100th Anniversary of Lutheran Camping in the USA

On July 5, 1919, a group of campers made their way, most of them by public street car, 28 miles north from Pittsburgh, PA, to the town of Zelienople. Then they walked to the Passavant Farm. Thus, began the first day of camp at Camp Wa-Ba-Ne-Ki, sponsored by the Inner City Mission Society of Pittsburgh. This is the first documented organized Lutheran camp in the USA. We know this, thanks in large measure, to the research of Mark Burkhardt, member of the LOM Board of Directors, former director of outdoor ministries for the ELCA, and currently director of Faith Formation Ministries of the ELCA.

Mark made us aware of this momentous event at the first meeting of the LOM 100th Anniversary Task Force. The other members of this exciting group are: Ralph Yernberg, himself an LOM historian of no small measure, having authored *The Camping Movement of the American Lutheran Church*; Marianne Brock, camp director of Camp Nawakwa (PA); Brent Seaks, executive director of Badlands Ministries (ND); Mara Stillson, marketing director of Lutherans Outdoors in SD; Kelly Preboski, executive director of Luther Heights (ID); and Meredith Massey Beall, board member at Lutherhill (TX), newly elected board member of LOM and chair of the LOM Development Committee.

This group had its first meeting on February 19 and is now well on its way to making plans for the LOM celebration of the 100th Anniversary and suggesting awesome ways for each of the LOM organization members to celebrate. It’s looking like July 5, 2019, will not be a single day of celebration, but the beginning of a yearlong opportunity to not only look back, but to more importantly look ahead to the impact LOM can and should have during the next 100 years! We’ll keep you posted.

Don’t order all your tee shirts and sweat shirts just yet – the task force will soon have an LOM logo for the 100th year that will be available to all.

**DID YOU COMPLETE THE SURVEY YET?** LOM is participating in a research project with our colleagues throughout the Outdoor Ministry Connection. A very important part of this project is a survey being conducted by our own LOM Board member, Jake Sorenson. We are hoping that 100% of LOM organizations will do the survey so that we can have complete and accurate results for all of LOM. There are 54 of our 91 LOM organizations that have completed and returned the survey. If your organization has not yet done the survey, please access it at the survey link: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OMCamps2018](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OMCamps2018). If you don’t remember whether or not you’ve done the survey, please contact Jake Sorenson: jake@sacredplaygrounds.com

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**CALENDAR**

**Various Dates:**
Staff Recruiting Events

**March 4-7, 2019:**
Program Share-A-Thon

**March 10-16, 2019:**
Compass Points

**March 18-21, 2019:**
LOM Executive Directors’ Gathering

**March 18-20, 2019:**
Region 3 Share-A-Thon

**May 13-17, 2019:**
Interim Exec Director Training

**November 6-9, 2019:**
LTE Administrative Track

**November 10-14, 2019:**
The Great Gathering
(with November 12 LOM Day at the Great Gathering FREE for all LOM participants of the Great Gathering)


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**On the Web**
www.lomnetwork.org

Check out the latest podcast on tips for boards.

Check out our featured site! Lutherdale (WI), is our latest camp on the homepage.
Innovative Program: Camp of the Cross Blue Christmas
This is one of the programs nominated for LOM’s Innovative Program Award last year.

The Christmas season brings about many joys and blessings but can also prove to be a difficult time for those facing grief and hardship. This past year, Camp of the Cross Ministries (ND) in partnership with the First Congregational Church in Garrison, North Dakota, invited surrounding constituents to join them for a new Christmas event: a community-wide Blue Christmas Service. Unlike other Christmas services, Blue Christmas was a time set aside -- a time to remember loved ones or past times, a time to cry, a time to reflect, and ultimately, a time to find renewal.

The notion of a Blue Christmas Service is not a new idea. Some hospitals, nursing homes, and even some churches host Blue Christmas services. However, for their community, and for their camp, it was a very new process. Together, the staff team worked to plan and promote the event. They decided to partner with a local church in their community and host the event there, to provide a more central meeting ground for those traveling longer distances.

