

# The Link to a Place Apart



## FAITH IN ACTION

“Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action” (1 John 3:18). It’s happening now. You can put your faith into action through a Luther Springs Mission Week this summer. Here’s what you need to know. Spread the word.

Hurricane Ian made landfall in southwest Florida September 28, 2022, a strong category 4 hurricane just shy of category 5. Ian was the deadliest hurricane to strike the state of Florida since 1935 and the second deadliest to strike the US, behind only Katrina in 2005. Ian left over 2.7 million people without power. It created extensive road damage, severing connections between barrier islands and the mainland. It destroyed neighborhoods and business districts. Ian flooded cars, boats, homes, and buildings in the record high storm surge.

In response to this devastation, Luther Springs is partnering with Florida-Bahamas Synod, Lutheran Disaster Response, Faith Lutheran Church, Sarasota, and Peace Lutheran Church, Ft. Myers to offer Disaster Response Mission weeks at two sites for eight weeks this summer. Over 240 participants have already registered to help restore and rebuild Southwest Florida.

Pastor Rob Rose, FB Synod Assistant to the Bishop for Administration, said, “It is amazing how Lutherans answer the call to help. Time, treasure, and talent are flowing from the state and the nation to help answer the needs of those devastated by Hurricane Ian. Bishop Suarez is very supportive of NovusWay Ministries at Luther Springs and the ministry they are doing in Southwest Florida. He’s excited that youth and young adults are giving their time to volunteer during their summer vacation.”

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# A MESSAGE

## from the Intentional Interim CEO

It's a new year, which means new opportunities for our NovusWay friends to experience Christ in the great outdoors!

All four of our camps are greeting many guests each week in adult and youth groups coming to get away from daily routines and get closer to our Maker in one of our beautiful, natural settings. Camp is the place to connect with one another!

Before we talk about what is coming in 2023, we need to give our great thanks to hundreds of friends for their generous gifts to this ministry in the last year. We have existed for over 70 years through the generous support of many friends. We are blessed by the support of our supporting synods—North Carolina, South Carolina, Southeastern, and Florida-Bahamas. In 2022, we were blessed with 2,778 individual gifts totaling \$1,070,018. We received donations from people in 27 states throughout the US. We were especially grateful for this year's Giving Tuesday campaign, which brought in \$35,730 to support our ministry!

In just a few months, our summer campers will gather at one of our special places for a week that will change their lives through new friendships, skills, appreciation for God's wondrous creation, and deeper faith formation. Our 2023 summer camp brochure can be found online by scanning the QR code below. There are programs for all ages with new offerings to pique a variety of interests of our campers. Many of our generous donors support our scholarship program so that no camper will be turned away due to finances. Visit [www.novusway.org/scholarship](http://www.novusway.org/scholarship) to learn how you can help. Please spread the word in your congregation and community about all the programs that our camps are offering this summer!

In order to deliver all our programs at our sites and the Day Camps we bring to congregations, we need MANY summer staff members. Counselors and program leaders must be college-aged. We seek well-balanced individuals who want to have a summer job that will really make a difference! Due to being understaffed last year, we were forced to reduce programs. We're off to a good start, but need more dynamic staff members to join our teams. Please help us spread the word to any potential counselors you may know! Learn more at [novusway.org/summer-staff/](http://novusway.org/summer-staff/)!

We are deeply appreciative of all you have done for our ministry! Please remember in prayer all our camp groups and staff as we gather to be a light on the hill that will positively impact the world in Christ's name. Your contributions to scholarships and operations support an ever-expanding circle of God's love and care for all.

Dick Peterson  
Intentional Interim CEO

Scan for the  
Summer Camp Catalog







Joel\*, a 7th grader in Lutheridge's onsite program for middle school, came to camp holding a lot of insecurities. He did not just come with concerns about being at camp, but a whole host of anxiety he lived with every day of his life. Joel is a funny kid with lots of wit. He is the comedian in his family. He is smart. He is liked by others. He is also always worried about "EVERYTHING" going on in his world. School, friends, family, appearance, and more could bring him to his knees with worry. It was often debilitating. Joel met with a therapist about once a week and some headway would be made in his ability to manage the times he would spiral. It wasn't enough, though, as he was still often wrought with worry. It was harder for him to enjoy life the way his peers did at school.

Joel had very long curly hair. His curls are the kind that many folks with straight hair would do almost anything to have. He grew his hair all the way to the bottom of his back. Joel would use his long locks to often "hide" from others. It was like a shield from having anyone look into his eyes or protect him from having to look into theirs. His parents had no idea how he could even see the ball through his hair while playing soccer with his teammates.

Joel's parents dropped him off at camp on a Sunday and the Spirit went to work!

