Great Gathering Registration Open

Registration for the OMC Great Gathering opened on Wednesday, May 1. You won't want to miss this ecumenical event that will bring together camp and conference professionals, board members, and volunteers at Lake Junaluska in Western North Carolina this November 10-14, under the theme "RelationSHIFT." Register early at omcgreatgathering.org to guarantee your housing preferences.

Costs: Program registration for The Great Gathering is $250 for the first person from your site. Each additional person is $225. Meal plan is $151. Lodging ranges from $113 (dorm style) to $499 (single hotel style).
Seeking Interns

Lutherhaven Ministries, a BCWI Best Christian Workplaces-certified organization, seeks applications from LOM/ELCA summer camp staff around the country for two year-long paid internship positions that start in late August, 2019 and run through mid-August, 2020. The interns will quarterback The Confirmation Project and Urban Servant Adventures, two exciting new initiatives funded by a major grant from Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA, Youth & Young Adult Ministry Initiative.

See this circular (https://www.lomnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Promo-3-19.pdf) for information on the grant and The Confirmation Project, and for more information on the internships or to apply, visit www.lutherhaven.com/about/employment/internships/

Calling All Camps!!!

Do you have an item to donate for this year’s LOM auction? Start thinking and planning! Big or small, we’ll auction them all! It could be a small item you could bring for the silent auction that showcases your camp OR it could be a bigger item you bring for the live auction. Or, how about a trip or excursion that everyone will be talking about? Let’s break last year’s auction total and support an organization we love! Remember, we’ll have an online catalog of items to see ahead of time so you have plenty of time to apply for a line of credit for those big ticket items! Or, you can begin crowdfunding with all your friends to take that adventure trip you’ve always wanted. Plan ahead, open your wallets, and always remember, “It’s not about getting a good deal; it’s about supporting a great cause!” To correspond with the auction committee, e-mail auction@lomnetwork.org.

Education Committee Update

Hello from your LOM Education Committee! An emphasis for the committee this year is equipping our camp/organization boards. Many of you participated in a survey at the LOM Conference in Texas in November. Thank you! We want to give you an update on our work since Texas.

What’s available right now?
- Podcast on board development-Don Johnson interviewed Board Coach Keith Johnson
- Board and Policy Resources on the LOM website under “Resources”

What are we working on?
- Podcast on board development-Don Johnson interviewing Great Gathering speaker Joan Garry
- The LOM Education Committee will endorse trained facilitators for board development meetings/retreats
- Our first 5-10-minute video module (the number one thing LOM requested in the survey) to use within a board meeting

If you have further suggestions, please contact a committee member or education@lomnetwork.org.

Meggan Manlove, Chair
Gretchen Bachman
Jeff Barrow
Dana Isaacson
Dianna Parks
Jessica Pina
Jacob Sorenson
Hans Wiersma

OM Connections Meet

LOM collaborates with outdoor ministry leaders from several mainline Christian denominations through the informal "Outdoor Ministries Connection." The group met in March at Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center in Arizona. They heard the latest reports on the Interim Director Training in May, our Directors' Survey preliminary results, and more. They strategized together about sharing training events and other resources. Our BIG current project, of course, is the Relation:SHIFT Great Gathering coming up in November. Everyone’s getting excited for this once-in-a-lifetime event. We are truly "better together" as we pursue excellence and sustainability in outdoor ministry.
Educational Opportunities 2019

LTE – Leadership Training Event – Administration Track
At Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center, Lake Junaluska, NC, from Wednesday November 6, to Sunday, November 10, 2019

Travel Details:
Arrival: Fly into Asheville, NC (AVL) before 3:30 p.m. – November 6
Departure: Fly out of Asheville, NC (AVL) After 5:50 a.m. – November 10
Round trip shuttle fee from and to airport - $25.00 per person (45 min shuttle from Asheville Airport to Lake Junaluska). You may also choose to fly into Charlotte, NC, or Greenville, SC – You are on your own for transportation from either of these locations – NO shuttle service provided to or from Charlotte or Greenville, SC)

Cost Per Person: (Late Fee added $100.00 after Oct 10.)
Double Occupancy = $600.00 per person (Paid in full by midnight EDT Oct 10th)
Single Occupancy = $700.00 per person (Paid in full by midnight EDT Oct 10th)

Sustaining Members are eligible for scholarship funding via application. If you apply for scholarship funding, please do not register until you are approved and receive a code for registration!

