



The Network of Camps and Retreat Centers  
Affiliated with The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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# LOM Election Guide 2025

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## **LOM Board of Directors Elections 2025**

**Role of LOM Board Members:** Determine the mission & vision of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries; Relate to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America churchwide office; Ensure effective organizational planning; Ensure adequate resources & manage resources effectively; Determine, strengthen, and evaluate the organizational programs; Enhance the organizational public standing; Ensure legal and ethical integrity; Recruit new board and committee members; Assess Board and Executive Director performance. A board member's term is 3 years; they may serve 2 terms.

**Note from the Nominations Committee:** The Nominations Committee sought candidates who specifically bring skills in development alongside their other gifts.

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### **Incumbents:**

#### **1 Current/Former Board Member of an LOM Organization**

The Boards of Directors of LOM Organizations elect Current/Former board members to the LOM Board. Voting is submitted via email, deadline was November 1, 2025. It is the desire of the LOM Board of Directors that board members in good standing run unopposed.

**Tami Lewis-Arendt** was re-elected. You can read Tami's biography below.



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## Open Positions:

We are voting for 2 open LOM Board of Directors positions:

**1 Professional LOM staff position**

**1 At-Large position**

**Vote for one candidate. Biographies of each candidate follow this page.**

### Professional

- 1) Anthony Briggs** (Cross Roads Camp & Retreat Center, NJ)
- 2) Jacob Spilker** (Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, NE)
- 3) Write In**

### At-Large

- 1) CJ Clark** (SE Michigan Synod: Asst. to the Bishop & Director of Evangelical Mission)
- 2) Jennie Wolf Smith** (GSB)
- 3) Write In**



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## LOM Board Nominee Biography

**Name:** Anthony Briggs

**Home Congregation:** Living Waters Lutheran Church

**City:** Ringos **State:** NJ **Synod:** New Jersey Synod

**Most Recent Camp Affiliation:** Executive Director, Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center (Port Murray, NJ)



### **Share about your skills, profession, and what you would like to offer LOM.**

I'm passionate about helping others grow as leaders and about making sure everyone has a place around the campfire. I've been part of initiatives like The Shape of Leadership, the LOM Leadership Training Event (LTE), and the Total Inclusion! steering committee — all focused on developing strong, inclusive, and forward-looking leadership. In addition to this work, I also bring the following skills to the table:

- Leadership of nonprofit and outdoor ministry organizations
- Planning, budgeting, and organizational oversight
- Mentoring and supporting staff and volunteers
- Building partnerships with congregations and community groups
- Creative program design and a commitment to adaptive leadership

### **Share how you have been part of your local Outdoor Ministry.**

I've been part of youth, outdoor, and retreat ministry helping people of all ages connect with God, nature, and each other for more than 30 years. Since 2010, I've served as Executive Director at Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center, a joint ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark and the NJ Synod of the ELCA. Before that, I led Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center in New York and Lutheran Retreats, Camps & Conferences in Southern California. Outdoor ministry has been my lifelong calling — it's where faith gets real, where people discover their gifts, and where communities come alive.

### **Why would you like to serve on the LOM board at this time?**

LOM has played a big role in shaping my ministry and my heart for faith formation and leadership development. I'd love to give back by helping guide LOM into the future — keeping our shared work creative, sustainable, and welcoming for everyone. It's an exciting time for outdoor ministry, and I'm grateful for the chance to be part of it.



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## LOM Board Nominee Biography

**Name:** Jacob Spilker

**Home Congregation:** American Lutheran Church

**City:** Lincoln **State:** NE **Synod:** Nebraska Synod

**Most Recent Camp Affiliation:** Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries



### **Share about your skills, profession, and what you would like to offer LOM.**

I have a background in development and nonprofit leadership, with experience serving camps of very different sizes—from Camp Tomah Shinga, with a staff of two, to Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, which employs more than forty. This range has given me a deep understanding of outdoor ministry from multiple perspectives, including programming, operations, and philanthropy. In addition to my camp work, I've also served in higher education, which has broadened my experience in communication, donor engagement, and organizational strategy. I would bring to the LOM Board a commitment to strengthening the ministry's sustainability, supporting leaders in their vocations, and helping connect the larger outdoor ministry network through shared learning and collaboration.

