

# *The Camping Movement of The American Lutheran Church*

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Volume 2

*The Collected Histories of Camps Related to  
The American Lutheran Church  
Ralph Yernberg*

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# Introduction

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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*

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*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

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.

## ***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

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. Nasvik 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. Nasvik 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 Cayler'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 Kuntson 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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

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.

## ***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, Kluver and Brynestad. The three laymen were Norby of Thief River Falls, Brastad of Roseau, and Dahl of Baudette. The original camp association was

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

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.

## ***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

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

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 Service 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.

## ***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

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

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.

## ***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

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*

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*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.

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.

### ***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

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 by 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

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.

### ***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

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:

*"The almost 40 years since August 1, 1947, have seen many changes and improvements in the physical plant at WAPO. This is especially true this spring of 1987, as the new dining area and kitchen facility is nearing completion. But one*

*thing has not changed. The emphasis of the camp is still on imparting the living truth of the Word of God to every life touched by the camp. That was the purpose for which the camp was dedicated July 4, 1948, and we trust will be the continuing goal in the years to come."*

## ***Bethel Horizons Dodgeville, Wisconsin***

In 1966 a group of people appointed by the church council of Bethel Lutheran Church of Madison, Wisconsin, searched through the hills and valleys of Wisconsin's driftless area for a piece of property that would serve as a camping and retreat setting for the church. They had a number of specific goals in mind: the land needed to be within one hour of Madison, it needed to have adequate access and it needed to be "wild" enough to provide a true wilderness camping setting for small groups.

Two years later, Pastor Duane Hanson was called to help develop a new camping ministry. Working with the land search committee, they located a farm in a valley adjacent to Governor Dodge State Park north of Dodgeville. It had all the prerequisites except one - it was not easily accessible. Miraculously the adjacent farm located on the uplands near the property was put on the market in 1969, and with a gift of \$10,000 from the Bethel Endowment Foundation for a down payment, 440 acres of prime camping land was secured. The Bethel Horizons Foundation was incorporated, and the initial fund-raising dinner was held at

Bethel Lutheran Church in 1970.

In 1970 the first camping program began in earnest, with a weeklong summer programs for 7th and 8th grade young people, including wilderness camping in the valley and river tripping on the Kickapoo River. The following year the camping program was expanded to 8-12 year olds. Approximately 50 percent of these campers were from Dane County Social Service agencies. This was an important part of the vision of Pastor Hanson - to extend camping ministry to urban children.

Using the services of land planner Art Harrison, a master plan was developed for the property. This landmark decision included designating a "line" along the upland ridge to separate the main site area, where limited development and construction could occur, from the wilderness valley that would remain "forever wild."

Gary Forbes was hired as resident manager in 1971. During his tenure, the valley farmstead was torn down and the land restored to a natural state. An additional 20 acres of land was purchased. Pastor Hanson organized a "Friends of



Horizons" group in 1975. Dan Ensrude began serving as resident manager in 1978.

Bethel Horizons, under the leadership of Pastor Hanson, has developed many unique programs. It promoted the Outdoor Awareness and Earth Stewardship Project through the Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Dr. Ruth L. Hine served as consulting naturalist for the many camps in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan through this project developed by Pastor Hanson.

In addition, the retreat ministries and special events of Bethel Horizons speak of a special relationship to the congregation. An annual congregational picnic draws 500 to 600 people; a cross-country ski-in began in 1975; the XYZ program (Extra Years of Zest) provides quality experiences for older adults; a choir retreat, pottery workshop and handbell seminar!

## ***Other Camps Wisconsin***

One additional camp was affiliated with The American Lutheran Church in Wisconsin. It was called the Homme Home Wilderness Camp and was located near Exeland, WI.

Homme Home is an agency of Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and cared for youth assigned by courts to the home for incarceration or treatment. The wilderness camp was used for field trips

Bethel Horizon's vision for outdoor education has met with incredible success. Mark Breseman was hired to serve as environmental education director in 1986 and established a school program. A beautiful nature center was built in 1987 to complement a ropes course and thousands of school children, trust building groups, business leaders, and staffs attend the creative programs of Bethel Horizons.

Additional construction at the camp includes a resident manager's home and maintenance building (1984) and the nature center (1987). These facilities complement the original retreat center built around the old barn on the farmstead located on the uplands.

Bethel Horizons remains owned by the Bethel Horizons Foundation in relationship to Bethel Lutheran Church. Its ministry is dedicated to social change within an ecumenical spirit.

and consisted of 570 acres. Some rentals were also offered to groups and in 1966, 96 other youth utilized the camp program

Homme Home itself is located in Wittenberg, WI, and is considered a highly effective program for youth (Camp Amnicon, located near Wentworth, WI, is included in the Minnesota chapter of this volume).

# *The Camps of Illinois*

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*Camping in Illinois did not flourish as much as might be expected. In the former American Lutheran Church, only one camp had its physical location within the state: Green Wing Bible Camp near Amboy, though among its predecessors was a camping program led by the Chicago Circuit of the ELC, whose story is taken from on of their newsletters and included below.*

*There were a number of circumstances that led to this arrangement. First, congregations in the Illinois District were spread across a significant geographic area. Those in the southeast Illinois, near the Ohio River, rented facilities in the Vincennes, Indiana, and area. They also joined with other Lutherans to rent camps for specific summer weeks near St. Louis, MO. Congregations of the ALC also rented East Bay camp, located near Bloomington. Rented facilities seemed to offer the parishes opportunities to camp without the expense of site development.*

*Lutherdale Bible Camp north of Elkhorn, WI, was and is considered an 'Illinois Camp' having received much of its support from ALC parishes in Chicago. It has always been part of the Chicago culture to 'go north' for camping and vacation opportunities and both shores of Lake Michigan have been favorite vacation destinations for Chicagoans. This pattern would remain true in outdoor ministries for many camps were held in southern Wisconsin, especially in the Lake Geneva area. An example of one of these rented camp programs is included in this history.*

*Green Wing Bible Camp was the only site ever developed by congregations of the American Lutheran Church in Illinois and its history was not long. This, in part, is another testimony to the difficulty of maintaining long-term funds for camping programs, particularly those that speak to social ministries.*

## ***Chicago Circuit Luther League Bible Camp Lake Geneva, WI***

The Chicago Circuit Luther League of the Evangelical Lutheran Church held many Bible camp sessions on Lake Geneva, near Walworth, WI, during the late thirties and forties. Generally, a specific week was selected for each summer and arrangements were made to rent a camp or resort facilities to conduct the program.

A typical camp was like the one held July 9-16, 1944, at Camp Aurora on Lake Geneva, WI. The camp dean was Rev. Stanley R. Olson, Rev. Alvin A. Snedrud was registrar, and Rev. Orville M. Running was Dean of Men. The Rev A. E. Hanson, Brookings, SD, was brought in to serve as Inspiration Leader, and the Rev. R. W. Solbert served as Bible Teacher. Rev. A. Gordon Nasby was Song Leader and Rev. Ariel R. Molldrem was Athletic Director. The Chicago Circuit published a camp newsletter called *Bible Camp ECHOES*, which offered an excellent opportunity to share the excitement of camping with adults and Luther league participants.

Rev. Hanson explained the evangelical purpose of the camps in the January 1945, issue:

*"Your Bible Camp is a place where God wants you to tarry while He endues you with His power...Perhaps it will not be your calling to go to the 'uttermost parts' and again perhaps it may. Of this we are certain, God wants you to be His witness right where you are, and now...There will be much to do by way of spiritual reconstruction*

*in the post-war world. That's where God will need effective witnesses."*

This same issue reminded campers of their Bible study focus called 'Men God Made.' Rev. Richard Solberg wrote the article about "a company of five ancient Hebrew heroes." They included Joshua the conqueror, Gideon the timid, Solomon the ruler, Elijah the preacher, and Nehemiah the builder.

Part of the Camp Aurora theme was a poem written by Rev. M. E. Fretheim of Monticello:

*"Fair Aurora--the Goddess of the morning  
That the hearts of our heathen forbearers deeply  
did inspire  
Has come again--the life of youth adorning  
And touched our hearts with living Christian fire.*

*At Camp Aurora we greet the daylight  
As it rolls its chariot o'er Geneva's main  
And darkness yields as from Heaven's light  
We drink from fountains where no one drinks in  
vain.*

*The Men that God Made' deeply stirred our  
emotions,  
To Listen, to Learn, to Leave, to Love, and to  
Live,--  
The heart-searching prayers poured out at  
devotions--  
Thirsting souls to receive, quenching Spirit to give.*

*So Camp Aurora gets its name from the  
Morning*

*In legend and in story of the Northern Lights -  
Its power is of the Spirit - young lives adorning,  
Keen edge to the sword--and zeal to the fight."*

-- M. E. Fretheim

Without doubt, the memories of the participants will best describe the typical Bible Camp experience:

*"Loads of fun but wish I could get to sleep at night!" (Betty Diephause, Christ Church)*

*"I have a hard time choosing which attracts me most - the women or the horses." (Herbert Southwell of Medill).*

*"I like everything about camp except the insects and the night prowlers." (Anita Riechman, Our Saviors)*

*"Those last famous words of Rev. Sniesrud and Rev. Running, 'Lights out and Quiet, please.'"*

*"Where do flies disappear to when you pick up the swatter?"*

*"When the electricity failed in our cottage was it because the main switch had been pulled?"*

*"...one camper thought in this day of alphabetical designations, preachers should be called A-men."*

Two hundred and fifteen campers attended the program during 1944. It is clear from the newsletter that the strong Christian relationships that developed between the campers and their camp leaders were the most appreciated quality of the camp program. The pastors in attendance were often described in

memorable ways. The Dean of Women was Sister Magdalene Klippen and she was remembered for her ability to "heal any ailment but a broken heart."

The pastors were remembered because of their active role in monitoring activities, keeping campers in their dorms, and participating in camp ball games and swimming. They are pictured with whistles around their necks and remembered for their discipline or obvious lack thereof. One camper remembers that the campers were generally not disciplined as much as the pastors may have thought.

*"all those people Rev. Olson was supposed to have a talk with."*

*And "We heard Pastor Running say 'Halt' at 11:30 on Tuesday night. Why did you run, Lloyd?"*

Week long camps such as these were often conducted through various circuits or district Luther League organizations. Their pattern was clearly established in the late thirties and forties, and many leaders from throughout the country were called upon each summer to participate. Seminary teachers, recognized evangelists and preachers, and church lay leaders all contributed to the development of these programs.

The Chicago Circuit moved their camp to Cisco Beach on Lake Geneva in the following year of 1945. The camps led by the Chicago Circuit Luther League were eventually moved to Lutherdale Bible Camp upon its development in the late forties.

## *Green Wing Bible Camp Amboy, Illinois*

Green Wing Bible Camp, located just south of Amboy, Illinois, was the only camping site and program of the former American Lutheran Church located within the state of Illinois. It began as an endeavor to serve people from seven conferences in the Illinois District.

Initially a District Camp Association formed within the state suggested that there was a need for a permanent site. They alerted Lutheran members to begin a search for a suitable piece of land that had from 100 to 500 acres and might be centrally located to serve the many congregations spread throughout the state of Illinois.

A suitable site was located in Lee County near Amboy. It consisted of 490 acres. Originally owned by the Charles Walgreen (whose family owned the national chain of Walgreen Drug Stores) and the Shaw Newspaper family of Dixon, the property consisted of a mix of wooded land and fields. It had a small cabin located near the woods and was used as hunting property, with the fields rented out to neighboring farms.

On May 15, 1968, a Board of Directors was formed to begin "looking into the possibility" of purchasing this land. Board members included Pastors Ronald Belanger, Robert Patterson, Herman Lehman, Alvin Bergh, and Leonard Carlson. In addition, three lay members participated on the Board: Richard Pubfrey, Erhart Renken, and Cora Schafer. An option to buy the

property was purchased by the group and they recommended forming a church association to own the camp.

19 member congregations banded together to form an association to purchase the property on August 18, 1968. The option to purchase the property was exercised only 15 minutes before the allotted time was to expire. The remaining \$12,500 was brought to the bank and the camp officially belonged to the association of American Lutheran Church congregations on November 5, 1968. Dedication of the camp took place the following spring on May 18, 1969.

James Splitt was called to serve as program director during Green Wing's first summer of operation in 1969. During the summer, Pastor Paul Wittenberg came to Green Wing as the first Executive Director. Pastor Paul served Green Wing until February of 1971, and during this time, an area for family camping was cleared in the forest and the original hunting lodge was remodeled to serve as a small, year round retreat center.

Mr. Arlen R. Holman became Executive Director in April of 1971. As a professional lay worker from Chicago, "Arly" continued to develop facilities he felt would help the camp to reach out to a wide variety of populations. In 1972, a second retreat center for year round use serving 46 persons was built. It was constructed of donated pre-formed cottages used by area migrant farm

workers. Arly developed programs to serve the children of migrant farm workers and offered summer programs for the children who traveled with the migrant laborers each summer.

In 1978, a dining hall was built as an addition to the retreat lodge. This new unit could seat 175 people. Also, several study cabins were built to provide more comfort for youth campers. All campers up to this point had lived in tent villages arranged in isolated areas throughout the camp property.

Holmen continued to seek new ways of bringing a wide range of campers to Green Wing. His recruitment efforts established a tradition of camping among a variety of ethnic backgrounds from the Chicago area, including residents of urban projects such as Cabrini Greens near the Chicago Loop. A relationship was developed with a residential facility for developmentally disabled to bring campers with physical or emotional needs to Green Wing. These youth were generally mainstreamed into the camp programs and shared in all daily life activities.

Other improvements to the camp included the development of a small

office and maintenance buildings, and staff housing arrangements as the staff increased in size to five persons.

Since its early history, the Green Wing Bible Camp Association struggled with the financial realities of operating the camp program. Its programs for urban campers were expensive to operate for no child was ever turned away for lack of funds to pay for registration fees. Special needs programs also required a significant outlay in staffing. And the association did not grow as expected; thus financial challenges began to shake the foundations of Green Wing Bible Camp.

Following the departure of Mr. Arlen Holmen in the mid eighties, the camps future was looked at closely by the Board and appointed committees. When the American Lutheran Church made plans to unite within the Evangelical Lutheran Church, it was apparent that no clear home could be found for Green Wing. After several consulting studies, the camp was sold to a consortium of Lutheran agencies whose intent to develop a wide range of programs was never realized. The history of Green Wing thus ended in 1988.

## ***Other Camps Illinois***

Many congregations in Illinois organized camps at a large facility called East Bay, located NE of Bloomington, IL. The camp had a capacity for 630 campers and in 1966 ALC churches led a program that served 472 campers.

One can assume the camp used a "conference model" for program with daily class periods, organized recreation and inspirational worship and campfire opportunities

# *The Camps of Iowa*

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*Camping in Iowa has a rich and long history. Among the very first camps related to The American Lutheran Church was Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp, established by the Sunday School Teachers Association of the Danish Lutheran Church in the early years of the nineteen twenties. Thirty years later, EWALU was established in the opposite corner of Iowa.*

*Iowa camping in the Lutheran Church is also a reflection of theological heritage of the state. It is not without reason that the camping ministry focus was built upon inspiration and evangelism. Roots of Haugian Lutheranism can be found in the constituencies of these camps; the concern for lay leadership and independence from bureaucratic interference may also be found. Camps may have been seen as centers for evangelism and outreach.*

*The history of Iowa camping often includes a creative "can do" spirit. There is much concern for involvement of a wide range of people to be engaged in Christian outreach. An independent spirit among congregations may have also contributed to a clear identification with their own camp.*

## *Okoboji Bible Camp*

### *Milford, Iowa*

Lake Okoboji Bible Camp is among the oldest Lutheran camps of the former American Lutheran Church. It began in 1922 when the Iowa District Sunday School Committee first suggested the idea of forming a Bible Camp at Lake Okoboji, a well-known resort and outdoor area in northwestern Iowa.

The first camp in 1924 was held at Miller's Bay on Lake Okoboji and was designed to train Sunday School teachers. Forty teachers attended the weeklong session. Over 500 people in a meeting held in a large tent joined them on Sunday. Housing was provided in near by cottages and tents and many people camped in their cars.

Camps were again held in the same area the following two years. It was during this time that the Articles of Incorporation were drafted for the "Lake Okoboji Bible School Association of the Iowa District of the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America."

Property was purchased the following year in 1927. Lots were purchased for \$1,000 and a chapel was built with \$1,200 all of which was borrowed. In 1931 the Luther League of the Iowa District of the UELC financed the cost of two small dormitories at Okoboji. Thus, Lake Okoboji Bible Camp had its roots not in youth camping programs but as a training center for adults, while youth camping was added at a later date.

A dining hall with dormitory rooms

was built around 1940, and during the following decade the old Miller's Bay Hotel was purchased and moved to the Okoboji's growing campgrounds. Soon after WW 2, old barracks were purchased and erected to serve as additional dormitory space, office and canteen facilities.

Lakefront property was finally purchased during the fifties and the growing camping program for youth meant that additional facilities were constructed. As the decade ended, and the new American Lutheran Church began to form, Okoboji became a district camp from 1960 through 1962. This form of ownership became cumbersome and the camp was given back to the congregations of the conferences in western Iowa.

Also in the sixties, an attempt was made to operate Ingham Lake Bible Camp, a camp of the former Evangelical Lutheran Church, jointly with Okoboji. Each camp went back to separate management and it would be another twenty years before the camps would be united in a joint working relationship.

During the years of 1972-75, Lake Okoboji Bible Camp entered into agreement with Lutheran Lakeside Camp to operate with a joint director, Rev. Ernest Lantz.

In 1976, the dedication of the newly winterized dining hall at Okoboji was held. It was called the Thomsen Center in honor of Dave and Nora



Thomsen who had served from the beginning of Okoboji's ministry for over 35 years. This same year, Connie and Jeanne Sorensen were hired as Co-Directors. Under their leadership the first Senior Citizens camp was held and the Shalom Cottage was received as a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Bill Nystrom of Sioux City, IA.

During the next four years, youth camper numbers increased from 320 to over 1,000 campers. Family use increased from 85 families to 340. Additions to the campsite included the Galilee cabin given by Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Mennen of LaMars, IA. It was moved to the camp and remodeled as a retreat center.

In 1981 a special campaign called the *Enrichment Appeal* raised \$337,000 toward the construction of a new Adult/Family Retreat Center. The funds

## ***Ingham Lake Bible Camp Milford, Iowa***

Ingham Lake Bible Camp was established just prior to 1948. Warranty deeds to the Estherville Circuit Bible Camp Association by Edgar Iverson and Percy Herum were filed in this year. The first cabin and the dining hall were erected with volunteer labor in 1949. This later became known as Boy's Cabin #3. The chapel and five more cabins were built on the campsite in 1950. Dredging material from High Lake was used to fill in the low ground that is not used as a recreation field.

Three weeks of summer camp were held in 1951. A total of 283 campers were

were also used to purchase the Beach Property. The adult center was dedicated the following year and named the Christopherhaus. The increase in family and adult retreats was dramatic.

It was in 1982 when a trial working arrangement between Ingham Lake and Lake Okoboji Bible Camps was proposed. In subsequent years this arrangement became stronger as Steve Mork began to serve Ingham Lake as director in 1983-84. Both constituencies approved new Articles of Incorporation into one and Connie Sorensen was named the Executive Director. The camps officially were united in January 1985.

By this time Okoboji's ministry was serving 680 youth campers, 2000 summer family and adult campers and over 3,000 guests during the retreat season.

served in that initial year of ministry. During the fifties, many additional facilities were built at Ingham Lake Bible Camp. Mr. Sylvester Berge became the camp manager and held the position for 14 years.

An attempt was made in the early sixties, around the time of the newly formed American Lutheran Church, to work cooperatively with Lake Okoboji Bible Camp. After two years, the camps returned to their original management structures.

In 1978 Richard Schroeder was hired as the first full-time director of

Ingham Lake Bible Camp.

In the early eighties, a joint ALC/LCA design for Iowa Lutheran Camps was established. Its purpose was to encourage cooperative ministry without competing interests. Formal working relationships between Lutheran camps in western Iowa were developed. A

### ***Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp Story City, Iowa***

Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp was dedicated July 4, 1943. The dream of Pastor A. J. Bringle became reality as pasture land donated by O. A. Mortvedt held campers in tents during its first summer. Pastor Bringle was known as "Mr. Bible Camp" for the camps he started and his devotion to camping ministry in church circles.

The Story City Circuit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church accepted ownership of the camp in 1944. In 1952, the St. Ansgar Circuit joined the association. In subsequent years, congregations in the Des Moines, Forest City, and Mason City conferences of the former American Lutheran Church also became members of Riverside.

It was in 1944 that the first buildings were constructed - a boy's cabin and three girl's cabins, as well as an administration building. In 1946, Uzziah and an additional girl's cabin and washroom were built. The Bringle Chapel was built in honor of its founder in the 50's. Also in the decade of the fifties, the swimming pool and camp manager's home was built. The Fellowship Hall

cooperative arrangement was also developed for shared leadership with Okoboji at this time. On January 1, 1985, Ingham Lake and Okoboji joined together in a unified outdoor ministry program. This same year, attendance at Ingham reached 372 campers and over 1,500 persons attending special events.

followed in 1957; it later became known as the O. A. Mortvedt Hall, in memory of the original landowner and friend of the camp.

In 1963, Pastor A. J. Bringle returned to Riverside as the first full-time camp director. Family camping began in the summer of 1965. With the acquisition of more land, part of it a farm, Bringle Village was completed with a hall for 70 campers. The farmhouse was modernized for the camp manager.

Pastor Kearney Frantsen became director in 1970. Beginning in 1972 Eric Johnson served 16 months as manager, and in 1973, Warren Johnson came to serve Riverside as the camp manager. Pastor Bringle retired and moved to Lake City, MN, in 1973.

The Peter Hansen Lodge was built in 1972 as well as a new kitchen. The Zion/Aaron duplex was built in 1974, and the Yaacob/Xerxes duplex was finished in 1975. The Founders Prayer Chapel and two full size tennis courts were also added in 1975.

In 1976 Pastor Franzen resigned, and Pastor Dan Knudsen was installed as

director in December. The new retreat center was begun in 1977 and completed the following year. A trail ride program was also established during the seventies, and two footbridges over the Skunk River were built.

Pastor Knudsen resigned in 1979, and the search committee recommended Pastor Arthur Vorhes to serve as the director of Riverside. A fund drive was planned for the first months of 1980 to reduce indebtedness and to raise funds for new projects. A suspension bridge across the Skunk River was built in 1982.

Meanwhile Riverside's program had developed many unique traditions. During the seventies and eighties a Lutheran Youth Encounter international team called 'Cross Fire' worked as summer counselors each summer. The camp also had a program established with the Training School for Girls in Mitchellville and carried on a program of canoe instruction with the Iowa State Training School for Boys in Eldora. Umegashima Bible Camp in Japan became the sister camp of Riverside and there

have been exchanges of staff members between the camps.

Financial development programs fostered through a consulting relationship with Richard Sayther of GSB Associates has helped Riverside form a Partners Club, conduct a yearly phonathon and send direct mail appeals to add stability to the annual needs of Riverside.

Following the retirement of Pastor Art Vorhes, Pastor Jim Cherry, a former director of Wilderness Canoe Base, accepted the call to serve as Executive Director. Pastor Cherry assisted Riverside in conducting another appeal that resulted in facility expansion through unique tree houses located on a bluff overlooking the river. The program has grown to serve substantial numbers of campers in a year round ministry.

Since its inception in 1943, Riverside has maintained its link to congregational ministry, serving as an extension of congregational life, while affirming its theme: "If you are in Christ, you are a new creation."

## ***EWALU Camp and Conference Center Strawberry Point, Iowa***

In the late 1950's many individuals of the Iowa District of The American Lutheran Church felt the need to establish a Bible camp in northeastern Iowa. A variety of locations were searched for a site. Among the sites under consideration was the St. Sebald Church property and Kleinlein Hollow area near Strawberry Point.

On September 23, 1960, a committee and a camp architect approved the present site along the Maquoketa River west of Strawberry Point. Following the approval of the District Executive Committee, 280 acres was purchased in 1961. W. Glen Wallace, a nationally recognized camp architect, was engaged to plan and develop the site.

Two weeks of tent camping took place in July 1961, under the leadership of Albert J. Bringle, the pastor at St. Sebald. Pastor Bringle had also been active in the establishment of Riverside Bible Camp in Story City. The only building on the camp was a woodshed brought from St. Sebald and used as a "cook shack." Yet the Rural Electric Cooperative duly provided service to the camping area.

Activity increased in 1962 when ten weeks of camping was scheduled for young people who had completed sixth grade through high school age. Bill White headed the camp staff. Construction of the main lodge began in early summer when a well was drilled and a fund raising campaign was initiated under the watchful eyes of Pastor Bringle. His report on February 22, 1963, listed commitments toward the appeal of \$222,000.

The association was incorporated in 1963 and the name EWALU was chosen, standing for "Eastern IoWA Lutheran." Alvin Zwanziger was to serve as the first president of the corporation for eight years. In May of 1963 construction of a 5,500 square foot swimming pool began; its first use was in July of that year. The lodge was dedicated on July 7, 1963, with Pastor Homer Larsen of Cedar Falls addressing the gathering estimated at 1000 people.

The registration fee for the 797 young people who participated in the camping program that summer was \$18 per week. Meanwhile, construction continued during the camping seasons for the latter part of the decade. A bathhouse, maintenance building, two unit lodges, eight cabins, sewage and

utility lines, a picnic shelter, and a director's residence were completed.

Over the years other improvements would take place. An addition to the main lodge for food storage and preparation, and a meeting room was added. An administration building with office space and individual guest rooms was also built. The former "cook shack" remained for years as the canteen. EWALU expanded over the years to include two sets of farm buildings and more wooded area so the total acreage was increased to 500. Most of the tillable land acquired with the farm buildings has been sold to neighboring farmers.

