

*The Camping Movement of
The American Lutheran
Church*

Volume 2

*The Collected Histories of Camps Related to
The American Lutheran Church
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Introduction

The stories of the individual camps that affiliated with the The American Lutheran Church were originally part of a single volume that also included the history of camping at the national level of the church. The development of camping, as well as the increased visibility of camping leaders, was important to a number of ministries in the ALC. It was also essential in nurturing future leaders for the ALC and its congregations.

This second volume completes the earlier publication I called *A History of the National Camping Movement in the ALC* (Volume 1 of the Camping Movement of The American Lutheran Church). There were many key figures in the original publication, including Jerry Manlove, Jerry Olstad, Paul A. Hanson and a host of others, who shaped the effectiveness of a remarkable movement. The key figures in this book are, in some cases, less known. They include hundreds of committed lay and clergy volunteers who built the camps that related to the ALC with determination and sweat. I find their stories even more inspirational because they were never expected to make such sacrifices.

This book could not have been brought to fruition had it not been for Paul A. Hanson who asked Mark Gardner to begin collecting camp histories. Mark, then a staff member for the Division of Life and Mission to the Congregation of the ALC, dutifully asked camp directors to send in their camp histories. Of

course, only a few did. Mark kept at it and when he left his position to join the staff of Augsburg Fortress Publishing House, Mark asked me to continue the writing task.

As an active camp executive I was able to use (or misuse) my friendship with colleagues to gather several of the histories gathered in this volume. Some of the stories were obtained through a phone interview with a camp director or member of the camp Board of Directors. Other camp leaders sent elaborate booklets from anniversaries or special events. These often included names, dates and photos of major events. In most cases, the information submitted for this research was provided without the name of the original writer. They were simply stories of camp history that had collected in a camp office over the years.

Thus, it is most likely true that some of the history I have collected is suspect. Source material drawn from memories of former directors and board members is often subjected to filtration. I know of situations where camp histories left out long periods of time, periods that were marked with malaise in their ministries. I also suspect that credit may have been given to the wrong people and I fear that spelling of names may be incorrect in numerous cases.

So if these stories may be in error, why bother to collect them? Why publish them? I believe, as a whole, they are simply too precious to forget. Those who

gathered and saved information may be forgiven for their inaccuracy because they did not know their notes might one day be found in print. At the same time, a collection of camp history can ignite our passions for this important movement.

I find these stories inspirational. I think of the men who walked an empty prairie in North Dakota to stake out a camp (Camp of the Cross) on the shore of a lake that had yet to be created. They had their camp designed before the waters of the Missouri River filled up behind the dam that was being built near Garrison. I think of a group of people gathering around a log to pray that the land they stood on would one day become their Bible Camp. Today that same log graces the fireplace at Lutherdale near Elkhorn, WI. I think of the early church leaders who led groups of campers into Brushy Creek in Texas before they even dreamed of buying their own camp. I think of a group of laity stuck in a snow bank high on a mountain road searching for the perfect place to build a camp. Pioneers, regardless of their profession, need to be honored.

Finally, I share these stories because they may just encourage a new generation of camping leaders to take risks. I sometimes wonder if we will lose the values inherent in outdoor ministries if we fail to sense how fragile and fleeting all ministries can be without the dreamers. It is my hope and prayer that these historical sketches will remind us of our

essential character. The camps of the ALC were built at the grass root level by ordinary people who sought to meet extraordinary needs. Few of these people waited for approval or needed blessings from on high. The establishment of a camp appeared to be an act of Spirit-filled people who believed their efforts would make a difference. One only wonders what they would think if they could witness camping's impact today.

I would like to thank those whose efforts assisted me in this task. I have mentioned Mark Gardner's contribution who first responded to Paul A. Hanson's request to begin the collection. Jerry Manlove was often called upon to help me identify those stories that needed to be included, along with the names of key people who made significant contributions. Likewise, I received comments from Jerry Olstad, past Executive Director of Outdoor Ministries for the ALC. My colleagues, including Executive Directors of many of the camps included in this volume, along with several program staff and Board Members, helped by reviewing many of the histories in which they were involved. When I first shared rough drafts, I received several critiques and a few critical letters informing me of my mistakes; I am thankful for the corrections that have helped make this volume more accurate.

No dedication is needed for this volume. The heroes are those you will read about in the following pages.

The Camps of Minnesota

The proliferation of camps in the state of Minnesota is a result of the large Lutheran population of the state as well as its ethnic background. As an immigrant church, Lutherans tended to organize around nationalities - German, Norwegian, Danish, and Finnish to name a few. That each should choose to develop its camps was natural, considering the widely held view that camping was essential to the development of moral character in young people.

But of all the church bodies that developed camping, it was the Evangelical Lutheran Church (formerly the Norwegian Lutheran Church until its name change in 1946) that led the way. Often against the wishes of its leaders, lay leaders and dedicated and independent clergy worked together to establish camps that would meet the needs of youth and Christian education in congregations.

Many of the older camps located in Minnesota were modeled after the centralized camping experience. Cabins were clustered in two living areas, one for boys and another for girls. Often the camp layout surrounded the all-purpose dining hall. Programs used the 'conference style' methods that called for a division of morning time into blocks for Bible Study, Missions Hour, and Practical Hour. A camp dean provided leadership for the summer program. The person was responsible for locating volunteer counselors and speakers for the week.

Most of the camps that developed in these early days were developed through volunteer labor. Often it was the responsibility of a committee of lay leaders to design camp facilities and lay out the location of roads, parking lots and playing fields. Many camp founders became strongly attached to the camps because of their personal involvement. Their camp programs became primary tools for involving youth in the work of the church.

A few camps with Minnesota support bases were established more in the fifties and sixties. These camps developed around a small group model and had high adventure motifs. Camp Amnicon (included in the Minnesota section of this volume because of its Minneapolis ownership) and Good Earth Village are two examples of camps that benefited from the changing models that were applied to development. Their program offerings were distinguished from the residential camps and often complemented the more established programs. This enabled many congregations to utilize multiple camp settings to meet their needs.

Shetek Lutheran Bible Camp Slayton, MN

The Windom and Luverne Circuits of the Evangelical Lutheran Church purchased Shetek Lutheran Bible Camp on December 9, 1947, from the State of Minnesota for \$40,100. Prior to this time, it had been a transient camp, established under the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1936, also known as the Works Progress Administration. The camp consisted of 14 buildings and included a dining hall, eight cabins, a bathhouse and a recreation hall on 27.4 acres. The first actual Bible Camps were held at the site as early as 1945.

Officers of the first board of directors were Pastor M. A. Braaten of Ruthton, Pastor Edson Harftje of Slayton, Pastor Leander Brakke of Westbrook, and Pastor Oberstad of Tracy, MN.

Early events at the camp included Sunday worships and picnics, women's missionary federation retreats, 4-H camps and Luther League camps. Events later added to the schedule included a week long high school camp, ALCW and Brotherhood retreats, church council retreats, family camps and senior citizen retreats.

The chapel was built in 1949-1950. When the air base in Sioux Falls, SD, was closed over 100 men from the Luverne and Windom Circuit offered to dismantle its buildings to salvage

lumber, windows, and doors and move the material to the camp to build the chapel. The chapel was built by Elmer B. Ralph Construction Company of Pipestone and was dedicated on September 10, 1950, by Dr. L. M. Stavig, President of Augustana College and President of the ELC. Its cost was held to under \$5000.

The first college students who served as summer camp counselors, as well as lifeguards and a canteen manager were hired in 1963. After a few years, the Board of Directors hired a summer program director. In this same year, the first winter retreats were held under the supervision of the camp's new caretakers, Marv and Iola Oines.

In the mid sixties some of the buildings were winterized and Shetek began hosting winter retreats. In 1970 Cheyenne Autumn Lodge was built, increasing the facilities to include two recreation and retreat buildings, with meeting rooms that included a fireplace and space for pool, ping-pong, and foosball games.

Pastor Ron Letnes was called to serve as Executive Director in the winter of 1974. Under Pastor Letnes, Shetek became widely known for creative and energetic programs. Filled with music, service, and hospitality, the programs grew in size and attracted

many youth from southwest Minnesota and eastern South Dakota.

Following the departure of Pastor Letnes in 1980, Mr. Jon Hoyme was called to serve as Executive Director in May of 1980. Shetek Lutheran Bible Camp maintained a strong sense of program health and appealed to increasing numbers of youth and family campers.

Following a capital fund appeal in the eighties, Shetek constructed a new retreat center for adults, remodeled its dining hall into a beautiful year round center and added to its winter retreat housing with many improvements. A bathhouse with shower and restroom facilities was built in 1982. Many of the original buildings were also remodeled during this decade.

Under Hoyme's leadership, camp programs were stabilized and activities for families and special groups

Green Lake Bible Camp Spicer, Minnesota

Prior to the formation of Green Lake Bible Camp, the property was known as the Crescent Beach Inn and was owned by Harold B. Lidstone. As a resort development, Lidstone had plans to dredge a lagoon but the project met with local resistance that in turn contributed to its economic failure. An ill informed neighbor believed that the

from the region were developed. Hoyme also offered programs for urban learning in Milwaukee and offered wilderness canoe trips through Camp Amnicon for individual campers from the area that is served by Shetek.

Shetek Lutheran Bible Camp has continued to serve Lutherans in a rural area of southwestern Minnesota and the Sioux Falls, SD area. During the period of its existence, rural America was undergoing many changes due to redistribution of its population and changes in the nature of the family farm. Despite the economic challenges associated with these changes, Shetek continued to draw large crowds during the summer season. It offered Sunday morning services that drew many cottage owners and vacationers from the Lake Shetek and state park areas. Families seeking space for family reunions filled the camp facilities months in advance.

lagoon would lower the water level of beautiful Green Lake. Nonetheless, Lidstone built a number of cabins and repaired the old buildings located on the property, formerly owned by D. N. Tallman as a summer home.

Lidstone gave up on his development in April 1936. He went to Peter Bonde, Kandiyohi County

Sheriff, and presented him with the keys to the Crescent Beach Inn, saying,

"You can take the Inn as it stands." He then moved to Michigan but the land remained in dispute. Having secured a promissory note from A.C. Pancoast of San Antonio, TX, Lidstone's interests were given to Pancoast. The problem remained dormant until 1939 when the matter of ownership was settled out of court.

Newspaper reports indicate that a Lutheran Bible Camp was held at Crescent Beach on June 25 to July 1, 1934, using a large tent capable of holding 1200 people. This group moved to Interlachen Hotel on the northern shore of Green Lake the next year. The camp was sponsored by the American Lutheran Conference of West-Central Minnesota. Peter Bonde then purchased the property of the Crescent Beach Inn and invested over \$17,000 in its purchase and repairs.

It may have been Bonde's idea to sell the Inn to the Lutheran Church. Bonde met with the Bible Camp Committee at Augsburg Publishing House, and later with Rev. Melford Knutson of the S. E. Minnesota District. An organizing committee was developed and Green Lake Lutheran Bible Camp was incorporated on March 22, 1938. The following people served on the first board of directors: Rev. T. W. Tysdal of Spicer, Rev. Melford Knutson of Red Wing, Rev. H. R. Gregerson of Marshall and Rev.

O. B. Endreson of Fairmont.

Congregations from the southern half of Minnesota were invited to join. Some of the congregations were located in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Albert Lea, Austin, Luverne, Wilmar, Windom, and Goodhue.

Following the filing of the Articles of Incorporation, the first official business of the new corporation was to purchase the Crescent Beach Inn from Mr. Peter Bonde of Willmar. The property included a home, a carriage house, maid's quarters, and assorted other buildings that had been repaired. The purchase price was \$10,000. Additional negotiations raised the price to \$12,000 with Peter Bonde offering to pay \$1000 up front and \$1000 at the end of the contract when he would provide a warranty deed for the property. Peter Bonde's involvement with Green Lake Bible Camp spanned a period of eleven years, from 1938 through 1949.

A chapel, patterned after the architectural style of a Norwegian Stave Church, was constructed on the camp property in 1941 at a cost of \$3,000. P. O. 'Peter' Nasvik of Christ Lutheran Church, St. Paul, was the designer of the building and contributed various building materials. He had intended to construct the chapel in Roseau, MN, but at the urging of Rev. A. E. Hanson, Nasvik was encouraged to build the chapel at Green Lake. Mr. Arne Flaten, professor of art at St. Olaf College, did

part of the original artwork.

According to his daughter, Peter Nasvik...

"visited his native Norway in 1930 and saw the Bergen church. He took snapshots of it from various angles and copied the floor plan and detail work of it. When he returned to America, he asked an architect (I believe it is Fred Slifer of St. Paul) to draw up plans and blueprints for him. Then Mr. Nasvick waited for several years for the opportunity to erect the chapel of his dreams in the proper setting. When the Bible Camp Committee of the Southern Minnesota District of the Norwegian Lutheran Church secured Green Lake as the site for a Bible camp, they approached Mr. Nasvick to build a chapel for it, and it was found to be exactly the type of setting he had been looking for."

The chapel became a central symbol to the focus of Green Lake Bible Camp's ministry and was dedicated in July of 1940. Many church leaders of renown were involved as staff and Bible Study leaders in these early days. Rev. Jacob Tanner, a systematics professor at Luther Seminary (upon retirement, Tanner began teaching at Waldorf College in Forest City, Iowa, at age 70) walked up the hill to the chapel to teach Bible study at the tender age of 97. Other regulars to visit the camp and share their illustrious teachings of scripture included Andrew Burgess, Theodore Huggenvik, Carl B. Ylvisaker, and A. E.

Hanson.

A girl's dormitory was built in 1942. The dorm and attached lodge were named Bonde Lodge in honor of Peter Bonde. In addition to helping establish the Green Lake Bible Camp, Mr. Bonde served as a volunteer caretaker of the grounds for many years. One of the last tasks before his death was to build the steps up to the chapel door.

Rev. Paul A. Hanson, pastor at Vinje Lutheran Church in Wilmar (and son of A. E. Hanson) remembered serving on the Board of Directors in the fifties. At one meeting, he made a motion to spend \$100,000 to clean up the sewage problem, buy some additional land from the Kelsey's and add shoreline to the waterfront. Mr. John Bjorge from Granite Falls said after the meeting, "Are you trying to bankrupt us?" Such debate is an indication of the vision of the early board members who knew that maintaining outdoor ministry programs would require substantial steps in faith.

