

The Link to a Place Apart

 Lutheridge

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HOLY DISRUPTION

“My family had been attending Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, but not regularly and we weren’t super involved,” said Michael Gentes. Back in 2002, Good Shepherd in Seminole, FL had youth registered for a week of summer camp at Luther Springs, but one of the boys canceled late the Friday before they were supposed to leave. “It was too late for a refund,

so a volunteer at the church took a chance and called my mom the day before the group was to leave,” said Michael.

“Would Michael like to attend a week of summer camp for free,” she asked.

The very next day, as a 12-year-old, Michael loaded up in the bus with other children he didn’t really know and headed off to a place he had

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A reading from 2nd Timothy, the 1st Chapter:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 4 Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. 6 For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; 7 for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

Hey Camp Friends,

How to start a letter that needs to include so much information and gratitude? First, we miss you! As Paul shares in his letter to Timothy, we at NovusWay, remember you, our campers, counselors, guests, and donors in our prayers. We long to see you. On Friday, May 22, 2020, the leadership team and Board of Trustees of NovusWay announced that all scheduled summer camp programming for 2020 would be suspended for the health and safety of campers, staff, and guests in light of the risks posed by COVID-19.

The affirmation we received for the difficult decision we had to make and the love and support our camp community poured out on us and on each other in the days that followed was indeed camp at its best. For this, we THANK YOU!

Thank you for the kind emails and encouraging social media posts. Thank you to those of you who were able to generously gift your paid registration fees to the ministry. Thank you to those of you who immediately opened your hearts and made a gift to the ministry. Thank you all for being a spark that will keep the fire of camp burning bright!

We have been asked what this decision means for the future of camp. In answer, the financial loss to the ministry is significant. We were not given a spirit of cowardice, but rather one of power, love, and self-discipline. Therefore, we are officially launching the *Light the Fire – Summer Camp 2021 Appeal to raise \$1.8 million* to offset the loss of revenue needed to ensure the strength of camp and maintain our excellence. You will hear more about this in July, but because the response to the announcement on May 22nd was so generous and positive, we have decided that all gifts given on or following that day will count toward the appeal.

We have also been asked, “what can I do to help?” This is a question of love and concern for camp and again, we are grateful. You can have the greatest positive impact on camp by starting a monthly gift to the ministry. It is like subscribing to camp – the way you would a magazine, Netflix, Hulu, or Stitch Fix to name a few. Including camp in your monthly automatic giving positions the ministry for strength. Any amount you can give adds up to sustainability when our community comes together. As an example, Netflix costs between \$9-\$20 a month, but adds up to an annual gift of \$108-\$240 a year. Similiar to how congregations plan from member tithes, camp can better plan when we know what giving will look like for the next 12 months.



To help, we have made the process simple for you. Visit www.novusway.org and click the green donate button. There you can select “monthly donation or subscription giving” under the Type of Donation section. You may now use a checking account, savings account, or credit card that will be auto drafted each month on the date you make your first gift. These can be paused at anytime by calling our office. Our combined \$1.8 million goal for the *Light the Fire* appeal includes 400 new monthly giving subscriptions. You can best help camp during this time by being one of these generous 400 people.

These places apart are amazing and life-giving because of the amazing people who love and support them. We long to see you so that we may all be filled with joy and so that these places may once again be filled with joy. Until then, we can *Light the Fire* within us and these ministries. Continue to share your camp stories. Continue to be a Spark!

In Christ's Love,

Boyd W. Harris, IV
Executive Director-CEO

Mitzie Schafer, Deacon
Vice President for Development

[Start a Monthly Gift Today](#)

never been.

“After that week, I was gung-ho about camp and church,” said Michael. He spent four more years as a camper and summers 2007-2011 on summer staff. “Looking back, if that volunteer had not had the courage to ask, my life would be completely different,” he reflected. “I often think about the power of asking and try to apply that to my everyday life and work now.”

While on staff, Michael met his wife Meghan. Meghan had never been a camper, but her youth director, Kristen at Living Lord Lutheran Church in Lakewood Ranch, FL, encouraged her to try working on staff after high school.