The service was also held on a unique day, December 21st, the day with the longest night of the year. The service was led by a rostered Camp of the Cross board member, the rostered Executive Director, and two Program Managers. Each person contributed unique parts to the service including: a sermon, specially selected songs and texts, an original poem, and more. Lights were kept low, so attendees could feel safe and comfortable allowing themselves to grieve in any way they chose. More light was brought to the service in the middle, when guests were invited to come forward to light a candle in remembrance of a loved one. The service was also live on the Camp of the Cross Facebook page. Focus was taken off attendees so no one could recognize them, but for those grieving at home, they too had a chance to be with them that evening.

For that time, people were simply allowed to “be.” In scripture and written word, they were reminded time again of God’s unbroken love in a broken time. There were no cheery Christmas songs and little laughter but instead a silent night’s peace. Camps can do amazing things in a variety of places! Camp of the Cross is already looking forward to the next Blue Christmas Service and continued opportunities to help meet the needs of their surrounding communities.

Check out Discount Programs
Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM) has partnered with three other denominations to provide special members-only pricing on products used by our camps and retreat centers. You can receive the specifics of these special deals on our website at https://www.lomnetwork.org/partners/vendor-discounts/. Instructions are also there on obtaining the discount codes. Many more discounts will be added to the list, so please check the LOM website for updates.

Submit Journeys
Have you set your adventure camps and servant trips for 2019 or 2020? If so, please submit them for Journeys for Youth. We’d like to list these camps by May 1. For more information and to submit, go to journeys.lomnetwork.org. Remember you can now submit Senior travel programs!
Still Time to Register for the LOM Executive Directors Gathering

Join with your executive director colleagues of LOM to explore how we can maximize the effectiveness of outdoor ministry staff teams whose members span different generations. We are confident that this event will provide you with:

- **Deepened, idea-bouncing relationships.** This will include working groups around particular topics with concrete ideas to take home. Topics that will definitely be included: keeping programs and activities mission focused; how to support and encourage both year-round and seasonal staff;
- **An experience of community** and encouragement to build new relationships while renewing ongoing relationships.
- **Relaxation and fun** in order to go home renewed and recharged
- **A variety of worship** experiences that will be inspiring and renewing.
- **New ways** of looking at old problems or new problems.

**Theme:** “Wander With Me” based on the theme verse “And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years and in divine and human favor.” (Luke 2:52) The gathering will hear the invitation of young adults to explore with them the meaning of this world; and it will extend invitations to young adults to explore this world with us.

**Dates:** March 18, beginning at 4:00 p.m., and concluding after breakfast on March 21, 2019. Ground transportation from Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) will be provided for all participants who arrive by 2:00 p.m. on Monday, March 18, 2019, and departure no earlier than 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 21, 2019.

**Place:** Briarwood Lutheran Retreat Center in Argyle, TX, an outdoor ministry of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod, ELCA  [https://www.briarwoodretreat.org/](https://www.briarwoodretreat.org/)

**Presenter:** Our idea-generating presenter will be Savanna Sullivan (she; her). Savanna is Program Director for ELCA Young Adult Ministries. She has given workshops and presentations around the country – including at the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering - to ELCA and ecumenical groups about Young Adult culture and empowerment in the church. She is passionate about Lutheran Outdoor Ministries – she was a camper for 10 years at Lutheridge in Arden, NC, and served on staff for two summers. She also served two summers on staff at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp (MT) and then full-time on Program Staff at Briarwood Camp and Conference Center (TX). She now co-facilitates the ELCA International Camp Counselor Training Program every summer. A Lutheran Campus Ministry and Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) alum, Savanna is passionate about helping young people seek the Divine in themselves and working with the church to equip, amplify, and respect the voices of young leaders. She loves banana pudding, the Clemson tigers, and memorizing poems.

**Cost:** $400 (single occupancy) or $330 (double occupancy) will include overnight accommodations, meals, program, and ground transportation to and from the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport.

**Scholarships:** If necessary, in order for you to participate, financial assistance applications can be obtained from Don Johnson. Please do not register until after your financial assistance application has been processed.

**Registration:** [https://www.lomnetwork.org/event/2019exec/](https://www.lomnetwork.org/event/2019exec/). In addition, feel free to contact Don Johnson  [director@lomnetwork.org](mailto:director@lomnetwork.org) with questions.