They did not talk with him at all that week. On the following Saturday they were excited to see how the experience was for him. How was his counselor? Did he make friends? Did he have fun? Like other camper parents, these were the questions they had when picking up Joel after a week of camp. Everything they needed to know (and then some) was communicated to them the moment they pulled up. Joel was there at Pioneer B Unit Lodge with many other campers talking and playing around their packed bags. What his parents saw amazed them. There he was with his hair tied up in a large ponytail. They could see his face. They could see his smile. He wanted to see, and he wanted to be seen. He was not hiding in his hair. That was the ONLY time they had ever seen him do that. They knew the moment they saw his hair that he had experienced a life-changing event on the mountain. His parents love Lutheridge, the staff and the Spirit's work here.

Joel's story is not the only camper transformation that we see each summer. Thousands of youth and adults have experienced the Spirit at work in their lives beyond the gates of Lutheridge. These experiences often lead them to become future counselors and seminarians. Your spiritual and financial gifts make camp possible and help to change lives like Joel's every day!

*\*Name was changed to protect the privacy of the camper.*



# NOT JUST HORISING AROUND

In March 2020, Luther Ranch began its equestrian ministry with the goal of serving summer campers, retreat guests, and the local community through trail rides, week-long overnight and day camps, clinics, and therapeutic and recreational riding lessons. Since an equestrian program can't exist without horses, a plea was made by Luther Ranch Program Director Gretchen Ahrens asking for donated or leased horses, and thus, this special ministry began with four horses. Our equestrian ministry develops faith, trust, stability, physical strength, confidence, joy and leadership skills.

Maggie is one such special horse. She is leased to Luther Ranch by her owner, Amy Sims. "My kind, beautiful Maggie mare is the sweetest horse ever! She was perfect for me - a timid rider - when I brought her home a few years ago. I knew immediately that she was careful and gentle beyond the norm. She helped me build confidence and before long we were riding all over the trails." When she's not riding horses, Amy is active duty military in a unique role for the State of Georgia. In 2021, she was asked to deploy to Afghanistan. "I was heartbroken imagining my big mares not being gently handled in my absence. After a particularly restless night, I woke to find Luther Ranch's plea for free lease horses to use in their therapeutic riding program. I jumped on it!" Gretchen met Amy's horses and brought them to Luther Ranch that summer. As troops were pulled out of Afghanistan, Amy did not end up deploying after all, yet she decided to allow Luther Ranch to continue to use the mares. "It has been the most incredible experience! I see pictures of riders on my Maggie and I can tell her sweet energy is giving them joy. I didn't intend for her ministry to be long term, but I couldn't imagine taking her from the role she loves. I still ride her as often as my work allows and am thankful that when I'm not there she's loved and trusted by so many riders."



Maggie's ministry at Luther Ranch has helped other riders grow in skill and confidence. She excels in helping therapeutic riding students. One particular student, Laney, has been riding for two years. According to her mom, Eden, "Laney loves working and riding with Maggie! Maggie is teaching Laney valuable lessons in how to trust when riding and has boosted Laney's confidence so much in the time she's been coming to Luther Ranch. I can't wait to see how much she grows and learns!"





Maggie's ministry doesn't stop with riders. Lutheranch relies on roughly 20 volunteers to help with the care and feeding of horses and serving as horse leaders and sidewalkers in lessons.



Fifteen-year-old Abby came to Lutheranch for a trail ride and loved it so much she began taking lessons and volunteering. It didn't take long for her to develop a special bond with Maggie. "Working with Maggie has changed the way I act around horses. Before, I was very nervous and anxious. Now I'm able to lead horses and feed them myself. I see God's presence in the Ranch horses like Maggie by how calm I feel around them - when they are calm that calmness gravitates to me. I have seen Maggie increase the confidence in all lesson kids she rides with!" Abby said.

Lutheranch currently has 10 program horses – four are owned by Lutheranch and six are leased. Their ministry is unique, but also expensive. Care for each of Lutheranch's program horses, including feed, vet and farrier bills, costs \$400 per month. A gift to the Lutheranch Equestrian Program directly impacts the lives of riders and horses. Often the families who need our program the most are burdened with realities that make lessons and therapeutic riding out of reach financially. Your donations help provide scholarships for riders who are unable to pay for lessons, facilities upkeep and improvements, and care for our horses, including veterinary visits, trimming and shoeing, grain, hay and shavings. You can also support this ministry by providing a full or partial sponsorship for a horse.

Financial gifts can be mailed to NovusWay Ministries, C/O Lutheranch Equestrian Program, PO Box 830, Arden, NC 28704 or given online at [www.NovusWay.org](http://www.NovusWay.org). Designate your gift: Lutheranch Equestrian Program or Horse Sponsorship. We also welcome in-kind donations of tack and supplies. Our current equestrian needs list can be found online at [www.lutheranch.org/equestrian/give](http://www.lutheranch.org/equestrian/give).

Interested in learning more? Visit our Lutheranch YouTube Channel using the QR code below to meet our horses and staff, hear stories about the positive impact our programs have on people's lives, and learn how you can get involved as a volunteer!



## Our Development Team

Your generosity makes a difference! Spring is (almost) here, which means summer camp is right around the corner. To make a donation or to learn more about ways you can give to camp, please contact our Development team at [give@novusway.org](mailto:give@novusway.org) or visit [www.novusway.org/ways-to-give](http://www.novusway.org/ways-to-give).