“It was a risk to head off alone to a new place,” said Meghan. “One of the ways camp has changed my life is by showing me that the risks are often worth it. You grow when you risk venturing into a place that isn’t comfortable.” Today, Meghan serves as a program director for a camp in Colorado. “Camp was a safe space for a number of reasons, but especially for taking risks and growing. After serving on staff at Luther Springs, I am able to create that safety for my campers today.” Meghan strives in her current role to create spaces that are open and accepting; spaces where adults listen so campers feel heard and understood - all skills she learned to do during her three years on summer camp staff at Luther Springs. “When a place creates feelings of safety for you, you want to return to it. Camp is a place set apart to do that.”

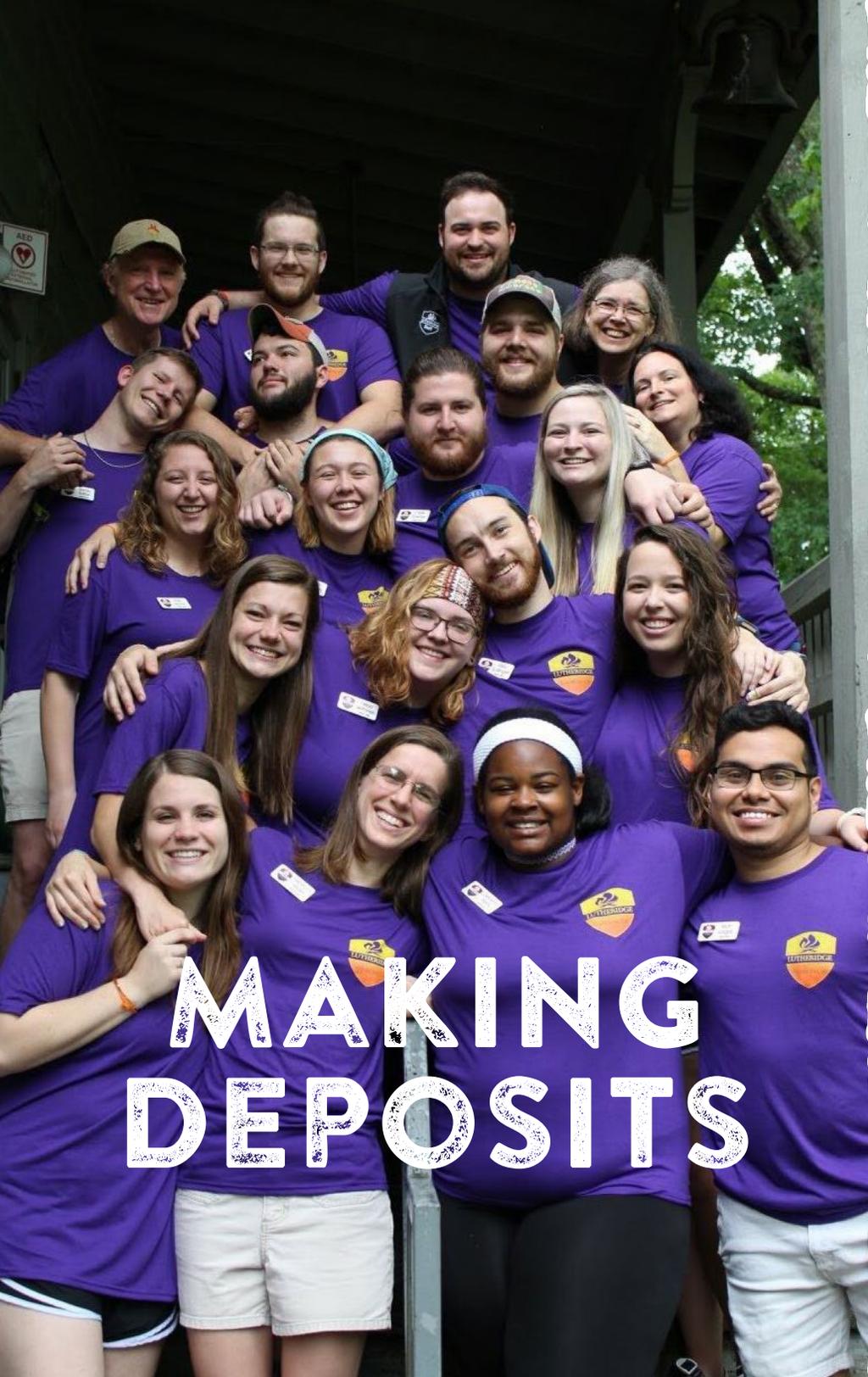
Part of feeling safe is also feeling,

“at home,” said Michael. Ms. Sarah Anderson has been on year-round staff at Luther Springs since 2005. “She would always say to us, ‘this is your home,’ and gave us ownership to belong and contribute,” said Michael. “Being 12, and being told, ‘this is your place, your home,’ is Christian hospitality. I felt included and empowered.”

