

The Link to a Place Apart

 **Lutheridge**

 **Lutherock**

 **Luther Springs**

 **Lutheranch**



HIGH FIVES

When Russell Hinson stood up to tell his congregation about the week of Lutheroad Day Camp they'd had at Living Saviour Lutheran Church in Charlotte, NC, he said, "I want to tell you how God has moved in this camp!"

What made the day camp at Living Saviour so memorable for Russell and so many others was the inclusion of children from local refugee families. Through a relationship with a relief agency working among refugees in the community, Living Saviour invited children from Ukrainian families to attend the one-week day camp at the church.

"On the first evening, we hosted a meal for the campers and their families," Russell says. "I noticed that the American kids and families sat together on one side of the room, and the Ukrainian kids and families sat together on the other. The Ukrainian families were a little uneasy because this was a new experience for them, and there were some language barriers. Still, everyone was very thankful for the opportunity to be there."

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A Message From INTERIM CO-CEOS



Greetings Camp Friends,

As we live into our third month serving as Intentional Interim Co-CEOs for NovusWay, we begin by saying, "Thank YOU!" Your notes, calls, and generous giving are a clear and certain reminder that this community is strong and passionate about camp. We have spoken to countless pastors, parents, and counselors from this past summer, and everyone lifted up why camp remains critical for children and young adults.

- Camp grows faith and teaches children and young adults they are loved by God.
- Camp expands faith circles.
- Camp develops leaders for our church and for the world.
- Camp provides holy rest for rostered leaders and God's people so they can recharge for daily life.
- Camp builds community - supportive, forgiving, nurturing, challenging, loving, fun, creative, dedicated community.

As you read through the stories in this quarter's LINK, we invite you to reflect on how camp changed you. How are you a different leader, parent, friend, and person because of your time at camp? How did your child or grandchild grow during their week or weeks of camp? How did they grow during a summer on staff? These powerful stories are witness to what God is up to in these holy places. Your generosity makes that possible.

Historically, camp has always been funded from three primary sources – summer camp registrations, retreat group rentals in the non-summer months, and the generosity of others. As we work to strengthen each of these sources in 2024, we are delighted to report that giving during November and December of 2023 was up significantly over the same time last year. YOU DID THAT! Thank you!

As we look to summer 2024, we are challenging ourselves, our staff, our pastors, and you. Think of 5 children in your life who would benefit from a week of camp, and encourage them to attend.

- Tell 5 children who haven't been to camp how awesome a week of summer camp will be!
- Share the camp website with the parents or give them a brochure so they can see all the different camp opportunities. www.novusway.org
- If they need help paying for a week of camp, encourage your church to help provide a scholarship or ask them to apply for a NovusWay scholarship.
- Check back with them to make sure they followed through with registering for camp.
- Find out which week they are going to camp and send them a postcard telling them you can't wait to hear about their week.

While we are charged with and committed to helping strengthen the ministry financially, we will not lose sight of why we do this. Children need camp and our staff have consistently and faithfully provided life-changing summer camp experiences. There is nothing else in the world that can do what camp does to grow leaders, build community, and form faith for children and young adults. Thank you for being part of this incredible ministry we all share.

With Gratitude,

Mike

Mitzie

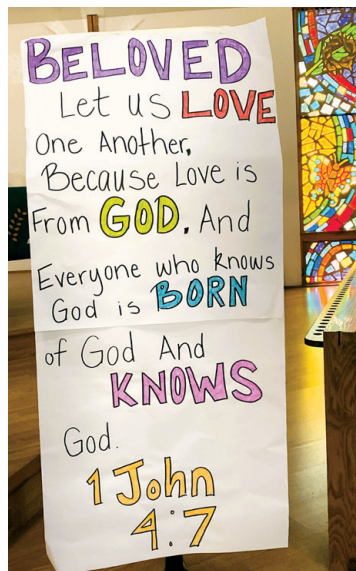
The diversity of the day camp group required some creativity by the camp staff. The Lutheroad counselors paired campers with a new buddy each day to get comfortable with others they did not know. Because singing songs in English was challenging for some of the children, music time included songs with more movement and fewer words. To ensure Ukrainian parents would know what was happening each day at camp, the camp staff used Google Translate to create take-home announcement pages in multiple languages.