Early in 1984 the Three Crosses Boys Ranch of 960 acres located about two miles north of Strawberry Point became available. It was acquired for development as an adult retreat center. The property included a dormitory, director's home, and a set of farm buildings. The dormitory was extensively remodeled so that it now accommodates 56 individuals in deluxe private rooms with bath. Approximately 700 acres of the land was sold to finance remodeling costs leaving 250 acres on what is now known as the "EWALU Stone Center," named for Mr. and Mrs. Herb Stone who had earlier donated the land for the boys ranch.

EWALU's history, being relatively new, has included the memories of a number of people who were instrumental in its beginnings. Included are many interesting memories such as this anecdote from Ethel J. Zwanziger:

*"On Sunday, June 17, 1962, most of the*

*men from camp had gone to Fredericksburg for a Brotherhood meeting. Two men, Bernard and Erwin Philipp, stayed at EWALU to see that everything went as it should. About two thirty, storm clouds began to gather in the west, and we became concerned for the safety of the young people who were in our care that Sunday afternoon. When the storm was imminent, and still no men back from Fredericksburg, Bernard and Flippie called all the campers together and asked them to get inside the big tent and stay there.*

*"Then Bernard, in his calm way, announced that there was a storm on its way but that we were confident God was in the storm and that we would be safe. Then he said, 'Flippie, you go to the north end of the tent and I'll go to the south end. We'll hold the tent down and*

*Ethel, you stand in the middle and pray!' I DID! After some strong winds and lots of rain, the storm abated and we left the tent, looked around, and found all was well...*

*"When the men returned from the Brotherhood meeting, they were concerned about the camp and campers because on their way home they had found many trees uprooted, telephone poles and wires down, and other evidence of a severe storm. But the camp and the campers were safe. God had indeed been in the storm; he had guided the wind and the rain around and away from the big tent. He had indeed watched over His own that day. I shall never forget it."*

(From EWALU REMEMBRANCES by Ethel J. Zwanziger).

# *The Camps of the Dakotas*

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*The history of camping in the prairie states is among the oldest in the country. One might think that the distance between communities and the small population base in the Dakotas might have created barriers too great to overcome. In fact, the opposite is the case. The twin facts of distance and camper numbers have always contributed to the importance of building Christian community at Bible Camps. As a result, the camps in the Dakotas, particularly those in South Dakota, have shaped Lutheran camping in many ways, providing a core of young camping leaders who moved on to other camping corporations.*

*It is remarkable that there was a camp for every conference in the Western North Dakota District! And camps such as Outlaw Ranch in the Black Hills also set standards that were followed throughout the country. Another first for the Dakotas: the first full time camp director position in the American Lutheran Church was at NeSoDak Bible Camp in northeastern South Dakota (Pastor Richard Borrud). Camping had considerable value to Lutherans in the Dakotas.*

## *Camping in North Dakota*

*Lutherans are the predominant denomination in the Dakotas, far outnumbering other church groups. The Dakota values of helping each other out, volunteering, and making things work contributed to concerted effort to create camps. Within a few decades, the spirit of camping swept the prairie, and camps were established throughout North Dakota. As previously mentioned, there was a camp for each of the ALC Districts in North Dakota.*

### ***Badlands Ministries Medora, North Dakota***

The property on which Badlands Ministries is located has had a long and tortuous history. Western North Dakota, near the Badlands, has been a land of legend. Ranching has been its main enterprise, and visitors have included cowboys, trappers, and hunters. President Teddy Roosevelt enjoyed the North Dakota Badlands as their shadows and drama make this part of North Dakota a land of extremes.

Originally, the camping program known as Badlands Ministries purchased an 800-acre spread that had twice folded as a guest Dude Ranch. The land was purchased by congregations in the southwestern part of North Dakota in 1945. It was held in receivership, after having failed as a Dude Ranch both in the late 1800's and during the close of the Roaring Twenties.

Youth camping was not new to these churches for their youth had often camped at rented facilities and participated in Bible Camps. A CCC

Camp located north of Medora had been the most recent location of the Bible Camps prior to the purchase of the property.

The camp utilized as its primary facility the old log lodge that had been built in the twenties for the Dude Ranch operation. In addition, a boy's and girl's dorm, each serving between 30 and 40 campers were built in the fifties. About this same time, financial difficulties prompted the association to sell off the major portion of the acreage. All but forty acres were sold in its attempt to continue to operate the camp program.

Within ten years of the sale, oil was discovered underneath the land that had been sold, and the neighbor who purchased the property became a very rich man.

The camp program was operated during these years during the summer season with modest use during other months of the year. Congregations would band together and establish programs that were attended by youth

from western North Dakota. Some conversations were also held regarding the sharing of leadership in Lutheran camping during the sixties.

In the mid seventies, the camp facilities received the gift of the Normal Lutheran Church building, located north of Scranton, North Dakota. It was moved to the camp premises and converted into a small year round retreat center with 20 beds.

About the same time, Mr. John Hoyme served as the summer program director for a short period. By the end of the decade, the Board began to seek full time leadership, and soon called Pastor Jim Liefeld to serve as Executive Director. Jim was well liked and as a 'city kid' embraced the western lifestyle, wearing his large brim hat and sporting his handlebar mustache. Camp

### ***Metigoshe Ministries Bottineau, North Dakota***

Metigoshe Ministries has its historical roots deep in the camping activities of the Lutheran Churches of North Dakota. Starting in the early days of the 1930's, pastors would join together to bring their students from the plains of North Dakota to the sparkling Lake Metigoshe for a week of Bible camp at the state park. In the early sixties these congregations were finding the ministry of camping to be invaluable. Finding a peninsula on Lake Metigoshe, they bought the land and incorporated the Metigoshe

programs were filled with excitement and inspiration, and story telling became a fine art.

Pastor Carl Kelly followed Liefeld's departure and brought with him his musical talent. The camping program, however, experienced the loss of campers often found in rural areas where population waned.

Improvements were made to the facility and small cabins were built to improve the quality of the camp environment.

Subsequent directors have included Dave Anderson, Carl Buettemaier, Greta Kessel, and Lowell Krogstad. The camp programs have continued to this day to provide quality outdoor experiences for Lutherans in Western North Dakota.

Lutheran Bible Camp.

To further meet the needs of the growing camping ministry, the camp corporation joined together with the local Lutheran congregation to call a pastor to serve these two ministries. Under the direction of Rev. Mark Ronning, and with the help of many committed people, the Bible camp blossomed into a strong, active, summer camping and winter retreating ministry.

In 1968, Metigoshe Lutheran Church built the Lakeside Chapel, a



rustic A-framed wood and glass chapel overlooking Lake Metigoshe. Every summer in this chapel, the Metigoshe congregation and the camp staff would work together to offer musical and meaningful worship services for the lake's summer residents.

In the early 1970's, with the help of many people, the camp built the Lakeside Christian Center. Metigoshe Lutheran Church worshiped in this stone and wood facility on Sunday mornings while local groups used the facility for retreats. To accompany the growing number of retreat groups, the camp also moved the Nordland church building (one of the original churches of the area) and adapted it to serve as a second retreat facility. This became known as the "Life and Growth Place." At the same time, the camp purchased 268 acres on Pelican and Sandy Lakes, five miles east and south of Lake Metigoshe for wilderness camping.

Soon the camping program grew to the point of needing a full time director. Pastor Mark Ronning left his duties as part time pastor of the church to assume full time duties with the camping ministry. He served as Camp Director of Metigoshe Lutheran Bible Camp until his death in November of 1983.

In the mid seventies Mr. Dave Brunkow was called to serve as Associate Director of the camp. As the program had expanded, the need for another person to assist with retreats, staff recruitment, and staff leadership

meant the addition of full time leadership. Mr. Brunkow resigned in late 1978 to accept a call to serve as Executive Director of Lutherans Outdoors in South Dakota.

In February of 1984, Rev. Paul Leslie became the new camp director. During the eighties, the camp corporation continued to grow and expand in new directions. It amended its name to be known as "Metigoshe Ministries" to reflect its wide spread growth. The camping program, being limited on the 20 acre Lake Metigoshe site was moved in its entirety to the 268-acre site on Pelican and Sandy Lakes. There, canoeing, sailing, fishing, swimming, and nature hikes are just a few of the many recreational activities to be enjoyed.

The spiritual rhythm of the camp included morning worship, Bible study, and evening campfires. The rustic camp and nourishing meals kept the lifestyle simple but highly meaningful, "anchored in Christ."

It was in 1988 that Pastor Leslie accepted the call to become Executive Director of Lutheran Outdoors of South Dakota. The Board of Directors called Rev. Marsh Drege to serve at Metigoshe Ministries. Pastor Drege brought a creative program touch to continue the nationally known quality of camping practiced at the camp. Known for its emphasis on music and worship, Metigoshe Ministries continues to provide a spiritual anchor to thousands of guests each year.

## *Red Willow Bible Camp Devils Lake, North Dakota*

Rev. R. A. (Rudy) Ofstedal led camping trips on the shores of Devils Lake as early as 1926. Rudy was a great football player for Luther College and despite his gentle nature, his stature was formidable and thus he made a successful impression on young people. His group of Luther League girls from his Edmore parish would camp during the district Luther League convention located in Devils Lake. The following year, 14 boys attended a four-day camp in the same location with Pastor Ofstedal leading a study on the Lords Prayer. When 35 youth signed up in 1928, the camp was moved to Red Willow Lake. Each young person paid \$1.50 and was expected to furnish a supply of provisions for the commissary.

In 1929, McVile Parish joined the Edmore group and 60 young people studied scripture under the leadership of the Rev. C. B. Ylvasaker. It was on this year that the campers gathered on Lookout Point for a sunrise service and prayed that "if God so willed" the land might someday become a permanent home for a Bible Camp. Enrollment reached 150 the following year, with representatives from many parishes throughout the district of North Dakota.

Despite the effects of the Great Depression, camping for young people grew between 1931 and 1935. Ofstedal

literally took his congregation from Valley City to the Red Willow site and invested the better parts of his summer building up the camp. Bible study leaders included Ylvasaker, the Rev. J. C. K. Preuss and the Rev. F. B. Anderson. During these years other camps began their missions in North Dakota, including Badlands Bible Camp near Belfield and Metigoshe Bible Camp in the Turtle Mountains. A new camp at Park River was also operating.

Between 1936 and 1939 camps were held at rented facilities at the conference grounds near Cooperstown and at Chautauqua Park in Valley City. The park was located on the Chautauqua River. Campers gathered annually to watch Pastor Swan leisurely walk over the bridge and suddenly dive into the water. It became known as the original 'swan dive.'

Then in 1939, Revs. M. A. Braaten and L. B. Brakke completed negotiations with Peter Jacobson for purchase of a campsite on Red Willow Lake that would become the permanent location of the camp. The prayers of the young people took 10 years to become reality as Lookout Point became the focus point for the Bible Camp!

The first year of operations, in 1940, much planning and building was completed. A kitchen and dining hall

was built first. Thanks to the efforts of Rev. M. T. Bratrude of Sheyenne, a barn was moved in from his parish to be used as the first dormitory. Over the years, many improvements were made as the camp expanded its summer operations. The program was conducted primarily through the efforts of pastors and lay leaders, and hundreds of youth from across the state enjoyed the inspiration of the camp.

In 1963, Gaius Aasland was hired as the first full-time camp director. This was a major step as Gaius was commissioned to hire 15 resident counselors and train them for summer program leadership. The following year, the camp was used every week of the summer season. Canoe camping on the Sheyenne River became part of the Red Willow decentralized program in 1965. In 1965, 1800 campers were served through the ministry of Red Willow!

In 1966 Red Willow also conducted the programs of Park River

and Lake of the Woods Bible Camps. Over 60 staff members were recruited to participate in this large programmatic mission. The Board of Directors also decided to begin construction of the Ofstedal Center as soon as feasible. The Center was dedicated in 1967 to inaugurate the first year-round ministry.

By 1978 full time staff was expanded to include a Retreat Hostess. Environmental education was a fairly new concept, and the Board investigated a program called "Whole Earth Education" in 1981. In the mid eighties, another 300 acres of property was purchases from the Jacobson and Svaren families for expansion of the camp programs.

Today the ministry of Red Willow is a vibrant program serving thousands of guests each season. The program has included festive musical reviews, inspiration, and traditional camp and retreat programs throughout the year.

## ***St. Olaf Retreat Center Devils Lake, North Dakota***

Pastor E. L. Rude had served a small country church, known as Norway ALC congregation, and located 11 miles west of Devils Lake in Pelican Township on a part-time basis for a number of years. In May 1968, the congregation merged with St. Olaf. The original facility held great

memories and thus no one wanted to see it deteriorate or be torn down for living quarters or storage facilities.

Pastor Alan Schultz suggested that it might serve well as a retreat center. Shortly after Pastor Roger Thoreson came to St. Olaf, the retreat center project was organized. After the

congregation voted to make use of the church building, Mrs. Esther Hanson and Robert Week donated a plot of land located in a wooded area on the west shore of Creel Bay. Since this required a move of about 10 miles across fields, it was necessary to wait until the soil was frozen deeply. The move was made on a cold day, February 26, 1975. It was early spring when it was placed on the new foundation on a steep hill overlooking the lake; by careful planning, this was accomplished without removing more than a few trees.

The building has since undergone many changes. A balcony was built to provide extra seating space in the upper level. This opens onto a large balcony over the lower level entrance, built by the National Guard as a work project, using iron rails from an abandoned railroad. A stonemason from Rugby, North Dakota, Edroy Patterson, constructed two large fieldstone fireplaces.

Many people have donated their time, money, equipment, materials, and labor to the various projects that made the center what it is. It will provide overnight indoor sleeping space for 40 people. There is additional picnic and

camping space, access to the lake for water recreation and both floors are accessible for the physically challenged. Outdoors there is a beautiful setting for a worship service. Sweet rockets bloom among the trees.

The mission of the St. Olaf Retreat Center is to provide for all age groups within the congregation as well as the surrounding community an outdoor setting that offers a place for worship, fellowship and an appreciation of creation.

The center has been used as a retreat for Bible camps, circle and committee meetings, family reunions, anniversaries, weddings and even a funeral or two. During the summer months, an early morning worship service is held every Sunday followed by breakfast.

Bishop Nelson Preus dedicated the St. Olaf Retreat Center May 15, 1977, at a 7:00 AM festive worship service. At Norway Cemetery, where the church stood for so many years, evergreens have been planted and a fieldstone cairn was built with a bronze plaque marking the location. The plaque is fittingly engraved "Mission Accomplished."

## **Park River Bible Camp**

### **Park River, North Dakota**

*An excellent history of the Park River Bible Camp has been published in honor of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the camp in 1996. It was written by Darlene Hendrickson of Edinburg, ND. According to the Park River Bible Camp Board of Directors, Darlene is considered "our Camp*

*Historian." She had researched old newspapers and camp minutes and used personal interviews to gather together 60 years of historical information. This summarized story of Park River Bible Camp is thus taken from her excellent research.*

When the Park River Circuit Luther League met at Hoople, ND, in 1935, a recommendation was made to establish a Bible Camp in the area. Mr. Albert Fagerholt of Hoople was president of the Luther League and he and Mr. Olaf Torson of Park River agreed to assist in its establishment. According to Eunice (Fagerhold) Vold, daughter of Albert:

*"I really doubt that this camp would be here today, had not Dad and Olaf Torson from Park River given so freely of themselves... They did it for the extension of God's Kingdom here on earth and in heaven forever. Here were two laymen who were concerned about the salvation of souls and that's why they donated their time and talents to the camp."*

With the help of Rev. Gustav Halmrast of Edinberg, Albert Fagerholt and he drove the countryside searching for the ideal site. "The Smith farm, three miles south of Edinburg, was chosen as the first site. Since the road to this area might not be accessible, due to heavy rains, it was agreed upon to use Golden Park. The Omland Brothers owned the land and they still own land south of the camp."

A small group was organized to constitute the first Board of Directors with Rev. Halmrast as chairman and Albert Fagerholt as Business Manager.

They formalized the camp's establishment in 1936. Early program opportunities began almost immediately by using a large tent with "old time religion." Mr. Carl Paulson of rural Hoople was in charge of the tent that was owned by the Luther League.

*"It was used as an auditorium and girls dormitory before the chapel was built. The tent measured eighty-four feet by forty-five feet. The tent was set up on the north end of camp... The pulpit was on the west end of the tent... Three long poles or pipes were placed down the middle of the tent... Sledge hammers were used to drive in stakes along the outside... at times the tent had to be lowered due to strong winds or a storm."*

The first camp held 104 campers from 21 of the Norwegian Lutheran and Free Church congregations and was conducted June 15 through June 22, 1936. Memories of this camp are abundant in those who experienced the first week.

Mrs. Bertha (Sundvor) Jenson of Edinburg recalled her work as a camp cook:

*"The sun wasn't quite up at four o'clock when Mrs. Lillian (Fredrickson) Schautz and I got up to prepare breakfast. We had to light lanterns in the cook car and keep putting wood in the cookstove to keep it going... We slept in*

*the cook car during the one week of camp. It was so cold we had to put our bathrobes over the blankets to keep warm."*

*"It was a wonderful time, something that stays with you all your life, " said Alice (Eagleson) Hall, of Edinburg who was a camper in 1936. 'Living for Jesus' was a song she learned and still likes. Alice remembered a makeshift stand which held a barrel of water. It sat in the sun all day so the temperature was just right for washing up. Everyone who wanted to go swimming had to walk north to the Sundvor farm and then east to the Smith's swimming hole. A big tree hung out over the water. The boys would climb out on a limb and jump into the water. The girls never had the nerve to do that."*

*"Eleanor Grace, a daughter of Rev. Halmrast, went wading in the river. Everyone heard her screaming so we went to see what was wrong. Her legs were covered with bloodsuckers. We took sticks to get them off. No one wanted to touch them."*

By 1940 the camp opened with 166 students. On November 1, 1940, the camp Board of Directors met at the G.O. Omland farm and a verbal agreement to purchase Golden Park for \$2700 was made. A contract for deed for forty acres in Golden Township was approved. During this decade, the camp was able to secure materials such as government granaries, lumber and other buildings. The first cabin was built in 1940.

*"My high school graduation present from my parents was a week of camping," Frances (Froiland) Kjelland said. "In*

*1940 there was only one cabin and tents were still being used. My sister, Irene, and I slept in the cabins. I remember the campfires on the hillside every evening. Kids would sing and give their testimonies. Sometimes they would sit at different levels. Singing would start at the top and it would echo down."*

In 1942, Rev. O. Gornitzka taught a week of study for older people who preferred Norwegian.

Camping during the days of WW II was challenging. Permission for materials and food had to be obtained by the local rationing board (because of the need for supplies for soldiers engaged in battle). In 1943, with rationing board approval, a Delco light plant was installed and campers were asked to bring one can of processed food such as corn or peas to share. In 1945, lifelong friends Oscar Laaveg and Floyd Lien were ordained at Park River Bible Camp.

The cornerstone for the new chapel was laid on Sunday, July 27, 1947. Lumber for the chapel was secured from Canada the previous winter. It was hard to get the lumber into the camp because of the deep snows. The 60 X 100 building was designed to seat up to 1100 persons and a large addition with a fireplace built of fieldstones would furnish classroom space for the camp.

Volunteers were used throughout the process. Eugene Loftsgard hauled lumber in his '37 Chevy. Olaf Torson built the altar, altar ring, pulpit and benches for the

chapel. Eunice Vold remembers the year the chapel was built.

*"Dad worked at camp from early spring to late fall. I think of all the lunches that mother packed for him each day. I remember the first services that were held in the chapel in 1948, and its dedication on June 27, 1948."*

Rev. Oscar Hanson, Executive Secretary of the Luther League conducted the services.

The Park River flooded in 1951 and changed the course of the river through the camp. Dirt covered the cement dam and old car bodies were pushed against the east bank of the river to stop erosion. With the new chapel in place, this decade proved to be an exciting time for Park River Bible Camp.

Rev. Jim Brooks, Lawrenceville, GA, recollected:

*"The Bible Camp I remember was a camp that emphasized the Bible. Albert Fagerholt explained to me as a young pastor that his hope was for a place here on earth in which the Word of Christ would dwell richly (Col 3:16) among His people; and that's what we all experienced. It was 'Rise and Shine' at 7 a.m. with 'Morning Devotions' and 'Cabin Clean-up' before breakfast at 8:15...Classes started at 9:00 a.m.; and there were three periods for these before the noon meal. 'Bible Study' took the first fifty minutes until 9:50. Then it was 'Mission Hour' until 10:40, or so. This was followed by a brief break before a session on the 'Christian Life' before dinner."*

*"And those evening services! The*

*people responded! Those sun-tanned farmers and their families drove in from miles around and filled the whole central area with cars. They loved it too! WE had guest musicians, our own Camp Choir, and preaching to warm the heart."*

A new swimming pool was constructed in the early fifties, pumping water from the Park River to fill the pool. Before the pool was built, the camp borrowed a grain truck from a farmer neighbor "and hauled campers to Homme Dam for a swim."

Many changes would take place in the sixties. In 1963, a study conducted by Rev. Richard Borrud, from the Bible Camp Association of the American Lutheran Church, addressed important issues regarding stewardship of the land, the quality of the water in the swimming pool, and the size of the property for the large program it was maintaining. In the Borrud report, the summary statement included these words:

*"The PRBC is 'on the move.' The improvements have been almost revolutionary. You stand on the threshold of a new era of Christ-centered camping in our church. Your leadership will not only speak to your local area but to the whole church."*

To reduce impact on the land, the Board decided to cancel evening services that had brought in large numbers of people. A statement in the summer brochure now said "No evening worship services." Next the

Board hired Mr. Jerry Hauge from Mt. Vernon, SD, to serve as the program director. Some of the roles played by pastors now were given to young summer camp counselors. In addition, because of the small size of the camp, a merger with Red Willow Bible Camp was explored. In 1966, cooperative agreements between the two camps were in place.

During the seventies, many needed improvements to the camp were made. It was also a decade of soul searching for its theological roots and its relationships to other Christian bodies. A new bathroom was constructed in 1971 and plans for a new dining hall were laid. The swimming pool was removed and the hole filled.

At the same time, questions arose over the relationship with Red Willow Bible Camp. On January 22, 1974, a discussion was held regarding camping in the Eastern ND District of the American Lutheran Church. It was felt that loyalty to the camp was being lost. There was also a theft of funds from Red Willow that made those associated with Park River concerned about operations. The following October delegates to the annual meeting dissolved the merger with Red Willow. A period of reflection, loss, and forgiveness was needed in the days to come.

Theological issues were also discussed during this decade. The use of altar calls was questioned in terms of Lutheran practice. As rentals to other Christian groups became more

common (such as the Navigator's and use of speakers from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association), it was important to state clearly the organization's principles.

Yet the Bible Camp ministry continued to serve campers by providing important spiritual direction. Maren (Flaten) Harki, Alaska, remembered her days as a staff member at Park River Bible Camp in 1980:

*"My impression of the camp...I loved the physical aspect of the camp, in that it was sort of in a circle and the chapel was at the head, a little bit higher than the rest. Also I loved the campfire locations, on top of those big hills, where you could see the big beautiful North Dakota summer skies. How did it help my faith grow...well, it was kind of funny because I had attended church and Sunday School all my life, but the real meaning of a living faith in Jesus did not hit me until I went to Bible Camp. In speculation, maybe it was the constant prayers by the people running the camp."*

On June 26, 1984, the decision was made to have a full time director of ministries. Pledges were received to secure funds for the staff position and Corey Bjertness was hired as the camp's first full time Director. Director Bjertness emphasized safe and sanitary operations.

*"The second thing we stressed was that everyone who comes through the PRBC gate needs to be presented with the Gospel of Jesus*



*Christ in some way and challenged in some way, and asked just where is God at in your life."*

On March 14, 1986, Park River Bible Camp celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a banquet and worship service. According to Bjertness:

### ***Camp of the Cross Garrison, North Dakota***

In May of 1954, the Bismarck Circuit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church invited all the Lutheran pastors in the area to meet in Washburn, ND, to discuss creating a new camp to serve Lutherans. Responding were representatives of the American, Augustana, Evangelical, and Missouri Synod Lutheran Churches. At the meeting, all agreed there was a great need for a church camp and that it would be best to pool their efforts to build a single camp that all might use. Two pastors and one layman from each of the respective church bodies agreed to serve on a committee to establish the new Lutheran Bible camp.

To select a location, the committee viewed a variety of prairie sites that would eventually become lakeshore along the Garrison Reservoir project under development by the Corps of Engineers. This huge reservoir would create a gigantic lake out of the Missouri River once completed. But at the time of site selection, the committee walked prairie

*"There was an attitude of 'hey we've got something good going here. Let's keep it going! It was nice because it was the time when the ELCA merger was happening, and it was a source of unity for the entire area when it was needed most."*

and could only envision the shore by the small stakes hidden in the grass by the engineers.

To their credit they selected a 92-acre parcel of land overlooking a ravine located 10 miles southwest of the city of Garrison. The ravine would eventually back fill from the reservoir and provide sheltered shoreline from the main body of water. The beautiful location would later justify itself, as the camp's location was to be on a lovely point surrounded by water.

The United States government had established terms for use of reservoir shore lands. If an organization could become an "incorporated character building group," the land could be leased for \$1 per year. Attorney Harold Anderson from First Lutheran Church in Bismarck drew up the necessary Articles of Incorporation and the Lutheran Bible Camp Association was formed.

After the water defined the site, early camp leaders led by the first

president, Rev. W. H. Munding began the task of constructing the camp, which was called the "Garrison Bible Camp." Having very little in available funds, a total of \$67,000 was borrowed from various individuals. Equipment for the camp was purchased beginning in April of 1955. Early workers took advantage of the recently vacated buildings that had housed the builders of the Garrison Dam. An offer of \$10,000 secured the buildings and they were moved to the camp to provide basic housing for campers. A caretaker's house was also moved to the property.

