What’s Inside: Words from Don

Don’t have time to read the whole issue right now? Here’s a quick summary from our Executive Director Don Johnson:

This newsletter is a sign of the times! A few years from now, if we look back at this issue and the year 2020 were deleted from appearing anywhere in the content of this newsletter, we will still be able to instantly identify it as a newsletter from the year 2020. Just about every activity, event, and opportunity to gather that’s mentioned in this newsletter is on Zoom and not in person. If that’s not a sign of the times, I don’t know what is.

One thing that’s reflected in this newsletter that would not make it distinguishable from other years is the abundance of opportunities to be in community. We outdoor ministry people yearn for community. We would prefer that we would not have to experience community virtually. But one way or another, we are going to do what we can to satisfy our yearning for community. During the next couple of months, we are going to have many opportunities to be in community.

So, a community we will be. **When we gather for the LOM Annual Meeting, for the annual Awards Ceremony, the Auction, Run4Camp and all the events being presented by the LTE Committee, we will experience community.** In events like Run4Camp and the LOM (virtual) Auction, yes, there will be the opportunity to raise some much needed funds for the important ministries of LOM and our individual camps, but the important thing we will be celebrating is the community we have with each other and the confidence we have for the future, grounded in our mutual confidence in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that will go far beyond the pandemic year of 2020.

Thank you for being part of this community we call LOM. I look forward to seeing you around the network!
**COVER STORY:**

Lutheran Lakeside Camp Hosts Town’s Middle School

Lutheran Lakeside Camp (IA) has an innovative arrangement with the public school district of the town in which they are located. They recently welcomed the Spirit Lake 7th Grade- ALL YEAR!!

Lakeside is now Spirit Lake Middle School’s south campus where 7th graders are attending school for the entire year. They get dropped off and picked up each day. All their classes are spread out between the Event Center, old Dining Hall, Barn, and outside! It is so exciting for them to have kids at camp again and they are thrilled to offer a safe space so in person school can happen. With the 7th grade on their campus, the rest of the students back in the main building have much more room to spread out too - helping everyone stay safer.

This is going to build relationships with Lakeside and local families, bring much needed revenue in the off season, and allow camp to be a place of belonging for all people. “We could not be happier,” says executive director Brittney Swanson.

**PRAYER REQUESTS**

- Healing for Hans Wiersma, professor of religion at Augsburg College, member of the LOM Education Committee, and keynote speaker at the 2017 LOM Annual Conference in Colorado. Hans suffered a stroke in mid-September. He is making progress in his rehab program.

- Healing for Wayne Harrison, first administrator of LOM, former executive director of Cross Ways (WI), and most recently interim executive director at Agape (PA). Wayne is scheduled for back surgery on October 9.


- Relief from the threat of wildfire, especially Sky Ranch (CO) and Mount Cross (CA).

**October 19-21, 2020:**
Program Director Gathering at Sugar Creek (WI). This is an LOM Endorsed Event. More information contact program@sgrcreek.org.

**October 28, 2020:**
Deadline for organizations to apply for Total Inclusion! sub-grants. Contact Nicole.VanderDoes@elca.org.

**November 1, 2020:**
LOM’s Run4Camp 5K

**November 6, 2020,** at 9:00 a.m. CST – November 14, 11:00 p.m. CST
LOM Silent Auction (virtual)

**November 9-13, 2020:**
LTE Online

**November 10, 2020:**
2:00 p.m. -4:00 p.m. EST – LOM Virtual Meeting 1

**November 11, 2020:**
2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. EST – LOM Virtual Meeting 2

**November 11, 2020:**
3:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. – LOM Awards Ceremony (virtual)

**November 14, 2020:**
8:00 PM Central Time – LOM Auction – Live Portion (Virtual)

More information at www.lomnetwork.org where you can also check out our featured site! Lutheran Memorial Camp (OH) is our latest camp on the homepage.
Run4Camp
There will be 16 LOM outdoor ministry organizations taking part in this first ever, LOM-sponsored 5K. They are lining up participants who will be running, jogging, walking, propelling wheelchairs or roller boards, skiing, you name it. It’s going to be on All Saints Day – Sunday, November 1 and they will be covering the 5K of their choosing for all the saints of outdoor ministry whose legacy has been the treasures of ministry and sites that are the camps and retreat centers we know today. We are going to be having a virtual “finish line” party on ZOOM that afternoon and what a celebration it will be all across every corner of LOM as we lift up with thanksgiving and optimism the future that we have together in this ministry that continues to impact so many people in so many positive ways. And here’s one of the nicest things about this new event for LOM – all the funds that the participants raise by getting sponsors will go directly to the camp they are representing!