Please use the application form and criteria forms found on the LOMnetwork.org web site. Then please direct all scholarship inquiries to: Randy Youngquist-Thurow, Events Coordinator email at: eventscoordinator@lomnetwork.org

Summary: Find more information at www.lomnetwork.org
LTE – Administrative Track - November 6-10, 2019
Great Gathering – November 10-14, 2019
The Impact of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM)

Your involvement in Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM) is important, because your involvement is having such a significant impact on the quality of the ministries of so many camps and retreat centers throughout the ELCA. For the ways in which you are involved – your participation and/or leadership in the events that LOM provides, your financial contributions, your service on committees, task forces, leadership teams, your prayers – THANK YOU! Here’s another example of the impact you are making because of your involvement.

From Jeff Bluhm, executive director of Lutherdale (the appearance of Jeff in our prayer list this month is totally coincidental. This piece was written by him several weeks before his current diagnosis. Nevertheless, it's amazing that we had planned to have this story of his appear at this time)

Why LOM is important to me and the ministry of Lutherdale (WI):

I started working in outdoor ministry back in the 1980s, when the ELCA was birthed as our denomination. At the same time, outdoor ministry was also being rebirthed with the merging of the ALC and the LCA camps into the Association of Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Professionals (ALOMP). There was so much energy put into getting ALOMP up and running, and it was exciting to be a part of this transitional phase.

As I look back on the foundations we laid in those early days, I am astounded by how far we have come. Now, all outdoor professionals are part of a strong and growing network called Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM). Many outdoor ministry professionals have devoted their time and energy to get LOM where it is today. The friendships and professionals who so freely share and give support to LOM is a huge part of why it is important to me. Learning from one another has been one of the most important aspects of my connection with LOM. It truly has been a blessing to be a part of this network.

One conference sticks out in my mind as a game-changer for how I viewed Lutherdale’s ministry. It was a number of years ago, when our Executive Directors conference was intentionally taking part in the CEO Academy of Lutheran Services in America. The conference was held at an LOM site, Spirit in the Desert in Carefree, Arizona. The room buzzed with the energy of so many CEOs from other ministries, not just LOM leaders. There, a presentation on transformational leadership pushed me to think of Lutherdale’s challenges in new ways, and it became the catalyst for changes that have kept Lutherdale a strong and growing ministry. Transformational leadership went on to become the theme of the LOM Annual Conference held at Lutheridge in 2015.

While our churches are facing many challenges and some are closing, I believe there are endless possibilities for Lutheran Outdoor Ministries. LOM is an essential part of keeping us all connected and supported. I hope to see you this fall for a one-of-a-kind conference The Great Outdoor Ministry Gathering 2019 that will expand our circle of friends and professionals.

Jeff Bluhm, Executive Director of Lutherdale

Please consider your financial contribution to LOM: https://www.lomnetwork.org/donate/. Checks payable to Lutheran Outdoor Ministries can be sent to: Jon Skogen, LOM Administrator, 1218 W. Addison Street, Chicago, IL 60613

On the Web

www.lomnetwork.org

Check out Don’s travel log and check out our featured site! Luther Heights (ID), is our latest camp on the homepage.
This is the final issue of the LOM News before publication is suspended until after the summer. The primary reason for this is that our newsletter editor is Chad Hershberger, whose very part-time contract with LOM is to serve in the position of LOM Webmaster. Publishing this newsletter is just one of myriads of tasks that Chad does for us. But Chad has a very demanding and more than full, full-time job as the executive director of Camp Mount Luther (PA), so even though his days are very full all year long, they are especially full in the summer. Thus, we go through the summer months without our fabulous monthly newsletter. Thank you, Chad, for all you do in your ministry at Mount Luther and for all of outdoor ministry through what you do for LOM!

I know that all of us throughout LOM are very grateful for the services of all of our very part time contracted staff, but I doubt that anyone is more grateful than me because I so often get to see first-hand how important they are to LOM. Jon Skogen, whose full-time job is with Church World Service, but also finds the time to serve us with distinction as our LOM Administrator. Kris Hinkeldey has a huge portfolio as the bookkeeper at Calumet (NH) and also uses her expertise as the LOM bookkeeper. Randy Youngquist-Thurow continues to share his extreme organizational competencies as our LOM Events Coodinator. Randy’s increasing load of responsibilities as executive director of Agape-Kure Beach Ministries (NC) have necessitated him to cut back on some of his LOM tasks, so we now will benefit from the services of Jenny Frantz as our LOM Conference Coordinator while she continues in her position of Director of Congregation Relations for Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Ohio and Site Director of Camp Luther. And one of the most visible signature services of LOM, the annual production of the LOM Outdoor Ministry Curriculum, is administered by Andrea Lee, who is the CEO of Legacy Editing.

