

The Link to a Place Apart



PATHS

Lutheridge counselors Jon Lakeman and Madeleine Rhyne had very different paths to get to camp. After several great summers serving on staff, now they are both headed in a similar direction – to seminary and future ministry in the church.

Madeleine grew up going to Lutheridge. “I was a camper for a long time,” she says, “and I always looked up to my counselors and wanted to be like them.” Madeleine knew being a counselor was a big responsibility, but after talking to some former Lutheridge counselors, she decided to apply to be on summer staff.

“My experience was the exact opposite,” Jon laughs. “I went to scout camp and sports camps, but I never went to any kind of church camp. I had grown up with the notion that bible camps weren’t really my thing.” That changed when Pastor Drew Yoos, Lutheridge Program Director, visited Jon’s college to talk about summer jobs at Lutheridge. “Pastor Drew said being a counselor at Lutheridge would give you experience in a way no internship can,” Jon remembers. “That convinced me, and I have not regretted my choice at all. The past three summers have been the best part of my life.”

Serving on staff at Lutheridge for several summers has helped Jon and Madeleine

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A Message From The CEO



Dear Friends of NovusWay,

Something keeps happening at our camps. People come for a summer or a weekend and leave with something that stays with them — forever. I've seen it at camps my whole career, and I'm seeing it at NovusWay. It never gets old.

In this edition, you'll read about two former Lutheridge counselors, Jon Lakeman and Madeleine Rhyne, heading to seminary, a middle schooler at Lutherock who keeps coming back summer after summer, and the outreach day camp at Trinity in Pembroke Pines — Luther Springs bringing outdoor ministry into a neighborhood for families who might never have found their way to us otherwise.

Three stories. Three sites. The same thing at the center: a place that gets into people.

A lot is happening on the ground right now. At Lutheridge, the Lutheridge 75th Birthday campaign is in the home stretch. New camper cabins will be finished in time for summer, and plans are under way for Mission Hall's return to guest lodging now that staff offices have moved out. At Luther Springs, our planning team is deep into a master plan that takes us into the future. At Lutherock, you'll have just heard that we have a new program director — new leadership arriving at exactly the right moment. Plus, FEMA contractors continue hurricane clean-up and the camp creek will be ready for creek walks by summer.

None of this happens without people who show up. Volunteers have been faithful this spring — work crews, cleanup days, and hands-on help at all three sites. We are grateful. If you haven't come yet, reach out to us. We'll find something worth doing together.

I believe in what's happening at our camps this summer. I hope you feel it too — in the stories, in the updates, in the sense that what we're doing together is landing on real people and doing real things in their lives.

That's worth everything.

With gratitude,

Lauri SoJourney

think a lot about church ministry. “Being a counselor is a difficult job and puts you in so many different situations,” Jon shares. “The ways that counselors support campers and one another feel like pastoral care. It’s such a great experience of Christian community. Knowing such a real body of Christ exists in the world has strengthened my conviction to be in ministry and offer that to others.”

Madeleine says she was already discerning a call to ministry before being on staff, but her time as a Lutheridge counselor has deepened her awareness of her gifts for service. “Camp convinced me that this was possible,” Madeleine says. “My years on staff have shown me that I can do ministry. It’s equipped me, giving me the chance to dip my toes into ministry leadership as a counselor and senior staff, and reinforced my sense of call.”

This fall, Madeleine and Jon will be on different paths again, each heading to a different seminary to begin ministry studies. As they step into this next chapter, they both say their camp experiences will stay with them. “The way I’ve experienced so many kinds of people and needs at camp will stay with me,” Madeleine says. “At camp I’ve learned how to take initiative, when to ask for help, and how to lead in healthy ways. Being able to teach God’s children that they are loved unconditionally is so inspiring and continues to move me toward ministry.” Jon says being on staff at Lutheridge has taught him that difficult things are worth doing. “The real work of Christ is possible,” Jon says. “It’s not just something to talk about in a class, it’s happening at camp. Understanding that has energized me to be a faithful and active disciple of Christ.”

Research on camp ministry and summer staff experiences at camp shows that working at a Christian camp is one of the most significant places young adults feel a call to ministry. Thank you for your gifts to NovusWay which are helping young people grow into the servant leaders needed in the church and in the world.



The Lutheridge 75th Birthday Capital Campaign continues to inspire a season of renewal at Lutheridge. Through the gifts of individuals and congregations, we’ve been updating beloved spaces and building new facilities to serve the next generation of Lutheridge campers and guests. To date, toward our **\$3.6 million** campaign goal we have received gifts and commitments of **\$3.4 million!** We hope you and your congregation will be inspired to join in this time of generosity.

For more information, contact Rev. Nathan Gragg, Chief Development Officer (NGragg@NovusWay.org, (828) 209-6326) or visit Lutheridge.org/Campaign.



CLOSER

The first time Jaime went to camp at Lutherock it rained all week. Amazingly, she came back again the next summer.

Jaime's first time at Lutherock was for a week of confirmation camp. Attending with other youth from her home congregation, Jaime participated in interactive learning times while also getting to experience outdoor activities and a joyful camp community. "I wanted to go back because of all the counselors," Jaime says. "They are really good people and helped us have so much fun."

For the last two summers, Jaime has participated in Outdoor Adventure programs at Lutherock. During her camp weeks she has been able to go hiking, caving, rafting, and camp out at lots of different locations. While Jaime has enjoyed the adventure parts of being at Lutherock, what has really made an impression on her is the sense of community. "Being together with all these different youth from other places and singing songs together is truly an experience," Jaime shares. "I love hearing everyone praising God together."