### **Share how you have been part of your local Outdoor Ministry.**

My involvement in outdoor ministry has been lifelong. I began attending Carol Joy Holling Camp as a five-year-old and returned every summer thereafter. First as a camper, then as a member of the Summer Ministry Team, and later as a full-time staff member in program, operations, and development roles. These experiences have shaped my faith, my leadership, and my deep belief in the power of camp to form community and transform lives. Today, I continue to support Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries through my professional work and as an advocate for its mission in the broader world.

### **Why would you like to serve on the LOM board at this time?**

I believe that at this moment in history, outdoor ministry is more vital than ever. Camps provide sacred spaces for people to step out of their comfort zones, engage in meaningful conversations, and experience God's presence in creation. As our communities navigate social, cultural, and environmental challenges, outdoor ministry remains one of the most effective ways to nurture faith, resilience, and connection. Serving on the LOM Board would allow me to contribute to the continued strength of this movement through supporting, equipping, and uplifting camps and leaders across the country who are doing this invaluable work.



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## LOM Board Nominee Biography

**Name:** C.J. Clark

**Home Congregation:** Grace Lutheran Church

**City:** Howell **State:** MI **Synod:** 6A – Southeast Michigan

**Most Recent Camp Affiliation:** Executive Director of Living Water Ministries

in New Era, MI from December 2010 to February 2024



### **Share about your skills, profession, and what you would**

**like to offer LOM.** My Clifton Strengths (in order) are: Strategic, Activator, Command, Connectedness, and Input. In my time in outdoor ministries, I was able to use these strengths to inform my approach to leadership, innovation, fundraising, and inclusion. I consider myself to be a leader that is able to connect mission/vision with people and resources. I also consider myself to be a leader who is willing to appropriately interrogate status quo and tradition in search of new ways to share the story of Christ and bring people together in community. I deeply value relationships and the power of community, and I believe building communities is at the very heart of the work of Outdoor Ministries.

My frontline experience as a former summer staffer, camp director, and executive director, as well as the learnings of my long tenure at LWM, feel like they might be a valuable contribution to the life of LOM and its members.

In my new(ish) role as Director for Evangelical Mission for the Southeast Michigan Synod, I also bring connectivity to the wider church, synodical perspectives, and ELCA churchwide office perspectives (as DEM's are employed by the national church and deployed to local synods). Uniquely positioned in a call that requires interfacing with congregations, synods, and the national church, I have a line of sight into many of the dimensions of the ELCA's ecology.

## **LOM Board Nominee Biography continued: CJ Clark**

**Share how you have been part of your local Outdoor Ministry.** While I no longer serve at Living Water Ministries, I am still actively involved in Bridge Builders, a faith-centered leadership and anti-racism training camp program for high school students. As a member of the Bridge Builders leadership team, I lead curriculum modules and help facilitate small groups with students during this specific week of camp.

I also participated as a runner for LWM's annual fundraising run called "Run the Race," helping to raise over \$100,000 annually for the organization.

In my role as Director for Evangelical Mission, I help connect congregations to youth ministry initiatives, often interfacing them with LWM programs.

**Why would you like to serve on the LOM board at this time?** The former outdoor ministry dynamic was that our sites were "downstream" from congregational life. I believe we live in a time where dynamic has begun to flip. Camp organizations are able to operate more nimbly than much of church, and camps have evidenced their ability to innovate and adapt. As a former Executive Director with a particular passion and track record for living into mission, I believe my experience and gifts are well aligned for the moment in which we all do ministry. We find ourselves in a time where maintaining status quo no longer serves us, and I deeply enjoy exploring ways to lean into new life through new possibilities and opportunities.