LOM Election in October
Each LOM organization should have received an election packet for the LOM Board. It is a letter that is intended for the Board of Directors of your outdoor ministry organization. Unlike the General Election taking place in the USA, the only way a vote can be recorded in this election is by mail-in ballot!!! Your Board of Directors is requested to make a decision together and cast one ballot (enclosed with the mailing) for a person to serve a three-year term on the LOM Board of Directors and return the ballot to Jon Skogen. This is why this is happening:

• Your camp and/or retreat center organization, by virtue of affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), is an organization member of LOM.
• Individual members of LOM consist of your organization’s year-round staff, members of your organization’s Board of Directors, and people who make an annual financial contribution to LOM.
• LOM is a stand-alone, non-profit, 501(c)3 organization. As such, LOM has a Board of Directors. For a current listing go to https://www.lomnetwork.org/about-us/board-and-committees/.

The Board of Directors of LOM is comprised of:
• 3 Seats – Year-round staff members of Organization Members of LOM (elected by individual members of LOM at its Annual Meeting, usually at the Annual Conference but this year on ZOOM, November 10)
• 3 Seats - At Large Positions (elected by individual members at the Annual Meeting)
• 3 Seats – Current or former members of Boards of LOM Organization Members (elected by Boards of LOM Organization Members by the mail ballot that will be enclosed with the letter)
• 2 Seats - Elected by the LOM Board of Directors shortly after the Annual Meeting.
• 1 Seat - Appointed by the ELCA

This packet that has been mailed contains the ballot to be used by your Board to vote for one member of the LOM Board for a term from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2023. The ballot must be signed, preferably by both Board president and organization director, but at least by one or the other. The deadline for postmarking the ballot of your Board is November 1, 2020.
West-Midwest Gathering

Dave Holtz, the territory coordinator for the West-Midwest Territory is calling everyone together for a virtual gathering during the same time that the in-person gathering would have taken place. The following is Dave’s announcement of invitation - We have an opportunity for you and your staff to join in together to experience the Next Faithful Move, an online Zoom experience that provides resources to approach interculturality and anti-racism with a developmental framework with David Scherer and Joe Davis, two extremely talented and faithful individuals in our ELCA, LOM Network and the ELCA Youth Ministry Network. Please carve out 1:30 - 4:30, October 5, 6, and 7 to be online with me, LOM executive director Don Johnson, and your fellow colleagues of the West-Midwest Territory.

Our Agenda each day is as follows...
1:30 - Join our colleagues in Prayer, Bible Study and Check ins with like job areas...sharing insight and support...
2:30 - 4:30 Next Faithful Move...
4:30 - Closing Prayer

Register in advance for this meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0pc-Csrj4pGtw_EN5IpdymDXTLNEHkIBP. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Registration fee not required but $25/participant donation to LOM suggested to help reimburse for the honorarium expense.

LOM Virtual Award Ceremony

The Annual LOM Awards Ceremony will take place, virtually, on Wednesday, November 11, on ZOOM, beginning at 3E, 2C, 1M, 12P. ZOOM instructions will be included in the next issue of LOM News. Nominations are still being accepted for the following awards:

LOM Innovative Program Award: Lutheran Outdoor Ministries will present the Innovative Program Award to an LOM member organization that has highlighted an innovative program in their organization. The $1,000 award will be for a program that could include but is not limited to: a new program, serving your population in a new way, a program that has made adaptations because of COVID-19, a new program reaching out to new populations in your area, or something that benefits the environment or teaches environmental issues, etc. All materials, including the google form, application cover sheet, and all required emailed attachments, must be completed, and returned by October 5th to be eligible for the award. The award will be presented at the annual LOM Awards Ceremony following the LOM Annual Meeting (virtual) on Wednesday, November 11, 2020, beginning at 3:00 PM (EST). More information and application form can be found here: https://www.lomnetwork.org/awards/innovative-program-award/