There was an incredible amount of volunteer hours put into the construction of the camp that was built on pristine prairie land. In June of 1956, Mr. John Torske of Underwood was engaged as the general construction manager of the camp. The camp was dedicated on September 2, 1957. An address was given by Mr. Martin Vaaler, the Public Service Commissioner for the region. A youth choir made up of youth from a number of the supporting churches sang, "God So Loved the World" and "If With All Your Hearts" with rousing and controlled voices. It was a day of celebration for the first camps were offered the following summer of 1958.

*(Note: An old brochure states that the official opening date of camp was June 15, 1957. This may have been delayed as a Board communication states that the camp opened in 1958).*

From the beginning pastors were the key people in the camp program and operations. They served as teachers, counseled young people and created interest in camp participation. This was continued for many years, with various church groups selecting different weeks during the summer schedule.

The camp became a part of the American Lutheran Church upon its formation. However it remained pan Lutheran having ties with Lutheran churches affiliated with the Missouri Synod and the Lutheran Church in America. Sometime in these years, the name of the camp became *Camp of the Cross*. The name refers to the prominent role that the message of Christ's death and resurrection has in our lives.

In 1966, delegates to the annual meeting asked the Board of Directors to hire a full time camp director. Due to finances this was not possible, but the organization was successful in finding a part time director. This brought about many program changes. The camp began to use more youth counselors and the budget was increased, creating some concerns about finances. And some of the pastors felt their roles were diminished.

In 1969, the Board of Directors decided to utilize clergy more fully and move from a camp director to a manager, leaving clergy in charge of programs. Mr. John Lee served in that capacity during the summer of 1970, and the camp program began to use the

Pastor Dean of the Week system. In 1970, a week of family camp was offered for the first time. And Operation Knock-Out was launched to retire the remaining debt of \$30,117.00 all that remained from the original loans of \$67,000.

Camp programs continued to flourish but heavy use also took its toll on buildings and grounds. At one point a girl named Darlene notices the erosion of shoreline near the dining hall. Knowing that the camp was in danger of losing valuable property and perhaps buildings she wrote to her senators in Washington, asking them to save her beautiful camp. What might be described as a miracle happened. The United States Congress ordered the

Corps to place a protective rock barrier on the shore to stop the erosion.

Camp of the Cross continued to provide faithful service to congregations in North Dakota. But the declining number of youth in North Dakota meant that the camp would need to adapt to changing rural patterns. The camp struggled some during the mid to late seventies, as funding was very tight. Yet modest improvements and volunteer activity continued under the leadership of their director, Garritt Van Hunnick. Just prior to the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in 1988, Ms. Marcy Burns was called to serve as Executive Director of Camp of the Cross.

### ***Shalom Bible Camp Grand Forks, North Dakota***

Shalom Bible Camp was established in 1956 when Pastor John Gaardsmoe, Senior Pastor of United Lutheran Church, Grand Forks, ND, felt a need for an affordable place for personal reflection and spiritual growth. Believing that many people would benefit from a place set apart for ministry, United Lutheran Church purchased a farm on the north side of Maple Lake just south of the town of Mentor, MN.

In the early years, volunteers cleared rubbish from the farm buildings, cleaned up farm residue, and made improvements to the buildings

that were kept for use by the camp. Among the buildings that were saved was the original farmhouse, silos that were used as "beach changing rooms" and a garage. Two additional double garages were moved onto the property and connected to serve as a dining hall and kitchen.

For many years the camp served the congregation's needs. Families and youth would enjoy outings at Shalom Bible Camp and participate in recreation, study, prayer, and worship. Then in the early 1970's, a year-round retreat center was built to expand the program opportunities. Soon a cement

wall basement structure was built into the side of a hill near the lake to serve as a chapel. In 1975 the unit was completed when the upper portion of the facility was built. The chapel could seat up to 500 people. It was named the "Gaardsmoe Center" in honor and memory of Pastor John Gaardsmoe, the founder of Shalom Bible Camp.

During the early seventies, Pastor Phil Knutson devoted a portion of his time as a pastor of United Lutheran Church to provide direction to the camp. Various members of the pastoral staff took turns leading Sunday morning services at the camp. For the most part, members of United Lutheran Church attended the worship services.

In 1975, Pastor Arden Norum was called to the staff of United Lutheran Church to focus upon youth ministry and to develop the program and facilities of Shalom Bible Camp. Pastor Norum was the first person on the staff specifically called to assume responsibilities for Shalom.

During the summer of 1975, Red Willow Bible Camp had been asked to hire and train the summer staff. The schedule was expanded to seven full weeks of camp and included programs for confirmation camping, elementary camps, and the "Tiki Camp," a ten day outreach camp for children living in the neighborhood surrounding United Lutheran Church in Grand Forks.

Housing was far from adequate and the campers slept in tents of poor

quality. Nevertheless, the success of the program launched a vision to improve the quality of the facilities and equipment owned by Shalom Bible Camp. The following year, new tents were purchased and plans were laid to construct new cabins. In the late seventies six cabins to serve 48 campers were constructed by volunteers. The staff expanded to 12 to 14 summer staff members.

The retreat center was remodeled in 1980 creating flexible space for groups up to 24 people in size. A tent and trailer campground with 54 camping sites was also created. Twenty of the sites in the campground were serviced with water, electrical, and sewer hook ups.

Summer camp attendance continued to grow under the leadership of Pastor Norum. The continuity offered with Pastor Norum enabled the worship services to expand from 50 people to an average attendance of 350. On festival Sundays there were often over 500 people in attendance. Each of the services was followed by a potluck meal, coffee and snacks.

An additional program was added in the early eighties when several Grand Forks schools took advantage of a new environmental education program. Each May weekend would be filled with groups seeking to learn more about nature and creation.

Projects added to Shalom Bible Camp during these years included a large maintenance shed and a new home for a caretaker was moved onto

the site. Several bathhouses were also built.

Kathy Norum served as Assistant Director and Director of Food Services during the early years of the decade. In 1984, Pastor Arden Norum and Kathy Norum left the staff of United Lutheran Church as a result of a call to serve as Executive Director of Luther Crest Bible Camp.

United Lutheran Church determined to return to its previous staffing model where different staff members were to "look after the camp." Summer site directors were hired but without specific year-around leadership for Shalom Bible Camp a number of programs were lost,

### ***Upper Missouri Bible Camp Epping, North Dakota***

First Lutheran Church of Williston, North Dakota, owned the Upper Missouri Bible Camp. The 34-acre site offered camping for confirmation students, children and youth and families. The congregation often used the camp for special events and outdoor worship.

The camp is located on the wind swept prairie of North Dakota. Long vistas can be seen and the camp has a

including the environmental education use by the schools of Grand Forks. Attendance began to decline without adequate marketing and the program grew smaller.

By the time of the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Shalom Bible Camp remained connected to United Lutheran Church, although its program was much smaller in scope than in previous years. Nonetheless, Shalom Bible Camp is a classic example of an outdoor ministry that was shaped out of the needs of a single congregation that emphasized growth in faith through the experience of outdoor ministry.

long history of faithful service to the church. It is also open to many children from the community.

Mr. Tom Hind<sup>1</sup> served as Camp Director in the early eighties and developed a small retreat program offering hospitality and friendship to those who came for retreats. The summer camp program uses a wide range of creative programs and is staffed by trained summer counselors.

## *Camping in South Dakota*

*South Dakota was one of the very first camping traditions that saw the benefits of uniting for the sake of statewide ministry. Lutherans Outdoors was not born out of an idea as much as a necessity. Its success today might hide the tension of its early days. Yet there were no models for this first umbrella organization to follow. Its slow but thoughtful construction became the model for unified camping in the country. And one of its camps, Outlaw Ranch, became a well-known national ministry, widely recognized for its excellence and creativity.*

*The history of camping in South Dakota has been recorded in anniversary and festival booklets and shared with many over the years. The following histories have been drawn from these official publications of Lutherans Outdoors and edited by Dave Brunkow, former Executive of Lutherans Outdoors, Steve Peterson, former director of Outlaw Ranch, and Dick Borrud, founding director at Outlaw Ranch. We are also indebted to Dave Brunkow for writing down his memories and record of the Klein Ranch project, from which the following history is taken.*

### ***Lutherans Outdoors of South Dakota, Inc. Sioux Falls, South Dakota***

Lutherans Outdoors of South Dakota was formed by the 1968 Convention of the South Dakota District of the American Lutheran Church. This action came upon the recommendation of the District Camping Ministries Committee to form a corporation to own and manage the ALC campsites in the South Dakota District. Their purpose was to provide quality coordination of camping, based upon sound Lutheran theology, on behalf of the congregations of South Dakota.

In the early years, Lutherans Outdoors was more of a federation of independent camps than a single unit.

In 1968, the formation of such an umbrella organization as Lutherans Outdoors was a major, some used the term "radical", move. The first Executive Director of the corporation was Rev. Roy Satre who served from 1969 too 1972. Following Roy, Gaia Aasland served between 1972 and 1977.

In the early days of Lutherans Outdoors there was an Executive Director with no central office. Each camp maintained its own checking account and purchased its own supplies. There was no central financial record, no unified balance sheet and no unified income and

expense statements. Site directors continued to be in charge of programs without an overall program plan. The largest part of the site director's job was maintenance, leaving little time for contacts with area congregations, program development, and promotion. The facilities at each site were suffering from years of inadequate maintenance due to limited budgets.

During these years, the Board of Directors of Lutherans Outdoors worked diligently to draw together administrative and development functions as it moved the camps into an organizational plan while attempting to make its modest resources stretch to cover a variety of crisis.

Following the departure of Gaiaas Aasland in 1977, Lutherans Outdoors operated without an Executive Director. The Board and Executive Committee were meeting frequently, providing day-to-day management. It was apparent that steps were needed to reorganize the management of the corporation, devote time to long range planning, and find additional financial support so that its camps might receive the care they needed.

The Board asked Norris L. Erickson, Assistant Vice President of Planning and Engineering at the University of South Dakota, to evaluate the mission, goals, financial condition, and day-to-day operation of the corporation. His report, A Look at Lutherans Outdoors, was presented to the Board in December 1977. By mid 1978, most of Erickson's

recommendations were completed.

In 1977 the South Dakota District Convention authorized a capital fund drive that raised about \$135,000 to relieve the financial pressure of accumulated debt and enlarged maintenance costs. The following year, the District Convention provided further support for Lutherans Outdoors by adding the corporation as a partnership ministry line item in the District budget, beginning February 1, 1979. The first year's contribution was \$82,000, and it would eventually rise to \$95,000. The importance of this stable source of support for Lutherans Outdoors cannot be overstated.

In February 1979, Mr. David Brunkow was called to serve as Executive Director. He agreed to start in September of 1979 in order to finish his responsibilities at Metigoshe Bible Camp in Bottineau, ND, through the summer season. His addition to the staff completed the organizational restructuring of the corporation. With the addition of professional management the Board was able to turn its attention to planning program and facilities for the future.

In May 1981, Lutherans Outdoors adopted its first Long Range Plan. Within a few years the challenges of that first plan were met. A comprehensive master plan for all the camps of Lutherans Outdoors was completed in 1983. Day Camp programs were developed in 1983 to serve congregations across the state and camping sites were rented to serve

congregations in southwestern South Dakota where distances prevented some from attending the owned sites. In 1985, an environmental education program was established. And also, a state wide capital improvement campaign that raised almost \$1,065,000 began in 1985, enabling dramatic improvements in its facilities at all four sites.

### ***NeSoDak Bible Camp Lake Enemy Swim, South Dakota***

Although the NeSoDak Bible Camp was not organized until 1942, camping in South Dakota was run under the NeSoDak Bible Camp Association as early as 1936. This organization operated under the Luther Leagues of the Aberdeen and Sisseton Circuits of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America. But pastors of this church between 1933 and 1936 conducted the earliest camping in eastern South Dakota.

The pastors of this area organized camps at rented facilities at lakes Kampeska, Clear Lake and Big Stone. One of these camps held at Clear Lake, near Sisseton, was called "Ne-So-Dak Bible Camp." Thus in 1936, a constitution was drawn up with Pastor J. L. Kildahl of Webster serving as President. Leif E. Evans was selected as Secretary-Treasurer.

At a meeting on July 9, 1936, the Bible camp committee met at Clear Lake. Pastor Kildahl, Miss Esther

On July 1, 1987 Lutherans Outdoors adopted another Long Range Plan. This plan included a new mission statement along with statements of value, objectives, and procedures. In August, Mr. Dave Brunkow resigned his position to join the financial development firm of Gronland Sayther & Associates.

Chilson and Miss Lillian Olson had investigated the possibility of holding camps at the Jack Rommel Resort (Camp Dakota) at Enemy Swim Lake. The facilities included a hotel with dining room, several cabins, and private cabins in the area were also for rent. The only "auditorium" in the area was at the Boy Scout pony shed, located one-half mile out into the prairie. In 1937, the first camp was held on what would eventually become the site of NeSoDak Bible Camp, with 130 campers present.

The camp was a great success. According to the *Webster Reporter and Farmer*, dated June 1937, the camp was open to anyone and daylight saving time would be used so no artificial light would be necessary. The pony shed proved to be inadequate since those who trudged into the prairie got wet feet in the morning grass. Camp fees were \$5.00, including tuition, meals and room for seven days.



Pastor Kildahl served as camp dean, which meant carrying water, wood, supervising even the mundane jobs, picking up fresh foods each day in Webster or Waubay, and generally supervising all aspects of camp life.

Jack Rommel, owner of the resort, had been skeptical of the camp. But he quickly grew to like the youth and recognize the leadership of Pastor Kildahl. He wanted them to come back, and knowing of the inadequacy of the pony shed, he offered to advance the group \$300 for the purchase of building materials to construct an auditorium on two lots known as "the triangle." This was a very generous offer to the organization because this area of South Dakota was just beginning to come out of the terrible drought caused by the dust bowl days.

Shortly thereafter, news of the success of the camps reached a wide area. Interest from congregations in the Brookings and Madison Circuits, along with involvement from the Watertown Circuit expanded the number of participants. These circuits also joined the NeSoDak Bible Camp Association, and finally in 1942, the corporation gained legal status within the state. By this time, land bordering Camp Dakota (part of the resort) was also loaned to NeSoDak by the Northern State Teachers College, thanks to Dr. Lipscomb of the faculty at the college.

Pastor J. L. Kildahl was clearly recognized as the *Founder of NeSoDak*

*Bible Camp*. His leadership was instrumental in not only creating the structure of the organization and expanding its base, but also as the person who assumed primary responsibilities for running the operations of the camp. Shortly after its Incorporation, the organization purchased the original Camp Dakota property in January 1943, consisting of the hotel and several cabins for a total cost of \$9,500. 48 congregations were members of the corporation at the time. Its waterfront opportunities and excellent location on Lake Enemy Swim in northeast South Dakota has long served as a focus for program development and facility construction. Additional acreage was acquired within time, including the property and dorms owned by the teachers college, and property belonging to the former EUB Camp with two dorms and several cabins east of the road. NeSoDak served 2000 campers per summer by 1945.

For many years NeSoDak served congregations from throughout the state of South Dakota. Hundreds of people would enjoy its summer camping programs. Also providing retreat opportunities for Christian renewal, NeSoDak developed as a full service year round camping facility.

Growth continued into the fifties as the Mitchell Circuit joined. The camp negotiated additional purchases of the log cabin home of Mr. and Mrs. Rommel for \$16,200 including interest. This property

included the parking lot. Later in 1957-59 the camps built boy's and girl's bathhouses at a cost of \$3,157 and \$4,575 respectively. Some 50 double bunks and mattresses increased the investment to the property. In 1960, six pieces of property were purchased to expand the camp, and a new dining hall was built.

In 1960, the NeSoDak Bible Camp Board issued a call to its first professional Camp Director, Pastor Richard Borrud of Hayti, South Dakota. Borrud supplemented his role as camp director by serving in interim ministries. The philosophy of the camp began to change under his leadership. Through involvement in the Bible Camp Association of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, new ideas were being promoted, many of which were advocated by Pastor Borrud, who was the first full time Camp Director in the newly formed American Lutheran Church, of which the ELC became a part.

Borrud spearheaded a new programmatic and managerial style that was soon to become a trend throughout the church. New and dynamic small group programs using paid summer camp staff who were carefully selected and trained soon became part of ALC camping. Borrud led creative programs for NeSoDak until 1962, when he was called to Outlaw Ranch in the Black Hills and to serve part time as a National Staff person for Outdoor Ministries in the ALC.

Mr. Gaius Aasland served as interim director in 1962 until he became director of Red Willow Bible Camp in Binford, ND, in the fall of 1962.

Pastor Fred Lutz became the new director and served for five years on a part time basis until 1967. Lutz shared responsibilities with the Webster Nursing Home where he was part time chaplain. Mr. Earl Jensen was the site manager. Program development continued as many programs were written that encourage Christian growth focused on small group camping concepts. In 1963, NeSoDak acquired the Jim River camp near Parkston. Thus, camping programs of NeSoDak spanned the entire Eastern border of South Dakota. A program venture called the Minnewaste Canoe Base was conducted, but because of the inability to purchase the leased property it could not be maintained. And in 1965, an addition to the main lodge enabled NeSoDak to undertake a year round retreat program.

The rising financial burden that was assumed during the construction phase of NeSoDak forced the camp into a period of reduced staffing. Following the departure of Pastor Lutz and Earl Jensen, Pastor Willard Olsen and Pastor Dick Bahnson (director of Outlaw Ranch) shared managerial duties. New plans were laid to meet the fiscal needs and continue to offer the strong program tradition of the camp.

In 1968 the camping programs

of the ALC were united into a new corporate structure in South Dakota called Lutherans Outdoors in South Dakota. Early in 1972, Dick Iverson was hired by Roy Satre, the first director of Lutherans Outdoors, to serve as the new site manager at NeSoDak. Shortly thereafter, a new Executive Director of Lutherans Outdoors of South Dakota was hired to replace Satre. The Board turned to Mr. Gavis Aasland, a former interim director at NeSoDak. Under his leadership, the duties of Dick Iverson were expanded to include all program and management responsibilities for the camp.

Under Iverson's leadership investment in the facilities continued. Renovations to the retreat facilities and new equipment expanded the camp's potential. Efforts were made to establish canoe trips, hunting and fishing camps, and sailing programs. Iverson also undertook a major effort to catch up on long deferred maintenance of the aging buildings.

The Executive Director position for Lutherans Outdoors was open in 1978, and the Board called Dave Brunkow to serve in the capacity. In the same year, Dick Iverson accepted the call to serve as Director at Outlaw Ranch in 1978 where he not only assumed duties at the ranch but also acted as interim director for NeSoDak during the transition period, particularly the summer season of 1979.

In the fall of 1979, Mr. Neil Sorensen was hired by Dave Brunkow

to serve as the new Director of NeSoDak. He continued the prior efforts to improve the quality of the camp, utilizing many volunteer groups and staff. Painting, removal of old buildings, and modifications of retreat centers became major tasks.

In these years another challenge was in the making. The loss of populations in rural areas contributed to the adaptation of camp programs from youth to families and older adults. Realigning budgets and changing facilities to meet congregational needs was an ongoing challenge. NeSoDak, through Sorensen's leadership, responded to these challenges in exciting ministry way.

Many theme camps were also developed such as music and conservation camps and programs for the developmentally challenged. To serve larger retreat groups, NeSoDak remodeled the chapel and upgraded its well and septic system. Serving a wide range of groups, NeSoDak's retreat ministry has expanded during a time of population decline.

Most significant was the development of an Environmental Education program. In the mid-80's, Joe Harber was hired to direct the EE programs at both NeSoDak and Outlaw Ranch. The Glacial Lakes area around NeSoDak proved to be an excellent site for youth to learn about the importance of the balance of life and their responsibility as stewards of creation. Many public schools have enjoyed NeSoDak's Glacial Lakes

Outdoor School.

In the 1985, NeSoDak embarked on expansion and facility improvements. The chapel was renovated and expanded. A new dining facility was constructed on the same site as the old one and retreat facilities were renovated as part of a state wide capital campaign led by Lutherans Outdoors. Four lots were purchased and given by the Satrum's near the southeast end of camp. A new residence for the director was built. Many old cabins were removed and replaced with new camper cabins. Many congregations and groups assisted in the development projects.

In 1988, NeSoDak began assumed responsibilities for off-site day camp programs to congregations. This program had begun in 1983 and had

been administered by the Lutherans Outdoors office in Sioux Falls. Up to 20 congregations were served each year. Teams of counselors with a director are sent to congregations where they set up a "camping program in the church community." Programs at the camp took on new dimensions, too. The age group served at NeSoDak was expanded to encourage children in 3rd grade through youth in high school to participate.

NeSoDak remains a powerful program of the local congregation in South Dakota because of its unique gift of a Christ-centered experienced shared with other Christians in the outdoors. Many will testify to the sense of renewal and vision they have gained through a Christ filled experience at NeSoDak.

## ***Outlaw Ranch Custer, South Dakota***

Lutheran pastors and laity began to search for a site that would be suitable for a Bible camp in the fall of 1956. They were looking for a location in South Dakota's West River area (west of the Missouri). For many years these parishes had contracted for a week of Bible camping at the Nemo Organization Camp, and the numbers gradually grew stronger with each year.

At the Black Hills Circuit Fall Convention in 1956, Pastor John Hjelmaseth proposed that a Bible Camp committee be formed to search

for a site. The committee reported the following year that nothing much had been done. They continued their search and began to focus on the Balzer Gulch area and the Clarkson place, both of which were unable to attract enough interest. The committee heard of Outlaw Ranch and after visiting favored that location. An option to purchase the ranch was obtained on April 11, 1958, but the Black Hills Circuit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) took no action towards its full purchase.

Because of their indecision, a group of men formed a new organization called the Lutheran Men's Bible Camp Association of Rapid City. On May 30, 1958, this group signed a note for \$10,000 to make the first payment to owner Jane Butts. The president of the Board was Robert Hart, George Bilden was first vice president, second vice president was M. S. Haugen, and James Ness was secretary. The name was changed to Lutheran Men's Bible Camp Association because their appeared to be great interest in their initiative by churches in the entire West River area.

The ranch was located near Bismarck Lake in the Black Hills and was purchased from the widow of the late Ben Butts who operated the Outlaw Store at Winner, South Dakota. The Outlaw Store was rumored to have received its name thanks to an unsatisfied customer who painted the word 'outlaw' over the front of the store. Later, the Butts took the outlaw name with them to their ranch in the Black Hills, where for many years, it served as their retirement home. The ranch was appraised at approximately \$120,000 but the purchase price had been set at \$45,000.

Many questioned the name Outlaw Ranch. But it stuck, in part, because in a way, it represented a camp that nobody seemed to want, at least initially. There was also the theological connection with Jesus, who as an 'outlaw' called upon his followers to take up their cross and become

'outlaws for Christ.' This witness to a kingdom not of this world reflected the heart of what the ranch program was about. A common theme in programs and campfires was 'make us outlaws for Christ,' and since it was already well known as *Outlaw Ranch*, the connection with the local community was kept.

On June 10, 1959, a loan of \$40,000 was negotiated with 1st National Bank of the Black Hills to permit the organization to make full payment for the purchase of Outlaw Ranch. Construction at this time included the building of the kitchen-dining hall in the old machine shed under the Trocadero. This was called Luther Hall for a while and is better known as the Trading Post. The entrance cabin was remodeled. Showers and toilets were added and a complete septic tank and drainage system for the grounds was installed. Outlaw Ranch was dedicated on October 20, 1959.

During these first years, many hours of volunteer assistance were needed to keep it going. Camp use and programs were planned and remained the responsibility of each congregation or circuit that rented the facilities. The camp was also helpful in encouraging Lutheran congregational development in Hermosa, Custer, Newcastle, and Hill City. Challenges included developing a strong financial base and determining a mission that would enable the camp to serve the church. Questions regarding its facilities and the need for improvements were also

raised.

Following three years of camping, the Lutheran Bible Camp Association Board of Directors voted to accept the offer of Pastor Dick Borrud to serve as the first camp director of Outlaw Ranch. He began his duties in October of 1962. Among his first duties was to replace the camp's entrance sign, Lutheran Bible Camp of the Black Hills, with the old historic Outlaw Ranch sign. This was a symbolic gesture that hinted at the new directions that would soon begin under his leadership.

*"The philosophy of teaching young people that following Jesus would set them apart from the peer culture and paganism of the times was to be taught by using the sign of the cross which was reserved for 'Outlaws' in ancient Roman law. Outlaw Ranch could be used to point campers to the Savior, Jesus, who died on a cross."*

Pastor Borrud received permission from the Board to move forward with a paid staff and to invite campers from other areas of the country to participate in this newly developing ministry.

Borrud brought horses from NeSoDak and began a horse program. He also brought from NeSoDak a number of key staff members who brought experience. Within three years, Outlaw Ranch increased its participation from 200 campers to 1000. This explosion of its reputation had the effect of attracting more local

campers and stimulating interest in camping by local pastors.

Borrud also developed a tradition of hospitality, through the hiring of a hostess, open houses for the area communities, and through developing the slogan "the staff makes the camp." This well known philosophy of Outlaw brings a positive not among camping people. It was not just the beauty of the Hills that brought people back to Outlaw Ranch, but the quality of a staff fully dedicated to Christ, trained and supervised to assure a high quality program.

The Outlaw Ranch program included many traditional camp activities such as Bible study, campfires, worship, discussion and inspiring talks. The Life of Christ Pageant, the Outlaw Ranch Rodeo, formal evening vespers and the use of drama by staff and campers, and learning about the natural environment all helped to make Outlaw Ranch a well respected program.

