



Encouraging, Educating, Equipping,
and Empowering Camp and Retreat Leadership

March 31, 2020

Latest information from Don Johnson, Executive Director, regarding Coronavirus

We've had our lives and routines altered for barely a little more than two weeks now, but it seems like much longer than that. I know that all of us in LOM hope that this "new normal" is nothing like the long-term normal that will emerge out of the other side of this crisis. That being said, my prayer at this time that I share with you now –

Creator God, you who always have time for us, grant us, we pray, the wisdom to use our time and energy in ways that reflect our love for you and witness to your love for us. Help us, even in the middle of all our tasks, to take time for you and for our neighbor, and make us, we pray, alert to say the good word, perform the helpful act, or merely to listen to our neighbor in need. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The information and guidance from multiple sources is flowing fast and furious. The LOM office can be a conduit for resources that might be helpful to your organization. So when you see something that's been useful to you, or you have a good idea or strategy to share, please keep those things coming to me (director@lomnetwork.org) as so many have been doing. Thank you.

Some of the most useful information for the financial stress facing just about all of our LOM member organizations is going to be in regard to the Covid-19 stimulus relief packages that have been passed by Congress. Here's links to a couple of the most helpful summaries I've seen so far:

<http://www.bpnews.net/54550/qa-how-churches-pastors-are-eligible-for-relief-in-stimulus-package>

https://us20.campaign-archive.com/?u=001faf6dc36451e1202183ef7&id=5f8a68b6e3&e=6063d39ddf&fbclid=IwAR1Pk4cGS7m4ck4NJXfyHHoRNMBvvDzoCM-kdbSQ3KsuoU8En38o9R_0mN4

As you consider recommendations you will be making to your outdoor ministry organization, particularly your Board of Directors, in regard to what the future of your organization is going to look like, I recommend that you read this article that was sent to me by Jake Sorenson –

<https://journal.praxislabs.org/leading-beyond-the-blizzard-why-every-organization-is-now-a-startup-b7f32fb278ff>

And, from the ELCA –

There are now several documents related to churches and church employees online and just posted on the Public Health page: <https://www.elca.org/publichealth>

Here are the individual links:

Families First Coronavirus Response Act - UCC Update

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Families_First_Coronavirus_Response_Act-UCC_Update.pdf

Summary of Cares Act Provisions

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/CARES_Act_summary_033020_v2.pdf

Update and Resources on COVID-19-related Benefits for ELCA Congregations, Synods, Other Ministries and their Employees

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/COVID-19_Relief_Summary_033020.pdf

Our plan is to continue sending this email blast on a weekly basis for a while. It's a more frequent way of sharing important information than the monthly LOM News, which will continue to be sent on its routine schedule. Lots of information is being shared on the LOM Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/lutheranoutdoorministries/> And the LOM Executive Directors page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/execlead/> Even if you are not a big fan of Facebook, I suggest that you check these sources of information on a daily basis for many items that are particularly time-sensitive.

During this time of unprecedented upheaval, the need for coming together as a community is very important. It's important as a way for us to share ideas, resources, initiatives and strategies so that all of our outdoor ministries can benefit. It's also a way of feeling the support from like-minded people involved in the same kind of ministry. That's why we've had three weekly ZOOM forums so far. We are now going to be doing these on an LOM-wide basis every other week, and on a Territory basis every other week beginning with the week after next.

The next LOM-Wide ZOOM Forum will be this Wednesday, April 1, 11 AM EDT, 10 AM CDT, 9 AM MDT, and 8 AM PDT. The link for the ZOOM Meeting is:

<https://zoom.us/j/625750935>

There will be a slightly different format. It will actually be a podcast live-streamed on ZOOM. Don Johnson will be interviewing [Mary-Kay Bunde DuChene](https://leaderwise.org/mary-kay-duchene-1) of LeaderWise (<https://leaderwise.org/mary-kay-duchene-1>) and there will be opportunity for those who are logged in to the ZOOM Forum to ask questions and seek clarification beyond the questions and conversation Don will be having with Mary Kay. This forum will be an opportunity for the leaders of LOM member organizations to come together for the purpose of what LOM is all about - a platform for sharing and learning so that outdoor ministry throughout the ELCA can be strong and vibrant, everywhere. In this case, we will be particularly focusing on leadership in times of crisis and turmoil, like the challenges we are now facing in the Covid-19 crisis. It will be an opportunity for outdoor ministry leaders to think about what their constituents need from their leaders in times like this.

Territory Forums are scheduled as follows:

- West: Monday, April 6, 10 AM MDT, 9 AM PDT <https://zoom.us/j/719550287>
- West-Midwest: Tuesday, March 31, 2 PM CDT <https://zoom.us/j/940073234>
- East-Midwest: TBA
- East: Tuesday, April 7, 10 AM EDT <https://zoom.us/j/205881042>

We have no way to predict all that we will be confronting us during the next several months, but one thing that I think I can be quite certain of predicting is that by the time we get to this fall,, there will never have been a time when the need for this network to gather in our LOM Annual Conference will never have been greater. At no time will the capacity of our organizations to pay for representatives to go to a national conference ever have been less. For this reason, we have come up with a plan to make some adjustments to the program and budget of the Total Inclusion! grant. We made a proposal for these changes to the Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies (MACP) and they have already approved the changes. Nicole VanderDoes, program coordinator for Total Inclusion!, has put together a summary of these changes as follows:

- Some funds previously allocated to the two Total Inclusion! symposiums will be reallocated to support attendance at the 2020 LOM Annual Conference for two representatives from each of most of the LOM member organizations. This is important, because financial hardship would likely make participation difficult for many at a time when coming together will be greatly needed. The theme of the annual conference is already "Total Inclusion," and this will be when we begin the emphasis throughout the outdoor ministry community on inclusion, the symposiums, and the grants for which they can apply in 2021.
- Because this reconfiguration will make it unnecessary for scholarship funds to be awarded, LOM can now make funds reserved for that purpose to provide travel assistance for those who need to use the airlines for travel to the Conference.
- Instead of two large symposiums, there will be four smaller, regional symposiums. Travel expenses will not be covered for attendance at two of the symposiums, because they will be within driving distance, and only limited "travel scholarships" will be awarded for the other two.
- The four symposiums will be shortened slightly to reduce costs. Each symposium will begin with dinner on Monday evening and conclude with breakfast on Thursday morning.
- So...don't take November 9-13 off of your calendar!

Thanks to a connection that Evan Moilan of GSB helped us to make, Troy McQuillen, Founder and Principal of McQuillen Creative Group, has offered to provide his services for the development of a sequence of six videos that will be generic to all our outdoor ministries and lift up the importance of camp and retreat ministries, especially at times like these. Each video will be about 30 seconds in length and make use of volumes of videos that Troy has accomplished through many years of working with LOM organizations. They will be organized thematically as follows:

- Outdoor Ministries – adaptive and flexible.
- Outdoor Ministries – strong and steady resources, serving people and congregations and communities when most needed.
- Outdoor Ministries – a home for a lifetime with lifelong friendships
- Outdoor Ministries – a safe and sacred space for families.
- Outdoor Ministries – serving as an arena for leadership formation for over 100 years.
- Outdoor Ministries – where faith is formed and nourished and grows from “Generation to Generation”

Because that’s what we do. That’s what you are continuing to do with strength and clarity, even in these days of uncertainty and drastic change. I continually give thanks to God for you and for all you do.

Don Johnson, Executive Director
Lutheran Outdoor Ministries