Jaime's favorite part of her week of camp last summer was spending the night camping out at The Saddle. "It rained on us," Jaime says, "but we still had fun. The rain kind of brings us closer together because we are all huddled in one place. I like how camp brings you closer to the people around you, and closer to God."

Jaime's dad, Eric, likes how going to Lutherock has created a bond among the youth from their church. "I knew that going to Lutherock would be cool," Eric says, "but an added blessing was the way the group seemed to grow closer. Getting to have those experiences together meant they came back connected."

Jaime remembers her first trip to Lutherock and how it transformed the relationships among her church friends. “On the way up, we stopped to eat together,” she recalls. “At the restaurant we were all spread out and sitting in different little groups at separate tables. Then at the end of the week, on the way back home, we stopped to eat again. This time, we were all pushing the tables together so we could sit as one big group. We were so excited and talking so loud. I was afraid they were going to kick us out of the restaurant!”

Each summer Jaime has been at Lutherock has made an impact on her. She has especially enjoyed being able to worship in new ways. “When I get home, I remember all the songs we sang. Whenever we worship at camp you can feel the presence of Jesus. I love being in that environment.”

Your gifts to NovusWay give campers like Jaime opportunities to worship, grow, and form deeper relationships with friends. Thank you for your support of this life-changing ministry!



OUTWARD

When Trinity Lutheran Church in Pembroke Pines, Florida heard about the Day Camp program at Luther Springs they knew it was something they needed, and something their neighbors needed too. Trinity members Tina Hines and Piper Spencer have been co-directing the day camp for years. “My kids had gone to Luther Springs,” Piper recalls, “so when I learned about day camp, I knew this was something we could do and this is how we could give something back to our community.”

Tina and Piper share that Trinity held a traditional vacation Bible school in the

evening for years, but they had started to wonder about hosting a day-time opportunity that would serve young people in their neighborhood. “We have kids nearby whose parents or grandparents have them at home during the summer,” Piper says. “We wanted to see if we could give them a break for a week.”

Tina says the church spread the word about day camp by talking to people in the neighborhood and sharing about the opportunity with co-workers who had children. “I talked to a teacher at the school where I work who told me, ‘You know, my child has been asking questions about God,’” Tina shares. “The mom felt like our day camp was a safe place for her child to speak up and say what he was thinking about. When he came to camp it was amazing to see. He realized there’s something bigger out there he can be a part of.”

While the day camp started as a program for elementary age children, the congregation has developed ways for older children to keep coming back each summer. “We decided to add a middle school program for the kids who were getting older,” Piper says. “We made it a service-oriented experience where the kids do things like work with our native plant garden and clothing ministry. Once they age out of that, they can even come back in high school as volunteers.”

Piper and Tina say part of what makes the day camp at Trinity special is the congregation’s commitment to reach out to children who haven’t been connected to church. “For some of them, they don’t really get to see church much, and some of them don’t see much during the summer at all,” Tina says. “A lot of them would normally be spending their days on electronic devices, but instead they are spending a week filled with things like bible study, crafts, good food, and a nurturing community.”

People at Trinity continue to be energized by hosting the day camp each summer. “We are an outward looking church,” says Piper. “This gives people from our church a way to be a part of it. Everyone can have a role.” This summer Trinity will be hosting the day camp again. “We get a lot out of it,” Tina says. “Seeing the children light up when they are learning and singing and sharing meals is the best part of all.”



Come to Camp This Summer!

We are excited about the joy and adventure that awaits children, youth, adults, and families this summer at our NovusWay camps. Here are some highlights for you to consider and share.

Lutheridge Adult Music Week

July 5 – 10, 2026

Sing and ring God's praise on the mountain! This 75-year camp tradition, for professional and volunteer church musicians and clergy, brings renowned clinicians David Cherwien, Sandra Eithun, and Mark Sedio to Lutheridge to lead choral and handbell ensembles and keyboard workshops. In addition, we offer creative daily worship, Bible studies, reading sessions of new music for choral and handbell choirs, instrumental ensembles and more to equip you for the upcoming year. The week is highlighted by a Thursday evening hymn festival and a Friday celebratory closing service before lunch. Join us for a week of fellowship, worship, learning and reflection – nestled in the mountains of western North Carolina.

Lutherock Family Camp

June 28 - July 2, 2026

Step away from the busy pace of life and make memories. Each day you'll have the freedom to choose what works best for you. Take on the ropes course and zipline, splash through the creek walk, or join a guided outing to Grandfather Mountain and the rock-slide. Kids will spend mornings with our young adult counselors while parents can rest, explore, or join in the fun. Evenings bring everyone back together for meals, laughter, and time in the beauty of creation. Whether you've been part of Lutherock for years or are joining us for the first time, Family Camp at Lutherock is a time to play, worship, and be together in this beautiful place.

Luther Springs Disaster Response Mission Weeks

Each Week June 7 - July 31

Luther Springs offers high school youth and young adult groups the opportunity to help rebuild and restore homes in the Tampa Bay area of Florida. Groups will arrive on Sunday evening for dinner and orientation, and work Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Our program is camp-style mission, in which our well-trained counselors oversee campers at night and provide a week of team-building, games, faith formation, and worship. We will provide housing, meals, tools, and programming (including a fun day!). Programming can be flexible to meet the needs of each group. Contact Deacon Sue Mendenhall at SMendenhall@NovusWay.org to register.

To learn more about all these and other opportunities at Lutheridge, Lutherock, and Luther Springs, visit NovusWay.org or scan the QR code here.



NovusWay Ministries

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