Outlaw also used a 'village' program model, where each camper group was charged with the responsibility of presenting one portion of the camp program. Pastors were integrated into the village planning so that campers were not necessarily talked at but were part of the programs that were conducted. The dramatic increase in campers attested to the success of this model.

Additional development to meet the needs of the increase campers included the construction of the Alpine Cabins at a cost of \$250 each. Also, a

parking area and traffic pattern was established and remodeling was done on virtually all the camp buildings. Environmental projects included restoring the flume from the creek to the pond and it was stocked for fishing. Pastor Borrud also placed a \$500 deposit on a land contract for the Elba Williams Place on Custer Limestone Road. This would eventually become Atlantic Mountain Ranch.

In 1967 a concern was expressed for Outlaw Ranch and NeSoDak to work more closely together. Pastor Dick Bahnson, who served on the staff of Outlaw Ranch, assumed some managerial duties for NeSoDak, to assist them during a period of limited financial resources.

In May, the South Dakota District of the American Lutheran Church amended its bylaws to establish the District Committee on Camping Ministries. At that meeting, representatives from Outlaw and NeSoDak expressed concern that operating as two separate corporations was not advantageous to South Dakota. The committee expressed desire to form one corporation as indicated in the minutes:

*"It was determined that program and program direction are the most essential parts of the camping ministry. The facilities are secondary. This means that ownership of facilities may not always be desirable, but that the program can be just as effectively used at suitable campsites owned by other parties. Our future need, then, is to have available*

*suitable camp sites that are accessible to everyone in the district."*

A steering committee drew up Articles of Incorporation and the 1968 District Convention adopted the charter for a district wide camping program that became known as Lutherans Outdoors of South Dakota. On October 28, 1968, the Outlaw Ranch corporations voted to turn all properties over to the corporation, and on January 1, 1969, Rev. Roy Satre became the first director of Lutherans Outdoors. (NeSoDak completed the process on February 17, 1969).

It was during these years that family camping became the most popular program at Outlaw Ranch. With more activities for youth at Atlantic Mountain Ranch, eight weeks of family camping at Outlaw quickly developed. People from throughout the Midwest and beyond used the family camping experience. The A frame Alpine cabins served the basic needs of family, and the great draw of the Black Hills provided many enriching activities. But it was the inspiration of Outlaw Ranch with its stories, worship life, Bible study, and guest resource leaders that brought families back each year.

Mr. Dick Iverson assumed the Executive Director position in 1978-1987. Iverson set about the task of renewing the facilities and program. Many improvements were made during these years as part of the Lutherans Outdoors capital campaign begun in

1985. The Alpine cabins were replaced and a new central water system and sewage disposal system was developed. The Retreat Lodge, the original guest lodge of the Butts family, burned to the ground on November 2, 1986. A new Retreat Center was designed, built, and completed by June of the following spring. It was funded through insurance proceeds and a special fund

### ***Atlantic Mountain Ranch Custer, South Dakota***

This 'wild west camp' was developed beginning in 1963 as a youth outpost of Outlaw Ranch. It has since become a full summer Christian camping program with the flavor of early mining and pioneering days in the Black Hills.

The site was originally called the Elba Williams Place on Custer Limestone Road. Pastor Dick Borrud, director at Outlaw Ranch, bought the place for \$500 down on a land contract. It was used as an outpost camp for youth, and unique living villages with early pioneer themes were developed for small groups. This enabled the participants to become totally immersed in a living laboratory of faith.

The camp property was later purchased by the camp board of Outlaw Ranch and used as an adjunct to Outlaw. The director of Outlaw Ranch also provided leadership for Atlantic Mountain Ranch since its inception, offering a well-organized

drive claimed by Jodeane Joy of Willep.

Jerry Manlove was asked to serve as Camp Director following the departure of Iverson in 1987 and brought his many years of experience as the former Executive Director of Camping for the ALC to the ministry. He led Outlaw Ranch for several more years as it entered the ELCA.

camping ministry for all ages in the Black Hills. Many church camping leaders have had experience serving in program director roles at Atlantic Mountain Ranch, including Rev. Sheldon Tostengaard at Luther Seminary, Gaias Aaslund, Wayne Jarvis, Bruce Williams, Steve Peterson, Augie Berdardt, Jeff Barrow, and Paul Leslie, all having served for many years in camping leadership roles.

The Wild West theme fit well at Atlantic Mountain Ranch. A covered wagon village was designed to accommodate 25 campers while another 25 stayed in an A-Frame village. Each group spent half a week at the main village site, and the other half on a pack trip through National Forest land with a horse drawn covered wagon carried their gear. A favorite overnight stay was at Mile High Spring on the forestlands.

Another creative village called *Fort Courage* included a fort with two



blockhouses in which 45 campers lived. There was a separate village of tepees designed to accommodate 30 more campers. During the week, camper group engaged in food preparation, camp chores, Bible study and campfires, and primitive outdoor living.

The camp followed the model of decentralized small group ministry that had been used by many other camps. A variety of living villages were created at different locations on the property, using historical motifs of the region. This form of camping promoted independence, self-direction, and small group study, reflection, and worship among the participants. The site includes an authentic gold mine where at one time, over 2000 miners searched frantically for gold. There had been

### ***Klein Ranch Mobridge, SD***

In the late 1960's, Jake and Martha Klein of Mobridge, SD, gifted their ranch property to the American Lutheran Church Foundation through a charitable gift annuity. Within a few years, Jack contacted the foundation and expressed his displeasure that the ranch, located on the Grand River, 70 miles southwest of Mobridge, had not become a youth camp as he had hoped. The Foundation began to negotiate a return of the land to Mr. Klein until Pastor Dick Borrud of University Camps, based out of South Dakota State University Lutheran Campus Center, offered to run a program for

plans to develop this theme and call it Bugtown Gulch.

In the seventies, Atlantic Mountain Ranch began to assume more identity as its own program and site, rather than an outpost of Outlaw Ranch. Although many staff members shared time between the two camps, leadership has fallen under the direction of the camp director of Outlaw Ranch.

Atlantic Mountain Ranch serves as a base for a wagon train camp and a unique 'vision quest' program that includes backpacking and servant camps on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Also established on the property is Fort Courage, where youth enjoy a Christian camp experience in a rustic replica of an 1880's stockade.

youth and young adults in 1971. Pastor LeRoy Iseniger provided pastoral leadership for the camp.

In 1972 the property was turned over to Lutherans Outdoors in South Dakota for management and programming although it remained the property of the Foundation. Lutherans Outdoors also assumed responsibility for the annual payment to Mr. Klein until his death in 1985.

From 1972 until 1997, Mr. Gaias Aasland staffed and directed the Klein Ranch programs during the summer months hosting school groups from the upper Midwest. A few church groups

used the facilities, one of which was Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls. Pastor Ray Engh and Dot Thomas, director of education, served as key staff for the programs both of which would serve in national outdoor ministry leadership positions in future years.

When Aasland left Lutherans Outdoors in the fall of 1977, Klein Ranch's future as an outdoor ministry was questioned. The 1978 and 1979 camping seasons had minimal participation from congregations with the exception of Our Savior's in Sioux Falls. The school programs also departed from the Klein property to attend the new operation developed by Aasland on the Missouri River.

A local rancher, Larry Weitzel of McLaugton, was asked to assume the role of camp manager. He did so, refusing any compensation. He arranged lease agreements with a local ranching family, the Arnold brothers and provided ongoing supervision to maintenance. Joe "Little Joe" Severson of Iowa was hired as summer program director. After strong program leadership and good reviews from the churches that did participate in 1979, Lutherans Outdoors agreed to give Klein Ranch one more year rather than return its management to the ALC Foundation.

A strong marketing and promotional effort was launched during the winter of 1979-80 and a significant increase in camper participation was realized. Because of Severson's program leadership and the

partnership with the Arnold Brothers Arrow 5 Ranch, the Klein Ranch program flourished in the years that followed.

The Ranch program takes advantage of its authentic working ranch focus. Perched on the Great Plains under wide-open skies, the Christian ranch has nearly 3,000 acres and is a horseback rider's paradise. The program was based upon horseback riding, hiking, visits to an Indian Mission, small group Bible study, and campfires.

The Arnold families hosted campers and staff at their ranch on a weekly basis in order to observe a working cattle ranch with its many activities. Local Native American families, the Bunkes, Agars, and Yellows befriended the camp. The horseback riding opportunities on the ranches nearly 3000 acres captured the imagination of campers across the United States.

These traditions continued after Joe Severson left his duties to assume a full time youth ministry position and as Klein Ranch came under the program supervision of the NeSoDak Director, Neil Sorensen, in 1988. Dining and housing facilities were expanded thanks to the generous support of the Lutherans Outdoors Capital Appeals in 1985. In order to keep camper numbers at a reasonable level to ensure a true ranch camp experience, participation at Klein Ranch is limited to 50 campers or fewer each week. Many groups continue to be turned away each summer.

## *Other Camps*

### *South Dakota*

Two additional sites in South Dakota were related to The American Lutheran Church. The Jim River Camp north of Parkston, SD, was leased by three ALC conferences in eastern South Dakota. NeSoDak operated the camp for the benefit of local congregations.

The site was a 22-acre site along

the river frontage. Activities included canoeing and horseback riding.

Camp Pickerel, on Pickerel Lake near Grenville, SD, was a small 2-acre site owned by a local corporation of ALC congregations. It was used for small group youth activities and for picnics. In 1966, 85 campers were recorded as participating in a program.

# *The Camps of Michigan and Ohio*

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*Camping was one of the gathering forces for Lutherans in Michigan. Michigan was one of the first states to think strategically about its camp programs and service arenas. A District Camping Committee managed the camps of the American Lutheran Church and its history as a multiple site organization is quite old.*

*The camping program of Michigan was well respected by colleagues in camping. The family camping programs of Pleasant Hill were considered to be models of excellence and many organizations sought the expertise of Sally White, the staff person who was instrumental in its development in Michigan.*

*Likewise, Ohio camping developed cooperative models for outdoor ministries long before they became the norm. Ohio camping also was instrumental in involving campers from many walks of life in their program, taking seriously the call to serve all of God's people.*

*The Ohio camps were particularly effective in generating quality leaders for future positions in the church. Not only did they encourage leaders to serve in camping roles but also many staff members found ways to become involved in youth ministry or parish ministry. It illustrated what could happen when camps were linked in a close partnership of ministry.*

## *Camping in Michigan*

*Outdoor ministries in Michigan had a way of overcoming traditional boundaries. Often a camp can serve people from many different geographic, economic, and ethnic differences at the same time. This has been true in Michigan. Serving urban communities has always been a central focus in its historic mission. Michigan's reputation as a family camp leader was nationally recognized; bringing together diverse populations in a family community has been at the heart of its mission.*

### **Michigan District Camps Detroit, MI**

Camping has been one of the gathering forces for people in ministry in the Michigan District. The forms and structures evolved as the community spirit of the campers and retreat participants grew. At first, a district committee managed camping in Michigan. As the need for administration and continuity grew, the committee sought assistance from a full time director.

Pastor Bill White was called by the District Camping Committee to serve as Executive Director when they saw the need for administration and continuity. Glenn Wegmeyer was chairperson of the Call Committee at the time.

Under White's leadership, the camps serving congregations in the Michigan District were drawn into one cooperative District wide organization. Each camp developed a special personality yet together they were to offer a wide range of services to congregations. The camps were also spread throughout the geography of Michigan, providing easy access to the majority of congregations in the District.

White also supervised the

development of efficient standards, administration, and registration processes for the camps. Hiring of summer personnel was pulled into a cooperative venture. Staff members could move between camps to better serve the needs of camping in the district.

Pastor White spent a great deal of energy on staffing and programming. There was a serious commitment to develop an inclusive staff. One of the authors of the camp history documents contributors to this collection commented:

*"This writer, for one, was given much hope in the New Testament promises that there are 'neither Jew nor Greek' during experiences with these summer staff people."*

Following Bill White's departure, Pastor Dick Feucht led the camping program. Dick was interested in sailing and although the camps already had sailboats, his love of this sport made sailing an integral part of the camping ministry. Many volunteers have fond memories of their sailing stories, just as

those who fish have fish stories.

Pastor Paul Christ joined the Michigan camps as Executive Director in 1987. Paul's history with Michigan is remembered as being a time of renewed

## ***Pleasant Hill***

### ***Pleasant Hill, MI***

Located in central Michigan, Pleasant Hill presented a unique challenge to the church. Early efforts to use it part time for confirmation camping proved less than exciting, due in part to its limited land and facilities. Another effort to provide ministry for migrant children in the area also met with limited results.

Sally White provided new energy and wisdom in building Pleasant Hill into a unique family ministry whose focus was on building Christian community. Sally in particular became well known for her creative and sensitive program, and often served as a national consultant to other camps interested in developing family camping.

Among the principles of the camp program was to accept people as they are and to provide flexibility in housing and

## ***Tecumseh Woods***

### ***Tipton, MI***

Tecumseh Woods, located 1 1/2 hours west of Detroit, was purchased shortly before the formation of the American Lutheran Church and brought into the Michigan camping programs as a

enthusiasm for the hiring of a diverse, multi cultural staff. The commitment to this sense of openness has been a mainstay in the history of Michigan camping.

meals. This hospitality was a sign of the camp witness to the Christian faith that is open to people of all backgrounds and types. In addition, a program called *Foxfire Week* gathered people who demonstrated skills in animal husbandry, crafts, and other areas. Guests have experienced demonstrations in refinishing wood, splitting stones, making cedar shingles and much more.

Another interesting program was the development of the Bass Lake Festivals. In the afterglow of Woodstock, camp leaders began to dream about gathering 1000 youth at Pleasant Hill for a weekend of music and inspiration. Although 1000 was a bit high, 300-400 people have gathered regularly for this special outreach event.

summer facility and winter retreat center.

Over the years it developed within the Michigan camping tradition as a significant retreat ministry. Retreat growth was significant as the camp

invested in key leaders to support the retreat ministry. The staff included Denny and Bege Wiegman, Don Jones, and Pam Wurster, and together they welcomed, provided worship, and offered

### ***Stony Lake***

#### ***Stony Lake, Michigan***

Stony Lake is located near Lake Michigan and its massive sand dunes. It challenged summer campers to become aware of the majesty of God's land. A dining hall designed by Paul Schmidiknecht enabled the camp to expand its program vision. Its porch has provided many a camper with opportunities for personal

### ***Other Camps***

#### ***Michigan***

Camp Hemlock was a 35-acre camp owned by St. Paul Lutheran Church of Toledo, OH, located on Hemlock Lake near Quincy, MI.

The camp was primarily for the use of members of St. Paul and at one time

resources to retreat guests and their leaders. Tecumseh Woods was sold in 1991 following a reconfiguration of camping objectives in the ELCA.

growth and served as a location for group building and Christian community.

The camp committee of Stony Lake made an environmental decision to "let the trees grow" which has changed the character of the camp from a lakeside setting to a feeling of isolation in the woods.

served up to 400 campers per year. In addition to summer camping programs, the facility was open for seasonal retreats. The camp served mainly junior and senior high school students.

## *Camping in Ohio*

*Camping in Ohio has developed into a hybrid umbrella organization. Lutherans in Ohio have had historic traditions of camping and outdoor ministry. In addition to the development of their Bible Camp sites, the unique 'non site' program ministry of Miami Valley Outdoor Ministries was developed, based upon the former model of volunteers who rented sites for the sake of providing Bible camping to their youth.*

*Today, Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Ohio is one of the most unique organizations in Lutheran camping. Structured statewide to take advantage of coordinated effort, each camp continues to operate with a local Board in a decentralized manner. Thus the organization creates a deliberate tension between local and statewide vision. The resulting creativity has produced remarkable results and outstanding programs. It has grown into the largest camping corporation in the nation. Still, Lutherans who love camping in Ohio are able to talk about their local Bible Camps - whose histories are told here.*

### ***Lutheran Memorial Camp Fulton, Ohio***

In the midst of World War II, the dream of establishing a Lutheran camp in central Ohio was conceived. Many Lutheran church organizations had been renting other camps around the state. The Ohio District Youth Board of the American Lutheran Church proposed that a district-owned facility made good sense; there were many congregations with families who wished to memorialize the sons and daughters who had served their country and had not returned. Thus the idea of a memorial camp owned by the church was born.

On June 21, 1945, the District Executive Committee appointed a site selection committee. Members included Rev. Van Mechofer of Berea, Andrew Bradow of West Alexander, and Rev. Rennix Van Scoy of Crestline. After investigating seven sites, Rev. Henry Young of Galion suggested the land that

would become the Lutheran Memorial Camp. 59 acres were purchased from Grover and Abigail Fissell on September 5, 1945. An additional 47 acres including a barn and house were purchased from Kenneth Randolph. 6 acres were purchased from Delbert and Mary Liggett to keep a proposed road on high ground. A master plan was approved and within a few months, a campaign to finance the project was launched.

Work began on the site quickly. Brush and timber were cleared by the "Silver Dollar Men," a group of volunteers from local churches of the North Central Conference. They worked in rain, sleet, and sub zero weather and were paid a silver dollar for their labors at the end of the day.

The following work was completed by the fall of 1948: a campfire circle, the open-air chapel, six cabins, and Cedar



Lodge. Lutheran Memorial Camp was officially dedicated to the glory of God and in memory of those who served their country in the Armed Forces on October 24, 1948. In 1949, the first camp was offered. Two five-day sessions at a cost of \$12.50 per person were offered, including transportation from Mt. Gilead.

The following year, Pastor Weldon Bittikofer was called to serve as the first resident manager and the first full summer camping season began in 1950. The theme in 1950 was *God in Nature*, a study that would make ample use of the wonderful outdoor resources of the camp. By 1954, eight more cabins had been added and the swimming pool was constructed in 1956. Fred Gliem arrived in May of 1958 as resident manager and facilities continued to grow as more buildings and conveniences were added. Modern sanitary facilities were built in 1959; a nursing cabin and more cabins were added to the camp plan in 1965; Twin Cherry Lodge was winterized in 1966; Shepherd's Fold and more cabins were built in 1967.

Up to this point, Lutheran Memorial Camp served mainly as a facility where groups came to do their own programs. Summer staff members included many volunteers. In 1966 the Ohio District Executive and Youth Committees requested a comprehensive study by the Bible Camp Association of the ALC. A team of camping leaders reviewed the program and recommended the establishment of an Outdoor Ministry Committee that completed a Master Plan. This was approved in 1967 by the district convention. The first full-time summer

staff was hired in 1969 and served the entire season under the leadership of Rev. John Gaverick.

In 1972, Rev. Tom von Fischer was called to serve as Executive Director. Under full time leadership, new plans began to be formulated for the future of Lutheran Memorial Camp. The need to provide programs for all ages throughout the years was apparent. Sixty acres of additional property had been purchased in 1971, and an extensive winterization program was undertaken to expand winter capacity from 30 persons to 150.

As a result of these steps, rapid expansion followed. In August of 1975, the *Homestead* concept was approved for small group camping. Ms. Deb Yandala became the first director of environmental education on September 20, 1975. She developed an extensive program for public and parochial schools that used the camp during fall, winter, and spring weekdays. Two hundred and fifty five acres of land was purchased to bring the total camp size to 428 acres during this period. Family camping and adult retreats continued at a steady pace. More off-site programs were added to the camp offerings for youth.

Ms. Margie Fieldler was hired as the first on-site associate director in 1977. She was to provide essential leadership to the expanding programs for many years.

In June of 1981 the Priebe Staff Center was added to the camp, located in a wooded area near the swimming pool. It was built and used as a staff center until 1985, when it was adapted to serve as a pleasant retreat center during the fall, winter, and spring seasons.

Pastor Tom von Fischer left his position on February 1, 1982. Pastor Lea Johnson assumed responsibilities for the directorship and became the first full-time resident director of Lutheran Memorial Camp. Pastor Johnson provided camp leadership until December 1985. On January 1, 1986 Dave Irvine began serving as Executive Director with his term running through December 31, 1988. Following Dave Irvine, Mr. Steve Lee assumed the position of Director of Lutheran Memorial Camp.

A major restructuring of camping

### ***Miami Valley Outdoor Ministries Cincinnati, Ohio & Vicinity***

Miami Valley Outdoor Ministries is a camping program that does not own properties. Its history is rooted in people and congregations who desired a local Lutheran camping program. They saw the value of a positive Christian experience in an outdoor setting and wanted to be sure that the young people of their area could take advantage of outdoor ministry opportunities.

Lutheran Youth Camp was founded in the early sixties to provide summer camp for youth in southeastern Indiana. Two weeks of camp were held each summer at rented sites, primarily Versailles State Park near Versailles, Indiana. Local pastors and lay volunteers provided leadership for the camp program. Mrs. Adelaide Meyer served as director in the initial years. Most of the youth were from Indiana congregations, but some traveled from southwestern

Ohio following the creation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Ohio (LOMO) was formed in 1988 as a ministry of the three Ohio Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Joining with three other camps serving congregations in Ohio, Lutheran Memorial Camp became part of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Ohio. The organization's first Executive Director was Ms. Margie Fiedler, who served until the fall of 1996.

Ohio since there was no Lutheran camping program serving the area.

Incorporated in 1967, Lutheran Youth Camp's stated purpose was to "provide camping experience for youth in participating congregations that will be definitely religiously oriented, Bible based and Christ centered, to rent available camp sites for summer camping within the area of participating congregations, but never to acquire, by purchase or otherwise, any real property for the purpose of developing a camp site."

From its inception, MVOM has been an inter-Lutheran camping agency. Lutheran Youth Camp was started by those mainly from LCA congregations, but ALC and LC-MS congregations also participated. After an LCA camp opened in Brown County, leadership shifted to ALC congregations with involvement from all Lutheran bodies.

Meanwhile, Lutherans in southwest Ohio were concerned that there was no Lutheran camping program in their area. They felt that support for Lutheran Memorial Camp and Camp Mowana was low because of the distance involved in traveling to the camps. In 1972 a group of persons representing the ALC, LCA, and LC-MS began to meet. Calling themselves Miami Valley Camping Ministries, they explored the need for an umbrella organization that could provide camping programs for Lutherans in southwest Ohio and southeast Indiana.

Their stated purpose was to provide "an organization dedicated to provide experiences of Christian education and fellowship in the outdoors. Our focus is to support the ministry of the local congregations by providing leadership and program assistance for various parish groups. We do not own any property but rent other facilities as the need arises."

In 1976 Miami Valley Outdoor Ministries was incorporated in Hamilton, Ohio. The original leadership felt much enthusiasm for a local camping program. MVOM worked cooperatively with Lutheran Youth Camp to offer several camping programs. Two weeks of summer youth camp continued to be offered in Indiana with leadership primarily from the Indiana congregations. Several other outdoor ministries programs were offered including weekend family camps, work camps and canoe trips. Pastor Gary Leopard served as director of Lutheran Youth Camp from 1978-1982.

During 1978 and 1979 the MVOM board along with judicatory leadership

pursued a feasibility study with pastors in the Miami Valley area. Three options were presented for reaction: a traditional camp, a retreat center or a resource person. The traditional camp option received the lowest interest, primarily due to cost. The retreat center and resource person received higher interest.

The results of the study were shared with judicatories a decision to hire a full time director was made in 1981. The purpose of the position was to coordinate summer camping programs and provide retreat resources and leadership for congregations. Ms. Deb Yandala was hired to fill this position beginning in the fall of 1982.

The MVOM office was established at Messiah Lutheran Church in Cincinnati. It was later moved to the offices of Lutheran Social Services Family and Children's Services in Dayton. In 1983 MVOM hired a staff of five to work with volunteers to offer a nine week summer program, consisting of youth camp at Versailles State Park, confirmation camp at another rented site, a youth leadership program, and three weeks of day camps held in congregations. During the year, Ms. Yandala led a variety of retreats and consulted with congregations in coordinating various retreat programs at a number of different centers.

By 1985 the number of summer staff had grown to 15 with five weeks of resident camp and day camps at ten sites. Canoe and backpacking trips were also held. At least two weeks of camp at Versailles State Park in Indiana continued each summer.

During the same period, in 1984,

MVOM began to employ a program director on a part time basis to assist with program leadership for the growing retreat needs. In 1986 a retreat leadership team was formed with various leaders available to congregations on a contractual basis. In addition, a variety of retreats for senior adults, young adults, confirmation students, and youth were offered. Youth ministry workshops and Christian education training were offered

### ***Camp Frederick New Columbiana, Ohio***

Camp Frederick has from its beginning been aware of its unique outdoor resources. Its northern part includes glacier till, gravel and rock deposit by a glacial outwash. It also has an ample supply of birch, beech and maple along with the southern forest tree types that includes oak and hickory.

Two streams, the Big Bull and the Little Bull, also divide the property. There is an abundance of wildflowers, a marsh for nesting birds and rock ledges along the creek. The land was originally donated to the Boy Scouts in 1932 by Mr. F. C. Reese. After two years, the camp became the property of Westminster Presbyterian Church of Youngstown. It was used for over 25 years to bring young people closer to God's "out of doors." The camp was owned by Mr. J. Allen Frederick, an Elder of the congregation and leased to the Presbyterian Church for \$1 per year.

Camp Frederick was purchased in 1966 by a small association chartered by

as day events. Boat cruises on the Ohio River have also been utilized for fellowship building events.

MVOM entered into the organization of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Ohio following the creation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Its day camp ministry has dramatically expanded to over 70 sites each year throughout the state of Ohio

15 Lutheran congregations located near Youngstown, OH. The congregations were affiliated with The American Lutheran Church and a Bible Camp Site committee purchased the camp following two years of study. On September 14, 1966, Rev. Thomas Rehl, the first president of the Camp Frederick Board of Directors, signed the purchase documents. The property included 70 acres of hardwood forests. Additional land was soon purchased across Big Bull Creek.

