

The Link to a Place Apart



LUTHERIDGE



LUTHEROCK



LUTHERSPRINGS



LUTHERANCH

2019: Quarter 3

Shepherds Change Everything

We'd like to tell you a story. A story about how camp has changed over the last 25 years, but more importantly, about how it has not.

In the fall of 1994, Pastors Tim and Mary Canniff-Kuhn moved their family, Matt, Jesse, and Nathan, from Apostles Lutheran Church in Florida to the mountains of Arden, NC where they began their shared calls as Program Directors for Lutheridge.

"During that first summer, we were just trying to hold on. We tried to learn as much as we could," said Pastor Mary. After that, they began dividing programs and tasks in ways that best

matched their individual gifts. They brought their own vision for change to the ministry. Pastor Tim worked to strengthen the Outdoor Adventure Program and make music central to the camp experience. Pastor Mary brought creativity to the programming and found her storytelling voice.

"Music and story move faith from head to heart," she reflected.

While Pastor Tim and Pastor Mary brought their own changes to the camp, the world was changing too. "When we started, Hwy 25 and Airport Road were

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A Message from the CEO

The summer of 2019 was a great one at each of our four NovusWay ministry sites: Lutheridge, Lutherock, Luther Springs and Lutheranch. 2,680 summer campers had life-changing experiences; 497 adult guests deepened their faith and relationship with God; and 140 summer staff members received leadership training and had faith forming encounters that inspired them to go from camp to love and serve a hurting world.

We are in an exciting season of growth and change at NovusWay Ministries. I am delighted to share that summer camper numbers increased by 102 campers from 2,578 in 2018 to 2,680 in 2019. Most notably, Lutherock summer youth numbers increased by 83 campers (19%) this summer over last, from 437 to 520, and Lutherock is poised for continued growth with the recent completion of the amazing Sky Park Zip Line in the saddle above Founders Lodge.

Summer adult and family registrations for NovusWay increased by a net total of 119, from 378 in 2018 to 497 in 2019. Most significantly, Lutheridge adult and family registrations grew by 132 registrants (39%) this summer over last, and staff successfully completed the demanding American Camping Association's accreditation process that takes place once every five years.

Luther Springs hosted 260 total campers this summer, and year-round programming at Luther Springs will soon benefit from the much-needed, 125-person capacity Atonement Chapel to be completed this winter. Lutheranch continues to grow its ministry impact, adding 18 additional summer campers this year over last, and we are excited about the launch of new program and retreat offerings under the strong site and program leadership at Lutheranch.

Ministry-wide, we are utilizing a return on investment strategy to improve and strengthen our reach, our ministry impact, and the camper and guest experience. We are investing in capacity-building staff positions, marketing, technology, program development, and buildings and grounds, among other things, and we are beginning to reap the rewards of these efforts and investments.

None of this, nor the life-changing ministry programs that we offer, would be possible without the generosity of those of you who give of your time, talent, and treasure. It is a high honor to serve this ministry alongside so many committed staff members, board members, churches, volunteers, supporters, and friends. Thank you for your part and partnership in this important work. God is clearly using our mutual efforts to change lives in Christ's name, and we remain grateful.

Thank you and God bless you,



Boyd W. Harris IV
Executive Director-CEO





both two lanes,” said Pastor Tim. “There are also changes like cell phones.” Pastor Tim and Pastor Mary both laughed about counselors lined up outside of Efird waiting their turn for 10 minutes on the payphone.

They each spent time reflecting on upgrades and facility changes over the last 25 years including the new pool, dining hall renovations, the Faith Center and new cabins at Lakeside. “Those improvements have offered greater ministry opportunities,” Pastor Mary shared.

“We have seen tremendous change in 25 years,” said Pastor Tim, “and yet, there is something about the core of camp that has never changed. For me, that is the cabin group.” Pastor Mary agreed.

“One counselor, shepherding 6-8 campers learning how to live together is the core foundation of the ministry.” Pastor Mary reflected on John 14, “Jesus tells his disciples, I will ask the Father, and he will send you another counselor to be with you forever. We see the way Jesus lives with his disciples, teaching them by example. When you live in small cabin groups, and the counselor models Jesus, the children can’t help but soak up Jesus, and that changes everything.”