Like so many others, Michael and Meghan were sad to hear that summer camp programming was suspended for summer 2020. “Camp is a positive disruption,” said Meghan. “Camp takes someone out of their day-to-day and places them in a safe home for a week, with new friends, new experiences and new ways to challenge their faith. And as NovusWay responsibly responds to COVID-19 this summer, we hope campers and families seek out positive disruptions that challenge all to grow in their faith and community. We hope they find ways to stay connected to camp.”

Michael and Meghan are serving as one of our volunteer site chairs for the new Summer Camp Alumni Network. “It is our hope that the alumni network will be that same type of faith disruption,” said Meghan. “We want being a part of this group, telling camp stories, and supporting the ministry to be a reminder of that faith disruption. We want it to resonate and ground our alumni, to re-center them and us in our faith practices. We want connection to the group and camp to keep us linked up until we can gather for that disruption again.”





MAKING DEPOSITS

Emily Nageotte graduated from Appalachian State University last year and started her first year as a teacher in August of 2019. “I am a 4th grade teacher now and I love my students,” she shared.

“I brought camp into my classroom in any way I could,” said Emily. “My students know all the camp porch songs and love singing them.” Emily started out the year working to bring creativity into her classroom. It was her goal to make school as special as camp. “I wanted school to be fun for them.” She was surprised and encouraged when seasoned colleagues popped their heads in the classroom to ask, “what is going on in here?” The camp songs brought joy to everyone.

Her 4th graders also know all the camp games like *Admiral's Coming*, the *Moose is Loose*, and *Riding a Donkey*, and love them as much as the songs.

While Emily felt she was starting her first year as a teacher off well with her classroom, she was struggling with one little girl. *Julie was behind in math and social skills. Emily tried separating her from the other children when there was an issue. The first couple weeks of school were hard. After a conversation with her principle, Emily was reminded of the *deposit and withdrawals* training she received during her three years as a counselor on summer staff.

“I wasn't making relationship deposits with Julie,” she realized. “I was asking for a lot of behavioral withdrawals from her though, and she didn't feel she was important to me. I

wasn't doing what I was taught to do at camp.” During summer staff training, counselors are taught hundreds of small and significant ways to make *deposits* into the lives of their campers. Praise, encouragement, listening and playing with them are a few examples. Asking a camper for a behavior or to try something new is seen as a *withdrawal*. Counselors learn that before they can make a withdrawal from the camper, they must make deposits – like a debit card.

Emily immediately adjusted her response to Julie and began making deposits into the relationship. She intentionally praised her for sharing her strengths. When Julie made strides in the tasks that were a struggle for her, Emily supported and encouraged her. Emily took the time to ask her about her life outside of school. Now, they have a strong relationship. “Camp gave me the tools I needed to turn that relationship around so I could be my best for Julie.”

Like so many, Emily was saddened to hear that scheduled summer camp programming for 2020 was suspended due to the health and safety risks posed by COVID-19.

“My life without camp would look so different,” she shared. “My life is filled with relationships from camp. Those are my strongest relationships.” In addition to the relationships formed at camp that support her daily, Emily believes that without camp she would not be as creative in her teaching skills. “I guess I was always creative but being on staff helped me believe I was creative and learn to use those

skills.”

“The biggest thing I learned from camp though was confidence. I learned confidence for praying outloud in a group. That always scared me when I was in youth group. Now I know my prayers don’t have to *sound* important; I can just talk to God, even outloud in a group of people.” She also learned leadership confidence.