One of its first directors was Rev. Bill Wilkins. Bill emphasized small group tent based camping for junior high youth and began to build support for the program from youth and families attracted to the beautiful setting. Pastor Wilkins also served as an Outdoor Ministry Coordinator (OMAC) for the ALC, covering the camping area of the East Coast. The camp became part of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Ohio following the creation of the ELC.

# *The Camps of Pennsylvania and the East*

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*Camping in the Eastern part of the United States at first glance may seem limited in terms of the number of sites that were available to Lutherans in The American Lutheran Church. However, the various denominations that would form the Lutheran Church in America were well represented in Pennsylvania, New York, New England, Virginia and the Carolinas. Several camps including Camp Calumet in New England, Lutherlyn in Pennsylvania and a Lutheridge in North Carolina were large facilities of the LCA that welcomed use by ALC congregations.*

*Nonetheless, two examples of camping in the East sponsored by the ALC developed around the metro areas of Pittsburgh and New York City. Koinonia in New York became one of the primary models for camping in the ALC and its principles were used in many camp programs across the country. Camp Agape, representing a smaller constituency, also played an important role in the life of many small congregations in the Pittsburgh area.*

*A third site, Lutherock, was developed near Boone, NC. It holds substantial property and has offered a number of adventure-based programs for Lutherans over the years. It is now linked with Lutheridge, a camping center of the former Lutheran Church in America, in a new corporation.*

## *Camping in Pennsylvania and the East*

### ***Camp Agape Near Pittsburgh, PA***

At this printing, little has been gathered about the camping program known as Agape other than that for several years it served a number of congregations in the Pittsburgh, PA, and area.

The camp originally consisted of 291 acres and served Junior High campers and families from congregations near the Pittsburgh, PA, area. It was located near

Hickory, PA.

Pastor Dave Thoreson provided leadership to the camp in the late sixties and early seventies and offered summer camping programs, and to a degree, family camp and retreat activities. The camp served small groups. In 1966, for example, 79 campers were served during the summer season.

### ***Koinonia Community Highland Lake, New York***

Thirty-five congregations incorporated the Martin Luther Camp Corporation in 1962 that gave birth to Koinonia. The camp, located in the Catskill Mountains near Highland Lake, New York, is an extension of their parish ministry.

Marie Ronning, a member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Staten Island, left her estate to the congregation. Rev. Bob Nervig, her pastor, believed in the value of camping among urban children and youth. In turn, this parish offered \$100,000 for a new camp if the whole group of congregations would agree to participate in an every member visit fund drive. \$440,000 was reached over and above the challenge gift, and Koinonia was born.

The metropolitan New York churches had a strong commitment to youth and outdoor Ministry. Camp Norge had served for many years as a Bible Camp location for their urban youth before Koinonia but the church did not own it. Ultimately, 60 congregations joined in the work of Koinonia. They were located in New Jersey, Metro New York, and Long Island.

Jerry Manlove was called to be the first director. Under his guidance, the camp was designed and developed, both as a facility, but more important, as a program concept and ministry uniquely equipped to challenge the constituent youth and adult population of Koinonia.

A magnificent wilderness site of 1200 acres, including two mountain lakes,

was purchased. A master plan was developed that has served the constituency since its inception. From the beginning, the theme of spacious, wild places for small groups of decentralized campers was maintained. The wilderness setting was to be preserved: Youth camping would be primitive, using tents and cooking over an open fire. Small groups were affirmed. All buildings would be winterized and be designed for multiple uses. Six year-round retreat centers were developed which have served over 50,000 youth and family members during the first 25 years.

John and Dorothy Asdal were called to serve as the first resident managers and they provided faithful service for 18 years.

Work camps for older high school youth involved them and other friends in gaining a sense of personal ownership in Koinonia. Canoeing the Delaware River has always been a part of Koinonia. Off site high adventure trips have been included in annual program offerings. Family tent and trailer camping has also been part of the Koinonia community, with 45 sites developed with utility hook ups.

In 1967 Burt Locker became the second camp director. Overseas boat trips were added plus camping for physically challenged campers and Title One programs. In 1972 Bob Nervig became the third director and served for many years. He had previously been on the camp board during Manlove's tenure as camp director.

In 1973 the Rafters, a family camp program center, was completed. The

following year, the farm, garden, and orchard were started. The youth group Walk-a-thons sponsored the barn raising for the farm. The Leni-Lenape Village was begun as a program site inspired by the Native Americans who originally inhabited the land. Commitment Homestead was also built and included a log cabin, blacksmith shop and craft area.

The Creation Learning Center, a field center for environmental education, was launched serving Lutheran Schools. Today, over 2000 students come to this center to experience the wonder of creation.

In 1976 the Future Mountain Village program center began. A geodesic dome was built as a core unit and a Yurt was added as a resource center for camp life.

A fund appeal for a new conference center was launched in 1978. \$900,000 was raised for the \$1.3 million center. The main dining room and kitchen were completed in 1980. Twenty guest rooms with private baths, meeting rooms, and a resource center were completed in 1982. The facility hosts adults and families and is especially designed for congregational retreats and elder hostel programs. Four weekend Advent festivals have been extremely popular. The center also has hosted conferences for youth leaders and has enabled Koinonia to expand its environmental education program.

In 1981 the Wilderness School, an accredited alternative high school, was opened. This program has given many young boys a second chance in life. Major funding came from the Commodity

Brokers Christian Fund. Partnership was established with Long Island Luther High School and Suffolk Luther High School.

A community center for the intentional young adults that serve and staff Koinonia was built in 1982. It is equipped with apartments, dorm rooms, chapel, dark room, education center, and work room. About 25 youth, which includes some foreign students, have been a part of the permanent community each year.

## ***Lutherock Boone, NC***

The idea of a camp near Boone, North Carolina, began in 1957 when V. O. Sipe donated 50 acres to ALC congregations in the area. The camp association was actually formed in the mid sixties as the NoCarAlc Association.

About the same time, 355 additional acres were purchased. The property owned by the camp is particularly beautiful and lent itself nicely to small groups of campers. The facilities that were developed were used in many different ways, combining sleeping rooms in a dining hall. Soon a lodge, several

The worship life of the Koinonia community has been shaped by the relationship with the Taize community in France. For a five-year period, 20 Koinonia staff members have taken a Holy Week pilgrimage to Taize.

The Koinonia community maintains its strong urban commitment and tie to inner city parishes. Koinonia understands itself as a holy place of renewal, prayer, reflection, and pilgrimage.

rustic cabins and a residence were constructed.

Rev. Mark Radloff became Director of Lutherock in 1984. Plans were initiated to develop adventure based camping in the area. This would lead to programs for backpacking, whitewater rafting, rock climbing and spelunking.

Following the formation of the ELCA in 1987, the corporation became part of Lutheridge /Lutherock ministries. Its high adventure program was launched successfully in 1988.



# *The Camps of the Central States*

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*Among the achievements of Lutheran leaders in the central states of The American Lutheran Church was their willingness to experiment with new models for camping. Those who lived in Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado were willing to gather Lutheran resources from both the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America to deliver quality outdoor ministry programs to children, youth, and adults.*

*Distance is a factor in these states with large geographic areas to serve. There was also a difference in the geography and livelihood of people living in the eastern sections of Kansas and Nebraska and those living in the west, which was a ranching economy. These people often found Colorado easier to get to.*

*It may also be significant to sense the impact of the Dust Bowl Days on this part of the country. Life in the plains was extremely difficult during with drought and high winds; parts of Kansas and Oklahoma contributed to the great western movement of people seeking to improve their lives. Some of the remaining churches did not have the resources to join the great decade when Lutherans established camps in the early and mid forties. As a result, camp corporations were established in the mid sixties.*

*As I write this introduction, I serve as Executive Director of Lutheran Ranches of the Rockies, the organization that now owns Sky Ranch. I once spoke in a small church in western Nebraska and began my presentation by asking, "have any of you ever been to Sky Ranch?" To my surprise, virtually every hand from those who were over 55 years of age was raised. One gentleman began to tell the story of how he and his neighbor had donated Sky Ranch's first tractor. He concluded his story by telling his friends that it had taken three days to drive it to Sky Ranch.*

*Camping may have gotten off to a late start, but it was a faithful and enthusiastic beginning.*

## *Camping in Nebraska*

*Camping in Nebraska was established relatively recently – in the mid sixties. This provided the new camping organization with the benefit of year round leadership early on in the development of the new Circle R Ranch. Lutherans in general were willing to work cooperatively in Nebraska. After only a dozen years, Circle R became part of a camping organization that also included ownership by the LCA. Together, a vibrant ministry has been developed to serve the Lutheran community of Nebraska.*

*Nebraska is a state with a sizeable population base in the east, near Omaha and Lincoln. Churches in the western part of the state became affiliated with Sky Ranch in Colorado at approximately the same time as Circle R was developed. The communities on the rising plains had much in common with their Colorado neighbors and the states were located in the same District of the ALC.*

### **Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Ashland, Nebraska**

In 1963 and 1964 land was purchased for Circle R Bible Camp. The camp was owned by eight eastern conferences in Nebraska of the Central District of The American Lutheran Church. In 1964-65 the main lodge and director's apartment was built. A dining hall with bunkrooms to sleep 36 people was also completed. In 1965 the first campers were served at Circle R with Mr. Stan Anderson as the part-time director. Rev. Paul Pfankuck was hired as the first full time director in 1969. In 1975 Rev. Garrett Van Hunnik became the second director.

The Nebraska Synod of the Lutheran Church in America united its camping programs with Circle R Camp in 1975 to create Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, Inc. George and Irene Holling donated Carol Joy Holling Camp near Ashland, NE, to the synod. Part of the purpose of the new

corporation was to determine how the two camps might cooperatively serve the needs of Lutherans of both synods in the state of Nebraska. Joint planning began immediately.

Rev. Wayne Jarvis was called as Executive Director of NLOM in 1979. That summer the first campers utilized Carol Joy Holling Camp. The facilities included a dining hall, manager's home, seven tent platforms, outdoor pavilion, shower house, and outhouse. Six wagons were rebuilt and four new tepees were purchased for camp use. Circle R camp continued as an active winter retreat facility. During the summer of 1979 there were 356 campers served.

An outdoor chapel was built in 1980 and two additional tepees were purchased. That summer 633 campers were served and 18 pastors attended camp with their church groups.

The following year, Crystal Springs

Lake was constructed through donations of money, labor, and earth-moving machines. This lake, created on the grounds of Carol Joy Holling Camp, greatly increased the program opportunities at the camp. A new toilet facility and three additional tent platforms were also added. 744 campers and 27 pastors were served in 1981. In 1982 two bunkhouses were built for the future ranch camp. The family campground was laid out and roads and camp areas were developed.

The Long range Planning Committee of NLOM recommended selling Circle R and moving all activities to Carol Joy Holling. This decision to sell the camp was adopted at the annual meeting and a pledge was made to build a retreat center at Carol Joy Holling Camp with its proceeds. All camping activities were moved to the site at Carol Joy Holling Camp. During the summer of 1982 there were 837 campers served along with 36 pastors.

In 1983 Carol Joy Holling Camp opened with horse and animal programs. Immanuel House (donated by Immanuel Medical Center) was moved from Circle R camp to Carol Joy Holling to be used as a retreat facility and living quarters. The camp office was moved from Circle R to Immanuel House. Two additional bunkhouses and a winterized shower house were added to the ranch facility. The farmhouse was converted to the ranch dining hall-kitchen. That summer 987 campers and 43 pastors were served.

The following year, the retreat center's first phase was built and called the Circle R Retreat Center in honor of

the traditions built at the camp, now no longer used. Three additional bunkhouses, a new barn, and corrals were constructed for the ranch. A new maintenance shop was added and the hay shed was moved. Two cottages were added to the family campground. During the summer, 1047 campers and 55 pastors attended camp programs.

The retreat center began operation in August with 1572 people in 81 groups serviced the first four months of operation. No major construction took place in 1985, but a challenge course was added and the farmhouse was converted to a crafts building. During the summer of 1985 attendance moved up slightly to 1077 campers. The retreat center continued to prosper with 2733 guests from 124 groups.

During 1986 the family camp cottages were reconstructed and an 80 X 200 foot riding arena was added. The Circle R Camp was sold. During the summer of 1986, there were 1211 campers served plus 77 pastors. The Circle R Retreat center served 3200 guests from 157 groups. The American Camping Association accredited Carol Joy Holling Camp this year.

In 1987 a new campfire ring and worship area was added at Inspiration Point. Three beehives were added to the ranch program. Water and electrical hookups were added to the family campground. Two additional animal stalls were added to the barn. An assistant director was added to the staff in 1987. Camper participation exceeded 1300 guests.

## *Camping in Kansas & Colorado*

*Camping congregations in Kansas sought programs in neighboring states or leased facilities to conduct early youth activities. A small camp in Kansas, locally owned Camp Alumbro, did offer programs for several years. A few of the western churches of the ALC banded together with Colorado prairie congregations and the churches serving the Front Range of Colorado to help establish Sky Ranch, west of Ft. Collins, CO.*

*As camping developed in Colorado it was done so with the full cooperation of these congregations located on the plains of western Nebraska and Kansas. The former Central District of the American Lutheran Church was a large geographic area. Pioneers of camping remember long hours of travel to attend meetings. Many of the congregations served large ranches and were rural in nature. Yet they had a generous spirit to help both in terms of labor, through their gifts (including food and used materials) and with their time.*

### ***Camp Alumbro Dodge City, Kansas***

Several congregations in the Dodge City, KS, area owned a small camp located on the north shore of Cedar Bluffs reservoir in Kansas. It included 25 acres and provided for small group camping activities for local parishes. Programs included confirmation camping, senior high youth activities and a small retreat

center that was available to congregational leaders. Reports filed with the ALC indicated that it was available for programs throughout the year and had a manager and caretaker but did not hire camp counselors. In 1966, 80 campers were served.

### ***Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp Fort Collins, Colorado***

The history of Sky Ranch can be traced to the effort of early key leaders from the Fort Collins area. Rev. Alton Schwandt, Alvoy Ekblad, Reynold Olsen, and John Kotchenberger were among the camping pioneers who located the original 107-acre property and purchased it for \$62,500.

Prior to purchasing the property, churches from the Northern Colorado

and western Kansas and Nebraska districts rented facilities south of Estes Park, CO, to conduct camps. Rev. Schwandt had heard that Sky Ranch was in receivership and would be available to the highest bidder.

Sky Ranch was once the homestead of Tom Bennett, a young man who hoped to carve a ranch livelihood underneath the "Mummy Range" of the Colorado

Rockies. The elevation was too high for successful ranching so odd jobs, including helping to build reservoirs for the water and ditch companies along with occasional guiding, kept him in the area.

Following the find of a single gold nugget, Bennett had a short lived but thriving business and decided to develop a dude ranch for those seeking the solitude of the mountains. The character of the camp lent itself nicely to mountain living underneath the "Mummies" within three miles of the north border of Rocky Mountain National Park.

Sky Ranch is located near the end of the Pingree Park road. Though only 55 miles from Fort Collins, the trip takes nearly two hours because of the rough switchback mountain roads that must be negotiated. Rev. Schwandt organized the search group to visit the camp in January. Taking an International Scout 4 X 4, the group got miserably stuck and walked the final two miles into the ranch. The snow was too deep to walk about the grounds so they took a quick look, saw the mountain grandeur and said, "let's buy it."

The four men, all from Trinity Lutheran Church, went back to Ft. Collins and placed immediate mortgages on their homes to gather the down payment. Then they sold the idea to other congregations. The area was familiar to many who supported the idea, because the camp borders the Pingree Park campus of owned by Colorado State University and used a teaching and research center.

The camp opened in the summer of 1963 with a ministry centered on Bible study, worship, hiking, fishing, and arts and crafts. In the late sixties, a

backpacking and hiking ministry began. A family campground was also built on the premises and from its early days, Sky Ranch has offered a rustic camping setting deep in the mountains at an elevation of 9200 feet.

Since its inception, the Sky Ranch offices were located at Trinity Lutheran Church in Fort Collins. Often staff from the congregation provided leadership to the camp. In some cases they served as director of youth programs at the church as well as Sky Ranch programs. Maynard Atik, a pastor at Trinity, also lent a hand directing programs at the camp. Two small Sunday School rooms housed the offices for many years.

The original buildings of the former Dude Ranch included a log sided lodge, an original homestead log cabin and several old forest service cabins that had been built near the camp. The cabins had once served guests who traveled to the Dude Ranch to hunt and fish.

The first part time Program Directors was Carl Guthals who led camp programs shortly after the purchase of Sky Ranch. Operating during the summer season due to the difficulty of access during the winter, Sky Ranch offered basic camping programs for youth and families. Campers were provided lodging in small 14 X 28 cabin units, recently built in sections below and hauled up the mountain for installation. Early volunteer workers had to shore up the old bridge spanning the South Branch of the Poudre River in order to transport building materials and equipment to the camp. This task was shared with City of Greeley water crews who have maintained roads

to reach their remote reservoirs past Sky Ranch. Greeley crews have always assisted Sky Ranch, providing gravel, road grading and help as needed.

Mr. Bill Hahn, "the colonel," led summer camp for several years in the late sixties, providing guidance to the staff that assisted in the program. Many camp leaders of Sky Ranch had their first experience under the "colonel."

Pastor Bob Kuehner was called to serve as the first Executive Director in 1974. Under Bob's leadership, Christ Center Lodge was constructed and dedicated in 1983. The backpacking program grew to a significant level, becoming the largest in The American Lutheran Church. In addition, a traveling day camp was launched and environmental education began.

Pastor Bob experimented with a winter community. Comprised of six to eight young adults, the community weathered a few winters in the harsh

environment to offer ski programs and small group activities. In addition, they followed patterns designed to help them grow in their Christian faith and life.

Following Pastor Bob's departure, Rev. Ron Letness was called to serve as Executive Director. During his tenure, participation at the main site, called "Circle of Life" nearly doubled. A new servant ministry called "Four Winds" developed by Program Director Greg Schairer was also begun which combined work and service ministries in such diverse locations as Habitat for Humanity of Loveland, the Pine Ridge and Wind River Indian Reservations, and the Border Ministries near Mexico.

By 1987, Sky Ranch was owned by nearly 80 congregations within Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, and Wyoming and was serving youth from up to 30 states each year through their high wilderness and Four Winds Servant Camps

# *The Camps of Texas/Louisiana*

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*Lutheran camping and retreat ministries in the Texas and Louisiana area of the United States has a rich tradition of service to youth, families, adults and congregational groups. The first recorded Lutheran camp had its beginning as early as 1929 when Lutherans rented a site near Round Rock, Texas. The camp, sponsored by the Augustana Synod, found its focus in a summer youth program.*

*This first attempt at camping has since multiplied in size many times over. Rented sites were used for two decades in the southwest, beginning in the late 40's. Over the years, five sites have been owned, and numerous programs were offered on rented sites through an organization that served up to 465 Lutheran congregations in Texas and Louisiana.*

*Over the years, Texans have developed a personality. Though only a generalization, Texans 'think big.' So it was with camping. What was once a modest and voluntary organization became one of the largest Lutheran organizations in the nation. Camp Chrysalis and Lutherhill are among the oldest camps in Texas and Chrysalis is now linked with a ranch facility called Ebert Ranch. In addition, day camps travel throughout Texas and Louisiana and Padre Island near Corpus Christi provides a spectacular setting of sand and ocean for beach camping!*

*Camps have come and gone in the southwest, but over the years some of the most creative camping projects had their roots in this organization. Travel camps took staff, gear, kitchen equipment, and program materials in a large truck to any site where they were needed. The 'camp ambassador' program had its roots in Texas. No event was too hard to pull off! And before Lutherans would learn to work together, Texas was doing it all along. This was the Texas way of getting it done.*

## *Camp Chrysalis* *Kerrville, Texas*

In 1949 the minutes of the Texas District of the American Lutheran Church showed a resolution passed in convention to "purchase and establish a camp for the Texas District." Great strides were made during the year that followed. The 1950 convention minutes include: "We have entered into negotiations for the purpose of purchasing Mirror Lake." During the same convention a "committee on Bible camp purchase matters" was established, which included pastors on the district youth committee of the ALC and eight lay delegates. There was almost unanimous agreement in favor of this property located outside of Kerrville, Texas, in the heart of the Hill County of Texas.

Mirror Lake was purchased by the Texas District at a cost of \$32,000, at 3 % percent interest. A per confirmed member fee was established. The campsite itself was a former dude ranch and consisted of 10 small cabins, a dining hall, and a large lodge, which were all, located on 42 acres on Turtle Creek, known as Mirror Lake. A beautiful and majestic bluff that the Comanche Indians used as an observation post to scout the wagon trains moving through the valleys highlights the site.

A Bible camp committee was charged with the task of administering the camp. It consisted of five people, two of whom were clergy. The selection of this committee was left to the executive committee of the Texas District. Controversy over the name selected for

the camp, Camp Chrysalis, began the day of the transfer of the deed and title. Questions were raised over the appropriateness of such a name for a Lutheran organization. The Luther League was asked to conduct a contest regarding the naming of the camp and the youth league affirmed the name of Camp Chrysalis. (The controversy continued and was not settled until 1962 when the name was changed to Lutheran Camp Chrysalis.)

The name itself was meant to provide the church with an important image - the chrysalis. The transformation of the cocoon to the butterfly was likened to the transformation of the spiritual lives of individuals from cocoon (confined) to butterfly (free) because of Jesus Christ.

The first camping season for youth at Chrysalis was in 1950. Volunteers from the Luther League and the Lutheran Men's Brotherhoods assisted in preparing the site for use. Within a short two-year period, camping sessions had been divided into eight different federations of congregations. Each federation became responsible for its own programming during their week at camp. This included enlisting volunteers who served as counselors, maintenance staff, cooks, and resource leaders. These camps were called conference camps.

The camp committee sought to establish guidelines for each camper who attended throughout the season. These guidelines brought a common focus to the



different weeks. This "code for the good camper" included that each camper would "help with kitchen duties, participate in two quiet activities, as well as in worship, and make two crafts each day."

The decade of the 50's at Camp Chrysalis were highlighted with several major milestones. The camp was paid in full in 1954. By 1957, 1772 campers used Camp Chrysalis during the eight one-week camp periods. The chapel was improved, a new water system installed, sewage systems created, two cabins were built, new kitchen equipment purchased, and the entire camp was fenced! Volunteers, in addition to the camp committee, were very much in evidence as people from congregations poured out their love by working at the site and giving leadership to the summer camps.

In 1957 a special committee report to the district convention recommended that the executive committee of the Texas District appoint a Bible camp board and that it become more self-governing. The rich decade of the 50's closed with the recommendation that a "Bible camp administration committee" draw up a master plan for future development. These early camping leaders demonstrated visionary leadership as well as loving care.

The decade of the sixties was highlighted by many major changes in the philosophy and direction of camping in the southwest. Camp Chrysalis was among the first Lutheran camps in the country to hire a full time camp director. The first camp director was Pastor Will Bigott. An early pioneer of camping, Pastor Bigott instituted many significant

changes which would propel Lutheran outdoor ministries in the southwest into a much larger and more comprehensive ministry. In his first season, he and a staff of 12 counselors served 1,500 youth.

Under pastor Bigott's leadership, paid summer camp counselors were hired and effectively trained to provide quality and continuity to the summer programs. Small group camping was emphasized, and many programs were extended off the campsite. For example, a beach camp was established on Padre Island, and a travel camp of summer counselors was sent to rented sites throughout the state of Texas, inaugurating confirmation camping. Because of a gift, Camp Shalom near Georgetown, Texas, was begun.

After Pastor Bigott's resignation in 1967, Pastor Wayne Jarvis was called to serve as camp director in 1968. The position title was quickly changed from camp director to *minister of camping*. Under Pastor Jarvis's leadership a new ranch program was established in 1971. The completion of a capital fund campaign to improve the facilities at Chrysalis enabled expansion to year round programs.

Jarvis created the *Camp Ambassador* program that enlisted over 200 people to spread the news of camp in Texas. Soon this program became part of most camp organizations across the country. And, Pastor Jarvis forged a cooperative ministry with the Lutheran Church in America during this time.

These were the seeds that would eventually result in a new camping organization, the Lutheran Association of Southwestern Camping (LAOSC).

## ***Lutherhill Bible Camp LaGrange, Texas***

The first site owned by Lutherans in Texas was known as Circle R and its 21 acres was located near Round Rock, Texas, on Brushy Creek. Camps were offered through this site for many years, beginning as early as the late 20's. These meager beginnings on a small site evolved into the purchase of Lutherhill near LaGrange, Texas, in 1954.

Essentially founded through the efforts of Pastor F. E. Eilers, the Lutherhill site quickly grew in popularity. In 1954, Pastor Eilers discovered that the Phillips Oil Company was prepared to sell its pumping station near LaGrange to the highest bidder based on closed bids. The United Lutheran Church in America made a bid of \$13,001 and thus gained the property because it had bid \$1 more than the next highest bidder!

The women of the Texas Synod supplied over \$3,000 toward the purchase of the new youth camp, and on July 1, 1954, Lutherhill was dedicated. Seventeen hundred people turned out for the dedication and barbecue. Charles Vorkoper is credited with having

contributed the name *Lutherhill*. The site consisted of a large oil pumping station building and four houses. The pumping station was converted into a meeting room, chapel, and dining room. Pastor Eilers served as the part-time manager for six weeks in the summer of 1955. Over 2000 volunteer hours were contributed in order to open the facility for campers during the summer of 1955.

Mr. L. L. Appelt added ten additional acres to the site in 1958 and a swimming pool was added in the same year. The support from the synod was strong through financial gifts from congregations and individuals who desired to see the camp successfully meet its purpose.

Lutherhill was the responsibility of the synod camp committee that was charged with overseeing the camp administration and maintenance. Many volunteers provided for program opportunities for early campers. The committee became known as the "Lutherhill committee" and consisted of six people in 1958.