In cabin groups, children learn and practice sharing, respect, cooperation, and kindness. Jesus’ example becomes a way of life for counselors, even in

difficult situations.

“Hundreds of counselors have discovered their gifts and passions,” said Pastor Tim. Being in this intentional Christ-centered community changes their vocational direction and gives them the skills and courage necessary to be who they are called to be.

Even with all the changes to the campus and world over the last 25 years, modeling Jesus in small camper groups remains core to the ministry identity of Lutheridge. Living in this way fosters hope.

“Hope means things can be different,” Pastor Mary said. “How can a week or a summer make a difference? Because things are different at camp. You’re not being bullied. You’re a leader. People listen to you. It’s safe to be yourself. You can just be silly...It is different for every camper, but they each find what they need here. They might not be able to make that change happen back home—but they know it *can* happen, because it *has* happened. They know that things can be different. That’s hope. And hope changes everything.”

The Canniff-Kuhns have shared that this past summer of 2019 will be their final summer as Program Directors at Lutheridge. Join us in giving thanks for their 25 years of faithful service to campers, counselors and guests. Join us in praying for their transition as God calls them to a new chapter in their lives. We will miss you!

Cabin Time Changes Everything

Louissa Pfundt, a first-year counselor at Lutheranch this past Summer, 2019, welcomed her first “Trail Group” for a week of camp. She was a camper at both Lutheridge and Lutherock as a child, so being at Lutheranch was new to her. *Kajha, a 6th grader, was among the campers Louissa welcomed during week one. Louissa learned during staff orientation at Lutheridge the importance of “Cabin Time” and practiced that faithfully with her campers each night. Cabin Time is based on the ancient practice called the EXAMEN. It helps campers reflect on their day by recalling highs, lows, and God moments—where they saw God present and active.

“I feel like it is important to read to my campers every night as they are settling down for bed,” said Louissa. “It never occurred to me that I might be the first adult to ever do that for them.” Kajha is a refugee from the Congo. Her family was resettled by the government to Atlanta, Georgia years ago when she was an infant. She lives with her parents and 8 siblings in a small apartment in the city. Kajha’s family is loving, but her parents must work long hours to provide for them. The oldest siblings provide a lot of the daily care for the younger children. Kajha shared with Louissa that her

parents have never read her a bedtime story; they just don’t have time. The simple act of reading each night to close Cabin Time had a huge impact on Kajha, and on Louissa.

“It opened the door for conversations about women succeeding in the world,” Louissa said. “Kajha shared concerns she hadn’t shared with anyone else about her brother’s new negative behaviors.” The relationships that Louissa established with Kajha and her other campers in the short span of a week were built on kindness, listening, reading, playing together, consistency and prayer. Praying for them each day and before bed each night opened the door for them to pray for each other. “She even prayed for us all in her own language one night,” said Louissa. It gave Kajha a safe place to unburden her worries and have fun – to be a kid.

When Kajha returned home from camp, the people and the circumstances were not changed. But Kajha was changed. She knows that reading to her younger siblings has power. She knows that praying for them has power.

Kajha and 2,700 others grew at camp this summer because of the generous support of the NovusWay community. Your gift changes everything.





*Ricky arrived angry and explosive for his first week of camp at Luther Springs. He was one of 40 campers from Rez House, a Lutheran congregation in Florida pastored by Rev. Bruce Edward whose primary membership is migrant worker families.

The congregation's adult leaders shared with program director, Sue Mendenhall, that Ricky's inappropriate behaviors had escalated over the previous months, but they had not yet identified why.

The first part of the week was a challenge for Ricky's counselor and the adults, but they continued to show love and patience.

Everything changed while Ricky was on the lake canoeing. His canoe tipped over and Ricky found himself in the water, frightened, but not alone. The staff helped him calm down and got him safely into a canoe. He began to sob uncontrollably.

They brought Ricky back to shore and listened as he shared that his uncle had recently drowned. While his counselor and other adults prayed and listened,

he shared for an hour and a half what life at home was like for him. Ricky's anger was directly related to his trauma, and camp was the first safe space away he had to be honest about the pain he was carrying around in his heart.

"After that, Ricky was a different child," said Sue. During Closing Word (Vespers) the last night, Ricky shared a song he had written after falling into the lake. "The song was his way of confessing some of the things he had done. Ricky acknowledged that God doesn't want him to live the way he had been living." The primary message of the song was his new understanding that God loves him, no matter what he has done, and that God is with him always.