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## LOM Board Nominee Biography

**Name:** Jennie Wolf Smith

**Home Congregation:** Olivet Lutheran Church (ELCA)

**City:** Sylvania **State:** OH **Synod:**Northwestern Ohio

**Most Recent Camp Affiliation:** N/A



### **Share about your skills, profession, and what you would like to offer LOM.**

For more than fourteen years, I have partnered with faith-based organizations and outdoor ministries across the country to strengthen their fundraising capacity and sustain their missions. As a consultant with GSB Fundraising, I've helped Lutheran Outdoor Ministries camps plan and execute successful annual fund programs, feasibility studies, and capital campaigns—many reaching or exceeding their goals. My work focuses on developing practical systems for donor cultivation, board and staff engagement, and long-term sustainability.

I would bring to the LOM board a deep understanding of how relationship-driven fundraising and strategic planning intersect to build healthy, mission-aligned organizations. I hope to contribute my experience in growing diverse donor bases, empowering leadership teams, and navigating transitions with clarity and confidence.

### **Share how you have been part of your local Outdoor Ministry.**

My first, personal, connection to LOM was as a parent of a camper who experienced the joy and transformation of a camp week at a Hopewood (OH) site. Professionally, I've also worked alongside many outdoor ministries to advance their fundraising efforts—helping them tell their story, connect with donors, and plan for future generations. These relationships have deepened my appreciation for the powerful role Outdoor Ministry plays in the wider church and community.

### **Why would you like to serve on the LOM board at this time?**

This is a pivotal moment for LOM as the organization welcomes new leadership and looks toward a sustainable future. In this season of transition, I believe I can help to strengthen LOM's long-term development strategy and to support its members in growing both mission impact and financial resilience. Having worked with camps in a variety of sizes and contexts, I understand many of the challenges and opportunities. I believe I can help the board think strategically about broadening its donor base and equipping Outdoor Ministries with the tools and confidence to thrive for years to come.



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## **LOM Board Nominee Biography**

**Name:** Tami Lewis-Ahrendt

**Home Congregation:** Our Saviours **City:** Lincoln **State:** NE

**Synod:** Nebraska

**Most Recent Camp Affiliation:** NLOM



### **Share about your skills, profession, and what you would like to offer LOM.**

As the CEO of a non-profit (CenterPointe), I bring leadership, compassion, and focus. I have a strong HR background, a passion for outdoor ministries, and insights into finance, personnel, grants funding and management, and board relations.

In addition to my work life, I am a member of the LGBTQIA+ community and bring my voice and experiences to everything I do.

### **Share how you have been part of your local Outdoor Ministry.**

I was a camper and summer ministry staff member at NLOM for most of my childhood and young adult life. I now serve as the president of their board of directors, am a donor, and a camper parent.

### **Why would you like to serve on the LOM board at this time?**

I would be honored to continue serving on the LOM board. As the chair of the Diversity Committee, I have an opportunity to work alongside the members, providing insight and oversight for the Total Inclusion grant administration and ensuring the important work of inclusion continues outside of that grant.



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## Board of Directors

### *LOM Professional Staff (3 Positions)*



**Name:** Leah Pletscher (Board VP)  
**Territory:** West Midwest  
**Skills:** Strat. Planning,  
PR/Marketing/ Comm., Program,  
Youth Min, Theology, Partnerships



Open position to  
be elected in  
2025



**Name:** Pr. Drew Tucker  
**Territory:** East Midwest  
**Skills:** Strat. Planning,  
Fundraising,  
PR/Marketing/Comm., Youth Min.,  
Education, Theology, Partnerships

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### *At-Large (3 Positions)*



Open position to  
be elected in  
2025



**Name:** Deacon Dallas Shealy  
(Board Treasurer)  
**Territory:** East  
**Skills:** Board Dev., Org. & Gov.,  
Fundraising, Theology



**Name:** Pr. Rozella White  
**Territory:** West  
**Skills:** Board Dev., Strat. Planning,  
Program, Youth Min., Education,  
Theology, Cross Cultural