Emily served two years as a counselor. Her third summer she applied to be on senior staff. “I didn’t make it though, and I was disappointed.” The program directors, Pastor Tim and Pastor Mary, told Emily she had developed a lot of skills in her first two summers, but they felt one more summer as a counselor would better hone those skills. “They were right,” Emily shared. “I had another summer with six cabins of campers I wouldn’t have gotten to know if I had been on senior staff. My third summer was different than my first two. I was a seasoned counselor able to use leadership skills

to encourage other new counselors I worked right alongside.”

After another summer as a counselor, building confidence and develop her leadership skills, Emily served on senior staff her fourth summer.

During social distancing, Emily is leaning on what she learned at camp in a new way. “One of the things I learned at camp is that connection is important. Whether that be connecting with people right in front of you or staying connected from afar. Camp is important to me because it is FAMILY! Camp helped me realize what kind of people I want to surround myself with. Camp brought me so many amazing friends and memories that I truly cherish. Camp is a place where you can totally be yourself and meet people who are doing the same. It is fun, silly, uplifting and life-changing.”

**Name changed to protect the child's confidentiality.*

FOR ALL THOSE *still to come*



“My camp story started in the 6th grade, after my family moved from Florida to Georgia. My parents wanted a camp with songs, crafts, the outdoors, hiking, swimming, and playing,” said Pastor Lauren Tilley Carlson.

“Oh, then you want Lutheridge,” her pastor replied.

Lauren’s first summer as a camper completely changed the trajectory of her life. After being a camper, she knew she wanted to be a counselor. Faith conversations with C3ARE leaders like Ranate Patrick and other staff like Joseph Bolick (now pastor), led her to participate in the ELCA’s Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program. That led

to conversations with camp friends and mentors about her sense of call to ministry, which led her to seminary. Lauren can trace her current call, her friendships and how she parents back to her first summer as a camper.

“At camp, people see you. You matter,” she shared. “That changes who you are and who you believe you can be.”

Lauren, like so many others, not only valued and appreciated this about her own camp experience, she continues to volunteer at camp to offer that same connection to others. Since her summers on camp staff she has served as the Family Camp adult Bible study leader along





Thank you Janet Aiken Photography for donating this photo.

with her husband, Pastor Paul. She was part of the original Kairos Confirmation Program planning committee, she helped plan more than 9 years of Wild Women's Retreats, and she now serves on the NovusWay Board of Trustees.

"I thought I knew all about camp but being on the board has increased my level of commitment," she said. "I really didn't understand the scope of what all four camps have to offer, but being on the board has given me a window into their impact. I realize now that the love I felt and feel for Lutheridge is felt by those who attend our other camps. I now see the giftedness that all of our sites have to offer, and I want to do everything I can to make sure that all of our camps are here and strong, not just for me and my family, but for those yet to come."

Earlier this year, Lauren, hosted her very first Facebook Birthday Fundraiser ever – for NovusWay Camp Ministries. "I've never done anything like this," she shared. "I was nervous, so I set my goal small because I didn't have any idea how people would respond." Lauren set her goal at \$250.

Lauren and Paul give generously to NovusWay with a monthly recurring gift. Her birthday fundraiser was her way to introduce others to NovusWay's four camp ministries.

"It is also a way for me to help keep the ministry strong. I had no idea what to expect from my birthday fundraiser, but I exceeded my goal

the first day." Lauren increased her goal from \$250 to \$500. She raised more than \$750 for NovusWay.

Lauren understands first hand, as a camper, counselor, pastor and now as a parent the sadness that a summer without camp means for so many. Her camp story and her generosity story are intertwined. Knowing the positive impact camp had on her own life, she is doing her part to ensure camp has the same impact on all those yet to come.

"When I think about all the children of our family campers (pictured on the front page), I see the future of camp, the future of the church and the future of our communities. That is something I feel proud to support."

Click [here](#) to join Lauren in supporting the future of our camps for those still to come.

Lauren Tilly Carlson and her husband Paul are both pastors at Calvary Lutheran in Morganton, NC.



NovusWay Ministries

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In an effort to be good stewards during this time, we are transitioning from a printed Link to a virtual Link. If you prefer a printed version, please contact Deacon Mitzie Schafer, Vice President for Development, at mschafer@novusway.org or 803-413-7857 to request a copy. We are happy to send that out to you.

Gifts by CHECK may be mailed to the address above. Contact Mitzie for help with stock transfers or planned gifts.