Hanson's memories about his Green Lake Bible Camp days include:

"For a long time Vinje church gave \$1,500 a year to development and brought a big crew of kids out to Green Lake to camp, matter of fact 100% of the confirmands. I used to make that a requirement for confirmation. People will debate the authority (I think the end result is good). Orim Lee from Vinje was the program director for a long time, Roy

Eliassen, of course, was in a class by himself with his wife as camp manager. And then Charles Frost, the architect, supervised a good deal of the remodeling of the lodge. Norm Madsen, the architect now at St. Olaf, also did a great deal."

In 1956 an additional 50 acres was purchased south of the chapel and in 1959 four cabins and a two-story lodge were built on the hill above the chapel. These buildings were winterized and used for winter retreats.

Dale Caylor was hired as the first full time director in the early sixties. He was a local business man and part owner of a grocery store. He served Green Lake for approximately twelve years. During his directorship, the camp managed its summer programs by allowing local pastors to lead each week with volunteer counselors. The camp would hire cooks and lifeguards, supporting the program with a small staff. Toward the end of Caylor's tenure, Green Lake began to provide the entire staff, including the camp counselors. There tended to be a loss of support for the program and some clergy expressed reservations about the direction the camp program began to take without clergy present.

Pastor Dean Larsen was called to serve Green Lake Bible Camp in November of 1975. He had served as a pastor in Brookings, SD, specializing in youth ministry. The Board wanted to redirect the theological focus of the

camp program and strengthen its relationship with local congregations. Green Lake was also experiencing some financial challenges and Pastor Dean was asked to take on the challenge of rebuilding.

Larsen expanded the staff by hiring Erling Lundeen as Property Manager in the spring of 1976. Four years later, Dave Eliassen was hired as Program Director, one of the first full time Program Directors serving under an Executive Director in the ALC. Dave had literally grown up at camp since his father, Roy Eliassen, had spent his summers volunteering for many years.

In 1979 the GLBC Corporation composed of 60,000 confirmed members of 159 American Lutheran Church congregations voted to construct a new facility to replace Bonde Lodge and other facilities on the lakeshore. The cost of the project was \$1,350,000. A capital funds appeal was conducted during 1980 and 1981. Approximately 6000 individual and group pledges totaling \$1,500,000 were received. In 1981 ground was broken for the new Chrysalis House and it was completed on January 20, 1982. On April 4, 1982, the Chrysalis House was dedicated to the glory of God. On August 18, 1985, the Chrysalis House mortgage was burned!

By 1987, Green Lake Bible Camp served nearly 2,500 youth and adults during the three summer months

and nearly 5,500 youth and adults in the fall, winter and spring. The total number of camper days for 1986 was 18,046. In 1987 the operating budget was \$496,500 and the fixed assets were booked at \$1,972,104.

Alison Kennedy, a camper during the 1986 season shared her recollection of the spirit of Green Lake Bible Camp. It serves as an apt description of the power of Green Lake's camping ministry:
I loved Bible Camp at Green Lake. It was a

lot of fun! We met new people from other churches and did activities with them such as swimming, camping outside, playing games and having chapel together. We made new friends and made better relationships with our old friends. But we also had a great relationship with God during our time at camp. We learned and understood how God cares so much for us. Another reason why I liked camp so much was because everyone there was so friendly and cheerful. Everyone looked like they were having a great time. I knew I was."

Luther Crest Bible Camp Alexandria, Minnesota

Luther Crest was originally a camp for boys called Camp Carlos. It had been established in 1931 and signed over to Carlos Camps, Inc. on July 5, 1932. Earl J. Drussel built the original dining hall, placing the rafters on June 23, 1931, according to markings found on the rafters themselves. Norm Olson ran the first camp and invited Henry "Heine" Brock to join the staff. Heine had been on the Olympic diving team and later became well known for his skating in the Ice Follies.

The mortgage holder of Camp Carlos was Phil Noonan. In the fall of 1945, Mr. Noonan called a local pastor to inform them that he was going to foreclose on the camp. If the church became interested, he would sell the

property to them for \$1000 down and \$24000 in 90 days. Four pastors met with Mr. Noonan and Pastor Thronson liked the idea so much that he wrote a personal check to Noonan then raced to the Osakis bank to borrow the money to cover the check.

Over the next 90 days the area pastors set out to raise \$35,000 to finish the purchase and make necessary repairs. They did not reach their goal but secured enough to cover the \$25,000 original sale price. On October 7, 1945, the Milaca-Glenwood-Fergus Falls Circuits of the Evangelical Lutheran Church gathered to vote on the purchase of Camp Carlos. It passed by a vote of 84 to 1 and the camp was bought for \$25,000. On November 6, 1945, the Luther

Crest Bible Camp Articles of Incorporation were submitted to the state.

The early camp association worked hard to develop solid programs for their churches. Improvements to the camp were made with volunteers and the facilities included an excellent beach, high and low regulation diving boards, cement tennis courts, a main lodge, seven cabins and western style bunks with "inner spring mattresses."

After purchasing the boys camp, Luther Crest quickly began offering summer Bible camps, Ladies' Aids events, Sunday School institutes, mission societies and Lutheran Brotherhood rallies. The Lutheran Student Association also held events for college students in the late forties and other Lutheran bodies, such as the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (Danish), also used the camp facilities.

Building a chapel on the camp property soon became a priority. On September 26, 1950, the corporation approved the building of a chapel. The building was to be 72' X 34' and serve as a focal point for the camp. This decision was controversial because many people believed the dining hall already served as an excellent chapel. Yet the building moved forward at a total cost of \$20,823.70 with income of \$15,846.70 and a loan of \$5000.

By the summer of 1962, Luther Crest began to hire camp counselors for the summer season. Camp deans

continued to bring different programs each week, requiring great flexibility by staff members. During these years, seminary students were hired to serve as summer camp managers. They, in turn, hired the staff, coordinated the program with the camp deans and supervised the counselors and camp property.

In the winter, a retreat center was available for group use. It rented for \$30 for the weekend and could provide housing for 30 people. The guests brought their own food, led their own program and did their cooking.

In February of 1968 Pastor Will Bigott arrived at Luther Crest to serve as the first full time Executive Director. On April 11, 1969, the first year round maintenance staff was added on a part time basis. This marked a major step for the organization for full time leadership would result in many important new steps.

Camp minutes reflect a good spirit at work among Board members. Meeting on May 12, 1970, a storm moved onto the property. Board member Rev. Chris Preus made an observation about the storm in order to encourage those meeting to complete their work before the rain fell. It was included in the minutes upon the order of the chairman:

"Rain-maker 'Christ Preuse' made a weather observation. Honorable chairman ordered said observation to be included in the

minutes. (unofficial - by Lord Tennyson):

*'The weatherman turned to the
heavens to see if the sky was red;
And now he is searching for
eye-wash cause an old sea-gull flew
overhead'*

*The moral of which is 'It's a
good thing cows don't fly''*

In 1970 and 1971 a new retreat center was discussed. A firm proposal was presented to the annual meeting in 1972. Pastor Bigott, however, departed Luther Crest in the spring and the proposal was laid aside until Pastor Ron Nielsen was hired as the Executive Director in September of 1972.

In October 1974, a building proposal was approved for a new dining hall and office building. By this time several cabins had been winterized for retreat use. The new facility began with ground breaking in 1977 and it was dedicated on July 23, 1978. Retreating at Luther Crest grew extensively in this decade. Youth groups, Kogundus Retreats for men, church council events, winter retreats for ALCW (women's groups) and special family retreats were well received. The foundations of environmental education were also laid.

Pastor Ron Nielsen left Luther Crest in August 1979. During the vacancy, Ms. Cheryl Berg and Ms. Mary Magelson served as acting directors. Pastor Phil Heide was called to this

position in the fall of 1980 and served until 1984. During his years of service, the old "Horse Barn" which had been converted into two cabins was torn down and two new winterized cabins were built.

In January of 1985, Pastor Arden Norum was called to serve as executive director. Under Norum's leadership the environmental education program grew from day events to a more developed program. A full time Environmental Education Director was hired and campers from Minnesota and Eastern North Dakota came to Luther Crest for three-day events. As a result new trails and native prairie grass and wildflower projects were completed.

Camping and retreat programs throughout the year had become a normal routine at Luther Crest. With the increase in demand for space, staff also grew to meet these needs. A Program Director for servicing retreats and directing summer programs was hired. Among the people who served in positions of program were Mr. David Herder and Mr. John Skogen. In addition the camp had a full time Property Manager, two secretaries, and a retreat host.

Pastor Norum provided continual leadership to the organization for many years. Under his leadership, retreat ministries were stabilized with new offerings provided for the association of churches owning Luther Crest. In addition, Norum provided

leadership through a major capital fund appeal that resulted in substantial new construction at the camp. This step enabled Luther Crest to increase its

Mount Carmel Alexandria, Minnesota

Mount Carmel has served as a center for inspiration and renewal for many decades. Its history is well documented in a small booklet written by Dr. Samuel Miller, formerly with Lutheran Bible Institute of Minneapolis. A portion of this history is reproduced here:

“For many years we had hoped and prayed for a home of our own for the summer sessions. God had granted us great blessings at Lake Independence. But because the property was not our own, and because we had to share it with others, it was not possible to do many things that we wanted to do at our summer sessions. For three years we also rented quarters at Lake Geneva, near Alexandria. This gave us opportunity to become acquainted with that part of our State and to look around at possible sites.

...We examined many sites. Next to the Lake Geneva Bible Camp which we were renting there were two pieces of property, each of twenty acres. We found that the two pieces could be purchased for about \$10,000. There were certain drawbacks, especially the proximity to the Lake Geneva Bible Camp. But we liked the territory and other sites that

winter retreat capacity for adult audiences and further solidified its congregational relationships.

we had examined cost just as much, and even more.

...One morning I was going to the Court House...On the street I met the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, who knew that we were looking for a site, and he inquired as to the progress we were making. When I told him that we would have to pay about \$100 an acre for the ground, he said, ‘Those people do not want to sell their property. You can buy property for much less than that.’

He then told me that the State had purchased the property at the northern end of Lake Carlos for a State Park, and that there was a forty-acre piece next to what the State had purchased, which they were trying to purchase but the owner wanted more than the state would pay. ‘If you will offer them \$1,000 for that forty acres, I feel sure that they will take it,’ he said. ‘And we who are working for the State Park will have no objection to the Lutheran Bible Institute occupying that piece.’

Before I went out that morning I had definitely prayed to God that every step that I took that day should be in the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I therefore dared not disregard this advice that had come to me all unexpectedly. I immediately drove out to the

land that he had indicated but found that it was not suitable, being very low and swampy, without an attractive shore that could be used for a bathing beach.

But while standing there looking about, I met another man who had a cottage and some property nearby. I found that he was fully familiar with all the land around the lake, and asked him if he knew of any place that might be a suitable place for a camp. Without my telling him, he said, 'You must be from the Lutheran Bible Institute.'

'How do you know that?' I said. 'Oh,' he answered, 'it is known all about here that you are looking for a site.' Then he told me about a piece of ground which he said a Mr. Bartel had been trying to sell to him. He described the location and said, 'You look it over, but look out for the owner. He will certainly try to get as much out of you as he possible can.'

...I now looked up this piece of ground and was fortunate enough to find the owner, Mr. Bartel, on the grounds. He was working on the very highest point of the rolling hills overlooking the lake. As I walked up the hill I was immediately struck with the marvelous beauty of the location. Before I even entered into conversation with Mr. Bartel, I said to myself, 'This is where the dining room and lobby should be. And over on that other knoll is where the chapel ought to be.'

I found Mr. Bartel very talkative... When I asked him if he would like to sell the piece of property upon which he was working, he said, 'Well, yes, but you would not pay what I want for it.' After much conversation he had told me that he had paid \$2,500 for

the forty acres, that not long ago he had been offered \$3,500 for it, but he had held it in the hope that he could obtain more. Now, he said, he realized that he was getting old, that values had gone down, and he would be glad if he could get out of it what he had put into it.

'Suppose then,' I said, 'that we offered you \$2,500 for it. Would that attract you at all?' Without hesitation he answered, 'Yes, to you folks I would be glad to sell it for \$2,500. It has yielded enough crops,' he said, 'to pay for the taxes and a little income besides, and I will be satisfied if I get out of it what I have put in it.'

Dr. Miller was to find his dreamed challenged when he returned to Minneapolis. Others at LBI felt the land was not wooded enough and that the hills were too high. Dr. Miller did not push the issue. He told his friends that he would not attempt to persuade them but asked them to see what the Lord will reveal to us.' Each member of the Board of Trustees viewed it again and again and slowly realized that it was...a beautiful site.

On a chilly fall day in September, 1937, the faculty of LBI stayed in a cabin on nearby Lake Darling. They looked over the grounds and found the highest hill. There they had the first faculty prayer meeting and claimed the ground in the 'Name of the Lord Jesus' and asked God to help them build the necessary facilities.

The following summer, Pastor H. J. Stolee assumed the task of supervising construction. Friends of LBI loaned the money to pay for the land and construct the new buildings, the total investment being about \$40,000. One week courses were soon held at

a cost of \$10 for room and board in cabins for four people, or a housekeeping cabin for eight persons at a cost of \$15 per week.

The name Mount Carmel was selected because like the mount in Palestine, it was a beautiful highland overlooking a body of water."

Camp Knutson Manhattan Beach, Minnesota

Camp Knutson is situated on a peninsula between Lower Whitefish and Big Trout Lakes in northern Minnesota. This property was once the summer home of congressman Harold Knutson, who served in the United States Senate for 32 years.

Before his death in 1952, Congressman Knutson deeded the property to The American Lutheran Church, designating that it be used "as a summer retreat for neglected, unfortunate, deprived and handicapped children." It was also to be named in memory of his mother, Jeannette Holm Knutson.

The ALC operated Camp Knutson until 1978. During those years, the focus was placed on property and facility improvements and program development. Then in 1978 the operation of the camp was turned over to Lutheran Social Services, with complete ownership being transferred to Lutheran Social Services in 1980.

Camp Knutson is a not-profit,

Mt. Carmel has since become independent of the Lutheran Bible Institute of Minneapolis but has maintained its long tradition of family camping ministry at its beautiful outdoor setting

tax-exempt residential summer camp. The program serves disadvantaged individuals, families, congregations, and groups where they are given an opportunity to increase their experiences and improve their personal and spiritual well being without fear of failure or insensitive attention from others.