“Every night, we referred back to our staff training,” says Lutheroad area director Grace Welch. “In training, we learned there are different kinds of at-risk campers who need extra love and support. The Ukrainian children needed extra love and support. But because this week was so unique, we also realized all the campers needed extra love.” The love and creative leadership of the camp staff had a tremendous impact on the campers. “As the week progressed, the campers didn’t stay segregated,” remembers Grace. “By Friday, they were all friends, and the language barrier had given way to smiles and high-fives!”

“One camper was so terrified on the first day,” Russell remembers. “Halfway through the week, his mother dropped him off early, and he was playing ball with a counselor. The mother came up to the check-in desk and said, ‘He hasn’t been able to go out and play for the last year because of the war. This is the first time he’s played with anyone.’”

The week was transformational for everyone, not only the staff and campers, but also for Living Saviour. “It was a week filled with so many God moments,” Russell declares, “The Spirit of God was in this camp.”

Your generosity to NovusWay helps us train counselors with the skills necessary to bring creativity and leadership into diverse settings. These skills transform children and church communities through Lutheroad Day Camps and go with these amazing young adults into their future lives and careers. Thank you for helping us form faith, build community, and develop strong leaders.



LEAP

Rashard Braboy served as a counselor at Luther Springs in the summer of 2017 and 2018. For Rashard, getting there was a leap of faith.

Rashard’s journey began when a friend told him she was going to be working at a camp in Florida for the summer. A North Carolina native, Rashard had never been to a church camp and had never been away from home for such a long time. But when his friend asked Rashard if he’d like to come be a counselor too, he took the leap.



“It was such a new experience for me,” says Rashard. “I had a lot of firsts that summer. First time tubing and zip lining and snorkeling, but also first time being in charge of a group of kids or leading a bible study.” As a part of his training, Rashard learned a lot about how to lead and how to work with children of all ages. “I was nervous and wasn’t sure how good I would be as a counselor,” Rashard remembers. “But my training prepared me well for campers and I found it was natural to be the counselor I was trained to be.”

The two summers Rashard spent on staff at Luther Springs stirred up a passion for working with children he hadn’t had before. “It changed my perspective on ministry,” he shares. “I felt so happy serving among young people, like that was the place I was supposed to be.” After his summers at Luther Springs, Rashard worked in leadership at YMCA camps in North Carolina and he now helps with youth ministry at his church. “I really want to help kids experience new things,” he says. “I want to help them know there’s more for them out there and ways for them to grow beyond what they think is possible.”

Rashard knows first-hand about doing more than seems possible. In 2019 he was diagnosed with a kidney disease that has led to multiple surgeries, including a kidney transplant in October of 2023. Today, Rashard is doing well and is thankful for the healing that allows him to continue working and serving. “There have been a lot of ups and down,” he says, “but my faith has kept me strong.”

Rashard is grateful for the time he spent at Luther Springs. “I feel blessed to have had those experiences at camp,” Rashard says. “I remember that our director would always ask me, ‘What do you want to do next week at camp, where do you want to serve?’ And I’d always tell her, ‘Put me where you think I should be.’ I guess that’s still what I am hoping for, that God puts me where I need to be.”

Thank you for your gifts to NovusWay Ministries, which give counselors like Rashard the opportunity to learn new skills, sense new callings, and serve in the places God needs them.



ON THE BUS

St. David Lutheran Church in West Columbia, South Carolina, is one of several churches in the southeast that takes a bus to camp. In recent years, St. David has partnered with Cristo Rey Lutheran Church, a Spanish-speaking congregation that has shared worship space with St. David for many years. Together, they fill the bus and head up the mountain to Lutheridge.

Celeste Schnabel, a member of St. David and former Lutheridge counselor, coordinates the week at camp with children from these two congregations. While the week at Lutheridge is a big undertaking today, it began small. “When my children were old enough to be campers, they wanted to invite friends to come too,” says Celeste. “It grew from there to where we needed more room and eventually offered transportation using the church bus.”