**Members of the Steering Committee for this event:** Sarah Lefler, Mar-Lu-Ridge (MD); Tom Powell, Caroline Furnace (VA); Lee Lindeman, LCLC (NY); Janis Sloka, Camp of the Cross (ND); and Deb Roberts, Lutherlyn (PA).
In our last newsletter there was an emphasis on taking stock of the year of 2018, just ended. And what a great year it was for LOM! This year of 2019 promises to be even greater. We have many good things to look forward to.

The Program Planning Committee for the LOM Executive Directors Gathering, March 18-21, has an excellent program lined up. And Briarwood in Texas is all set to provide us their customary and wonderful hospitality. There’s still time to register (https://www.lomnetwork.org/event/2019exec/).

With encouragement from our ecumenical partners in The Outdoor Ministries Connection (OMC), we are planning a second session of the Interim Executive Directors Training Event, May 13-17, also at Briarwood (TX). OMC is the official sponsor of this event and it is spearheaded by LOM in collaboration with the National Association of Lutheran Interim Pastors (NALIP). The first of these events in 2017 has proven to be invaluable to LOM organizational members because of so many transitions in executive director leadership during the past couple of years. If you or anyone you know would like to explore the possibility of serving as an interim executive director, you can get more information at https://www.lomnetwork.org/event/2019-interim-director-training-event/.

And speaking of the Outdoor Ministries Connection, the event of a lifetime for outdoor ministry staff and board members, in the planning for a few years now, is finally upon us! The Great Gathering will be exactly that – GREAT!. This is one event you don’t want to miss. http://omcgreatgathering.org/

Because of The Great Gathering, LOM will not be having our own Annual Conference this year. But on Tuesday of the Great Gathering week, we’ll be having LOM Day at the Great Gathering! And because of the generosity of our LOM Day sponsors, most notably the ELCA Mission Investment Fund, we’ll all be able to get on buses for about half an hour and go to Lutheridge (NC). We’ll have our Annual Auction there; we’ll have our Awards Ceremony; we’ll elect board members for the ensuing year; and we’ll have a banquet that will celebrate and commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Lutheran camping in the USA.

And if that’s not enough, immediately prior to The Great Gathering will be the Leadership Training Event – Administrative Track (LTE). We have an outstanding LOM LTE Committee and they never stop updating the LTE and making sure it stays relevant and grows in excellence. https://www.lomnetwork.org/event/leadership-training-event-3/
I’m looking forward to seeing you around the network – often!

--Don Johnson, Executive Director

Good News from Around the Network

From Hungry Mother Lutheran Retreat Center (VA): HMLRC was the recipient of a grant from the US Department of Forestry for green space planning. That grant money was used to acquire a set of designs, drawings, and renderings from the Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC) at Virginia Tech. All designs were gleaned from input at stakeholder meetings and the process has seemed to re-kindle some excitement about camp. They also completed a primitive tent camp area with five sites containing tent pads, picnic table, fire ring, and lantern pole. All work was completed by Eagle Scouts. This year they hope to complete the renovation of the Hillside Chapel and Prayer Path and are looking at designs and estimates on adding more camping opportunities like tree houses or yurts. They are also looking at other innovative ways to improve our campus and property to attract more groups to see how HMLRC can provide the space to enhance their program needs.
Metigoshe Ministries is hosting the West Midwest Program Share-A-Thon from March 18-20!

Who: Program Professionals  
What: Share Ideas and Resources  
Where: Metigoshe Ministries, Bottineau, ND  
When: March 18-20, 2019  
Why: To support one another in outdoor ministries!  
Cost: $75... includes 3 nights stay and 5 meals

Follow the link to register! [http://metigosheministries.com/register/](http://metigosheministries.com/register/)

Email Katie at [program@metigosheministries.com](mailto:program@metigosheministries.com) or call 701-263-4788 with any questions!

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Two Compass Points certificate classes will be offered in March at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA. You have the option of taking Biblical and Theological Foundations (March 10-13), Program Design and Implementation (March 13-16), or both courses. You can learn more about these programs (and register) by going to the Compass Points website at [www.compasspointsprogram.org](http://www.compasspointsprogram.org).