As you approach the summer camp season, which for so many of us continues to be the busiest time of your very busy year round schedule, my hope is that you will find it just as rewarding to be working with the people you’ll be working with as I am rewarded by the people I get to work with. I know your summer will be full to overflowing with tasks and responsibilities. I pray that it also be fully safe, fun, faith-filled, inspirational, and filled with the affirmation of God’s presence in all that we experience.

Have a great summer!

--Don Johnson, Executive Director

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**PRAYER REQUESTS**

- For Jeff Bluhm, executive director of Lutherdale (WI) and chair of the LOM Nominating Committee. Jeff is undergoing treatment for stage 4 lymphoma.
- For Andrea Scofield, executive director of Lutherwood (OR) and to all for whom Lutherwood is a treasured ministry. Lutherwood lost their main lodge and dining hall to a fire early in April.
- For smooth transitions for Joanne Knudson, who recently stepped down from serving as executive director of Koinonia (NY).
- Of congratulations to Rob Gieraltowski who, on May 15, begins serving as the new executive director of Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center (LOMC) in Oregon, IL.
Innovative Program:  
Living Waters Ministries MYLA

This is one of the programs nominated for LOM’s Innovative Program Award last year.

MYLA (Multicultural Youth Leadership Academy) is a camp program that occurs in partnership with Rescue, Release, Restore and Glocal at Stony Lake in New Era, MI. MYLA offers young men and ladies in high school a safe space where they will be developed and refined as leaders for a multicultural world. Campers from multiple cultural backgrounds will form community with one another, experience the richness of each cultures’ heritage, and develop together as leaders.

MYLA gathers culturally diverse youth from all over the country for a deeply rich and meaningful exchange. As we share in each other’s rituals, experience each other’s food, sing in each other’s languages, and live together in intentional community stereotypes are destroyed. At MYLA youth learn to walk alongside one another in a way that provides a glimpse into the kingdom of God.

MYLA is the brain child of Pastor Yehiel Curry of Shekinah Chapel (ELCA) in Riverdale, IL. Pastor Yehiel also serves as Executive Director for Rescue, Release, Restore and has years of experience providing camp programs for African American boys and girls through programs known as SIMBA (Safe in My Brother’s Arms) and SIMSA (Safe in My Sister’s Arms). At the onset, Pastor Yehiel approached C.J. Clark, Executive Director of Living Water Ministries (MI) and Rev. Sunitha Mortha, Director for Education in the ELCA’s Global Mission Unit in Chicago about creating an immersive multicultural camp experience focused on leadership development.

Leveraging the three networks of Rescue, Release, Restore, Living Water Ministries, and Glocal, MYLA was born in 2016 to fill the gap (especially for youth of color) between the years that MYLE (Multicultural Youth Leadership Event) were offered as part of the ELCA Youth Gathering. One of the initial driving questions that brought this program into existence was, “What are we doing to create intentional communities where leaders can be developed with a multicultural aptitude in and for this church and world on an annual basis?”

Skeletally, MYLA is a camp program that employs similar tools as other programs. Aquatics, campfires, high ropes, low ropes, and more are all used as part of the gel that holds the community together. However, the meat on the bone is how, in the midst of that community, we are invited to explore and experience each other’s culture. Whether it’s when we are in the sweat lodge with our Native siblings, or around the tree before breakfast experiencing libations, or at a meal tasting an authentically prepared meal and hearing about that meal’s context within its culture of origin, or at campfire singing songs in more languages than can be named, or as we explore scripture daily about what God says to us about the sacredness of our togetherness...something magical happens and the very ground beneath our feet becomes sacred as we are transformed into a new creation together.

The first two days of the program are intentionally designed to shed the things we brought with us, and as we cross over into the remaining days of the program the new community that has formed flourishes!
Summer is coming!

We know you have plenty of items to cross off your list between now and when those staff and campers arrive. To support your work, the American Camp Association (ACA), wants to remind you of some valuable resources.