Camp Knutson allows each person to be "helped and helper, teacher and student, cared and cared for. The therapeutic program provides children, adolescents and adults who are mentally ill, culturally disadvantaged and chemically dependent with an exceptionally unique camping and vacation experience." It provides for a positive and supportive environment of programs and activities, archery, biking, nature studies, arts and crafts, volleyball, water sports and drama, to name a few. Each week activities and programs are organized to fulfill the needs and interests of each individual group.

Pathways Lutheran Bible Camp Ministry Bemidji, Minnesota

Pathways was officially incorporated on August 30, 1969. Two of its three camps can be traced back to the early thirties. Camp Emmaus was dedicated on September 2, 1934 and Lake of the Woods Bible Camp was established in the spring of 1933. Camp Minne-Wa-Kan was purchased on July 30, 1944.

The initial concept of Pathways was to serve as a programmatic organization that would coordinate camps in northwestern Minnesota. Camp coordination had been discussed for many years but a joint venture with Camps Emmaus and Minne-Wa-Kan enabled Pathways to begin. The concept for a coordinating ministry was initiated through a series of evaluations conducted by Jerry Manlove, Director of the Bible Camp Association for the ALC, on behalf of the organization.

Pastor Bruce Hermann from Trinity in Moorhead also helped establish the new camping entity so it might provide more effective development of the camps in the region. The name *Pathways* was chosen because it represented how Bible Camp ministries served to build pathways to God, to each individual and to nature.

Since both Emmaus and Minne-

Wa-Kan were unable to afford their own year round directors, they decided to pool their resources in order to call a shared director. Jerry Olstad was hired to serve as the first Executive Director of Pathways in 1972. Jerry would later become the National Director of Camping for the American Lutheran Church, and the first Executive Director of Outdoor Ministries for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Al Judson followed Jerry's departure and served as Executive Director from 1977 to 1990.

Pathways evolved from a program organization into one that eventually owned the camp properties. In 1985, Lake of the Woods Bible Camp became a third camp to become part of Pathways. Pathways also operated a houseboat program on the international waters of Rainy Lake in Ontario, Canada. And it offered day camps throughout its association of congregations in northwestern Minnesota.

Pathways also developed a program for "at risk youth" called "New Paths". Through this program participants built self-esteem within caring communities as they built their own kayaks for an extended river trip.

Camp Minne-Wa-Kan Cass Lake, MN

Camp Minne-Wa-Kan was purchased July 30, 1944, for \$18000. The Minne-Wa-Kan Resort became the property of the Bible Camp, retaining its Ojibwa name that means, "Spirit over the waters." The camp includes 23 acres of prime real estate on Lake Andrusia, near Cass Lake, MN. Pastors of the Clearwater Circuit of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America provided leadership in the early days of the camp. Rev. Jovaag was elected chairman of the corporation. Other pastors active in its ministry were Revs. Sokgerboe, Levohl, Arneson, and Megorden.

In 1948 a merger of the Norwegian Lutheran Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church changed the makeup of the constituency. Its territory of service expanded west to include churches in the Crookston area. The pool of pastors to serve as camp deans also expanded and as the camp programs grew, the Camp Trustees sought to hire a camp manger to oversee the operations.

During the fifties, additional land was obtained by purchasing cottages located at the north end of the camp. Many improvements to the camp were also made. Sometime after 1955, a chapel was moved onto the camp from McIntosh. In the early sixties, the ELC became part of the new American

Lutheran Church. This changed the ownership pattern of the camp. In 1962, 90 congregations of the Crookston and Bemidji Conferences took over ownership of Camp Minne-Wa-Kan. A Program Director was hired to provide leadership for the camp.

As early as 1970, leaders of the camp were looking for ways to hire a full time Camp Director. Discussing the need for leadership with the neighboring camp, Camp Emmaus, the two joined together to hire Mr. Jerry Olstad as the first Executive Director. The new cooperative agreement resulted in a program arrangement called "Pathways." The cooperative work led to the eventual development of a new corporation of the same name. This took place on April 16, 1977. The camp maintained its original name.

Camp Minne-Wa-Kan received many improvements after it became part of Pathways. A new dining hall and retreat center was approved in September of 1979 and completed by the following camping season. It provided lodging for 24 persons. A part-time program director was hired in 1983 and in 1984 a site director was hired to care for the facilities. In 1986, Minne-Wa-Kan purchased 350 acres south of the camp, but due to finances,

could not complete the purchase. A new recreational building was purchased and moved to the camp from a Girl Scout Camp on Cass Lake. The Director's House was built on the northeast end of the camp in 1988.

Minne-Wa-Kan was one of several camps used by Concordia College as it developed the Language

Camp Emmaus Menahga, Minnesota

Dr. Frederick Schiotz founded Camp Emmaus when he discovered Lake Morgan and its surrounding 80 acres of beautiful timber on July 26, 1933. The story is told that Schiotz camped along the lake for two weeks in a pup tent and then bought the land for \$5 down. He felt that the property would make an excellent Bible Camp site. Bethlehem of Ulen and Trinity of Moorhead were the two congregations that shared the initial investment of \$1,650 and responsibility for developing the camp. The two congregations dedicated the camp on September 2, 1934. Trinity Lutheran Church became sole owner in 1958.

The name for Camp Emmaus is drawn from Luke's gospel where Jesus revealed himself to two disciples on the road to Emmaus. It was felt that a similar sense of meeting Jesus would take place at a Bible Camp and thus the name was selected.

Camps that have become internationally known. The Norwegian Camp was held at Minne-Wa-Kan and over a weekend the camp was turned into a center for Norwegian studies. The food, language, activities, and crafts were all organized around Norwegian themes.

The camp was developed by volunteers who quickly began building cabins. Rev. Paul A. Hanson, former Executive Director of the Division for Life and Mission of the ALC and a former pastor at Trinity of Moorhead, offered these memories:

"Imagine a janitor in Willmar who was also the leader of the school patrol in the city, pulling together a number of locals and spending the summer at Emmaus and building the Dining Hall/Chapel with scarcely any money (nobody had any in the depression). One summer Bruce Hermann and I ran the camp (with 33 counselors and helpers) and a cook who was a college student, with ALL Trinity members. And we took Stan Goodwin...who came with 50 7th graders, we had a like number from Trinity, he had no counselors and by the end of the second day most of our kids had been cleaned out of money and tennis shoes...I threw what our kids wrote away or we would have had

ALL their parents descending on our camp, in a couple of days the kids had found their way and come together..."

For years, Camp Emmaus survived the criticism of its small lake! A.E. Hanson, father of Paul, described Morgan Lake as "a large pond with stunted fish." Jerry Manlove pointed out Emmaus's potential in terms of privacy, woods, and location. Mr. Ralph Russley repopulated the lake

Lake of the Woods Bible Camp Baudette Minnesota

Three pastors were instrumental in generating the enthusiasm to develop a Bible Camp near Lake of the Woods near the northern border of Minnesota. Pastors Nervig, Beaver, and Haaland, all local pastors serving congregations in the border lakes area, began to discuss the need for a camp at a meeting held in Roseau in 1932. The location for the camp was a 76-acre parcel of land, which had formerly been the homestead of Rev. Grefthen.

To purchase the site, seven ministers and three laymen extended funds for the project. These people include Reverends Evans, Beaver, Haaland, Nervig, Fjestad, Kløver and Brynestad. The three laymen were Norby of Thief River Falls, Brastad of Roseau, and Dahl of Baudette. The original camp association was

with trout to prove the point.

As a congregational camp, Emmaus opened its doors to many groups from other agencies and churches. Camp Emmaus was to become an early pioneer of year round camps and retreats by offering retreats during the 1976 and 1977 winter seasons. The camp has also grown in acreage to 347 acres.

comprised of these ten men.

In the spring of 1933 a decision to start a camp in the summer season was made. Following five weeks of steady labor by the men and their helpers, the camp was readied for service. The old house on the property served as the cookhouse in the early camp days and the camp began as a "rude affair" with many inconveniences.

Soon, land was found on the north side of Rainy River, a few miles from Lake of the Woods, north of Baudette. Two small buildings were reserved for girls, but most of the campers who were male and a few others lived in tents. The cookhouse was small and soon got so hot that the wood stove had to be taken outdoors. The chimney had to be turned each

time the wind direction changed in order to keep the fires burning. An old barn was used to keep athletic equipment in and served as the men's dressing room.

Each morning the campers were rowed across the river in five boats for morning and evening lessons that were conducted in a church on the point. The facility was called Wabanica Church. The Bible Study was on the book of Philippians and was led by Rev. Brynestad of Warren. Rev. S. L. Tallakson of Fergus Falls taught a class on Church History. The Old Testament class was led by Dr. Tanner from Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul. Rev. Agnar Tanner of Ulen, MN, discussed the Luther League. The spirit of the early campers was contagious and plans were made to continue the program in subsequent years.

Minor improvements were made following the first summer including the erection of a large tent to conduct outdoor meetings in addition to the church. Rev. H. J. Stolee of the Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis led a Bible Study on the Gospel of Luke. In 1935 the entire camp operations were moved to the point, all on the same side of the river. Three new cabins officially designated for use by girls had been built. A new auditorium was built thanks to a \$300 contribution from Mrs. Hanson of Thief River Falls. The cookhouse was

provided with new shelves and tables and a sleeping quarters for the cooks was added to make everyone's tasks easier.

A typical program in these early days included morning worship at Inspiration Point where the day began with songs and prayer. Classes followed with an emphasis on Bible Study, Church History, Old Testament characters, and contemporary youth issues with discussion. Afternoons provided ample time for recreation. In the evening, services were held which were led by many fine speakers such as Revs. Evans, Fjelstad, A. O. Johnson, Abrahamson, and Haaland.

Inspirational moments around a huge bonfire lit in front of the girls' cabins added to the wonder of the early camp programs. Following cabin devotions, conducted by deans, each cabin would sing the last song of praise and a bugler would sound taps "after which a deep peace settles on the entire camp giving assurance that God is near."

"A memory which may never be erased from the mind of the campers is the picture of the campers...from the water and the shore <with> their voices <blending and> praising God. The hymns which so beautifully express the joy of the Christian life seem to receive an added beauty from the setting as the songs of one group of singers in the boats would float across the waters to join the songs of those on the shore. Sometimes as these songs died away

one would hear from some distant knoll along the shore the echoing song of a hidden quartet."

(From a *History of Lake of the Woods Bible Camp*, about 1937. No author is cited on the history.)

Campers in the first few years at Lake of the Woods devised wonderful names for their buildings. The boys stayed at Rulien House on Wabanica Creek. The girls had the more luxurious cabins such as the famous 'Rat Palace' and 'Olson Cottage.' The 'Porcupine Inn' became the name of one of the girl's tents after a porcupine had wandered in by mistake. The newer girls' cabins were named after the clergy: 'Beavers Bunk' and 'Nervig's Nest' and 'Haaland's Hut.' The boys remembered catcalls and animal imitations outside the girls lodging units, but the greater part of the night was the furious battles with mosquitoes.

Pastors were also known for their difficulties and hardiness in putting up with rough facilities. Rev. Fjestad had a...

"tick with some wet hay inside. The next morning he found he had a lame back and sore chest. Dr. Tanner suggested certain remedies and the next few days found Rev. Fjestad sneaking away from the campers into the woods to an open spot where his body could absorb the healing rays of the sun."

Even in the construction of the cabins, workers had to work extra to build each unit. 'Haaland's Hut' was being constructed on July 4, 1935, when a large 80-foot spruce crashed upon the cabin in a sudden storm. Several of the workers narrowly escaped as the tree crashed beside them.

The dean of women, Grace Dale, lovingly took charge of her girls. Each night she would spray the three cabins and the girl's tents in order to discourage the mosquitoes from their nightly feasts. The pastors finally decided to move their cots and bunks into the Wabanica Church, as the campers said, "they didn't get to church that often." Rev. Abrahamson was remembered for the night that his bed banged the floor each time he took a breath.

An early camp leader's memories include the following:

"Since we believe that the youth of today often lack wholesome entertainment we ourselves are learning to take part in those things which we could take back to our own communities and use to provide active leisure activity for others. The energetic camper especially enjoys the swimming, hiking, and the various ball games but there is boating, croquet, ping-pong, and horseshoe for those who enjoy less strenuous athletic contests. Picnics, treasure hunts, and stunt days all help to round out a happy worthwhile recreation program."

In closing remarks about the first decade of camping, the writer of the camp history noted:

“Indeed we have some very definite goals still to be accomplished; namely: a deeper sense of the meaning of a Christ-like life instilled in each camper and the realization that Jesus is his truest friend, increase in camp membership,

increase in camp equipment, particularly cabins for the boys and for the faculty.”

Lake of the Woods Bible Camp became part of Pathways in 1985 so that it might become better equipped to serve the summer camping needs of churches and provide retreat programs for its members.

American Lutheran Memorial Camp - Camp Onomia Onamia, Minnesota

Bible Camp programs of the former American Lutheran Church (this church body preceded The American Lutheran Church established in 1960) were held prior to the establishment of The American Lutheran Memorial Camp at Onamia, MN. Early camps were held at Sundeen’s Resort on Maple Lake near Lake Independence, at Green Lake and at the Assembly Hall at the Lake Koronis Camp near Spicer. Interest in The American Lutheran Memorial Camp began in 1947. Dr. Arthur Braun, advisor to the Luther League, was charged to seek a suitable site for a camp that could serve the youth and leaders of the Luther League of the Minnesota District of the former American Lutheran Church.

Authorization to purchase the original 80 acres at \$50 per acre and an additional 64 acres of wooded land on Lake Shakopee and Lake Warren came

from the Minnesota District in 1948. The 80-acre parcel was known as “Shakopee Shores” and was a defunct development. The 64-acre site was called the ‘Warren Homestead,’ and had been assumed by the Bank of Onamia by Mr. Holten Benzie. It was also known as the ‘Generous Farm.’ Early leaders who assisted Dr. Arthur H. Braun included Rev. William Tinge, Rev. Otto Herder, and Rev. Paul Bredow.

Plans for the development of the camp were made by the Nichols firm of Site Planners and Architects who also assisted in the planning of the State Capitol approach and the campus of the University of Minnesota. The original property was quite rustic and had a primitive log barn, a farmhouse, and included wetlands and swamps.