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**Exhibitors Needed for the OMC Great Gathering**

Open registration has begun for the exhibit hall at the OMC Great Gathering in November. As of today, about half of the 76 booths are still available. If you know companies and organizations that might be interested in a booth or a sponsorship opportunity, please send them to the [exhibitor/sponsor information](#) today.
From one of our LOM Business Members

To date, CORD has 21 LOM camps as members of our Group Purchasing Organization (GPO), and we are happy to welcome Camp Amnicon of South Range Wisconsin as our newest member. CORD’s partnership with the LOM has given us the privilege of rebating back to the LOM .5% of the LOM membership’s total purchases. In November at the annual conference CORD presented to LOM a check in the amount of $1302.96 which represented quarters 1 and 2, an additional rebate check, in the estimated amount of $1482.00 which represents quarters 3 and 4 will be issued once we close the books on 2018, for a 2018 total of $2802.96. CORD feels proud and privileged to assist in delivering the LOM’s ministry to the thousands of youth and adults your facilities welcome every year.

CORD continues to offer premium vendors for your choosing to help keep your camps running smoothly, efficiently and effectively. We continue our long-standing partnership with Sysco Food Service and are excited to announce that we have recently partnered with Performance Food Group as a source for food, paper goods and EcoLab chemicals. We would be happy to provide you with a pricing review of your current food supplier compared with Sysco and PFG.

With summer around the corner, and it will be here sooner than you think, it’s time to spring clean, paint and repair. CORD’s vendors, Sherwin Williams, SupplyWorks, Grainger, Lowe’s and HD Supply will provide you with all the necessary supplies and equipment to keep your camps running top notch. Something you may not be aware of is SupplyWorks offers a complete line of commercial pool chemicals including chlorine tablets, calcium hypochlorite, muriatic acid, sodium bicarbonate and DPD test kits. CORD can set up accounts for you with any and all these vendors, if you already have an account, we can add you to our program to receive member pricing. Remember a CORD membership is completely free of cost.

After your repairs and maintenance items are solved, you may find a need for new or additional recreational equipment. Our vendor partners New England Camp Discounter and BSN are standing by to provide you campers with the latest “toys” for summer. For the not-as-fun-but-necessary camp equipment CORD offers the services of Mity Lite tables and chairs, American Hotel Register Company for your furnishing needs. Administratively, CORD offers pricing through Data Facts for background checks, Office Depot for office supplies, Konica Minolta for copiers and audio-visual security systems, and also B&H Supply for your computer, photography and audio-visual presentations.

CORD looks forward to an ever-growing partnership with LOM, assisting you in delivering your ministry so you can spend less and do more. Please contact Jeff Acks, your LOM CORD representative at 630-217-3844 or email me at jacks@cordonline.com and we’ll get you connected.
Help Promote the 2019 LOM Curriculum "Transformed Community"

The LOM Curriculum Committee would like to ask for your help in spreading the news to the congregations in your area about the 2019 LOM Curriculum. Please take a moment out of your day and share the following information with congregations who support your ministry. LOM has a VBS bundle that we believe could be very useful to many congregations, but we need your help to get the word out! All you have to copy the following and share it! You can even cut and paste from our website at https://wp.me/p8d42C-OJ.

***Here is wording for you to send to congregations***

As a supporter of our camp, you know about our ministry, but you may not know that we are a part of a larger organization called Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, or LOM. LOM is an organization that exists to empower and equip outdoor ministry organizations, and one of the ways that they do that is by producing an outdoor curriculum each year.

Now, the same easy to use and theologically strong curriculum is available for congregations to use for Vacation Bible School. LOM’s 2019 theme Transformed Community: God’s Agent of C.H.A.N.G.E., conjures up images of a mighty band of superheroes with secret missions. When we take on the mission of being God’s agent of change in the world, we must be ready to be transformed—individually and together—and to discover that our not-so-secret identities will probably not conform to the world’s expectations. This is not always an easy thing to say yes to, but when the mission is attempted together and in community, we discover that we are aligned with God’s will, powered by God’s spirit, and that there is purpose and joy in being Christ’s life-giving and love-giving presence in the world as God’s hands and feet.