*Current/Former Board Member of LOM Organization (3 Positions)*



**Name:** Laney Herauf

**Territory:** West Midwest

**Skills:** Org. & Gov., Program, Youth Min,  
Theology, Partnerships, HR



**Name:** Tami Lewis-Ahrendt

**Territory:** West Midwest

**Skills:** Org. & Gov., Strat. Plan.,  
Cross-Cultural, Tech, HR



**Name:** Pr. Phil Geleske

**Territory:** West Midwest

**Skills:** Strategic Planning,  
Fundraising, Financial Planning,  
Theology

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*Board Elected (2 Positions) & Appointments (1 Position)*



**Name:** Jessica Jackson

**Position:** LOM Board Elected

**Territory:** West

**Skills:** Fundraising, PR/Marketing/  
Comm., Program, Education



**Name:** Pr. Matt O'Rear (Board Pres.)

**Position:** LOM Board Elected

**Territory:** East

**Skills:** Board Dev., Org. & Gov., Strat.  
Plan., PR/Marketing/ Comm.,  
Education, Theology, Tech



**Name:** Pr. Ed Kay

**Position:** ELCA Appointed

**Territory:** East



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## **Nominations Committee Elections 2025**

**Role of the Nominations Committee:** The Nominations Committee is comprised of six individuals from across the country with connections to Lutheran Outdoor Ministries. They are responsible for seeking and recruiting candidates for the LOM Board of Directors. It is the LOM board's desire to have a Board of Directors that is diverse, gifted and well connected to the church, outdoor ministries and nonprofit organizations. A Nomination Committee member's term is 3 years.

**We are voting for 2 open Nominations Committee positions.**

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**Vote for two candidates. Biographies are below.**

- 1) Ashleigh Ellsworth-Keller (Lutherwood, WA)**
- 2) Jeff Fairfax (Sky Ranch, CO)**
- 3) Sam Garcia (Mt. Cross, CA)**
- 4) Kyle Rydell (Lutheran Lakeside, IA)**



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## LOM Nominating Committee Nominee Biography:

**Name:** Ashleigh Ellsworth-Keller

**Home Congregation:** Christ the Servant Lutheran Church

**City:** Bellingham **State:** WA **Synod:** Northwest Washington Synod

**Most Recent Camp Affiliation:** Lutherwood Camp and Retreat Center



### Share how you have been part of your local Outdoor Ministry.

I have served as Program Director at Lutherwood Camp and Retreat Center since April 2024. Now that I have two summers here under my belt, I am more motivated than ever to help rebuild this ministry after several bumpy pre-Covid and post-Covid (and, while we're at it, Covid) years. Lutherwood has been a ministry for 78 summers and there are many challenges in working at an "established camp in transition", but the work is incredibly rewarding and FUN! Alongside the rest of our small team, I am working year-round to build positive relationships with our synod and local community, and create programs that give campers a meaningful week exploring their faith. I feel like my most essential role of all is to give summer staff a deeply rewarding experience that is life-changing (big dreams, right?!). I'm excited and humbled to be tasked with this important work and thankful that I don't have to do it alone.

### In what ways have you been involved with the LOM Network?

I am rather new "officially" to the LOM Network, though I've been peripheral to it (and have benefited from it) for quite some time! For six summers, I served on staff at Lutheridge and Lutherock (in Arden, NC and Newland, NC, respectively), and the previous iteration of LOM (ALOMP) helped connect me to my first job out of seminary back in 2003, as Director of Faith Formation at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Flagstaff, AZ. I also leaned heavily on resources from LOM when I was director of Camp DREAM in rural Vermont, a rustic camp devoted to providing traditional camp experiences to children in government subsidized housing neighborhoods in Vermont, metro Boston, and metro Philadelphia. Currently, I've participated in two Leadership Training Events and two LOM conferences (counting this OMC), and welcome other additional training opportunities and affinity groups, like Parents in LOM, where I hope my personal experience and knowledge can be of service to others!

## **Nominating Committee Nominee Biography continued: Ashleigh Ellsworth-Keller**

### **Why would you be willing to serve on the LOM Nominating Committee at this time?**

I'm excited to get more involved with LOM—both for my own growth in my role as Program Director, and for the sustainability of LOM. I have a wealth of knowledge from decades of camp and non-profit experience that I draw on daily and that can benefit the larger organization as a whole.