The camp adjoins the Kathio Mille Lacs State Park, established in 1957, which created a 10,500-acre

outdoor resource along the Rum River next to the camp. The natural history of the area includes over 4000 years of continuous Native American history. The site bears historic landmarks from Minnesota history including logging booms and stagecoach trails. The area was also prominent in the maple sugar era of this heartland region.

Clearing of the grounds and construction using volunteer labor supplied by churches was started in 1948. Friendship Hall, the first building, was dedicated in July 1949. The facility served as a meeting, program, and worship center, and was also used as a dining hall. Lodging was first provided in temporary Army barracks. Electricity from the REA was first installed in October of 1951.

On May 29, 1948, the camp came under the dedicated leadership of Bill and Iona Knoll. Their duties included property management, camp record keeping and food service; all the necessary behind-the-scenes activities required for a well-run camp. The first camp program was held that summer. Eventually, youth camps, leadership schools, district conventions, mission weeks, family camps (1952), senior adult camps, a Lutheran World Federation gathering (1957) and men and women's auxiliaries were all hosted at the camp.

In 1949, Friendship Hall was dedicated "to the memory of the young people who had given their lives to

their Church and Country." Lakeview and Pine Needle dormitories were added in the early fifties, with a third dormitory called Woodland was completed in 1954. An eight-unit motel for families, staff, and campers was built and completed in 1959.

An attractive Fireside Circle with a large memorial cross was completed and dedicated on June 26, 1959, the 10th anniversary of the camp programs. The name, "Memorial Camp," expressed the district's desire to dedicate this camp to the memory of the young people who had given their lives in service to their church and country. Braun Chapel was dedicated on July 30, 1961, in honor of the camping leadership provided by Dr. Arthur Braun, the District President and Board member.

In August 1963 a modern home providing a new residence for the camp manager was completed at the entrance to the camp.

On June 15, 1970, Camp Logos, owned and operated by the Minneapolis Conference Camp Association, merged with American Lutheran Memorial Camp. Canoe trips on the St. Croix and small group camping programs continued at Camp Logos until June 18, 1984, when the Southeastern Minnesota District of The American Lutheran Church sold the property to Taylor Properties.

The construction of an all season retreat center began in August of 1970.

Completion and dedication took place on October 22, 1972. With the completion of this center, the camp began a year round retreat program, expanding the ministry of the camp to all seasons of the year.

In May 1971, Pastor William E. Vogel was called to serve the camp association, which now owned both Camp Onomia (the American Lutheran Camp at Onamia) and Camp Logos (the wilderness property located on highway 70 and the St. Croix River). Pastor Bill and his wife, Helen, served the camp until retirement.

The camp became a member of the American Camping Association in 1974, and has received both camp accreditation and site approval through this strenuous program.

In March of 1975, the American Lutheran Memorial Camp (both sites) became owned and operated by the Southeastern Minnesota District of The American Lutheran Church. A primary reason for ownership by the District was to provide a firm foundation for the financial needs of the camp. A significant debt from the construction

Camp Logos Pine City, Minnesota

The Minneapolis Conference of Southeast Minnesota District of The American Lutheran Church founded Camp Logos in the early sixties. It

of the retreat center required a broader financial support base. The District appointed a camp board to manage the affairs of the camp, and under its leadership, the camp continued to progress. An additional 80 acres were added to the camp in 1980, and in 1987, the mortgage on the retreat center was paid and the camp became debt free.

Many new programs were added to the camp during these years. Mr. Mike Francis became the full time Program Director in 1980. In 1985 a Minnesota Elderhostel program was introduced.

With the formation of the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the ownership of the camp was transferred back to an association of congregations. The member congregations are located in five of the six synods in Minnesota. The ownership and operation of the camp in the association began on January 1, 1988. The camp's name permanently became Camp Onomia and the first annual meeting of the new association was October 10, 1987.

consisted of some 250 acres located on a parcel of property adjacent to highway 70 and the St. Croix River just east of Pine City, MN. The property

was formerly a small farm, and the land that was cleared tended to be low and wet. A substantial portion of the property was left in woodlands, and a small creek had been dammed to form a small pond.

The property was adjacent to federally owned land that was part of the St. Croix National Scenic and Wild River. Access to the St. Croix could be gained by walking down a hill, across a meadow to the river. The river shoreline itself was part of the federal scenic river and had been purchased by the government at about the same time.

The camp's founding vision was to serve as a center for adventure based education and small group ministry. Its major programs included canoe trips on the St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers. Located 70 miles from the Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Conference felt the property would be ideal for camping and canoe trips for youth from the cities.

Early in its history, Pastor Maynard Atik, who shared a call with a congregation in Minneapolis, served the camp. The camp was open only in the summer season. Programs included canoeing on the St. Croix, on site tent programs, and a unique venture called "The Vagabonds." Vagabond campers were dropped off in the rural area surrounding the camp. As they found their way back to camp they would stop to visit farms and offer to do work

projects in exchange for a place to camp and share in community life with the local farm family.

This program introduced many city youth to rural life. Common activities performed by the vagabonds included haying, cleaning out a barn, assisting in canning or garden work, milking cows, and other common farm chores. Usually, campers would invite the farm families (who would often call their friends and neighbors) for an evening campfire. Campers could not accept any financial rewards for their labor because the program focus was meant to be one of service, friendship, and witness. However, it was very common for groups to receive and accept the special hospitality of the farm families who shared fresh vegetables, lemonade, ice cream, and homemade cookies with the youth.

Camp Logos merged with American Lutheran Memorial Camp at Onamia, MN, on June 15, 1970. The two camps became known as Onomia/Logos (*Onomia* is a derivative of "name" in Greek and a play on the town name where the camp was located whereas *Logos* meant "Word" in Greek. Together the camps claimed the name of Jesus, God's Word who became flesh and dwelt - or tented - among us)

Mr. Jerry Pyle, a student at the University of Minnesota and a former student officer of the ALC National Youth Ministry, served as summer

director of Camp Logos in 1970-71. Under his leadership, the canoe program grew steadily. Logos provided river guides, and transported groups to the Danbury area in an old bus with canoes towed behind

In May of 1971, Pastor Bill Vogel was called to serve as camp director of Onomia / Logos. Pastor Bill began to coordinate the camping efforts of both camps and develop strategies for encouraging use of Logos and staffing the summer program while gaining additional staff time for the growing winter programs at Onomia.

Mr. Ralph Yernberg, a student at Luther Seminary, was asked to serve as the summer director of Camp Logos in 1972 and 1973 as part of a joint internship program with Lutheran Church of Peace in St. Paul, MN.

During his term, the St. Croix Weekenders became very popular for young adult groups. These groups would attend camp on Friday through Sunday, being dropped off for weekend canoe trips late Friday evening. Perhaps the most enjoyable part of the trip was traveling by canoe through the "seven mile rapids" section of the St. Croix River. Longer trips were offered on the Namekagon River, beginning near Trego, WI, for a long week trip back to Camp Logos.

A solid working relationship was also developed with scenic and wild river rangers. They appreciated the

camping ethics and values that Camp Logos promoted. Most of the time, groups brought back far more garbage than taken and practiced good camping behaviors that served as a model for other organizations that used the wild river area.

Yernberg continued to direct Logos while serving as an intern pastor during the winter months at Lutheran Church of Peace in St. Paul. During this time, the church entered into a building program and rather than raze the original sanctuary that was to be replaced, members of the congregation removed the facility piece by piece and delivered it to Logos, to be used in future construction projects.

The material was stored in a barn until it was clear that a new facility was not necessary at the camp. Much of the material was then transferred to Onomia for remodeling portions of the lodge and retreat center.

Camp Logos was perceived as an adjunct of Camp Onomia until June 18, 1984, when the Southeastern Minnesota District of The American Lutheran Church sold the property to Taylor Properties. At the time, it was perceived that there would not be additional funds to expand Logos and that some of its featured programs could be offered through Onomia. The funds from the sale were used to help pay off debt on the adult center at the Onomia facility.

Camp Vermilion Cook, Minnesota

In the later part of the fifties, many Lutherans in NE Minnesota began to express a need for a Bible Camp in the area. Following a thorough search of potential property, a site that included 168 acres of land and facilities was found in 1958 for a price of \$72,000. The site was a private Boy's Camp, and it had already been showing signs of age. It was located on beautiful Lake Vermilion, on the Iron Range of northern Minnesota.

Nonetheless, on February 18, 1959, at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Virginia, the "Lake Vermilion Lutheran Bible Camp Association" was formed. The camp association included congregations from the Lake Superior and Iron Range areas of northern Minnesota.

Immediately, the young association began to make plans for opening their first camp the following summer. It was decided to install electricity; its own generator had previously powered the camp. Numerous work days were held that first year with thousands of hours volunteered. The work was duly rewarded when the first summer camp was held with 61 boys in attendance.

Melvin Bakk was named the part time manager of the camp upon its purchase in 1959. The position became

full time in 1964. Mel served as both manager and camp director until his retirement in 1978. In honor of his long leadership, the Canoe Retreat Center was renamed the "Bakk House."

In 1960, the first major construction project began with the construction of seven new cabins. These cabins enabled the camp to expand its youth program and were located on top of the hill near the dining hall. During these early days of camp life, the goals of Camp Vermilion became implemented in its programs. The camp program's aim was to communicate and celebrate the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to create a Christian community, to equip and empower persons for a life of discipleship, to increase the awareness of our relationship to the Creator, and to increase ministry among youth and adults.

In 1963, the camp program was extended to include junior high youth. Six years later, camp weeks for grades 4 through 6 were added, along with a 3-day camp for young children. In 1964, the Canoe Country program utilizing the near by Boundary Waters Canoe Area, which would grow exponentially over the subsequent years. It was in 1967 that retreats, programmed by camp staff, were added to the offerings

of Camp Vermilion.

Pastor Lee Yarger accepted a call to become Program Director at Camp Vermilion, while serving part time in the Lutheran parish at Orr, Minnesota. This plan continued in 1971, when Rev. John Andreason served a joint call with Camp Vermilion and as Assistant Pastor at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Virginia. From 1973 to 1975 Mr. Jerry Friest served as Program Director while attending Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN. Mr. Joel LiaBraaten became the first full time Program Director in the fall of 1975.

During the early seventies Melvin Bakk made many camp improvements. Under his leadership, volunteers were recruited to share their gifts with Camp Vermilion. In 1974 the construction of the canoe retreat house used for groups participating in the Boundary Waters program was constructed. It was financed through a \$26,000 grant from Lutheran Brotherhood arranged through the efforts of Tom Hallowell of Hibbing. In the same year, 200 additional acres of adjacent land was purchased for \$20,000. This increased the property size to 368 acres.

About the same time, construction of a second residence was begun. Originally used for summer camp, "The John" has now been adapted into a year round home. Two years later, Mrs. Dorothy Bauer donated 20 acres of land to the camp

on Hinsdale Island.

Following the retirement of Melvin Bakk in 1978, Mr. Keith Johnson was called to serve as Executive Director for Camp Vermilion. He was to serve for nine years, providing strong leadership and organizational abilities to the camp association. Many new programs were developed during his tenure, and Johnson established quality administrative procedures, manuals, improving the quality of staff and program.

In January of 1979, Mr. Doug Scharfenberg became Camp Vermilion's year round Camp Manager. In 1982, Ms. Sandy Dodson joined the staff as the Program Director of Camp Vermilion. In February of 1985, Ms. Kim Bergmann took over the position following Ms. Dodson's departure.

During this period, the canoe country program grew substantially. Up to 95 canoe trips each season were run through Camp Vermilion, using the historic Echo Trail which ran between Ely and Orr across the southern reaches of the Boundary Waters. Also during this time, from 1984 to 1987, discussions with Camp Hiawatha began to take place. Hiawatha was located north of Grand Rapids, MN, on Deer Lake, and was owned by congregations of the Lutheran Church in America.

In 1987 three new cabins were built: Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Virginia, Our Savior's Lutheran

Church, Cloquet, Zion Lutheran Church of International Falls and Little Fork Lutheran Church of Little Fork provided the funds and the workers to complete the task. In 1988, Our Savior's of Duluth built the fourth cabin. Footings for a fifth cabin stand waiting for another congregation to take up the challenge.

From May 1987 through January

Wilderness Canoe Base Grand Marais, Minnesota

The history of Wilderness Canoe Base begins with Plymouth Christian Youth Center in Minneapolis. Four students at Luther Seminary began this unique ministry on the north side of Minneapolis: Bob Nervig, Bob Evans, Oz Anderson, and Ham Muus. Sensing a need for Christian presence in a street setting in need of justice and service, these men initiated many programs still recognized as unique in the history of the former Evangelical Lutheran Church that preceded the ALC.

Each of the four had unique leadership gifts. Bob Nervig and Bob Evans had worked with Jerry Manlove in the St. Paul YMCA downtown gang program. Luther Seminary offered these students ordination into specialized ministries. Nervig decided to go to Trinity Lutheran Church in Brooklyn instead. Oz Anderson

1988, Pastor Morris Johnson served as Executive Director of Camp Vermilion. He was instrumental in helping to establish a new corporation when Camp Hiawatha, with roots in the Lutheran Church in America, and Camp Vermilion from the ALC united into a single organization. The new corporation was called Voyageurs Outdoor Ministry Association

accepted a call to Red Wing as a chaplain in a boy's home. Bob Evans took over operations at the city base and began Frontier Farm. Ham Muus became the Executive of PCYC and director of Wilderness Canoe Base.

Wilderness Canoe Base was established by Plymouth Christian Youth Center as an outreach program of the center. In the early days of PCYC, Wilderness was the 'crown jewel' of the center. The program initiated a great deal of pride in those who worked at the camp. And the program offered a design that was truly integrated. For example, youth assigned to the Red Wing School by courts were integrated with campers attending Wilderness from congregations. Inner city youth, kids at risk, and youth from a wide variety of economic and ethnic backgrounds were thus blended into programs that had

powerful results.

Staff members at PCYC had been taking youth from the urban areas surrounding the north Minneapolis ministry on canoe trips prior to the acquisition of property on Seagull Lake at the end of the Gunflint Trail in 1957. Many of the original buildings that housed staff and campers at Wilderness Canoe Base were old resort buildings that were dismantled, carried across the water or ice, and erected on Fishhook and Dominion Islands.