**Evaluating Your Camp Program.** Looking for tools to evaluate your program quality or the outcomes of participants in your program. Start here. [https://www.acacamps.org/research](https://www.acacamps.org/research)

**Connect with Your Peers.** ACA Connect is your online community and lets you engage with other camp professionals doing the same work you are doing. Ask and answer questions. Network with others on a variety of discussion topics. Get connected. [https://www.acacamps.org/connect](https://www.acacamps.org/connect)

**Be Prepared.** Communicating effectively during a crisis is critical. ACA’s Crisis Communications Toolkit will help you prepare the components of a good crisis communications plan should the worst happen. Download the communication toolkit for free. [https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/crisis-communications-toolkit](https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/crisis-communications-toolkit)

**Camp Crisis Hotline 1-800-573-9019.** ACA’s crisis hotline is 24/7 and confidential. The Camp Crisis Hotline is for camps in crisis and provides callers with the opportunity to talk through their crisis with a trained third party. The hotline is not a medical or legal expert call line, but it can help you think through your issues and options. Post this number where you can find it.

**Train Staff to Deal with Sticky Situations.** S’mores and Other Sticky Stuff is a game for staff training. Available through the ACA bookstore, this interactive game is perfect for precamp and in-service staff training. S’mores identifies sticky situations and helps staff identify responses, promotes discussion about difficult issues, and helps reinforce the role each staff member plays in the camp’s risk management plan. [http://acabookstore.org/smore-and-other-sticky-stuffa-game-for-training-camp-staff-2nd-edition/](http://acabookstore.org/smore-and-other-sticky-stuffa-game-for-training-camp-staff-2nd-edition/)

**Faith-based Activity Resources for Front-line Staff.** The ACA Bookstore has tools for faith-based camp staff, with resources from retreat models, to staff training, to games, activities, and scavenger hunts, to teaching about nature. [https://www.acabookstore.org/c-273-faith-based-resources.aspx](https://www.acabookstore.org/c-273-faith-based-resources.aspx)

Questions about these resources and others? Call or email Grechen Throop at 765-342-8456 or gthroop@ACAcamps.org
Lessons Learned
By Keith Johnson, The Board Coach

When I retired in December 2017 after 43 years of service with LOM, I sought a way to continue to serve Christ and the church. After months of prayerful discernment, I launched “The Board Coach,” a spiritually based consulting service for board leadership development, strategic planning and financial development. The past 16 months have been encouraging as I have worked with boards and executives in Minnesota, South Dakota, Kansas, Texas, Montana, California, Alabama, South Carolina and North Carolina. In the process I’ve gleaned several insights that will be helpful to executive directors.

• Board members want to make a difference and respond positively when challenged in their service with renewed commitment;
• Many executive directors find it hard to prioritize the necessary time to grow board capacity and capability through recruiting, training and supporting top-notch board members;
• Board presidents and committee chairs have expressed the need for and responded well to training in how to develop agendas, lead meetings and skills for enhancing communication, making decisions and handling conflicts;
• Boards have embraced a matrix profile that I’ve developed to help them identify the gifts, abilities and skills needed to strengthen their boards; and
• Leadership development workshops for boards are important, but just as vital are conversations prior to the workshop to set the agenda, along with follow-up consultation to ensure well intentioned plans are implemented.

You can find more information on available services at www.TheBoardCoach.org, which includes possible workshop topics, past experience, governance resources and a link to my LOM podcast on the basics of good governance.

Please don’t let a lack of finances stand in the way as I will partner with you and your board to make it work. To explore whether “The Board Coach” can be helpful to you, I suggest a three-way Zoom conversation with your board president. Contact me at kjohnson@TheBoardCoach.org or call 828-230-7282. I would love to help you and your board grow toward your full potential.
From one of our LOM Ministry Partners

**SNICKERS:** Enhancing Our Ministry Among Young Adults

To learn more, contact Don Romsa, ELCA Program Director for Campus Ministry at Don.Romsa@elca.org

For the past two years, ELCA Campus Ministry has been conducting an extensive research project to evaluate the effectiveness of our work, and to understand more fully the young adults and others we serve. We also hoped the research would give us some clues to help congregations and other faith communities more effectively connect with young adults and engage them in ministry. Below are eight approaches this research suggests might help all of us become more effective in our ministry among young adults:

**Simple** faith practices help ground and nurture the busy and complicated lives of young adults

The research indicated that young adults are seeking a faith community where the experience of simple faith practices is central. Small group worship, personal and community prayer, opportunities for growing in faith, service to those in need and advocacy for justice, time in nature, shared meals and fellowship – all of these simple faith practices were valued and affirmed by these young adults.

**Nurture** a community that is graciously welcoming and rich in relationships

The research was clear that young adults are looking for a grace-filled, authentic community where ALL are welcomed just as they are. No masks – no pretending – no faking it. They realize faith can best be nurtured in a community of faith that embraces everyone as precious children of God.