Kristen Williams  
Executive Director of Financial Development

The Rev. Dr. Jan Setzler  
Senior Development Officer

The Florida-Bahamas Synod will provide a \$20,000 grant to NovusWay to help defray expenses directly associated with the Disaster Response Mission weeks. Pastor Rose explains, "Bishop and the Synod Council want to make sure the supplies and supports are in place as these amazing volunteers come down to do God's work with their hands."

There are two options for service weeks: one for high schoolers in Sarasota, FL and another for adults and campus ministry groups in Fort Myers, FL. Service weeks are Sunday through Friday June 4-9, 11-16, 18-23 and 25-30, and July 2-7, 9-14, 16-21 and 23-28. Work days are Monday through Thursday. After work each day, volunteers will spend time enjoying the beach, worship at sunset, and devotions in the sand.

### **Faith Lutheran Church, Sarasota High School & Adult Leaders**

Limited to 40 participants each week  
Sunday: arrival, team building, games, music & prep for the work ahead  
Mon.-Wed.: volunteers work at debris removal and rebuild projects  
Thursday: volunteers assist with Faith's food distribution program  
Friday: breakfast, closing worship & departure  
This will be mission – camp style!  
Counselors will supervise youth at night and provide programming during non-work time, lead bible study and work alongside youth. Congregational leaders provide transportation for their groups, work at projects if able, join in programming and lead group time. This week includes a fun boat outing!

### **Peace Lutheran Church, Ft. Myers Adult Groups, Young Adults & Campus Ministries**

Limited to 20 participants each week  
Sunday: arrival to meet other volunteers & prep for the work ahead  
Mon.-Thurs.: volunteers work on debris removal and rebuild projects  
Friday: breakfast, closing worship & departure  
Counselors provide programming and lead bible studies each day.  
Group leaders will provide transportation for their group, work at projects if they are able, and lead time with their groups. This group will also have a boat outing, depending on what is available.

For more information, please contact Deacon Sue Mendenhall, Luther Springs Co-Executive and Program Director, at 828-209-6312 or [SMendenhall@NovusWay.org](mailto:SMendenhall@NovusWay.org). Gifts to help provide supplies and materials to support volunteers during these special ministry weeks can be mailed to NovusWay Ministries, C/O Luther Springs Disaster Relief, PO Box 830, Arden, NC 28704 or given online at [www.NovusWay.org](http://www.NovusWay.org). Designate your gift: Luther Springs Disaster Relief.





# MAKING LEADERS OUT OF SALT



Last summer was an experience of a lifetime and one that I will never forget. I have grown up at camp and have been attending ever since I could in 2015. I knew that one day I wanted to work at camp and be able to serve as a counselor, helping to guide campers through not only their week at camp but life in general, and helping them strengthen their faith. Last summer I had an opportunity to do just that as a SALT staff at Lutherock.

Every day was a new opportunity to grow in a different area of knowledge and skill. The Servant Adventure Leadership Training (SALT) program at Lutherock allowed me to experience everything I had as a camper, plus the experience of serving as a staff member. I was able to develop many new skills last summer and truly learned what it meant to be a servant leader. I love being outdoors and participating in high-adventure activities. Every week at camp was a new experience! From Backpacking through the Smokie mountains on the Appalachian trail to sliding down a natural rock waterfall, camp allowed me to not only participate in these activities but also lead and teach campers about them.

Working as a SALT staff at Lutherock last summer also taught me endless life skills that I have been able to take off the mountain and back home with me. Working with such a diverse group of people from all around the country allowed me to connect and learn in different ways. Being able to experience different perspectives and personalities while creating lifelong friendships was a highlight of my summer. Each week was filled with new lessons and memories. Another highlight was working with campers from all around the country. The memories I now have of camp because of these campers are unreal. Playing games, singing songs, and exploring the mountains of North Carolina all summer is a dream come true, and one I hope to continue to enjoy in the upcoming summers!

The SALT program at Lutherock has changed my future and my interactions in my daily life. I have had the opportunity to connect with many people and share my experiences at camp. The network of people connected to NovusWay Ministries is incredible and those people are always there to support me. I have used the knowledge learned during my time as a SALT staff to help me lead in my church and community. I have turned my experiences at camp into an opportunity to connect with other people and share a connection through camp.

I would 100% recommend that every camper who has completed their junior year of high school apply for the SALT program at Lutherock. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create lasting memories between both staff and campers and to experience the great outdoors in a new way.

Your support helps cultivate programs like SALT at Lutherock, where faith is formed and leaders are developed across the ministry!

Jacob Smith  
SALT Staff & Future Counselor



# NovusWay Ministries

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## Your Gift Makes a Difference!



The new year has brought about new laws and retirement changes that may impact your giving decisions, known as "Secure 2.0." These changes may even make it easier for you to make a difference through charitable contributions to organizations like NovusWay. Learn more about Secure 2.0 online at [www.novusway.org/ways-to-give](http://www.novusway.org/ways-to-give).



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