Rev. Ham Muus developed the program and facilities at Wilderness with a vision that captured the support of many generous volunteers and staff. They provided time, talent, and financial assistance to bring the dream to reality. The Wilderness experience combined high impact problem solving experiences, opportunities for individual achievement, an empathetic climate, high expectations, experiential learning, structured bible study and reflection, environmental awareness and the use of adventure as a metaphor for life. Seldom has the church been able to combine these program directives in an experience in such a powerful way as through the Wilderness program, particularly when done within an integrated small group of people.

Early participants fondly reflect upon the trials and tribulations of the early days at Wilderness Canoe Base. Mosquitoes plagued early workers; to

carrying massive logs up steep terrain tested the sturdiest of workers.

Notorious stories of feasting on seagulls when the packed food was too lean and rumors that raisins were actually counted before sent on the trails abound. There is also the story that one staff member got so hungry that he drove to Duluth and bought a side of beef overnight.

Building the camp also took creativity. There are many who remember loading 24 bunk beds into canoes and attempting to paddle the waves of Seagull Lake safely. There is still a lost bunk bed somewhere between the two islands that Wilderness is located upon.

After construction of the main lodge, Pinecliff was destroyed by fire in 1960. It would be rebuilt only to see another fire in 1971; such events left scars that were transformed into opportunities to make continual improvements

With the growth of the agency under the leadership of Rev. Curtis Johnson, the executive director of PCYC, the Wilderness program and facility was entrusted to the management of camp directors. Following Rev. Muus's vision and work in its early years, Rev. Wayne Vetter became director in 1967. Rev. James Cherry followed him in 1973. Ms. Kim Fluhrer and Jim Wiinanen co-directed the program from 1982-83. Ms. Fluhrer became the camp's program

director in 1984, and Mr. Dyke Williams began as the director of camping services for PCYC in January of 1987.

Over the years many programs have been created and modified at Wilderness to meet new and changing needs. Community building through the canoe tripping experience in the BWCA has been and remains the primary youth program vehicle. Throughout its history Wilderness has served youth from the church and reached out to youth that were disadvantaged or had special needs. In 1963 the "Yokefellows" program brought together three congregational youth with three youth who were part of the agency's Kinsmen program and residents of the State Training School for a 28-day Wilderness experience. A similar 16-day experience for young women was also initiated and was called the "Mary-Martha" program.

The camp was first used as a

Lutherhaven Bible Camp Winona, Minnesota

At this writing, little is known about the history of Lutherhaven Bible Camp. Formerly owned by congregations in southeastern Minnesota and southwestern Wisconsin, Lutherhaven was a small motel unit located on the west side of highway 61, which traveled down the

college interim learning site during the month of January 1972, for Lutheran college students from institutions using the "4-1-4" semester system. By 1976 year-round programming options at Wilderness became a part of camping services of the agency. The PCYC Women's Auxiliary initiated the "Women's Wilderness Adventure," a weekend retreat for women in 1975, and in 1978, family camping was introduced at Wilderness as a regular summer program.

For three years in the late 1970's Wilderness was under contract with the U.S. Forest Serviced to provide Youth Conservation Corps programs at two sites in the BWCA.

Twenty-five years of service to the church and community was celebrated at Wilderness in 1981. The Wilderness flavor continued to offer all who came the opportunity for renewal, discovery, and enrichment in God's primitive wilderness environment.

Mississippi riverbank from Minneapolis to the Iowa-Wisconsin line.

Lutherhaven's property included some waterfront along the Mississippi River. Campers would stay in the motel unit, cross the busy highway and move across the Great Northern railroad tracks to get to the beach or

ball field. Realizing the limitations of the property, the congregations voted to sell the land in the late sixties.

The funds received from the sale were used by the Wisconsin churches to help start Sugar Creek Bible Camp in 1968. The proceeds that were given to the Minnesota churches from the sale were used for many years to fund scholarships for campers to attend Sugar Creek. It is believed all the funds eventually found their way to Sugar Creek Bible Camp.

Of notable interest is the fact

that a significant meeting of the Bible Camp Association of the ELC took place around 1960, prior to the merger of The American Lutheran Church. At this meeting, major planning was taken by the few early camp directors and board members who were establishing goals for the Bible Camp Association. Pastor Dick Borrud was first asked to do "field service work" on behalf of The American Lutheran Church. This was a first step in what would eventually lead to full time staffing of camping in the church.

Good Earth Village - The Founders Association Spring Valley, Minnesota

Good Earth Village is located six miles northeast of Spring Valley, Minnesota, on over 400 acres of woodlands, bluffs and prairie land. A trout stream winds through the property. The land is unusually diverse with towering limestone cliffs and scenic vistas, hidden caves with bubbling springs and a mixed forest of elm, oak, maple, walnut, and white pine.

Much of the property has been kept primitive with an active and abundant wildlife consisting of deer, small game (including wild turkey), fox, eagle, osprey, and heron. The land has immense character; it is surprising, delightful and conveys a sense of isolation. In this setting, Good Earth

Village has developed program concepts that utilize its natural resources, rural pioneer heritage and opportunities that come from outdoor living and education. This camping model provides for a profound sense of the love of God as Creator.

The Founders Association was incorporated in December of 1969 as an ecumenical organization of congregations for the purpose of developing outdoor ministries. Shortly thereafter, Good Earth Village was purchased after a number of available land parcels were combined. Commitments by the early Board of Directors were made to assure a decentralized, small group approach to outdoor ministries and the initial five

years were spent in camp planning, recruitment of church members, and the development of the camping program.

Good Earth Village was an active part of Crossroads Ministries, the outdoor ministry program of the Southeast Minnesota District of the ALC. Rev. Hamm Muus was instrumental in providing professional guidance to the Board of Directors, assisting with organizational planning and development and locating summer program directors for the camp.

The early days at the camp were very rustic. An original farmstead served as headquarters for the operation although it lacked electricity. Gas operated refrigerators were purchased and a field kitchen used to provide for food service. An old barn was used as a rainy day shelter and volunteers built the Wells Fargo Station on an old limestone foundation. Muus continued to provide leadership to the organization and helped Good Earth Village develop camping villages using tepees and tents.

Pastor Ralph Yernberg was called by the Founders Association in April 1975, and served until April 1981, as its first full time Executive Director. During that time, the corporate membership expanded from the original 26 churches to about 60 congregations. The summer program expanded the "village concept" designed for small groups of campers

spread out over the 520-acre site.

In addition to a tepee village, a covered wagon circle was added. In Old Town, a few log cabins found in the region surrounding the camp were rebuilt. A fort was added nearby. Thus four villages, each capable of handling 16 campers were established. Campers selected from these living units each year they attended camp.

A year round retreat center, named "Barr Lodge" in honor of one of the early visionaries of the camping concept, Dr. Lowell Barr of Albert Lea, MN, was built in 1977. It was designed as a flexible, energy efficient facility, heated with a wood furnace and partially constructed into the hillside overlooking the valley. It provided year round food service support and served as a small group retreat center in the winter. It was simple in design - a basic square shaped building tucked into the hillside with a spectacular valley view. The design was selected so that it could be easily remodeled as program needs changed.

Another important development at Good Earth Village was the family campground. The area, located on top of a hill overlooking Old Town, is used for a variety of family camping activities. A restroom, pavilion, and sanitary trailer depot provided for convenient services to the campground.

In 1980, two small A-frame cabins expanded the program opportunities of the camp. These

cabins were also heated by wood and used in the winter.

Pastor Jim Janke became Executive Director in August of 1981 and served until June of 1983. During this time, a more centralized approach to camping was attempted. Due to financial constraints, the Good Earth Village board of directors decided to share a half-time director who would also work as a half-time pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Wykoff, MN. Pastor Steve Peterson was called to that position on December 1, 1983.

The summer program returned to a decentralized camping approach with several age groups served at camp each week. A wide variety of activities have been decided to enhance the theme in each village. For example, in Old Town, pioneer homestead living was emphasized with age appropriate

Crossroads Ministries Minneapolis, Minnesota

In 1969 the Southeastern Minnesota District of the ALC voted at their convention to fund an organization called Crossroads Ministries. This program entity had been envisioned by Rev. Hamm Muus, as a coordinating ministry on behalf of the camps serving the District by the former director of Wilderness Canoe Base.

Muus envisioned an organization

outdoor activities, gardening, and animal husbandry. Each village maintains its commitment to small group Christian community and includes regular worship and Bible Study. The summer camp was well received and helped the association grow in size.

During Pastor Peterson's tenure basic additions to the A-frames were made to provide more housing for campers, both summer and winter. Pastor Steve Peterson left to assume duties with Outlaw Ranch near Custer, South Dakota. It was felt that Good Earth Village, with its steady growth, should return to a full time Executive Director and Pastor Linda Gunderson was called to serve as the new director shortly before the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

that would gather together the various strands of the camping movements and lend them a professional support that would result in a cooperative effort in Minnesota. At this time, many of the camping organizations within the District did not have full time camp staff. Thus Crossroads would lend supervision and provide year round leadership to the Camp Boards that served churches in the area.

The organization through its Executive Director would assist camps to locate competent summer program directors, help train these people, provide them with supervision, and allow for the professional support of each camp Board.

In addition, Crossroads established unique outdoor ministry programs accessible to all congregations within the District. These new programs were often ingenious, providing a sense of contemporary small group programs with an international flavor. Among the new programs managed through Crossroads were the Bighorn Pack Trips in Wyoming and the Mexico Youth Encounter. Each would serve hundreds of youth each year.

From its inception Crossroads was an organization ahead of its time. It offered new models for camping, which were often resisted by those, affiliated with traditional camp programs. For example, through Crossroads a cooperative "tree" model of camping was promoted for congregations. This model encouraged churches to select different camps for various age groups. Thus a camper might have opportunities to participate in a wide range of programs, branching out into more adventurous camping experiences as they grew older. This met with resistance from some camps that believed their programs were suitable for all ages. And some

churches that were strongly affiliated with a specific camp did not necessarily appreciate the promotion of a variety of experiences for their youth.

Another model offered through Crossroads was to encourage cooperative ministry and facility development among its camps. For example, camps were encouraged to develop unique program offerings. The theory was that each camp could highlight specialties and work together to offer a broad and comprehensive choice of program activities for the congregations of the SE Minnesota District of the ALC.

Crossroads also asked its participating camps to discuss their development plans together in an effort to avoid duplication of facilities. Its hope was to prevent the construction of unnecessary facilities or competitive programs between the camps serving the Twin Cities area. This was controversial among some of the camps because it was perceived as interference with their own corporate jurisdiction.

Nonetheless, Crossroads had hugely successful moments, in part because of the charisma of its Executive Director, Pastor Hamm Muus. Pastor Muus recruited talented young program directors to serve at the camps and offered them training and support. A few of the camps, such as Good Earth Village, drew on substantial staff services to the Boards

in areas of planning and staffing. Camp Amnicon was also a beneficiary of many concrete development plans and programmatic concepts through its association with Crossroads.

Among the major accomplishments of Crossroads were the development of Camp Amnicon and Good Earth Village. Muus also developed an international program in Mexico where thousands of young people were engaged in service in the Cuernavaca west of Mexico City. Crossroads also facilitated the cooperative camping model used in the Bighorn Pack Trips where individual churches became partners in the camping enterprise. Each church was responsible for an individual week of the summer and staff training and creative programs were provided to each group.

Crossways was an early leader in developing new models in marketing such as camp fairs, creative printed materials, visual media, and multimedia shows. Its connection with youth ministry encouraged and promoted the Worship in Jazz group connected with

First Lutheran Church of Albert Lea. The gifted high school musical group was used at district youth conventions and leadership training events. Muus also began a monthly youth ministry focus at Augsburg College called the Round Table for professional and volunteer youth leaders that is maintained to this day.

Many of the models introduced by Crossroads have now become common to camping ministries. But at its time, Crossroads was a highly creative enterprise involved in groundbreaking activity. It often had to substantiate its ministries through statistics, personal testimony and political power at convention time. Toward the end of its history, some of the camps involved withheld funding and with cuts in funding at the District level, Crossroads finally closed its operations in 1975.

Among those who were active in Crossroads, most remember its spirit of high energy, creative networking and, of course, the visionary leadership of its Executive Director, Hamm Muus.

Camp Amnicon Wentworth, WI (Minneapolis, MN)

Though located in Wisconsin, Camp Amnicon was designed as an integral program of Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis and many of its

campers and guests come from the Twin Cities area. Its history thus belongs within the history of camping in Minnesota.

Camp Amnicon began with a gift of 40 acres by Teresa and Martin Burtness to Central Lutheran Church in downtown Minneapolis in 1966. At the same time, 40 adjacent acres were donated to Concordia Lutheran Church in Superior, WI. In 1967 the Camp Amnicon Foundation was incorporated to "establish this site as a year-round retreat center and summer camp operation" with concern for "ministry and service to the people and mission of Central Lutheran Church." It was to start a program of high adventure to involve campers in a "laboratory for the living Christian faith resulting in a living Christian Community." There was also a strong commitment of service to the inner city.

The camp began operations in 1967 with two weeks of confirmation camp and four weeks of work camp. Ron Lundeen, the Youth Director of Central Lutheran Church, directed the camp. Most of the staff and volunteers were from Central Lutheran Church. Campers and staff lived in tents and worked on a garage building that was to be a temporary dining hall. It continued to serve the camp in its "temporary" status for 30 years. In this year the camp also received a gift of 144 acres of land on Lake of the Woods in Canada from Robert & Irene Lundberg of Poplar, WI, a small town located near the camp.

In 1968 the program began in earnest with a variety of on-site

activities for 350 campers. Over half of these were urban youth. The facilities included the dining hall named 'Menomen.' A lodge basement was constructed and promptly named 'the catacombs.' In addition, a trailer was obtained for the director and a sauna was built. Campers and staff lived in tents and tepees. The camp also purchased 540 additional acres from Lakeside Township.

In 1969, Amnicon held a planning workshop to chart the course for the camp program. They defined the mission of the camp program primarily as a "resource and service arm of Central Lutheran and its immediate neighborhood...in cooperation with neighborhood organizations, agencies, and churches." Over the years up to 55% of Amnicon's campers received financial assistance to attend camp. There was also a commitment made to specialize in adventure based learning models and coordinate it with other Lutheran camping ministries. Amnicon's focus was to be on wilderness trips primarily for junior high youth.

The new program expanded to include Montreal canoeing along the shoreline of Lake Superior. A few other decentralized programs were tried, including rafting and canoeing on the Brule and St. Louis Rivers, motor boating, bicycling, backpacking, farm visits, and trips to the Canadian property. The camp continued as a

summer program operation until 1977. Summer program directors were hired from Luther Seminary in St. Paul.

