

WINTER 2020/21

BIG RIVER Reel

BIG RIVER
BIBLE CAMP
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HOPE ON EARTH

BY JASON BOUCHER, DIRECTOR

I'm sitting here trying to figure out what to write. 2020 has been something else. This was the first time in my lifetime that there was no summer camp.

I attended camp as a kid, I began working at a camp when I was 15, and worked consecutive summers at camp until I was 22. I sat on a board for a few years until becoming the director at BRBC in 2004. Summer camp is in my

blood. So what do you do when camp is taken away? That is the question we've all been asking this year. What will camp look like going forward? Will there ever be camp again?

I wish I was giving you a glowing report of how many campers came to camp, where the staff was all from, and what is new and exciting, but alas, here I am trying to figure out what is going on. One

could ask where the hope is. As a believer, I know my hope is in the Lord. God is in control. God planned for 2020 when He created the world. This is not catching Him by surprise. The Lord is faithful.

We are thankful that work has been done at camp. We're thankful for the upgrades, paint jobs, and other various tasks that were done — but we know it's not the same as having camp.

God has given us ideas for how to connect with people online. If you haven't already, check out BRBC on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. We are under the name Big River Bible Camp, SK. Check out our website www.bigriverbiblecamp.ca, and please, feel free to contact us.

A highlight has been having our interns around camp and getting to spend time with them and watching them grow and mature in their walks with the Lord. That is really what this ministry is all about.

WE STILL NEED YOU. We need you to be praying for us in two ways as we prepare for 2021. What are the two ways? *First*, that camp would be normal! *Secondly*, for direction and vision for whatever is not normal. I have a few ideas but we are seeking the Lord's direction. We need you to pray for us as we look for creative ways to connect with past campers and staff. We also need you to keep supporting the camp financially. Keep on loving your neighbours and loving the Lord. ♦

A NEW JOURNEY

BRENDA THIESSEN

My name is Brenda, and my connection with BRBC started back in 1968 when I accepted Jesus as my Saviour while attending camp. As a teen, I would work summers at camp as a cabin leader or kitchen help. Then I left the camp life to get married and raise my family. My walk with God has had many ups and downs over the years as I would choose my own path instead of walking with God.

Eight years ago I decided to again volunteer as a kitchen helper at BRBC. I told Anita that she could give me almost any job but not to leave me alone to make the decisions! She is great to work with so you may want to give it a try sometime.

Last summer was different for me because I was feeling more tired, although otherwise good. When others would come to volunteer, I would slip away to rest. I just thought old age was catching up to me. I had some blood work done in March of 2019 and the doctors were monitoring it and suggested I rest more. On August 12, 2019, I had follow-up blood work, and the



next day they called me and said I needed to go for a bone marrow biopsy on the 15th. On August 16, 2019, a new journey began for me when I received a phone call from the doctor's office telling me I had Acute Myeloid Leukemia and I needed to pack a bag for a five-week hospital stay to start aggressive chemotherapy treatment. I was admitted to the hospital on the 19th of August feeling perfectly fine. I had no symptoms of any kind other than being a little more tired than usual.

My first round of chemo was for seven days and ran 24 hours a day. After that, I had four weeks of recovery as an inpatient. (My blood was at 70% cancerous when this

treatment started.) I was then sent home, but that only lasted for four days instead of the planned 14 days because I developed a full-body rash that was very itchy. I was readmitted to the hospital and the second round of chemo was started while they treated the rash. (My blood was now 30% cancerous.) At this time the doctors were hopeful that they could get the cancer to less than 5%, which was needed in order to do a stem cell transplant. So, I had seven more days of aggressive chemo, followed by four more weeks of inpatient recovery.

During this time, we had a family meeting with the doctor to explain my options. The stem cell transplant seemed to be the best option and to this point my body was handling the treatments pretty well. When the doctor left the room, I asked my family what they thought I should do. They all agreed that I needed to try the transplant option. One of my boys said, "Mom, even if it doesn't work it may help the doctors learn one more thing to help someone else." I was very impressed with his forward-thinking and the plan started to be put in place.

I was released from the hospital to have 13 days of at-home recovery during which time I had five appointments in Prince Albert and Saskatoon — so it didn't feel like a rest period! At one of those appointments, I had chemo injected into my spine. I was readmitted to the hospital on November 14 to begin a third round of chemo for six days and on the seventh day for two 45-minute full-body radiation treatments. The next day was the stem cell transplant. I had some major side effects with this third treatment, from sores in my throat so bad that I could not swallow my saliva to losing all my fingernails and toenails and all the skin off the bottom of my feet (this made walking very hard). I was not able to eat anything for 14 days because of the sores so everything was fed to me through a port.

I was released from the hospital on December 12 but was required to live in the city until the end of February because

of ongoing outpatient treatment. We had rented a small basement suite to live in.