I know, as many of you do, how powerful a Lutheran camp experience can be, and how just one week can shape the life of a young person. Part of LOM's work is to safeguard and nurture this superpower! I want to learn as much as I can and be as helpful as I can in sharing that superpower with others.



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## LOM Nominating Committee Nominee Biography

**Name:** Jeff Fairfax

**Home Congregation:** Trinity Lutheran Church

**City:** Fort Collins

**State:** Colorado **Synod:** Rocky Mountain Synod

**Most Recent Camp Affiliation:** Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp



### Share how you have been part of your local Outdoor Ministry.

I currently serve as the Operations and Property Director at Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp. I have served full time at Sky Ranch since 2016, serving first as Program Director before transitioning to my current role in 2023. Prior to my time at Sky Ranch I was a Program Assistant at Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp and summer staff at Luther Springs in Florida and here at Sky Ranch.

### In what ways have you been involved with the LOM Network?

Involvement with the LOM Network has included being an LTE participant, yearly LOM conference participant, contributor to and participant in various LOM forums and visioning conversations. Additionally, I was part of the team from LOM that facilitated an Intensive Care Course at the ELCA Youth Ministry Network's Extravaganza in 2023.

### Why would you be willing to serve on the LOM Nominating Committee at this time?

I am excited to serve on the LOM Nominating Committee because this network has provided consistent support and opportunities for me personally and professionally. I believe having a diverse group of individuals on a nominating committee that represent all roles within LOM organizations can only strengthen those identified and asked to lead LOM. I have been networking within LOM for over a decade and feel my relationships will help to identify colleagues to fill important roles on various committees and the LOM board.



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## **LOM Nominating Committee Nominee Biography**

**Name:** Samuel Garcia

**Home Congregation:** St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

**City:** Santa Cruz **State:** CA **Synod:** Sierra Pacific

**Most Recent Camp Affiliation:** Mt. Cross Ministries



### **Share how you have been part of your local Outdoor Ministry.**

Program Director since 2022

### **In what ways have you been involved with the LOM Network?**

Camper at Briarwood (Argyle, TX) from 2012-2015, Summer Staff at Briarwood (Argyle, TX) in 2016 and 2020, Summer Staff at Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp (Hillside, CO) from 2017-2019, Program Director at Mt. Cross Ministries from (2022-present)

### **Why would you be willing to serve on the LOM Nominating Committee at this time?**

I am interested in serving on the LOM Nominating Committee because I care deeply about identifying and supporting strong, faithful, and diverse leaders in outdoor ministry. My experience within Lutheran camps has shown me how transformative this work can be when guided by passionate and inclusive leadership. I want to help ensure that LOM's board and committees reflect the breadth of our church and the creativity of our shared mission. I would bring collaboration, insight from my ministry experience, and a commitment to helping LOM grow. I want to do my part in supporting our network.



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## LOM Nominating Committee Nominee Biography

**Name:** Kyle D. Rydell

**Home Congregation:** Grace Lutheran Church

**City:** Spirit Lake **State:** IA **Synod:** Western Iowa Synod

**Most Recent Camp Affiliation:** Lutheran Lakeside Camp



### Share how you have been part of your local Outdoor Ministry.

Briarwood Camp/Retreat Center: 2 Summers as Camp Counselor and Activities Coordinator. 2 Years as Hospitality Coordinator. 2 Years as Activities and Retreats Coordinator.

Park River Bible Camp: 2 Years Associate Director.

Lutheran Lakeside Camp 3.5 Years at Camp Director

### In what ways have you been involved with the LOM Network?

I have attended 1 LTE class, 4 LOM Conventions, and completed Compass Points Classes. Out of the 4 LOM Conventions I have attended, I helped with audio and visual tech needs.

### Why would you be willing to serve on the LOM Nominating Committee at this time?

One of the reasons I am in outdoor ministries today is because of the community of care that I have experienced working alongside LOM Camps. I found a calling for outdoor ministry 10 years ago, but having a network of support and experience in hard times affirmed that the work we get to do at camp is important and needed. When asked to help the LOM I do my best to give back to the community that has given me so much.