## ***Lutheran Association of Southwestern Camping Round Rock, Texas***

In 1975, The American Lutheran Church (ALC) and the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) combined their camping efforts after several years of cooperative work. The Lutheran Association of Southwestern Camping

(LAOSC) now became an agency of both the LCA and the ALC. Wayne Jarvis became its first Executive Director to lend his skills to camping throughout the two state area.

By this time, Wayne Jarvis and

other staff had created many unique opportunities designed to serve Lutherans throughout the Texas and Louisiana area. A Traveling Camp had been developed so that staff, tents, equipment, food, and program supplies could be trucked to rented campsites throughout the Texas area. This brought the program to areas that were more easily reached in the long distances between Texas communities and did much to develop support for camping ministry throughout the state.

Jarvis also provided leadership for Camp Shalom and developed a unique Tree House ministry where campers lived high in the trees. This popular camp was to eventually be destroyed by fire.

Pastor Ernie Lantz was hired as the minister of camping to replace Pastor Jarvis in 1975, a post Lantz was to hold until 1983. Under Pastor Lantz new programs continued to develop, and increased depth and mission was established. The retreat ministry of the organization took major steps forward, and the number of retreat guests finally surpassed summer campers.

In April 1983, a national ALC and LCA evaluation team came to Texas to study the strengths and weaknesses of the LAOSC ministry and to consult with the

### ***Camp Georgetown Georgetown, Texas***

The Southern District of the ALC owned a camp near Georgetown and sponsored camps for junior high youth. The camp is no longer in existence but

constituent members. Upon the recommendation of this team, the Board of Directors consisting of nine persons, 3 from the board, 3 from the ALC, and 3 from the LCA created a long-range task force. The nine people met for a year and developed long range plans for LAOSC programs, financial plans, public relations efforts and administration.

The implementation of this plan began in February 1984, when Mr. Armond Paulson was brought in to serve as Executive Director of LAOSC. Under his leadership, LAOSC began to prepare itself for future service in the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which would begin a few years later.

Pastors Art Weiss and Gary Stevenson, staff members of LAOSC, were involved in these future oriented plans. A revitalized progressive camping program for youth was developed utilizing the strengths of past programs; a new retreat ministry was established; new plans for financial development and management were installed; the administrative systems of the multi site corporation were developed and refined. LAOSC was, in effect, prepared to deliver high quality programs when the ELCA was formed in 1988.

served Lutherans for several years until encroachment made the site unusable for camping purposes.

# *The Camps of the Southwest*

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*The spectacular geography of the Southwest and California has lent itself well to camping. Adventures in the mountains, viewing desert stars or catching the breezes of the ocean mark many of the creative programs developed by Lutherans in the Southwest. The camping story of the southwest began in California where Lutherans organized camping programs at rented sites before building their own outdoor ministry centers.*

*The Lutheran community in California has been challenged to serve diverse populations from their urban areas for many years. It seems as if there has always been effort to develop effective centers to serve people of all ages and colors. And several creative ventures, including beach camping and day camping, have helped Californians work together across Lutheran lines.*

*The Nevada churches around Las Vegas have developed their camping effort more recently. The gifts they have received in land were originally part of an effort to extend California camping programs into this area. It is now managed effectively by a new organization on behalf of an area that is seeing much growth.*

## *Camping in Nevada*

*The development of a camping site in Nevada is relatively new in terms of its history. Las Vegas has become a large metropolitan area in recent years with strong Lutheran congregations. The history of camping that developed from the Las Vegas area had less than a dozen years of history with the former American Lutheran Church. Its vision was shaped by its natural resources and its plans for family camping taking advantage of its pool of new volunteers.*

*John A. Mogren, former Treasure of the organization, submitted the story of the Lutheran Camping Association of the SW. I thank him for wishing to include this important history in this volume.*

### ***Lutheran Camping Association of the SW Las Vegas, Nevada***

In 1975, the Lutheran Camping Association of Southern California began receiving gifts of 10, 20, and 40-acre parcels of land in Utah near the area of Long Valley Junction. Located near the intersection of highway 14 and 89, the land is in the middle of southern Utah's park and recreational lands. Bryce Canyon is only an hour east; beautiful Zion National Park is one hour to the west, and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon is just over two hours to the south. Also near the parcels is excellent hunting and fishing in the surrounding Dixie National Forest. Many people have summer cabins in the area because the high altitude of 7,400 feet and absence of industry provides an escape from the desert heat. And in the winter, there are numerous ski resorts for people to enjoy.

The site, however, was not suitable for people living in Southern California. Development was difficult because of travel, and the site was initially quite primitive. A two-bedroom mobile home

was donated and placed on the site. A pit toilet was dug and a solar shower was constructed. Because the land was not under full time use for church purposes, there was the additional burden of taxes each year that had to be paid for out of the California operating budget.

In 1982 the property, which now consisted of 820 acres, was offered to a group of laypersons in Las Vegas, Nevada. The gift was conditional; the formation of a non-profit corporation to manage and develop the lands for camping and retreat ministries was required. The corporation was registered in the state of Nevada and was called Lutheran Camping Association of the Southwest.

Development of the site was slow to begin. Without a full time director, the new organization relied on laity who would use their spare time or take vacation time to work and provide for services at the campsite. However, great expectations for the future were quickly

established.

Shortly after the camp association was established, two additional mobile homes were donated and placed on the property. In the summer of 1987, a contractor was hired to gravel and improve the access road from the main highway. A well permit was obtained and plans to dig the well were made. The challenge of providing special treatment for sewage disposal was significant as the lands include the headwaters of the Sevier River. Negotiations for the plan were worked out with the Utah State Health Department; meanwhile, a large holding tank was used to storage and regular pumping was required.

In October 1987, Mr. Paul Fjare of Brauer & Associates Ltd. visited the campsite. Mr. Fjare studied the property and made many recommendations for proposed use of the property. Additional donations to the property have brought the acreage to over 1200 acres. Much of

it is in primitive condition, and the overall goal is to continue its natural state for future generations. Deer, elk, golden eagles, rabbit, blue birds, sage grouse, and coyotes are prominent species on the property. Local residents have informed the camp board that bear had also been seen on the property. Some grazing of cattle is allowed through an arrangement with a local cattle company that leased a portion of the site. Three natural springs have been found on the property, and have been tapped to provide water for wildlife.

Future plans for the facility have included a lodge for travelers who wish to stay for a week's visit, with the camp providing transportation to the many scenic areas surrounding the property. A recreational vehicle park is being planned. It is the intent of the association to provide new and exciting experiences in faith and fellowship when the future campsites are completed.

## *Camping in California*

*Lutheran camping on the West Coast developed as the cooperative venture of various Lutheran bodies working together on behalf of youth and families. These cooperative ventures were often years ahead of other forms of church cooperation. Camping was well organized prior to the purchase of sites. In some cases, camping was viewed as one of the only viable forms of unified mission during years when Lutherans were divided into several groupings.*

*Great changes have affected camping in California. The diversity of the urban areas served by the Lutheran camps challenged the programs to remain open to a wide array of groups and organizations with many types of needs. In many ways, camping leaders in California have lived among new trends that would eventually affect camps in other areas of America.*

*The importance of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Southern California (and its predecessor organization, the Lutheran Bible Camp Association of Southern California) should not be overlooked. Whereas many coordinating camping organizations in the country were formed after camps were purchased, these organizations were created prior to land purchases, offering hundreds of programs at rental sites and generally coordinating youth and family camping efforts in Southern California.*

*Source material for this history of this organization as well as its camps, including Camp El Camino Pines, is taken from an historical paper developed by Colleen Tucker on 5/23/89. A copy is stored in the Camp History Archives. I express my appreciation to her for her excellent research. I also thank Connie Wolff, a recent director, for sharing California camping information with me.*

### **Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Northern California Mount Cross Bible Camp Felton, CA**

Following World War II, a small group of pastors and laity in northern California concluded that it would be advisable to obtain suitable land for a Lutheran Bible Camp and Retreat Center. Rental facilities had previously been used for Lutheran camping but they were becoming worn out and over utilized, making it difficult to reserve satisfactory dates for their programs. Accordingly, the congregations these individuals

represented affiliated with the National Lutheran Council and organized a Camp Committee to represent them.

After making a thorough investigation of available sites throughout northern California, the committee reported that it had selected a 135-acre site (later reduced to 107 acres) on Highway 9 between Felton and Ben Lomond in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The cost of the timbered property was

\$35,000, and the committee negotiated for necessary loans to cover the purchase price and the immediate expenses of developing the site. The first camping program was conducted in 1948 on this new location.

About this time the Lutheran Bible Camp Association of Northern California was organized to own and operate the camp. This organization included church bodies that would eventually form The American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America; thus the effort was pan Lutheran.

The name unanimously selected for the camp came as a natural consequence of its location. The camp lies in the heart of the Santa Cruz Mountains, which is Spanish for "Holy Cross." The cross of Christ has always been at the heart of Lutheran theology. It was the concern of the founders that this message would provide the focus for the new camping ministry. In the hopes that the Bible Camp experience would influence campers throughout their lives, the new camp was called Mount Cross.

The early founders wrote upon dedication: "This is a project great enough to test our faith, great enough to challenge our best efforts. This project invites us...to work in a common purpose for a common good."

New buildings and facilities were constructed. Eventually, the site contained a kitchen and dining hall to serve 195 campers, a hall with seating for 300 people, three dormitory buildings with accommodations for 56 each, seven small cabins, and a 30 by 60 foot swimming pool.

When the site had been in use for about 20 years, the Lutheran Bible Camp Association began to experience financial difficulties. The high cost of maintaining the many facilities and management costs were combined with dwindling interest from many parishes. The camp also had a large indebtedness and there were pressures from encroaching civilization. The Board of Directors and the judicatories involved began to have serious doubts about the future of Mount Cross.

In 1969, Rev. Richard Borrud, a field service director in camping for The American Lutheran Church, wrote in his study of camping in California: "Taking all the assets and liabilities of this site, it appears there would be good reason to dispose of this site." Utilization of the camp continued to drop during the next several years, and the grounds and buildings suffered for lack of adequate care. At the same time there was a general dissatisfaction with the summer staff and the program that was being offered.

In the spring of 1973, the Board of Directors called W. C. Crouser to serve as the Executive Director. In order for Mount Cross to survive, the judicatories promised a supportive relationship while the local pastors agreed to participate at the camp in future years. New interest developed in the programs offered at Mount Cross as the camp was cleaned and remodeled to provide meeting space for adult retreat groups.

An intensive public relations campaign was launched with visits to many congregations. Presentations were



made at meetings, conferences, and conventions. The number of summer campers began to increase each year, and the camp became a member of the American Camping Association to insure compliance with the highest standards available in camping.

Though historically affiliated with The American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America, conversations began in the early eighties to develop relationships with the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod's camping association known as the Sierra Pacific Lutheran Camp Association. This organization owned several sites but had no regular camping program and labored under a considerable debt. Articles of Agreement were drawn up that allowed the two associations to share the services of one Executive Director.

Within a couple of years it became evident that there was no need for two separate Lutheran camping associations serving the same area. The Sierra Pacific Association decided to disband, sell its sites to reduce its debts, and become part of the Lutheran Bible Camp Association, bringing its limited assets with it into the inter-Lutheran organization. At the same time, the name of the new association was changed to Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Northern California. The constitution was revised in 1982 to add the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod as a member of the corporation.

Support has increased yearly, as has the number of summer campers and retreat groups using the campsite. Improvements were made as the number of tent and recreational vehicles has increased; new seating was provided at both the outdoor chapel and the campfire area; trails into the wilderness portion of the grounds were developed; a solar heating system was installed at the swimming pool and security lighting was increased. Buildings were improved with the addition of new heating systems, carpets, beds, and furnishings.

Replacement of kitchen equipment and remodeling of one of the dormitory buildings for higher comfort space has provided for quality adult facilities. There are two residences on the grounds, both of which have been improved, and a third home was given to the camp and is located on the edge of the camp boundaries. Efforts to expand office space began in 1985 and completed in 1987. A special event in the history of the camp was the burning of the mortgage on Memorial Day 1982.

Following the departure of Executive Director Crouser, Pastor Gary Stevenson became the new Executive Director until 1996. Under his leadership numerous programs were initiated and staff was expanded to handle the many program requests. Among these new programs were day camping and off site experiences.

## ***Lutheran Bible Camp Association of Southern California***

Lutheran Bible Camping in

Southern California began at Radford

Camp, a small camp facility owned by the city of Los Angeles. Minutes dated October 14, 1941, record the Radford Lutheran Bible Camp Council activity, which was an inter-synodical effort including the American Lutheran Church, the Augustana Synod, the Norwegian Lutheran Church, and the Danish Lutheran Church.

These minutes record that a camp lasting seven days would be held at a cost of seven dollars per camper. The Norwegian Lutheran Church was to provide the Bible Teacher for the week, a Rev. Oscar Hansen. The camp was also coed. Two years later, on November 30, 1943, a decision was made to extend a camp offering for families the following summer. There was reference to another family camp in existence at the time, which had been going on for "forty years in the desert." It is not known whether this was a Biblical pun by the secretary or true.

Discussions about purchasing and owning a camp were held during the mid to late forties. A motion was made on February 21, 1950, to purchase a Presbyterian Conference grounds located at Big Bear Lake for \$75,000. Camping programs had increased to two weeks of family camping and one week for youth. The programs were held at a rented facility called Camp Seeley. No progress was immediately made on a purchase. Thus the programs of the camping council were offered for many years using leased camps.

On February 10, 1953, the board recommended camping cooperation with the United Evangelical Lutheran Church

(UELC) and on April 6 the Bible Camp Board met with the District Presidents for the purpose of considering joint ministry with the UELC at their new camp near Redlands. Dr. Koosman recommended that the camping movement be statewide and that the UELC be asked to cooperate at Mt. Cross in Northern California in the same manner that cooperation might take place in Southern California.

Camping expanded in 1954 to include a separate camp for junior high youth as well as one for senior high youth. An additional program of family camp was offered at Forest Home to complement the camp that was already offered at Camp Seeley.

The efforts placed into camping ministry began to expand at this time. There was a request from the Evangelical Lutheran Church to conduct a Sunday School Teacher's Institute under the leadership of Sadie Austin. This would be incorporated into the family week. In addition, a Church Worker's Institute was promoted. In the mid fifties, staffing was expanded and discussions about camping philosophy, a permanent camp director, paid staff, and long range planning were also held throughout the church. Soon camps were offered during three weeks at Camp Seeley, one week at Cedarcrest, and a week at Forest Home. The Board also began to participate in the American Camping Association, which pointed out the need for proper medical care and supervision of campers.

A Long Range Planning committee was created with representatives from various parts of California. It held its first meeting on January 31, 1958. Reports of

the various camping efforts were shared. For example, minutes indicate a report was given about Mt. Cross at Felton, which was purchased in 1948 and included 101 acres, serving 120 campers per week. The San Joaquin Valley Ministerial served 20 churches from Bakersville to Stockton and offered camps at Camp Sierra near Shaver Lake. Lutheran Men of the Valley, Inc., had also founded a camp called Camp New Hope.

Summer camps that were held in 1958 were developed under the leadership of the camp dean. A dean was responsible for an individual camp week for a specific conference. Responsibilities

### ***Camp Hemohme Wrightwood, California***

Camp Hemohme was purchased at a cost of \$76,000 on December 10, 1958. The Long Beach Campfire Girls had previously owned this camp. The purchase and debt reduction plan required approval and regulation by the United States Forest Service.

Owning a camp meant the development of year round opportunities for retreats and conferences in addition to expanded summer camps. This, in turn, forced the Board to recognize the need for more assistance through additional staffing. Still the new camp managed to function for seven years without a full time director.

On December 16, 1965, Rev. Bob Newcomb was called to serve as the first Executive Director of LBCASC. He was installed on March 14, 1966. His duties

included locating the registrar, developing name tags, placement of tents, choosing the recreational director, the dining hall and K.P. director, the store operator, song leader, and campfire director. The dean also trained the teaching staff and counselors, handled publicity and furnished program materials.

In the fall on 1958, many changes affecting the permanent status of camping in Southern California were made. Articles of Incorporation of the Lutheran Bible Camp Association of Southern California were approved October 20, 1958 and endorsed by the state on November 20, 1958.

included the administration of the camp philosophy and program, the development of a constituency of parishes that would offer support and use the camp programs, and to provide general camp leadership to all the functions required in managing the camp activities.

The camp philosophy included the 'unified-diversified' program. This concept offered a total camping program with the same philosophy, development and administration. Camping could take place not only on the camp premises, but also in many off-site locations. In the summer of 1966, the camp programs included opportunities on the beaches of Sand Clemente and La Jolla, backpacking near Sequoia, confirmation camps at El Camino Pines Camp (at this time, leased from the El Camino Conference

Brotherhood) and at Camp Hemohme.

Camping under this philosophy was extended to a wide range of participants. Rev. Paul Wee, under the auspices of the Economic Youth Opportunity Board, brought 80 youth from the City of Venice to summer camp for a week. Operation Commitment was born in 1968 as an all-summer day camp program in the urban areas of Los

### ***Camp El Camino Pines Gorman, California***

The ownership of El Camino Pines was centered in the men's groups of a number of churches in Southern California including Trinity Lutheran Church of Santa Barbara, Mt. Olive of Santa Monica, Trinity of Ventura, Our Redeemer of Bakersfield and other churches in Thousand Oaks, Northridge, North Hollywood, and Burbank to name a few. Representatives of the El Camino Pines Camp Board were meeting as an advisory board with Rev. Dick Borrud, a field service representative of the American Lutheran Church in the latter part of 1967.

Within a few months, the advisory committee recommended a merger of El Camino Pines and the Lutheran Bible Camp Association of Southern California. The vote approval took place on January 6, 1968, and took effect on March 1, 1968.

In 1971 a Camp Director was called whose job description included the development of a mission congregation for the community surrounding El

Angeles. The Amigos de las Americas program in 1969 involved 25 high school young people who paid \$325 to go to Guatemala in order to teach general hygiene, administer shots and promote public health to families in remote areas.

Because of the condition of Camp Hemohme, it was sold in late 1968 and primary camp operations were moved to El Camino Pines.

Camino Pines. Shortly thereafter, staff was added to provide outdoor education experiences for school children. A neighboring camp was purchased to add recreational vehicle space and additional retreat opportunities. Known as *Frontier Pines*, it added a rustic feel to camping at El Camino Pines.

Camping continued during this decade to include a wide range of creative programs for a diverse population base. Day Camping continued to offer programs for urban areas, and congregations underwent changes in makeup to become more diversified. Camping cooperation continued in the late seventies with the Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Southern California (LCMS) program and with the Lutheran Church in America. Some joint promotional efforts were made and some program sharing was also developed.

Upon the creation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1987), it became apparent that a more formal ownership pattern of camping was

required to coordinate camping in Southern California. The LCA and ALC camp programs joined together in March of 1989. Thus there would be one administration in the new church

### ***Shepherd by the Sea Retreat Malibu, California***

Because of the need for retreat centers for California Lutherans, several private and church facilities received regular use by congregations. Sensing the need for retreat ministries in the Malibu area, the church council of Shepherd by the Sea Lutheran Church in Malibu worked out plans for a retreat center at their site. The facilities were offered to LBCASC so that their staff could

managing the programs fostered through El Camino Pines, Frontier Pines, Camp Yolijsa, and the Lofthus Retreat Center near San Diego.

coordinate activities and plan events.

The 24 person retreat center included the remodeled 'sheep hut,' a landmark in Malibu. It was shaped as an octagon and had two stories. It was used by retreat groups and in the summer served as a base for beach camps until zoning changes in the community made the site unavailable.

# *The Camps of Montana & Idaho*

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*Camping in Montana and Idaho has a long and faithful history. The effort to organize camping was initiated to develop programs that would help reach young people with Christian education and inspiration. Because resources were often at a premium, these stories are particularly meaningful. The lengths to which camping pioneers went to develop their camps in locations that were often inaccessible in the winter were great.*

*There are several sources of good records for these histories. I had the opportunity to review a large box of minutes, notes and letters from Rev. Amon Johnson. His daughter kept these records for years. It was by chance that she discovered I was interested in camp history and loaned me the box. It was a treasure chest of information about the early days of Flathead Lake Bible Camp, including drafts of contracts for the first property manager and personal letters and notes about the issues faced by the fledgling organization.*

*The resources available to these "mountain camps" are plentiful. To have a number of camps located high in the northern Rockies or beside the cold-water lakes of the Canadian border is a gift to the church. These histories represent stories of grace for the camps were built on faith and a shoestring.*

## *Camping in Montana*

*The Montana camps were considered "jewels in the mountains" to those who owned and developed them. From the wide-open spaces of prairie wheat farms, the mountains had lured visitors and vacationers for years. It is no surprise that Lutherans would locate some of the most beautiful land in America to develop into camps.*

*Montana is blessed with two existing camps that can be traced to their ALC roots: Flathead Lake Bible Camp and Christikon. The natural resources at their doorstep has enticed several generations of people to their camp facilities, offering a wide range of outdoors activities. In addition other campsites were leased in early years and a church owned one camp near Plentywood, Montana, on the eastern plains.*

### **Flathead Lake Bible Camp Kalispell, Montana**

Congregations of the Norwegian Lutheran Church located in northwestern Montana first held a Bible camp at the Kalispell Lions Club Youth Camp on Bitterroot Lake in 1941. Located in the beautiful mountain area 23 miles northwest of Kalispell in the heart of the Rockies, the camp offered excellent outdoor attractions.

*"The altitude of Bitterroot Lake guarantees good, fresh mountain air - cool enough at nights for blankets, but days are delightfully warm."*

The camp consisted of four large barracks tents with double-deck beds, a main lodge with two fireplaces, and a commissary...

*"Camp Rates depend upon number in party and length of stay. But be assured that the rates are more than reasonable, as the KALISPELL LIONS CLUB does not wish to make any profit from its guests."*

(The information above is quoted from a 1941 camp flyer describing the Lions Club Youth Camp).

Pastors who brought youth to the camp included Rev. Field of Kalispell, Rev. Jacobson of Missoula, Rev. Bergeland of Whitefish, Rev. Nelson of Polson, and others. The following year, these men agreed to hold another camp at a Methodist facility on Lake Kalispell. Rev. Field was called to Iowa, and other changes

in the clergy roster proved to slow the development of a camp facility owned on behalf of Lutherans. In addition, the high cost of land made the project seem impossible. Nonetheless, a search was launched in 1942 and early 1943 to locate a piece of property on Lake Kalispell.

The Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Kalispell where Amon Johnson served as pastor spearheaded the search. In addition, Ernest Iverson, Hans Larson, and J. M. Carlson agreed to assist with the search for the right location. They enlisted the services of Guy Kao, a member of the Christian Church with a "hearty and generous soul." According to memoirs of Amon Johnson,

*"We told him he could find more sites in three days with him than in three years by ourselves. Guy was wonderful, bless his soul."*

As the group traveled around Lake Kalispell (no small feat in those days for the lake is of sizeable dimensions) they were joined by Rev. Jacobson of Whitefish and Oscar Engebretson of Kalispell. Several sites were rejected within a week. But one evening the group was resting from a weary day and looked across a small bay toward a wild and prominent shoreline. Suggesting the possibility of exploring the area, Mr. Guy suggested that he did not believe it would work since the "going was tough."

The following day, Guy led the

group through the native forests and rocky hillside. It had been the roughest walk of all the explored sites. But when they saw the seemingly virgin timber and a rocky point stretching a hundred feet into the lake, they declared it "breathtaking." The group asked Guy to see if he could negotiate a price for the property.

Mr. Kao located the owner in Butte and was given a price of \$1000 to purchase a total of 68 acres that included 3006 feet of shoreline. The group was unprepared to purchase such a large tract of property but liked the property so much. They agreed to attempt to raise the money, but within two days the owner sent another letter to Mr. Kao raising the price to \$2000. Pastor Johnson told him "the deal is off, we cannot raise that kind of money." Mr. Kao, upon contacting the owner, was informed that he would stand by his first offer of sale at a cost of \$1000.

Raising the money took strategic planning. It was a time of war and the pastors involved had minimal salaries. However, with the help of Ernest Iverson, Dr. Brasset, Hans Larson, and Chriss Larssen, Pastor Johnson borrowed \$200 from the Edmiston's bank and made the down payment. The land then belonged to this group of individuals.

In early 1943, the men faced the difficulties of putting in a road, electricity and buildings that would enable the camp to begin. A



preliminary planning meeting was held on February 15, 1943, to make plans and promote the concept. Pastors Amon Johnson, Orlando Lee, Ocee Johnson, and R. Ylvisaker attended the February 15 meeting in Kalispell, and the next day, Pastors H. M. Rye, John Laver, and Jacobson met in Polson.

Hans Larson, Ernest Iverson, Chriss Larssen, Dr. Brassett and Rev. Amon Johnson held the actual ownership since no corporation or association was yet formed. Two conferences were slowly becoming involved in the project and at their assemblies the following statement was approved:

*"That the Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp association operate the Camp. The said association to be composed of representatives of congregations of the churches of the American Lutheran Conference in the territory served by the Camp. Also that in case of failure of the Camp to operate successfully, that ownership revert to the original owners, or to the corporation of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church. The original purchasers having made the Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Kalispell, Montana the owner of the tract of land in question."*

Upon approval, this decision was placed before the individual owners at the home of Amon Johnson and accepted.

At an April 12, 43, meeting of the association, a number of recommendations were made. Plans

for a 25 by 70 foot building to be used as a chapel, dining hall, and kitchen were drawn by R. Daehlin. The Ladies Aid was asked to make tick covers. It was also moved that "we do our level best to construct ten cabins." The new association also voted to incorporate under the name of The Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp. The camp was granted incorporation by the Secretary of State on September 17, 1943. The first camp fee was also set at \$6, and \$20 was spent on athletic equipment.