LOM Diversity Grant: Lutheran Outdoor Ministries will award a $2,000 grant for an outdoor ministry organization to initiate a new project or a new element of an existing program that promotes diversity within the ministry and community. Applications will be reviewed by the Recognitions Committee. A selection will be made, and the grant will be awarded at the annual LOM Awards Ceremony following the LOM Annual Meeting (virtual) on Wednesday, November 11, 2020, beginning at 3:00 PM. The grantee from the previous year will give a brief presentation about their project at the same Awards Ceremony. All materials, including the application and all required emailed attachments, must be completed and returned by October 5, to be eligible for the grant. More information and application form can be found here: https://www.lomnetwork.org/diversity-grant/

Manlove-Howells Leadership Award: The Manlove-Howells Leadership Award is given each year to an individual who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in Christ’s Church through the field of outdoor ministry. It recognizes those who have provided visionary insight, inspired collaborative efforts among colleagues, and offered valuable guidance to current and future outdoor ministry leaders. Nominations are reviewed by the Recognitions Committee. A selection will be made, and the 2020 Manlove-Howells Leadership Award will be awarded at the annual LOM Awards Ceremony following the LOM Annual Meeting (virtual) on Wednesday, November 11, 2020, beginning at 3:00 PM. Applications must be submitted by October 5. More information and application form can be found here: https://www.lomnetwork.org/awards/manlove-howells-leadership-award
Professional Development for Outdoor Ministry Leaders

FREE VIRTUAL SESSIONS

NOVEMBER 9-13, 2020
EVERYONE is invited!

The purpose of the Leadership Training Event (LTE) is to provide an educational opportunity for outdoor ministry professionals. The LTE helps to develop well-trained, committed, and diverse outdoor ministry professionals; enhance the quality of outdoor ministry programs; support professionals through formal and informal learning; and assist in the retention of professionals in the network.

Schedule (EST):

Register for one or all!

Nov 5, 4:00 pm - Session for those new to LOM within the last 2 years
Nov 8, 8:00 pm - Virtual Social Hour
Nov 9, 11:00 am - What did camps learn from this summer?
Nov 9, 4:00 pm - Planning for a Crisis
Nov 10, 11:00 am - Mental and Spiritual Health
Nov 10, 2:00 pm - LOM Annual Meeting
Nov 11, 11:00 am - Staffing for 2021
Nov 11, 2:00 pm - LOM Annual Meeting pt. 2
Nov 11, 3:00 pm - LOM Awards
Nov 11, 4:00 pm - Camper Recruiting
Nov 12, 11:00 am - Communicating with Constituents
Nov 12, 4:00 pm - Camp in 2021
Nov 13, 11:00 am - What is next in LOM?

Register by Nov 9 at https://forms.gle/S8d7ueGkVXg6Zb9a9
For more information visit us online:
www.lomnetwork.org/lte/
THE LOM AUCTION

An Announcement from Auction Chairperson Daniel Kirschbaum

Hello LOM Members and Partners,

This is the first of two press releases the auction committee would like to share with you to send to your constituency. The second will be mid-October and include a link to the silent auction site, copy for social media, and a graphic to use. The silent auction will be the larger part of our event this year and open widely. Our live celebration will include a small number of items for bid, fellowship, and foolery and be for LOM members and friends of LOM. Instead of a financial goal this year, the auction’s goal is to have 100% participation from every LOM partner organization. Engagement can take many forms and a member of the auction committee will be in touch soon with you individually to discuss those with you.

One of the ways to be involved is to have people that love your camp be involved in the silent auction bidding and identifying with your organization. Another is to donate a registration to a retreat, event, or summer camp to the auction that your people can bid on. Please include the highlighted portion of the press release if you plan to engage in that way. The third way we’d like you to know about now (plenty more coming soon) is to simply be present with us during the live celebration of the silent auction on November 14th at 8:00pm central time. Even folks with no plans to bid on live items should join us for a night of fun and fellowship. We’re all craving a chance to be reconnected after a difficult summer. Let’s be together. Thanks in advance for your support in getting the word out about the auction and all of the ways you continue to support God’s mission through outdoor ministry.

PRESS RELEASE FOR LOM MEMBER ORGS TO SHARE WIDELY:

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM) is the ELCA churchwide expression of outdoor ministries that connects and supports the 119 outdoor ministries sites across the country. For many years LOM has had an auction at its national conference that has been a major source of income for its annual budget. Because of Covid-19 and a real need to be the church together, the auction has moved to an online format. Here at INSERT ORG NAME HERE, we want to invite you to participate with us in the silent auction from November 6th - November 14th. You’ll notice that one of the many items available for bidding is a week of summer camp registration with us at INSERT ORG NAME HERE. Be on the lookout on our social media for more information on how to access the auction and the items for bid such as a Colorado Ski Trip, a podcast guest opportunity, handmade cribbage boards, and more!