I am so thankful to my stem cell donor. The transplant team has to find a suitable donor and they will not proceed until they find at least a six out of ten-point match. For me, they were able to find a ten out of ten-point match from an unrelated donor. Blood type is not what they match. My blood type used to be O- and now is A+. I had no idea that was even possible!

Through all of this, there were many times we could see God's plan emerge — like getting the apartment fully furnished for such a short term. The landlord was amazing and treated us like family.

The hospital staff was also so amazing and the care I received was second-to-none. Because of my immune-compromised condition, I had a private room for my whole hospital stay.

God has taught me through this to be far more patient and to live one day at a time. God has also given me unexplained peace. It's not that I have not had moments of concern or sadness, but that is short-lived and I can move on. By the time this is in print I will have had my one-year check-up which will tell the doctors if my body is producing donor cells and at what level. I am feeling really good but have almost no energy yet. I do odd jobs around the house and try to do most of the cooking and dishes. I spend time sewing and crocheting to fill my days as with COVID-19 I have to be very careful not to be out in public. Some days I really miss my kids and grandkids.

This is a small look at what my year-and-a-bit has been like.

In Revelation 21:4 it says,

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

So, I have the hope that one day this will all come to pass in God's timing.

I love my camp family and am so very thankful for them. ♦

A MOMENT WITH STAFF

A glimpse of the ministry BRBC has in the lives of staff who come and serve here.

Q: Jonathan, how long have you been coming to BRBC? A: I came when I was nine years old as a camper and that was when I accepted Jesus into my heart and I started working at camp when I turned 14.

Q: Why do you keep coming back to BRBC year after year? A: The main reason is that it was the only place I felt safe and felt loved.

Q: What are some of the different jobs you've had at camp? A: Basically everything but never the camp director. I've been a cabin leader, an LIT, dishes, maintenance and even program directed. My favourite job is cabin leading because of the relationships you can build with the campers. It's easier to see their lives change as they come back year after year when you are their cabin leader.

Q: What are you doing this season now? A: I'm going to Nipawin Bible College and enjoying the classes and relationships there. So go to Nipawin Bible College #notsponsored!

Q: How has coming to BRBC impacted your choice to go to Bible School? A: I heard about NBC in grade nine when I came to camp. Many of the leaders I



Jonathan Mirasty under attack (above), and visiting on campus at Nipawin Bible College

knew also went there, and so I thought it could help me learn more about God.

Q: What do you hope to learn at NBC? A: I chose to go to Bible school because of some of the classes, such as evangelism and apologetics. I hope it helps pull me out of my comfort zone and gives me confidence as I speak with my friends and community about God.

Q: What are your goals for next year or after NBC? A: The thought about going into ministry is there, but I'm waiting on God's direction as I look to the future. ♦





PARTNER with us in MINISTRY!



- I would love to hear what's going on at Big River Bible Camp! Please add me to your mailing list.
- I am giving a one-time gift of \$ _____.
- I intend to give a monthly donation of:
 - \$ _____ \$25 \$50 \$100 \$1000
- I would like to participate in supporting a current camp project with a donation of \$ _____ toward:
 - Installing water lines for Showerhouses General Fund

ELECTRONIC GIVING OPTIONS (including online, credit card, electronic funds transfer and email transfer) are available at www.ncem.ca/donate/ways-to-give or by calling the NCEM office, 306-764-3388.

Name _____

Address _____

City/Town _____ Prov/State _____

Postal/Zip Code _____ Email _____

Phone _____

- Please indicate if you would prefer a yearly receipt.

Cheques should be made payable to NCEM and mailed with this slip to NCEM, PO Box 3030, Prince Albert, SK, S6V 7V4. Tax-deductible receipts will be issued.

If more funds come in than are needed for designated projects, the extra funds will be used for other BRBC needs.

BIG RIVER BIBLE CAMP is a ministry of
NORTHERN CANADA EVANGELICAL MISSION



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Praise

- We are thankful for the opportunities for online and some in-person outreach.
- We praise God for the interns that He has sent to the camp.
- Praise the Lord that the Bible school in Nepal, with which the Regnault family is involved, started with 13 students this month!
- Praise God for the provision and work of placing the wiring underground and that most of the landscaping necessary was done before the snow.

Prayer

- Pray that the in-person Awana program will continue running and that kids understand the Gospel message and grow deeper in their relationship with Him through it.
- Pray for wisdom, health and success for Steve as he will be teaching fifteen hours a week for the Bible School in Nepal, via the internet.
- Pray that we, as a camp and the church, will be a light in our dark world and find new ways to share the hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with our communities.
- Pray that we would show Jesus' love this Christmas season to people with whom we are in contact.
- Pray for direction for camp leadership in planning for the upcoming year.
- Pray for wisdom in prioritizing off-season maintenance tasks and planning for next season's projects.
- Pray for campers, LITs and all camp staff to be exceedingly excited to continue with the Lord in spite of a no-camp summer. ♦



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ONE NAME. ONE PURSUIT.



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