**Involve** them as creators rather than just consumers

Young adults want both the opportunity and the support to genuinely lead in ministry – to make important decisions, and then carry them out. They want to be part of faith communities where they are invited to be “servant leaders” – making a new road – being church in a new way. They want to be recognized as having skills, talents, and abilities that qualify them for leadership roles in a community of faith.

**Changing** altar linens replaced by changing the world

In this research we discovered again that many young adults are ready to follow a Jesus who invites us to change the world. In our campus ministries, young adults are actively working with:

- AIDS patients,
- people who are homeless,
- children aging out of foster care,
- families who are hungry,
- older adults who need companionship,
- DACA students,
- and the list goes on.

As they partner with God in the work of mending creation, they recognize that their faith is shaped and deepened.

**Know** their stories, hopes and dreams

Young adults would like someone to listen to their stories – to hear about their hopes and dreams, and what gives their lives meaning and purpose. This is what it means to accompany young adults as they explore their journey, and in simple conversations, sometimes over a cup of coffee, the door of faith opens wider for them.

Continued on next page
**Exploration** rather than definition

In the lives of young adults, it’s critical that the faith community offer a safe place to connect faith and reason through freedom of inquiry, inviting and encouraging them to wrestle with the big questions of life and faith. Faith is deepened in this place because they are free to explore, question, wonder, doubt, and be challenged – but always know they are loved!

**Remember** the power of the screen

This research confirmed that the lives of today’s young adults are characterized much more by digital connections and networks than previous generations. Faith communities that wish to connect in meaningful ways with young adults will need to be attentive to the significance of these digital platforms and relationships.

**Surprised** and sustained by the radical Jesus

Finally, the research suggests that many young adults really aren’t hungry for more church structure, or smooth programming, or better praise bands, or fun social activities - they are hungry for the radical Jesus they discover in the Bible. In this Jesus, they see a God who is real – present on the margins, willing to shake things up, on the side of the lowly, choosing to die without status, and always radically loving us and the world. The more we proclaim this radical Jesus we see in the Bible, the more we will find opportunities to engage young adults in ways that are meaningful for their lives.

LOM News will not be published during the summer camping season. The next edition will be published in early September.

**Have a Great Summer Season!**

*From the LOM Board and Staff*
Teaching and Innovating

Two areas we have not yet discussed in this series of articles on leadership are how leaders are teachers and leaders are innovators. **A leader is a teacher.** Part of being a leader, I think, is being a teacher. As someone who leads others, you need to use teachable moments to get the best out of those who follow you. In fact, Jesus frequently used the unplanned experiences he encountered to draw out spiritual wisdom and reflection. This ability to observe life and then to get people to consider the deeper meanings of situations is a powerful way to teach and guide.

Shared activities when you engage your followers become an avenue for reflection and seeking wisdom. Planned programs are certainly beneficial; however, some of the most powerful learning will happen in those moments that are not part of a curriculum. Teachable moments are spontaneous. These teaching opportunities are not predictable and can occur any time, perhaps when discoveries are made, when differences of opinions are voiced, or possibly after a failure.

When teaching a new skill, be patient, understanding and friendly. For a quick Biblical lesson on modeling, read Exodus 20: 8-11 and Deuteronomy 5: 12-15. In one verse, God commands the observance of the Sabbath. In another verse, God models the observance of the Sabbath. Which one do you think is more effective?

Being supportive of your followers while teaching them is also important. One model that works effectively is based on the acronym “EDGE.” First, you explain or do. Then you demonstrate, showing the staff as they help. Then you guide, having staff do something and you watch. Finally, you enable, as staff do and someone else watches. In addition to you teaching, you should learn from your students. Great leaders are always willing to admit mistakes, listen to their supervisees’ feedback, and learn better ways of helping their team achieve its goals.

**A leader is an innovator.** As a leader, you should be creative and be willing to take the first steps to do new things or get the group going. Leaders also take initiative. They look for ways to add creative twists to the program by asking the questions, “What do people expect?” and “How can we mess it up?” An innovator is also a visionary, foresees new ideas and helping them come to fruition; also seeing an impending crisis and trying to avert it if possible. In the Bible, Deborah is a model for us as a leader who seizes the moment. Read Judges 4. Here are some questions to consider:

- How do you explain the different reactions of Deborah and Barak to their crisis?
- What gave Deborah her ability to act decisively?
- What kind of forces and people threaten your life, the life of your family, the life of your congregation, the life of your community? Do you have a partner to help you overcome these forces?
- How does your relationship work? Who is responsible for what?

Next time, we’ll talk about evaluation. –Chad Hershberger