Celeste has helped recruit more children from St. David and Cristo Rey each year. Last year, 24 campers plus adult leaders were on the bus. “We didn’t have room for all of the kids and their luggage,” remembers Celeste, “so a church member hauled a trailer with all the suitcases and sleeping bags for us.”

Cristo Rey and St. David can send so many campers for a week together because of the generosity of members of the congregations. Throughout the year, the congregations work together to raise funds to pay the way for any child who needs help getting to camp. “It brings people joy to help kids have these awesome experiences that they may not otherwise afford,” Celeste says. “And for those who went to Lutheridge or other similar camps when they were younger, they want to share this opportunity because they know the impact it had on their faith lives.”

The impact of a week at camp for the children of Cristo Rey and St. David is significant. The children of St. David love the experience. “It gets them excited about their faith, and they come back and tell everyone at church that they should come too!” The week at Lutheridge has a similar effect on the children from Cristo Rey, but there is an additional reality for many of them. “For some of them, it is their first time away from home without their families and their

first time to see the mountains,” says Celeste. “But they feel loved and a part of something special.”

Organizing the trip to camp involves lots of logistical challenges for Celeste and the adult leaders of St. David and Cristo Rey, but the joys make it worth it. “There are so many joys,” Celeste shares. “I love the excitement on the bus on the way there. I love seeing so many smiling faces around camp all week and kids telling me it was the best thing they did all summer. When they ask me in the fall when we will be going back to camp next year, I know we are impacting their lives.”



PICK UP THE KEY

Some might say that Bea Youngdahl’s first visit to Lutherock was a holy accident. Bea and her husband Duane had recently moved from Colorado to Greensboro, North Carolina. Visiting Christ Lutheran Church in Greensboro for the first time on a Sunday morning, they heard that worship the following week would be at Lutherock. “We didn’t know what Lutherock was,” Bea says, “but the next Sunday we decided we’d go to Lutherock, and we fell in love.”

In those days, Lutherock was a small retreat property that a handful of congregations would visit several times a year for congregational fellowship in the mountains. Walking in the woods with others from Christ Lutheran during her first visit, Bea knew she had found a home. “It felt so good to be in those mountains,” she remembers.

That first trip Bea made to Lutherock began a partnership that has lasted for more than 50 years. A year or two later, she was recruited to be on the Lutherock board, where she served for many years. Bea and her family made lots of trips to Lutherock. On many of those trips, Bea had the special responsibility of stopping in Hickory, North Carolina, to pick up the key so she could unlock

the gate leading into camp for everyone else. “When my car was crossing over the creek into camp, I’d stop and open the door,” she recalls. “Then I’d dip my hand in the creek and feel the cold water. Then I knew I was in a special place.”

Bea and Duane (who died in 2021) sent their children to Lutherock for a week of camp every summer they could. When their grandchildren were old enough, they gave them a week at camp as a gift every Christmas. All these years later, Bea is still looking for reasons to go to Lutherock and keep her family connected there. She is hoping to have a family reunion at camp in 2024.

Financially supporting Lutherock and giving the gift of camp to others has been an important part of Bea’s faith journey. “We’ve given a lot because of our love of the camp and this life-changing ministry,” Bea says. “It’s such a beautiful site and a wonderful place to get away and be refreshed and renewed.”



LEGACY OF LIGHT

This beautiful stained glass window depicting Luther’s Rose was made by Bill Strauss, a member of St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Forest Park, Georgia. The window was installed above the church’s chancel and dedicated on July 27, 1986. Through this window, the light of Christ shone over the congregation for 24 years. The church was decommissioned on December 5, 2010, and the building was sold. Half of the sale proceeds were donated to NovusWay Ministries. In honor of this gift, the St. Timothy Great Room at Lutheranch was named. Recently hung in the front window of the great room, the stained-glass window reflects the past mission and legacy of St. Timothy and the Lutheran foundation of faith upon which Lutheranch proceeds in ministry.

In the picture above: Former St. Timothy members Joe and Debbie Lundell (left) and Arolue Flemmen Prater and Ron Prater (right) by the new window in the McKanna-Sandrock Retreat Center at Lutheranch.



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