1972 through 1974 were years of heavy construction as the 'Alleluia Lodge' was built on top of the 'catacombs.' Mr. Phil Anderson, a student at Luther Seminary, served as Program Director. The 'Brotherhood Room' of the lodge provided a comfortable meeting space and the 'catacombs' were used for rainy day activities. During this construction project, volunteers contributed most of the labor. Funding for the project came from the sale of the Canadian property.

Rev. Hamm Muus, with Crossroads Ministries, assisted in the planning of the project and the acquisition of materials. The beams used in the lodge, for example, were taken from the old turn bridge that spanned the harbor between Duluth and Superior. Hamm Muus was driving over the new Blatnik Bridge and noticed that the old bridge was being torn down. He stopped and asked the crew where the beams were being taken. Somehow he managed to convince them to place them on a semi and haul them out to Camp Amnicon as a donation.

In 1974 Tim Hepner was hired by Central to serve as its urban ministries pastor. Twenty percent of

his time was assigned toward serving as director of Amnicon. In 1974, the camp began its Montreal Canoe trips to the Apostle Islands.

In 1977, Camp Amnicon made a commitment to offer retreats throughout the year. An addition for trails food preparation was added to the Dining Hall to free up space in the lodge. The basement of the lodge was then converted into a bunkroom for housing and a heating system was installed in both buildings. The southernmost 90 acres of the property was sold to provide funds. John Olson was hired as the first full time director to facilitate year round programs.

During the late 70's, the summer program emphasized its canoe trips on the Namekagon River and established backpacking trips to the Porcupine Mountains of Upper Michigan. Programs for upper elementary youth and families were initiated and the senior high leadership-training program was strengthened.

In the mid 80's kayak trips on the Brule River were also added. The Concordia Outdoor Chapel was built in honor of Concordia Lutheran Church of Superior that donated its property to Amnicon. Concordia maintains a special relationship with Amnicon and receives a discount on its fees

Other Camping Programs Minnesota

Two additional camping organizations operated in the state of Minnesota and related to The American Lutheran Church. As of this writing, limited information has been available on these outdoor ministries. Official documents, however, list the following sites as related to The American Lutheran Church as of 1967:

Frontier Farm, owned by the Plymouth Christian Youth Center, was a 160-acre farmstead that served as a

small group camping site for disadvantaged "pre teens" from the Twin Cities. In 1966, three camps were offered.

Camp Clearwater, owned by the Minneapolis Conference, was located on the north shore of Annandale, MN. It was a small site of 11 acres that served as a congregational retreat center. In 1966, 3132 camper days were recorded in the official statistics of the AL

The Camps of Wisconsin

The state of Wisconsin had not been overbuilt with Lutheran camps and each camp developed from a clear denominational foundation. Most of the ALC camps in Wisconsin were organized under an association model where congregations joined together to offer support and leadership for the corporation. Two camps, Bethel Horizons and Camp Indian Sands, established an ownership pattern with supporting foundations and were each owned by a single congregation.

Generally, there has been a clear demarcation of service areas in Wisconsin. Separated according to conferences and districts, the camps each enjoyed a clear grouping of churches from which to gather support. A history of sharing was also a mark of Wisconsin camping. Early in the sixties, for example, a single camp director served three camp associations at the same time.

Collegiality between the camping organizations was strong. Brauer & Associates conducted a significant study of the camps in Wisconsin that would relate to The American Lutheran Church. Many recommendations regarding program and site development were made for each of the camping ministries and contributed to a camping partnership in the state.

This early study set the pattern for development of camping organizations with multiple sites. Imago Dei Ministries, for example, began shortly after the beginning of the American Lutheran Church as the Wisconsin Association of Lutheran Camping. This structural change was made easier because of previous patterns of cooperation that can be traced into the fifties.

Some of the camps located in Wisconsin have many congregational owners in metropolitan areas outside the state. Lutherdale serves a large constituency from the Chicago area. Lake Wapogasset Bible Camp has Lutheran Free Church roots in the Twin Cities of Minnesota as well as Wisconsin ownership.

Lutherdale Bible Camp Elkhorn, Wisconsin

In the summer of 1944, Pastor O. Storvick of St. Timothy Lutheran Church in Chicago was enjoying a vacation in the Lauderdale Lakes area of southern Wisconsin. Seeing the beauty of the area, he became convinced that the youth of Illinois and Wisconsin needed a place for faith to be restored and developed. Exploring the lake, he noted that 18 acres of wooded lakeshore was for sale at a price of \$16,412 - an enormous amount during the midst of a World War.

Pastor Storvick invited a number of pastors from five circuits of the Evangelical Lutheran Church - Madison, Mt. Horeb, Milwaukee, Illinois, and Chicago - to visit the property. A convenient oak log furnished the seating for this group of 17 pastors and lay persons. The log's importance was duly noted for the seeds of a new camp emerged from this meeting. (The log was cut, milled and shaped into the mantle that graces the fireplace in the dining room at Lutherdale).

Mr. Bob Groen, a lake resident, heard of the project and offered the financial backing necessary to purchase the property. A decision was made to purchase the land. On March 24, 1945, Lutherdale became a legal entity. The circuits of the church represented by this group later became the names of some of the cabins on the grounds.

Taking advantage of the war demobilization, Lutherdale purchased a number of dismantled army barracks from

southern Illinois as well as hospital tents, squad tents, bunks, mattresses, pillows, blankets, and cooking equipment for a total cost of \$1,800. On August 3, 1947, the first organized youth camp was held.

The temporary buildings were soon replaced with permanent cabins. A lodge for dining was built as well as a chapel. Additional land adjacent to the highway was purchased. In 1956, Rev. Paul Watson became the first full-time camp director and retreats were held at the camp throughout the year.

Increased demand for adult facilities became apparent in the early seventies. By this time, the original cabins had already seen significant use. Following a master planning process, a new Retreat Center was built in memory of the camp's first director. It was called the Watson Center.

Rev. Ray Engh succeeded Pastor Watson. Ray's camping background included camp development in South Dakota. As a pastor, Engh helped create and organize Lutherans Outdoors of South Dakota to coordinate camping ministry in that state. Pastor Engh is credited with developing a full time professional staff and program at Lutherdale. His innovative approaches in program were well known and shared throughout the camping network. Many are still in use at the camp. Pastor Engh also developed a number of financial programs to serve as a foundation for future stability and growth.

Following his departure, Pastor Paul Hill was called to serve Lutherdale Bible Camp. During Paul's tenure, substantial changes were made to the camp facilities and program. A capital funds appeal successfully raised gifts to build a new administrative center, remodel the chapel, improve the dining hall and fund debt reduction. The staff also was expanded to include creative youth ministry outreach teams and shared staffing arrangements with congregations. A high ropes challenge course was added to the features of the camp program.

Pastor George Carlson joined the Lutherdale staff when Pastor Paul Hill left to establish the Center for Youth Ministry at Wartburg College in Dubuque, Iowa. Pastor Carlson continued the development work at Lutherdale and supervised construction of the new

Camp Indian Sands Neshkoro, Wisconsin

Camp Indian Sands is owned by the Ascension Lutheran Church Foundation of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The camp is located on the south shore of Tuttle Lake near Neshkoro, Wisconsin. The site is particularly beautiful, located in the pine barren country with a lovely sand bottom lake. It has an interesting history as a sports camp prior to its ownership by Ascension.

Mr. Lloyd Larson, often known as "Mr. Sports" in Milwaukee, served as sports editor for the Milwaukee Sentinel newspaper for many years. He owned and ran a camp on the site of Indian

facilities made possible through the 1987 campaign. Carlson brought a sound theological program to Lutherdale. By this time it served thousands of guests each year and quality worship and Bible Study helped Lutherdale maintain its rich tradition of service to the congregation.

During a period of illness, Ms. Judy Engh served as Interim Executive Director and supervised the large program staff that was necessary because of the increased number of campers served through the facilities. Day camping had also been added and many summer employees drove to communities in southern Chicago, Madison, and Milwaukee.

Lutherdale remains a 53-acre site owned by an association of 250 Lutheran congregations from southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois.

Sands as a sports camp, hiring Don Gehrman, a famous distance runner at the University of Wisconsin, to direct the camp programs.

The site was developed for many outdoor activities. There was a particularly beautiful mooring bay, shaped in the form of a doughnut with a central island accessible by a bridge. The camp owned finely crafted wooden sailboats and taught sailing to hundreds of youth in Wisconsin. The land was laid out to accommodate sports, with playing fields, basketball courts, shuffleboards, hiking trails and tennis courts. In addition to the

sports programs, the Green Bay Packers regularly used the camp for pre season workouts.

Mr. Rudy Hoppe, a friend of Lloyd's and member of the Ascension family, finally engineered the camp into the congregation for use by the church in 1955. At the time, Lloyd was no longer willing to run the camp.

Bob Geltz, a young man who had attended the camp, became its first camp director once Ascension owned the camp. He also served as a neighborhood youth director in Milwaukee during the fall, winter and spring. The joint responsibilities of church work and camping has become the pattern used to hire subsequent directors who have often played major roles in Ascension's changing ministry patterns over the years.

Imago Dei Ministries, Inc. (Wisconsin Association of Lutheran Camps) Clintonville, WI

The Wisconsin Association of Camps began on January 1, 1963, following the creation of the American Lutheran Church (ALC) in 1960. Originally, the association included three camps, Mission Lake Bible Camp of Hatley (former ELC), Shadow Lake Bible Camp of Waupaca (former UELC), and Long Lake Bible Camp of Clintonville (former ALC).

Pastor Ned Westphal served the new association. Pastor Westphal was the existing director of the Long Lake Bible Camp. In the early days of the association, a study by Brauer and Associates was made of each camp in the

Many youth who were connected to the camp came from the neighborhood surrounding Ascension.

The camp flourished during the late fifties and early sixties, when the Baby Boomer generation was active in youth camping. Indian Sands was directed by fine camping leaders, including Pastor Ron Hansen and Mr. Vaughn Roberts.

Rev. Jeff Barrow was called to serve as director of Indian Sands and parish pastor at Ascension between 1981 and 1989. Under his leadership, many new programs were established with significant ties to urban ministry concerns. Programs in nutrition and child raising were held in Spanish for young women of Latin descent. A program for community growth was run for members of gangs under the leadership of Phil Williamson.

state of Wisconsin. Recommendations to create special programs and adapt facilities were made for each camp but the overall effect was to coordinate camping under a single umbrella organization. This decision had a lasting impact on camping and outdoor ministries in northeast Wisconsin where three Lutheran camps were located within easy driving distance of one another.

The three sites became incorporated within the umbrella of the Wisconsin Association of Lutheran Camps, Inc. A few years later, the corporation changed its name to Imago Dei Ministries, Inc., with individual camp

names changed to Imago Dei Village (Long Lake), Imago Dei Gateway (Shadow Lake), and Imago Dei Waypost (Mission Lake). Each camp's name gave an indication of the type of program that was to be developed.

Rev. Armond Paulsen became Executive Director in 1965. Under Paulsen's leadership, many new programs began to develop through Imago Dei Ministries. Gateway emphasized weekend family camping and day camping. Waypost served as a headquarters for high adventure. Conference camping for junior high youth was offered at Village. The summer staff often moved from camp to camp whenever staffing was required.

Mr. Jim Mueller acted as Property Manager for Imago Dei Ministries. His responsibilities included property supervision over all of the camp facilities. Alice Mueller often fulfilled the responsibilities of Food Service Manager. The size of the operations (which included 65 buildings) and the number of persons served often strained the budgetary and staff resources that were available.

Imago Dei Ministries also developed a wide range of high adventure and small group ministries, recommended through the programmatic study funded by the Board. Canoe trips on the Flambeau River, backpacking on Isle Royale National Park, bike trips and vagabond experiences were all sponsored through the camps. As a result of the variety of programs offered, camp participation increased significantly during this period.

Another program that was established was confirmation camping. Sensing a need to find new opportunities for clergy, who had lost their traditional roles in camp sponsorship, confirmation camps were developed. Many area congregations would send clergy to camp with confirmation students for a week of Christian education. From the beginning, the camps provided full staff, unlike the early days when pastors brought volunteers to "their week." Over a thousand campers were involved in these programs each year.

Mr. Dean Ryerson became Executive Director in 1975. Ryerson reaffirmed the role of the Board and its committees, and through planning, helped bring the association to a point in which a formal fund appeal was conducted. Within two years, Ryerson accepted a call to the District office in northeast Iowa so the appeal fell into the hands of Rev. Howard Reeves, the next Executive Director.

The appeal was launched by Rev. "Skip" Reeves beginning in 1977. Hundreds of volunteers were involved in the effort. The appeal successfully raised \$413,000 for camp improvements at Waypost and Village camps. To facilitate fund raising, Mr. Drew Flathmann served as the Program Director of the organization. In 1978 the Gateway camp was sold and additional land purchased for the Village site. Mr. J. C. Christopherson was added to the staff when Jim Mueller left his position of Property Manager.

Pastor Ralph Yernberg became Executive Director of Imago Dei

Ministries on April 15, 1981. Initial responsibilities included finishing the collection period of the fund appeal and finishing the projects outlined in the appeal. Under his leadership, Waypost was opened as a year round ministry with lodging rooms built into the lower level of the new dining hall. A permanent staff person was placed on the site in a new home and a maintenance facility built.

Improvements to the Village site also continued. The newly purchased land became a key component of the program. Daily canoe trips on the Wolf River were added and the retreat ministry also expanded.

Imago Dei Ministries was an effective multi site ministry in part because of the judicious use of its staff in

a setting easily accessible to hundreds of congregations. The organization was also willing to sell and purchase property as necessary for program purposes.

Conversations with Pine Lake Lutheran Camp (a camp owned by the Lutheran Church in America) began in the early eighties when it was clear the new ELCA would emerge; this would lead to a merger shortly after the church was formed.

From its early days, summer staff members would transfer between the sites on a regular basis, going where needed to serve campers. The administrative systems were centralized. Each of its sites promoted specialized programs. This enabled a degree of corporate flexibility to work with congregational needs.

Imago Dei Waypost (formerly Mission Lake Bible Camp) Hatley, Wisconsin

For many years prior to World War II, young people from the Central Wisconsin Circuit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church drove to the Hagerman Bible Camp in Northern Michigan for their Bible Camping.