And...Now that we’re talking about the Auction...Don’t Forget that we need you to lose your tee-shirt for the Annual LOM Auction!!!

We’re not going to let a little thing like a pandemic stop us from having the fun and philanthropic satisfaction of the Annual LOM Auction!

The live auction is going to take place (virtually, of course) on Saturday evening, November 14, beginning at 9:00 PM EST, 8:00 PM CST, 7:00 PM MST, 6:00 PM PST.

One of the featured items will be a hand-sewn LOM Quilt that will include the tee-shirt from every LOM camp and retreat center. Please send the tee-shirt you want included to: Don Johnson, LOM Executive Director, 665 Eaton Road, Freedom, NH 03836. Deadline is October 15. The portion of your tee-shirt that you want included with your quilt should be less than 5” high and less than 5” wide. If you don’t have a tee-shirt that meets those specifications, don’t worry! Send us the closest thing to it.

The silent auction will begin on November 6, 9:00 AM Central Time, and conclude at 11:00 PM Central Time on November 14.

In regard to contributions of items for the auction and your offer to help in any way with the auction, please contact the chairperson of the LOM Auction Committee – Daniel Kirschbaum, Director of Retreat Ministries, Rainbow Trail (CO): daniel@rainbowtrail.org
New Resource for Boards

One of the most frequently heard comments around the LOM network about a silver lining in the pandemic cloud has been the growth in collaboration of executive directors with their boards of directors. Now, an exciting new resource that we have because of our work together through LOM will help boards and executive directors to solidify what has been taking place in an organic way.

At the request of LOM through the Education Committee, Keith Johnson, “The Board Coach,” volunteered to develop seven 10-minute sessions to help grow the effectiveness, capacity, and capability of boards. The COVID 19 pandemic has shown the importance of a strong board to help camps navigate through this crisis and whatever challenges us in the future.

1. Activating the Board Engine
2. Good Governance Basics
3. Recruiting Great Board Members
4. Leading through a Strategic Vision & Plan
5. Four Keys to a Strong Board & Executive Relationship
6. How A Governance Committee Can Transform the Board
7. Vital Role of the Board in Raising Funds

The video series is designed so that each can be used separately during each of seven meetings of your board. Or, all seven could comprise a day-long or weekend board development retreat.

They will soon be available on www.lomnetwork.org. If you would like to have access to them before you see them on the website, contact director@lomnetwork.org.

THANK YOU, Keith Johnson, for this superb contribution to the life of LOM and our member organizations. Thank you, Liam Riddle, for your superb work of filming and editing all seven videos and everyone at Lutherlyn (PA) for connecting us to Liam and hosting the filming process.

New Podcasts

Five new LOM Podcasts are now posted on the LOM website, with a sixth one soon on its way

Now available at https://www.lomnetwork.org/podcasts/

• Jake Sorenson, reflecting on the results of the cammp2congregation project. This podcast is a “must see”, especially for camps that are planning to resume or begin doing travelling day camp programs in 2021.
• Leaders from five LOM camps discussing the measures they took during the summer of 2020, in light of COVID-19, during summer camp programs at their camps.
• Leaders of four LOM camps discussing the alternatives and virtual experiences they developed in the wake of cancelling summer camp in 2020.
• Nicole VanderDoes, program coordinator for Total Inclusion! An introduction of Nicole to the LOM network and an overview of Total Inclusion! in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
• 2020 Auction Plans (VIRTUAL!!!) with Auction Team chairperson Daniel Kirschbaum.

And soon to be posted –
• An interview with LOM LTE Committee members Dana Isaacson, program director, EWALU (IA), Anthony Briggs, executive director, Cross Roads (NJ), and chairperson Gretchen Bachman, operations director, Voyageurs (MN).
Help your Ministry Reach More with an MIF Building Loan

While outdoor ministries can provide a unique faith experience, addressing the needs of all age groups can be a challenge. This is where a building project loan from the Mission Investment Fund (MIF), the lending ministry of the ELCA, can help. MIF provides loans to ELCA-related ministries—including camps and retreat centers, as well as ELCA congregations. MIF also offers individual investments to ELCA members and ministries which, in turn, fund the building loans.