Early in 1943, the road was bulldozed into the land and electricity was installed. Pastor Amon Johnson was allowed by the Kalispell Bethlehem Lutheran Trustees to take a six-week absence from parish duties in order to supervise the creation of lumber from trees that were felled on the property. The selected trees yielded 50,000 board feet of lumber, all sawn on site by Mr. Shoemaker with scores of helpers. The pine boards were 8 to 24 inches in width and up to 24 feet long and were carefully stacked for future construction projects. Pastor Johnson remembered, "Boy, that was beautiful stuff to lay up for roof boards."

Mr. Halvor Stordok was engaged to construct the main building. Stordok was a carpenter from Missoula. Oscar Engebretson cleared the location and laid foundations on the site of the first building. Thirty men from Kalispell turned out on a regular basis to work into the evenings, often showing up at work the next day like

"bronco busters." Members of the Conrad parish joined in, under the encouragement of Pastor Ocee Johnson. Rev. Ylvisaker came with men from Cutbank, Montana, and also members of the Whitefish, Galata, and other locales.

In order to raise money for construction, lots on the beautiful shoreline were sold. Thus the early camp association was able to pay their way as construction progressed. The actual ownership of Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp property was assigned to Hans and Mrs. Larson, and Chriss Larssen. This enabled them to give title to those who purchased the lots that were part of the *Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp Villa Sites* without the need for cumbersome special association meetings. The lots were sold at around \$200 each, and a few of the early purchasers included Dr. Brassett and Ernest Iverson.

Eventually, contributions from congregations began to arrive, thanks to the urging of Pastor Amon Johnson, the elected Secretary Treasurer. Johnson recollected the difficulty of procrastinating in his regular epistles seeking assistance and providing information to churches:

*"Anyway peppy letters flattering me into high speed kept things rolling with Duffy Ylvisaker and Ocee Johnson and their like accompanying the epistles with checks that cheered us all like war paint on an Indian of old."*

Rev. R.E. Ylvisaker organized camping efforts during the first year. A large tent was purchased for under \$50 that would serve as a housing unit for 30 youth. Makeshift beds and sleeping bags, along with washbasins and outhouses were the order of the day. Some slept under the trees. In the first year of camping, Hans Larson announced at the barbershop,

*"that 200 or more campers were having the time of their lives. A bit dusty maybe, but the food was good and the program had everyone enthusiastic with a great faculty with ball games, swimming, fishing, volley ball, and every outdoor enjoyment."*

Pastor Amon Johnson and O.C. Johnson were elected to share the position of President in 1944. Oliver Engebretson served as Secretary - Treasurer, R.E. Ylvisaker as 1st Director, R.A. Daehlin as 2nd Director, and T.T. I. Bergee as 3rd Director. At the annual meeting, special thanks were directed toward the men from Bethlehem Lutheran in Kalispell who located the land and took the risk of its purchase. Special thanks were offered to Mr. Guy Kao.

By 1945, camp registrations brought in \$1811.92 while offerings received were \$146.29 from the public services held each Sunday. General improvements to the camp continued to be made. But it was in 1946 when the Men's Brotherhoods of the congregations encouraged the Board to

reach out to churches in other Synods in the Rocky Mountain region. They envisioned a camp that would become a symbol for Lutheran cooperation and unity. It was felt that a broader base of support was also needed in order to encourage the extension of God's Kingdom.

Upon approval of the Board, invitations to a general meeting of all synods were sent. Numerous people attended who were not yet active in the project, and a presentation on the camp's history, its by-laws and other documents were presented. Rev. Charles Johnson and Rev. Mackensen of the Missouri Synod responded with personal pledges to support a unified effort. A special task force was established to review the by laws and make recommendations. The committee was composed of one layperson and one pastor from each of the church bodies present at the meeting. This included the United Lutheran Church, the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church, the Augustana Synod Lutheran Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church (of which the Norwegian Lutheran Church which founded the camp had become a part).

The Intermountain Circuit Week held their camp at Flathead Lake Lutheran Bible Camp during the week of July 8-15, 1946. The camp brochure displayed a beautiful picture of two sailboats and a pleasure boat on Flathead Lake overlooking the Mission Mountains to the east. It is a typical

view from the lakeshore of the camp. The Bible study leader was Rev. Eugene Stime of the Seattle Lutheran Bible Institute. The Mission study leader was Rev. Herbert Loddigs who had been imprisoned in the Philippines with Lutheran missionaries during Word War II.

Camps began on Monday and ran 7 days, ending with a Parents Day on Sunday when a festive worship was held. Congregations were also invited to come on Sunday to join the youth. A typical camp day included rising at 7 AM, with breakfast at 7:30. Following a housekeeping time, three classes were held in the morning, featuring the guest speakers. Lunch was held at 12:15, followed by a rest hour.

From 2 PM till 5 PM, campers were engaged in swimming, baseball, fishing, badminton, horseshoes, hiking, and a host of other activities. Each evening at 7:30 an inspiration hour was held followed by a campfire. Lights out were to be promptly at 10:15, a time which was challenged by many a camper. The cost of the week was \$7.

A revised constitution was adopted in early 1947 that opened the camp to further membership. Additional improvements to the camp included the construction of a permanent dock, several boats, recreation and athletic equipment, several new cabins, new bedding, electrical improvements to all the cabins, a new veranda along the dining hall, purchase of tables and

construction of lounge chairs. Finances were low but through judicious borrowing, the camp managed to stay ahead.

Camp participation was increasing, too, as new communities brought additional youth to camp. Congregations from Great Falls, Shelby, Butte, Columbia Falls, Havre, and other communities were becoming involved. In the 1948 camping season, which included 6 summer weeklong camps, over 800 people attended the camps. At one of the conference weeks, Rev. Loyal Tallakson of United Lutheran Church in Grand Forks served as Bible Study leader. Local pastors of the conference led missions, youth work, and the Question Box series.

In 1949, Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Fladstol became the camp administrators with power to act on behalf of camp development. This was a major step in the development of the camp, to have a person work throughout the year. In a letter sent to Amon Johnson from Fladstol, dated September 12, 1949, Fladstol said:

*"I have been pondering over the Bible Camp job. And am sending you some of my offers. I have drawn up a few items to consider in paragraphs.*

*1st Salary. App. \$1800 per year, pay when ever you have the money. In exchange, I'll be the camp keeper, head carpenter, and overseer over volunteers. Doing all odd carpenturing, cement, stuccoing, wiring,*

*and painting.*

*2nd Free house. Need not be elaborate. Bath room is nice but not nessessary (sic) we can use outside facilities.*

*3rd Free wood & water. I will rustle and cut all wood. Would like pressure as much as possible. When its too cold and must drain the pipes, I can carry it.*

*4th Free Electricity. We must have a electric stove & Frigedair which uses quite a bit of electricity. In turn I have Power tools and when used, will be wholly to the interest of the camp."*

The total receipts for the year were \$4,129.15 with \$3,918.77 in expenses of which only \$1800 was used for the salary of Mr. Fladstol.

Amon Johnson summed up the first decade of camping at Flathead in one of his epistles from 1950:

*"The past eight years of Bible Camp development have been remarkable. Today we realize a camp ground valued at approximately \$50,000, including real estate and physical equipment. Nine years ago we were using the Methodist-Episcopal camp ground, and, incidentally, we owe a debt of thanks for the courtesy extended...*

Next, Johnson summarized the feats of the first decade already noted in this history. He concluded with some inspirational comments:

*"There is much that could be added. And endless list of names that have contributed to the success of the camp, and the present*

*prospect of a development that can easily challenge any similar project in any section of the U.S., Canada, or the continent of North America, we believe...*

*The interest in our young people has been the prime factor in moving our church people to contribute generously. Our treasurer, Mr. Oliver Engebretson, who has served enthusiastically throughout the history of the camp, will bear me out, I am sure, in this position. The spirit of giving has been good.*

*When you visit the camp you will realize how much it means to keep up this*

*constant building program just at present. It looks like another camp entirely. It will require a more strenuous effort and we are sure that the generous response of our people will be equal to this opportunity...We do not have extravagant plans, but a certain amount of comfort is necessary for best results."*

*"May God bless the Bible Camp Association richly in an advance that will glorify His name and prove a blessing to the many groups that come to worship and to learn of God and His plans here in the glorious out-of-doors."*

## ***Christikon McLeod, Montana***

The history of Christikon officially began in 1951 but includes a story that goes back several decades prior. Christikon's current site just north of Yellowstone National Park was first staked as a homestead claim in the early years of the 20th century. Don Cowles, who later came to be called "the cowboy druggist of Livingston," may have originally envisioned his 83-acre claim would provide him an agricultural return. But he soon found his location to be a convenient stop over point for workers, merchants, and others heading up the road toward the Independence Mine. Knowing the value of mountain hospitality, he began welcoming them for meals and lodging at very affordable prices.

Although the area's mining

activity wound down after World War I, national interest in the Park and its surrounding terrain brought increasing numbers of people pursuing recreational and leisure sports. "Daddy Cowles" hospitality skills were polished to appeal to this new clientele. With his son, Don Jr., he started in earnest to create a rustic guest ranch that would appeal particularly to the eastern tourist.

By the early thirties, they had built two lodges and numerous cabins, using local timber and the skills of some of the best log construction workers in the area. With the management savvy of Anna Rutledge, the facility was operated as the Lazy Day Ranch until the late 40's, when changing times and a remote location led the Cowles family to put the place

up for sale.

It would prove to be an opportune time to bring the guest ranch and the church together. From Bozeman on the west, to Hardin on the east, to Cody, Wyoming on the south, congregations in the Billings Circuit in the old Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) had been doing cooperative camping during the summer for a number of years. These churches rented sites and moved from location to location. Leaders in these churches were convinced that the time had come for them to organize for outdoor ministries.

They had been considering an offer of free land at the base of the Crazy Mountains, about 70 miles north of the current site. But with a developed guest ranch now available, interested congregational leaders began contacting individuals and groups for support. They held up the vision of this lovely mountain setting for use by Lutherans in the years to come.

In 1951, the former guest ranch became the focus of the Luther Lodge Bible Camp Association that would later be incorporated as Lutheran Bible Camp, Inc. Congregations were now able to do Bible camps and other conference activities at a place they could call their own. They added a few new buildings during the next fifteen years, remodeled the existing structures as needed, and arranged for a summer caretaker each year.

By the late 60's, camp leaders

recognized the need for more focused programs and leadership in their camping ministry. In 1968 a call was issued to Pastor Stan West, a pastor from Livingston, Montana, to serve as part time camp director. Stan was known for his story telling skills and one of his published novels, Amos, became a television film. Stan introduced a camping program with leadership focused on staff training and the development of the camp counselor. During his seven years as camp director, he began the camp's first organized backpacking trips into the beautiful mountains surrounding Christikon.

The name *Christikon* was adopted in 1971 to lift up the importance of its camp mission. A coined Greek word, Christikon means *that which belongs to Christ* or *those who belong to Christ*. This message continues to characterize the camp's orientation and mission as an arm of ministry on behalf of its congregations.

In 1975, Pastor Robert Quam was called to serve as director of Christikon part time with a congregation in Billings. The arrangement was renewed in 1978 with a different Billings congregation. In 1986, Quam became full time with Christikon to serve the growing ministry of the camp.

Many faithful people have been involved in the mission of Christikon. One such person was Charlie Rasnick, a long-time area prospector. Until his

death in 1983, Charlie lived at his wilderness cabin about two miles up the trail from the camp. He welcomed Christikon folks to his cabin innumerable times. While he had no formal connection with the camp, Charlie was always a gracious host, a good friend and a gracious role model. He was a fascinating conduit to the area history and his stories entertained hundreds of campers and staff.

During the past several decades the ministry of Christikon has been extended to include many people from other states, both in its residential camp

### ***Brush Lake Bible Camp Plentywood, Montana***

Brush Lake Bible Camp was a 42 acre camp located near Reserve, Montana, and owned by congregations in the conference surrounding the community of Plentywood, Montana, near the North Dakota border. In 1966, the ALC reported a camper

programs and through its fine backpacking trips into the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Area that surrounds the camp. Christikon is known for its "mountain hospitality" and has served youth in grades five through twelve. It also provides space for families and adults, developmentally challenged persons and many others from throughout the nation.

Christikon looks forward to continued faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as a place and people of vision and hospitality.

population of 295 junior and senior high campers.

Summer staff members were seldom hired; mainly pastors or group leaders who sponsored activities at Brush Lake Bible Camp ran the program.

## *Camping in Idaho*

### *Lutherhaven Bible Camp Inland Empire Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Coeur d'Alene, Idaho*

In the 1940's a group of men from the Spokane area Lutheran churches organized themselves into the Spokane Lutheran Men's Club. These men were from all of the Lutheran synods in the area and united together in order to work, sing, enjoy Christian fellowship and be engaged in service. Howard Fetz, a club member, presented them with an opportunity to purchase property on Lake Coeur d'Alene. It was decided to sound out the interest of all Lutheran churches in the Inland Empire, since the property would be central to so many communities. This early decision had the effect of broadening support for a worthy cause.

In 1945 a group known as the Inland Empire Lutheran Men's Association was formed. It was their specific dream to establish a summer camp for use by returning servicemen and for use of families of Lutherans in the Spokane area. It would be many years before this dream of family camping would become a reality.

The organization located 16 acres overlooking Mica Bay on Lake Coeur d'Alene in Idaho and purchased the property. Also purchased was an

old CCC camp for \$500. The eight buildings from this camp beyond Avery, Idaho, were moved some 150 miles and reassembled on the camp property, which was still virgin timber. The camp was called *Lutherhaven*.

The camp was officially dedicated on a beautiful Sunday afternoon on May 26, 1946. Over 1000 people were in attendance. The first camp was hosted in June 1946. As Pastor William A. Foege of Chewelah remembers:

*"The first Bible camp held at Lutherhaven was in June of 1946. I was there. It was a great camp. It was a busy camp. A camp with real cooperation. The one person who had worked hard and long was Pastor Edward Wagner, at the time, pastor at Reardan, Washington."*

In 1946, 650 campers enjoyed camp at Lutherhaven. By 1948 the camper attendance had more than doubled. Along with this growth came some unique challenges to lodge, provide food service, and care for the growing number of campers. Many people shared interest in expansion of the camp.



During the first six years, Howard Fetz had faithfully managed the camp. But the Board of Directors was fearful that the camp premises and facilities would deteriorate unless new sources of support were found. Their need for financial support was met by the Lutherhaven Ladies Auxiliary, which pulled the men out of trouble.

Shortly before 1956, after the first decade of Lutherhaven's existence, twenty additional acres north to the country road were annexed. And many new concepts in camping began to find their way into the plans for the camp program. Between 1956 and 1966, new cabins designed to provide small group space for 8-12 campers were constructed. Camp counselors began to use small groups for Bible study and programs during these years.

In 1970 the Board of Directors decided to sell the timber on the grounds for an estimated \$32,000. In addition, a canvas of all Lutheran congregations in the area was planned with a goal of \$25,000. Preparations for a Silver Jubilee were made. By 1973 family camping was established, as land was cleared and sites developed for

tents and recreational vehicles. A new program called *Camp Ambassadors* was launched which would help spread the word about camp to the many Lutheran congregational members involved.

Guidelines for the organization were reaffirmed and Lutherhaven began to be known as Inland Empire Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, which encouraged a broader concept of camping, retreats, and outdoor ministry programs.

The theme for 1976 was "Burn the Mortgage" on the new Pinecrest Retreat Center. Many people worked on fund raising programs such as the Cast-Away Fair and a Bike-a-thon which helped accomplish the goal. In 1979, the Board authorized the exchange of the Tollgate-Luthercrest property in Oregon for the Columbia River Property.

The fortieth anniversary celebration was held in 1986, which marked the beginning of the fifth decade of camping for Lutherhaven. Founders met to celebrate the many changes that had occurred over the years.

### ***Tollgate Luthercrest Weston, Oregon***

This 33-acre site was located near Weston, OR, and was owned by the Mid-Columbia and Blue Mountain conferences of the ALC.

Little is known about the camp as of this writing. A booklet published by the ALC describes its program for Junior and Senior High youth including

trail hiking, horseback riding and skiing. In 1966, 160 campers used the facility.

The camp was winterized and had a caretaker but it appears no counselors were hired for summer duties.

At some point, the conferences that owned Tollgate Luthercrest joined

## ***Luther Heights Ketchum, Idaho***

The Intermountain Lutheran Camp Association was incorporated in Idaho in 1953 as a nonprofit corporation to provide camping and religious activities for Lutheran youth. The original directors were Theo H. Wegner, Boise -- Augustana; Samuel E. Running, Twin Falls -- ALC; Ervin E. Miller, Boise -- ULCA; H. P. LeLand, Ogden, Utah -- Augustana; and Harry Johnson, Shelley -- Augustana. Pastoral advisors were P. W. Funk -- Augustana; Elmer Carlson -- Augustana; and Rev. Keller -- ALC.

A choice of two campsites was offered by the Forest Service near Lake Alturas in the Stanley Basin of the Sawtooth Mountains. The present site of 11 acres was selected by the committee and plans made to begin youth camping with tents in 1954. New members on the Board of Directors included Rev. Carl E. Samuelson, John A. Yeates, and Rex Johnson. During the first years of the camp organization, Ted Wegner served

with Inland Empire Lutheran Outdoor Ministry. It was then managed by the organization until its sale in 1979. The proceeds were used to purchase land on the Columbia River that would eventually become a center for small group, adventure based camping.

as board chairman. Upon his death, Ervin Miller assumed this position and continued during the next 20 years of development.

Rev. Carl Samuelson, known as Sammy, took the lead in obtaining surplus CCC tents, picnic benches, steel dinner trays, silverware, cooking utensils, and a cooking range from the local camp, which was closed down by the government. Thus the Bible camp began with primitive equipment and basic camping concepts.

Toilet facilities were constructed of small log buildings with concrete walled pits and floors. Pastor Hermanson, Pastor Samuelson, and John Yeates constructed the first foundation-pit in 1954. It is assumed it was blessed and duly dedicated. Water facilities consisted of a gravity water system designed by Ervin Miller. It piped water from a nearby spring on the mountain above the campsite.

When a name was needed for the new camp, Pastor Luther

Samuelson of Blackfoot, Idaho, suggested *Luther Heights Bible Camp*, and it was agreed to be acceptable.

Pastor Samuelson had also pressed the Board to install the water system, and he hauled many heavy 10-foot sections of galvanized pipe on a ski rack mounted on his Studebaker sedan. It was a hazardous trip of 280 miles from Idaho Falls to camp over a rough road partly under construction.

Plans for a lodge and cabins were developed by John Yeates and approved by the Board before architect Perry Bruvold began the work of creating blueprints. The goal for the camp was a capacity of 100 campers. The Forest Service also approved the architectural plans. Five and six inch sawed logs were obtained from the "South" sawmill in Island Park, Idaho, and hauled by church members 370 miles to camp.

Two sessions of camp were run in 1955 using primitive facilities. 144 youth attended these first sessions of camp at Luther Heights.

During the summer of 1955, construction of the lodge began. The Rex Johnson Construction Company of Twin Falls, Idaho, donated construction equipment and craft personnel and the foundations and floor slab were placed. Wall and roof construction continued into the following year.

During the following winter of 1956-57 disaster struck. The heavy snow load of approximately five feet

caused an unbalance on the lodge roof, resulting in its collapse. A major effort was required in 1957 to salvage trusses and logs in order to rebuild the roof. Cross bracing was added to overcome the original stress problem.

Since those original projects, staff and volunteers have built many sleeping cabins and an administrative cabin. A 120-240 volt aerial distribution electrical system was installed in order to electrify all the buildings.

Camper registration numbered 261 campers during three weeks of camping in 1958. This slowly increased to five weeks of camping plus retreat weekends for confirmation youth, couples, women and families.

In the mid eighties, a centrally located environmental compost toilet was added. A shower facility followed. And a 20 yearlong range plan for expansion has been developed and presented to the Forest Service that must approve all development.

Throughout the development of Luther Heights, a financial philosophy of "pay as you go" has prevailed. No excessive debts have been incurred.

The original purpose of proclaiming the gospel of Christ and strengthening the Christian faith of youth has been given highest priority. It is considered the foundation of the camp's success.

# *The Camps of Oregon & Washington*

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*It is unfortunate to report that camping in Oregon and Washington has fallen from its once illustrious past. Events have forced the closure of camps that were dear to the heart of many. There were at one time seven camps and a ship (and several governing organizations) in these two states that were related to the ALC. Today there are two.*

*A combination of factors contributed to this loss, including lack of funding, encroachment and the deliberate decision to keep one program over another. However, one should not underestimate the power of the programs these camps had during their lifetime. There are many testimonies to the impact that camps like Camp Colton in Oregon or Tollgate Luthercrest had on people. And in their prime, they offered everything from horseback riding to badminton.*

*The source material I used for the camps in Oregon and Washington currently lacks information about the sites that no longer exist, particularly Lutherland, Olympic Lutherhaven and Tollgate Luthercrest. I have relied on interviews with Jerry Manlove, former Executive Director of Camping for the ALC, Mr. Alan Rogstad, recent director at Lutherwood in Washington and Jim Liefeld, former Executive of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Oregon.*

*(Please note that the history I have obtained on Tollgate Luthercrest (Weston, Oregon) is contained in the previous section under the state of Idaho, since it eventually became part of the Inland Empire Lutheran Outdoor Ministry organization).*

## *The Camps of Oregon*

*Among the most complete histories located of all the camps in this volume is the booklet written by Hilma Anderson that tells the story of Camp Colton. The booklet is filled with memories and deep emotions. The copy was loaned to me by Rod Boriack, former assistant director for camping in the ELCA (and former employee at Camp Colton). He hoped it would help me write this shorter summary.*

*Among those whose lives were touched by Camp Colton is an arranger from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, who dedicated a beautiful piano arrangement titled "Children of the Light" in honor of her memory of Camp Colton. The words to the song are particularly appropriate for camping: "I want to be a child of the light, I want to be like Jesus."*

### **Camp Colton, Colton, Oregon**

Camp Colton was one of the earliest Lutheran camps to be established. In 1927, the Carlsborg Lutheran Church (known as the "Colton church") was without a pastor. Fortunately, a young medical student named Regner Kullberg arrived on the scene. He had worked in the western states and noticing the value of children's camping he had seen, agreed to serve as a lay pastor during the interim period that Carlsborg was without clergy.

One of his first obligations was to assist in planning the Luther League District Convention that had been previously scheduled to take place in Colton. A large crowd was expected, as the primary speaker was Dr. Sebelius of Rock Island. Also, a young man from India was to be there for a day. This had been organized by Pastor E.

Sundeen, the previous pastor who had recently moved to Powell Valley (now Gresham, OR).

Mr. Kullberg conceived the idea of holding the 1927 convention in the beautiful forests that surrounded Colton. These lands had reminded him of youth camps he had witnessed in other parts of the west. The date selected was August, and the weather would be warm with the woods cool and inviting.

He had Ingemar and Vincent Hill explored an area across the road from Canyon Creek Garage and finding a likely spot, cleared the brush and arranged a rustic altar and organ platform. Mr. Kullberg drew upon the musical interests of the youth attending and designed a well-rounded program. This first gathering was such a success that the group decided to meet their

again the next year and approved a plan for a week long Bible Institute to be held right after the Luther League Convention. A vague glimpse of future Camp Colton could be seen in these steps.

Living in Colton, Miss Hilma Olson had established a reputation as a generous spirited woman. She had moved from Stanton, Iowa, in order to be happy in the far west. She had purchased 30 acres of land in Colton, thanks to her friendship with a college friend, Anna Hult Renhard, whose husband was a leader of a Carlsborg Colonization company. Her land was found to have tall trees, ferns, and two tumbling creeks.

Young people liked her and she opened her home to the youth who enjoyed her laugh and wisdom. She watched with great interest the young people who gathered at the Canyon Creek Cathedral (as the Forest Chapel was now known). In November of 1929, Hilma Olson discussed the idea of donating part of her land to the church youth for a permanent home. Pastor Sakrison arranged for a trip to Oregon City where she formally deeded over nine acres to the Augustana Luther League of the Portland District.

Pastor Sakrison told the youth attending a rally in Portland,

*"We have a new home now," "given by Hilma Olson. A natural park it is...two clear, cool mountain streams meet almost in the center of it, one merrily leaping over a little fall just as it joins hands with the others."*

The camp took shape through the help of many local volunteers. During the first summer, a girls' cabin was built for 15 girls. But since the older women had trouble sleeping in tents, the girls had to give it up. Land was smoothed for tent villages. Homes in Colton were signed up for visitors and guests.

In the early thirties, the camp saw much development as trails, camping areas, and footbridges over the streams were built. Small cabins were built. Many people drove from throughout the west to see the new camp and enjoy its program. Guest speakers came from places as far as Wisconsin and California. Looking for inexpensive vacations (the camp was free to all), people came to donate their skills and talents to help the young Bible Institutes that were held on the grounds.

A new day was dawning in terms of unification of Lutheran camping interests. In 1933, representatives of a number of Lutheran bodies met in the Colton parsonage to discuss working together. Cooperation seemed necessary and natural. As a result of this positive discussion, the following Lutheran bodies began to work together in the "Colton Institute" as it was being called: American Lutherans, Norwegian Lutherans, Free Church, United Danish Lutherans, and the Augustana Lutherans.

That year the primary project was to build a swimming pool - by

hand! Hundreds of rocks, roots, logs, and debris were removed before the pit could be dug. Horse drawn fresnos were used along with mules, hand picks, shovels, and hands. A trench from Bee Creek brought cold water into the 125 X 90 foot pool.

During the Great Depression, when work was hard to find, Rev. Sakrison applied for a W. P. A. Labor contract. The request was granted and the government paid \$1000 in wages for a fence, park entrance, two car bridges, and a diversion dam.