One day, Rev. Alf Romstad, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Stevens Point, sat in a dentist chair in the office of a certain Dr. Cook. Dr. Cook mentioned that he had come across the old "Crooked Lake Dance Hall" near Bevent and that it looked like a desirable place for a Bible Camp. Dr. Cook, Russell Broten and Alf Romstad visited the site and thought it was ideal for a Bible Camp.

In the fall of 1941 at a Luther

League meeting, the question of purchasing the camp was discussed and a committee appointed to see Mr. Baum of Hatley, WI, who had acquired the property by foreclosure from Winneger Bros. Show Troupe of Wausau. Later in the winter, in 1942, the committee reported they had agreed upon a price of \$3,500 and the property was purchased on May 1, 1942.

When the land was purchased, Mr. Baum, the owner, asked about its use. When he was told that it was to become a Bible Camp, he said, "if that is the case I will donate \$1000 to your camp fund." The camp organization acquired 21 acres of land, four cottages, an ice shed, three

smaller buildings, a tavern and an old dance hall whose roof had been completely caved in by the weight of snow.

Later in the month, on May 17th, 1942, at a Luther League meeting in Arkdale, WI, the Central Wisconsin Bible Camp Association was formed with the Rev. Oliver Thompson as President. Rev. Fritz Anderson was in charge of organizing the clean up effort. Walton Murat, a man who was to be active in the ministry of Waypost until his death years later, was appointed Business Manager. Theo Abrahamson of Tigerton was in charge of construction.

A call went out for bed springs and mattresses and hundreds arrived. Tents were used to accommodate those who could not fit into the old cabins. Many boys slept in the open on bedsprings laid on the ground. There was no electricity for the first two years of camping. The camp meals were cooked on wood stoves by Mrs. Haroldson of Rosholt who served up to 150 campers at a time.

Old materials from the resort were used to construct a boy's dorm near the north edge of the property, but soon more sleeping accommodations were needed. The camp board purchased five used army cabins for \$100 each. They were shipped by rail from Louisiana and moved to the camp from Stevens Point. The need for a chapel was met in these early days by digging under the old dining hall and pouring a new foundation. The dirt that was removed created the amphitheater on the lakeshore.

In the spring of 1949, the camp board purchased 120 acres of land that

bordered the camp on the south around the lake. Native Americans had owned the land until the Indian Agency had sold it three years prior to the development of the camp. The camp placed a bid on the land but lost by \$200 to Clarence Rozmarynowski of Bevent. The camp pursued the matter, and Mr. Lester Peterson, the banker in Rosholt, negotiated a purchase from Mr. Rozmarynowski for \$4,200. Thus the total acreage of the camp cost \$7,700.00.

It was from this land that timber was harvested to build the chapel. In the fall of 1950, volunteers selectively cut timber for the project under the direction of Melvin Rustad of New Hope Township. Several neighboring farmers with teams and sleighs were hired to haul the logs to an open space on the south shore. A sawmill was brought in and 35-40,000 foot of lumber sawn. A plan for the chapel was drawn by Gust Torkelson from Merrill in 1951 and Rudolph Hanson of Wittenberg was hired as the building contractor. The chapel construction stalled in a heavy and cold winter, but the following spring was completed in time for the summer season.

Some of the weeks were now serving 200 campers and more space was needed. In the fall of 1953, volunteers once again went to the woods on the south side of the lake to cut timber. This time the lumber was hauled out by highway 153, and it built the camp director's cabin (at the entry road to the camp) and an addition to the boy's dorm. The remaining lumber was sold to raise cash for the construction costs.

In the same year, 1953, the camp

board decided to rename the camp since "Crooked Lake" did not seem an appropriate name for a lake on which a Bible Camp was located. A contest was held and between 50 and 60 names was produced. The Board approved "Mission Lake." The name was approved by the Marathon County Board, and submitted to the Wisconsin Geographical Board in Madison for their approval. Then approval was sought from the United States Geographical Board at Washington, D.C. It was finally approved on June 24, 1954. (It appears that no one remembered to change the name of the road that provided access to Waypost as it remains "Crooked Lake Road.")

In 1954, the Luther League of Green Bay and Lemonweir Circuits asked to become part of the Central Wisconsin Bible Camp. This was approved and the Articles of Incorporation was amended to include all three circuits. The camp was called "Mission Lake Bible Camp" until it merged with Long Lake Bible Camp and Shadow Lake Bible Camp in 1961 to form Imago Dei Ministries.

Camp programs continued during the summer season with little change in format until the late sixties. Under the direction of Rev. Armond Paulsen, the camp began to offer many unique programs for various age groups including

confirmation camp, backpacking trips to Isle Royal National Park, canoe trips on the Wisconsin River, and many decentralized or small group camps called Pioneers, Trailblazers and Mavericks.

This style of camping had become known as the *Waypost Way* - it included first and last word, small group bible study, and many discussion oriented activities, in addition to the skill development focus of the age group.

Following a capital funds campaign that began in 1977, Waypost received many new facilities. . Four new cottages were built on the hill near the beach and a new dining hall was built near the old facility, which was torn down. The lower level of the dining hall was finished as a small group retreat center. Mr. J.C. Christopherson became the first Site Director at Waypost and the first retreat in the center took place in January, 1982.

Mr. Tom Hind became Site Director following the departure of Mr. Christopherson in 1985. Mr. Hind brought program creativity and hospitality to the site, helping to expand the retreat program by constructing a new duplex to replace old cabins from the early camp. A new restroom facility was also built on the hilltop. Following his departure, Mr. Tim Wilkinson became the full time Property Manager in 1988.

Imago Dei Village (Long Lake Bible Camp) Clintonville, Wisconsin

The Long Lake Bible Camp was established in 1949 as an outreach ministry of the Men's Brotherhood of the

former American Lutheran Church. A leadership group assisted in identifying property surrounding Long Lake, which

was held in government ownership. At the time, the property had been cut over from logging and consisted of brush and small growth trees. However, the lake appeared to be quiet and the land included a nice hill with a pretty view. The Brotherhood Committee agreed to purchase the property.

Each individual church Brotherhood group was responsible for raising enough money to contribute to the purchase of the property. In addition, specific building projects were selected by various Brotherhood groups and plans made to construct the facilities in the next few years.

During the winter of 1948 and 1949, men from the Brotherhoods volunteered to serve in a logging camp in northern Wisconsin near Mercer. In exchange for their wages, they asked the owner to provide them with lumber and heavy beams for use in constructing a dining hall/chapel at the Bible Camp on Long Lake. The owner sent the materials to the camp, and construction began under the leadership of a new caretaker, Harold Tressler, who was a building contractor prior to moving to the camp.

In 1949 the dining hall was built. Also, a caretaker's home was built along with a garage. And, each of the brotherhoods that had agreed to build a cabin came through and constructed 21 cabins in two clusters, one on each side of the dining hall. A central bathhouse for each of the cabin areas was built. The chapel followed in 1951.

The camp program in its early days was based on the traditional conference style of camping. Each week, a dean was

appointed to serve as camp director. The dean located a teaching faculty consisting of pastors. Camp cooks, lifeguards, and extra maintenance staff attended and served as volunteers. The camps were very large in their early days, sometimes serving 175 campers each camping period.

At the entrance to the camp chapel a large three timber cross structure served as the central gathering point each morning. Here the campers gathered for blessing and participated in chapel services. Bible studies, mission hours, and the Christian practice hour rounded out the morning. Recreation included swimming, boating, sports of all kinds and plenty of exercise.

Each spring was a festive time, too, as the Brotherhoods gathered at the camp to fix buildings, upgrade equipment, and prepare the camp for use. These weekends at camp helped build significant friendships and provided a sense of service to those involved.

In 1963, Long Lake Bible Camp merged with Mission Lake Bible Camp and Shadow Lake Bible Camp to form the Wisconsin Association of Bible Camps, later known as Imago Dei Ministries.

Since the Imago Dei Ministries office was located at Imago Dei Village, camp deans and program directors provided leadership to the summer camps. Following Rev. Westphal, Rev. Frank Bocker (who shared time with Luther Park, in Chetek, WI) assisted the Board of Directors. When Bocker left, Rev. Arm Paulson accepted the call to serve as Executive Director. His creative camping ideas greatly expanded the options available to churches. Jim

Mueller and his family lived in the home at Village for several years to provide support for the facilities and program of Imago Dei Village as well as the other camps that were part of Imago Dei Ministries.

Retreat programs were expanded through the addition of the 'mini retreat center' in 1965 and the construction of the 'large retreat center' in 1969. A significant year round ministry became established at the camp which was in wide demand. Under the leadership of Dean Ryerson, plans for further expansion were made and Pastor Skip Reeves launched a fund appeal in 1979.

During Reeves service, the Gateway camp was sold and Imago Dei used its resources to purchase and additional 80-acre plot of land near the Village camp. This provided a space for outdoor education programs and overnight camping trips. Canoe trips on the Wolf River became a regular part of the ministry of Village. Many new churches became interested once again in participating in confirmation and youth camping. Mr. J. C. Christopherson became the Property Manager for Village and Waypost.

Imago Dei Gateway (Shadow Lake Bible Camp) Waupaca, WI

The United Evangelical Lutheran Church established shadow Lake Bible Camp on June 12, 1963, on the site located on a point of land on the edge of the city of Waupaca. The parcel had been used for many years as a children's home

Pastor Ralph Yernberg was called to serve as Executive Director of Imago Dei Ministries in 1981. Mr. Tim Wilkinson accepted the position of Property Manager for Village when Christopherson moved to the Waypost camp so that each of the two camps had full time year round leadership. An additional parcel of 40 acres was purchased near the original 80 and dubbed the "120" or "the ponds." Ms. Marci Burns was hired to serve as the first full time Associate Director at Imago Dei Village.

Confirmation camping began to grow significantly and other new programs were established. Creative retreats were added to the schedule and many outdoor learning activities were possible because of the natural resources of the "120." The dining hall kitchen at Village was completely rebuilt, most of the older cabins roofed, and many improvements were made. Ms. Burns left in 1985 when she accepted a call to Camp of the Cross in North Dakota. Ms. Sherri Holman arrived in 1986 to provide program leadership until she moved to California to serve as Director of Program Ministries for ALOSC.

of the church. When the home was disbanded, a group of people spearheaded by Rev. A. S. Petersen expressed desire to incorporate to organize a Home for the Aged. This home became Bethany Homes of Waupaca, and developed on a

piece of property that included a substantial amount of shoreline on Shadow Lake and along the Crystal River.

As plans were being made for the Home for the Aged, a group of individuals, Pastor Ray Paulsen, Mr. Ray Martin, and Mr. Clifford Olsen, worked with the Bethany Home Board to utilize a portion of the lake property in order to establish a camp. The group agreed to pick up the balance of the mortgage on the property of a little over \$13,000 and thus secure a parcel of property that was clearly defined, including a beautiful point that was surrounded by the lake at where the river entered the water. Access to the property was through Bethany Home's property.

It was agreed (through a gentleman's agreement) that the property would stay in continual use for Christian purposes, and if it were ever sold, Bethany Homes would have the first opportunity to redeem it.

The 'gentleman's agreement' was deemed of great importance to Pastor Paulsen, for he was a party to both Bethany Homes and the camping group. Years later, the agreement would be honored despite the fact that there was no legal requirement. Those involved simply wished to keep the property available for use by Bethany homes.

Camp facilities were quickly constructed. Permanent buildings included a program director's cabin and a counselor's cabin. A concrete block bathhouse was developed but not finished. Sixteen portable cabins were built; each had four bunks and a door on each end using open frame construction.

The main building was used as a dining hall and chapel. Its lower level was accessible to the rear of the building.

Shadow Lake Bible Camp became part of the Wisconsin Association of Camps early in its history. This association was better known as Imago Dei Ministries. In its initial days, Shadow Lake Bible Camp was part of this association with Long Lake Bible Camp of Clintonville and Mission Lake Bible Camp of Hatley. As Imago Dei Ministries developed, Shadow Lake became known as *Gateway*, although many participants continued to refer to it as the Shadow Lake Camp.

The camp program participants were private church and family groups who rented the facilities for congregational events. Many of these groups were families who enjoyed the lovely location, lakeshore and the many vacation opportunities in the Waupaca area. Trinity Lutheran Church of Waupaca also was able to utilize the premises for youth activities. Children from Waupaca were invited to attend day camp activities in the early days of the camp program.

In the early seventies, it became apparent that the future of Shadow Lake Bible Camp (*Gateway*) was in question. The very nearness of its facilities to Waupaca invited vandalism. Its small program prevented the association from hiring full time management for site maintenance and security. Rumors began to circulate as to its potential sale. In 1972, the *Gateway* property received \$4,617.50 in income and spent \$2,673 on operations (this does not count

administrative expenses that were paid for by Imago Dei Ministries).

The Board of Directors of Imago Dei Ministries, through their Executive Director, Armond Paulsen, began to discuss its potential sale in the midst of a number of studies. Brauer & Associates, the firm that studied the camping sites located in Wisconsin, issued recommendations regarding its potential development and cost effectiveness during this period. Conversations with Bethany Homes were also initiated and a proposed sale price of \$60,000 was offered that would represent half of the total investment in the property and facilities.

Bethany Homes countered with an offer of \$25,000 in March of 1973. Being unwilling to sell, the Board of Directors continued to operate the program at Gateway. Interested parties at Trinity Lutheran Church, Waupaca, also stepped forward to express their interest in acquiring the property. An offer was made by Trinity to run the summer program if the camping ministries were no longer interested.

Negotiations continued on and off for a few years. Program use was sporadic between 1973 and 1977. Total revenues from operations were as follows: 1973 - 952.86; 1974 - none; 1975 -

\$339.50; 1976 - 609.50; and 1977 - 962.25. Each year the loss increased, and limited investment was made in the facilities due to the increased vandalism.

Nonetheless, loyal supporters of the concept continue to press for the development of programs, particularly for families, during these years. A significant study of the property with firm recommendations for the development of family camping was conducted in 1976. Pastor Eugene Gauerke of Trinity Lutheran Church saw opportunities for summer ministries and evangelism.