When outdoor ministry met twenty-first century technology—and changing expectations people have about time away from home—Lutherdale in Elkhorn, Wisconsin, knew an opportunity existed in building a new, high-comfort adult conference center to replace one constructed in the 1970s.

After a successful capital campaign raised the majority of funds, Lutherdale turned to MIF for the balance, securing a building loan and line of credit to help finance the recently completed center. The new building allows Lutherdale to successfully attend to its growing ministry with adults—a ministry that has substantially increased in the past 10 years.

“We actually serve more adult guests than youth,” says Jeff Bluhm, Lutherdale’s executive director. “The new center is like a hotel,” he adds, complete with conference rooms designed to accommodate the latest audio/visual needs, fireplaces and a hospitality area. The main building is flanked by right and left wings with 10 guest rooms each including: queen-sized beds, an additional twin bed, desks, refrigerators, private baths, Google Home Mini, and a secure Wi-Fi connection.

“Securing a loan from MIF was the right decision,” Bluhm says. “We knew MIF from its previous building projects with camps and retreat centers and keeping partnerships within the church helps others. MIF was very good and easy to work with.”

Lutherdale, along with other camps and retreat centers, has had to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. Closing in March when the pandemic started, Lutherdale immediately began planning for summer camp and was among 20 LOM ministries to host a summer session this year. Even though attendance was limited to only a tenth of the usual number, participants declared it “the best ever,” according to Bluhm. “All of the pandemic protocols were in place, and everyone stayed healthy. LOM was especially helpful in planning to reopen.”

Also affected by the pandemic is LOM’s Annual Conference sponsored in part by MIF. In place of an in-person conference this year will be virtual educational opportunities running from January to November 2021. Emphasizing hospitality and inclusivity, these sessions will prepare LOM leaders for the LOM Annual Conference in 2021. At that conference, a multi-year initiative will be unveiled addressing inclusion—breaking down barriers that might exist to people who are marginalized from fully participating in outdoor ministry programs. MIF is proud to help sponsor the virtual educational opportunities leading up to the initiative.

“LOM is grateful for the partnership with MIF, including sponsoring the Annual Conference and the upcoming virtual educational opportunities,” says LOM Executive Director Don Johnson. “Our partnership is a great collaboration and mutually beneficial.”

For more information about MIF loans and investment opportunities, visit MIF’s website at mif.elca.org.
From one of our LOM Business Partners

Serving 450+ faith-based camps for 25+ years, we understand that you have a wide range of unique needs and we have a comprehensive set of modules built specifically for you. Whether you need camp registration, family camp registration, conference center management, fundraising software, a camp store and point of sale, or staff applications & management, CampBrain has all your needs met.

For more information visit our website (https://www.campbrain.com/camps/faith-based) to see why so many organizations choose CampBrain.

Elegant point of sale to manage camper accounts and sales.

Real time tracking of fundraising goals and donations.

A beautiful registration experience for your parents.
United We Stand

In Chapter 5 of Nehemiah, the Biblical book we’ve been studying in these articles to get some leadership advice, the story of the building of the wall is not mentioned. This chapter is all about internal strife. And yes, it has to do with money! The workers are upset because they quit their jobs to do this work and are not getting income. They are burdened by lack of funding!

Reading this out of context, we might think this is a story of the year of 2020. Job losses. People worried about making ends meet. Leaders have to furlough staff, including members of their own families. It can cause division. And you know what they say: “United We Stand. Divided We Fall.”

As a leader, how do we build unity? It can be tough. But listening is part of it. Getting people onboard an idea, program, or new way of doing something before you do it will help to build that unity.

What is next year going to look like? Who knows? We could answer that question that way any year but this year there is more uncertainty. For me in the camping world, I don’t know what Summer 2021 will work look. But I do know that it will look differently that we were used to prior to this year.

When we gathered our returning summer staff for three weeks this year, we spent time talking about next year. I tried to build unity among the staff as to what we might expect next year. They gave ideas and we talked through some possibilities. I tried to get them to “buy into” what things will be like so that we can be united, not divided, in our thinking.

Building consensus and unity among your followers can be tough, especially when someone has a strong mind or opinion about something. But it can be key to leadership. If everyone is united in their thinking, you won’t have a mutiny from your workers, like Nehemiah faced.

I’d be curious to hear your stories how you tried to build unity as a leader. Send me an email at webmaster@lomnetwork.org and give me your ideas of how to build consensus and get people to stand together so they will work hard toward your mission and not fall!

–Chad Hershberger