



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

May 27, 2020

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Many of our LOM member organizations have been making decisions about the crucially important summer season, while for many others their decision is imminent. Of our 90 member organizations, 31 (accounting for 51 of our 120 sites) have reached the conclusion that it is best for the people they serve to not conduct traditional summer camp for children this summer. Many others have decided to offer traditional summer camp programs with length of the season scaled back operational procedures modified in order to abide by applicable guidelines. There are some who have decided the uniqueness of their location and the uniqueness of the population they generally serve will allow them to offer a normal complement of summer camp activities with the modifications that health and safety will require. What is universal throughout LOM is the care and research and prayer that has gone into making these decisions; the commitment to ministry continuing in some way, shape, or form; and the courage that will be involved in carrying them out.

That's why this is my prayer today for all involved in making and carrying out these decisions. *O God, give us courage. Courage to make the right decisions for your people in the face of their effect on the "bottom line". Courage to make experiments, and not to be afraid of making mistakes. Courage to get up when we are down. Courage to work with all our might to proclaim your Gospel no matter how difficult or different the circumstances might be. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

The next LOM Gathering on ZOOM will be for Worship: On Wednesday, June 3, we, the people of LOM, will gather together for a ZOOM worship experience. It will be an opportunity to join together with friends who know better than anyone else the struggles that we are confronting because of the pandemic; a chance to focus together on God, grief, and gratitude. Many leaders from around LOM will be sharing in providing leadership for various aspects of the worship. Our preacher will be Jeff Barrow, former bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod, now an interim director extraordinaire currently serving as interim program director at Wapo (WI). We have purchased a large group subscription for this event, so you won't have to worry about getting blocked because of our account maxing out. As long as we don't go over 500!! The worship will begin at 4 EDT, 3 CDT, 2 MDT, 1 PDT. Join Zoom Meeting:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88619990670?pwd=Rnh4a3U2Ry83RklaTDFQT2YzL0czZz09>
Meeting ID: 886 1999 0670 Password: LOM2020 Find your local number:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kcajVIhML1>

Announcing the new Virtual Camp Portal: Because of the generous gesture of cooperation from PCCCA, our Presbyterian camp and retreat ministry colleagues, we are excited to introduce you to a brand-new resource that can help you provide virtual programs for your campers this summer. Your camp will be able to create your own portal from which to offer the content you produce, as well as activities from a shared library. Your participants will register for your virtual programs using your camp's existing registration system. You can offer access to your portal for free, for a donation, or for a fee. With the

help of the website, you will create login credentials for your campers. The website is a WordPress template. It is designed for users to set up their own portal. We have a library of instructional videos for each step of the process. Those with WordPress experience will be able to set it up quickly. If you are new to WordPress, we highly recommend watching the videos to make your first experience a positive one.

A Special Discount: An introductory price of \$450 is now available to the first 250 camps that sign up (then the fee goes up by \$50.00). Since LOM has endorsed the portal and is contributing content to its shared library, our members receive a special coupon code for \$250 off the price (you would pay just \$200 if you took advantage of the introductory offer). The price you pay is a one-time fee and there are no additional charges regardless of how many weeks of programming you offer, how many age groups you serve each week, or how many campers attend each of your virtual programs. Our special coupon code is LOMVCP20. This is just for LOM members, so please do not share it outside your own camp community.

Check It Out: You can visit the website right now at www.virtual-camp.org. It contains the details related to the system, including an example of what a portal can look like. If the Virtual Camp Portal is the right tool for your ministry, please remember to use the coupon code during the payment process. If you should have any questions about the Virtual Camp Portal, please send them to info@virtual-camp.org.

“Financial Strength through Uncertain Times.” A Resource Available for LOM:

Mitzie Shafer, Development Director at NovusWay (NC, GA, FL), and Mike Ward of GSB Fundraising Associates (a business member of LOM), have invited members of LOM to access this resource that they are providing free of charge. They are launching a 6-Week Congregational Vitality Podcast that will be very applicable to camps and retreat centers as well. www.novusway.org/congregationalvitality

Prayers:

- Sympathy for the family and friends of Ernie Lantz. Ernie served as executive director of Cross Trails 1976-1984. He died May 8, 2020; born May 8, 1936: <https://tinyurl.com/ycn6qydf>
- Celebration for Kevin Lien. Program director, Camp of the Cross (ND), who was married on May 9 at Camp of the Cross.
- Celebration for Chris Andreason, executive director, Pathways (MN), whose wedding was on May 16.
- Celebration for Marv Nysetvold, executive director, Shetek (MN), whose daughter was married on May 16.
- Healing for Judy Smith, camp director for family and adult programs, Calumet (NH), recovering from Achilles tendon surgery.

In Conclusion: May God bless and keep you during these strange and difficult times.

Don Johnson, Executive Director
Lutheran Outdoor Ministries