In 1935 a dining hall was built (previously, meals had been served in the church basement at a modest cost to guests). During the end of this decade, many camp traditions were developed, such as the annual Pillow Fight winners. Attendance during the weeks averaged about 65 campers.

In the forties, money was tight and laborers few. Rationing during WWII had an effect on what could be accomplished. Many workers were gathering lumber for the war effort. Still camping continued at Colton. Land was purchased thanks to a mortgage taken out by the Colton congregation. And the women of the Ladies Aid continued to make

improvements to the camp kitchens and dining hall.

Several clergymen would lead camp programs and supervise swimming in the pool or dipping in the creeks that ran through the property. The program was similar from year to year: morning devotion, followed by Bible Study, a panel discussion, and a Bible lecture after dinner. Outdoor sporting games were important with baseball, hiking, tennis, badminton, and swimming.

The camping programs at Colton became even more important when the war ended. The early fifties were exciting with many church leaders volunteering for teaching the youth who attended camp. Many of the early improvements were being updated, too. Of special interest is the fact that over the years, Sunday worship in the park has always been part of the Colton story. Local support and worship leadership has been an essential element of this outdoor ministry.

Hilma Anderson wrote a full history of Camp Colton in 1961. It was commissioned by the History Committee and published by the Camp Colton Development Council and is the basis of this early history.

## ***Camp Fridland Hoodland, Oregon***

In the late sixties, shortly before the creation of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Oregon, members of the

former American Lutheran Church purchased a piece of property on Mt. Hood called Camp Fridland. The

camp was developed with a simple A frame cabin, some pit toilets and a few camping sites.

Local congregations normally led the camp program. Churches used the

site for Sunday morning worship and weekend camping.

The camp became a part of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Oregon upon its formation.

## ***Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Oregon Portland, Oregon***

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Oregon was formed in the late sixties. It was created as a joint, comprehensive camping venture of the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and Missouri Synod Lutherans. From the beginning its Board of Directors was pan Lutheran. Its first Executive Director was Pastor Frank Bocker.

Camp Colton and Camp Fridland became camps that were owned by LOM after it was formed. In addition, a gift of 40 acres of land on the Clackamas River near Barton, OR, was donated to the organization and called the Cedars.

Following the departure of Frank Bocker, Jerry Olstad became the Executive Director of LOMO in 1976. Mr. Rod Boriack was hired to serve as Program Director. Another camp, Lutherwood (located west of Eugene by Junction City) became involved in LOM at this time but its ownership was never transferred.

During this period, many efforts were made to make improvements to the aging facilities of the camps now owned by LOM. At the same time,

Olstad and Boriack launched a new program outreach of LOM in the form of traveling Day Camps. Through Day Camps, numerous congregations accepted teams of counselors to run camp programs in their local community. This was recognized as a pioneer approach to serving congregations that soon became a model for camping throughout the country.

When Olstad accepted a call to serve as Executive Director of Camps, Retreats, and Outdoor Ministries for the American Lutheran Church, Pastor Jim Liefeld accepted the position of Executive Director of LOM. The immediate challenge that Liefeld faced was financial. The cost of maintaining the camps and the limited amount of congregational support was catching up with Lutheran Outdoor Ministries.

Because of the age of many of the camping facilities owned by Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Oregon, LOMO began to face serious challenges with site redevelopment and renewal. A feasibility study was conducted of the camps owned by LOM, and among the participants of



the study team was Paul Fjare, a noted camp designer and landscape architect.

Two major recommendations came from the report offered by the study members. First, it was recommended that the financial resources needed to repair and operate Camp Colton were more than what could adequately be expected from member congregations and participants. The second recommendation was that since there were so many outdoor centers available in Oregon that could be rented and used by Lutherans, a new approach to camping could be reasonably developed. That approach was to sell Camp Colton and use the resources from the sale to develop camping programs using rented sites and locations in many different parts of the state.

When these recommendations were presented, they resulted in both acceptance and great anger. The local Lutheran congregation that had been instrumental in establishing Camp Colton subsequently hired an attorney to sue for the return of the camp so that it would not be sold. Meanwhile, the Board of Directors of LOM felt that they could not release the camp to the church and still be considered legally prudent as required of their positions on the Board and because they felt the new model for camping truly served Lutherans more effectively.

The litigation became more sensitive when the Lutheran Church in America filed an additional suit against

LOM to prevent the sale. The Board of Directors felt that because the responsibilities for leadership included the rule to be prudent and responsible for the total assets of the corporation, they had no choice but to further fight the suits.

During the controversy, the financial resources of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries dwindled. The lack of gifts during this period and fewer fees for programs led the Board of Directors to sell Camp Fridland in order to continue the efforts of LOM. It was hoped that the net from the sale would secure LOM during the litigation years and enable some new programmatic steps. However, the sale to new owners resulted in the immediate cut of a magnificent fir forest and this made many people who had a personal history with the camp to feel frustrated and alienated.

In the process of litigation over Camp Colton, the Board of Directors finally secured approval to sell Camp Colton. Those who invested in the camp turned it into an Artist's Colony for glass workers. Pastor Jim Liefeld resigned in 1985 in order to accept a call to a congregation. The sale left LOM with one camp - the Cedars.

By this time the Cedars needed major work. Located in a damp area, there was much rot and structural damage to repair. It became obvious to the Board of Directors that it could not raise the funds necessary for renewal of the property and so the Cedars was sold to Concordia University in

Portland. The Board of Directors finally voted Lutheran Outdoor

Ministries out of business in 1987 or 1988.

### ***Lutherwood Junction City, Oregon***

Lutherwood was located near Junction City, OR, and was owned by 80 congregations affiliate with the Lutheran Church in America and The American Lutheran Church. The location, west of Eugene, was easily accessible to many church leaders and their groups and the camp was operated in the summer season to serve youth.

Lutherwood became involved with Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Oregon as a partner without giving its ownership over to the organization. Instead, it allowed its facilities to be managed and programmed by staff from LOM while providing for its own maintenance and improvements. Thus when LOM ended its ministry, Lutherwood was able to continue to serve congregations in Oregon.

## *Camping in Washington*

*One of the grand programs related to camping in the ALC was the Ship Christian, operating out of Anacortes, WA. Featured in many national articles by the Lutheran Standard, the ship caught the imaginations of thousands of people across the country.*

*Readers may also question why Holden Village, Chelan, WA, is not included in this history. Holden Village stands in a class by itself. During the time of the ALC, Holden chose not to be listed or considered a "camp." As a community, with its wide pan Lutheran base, Holden Village did not offer "camping programs" but high quality programs of adult education for its diverse community of adults and families. In the 1967 book published by Bible Camp Association of the ALC titled, Camping in the American Lutheran Church, 1967, no mention of Holden is recorded in its pages.*

### **Camp Lutherwood Bellingham, Washington**

Rev. Thomas Allport can be credited with initiating the effort to develop a camp in the Bellingham area of northwest Washington State. In 1946, Allport began looking for a place to take children and youth on outings and discovered Captain Alexander Roy's fishing resort on Lake Samish, 8 miles south of Bellingham.

Rev. Allport, then pastor at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Bellingham, reported to the United Lutheran Church's Northern Conference of the Pacific Synod that Captain Roy was willing to consider a sale of his property for a Bible Camp. The synod approved but suggested that other Lutheran churches in the area be invited to join in the effort.

The land upon which the camp would be developed consisted of 45.6

acres, 1500 feet of shoreline, a five-room house, seven cabins, a tent house, barn and chicken coop. There were also swimming facilities, ten rowboats and a large playing field available on the property. The price was set at \$22,500.

An invitation for pastors to meet to discuss the development of a camp was issued. On October 28, 1946, steps were taken to form the Lutheran Camp Associates, Inc., a non-profit corporation to operate for the religious training and instruction of youth and to strengthen their moral and physical well being. Two of the men who incorporated the camp were T.B. "Tut" Asmundson, a local attorney, and Pastor Allport.

On March 19, 1947, people who invested or donated \$100 to purchase the camp property voted to elect

trustees. Church bodies that were represented at this early date were the United Lutheran Church in America, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Augustana Lutheran Church, and the American Lutheran Church. Early officers included Rev. Phil Warmanen (Augustana), of Sedro Woolley as President; Rev. Allport (ULCA) as Vice President, Rev. Edwin Soiland (ELC) as Secretary and Rev. Edwin Bracher (ULCA) as treasurer.

Unable to gain enough funds for the purchase of the camp, the organization leased the camp for a year with an option to purchase. By January of 1948, \$10,000 was raised and a down payment was made. Captain Roy had received two additional offers for more money but Roy was sympathetic to the effort and made many contributions to the new organization. Certificates of interest were issued for about \$15,000 and enough funds secured to complete the transaction.

In 1947 and 1948 a large dining hall was constructed with labor donated and supervised by Pastors Soiland and Warmanen. A water system was purchased from the War Assets Administration at a reduced price. Andrew Bruland was hired as caretaker in the fall of 1947 and the house was remodeled for his use.

The first camping season ran from the last two weeks of June through the last week of August in 1948. The Lutherans involved used five of the ten weeks and leased the facilities to other denominations for the

rest of the summer season. Several weekend youth activities were also held at the camp.

Because of the success of the new camp, several improvements were studied. Surveys of needs were also looked at in the development plan. A modern stone and cement rest room building was constructed at a cost of \$3000. Better drainage to the site was developed and the recreation grounds were reseeded. A store was built near the camp entrance with an office area for registration.

By the early fifties, over 1000 people used the camp facilities and the Board of Directors began to plan for a new chapel. By the fall of 1953, sufficient funds were collected to finish the cement foundations and build the walls and roof structure. Carelton Tollefson of Spokane donated the chapel plans and a Seattle architect furnished the electrical plan. It is estimated that the cost of the chapel did not exceed \$10,000.

In 1957 the Brotherhoods of Burlington and Bow completed the tennis courts and an outdoor kitchen was built. And in the fall of 1958, an additional 20 acres was purchased for \$1000 and 40 acres was purchased for \$2000. In 1959 a staff cabin was begun with work completed by men from Edison and Burlington.

In 1961, the Board of Directors authorized a fund raising campaign and more than \$50,000 was given or pledged over a five year period. Professor Roger Larsen of Washington

State University completed a study and projection of facility needs so the development program could continue. A girl's lavatory was completed first, and in 1962, five new cabins were completed and the old cabins moved from the waterfront.

In 1963, the caretaker's house was moved and the state gave the camp permission to use 200 acres of land located above the camp for trail hikes into a beautiful lake. General improvements to the dock and swim area were completed in 1965. Many small but important improvements took place during the late sixties, including a bridge, the relocation of a nurse's cabin and a new drain field. Drainage of the camp property has always been a constant concern.

Lutherwood raised funds for many of its projects by developing a unique plan that allowed people to provide money to the camp while building personal estates. The camp would, in turn, pay annual insurance premiums to replace the donated funds in the person's estate. By working with the Farmers New World Life Insurance Company and Everman Organization, \$54,682.46 was raised. Instead of paying interest on the amount, the camp paid the insurance premiums.

By 1966, some camp leaders became concerned about the lower number of camp registrations. In 1967,

the Tri-Conference (Tri-C) was formed and Buzz Kahn was called to be the Director of Camping Ministries.

Lutherland, near Tacoma and Lutherhaven near Bremerton began to work with Lutherwood to develop more quality program opportunities. Up to this point, local pastors led camping at Lutherwood and most other programs were rentals.

Through the attempts of Tri-C, more joint program efforts were undertaken. Attention was given to staff training and the development of creative program opportunities.

Mike and Linda Waller directed Lutherwood's efforts in the early eighties and were followed by Bob and Karen Edwards. During these years Lutherwood continued its renewed programs during the summer season. Its retreat ministry, using six cabins with wood fired heat, also became very popular. Yet, the facilities began to show their age. New and stringent government regulations made the Board and its leaders aware of the need for higher quality construction and attention to operating details.

Nonetheless, Lutherwood continued to offer a full season of program opportunities and retreat activities. When the ELCA was formed in 1987, Lutherwood entered onto the roster of camps affiliated with the new church.

## ***Lutherland Tacoma, Washington***

Lutherland was an inter synodical camp located midway between Tacoma and Seattle that offered summer youth camping and winter retreat programs to youth, families and adults. The 60-acre site had sufficient facilities to house large numbers of campers. In 1966, Lutherland reported camper use of 3,421 youth and adults, making it one of the most active camps in the ALC during the year.

### ***Olympic Lutherhaven Bremerton, Washington***

Eight ALC congregations and one Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod congregation owned and developed Olympic Lutherhaven, located on the beautiful Olympic peninsula west of Bremerton, WA. The 40-acre site provided opportunities for youth and held a special focus on designing programs attractive to Senior High youth.

### ***Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Association (LOMA) Anacortes, Washington***

The primary predecessor organization of Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Association was the Tri-C Camping Association established in the mid sixties. Buzz Kahn served as director of this organization that offered camping programs for Lutherans to enjoy but owned no

In 1967, Lutherland became part of the Tri – C organization, a coordinating ministry organization owned by the three conferences that linked their camps into a single organization. In 1982, Lutherland was sold and the proceeds used to pay off the rising debt of the organization and purchase the retreat center located near Issaquah, Washington, called the LOMA Center for Renewal.

In 1967, Olympic Lutherhaven became part of the Tri – C organization, a coordinating ministry organization owned by the three conferences that linked their camps into a single organization. In 1985, following a period of financial distress, Lutheran Outdoor Ministries returned Lutherhaven to its original owners.

property.

Kahn found growing enthusiasm for a central organization to provide camping programs in the many settings that were available in this beautiful area.

The camping program in these days managed to develop a ministry on

board the Ship Christian. Sailing the waters of Puget Sound, the ship offered retreats on board and camping on island sanctuaries in the beautiful waters of the sound. It operated out of Anacortes, Washington.

The unique and one of a kind program was costly. Not only was there substantial investment in the ship, but also regular maintenance and improvements and the limited length of season created great financial stresses on the organization.

Pastor Will Bigottt was called to serve as pastor and director of Tri-C in 1972. Under his leadership, the variety of programs and sites that served Lutherans was pulled together into a unified ministry open to all.

Established in 1975, Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Association (LOMA) created a dedicated organization that offered a unified approach to Lutheran outdoor ministry programs in the Pacific Northwest.

Pastor Wayne Jarvis was called to head LOMA in 1977. By this time LOMA's indebtedness had reached over \$150,000. Some land owned by LOMA was sold to offset the debt, but it was not enough. The all-important relationships that had been created to form LOMA began to suffer. Despite a year in which the number of campers was at an all time high, 1977 was a year of loss for LOMA. The ship's skipper resigned. The organization slowed its progress in order to contemplate its future.

Yet enthusiasm for a LOMA

vision remained. Board members recognized the importance of outdoor ministry goals. A report to their members said,

*"...outdoor ministry of the church has come to play an increasingly important role. The loneliness of crowds of busy people, preoccupied people, the numbing effect of unbroken routines, and the pressures of a hurry-up-and-wait mentality are shattered in the places and settings of the outdoor ministry."*

Outdoor ministry was not simply a retreat from the world, but a strategic program that enabled guests to regroup and strengthen their spiritual resources. The task ahead for the LOMA board was not an easy one.

In 1979, Pastor Ron Nielson joined the organization as Executive Director.

LOMA continued to offer camping programs, but camper participation continued to decline and without dollars for improvements, facilities were deteriorating while operating costs increased. With a heavy debt and fewer gift dollars to work with, the congregational ownership of LOMA made the painful decision to sell Camp Lutherland in 1982. With the sale of the camp the organization paid its indebtedness and purchased what today is the LOMA Center for Renewal, an adult retreat facility 20 minutes from Seattle.

Pastor Don Taylor was called to be the skipper and director of the Ship Christian, moored in Anacortes, and

Pastor Ray K. Lester became the director of the retreat center. With Ray providing retreat leadership, Don was busy preparing the ship for a major overhaul and extension. Camping was up, and both the ship and the center were being used. The future at campsites looked bright based upon statistical data.

But once again, summer camping declined and failed to reach predicted levels, LOMA's corporation made another difficult move. LOMA's active involvement in summer camping was terminated in 1985. Operations and properties were turned back to congregational roots for summer site camping, and while ongoing interest in camping was pledged by the struggling corporation, no financial assistance could be made. The ownership and operation of the retreat center and ship was kept and would become the sole focus of LOMA.

Pastor Taylor continued to lead the ship ministry. Pastor Lester resigned from his position at the

### ***LOMA Center for Renewal Issaquia, Washington***

The LOMA Center for Renewal is a retreat center that bordered the Lutheran Bible Institute of Seattle. The center was purchased with the proceeds from the sale of Lutherland in 1982.

The facility can accommodate a wide variety of groups and ages. Adults have found the center to be a

LOMA center in 1985. Executive Ron Nielsen had moved earlier. LOMA decided against hiring another Executive Director.

The ship continued its ministry by providing summer youth camping weeks and activities during other sailing months. On board, the program included study, worship, and plenty of discussion. Developing financial resources continued to be a challenge, but the Board felt the unique ministry was important to continue.

The Ship Christian eventually needed repairs and regular mandated maintenance that proved too costly. The ship was eventually sold but has continued its use as a mission ship in the Alaskan islands.

The LOMA center, located near Issaquia, WA, continued to offer adult retreat programs and was open to all denominations. Personal retreat programs and a ministry providing support to ex-offenders were also established as part of its program of outreach.

remarkable facility for planning seminars, educational endeavors and group building. Its access to LBI has allowed groups to take advantage of both for personal growth and renewal.

The retreat center related to the ALC for only five years and then became part of the ELCA.



# *Sources and Reference Material*

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The basic substance of this historical volume was taken from the written vignettes provided by approximately 40% of the camps of the former American Lutheran Church. These sketches were provided by the Executive Directors or interested individuals associated with the camps included in this volume. In many other cases, I have used personal or phone interviews to obtain information. I have been, of course, dependent upon these people for their willingness to share their memories with me so they might be preserved.

Below is a listing of many of the sources and/or reference material I used in gathering the short histories of this book. Additional material is no doubt available from many people who have been overlooked.

## ***People who assisted***

I wish to thank many people who have assisted in this effort. Jerry Manlove and Paul A. Hanson (now deceased) have been true partners in the promotion of this volume, believing that the stories of those who began the camps of the ALC were worth recording in an orderly fashion. I am thankful for the many times they consulted with me and read drafts of the material that is part of this book.

Jerry and Paul introduced me to many camping leaders that I did not

know. Paul Ofstedal shared memories of his father's camping days in North Dakota.

I express appreciation to Jerry Olstad, former Executive Director of Outdoor Ministries in both The American Lutheran Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for the time we spent together. He provided advice and offered corrections that have been most helpful.

Dozens of Executive Directors and Camp Directors deserve thanks for preparing summaries of their camp histories, checking dates, spelling of names and providing information in logical format. I am thankful to Mark Gardner who began this effort and collected histories of many of the camps and put them into summary format. In many cases, the histories in this book are identical to those provided by Mark. In several, I was able to expand the histories with interviews or quotations from records in my possession.

Many directors of these camps have responded to calls to check on details. Several others sent excellent histories to summarize in this volume.

## **Camping in Minnesota**

The Minnesota News, an insert to the *Lutheran Standard* provided several articles about the camps in

Minnesota, including Wilderness Canoe Base, Camp Onomia and others.

Original material was provided by Mark Gardner for Shetek Lutheran Bible Camp, revised by conversations with Jon Hoyme, Executive Director of Shetek.

Material for Green Lake Bible Camp includes interviews with Paul A. Hanson, written history from Green Lake Bible Camp, Dean Larsen, and many personal memories recorded by people who have been involved in the development of the camp. I thank Dave Eliassen for offering advice on what to include from these sources.

The Mt. Carmel story taken from a copy of the 1938 history of the camp called "Mt Carmel" by Dr. Samuel Miller, President of Lutheran Bible Institute, Minneapolis, MN.

Camp Knutson's history was recorded on a letter to Mark Gardner.

Pathways Camping Ministries has graciously provided written histories of all its camps and in addition, there is a tape recording of Dr. Frederick Schoitz, founder of Camp Emmaus.

I thank Ron Nielsen for his historical work on Luther Crest called "Fifty Years of Fact, Folk Lore, and Fiction." It is an excellent history of the camp.

The American Lutheran Memorial Camp has complete written histories and a chronology of the camp highlights, thanks to Rev. Bill Vogel, now deceased. I developed the history of Logos from personal memories and

involvement with the river canoe base on the St. Croix River.

Wilderness Canoe Base has many sources, including newspaper articles, written history, and a personal letter from Jerry Manlove to Paul Hanson regarding his experiences with Wilderness. Rev. Hamm Muus was instrumental in the development of many written materials to assist other directors and can be credited with developing many camping leaders in the church.

Crossroads Ministry has little in written historical materials but a filmstrip of its ministry has been preserved. I wrote the history based upon my involvement with Crossroads in its early days.

Thanks to Alana Butler for submitting a very fine written history of Camp Amnicon dated 1/14/1995 for inclusion in this booklet.

## **Camping in Wisconsin**

Mark Gardner provided Lutherdale's history.

Camp Indian Sands history is the result of an interview with Pastor Jeff Barrow, former director of the camp.

Imago Dei Ministries and its camp is the result of research I did into its history while serving as Executive Director of the organization. There are many sources, written materials, and brochures I used in its development.

Mark Gardner provided Luther Park's history.

Pastor Ted Berkland provided a chronological summary of the history of Luther Point.

Lake Wapogasset has a well-developed history found in its booklet "*A Common Vision*."

Mark Gardner provided Bethel Horizon's history.

Written historical materials were provided by Sugar Creek, dated 1987.

### Camping in Illinois

I have in my possession a few copies of a newsletter called *Echoes* that were developed by the Chicago Circuit for their camping program. They are very complete and filled with colorful stories, songs, and poems.

Mark Gardner provided Green Wing's history.

### Camping in Iowa

Okoboji Bible Camp has a complete *Chronological History* up to 1988 and it was used to develop their story.

Mark Gardner provided Riverside and Ewalu's history. However, Ewalu provided a number of remembrances from written by its early pioneers. Among these people are Al & Ethel Zwanzigar, Kathy Hallon, Dennis Statrud, Elmer Luloff, Henry Mathre, Christine Faust, George Strum, and Erwin and Bernard Philipp. I have a personal preference for the stories told by those who were instrumental in establishing our camps.

### Camping in the Dakotas

The Badlands history is a result of a phone interview with their Executive Director Lowell Krogstad.

Metigoshe Ministries, Red Willow Bible Camp, and St. Olaf Retreat all had their histories provided by Mark Gardner. However, there are many references to these places in church publications.

Park River has perhaps the best written history of all the camps in this book. Their story is found in the book written by Darlene Hendrickson called "*We Shall Gather at the River...*" I am pleased to have been given a copy.

Camp of the Cross provided me with a variety of written material including a copy of their initial development booklet and Dedication Booklet. I wish to thank Jim Silrum for his assistance and conversation.

Arden Norum provided the history of Camp Shalom.

I am indebted to the many written histories of the camps of South Dakota for their story. Their anniversary booklets are consistent and filled with excellent information. "*A Time to Remember*" records the history of Outlaw Ranch and Atlantic Mountain Ranch. NeSoDak has its own history recorded in its anniversary book. I thank both Dave Brunkow and Paul Leslie, former directors of Lutherans Outdoors of South Dakota for their comment and assistance. Ray Engh also illuminated the importance of the first Board of Directors of Lutherans Outdoors and noted, properly, that its

lay and clergy Board members were the driving factor in creating this fine organization.

### **Camping in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and North Carolina**

Mark Gardner provided much of this material as collected from the Ohio camping staff. A booklet called "Celebration" was written by Luther Memorial Camp for their Golden Anniversary and provided many more details for this volume.

I regret that I was able to find very limited information about Camp Agape. Jerry Manlove reviewed the history of Koinonia.

Web site information from Lutheridge / Lutherock Outdoor Ministries and archive information from ALC camping records enabled me to piece together a history of Lutherock in Boone, NC.

### **Camping in Nebraska and the Central States**

Mark Gardner provided basic information from his collection. As Executive Director of Sky Ranch, I had access to its archive information. ALC camping records provided limited information about the camps of Kansas.

### **Camping in Texas/Louisiana**

Basic information was provided by Mark Gardner for the Texas

camping program but personal phone conversations and follow up letters of review from Jonathan Reid were most helpful.

### **Camping in the Southwest**

A personal letter from John Mogren, Treasurer, helped define the history of Lutheran Camp Association of the Southwest, headquartered in Las Vegas. Mark Gardner had basic information about the camps in California but the supplemental material provided by Ms. Connie Wolfe was most helpful to the completion of this history.

### **Camping in Montana, Idaho, & the Pacific Northwest**

I had a great deal of fun reviewing historical material from Flathead Lake Bible Camp provided to me by the daughters of Rev. Amon Johnson, one of its founders. The boxes were kept for many years and included personal correspondence, invoices, and other memories. As a result their history is written to depict the story of its people.

Lutherhaven has provided us with an anniversary booklet from 1986.

The history of Camp Colton was drawn from a book provided to me by Rod Boriack, a former staff member in Oregon camping program. Credit to the author is recorded in their history.

Rev. Jim Liefeld, former director, provided the remaining history of the Lutheran Outdoor

Ministries of Oregon from his personal notes. Included were copies of camp histories dated from 1963 - 1981 and include information about Colton, Fridland and the Cedars.

Thanks to Alan Rogstad, Executive Director of Camp Lutherwood, for his help in tracking down the history of camping in Washington from 1946 - 1967 and for

supplementing it with new materials since that date. There were many camping ventures in Washington, including Olympic Lutherhaven, Lutherland, the ship Christian, and the LOMA Center. This history was complicated to write and hopefully further research will provide a better picture of camping in Washington.