Daily themes include: Generosity Transforms Community (Acts 2:41-47, the early Christian community); Compassion Transforms Community (Luke 14:7-14, the parable of the wedding banquet); Inclusion Transforms Community (Luke 10:25-37, the parable of the good Samaritan); Justice Transforms Community (Matthew 20:1-16, the parable of the laborers in the vineyard); and Forgiveness Transforms Community (Mark 2:1-12, Jesus heals the paralyzed man).

LOM’s VBS package includes all you need to run your own Vacation Bible School program: five full days of Bible Study designed for lower and upper elementary students, crafts, games and graphics. Priced at only $100, your congregation gets the tools that you need to help the children in your community engage with the Bible and their faith. This theme, as well as others, are available on the Lutheran Outdoor Ministries website at www.lomnetwork.org.

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Start Thinking about the LOM Auction

The Annual LOM Auction will take place this year during the Great Gathering: Tuesday evening, November 12, during the day that LOM will be gathering at Lutheridge. Dave Jarvis is once again chairing the Auction Planning Team. He’s looking for volunteers to be part of the team. If you would like to be part of the team that makes all the plans and arrangements for this exciting event, please contact Dave Jarvis: dave@rainbowtrail.org

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Deadline Extended for the Call for Workshop Leaders at the OMC Great Gathering

Are you interested in leading a workshop at our joint annual conference in November? The deadline has now been extended to March 15, so please check out the Call for Presenters page as soon as possible.
Consider a Monthly Gift

Have you ever thought about being a regular contributor to LOM? You can easily set up recurring monthly donations. Just go to https://www.lomnetwork.org/donate/ and hit the donate now button. You’ll be directed to our Vanco Giving Page, where you can set up recurring donations to LOM.

Announcing the Camp2Congregation Project

There’s a new study examining the impacts of traveling day camp ministries on congregations, families, and young leaders in the church! This study directly involves four of our LOM organizations, and all of our organizations will be encouraged to provide details about their day camp ministries. More at www.camp2congregation.com.
Affirmation Through Example and Encouragement

A big part of leadership is being positive and giving reinforcement to those that you are leading. Leadership requires evaluating others’ job performances and giving them feedback. As a performance evaluator, you need to point out both the good and bad.

Inappropriate criticism weighs us down. It often makes us not want to do our job the best that we can. However, affirmation leads to appreciation, aspiration, transformation, and celebration. Giving candid communication by modeling gentle feedback and listening to followers will help to encourage staff to work hard to achieve their personal and professional goals. Point out all the things your staff are doing well!

At times, leaders also have to point out inappropriate behavior such as immaturity, inexperience, stress, lack of knowledge, illness, fatigue, or poor judgment. If you have to reprimand, it is important do it in private. I’ve always liked the mantra “Praise in public; criticize in private.” Manage undesired staff behavior in positive ways, with tact and compassion. Be firm, friendly, and objective. Never use physical punishment, humiliation, or intimidation as a means of behavior management. Instead, do the following:

- Ask the offender what their understanding is of the rule or guideline. This allows them to get away from the “you are right, they are wrong” mentality.
- Seek clarification as to why they chose to break the rule.
- Make sure you leave the staff member thinking about their behavior, not that they are being treated poorly. An important part of the reprimand is a reaffirmation that lets them know they are valuable and that you still have faith in their values.

At camp, we tell our staff to “Oreo cookie it.” Make sure you tell positive things to start and end the conversation (the cookie). Do the reprimanding in the middle (the filling). That way, you begin and end with a positive statement and create a good atmosphere to deal with the reprimand.

In the Bible, Elizabeth is a model for us as a leader who encourages and uses positive reinforcement. This month, try to read Luke 1 and think about these questions. Also, ponder the ways that you can use affirmation and encouraging words to help motivate those you lead.

- What do you imagine Elizabeth to look like; how do you think she spoke; what kind of person do you imagine her to be?
- What kind of hopes and fears do you think Mary had as she traveled to see Elizabeth?
- Elizabeth has the right word for Mary and Zechariah. How was she able to speak in such an effective way?
- How do you imagine Mary and Zechariah responded to Elizabeth?

—Chad Hershberger