The 40 children who attended Rez House Summer Camp at Luther Springs this summer came on a full scholarship. The generous contributions of those who support the camp financially help ensure that children like Ricky have an opportunity to feel the safety and love God provides for all of God's children.

Leading from the Back



Grace, a sophomore at Roanoke College, just completed her first summer on staff at Lutheridge after being a camper for 12 years.

“I’m not an up-front person,” she shared. “I never have been. I don’t see myself as creative. I have always been more logical.” Much to her surprise, during her first week on staff she found herself on a Lutheridge day camp in Peachtree City, GA with a group of mostly returning staff.

“They were pushing me to lead from the front,” she said. These returning staff recognized an opportunity to help Grace, a first-year counselor, build confidence and skills managing a group of children and inspiring energy, but it was a bit unsettling for Grace. She had never been challenged like that before. She preferred blending into the background where it was comfortable.

Grace handled the challenge by turning to her Lutheridge summer staff prayer partner group. “We became close, and I could share my worries and hopes with them. They would help me sort it all out. They supported me.”

During staff meeting each week the newly formed counselor groups consider the upcoming schedule and each other’s strengths and growing areas. They asked the question, “where do I want to lead from this week?” Before being a counselor, Grace would have considered herself a background person. The concept of “leading from the back” was new to her. Asking this question and talking it out as a group gave Grace an opportunity to try leading from the back, the middle, and the front.

Grace used this same technique with her own campers after seeing it modeled for her. “It was my first cabin group, and I was already scared before they even arrived. They were middle schoolers. Middle schoolers need lots of love,” she admitted. After meeting her campers the first night, Grace quickly realized that *Julie was questioning a lot of things. “I realized pretty quickly I was going to have to love on her a little more.” Julie had announced to her cabin group that she didn’t believe in God. She was more interested in Greek Mythology. Each night, during cabin time, Grace

created an opportunity for the campers to share their “High’s, Low’s, Ut-oh’s and God moments.” Julie wasn’t sharing God moments. She was also pulling herself away from the other girls in the group.

Instead of working to be the only person giving Julie love from the cabin group, Grace encouraged and empowered her other campers to lead from the front by intentionally including Julie in conversations and activities.

“Wednesday night vespers was a turning point,” said Grace. Julie shared a funny moment from the day, but for the first time she related the event to God. “After that, she had a God moment every single night,” said Grace. “She was also more engaged with the other girls. By the end of the week, Julie knew she was loved by God and that she wasn’t a mistake.”

Summer staff training, her fellow counselors, and Program Directors,

Pastor Tim and Pastor Mary, gave Grace the skills and support necessary to create life-changing moments for campers. It also gave Grace leadership skills she is already applying in her life as a young adult.

This year, as a returning sophomore, Grace is working as a Resident Advisor (RA) at Roanoke College. “During orientation and RA training, my boss asked how many of us were camp counselors. There were 10 of us!” Grace’s supervisor shared that he intentionally hires RA’s that have summer camp experience, and Grace understands why. “I feel more confident laying down rules with people who are older than I am,” she said.

Grace credits her 12 years as a camper for a large part of her decision to enroll in the Christian Studies program at Roanoke College. She credits everything she learned as a first-year counselor for building her confidence in leading from the front, the middle, and as she now sees it, from the back.

Deborah’s Leadership

Pastor Mary Canniff-Kuhn, Program Director at Lutheridge, uses the story of Deborah from the book of Judges in scripture to teach leadership to counselors each summer. The goal is to grow leaders who are not only able to lead themselves, but who are also able to use their gifts to grow leadership skills in others.

* **Leading from the FRONT:**

Being in the spotlight. Taking charge and making things happen.

* **Leading from the MIDDLE:**

Partnering with someone to get something done. Doing it with them so they can gain confidence and skills.

* **Leading from the BACK:**

Giving support and encouragement to others. Seeing their gifts and helping them use them.



Save the Date

Lutheranch

Open House
& Family Fun Day!

Saturday

November 23, 2019
10-3

Admission: **FREE**

Bring your family and enjoy:

Canoeing
Pony Rides & Baby Animals
Archery
Arts & Crafts
Campfire & S'mores
Wagon Rides

Lunch Served 11-1:00

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