Finally the issue was brought to a head in 1978. Rev. Skip Reeves, Executive Director of Imago Dei Ministries worked with the two principle parties, Trinity Lutheran Church and Bethany Homes, to seek for a final resolution to the sale issue. Trinity Lutheran offered \$30,000 to Imago Dei Ministries for the site, including the equipment, canoes, and trailers that had been removed from the premises due to fear of theft. Bethany Homes offered \$1 more, and during the year, the property transferred back to Bethany Homes.

Bethany Homes has since developed a substantial housing project for semi care living for senior adults on the old Gateway property.

Luther Park Bible Camp/Luther Woods Chetek, Wisconsin

Luther Park's beginnings date back to the depression years. In 1929 Thorwald Ditmanson and A. O. Running

were chosen by the Luther League convention to investigate potential sites that would provide for a permanent

convention hall within the Rice Lake circuit of the ELC. In June of 1931, "Carter's Park" near Chetek was accepted by the circuit Luther League as that site. That year, on June 29, a sunset service was held as part of the Luther League convention. Final arrangements for the purchase were made on December 21, 1931, and the Articles of Incorporation were recorded on May 10, 1932, in Barron County, and on June 29, 1932, with the state of Wisconsin.

The first Board of Directors was appointed at an organizational meeting held on May 13, 1932. The first president to be elected was Thorwald Ditmanson. The deed was transferred the following day, May 14, 1932, and Luther Park began to function. It was in May of 1933 that the clearing of land began.

The first camp week was held June 12-18, 1933. 116 people registered for the week; forty tents were used to provide housing for the group. In August of that first year, the dining hall and kitchen construction began. In 1934 the first cabins were built and financed by Luther Leagues in the Rice Lake circuit. In June 1934, the second week of Bible camp was held with 130 in attendance.

Work began on the chapel in the fall with completion in the spring of 1935. More cabins were also added as well as a permanent refreshment building. During the next forty years, the structures built in these early days served tens of thousands of guests. An addition to the early campsite plan included a new retreat center in the sixties and a new bathroom and shower facility.

Luther Woods, a 320-acre

wilderness area near Birchwood, was purchased in 1966. The area is known for its natural beauty, with its lakes and woods, and was envisioned as a unique programming site for small groups in primitive camping conditions. A small A-frame was built to serve as a small group center, both for summer and winter use.

Until 1967 Luther Park did not have a full time director. Pastor Frank Brocker served as Luther Park's first director from 1967 to 1970. Pastor Al Dungan followed him. Dungan served until 1974. From 1975 through 1985, Mr. John Walledom held the position. Under his leadership, a full time Property Manager, Mr. Jim Wehn, was hired in 1980. During these years of leadership, the ministry of Luther Park expanded in both summer and winter campers.

Meanwhile, the demand for program services at Luther Park increased in the seventies. The camp association approved the Luther Park Enrichment Appeal to provide funds for a new swimming pool, dining hall, retreat center, and for remodeling the chapel. Ground breaking for the new facilities was held on September 16, 1979. The summer season of 1980 began with dedication services on June 8, 1980. The campus took on an eclectic look with new facilities scattered among the original cabins and chapel complex.

Again, new opportunities were presented which enabled Luther Park to serve more campers. In September of 1984 the purchase of 11 acres of wooded area near Luther Park was approved at the annual meeting, increasing Luther Park's size to 25 acres. The following year, the

delegates at the annual meeting approved the purchase of a 74-acre farm adjacent to Luther Park. The purchase was finalized in March of 1986. The Luther Park site is presently comprised of 100 acres with three retreat centers for retreat and conference ministry.

Luther Woods also received project improvements during these years. The expansive land and water resources have made this program and exciting

Sugar Creek Bible Camp Ferryville, Wisconsin

Sugar Creek Bible Camp was incorporated in 1966 by a group of dedicated people from southwestern Wisconsin. (The corporation has since been expanded to include all the churches of the Dodgeville, La Crosse, and Viroqua areas of the church). Sugar Creek was originally the dream of a local pastor, Pastor Andrew Hegre. Pastor Hegre had participated in Bible camping in South Dakota, and while in the Sugar Creek area, he worked to make a Bible camp experience available to the people of southwestern Wisconsin.

Sugar Creek is located on 635 acres of steep bluffs and meadows, with a stream winding along its northern edge. The land is typical of the Coulee region of southeastern Wisconsin, providing steep bluffs and panoramic vistas over an oak and hardwood forest. It is also located within a few miles of the Mississippi River near Ferryville, WI.

Summer programs began in 1969 with steady growth each year following.

alternative dimension of Luther Park's ministry.

Following the departure of John Walledom in 1985, Mr. Sherman Toufar became Executive Director of Luther Park. The staff increased in the following years to include Mary Toufar as Program Director. At this time, 124 congregations in the Rice Lake, Eau Claire, and Mondovi areas supported Luther Park.

Sugar Creek, in its early vision, committed itself to a primitive, small group camping program. The response to these programs provided assurance to the Board of Directors that it had made the right decision. Sugar Creek is one of the few camps in the nation to offer a horse program. The horses graze the valley in the winter and the old tobacco shed on the property serves as the stable.

In 1972 Sugar Creek took a major step and called Pastor Dick Sayther to be its full time director. Up until this time Sugar Creek had been operating with summer directors. Pastor Sayther's first task was to head up a development fund campaign to build a year around retreat facility. The center was built in 1973-74 and Sugar Creek's program grew into a year round ministry. Arvalene Vedvik, the camp secretary and registrar, was added to the staff at this time.

Sugar Creek called Keith and Anita Johnson to serve as Sugar Creek's program directors in 1978. The program

of the camp was growing and Sugar Creek needed leaders who could commit all their time to the retreats, adult education, and summer programs that took place. Pastor Sayther directed his efforts to the development of program vision, public relations and financial development for the camp.

In the spring of 1981, Sugar Creek built four open-air cabins. These were designed for campers in grades 4 - 6, called "Seekers" at the time. In the same year, a swimming pool was constructed near the retreat center.

Tent and trailer camping is also popular at Sugar Creek. The on camp program that developed in these days included a progressive program offering increased challenge to each age group. Among the activities offered are small group camping, residential camping, river boating, canoeing, hiking, and a horse program.

Following the departure of Pastor Dick Sayther, Rev. Dave Aasmus was called to serve as Executive Director. Dave continued the task of program development, attempting to increase the number of campers served each year. Within a few years, the retreat center was hosting over 2000 guests each year on weekends while another 2000 people

Luther Point Bible Camp The Lutheran Bible Camp Association of Grantsburg Grantsburg, Wisconsin

Luther Point Bible Camp began with a prayer offered by two people in the early 1930's. These men stood by a "log

enjoyed the camp for day events. Sugar Creek's identity as a center for congregational life began to take root in the life of the churches of southwestern Wisconsin.

On March 1, 1987, Mr. Dick Iverson became Executive Director. Dick had previously served in the camping ministry of South Dakota, arriving from Outlaw Ranch in the Black Hills. Under his leadership, the camp facilities expanded as four new cabins were framed up to provide summer camp lodging. Following a fund appeal in the early nineties, a new adult retreat center was built with a view of the valley owned by Sugar Creek. Its extensive panorama and wrap around deck became popular with retreat guests immediately. It also serves as a center for community activity and senior citizen programs in the area.

The ministry of Sugar Creek remains an exciting small group experience for those who attend. The extensive hiking trails of the valley over the Mississippi River, the horse program of Sugar Creek, the natural trout stream and the sensitive facilities of the camp, make Sugar Creek a center for outdoor ministry creativity in the life of its congregations.

of huge proportions" on a narrow point of land on Big Wood Lake. They prayed that on this point a camp would be built

where young people would hear the gospel in a new, outdoor setting. The two men were Pastor Arvid Larson of Zion Lutheran Church, Trade Lake, and Mr. Edward Dahlberg, the owner of the land.

In February, 1945, Ed Dahlberg and his brother, Fred, met with Pastor Verner Granquist, pastor of Frosted Lutheran Church, Centuria, Wisconsin. They met in the furnace room at Frosted Lutheran Church; it was the warmest place to talk on that February day. The men presented to Pastor Granquist their plan to donate the land on Wood Lake for the purpose of building a Bible Camp.

The discussion gained interest from other participants: the Apple River District (WI) of the Augustana Synod and the Chisago District (MN). By the time of the formation of the Lutheran Bible Camp Association in 1946, churches of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church were among the charter member congregations, as well as the original Augustana Synod congregations.

Ground breaking for the building of the first two cabins began in October of 1947 at an estimated cost of \$1,000. Ed Dahlberg donated much of the lumber. The camp dedication service was held on July 29, 1949, which was also the first day of camp. The campers were members of the Apple River and Chisago Luther Leagues. Each camper attended a week of camp for the cost of \$8.50. The first "Junior Camp" was held the week of July 9, 1950.

The Hudson Circuit of the ELC built the "Faculty Cabin" in 1951. In 1956 the chapel was built and dedicated.

The pipe organ from Zion Lutheran Church at Trade Lake was moved into the camp chapel in 1964 when Ed Dahlberg promised to buy the congregation a new organ. In 1965, Ed Dahlberg donated forty acres of woods across County Road M to the camp.

During the early years of camping, the pastors who attended camp recruited the counselors. Usually the young men and women who served were from each congregation; most of them served in volunteer capacities. It was in the sixties that the camp began to hire staff counselors. Some of the first counselors hired were members of Lutheran Youth Encounter teams. Bob Berthelsen, a school principal from Albert Lea, MN, served as camp manager for eleven years.

In 1975, the camp board of directors took a significant step in hiring the first year round director of Luther Point Bible Camp. Gary Loktu, a young school teacher from Park Rapids, MN, served as director only until the fall of 1976 when he tragically died during heart surgery.

In 1977, Chip Salzgeber, pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church, Siren, WI, was called to serve as camp director. During the same year the camp dining hall was winterized and remodeled into a year round facility. The retreat program began and the camp outpost and canoe trip program utilizing the near by Namakagen and St. Croix Rivers also began.

At the end of the summer season in 1979, Pastor Salzgeber accepted a call to Camp Lutherlyn in Pennsylvania. Pastor Ted Berkland from Grace Lutheran Church in Larsen, Wisconsin, was called

to serve as Executive Director in the spring of 1980.

Many improvements to the camp grounds and facilities have been made over the years: winterization of the faculty cabin and of the Branson Cabin for year round residences, a bathroom and kitchen storage addition to the dining hall (now

called the Gary Loktu Retreat Center), and improvements in the septic system in 1983.

At the time of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, membership in the camp association included 74 congregations located both in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Lake Wapogasset Lutheran Bible Camp Amery, Wisconsin

Bible camping was not new to the Lutheran Free Church of America in 1947. Congregations of this church body had rented camps and conducted many fine Bible camp experiences. However, there was always the problem of reserving the weeks they wanted and of finding camps to rent that were capable of handling the number of campers they wished to bring. This motivated pastors in the Lutheran Free Church to seek to build their own Bible Camp.

In the summer of 1947, Pastor Olaf Braseth, then serving Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Amery, WI, learned that the Hickory Point Resort was for sale. The resort was located five miles northwest of Amery and included a point with shoreline on Lake Wapogasset and Bear Trap Lake. Pastor Braseth contacted other clergy whom he knew to be interested in Bible camping and suggested they meet at Amery to consider the possibility of acquiring the site.

Sixteen pastors met in Amery on August 1, 1947, and, after viewing the resort, decided this was an opportunity that called for immediate action. They

formed as association on the spot and bought the property of 22 acres on Hickory Point. The purchase price was \$16,000. A disputed story says that each pastor pledged \$1000 from their church or personally in order to come up with the necessary funds. The first camping season began the following year, in 1948, and had 360 children in attendance.

The constitution from 1947 to 1956 provided that any confirmed member of a congregation of the Duluth, Northern Wisconsin, or Minneapolis Districts of the Lutheran Free Church could become a member of the Bible Camp Corporation by paying an initial fee of \$5 and an annual membership of \$1.

In 1956, the ownership was moved into a congregational association of the three districts. And in 1964, following the formation of The American Lutheran Church, the Articles of Incorporation were amended to provide that any congregation of the ALC could apply for membership. Many of the congregations that now own the camp are located in the metropolitan Twin Cities area and northern Wisconsin.

The chapel was the first major building to be constructed. Lake Wapogasset Bible Camp had always based its ministry in the experience of worship and Bible Study. From 1958 to 1962 additional cabin space and the manager's home were built. The camp was also winterized at this time, opening a new era of year-round ministry.

Typical summer programs during the late sixties and seventies relied on pastors of various congregations to band together for their week of Bible Camp. Congregations were assigned various weeks of the summer, and the pastors took turns leading discussions, Bible study, and special events. Summer staff was assigned to work with specific children and were hired to manage waterfront and recreational activities.

Ralph Yernberg, a Luther Seminary student, served as summer program director in 1971 during the period when the Wapogasset Board was involved in the cooperative ministry known as Crossroads Ministries. Rev. Hamm Muus, Director of Crossroads, recruited Yernberg, introduced him to the Wapogasset Board and provided coaching and training. This was a year of experimentation with a larger summer staff and a program directed under the leadership of the program director rather than individual camp deans.

This was to become a transitional step toward the hiring of more permanent staff to monitor camp program operations. Roger Krueger served as the first year round Director/manager in 1972. O. K. Sternberg followed him and served in 1973 and 1974.

The Board of Directors hired Mr. Loren Teig in the fall of 1976. He became the first full time Camp Director. Paul Halvorson was hired at the same time Teig and under their leadership the camp saw extensive growth throughout the year.

In 1980 the Ox Lake property, a 254-acre semi wilderness area located five miles from the main camp, was purchased. The primary focus of this site has been the development of international cross-cultural villages. One of the villages represents life in India, and a second emphasizes African culture. Through Ox Lake the cultures of these lands and the issues which they bear witness to can be experienced and studied. The rolling meadows, wooded areas, marsh, lake, and creek provide a beautiful setting for primitive camping, canoeing, and cross country skiing.

Lake Wapogasset also developed as a center for retreating and has been used throughout the seasons. Retreating first began with the use of the lakeside cottages built in the early sixties. Meals were served in the winterized dining hall, which was the original lodge of the resort.

A new dining hall and kitchen facility was completed in 1987, and shortly thereafter, a retreat facility for adults and older groups was built. These new dimensions to Lake Wapogasset Bible Camp have enabled the camp to serve as a center for retreats, conferences, meetings, and extensive Christian education events.

As one long time supporter of Lake Wapogasset Bible Camp remembered during the construction phase of the dining hall in 1987: