



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

Executive Director Report to the Annual Conference

2018

It's been quite a year for LOM! Here's just a few of the highlights –

- For the first time in several years, LOM had its own gathering for executive directors. The event was held at Lutheranch (GA), April 23-26, 2018, and attracted 31 participants. The theme, "Navigating the Future" was spearheaded by keynoter Mary Kay DuChene and included the full participation of Rev. Dr. Stephen Bouman, Executive Director of ELCA Congregational and Synodical Mission. It was rounded out with the music and worship leadership of Matt Simpkins and Chandler Carriker. Thank you for a great event to the Planning Team: Dianna Parks, Good Earth Village (MN); Brent Seaks, Badlands (ND); Heather Eggert, Wapo (WI); Matt Kindsvatter, Lutherhill (TX); and Don Shunkwiler, Sugar Creek (WI). The next such event is planned for March 18-21, 2019, at Briarwood (TX).
- LOM entered into a partnership with ELCA Advocacy to share space and activity in the Interactive Learning Center at the ELCA Youth Gathering in June. The theme for our partnership focused on stewardship of creation. Representing LOM on the planning committee: Sarah Lefler, Mar-Lu-Ridge (MD); Heather Lutz, Caroline Furnace (VA); Anthony Briggs, Cross Roads (NJ); Pete Smith, Bear Creek (PA); Joanne Knudson, Koinonia (NY); and Mike Youse, Lutheran Camp Corporation of Central PA. Heather Lutz, along with a great group of 4 volunteers from Cross Roads (NJ), did a great job of making sure LOM was visible and well represented at the Youth Gathering.
- Kris Hinkeldey became the new LOM Bookkeeper. In this transition we are grateful for the patience and thoroughness of former bookkeeper Aurice Worley, as well as outgoing treasurer Dave Jarvis and our new treasurer Susan Troutman, as we, (especially me!) asked multiple questions in ascertaining our understanding of the financial management systems that are in place.
- An LOM Task Group spearheaded the preparation of the "Education for Cultural Competencies" Section of a grant proposal to the Margaret A Cargill Foundation that is

being submitted by ELCA Mission Advancement. The grant proposal will be for initiatives aimed at helping outdoor ministries related to the ELCA to grow in their commitment and implementation of what is important to make our outdoor ministries totally inclusive for all persons, especially those who are often marginalized because of handicap, race, or identification as LGBTQ. Member of this Task Group: Yehiel Curry, executive director, Rescue, Release, and Restore (Camps SIMBA, SIMSA, and MYLA); Brenda Olson Binge, executive director, Bay Lake Camp (MN); CJ Clark, executive director, Living Water Ministries (MI); Darryl Thompson Powell, Program Associate Director for African Descent Ministries – ELCA, and LOM Board Member; Sarah Lefler, executive director, Mar-Lu-Ridge (MD); Carol Josefowski, Disabilities Ministries Coordinator, ELCA; Brian Krause, ELCA Disability Ministries Table; and Casey Fuerst, LOM Board president.

- At the Conference last year, the LOM Recognitions Committee did a great job of instituting LOM recognition of years of service milestones (5, 10, 20, 30 years) for our individual members. Another great award was started - the Manlove-Howells Leadership Award. The inaugural presentation of this award went to its namesakes, Jerry Manlove and Paul Howells. Jerry was with us in person and his acceptance of the award was an inspiration. Several of us gathered with Paul and his family in January to make the presentation of the award to him in person. The award to Paul was just in time as he passed away several days later.

An important part of the Strategic Plan for LOM is to cultivate collaboration partnerships. Since the last LOM Conference in November, 2017, we have had the opportunity to cultivate collaboration with these groups and persons –

- American Camp Association (ACA)
- Outdoor Ministry Connection (OMC)
- Compass Points ecumenical outdoor ministry continuing education certification program
- ELCA Schools for Lay Ministry
- LuMin (ELCA Campus Ministry Network)
- Colleges and Universities of the ELCA
- Seminaries of the ELCA
- ELCA Young Adult Ministries
- ELCA Hispanic Ministries
- ELCA African Descent Ministries
- Women of the ELCA
- ELCA Youth Gathering
- ELCA Advocacy
- ELCA Mission Advancement
- ELCA, Faith Practices and Book of Faith
- *The Living Lutheran Magazine*
- *Seeds for the Parish*
- Mission Investment Fund

- Portico
- Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM)
- Rescue, Release, Restore
- ELCA Disability Ministries
- Thrivent

A significant area of growth for LOM has been to consult with Board of Directors of our member organizations. Often, this has taken the form of the executive director serving as the facilitator for Board Development Retreats, and in many cases this has taken the form of a Board Executive Transition Planning Retreat. Since the 2017 LOM Conference, we have had this opportunity with these organizations –

- Cross Roads (NJ), January 12-13
- Agape (PA), January 19-20
- Luther Heights (ID), January 26-27
- Vanderkamp (NY), March 23-24
- Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center (NY), May 4-5
- Fortune Lake (MI), June 1-2
- Sugar Creek (WI), June 7-8
- Crossways (WI), September 28-29
- Lutheran Lakeside (IA), October 12-13

Another relatively new initiative for LOM is to organize Consultation Teams in response to invitations from the Board of Directors of our member organizations. The purpose of a consultation team is to review the current operating status of requesting organization and to make recommendations to the Board regarding the same. The Requesting organization is invited to specify aspects of operations, management, administration and governance for which the Consultation Team is especially requested to be attentive. Since the last Conference, LOM has organized two Consultation Teams –

- Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp (MT), January 24-26. This team consisted of Dave Jarvis, Keith Johnson, and Don Johnson.
- Crossways Camping Ministries (WI), September 24-28. This team consisted of Joel Abenth, Don Hayn, and Glen Egertson.

As your executive director, it has been extremely valuable for me to make in person visits to the camps and retreat centers that provide the context for your ministries. During the one-year period covered by this report, I have made visits to the following outdoor ministry sites (first time visits indicated with an asterisk*):

- 1/19 - Camp Frederick (OH)
- 1/19 – Camp Lutherlyn (PA)
- 2/13 – Camp Wilbur Herrlich (NY)
- 2/15 – Cross Roads (NJ)
- 2/21 – Lutherans Outdoors SD
- 2/21 – Carol Joy Holling (NE)

- 3/18 – Lutheran Hills (IN)
- 5/2 – Calumet (NH)
- 5/4 – *Camp Luther (part of LOMO, Ohio)
- 5/31 – Lutherdale (WI)
- 6/1 – Crossways (WI)
- 6/3 – Amnicon (WI)
- 6/3-4 – Bay Lake Camp (MN)
- 6/4 – Luther Point (WI)
- 6/4 Luther Park (Chetek, WI)
- 6/4-5 – Bethel Horizons (WI)
- 6/5 – Shalom (IA)
- 6/6 – Ewalu (IA)
- 6/6-7 – Good Earth Village (MN)
- 9/25 – Luterhwald (IN)
- 10/1 – Green Lake (MN)
- 10/12 – Lakeside (IA)
- 10/16 – Bear Creek (PA)

A significant amount of your executive director's time is involved with organizations in the midst of executive director transition. Organizations that have been in executive director transition process this year –

- Amnicon (WI), Jeff Barrow served as interim; Jesse Weiss called
- Agape (PA), Lavinia Wingert retired; Wayne Harrison serving as interim
- LOMIK (IN-KY), Mark Radloff retired, Steve Flynn called
- Lakeside (IA), David Halaas served as interim, Brittney Swanson called
- Luther Heights (ID), Bob Kuehner served as interim, Kelly Preboski called
- Pathways (MN), Steve Peterson retired, Chris Andreason serving as interim
- Crossways (WI), Jake Czarnik-Niemeyer retired from executive director to become Capital Campaign Director; Laurie Wilkinson serving as interim
- Fortune Lake (MI), Sara Jonasen served as interim, final stages of search process
- LOMC (IL), Russ Senti retired; Carolyn and Jerry Fritsch serving as interim
- Briarwood (TX), Phil Geleske retired, Matt Baumhardt now serving as acting executive director
- Sugar Creek (WI), Don Shunkwiler retired; Jeff Barrow serving as interim
- Lutherans Outdoors in South Dakota (SD), Layne Nelson retired; Paul Hanson serving as acting executive director.
- Bethel Horizons (WI), Eric Knueve called
- Luther Point (WI), Jon Hoyme served as interim; Sam Campeau called
- NovusWay (NC, GA, FL), Keith Johnson retired; Bo Harris called
- Mount Cross (CA), Sarah and Adam Erickson called
- Green Lake (MN), Loren Teig retired, Travis Aufderheide called
- Caroline Furnace (VA), Heather Lutz served as interim, Tom Powell called

- Wilbur Herrlich (NY), Bob Gentile retired, Dean Stichbury called
- Riverside (IA), Dave McDermott retired, Chris Dahl called
- Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, Dave Coker retired, Jason Gerdes called
- Camp Roig (PR), Idalia Negron elected bishop, David Guadalupe now serves as contact

A significant enhancement to our capacity to strengthen networking and helping us to collaborate with one another for strong outdoor ministries throughout the church is now getting up and running. Territory Coordinators are in place as we move into full implementation of the “Expanding the Capacity” initiative. Here’s the lineup –

- The West: Kyle Lefler, program coordinator, Flathead (MT)
- The West-Midwest: Dave Holtz, executive director, Luthercrest (MN)
- The East-Midwest: Jeff Thompson, program director, Lutherdale (WI)
- The South-Central; Phil Geleske, recently retired from executive director, Briarwood (TX)
- The East: Karen Heser, program/development assistant, Bear Creek (PA)

During the period covered by this report, LOM Podcasts have been produced with –

- Rev. Yehiel Curry, executive director of Rescue, Release, Restore (Camps Simba, Simsa and Myla)
- Molly Beck Dean, executive director of the ELCA Youth Gathering.
- Andrea Scofield, executive director of Lutherwood (OR)
- Brad Abbott, executive director, Sky Ranch (CO), and 2017 LOM Conference Committee chair.

There’s a strong consensus throughout LOM that the work of the LOM Recognitions Committee has provided a big boost for encouragement and empowerment for outdoor ministry leaders throughout our network

The LOM Curriculum Committee continues to oversee the production of an annual outdoor ministry curriculum for which we can all take much pride and is such a practical undergirding for the programs of so many of our camps and retreat centers. It’s truly one of the signature programs of LOM. The response this year to LOM and the ELCA Youth Gathering having the same theme has been overwhelmingly positive.

The LOM LTE Committee continues to provide excellent foundational education and training in best practices for administration and program. This is another signature program for LOM.

The newly reconstituted LOM Education Committee has a busy year ahead as we work with all of our membership to find the most effective ways to provide education for outdoor ministry Boards of Directors.

I have a feeling that the LOM Development Committee is going to be especially engaged in the year ahead. Although LOM has experienced significant increases in contributions during the last few years, we need more growth in order to continue providing services and resources to one another at our current levels. A particular challenge that we have not yet met is to find donors beyond our own membership who realize the value of the encouraging, equipping, empowering and educating that all in this organization provide for each other so that outdoor ministry can be strong and vibrant throughout the whole church.

I cannot imagine serving in the position of executive director of LOM without the involvement of the persons who serve as our contract staff. Jon Skogen, administrator; Randy Younquist-Thurow, events coordinator; Chad Hershberger, webmaster; Kris Hinkeldey, bookkeeper; and Andrea Lee, curriculum production manager – thank you so much for your attention to the details, for your support and encouragement, and for your understanding of the importance of outdoor ministry for the church and for the world.

And a shout of gratitude to our Board of Directors. We all appreciate so much your willingness to share from your considerable and collective experience and expertise in ways that assure good decisions for LOM. I am particularly grateful to those Board members with whom I have worked most frequently during this past year – chairperson Casey Fuerst and treasurer Susan Troutman.

What's especially impressive about LOM is the dedication of so many who volunteer so much to the success of this organization. There is definitely a growing sense of gratitude among our members for what we can all do together to assure strong and vibrant outdoor ministries throughout the whole church. Hats off and thanks to all who have been working so hard to make sure we can do for each other what would be difficult to provide on our own – to the Boards and committee members, all who help with events and task forces, and to all who make individual financial contributions and make sure that their organizations make financial contributions – all of LOM is so grateful.

It is my honor and privilege to serve in the capacity that I do. Thank you for this opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Johnson, Executive Director
Lutheran Outdoor Ministries