It All: Taste"



Dear God,

We are grateful for the gift of life and for everything You provide us. Thank you for giving us the strength, courage, and wisdom to face challenges. Please help us to pray more, worry less, smile more, fret less, be thankful more, complain less, embrace more, and rush less. May we be filled with Your joy today. Lord, we appreciate all that You give us, which is more than we ask or imagine. Nothing is impossible for You. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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PRAYER



February 2025

Bundled up with hats, coats, and gloves, backpacks packed with books, pencil cases, and lunchboxes, we step out of the stairwell of our apartment building into the predawn darkness and chill of Germany in January. As parents, Chelsea and I have braced for these moments that have been looming over us for over a year: the first few weeks of our kids attending the local public school here in Hannover. Time and time again, we've asked congregations to join us in prayer for our children, that they would be able to make friends and adjust well to doing school in a new language. This is where the rubber meets the road.

We walk a couple of blocks as the traffic flows by, wait at the intersection for a tram to cross, watch for the little red man on the light to turn green. A part of me wants him to stay red, to keep the kids on our side of the street, close to the little English-speaking nest of our apartment where they feel confident, expressive, joyful, and safe. But, the light turns green, and we continue on.

As we walk, my mind drifts back to a few weeks earlier. We did our final "big move" here to Hannover just a few weeks ago, just a week before Christmas. My parents came with us to help us get settled in and to see for themselves just where their son and daughter-in-law had brought their beloved grandkids. Members of Chelsea's family followed ten days later. They each discovered a place which was very different from home, but also filled with excitingly different opportunities. We said our goodbyes to them at the end of their trips at the airport, waving at the security checkpoint.

As the kids and I continue our chilly walk to school through the dark, I realize that my anxiety for my kids' well being at school was probably the same feeling our parents felt for us. There comes a point where you have to say your goodbyes and give final hugs and trust them to God's loving hands.

As we walk, we begin to notice that we're no longer walking alone. A couple of girls and their mom march along in similar hats, coats, and backpacks a few yards ahead. A dad and his son follow along behind us. Children zoom along on scooters, shouting out greetings to their friends as they pass. Soon we find ourselves in a group of a couple dozen elementary school kids and their parents, all streaming to the school ahead.



I feel a wave of solidarity with these other moms and dads: in a few minutes, we'll all bring our children to the entrance to the school, give a squeeze and a word of encouragement, and send them off to be challenged and cheered by teachers and classmates, to wrestle their way through Deutsch and math, to navigate their way through friendships and playground politics as they each begin to discover themselves.

We get to the gate and I give them each a hug and send them on their way. As they walk through, I say a silent prayer that those teachers and kids will love them at least a fraction as much as I do. And then I turn, heading to catch the tram that will bring me to my office.

As pastors of the English-speaking RELISH community (Reformed English Language International Service of Hannover), we are a bit like teachers ourselves. Just as we entrust our children into the care of the teachers at school, brothers and sisters in Christ from abroad have been entrusted into our care. We have been given the opportunity to challenge and cheer believers from around the world who have found themselves in Hannover for a time, sent by families and communities who love them and who pray for their welfare. Chelsea and I get to walk alongside them as they wrestle with God, as they seek to follow Jesus faithfully, as they deal with the pressures of work and family and culture in a place that is often far from home. Just like our kids' teachers, we want to build these believers up, strengthening their minds and hearts so that they can not only survive in this world, but thrive as they follow the call of Jesus Christ to be salt and light.

A few hours from now, either Chelsea or I will walk back to school and gather our kids back at the schoolyard gate. And just as I pray that my kids will emerge a bit wiser, a bit kinder, a bit more confident and resilient, so I also pray for our RELISH community, that whenever they will leave us, God will have worked in their hearts to prepare them for the journeys ahead—planting fruits of the Spirit that will grow into a harvest that will bring glory to Jesus Christ over and over again.

P.S. If you would like to personally see what church planting in Europe looks like up close, we would like to invite you to attend the European Church Planting Retreat in May 2025, where participants can visit a church planting site—including with the Lampen family in Hannover—to discover the challenges and opportunities that God has provided in various places throughout Europe. Following these church plant visits, participants will come together at the Emmaus Centre in the Netherlands to discuss their experiences and to listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit as they consider how to apply their learnings in their own churches and communities. For more information, including a review of previous years' trips, please visit <https://www.europartnership.org/>.

Thank you!

Jeff and Chelsea

dates to Remember

April

- 1 - ELECTION DAY
- 2 - Lenten Supper & Service at Ebenezer
5:30 p.m.
- 6 - Communion & Benevolent Fund
Offering taken
- Deadline to turn in Baby Shower
Items to Elim
- 9 - Lenten Supper & Service at Ebenezer
5:30 p.m.
- 11 - Ogle County Health Department
Community BABY SHOWER
- 13 - PALM SUNDAY
- 17 - MAUNDY THURSDAY
Supper & Service at Ebenezer 5:30 p.m.
- 18 - GOOD FRIDAY
- 20 - EASTER BREAKFAST at Elim
Serving from 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.
- EASTER WORSHIP at 10 a.m.

May

- 11 - MOTHER'S DAY
- 26 - MEMORIAL DAY

June

- 1 - Graduation Sunday "You Do-Nut"
Service & Reception
- 17 - FATHER'S DAY



Birthdays & Anniversaries (A)



APRIL

- 2 - **Bob & Linda Alderks (A)**
- 5 - **JD Ingersoll**
- 10 - **Peggy Howe**
- 14 - **Rhett Monson**
- 18 - **Joe Somers**
- 21 - **Randy Monson**
- 25 - **Pastor Marv**
- 27 - **Rodney Hayenga**

MAY

- 3 - **Lori Bee**
- 11 - **Chris Torgeson**
- 14 - **Ada Mae Haner**
- **Glenn Hansen**
- 23 - **Jeff Monson**
- 26 - **Jeff Hayenga**

JUNE

- 15 - **Ron Hall**
- 17 - **Diane Monson**
- 19 - **John Ingersoll**
- 21 - **Randy & Diane Monson (A)**



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