10th Seafarers Collection

On behalf of Director Marsh Drege and Seafarers International, we extend an enormous word of thanks for the number of Seafarer’s Christmas-at-Sea bags donated by members and congregations of this synod. In total, 698 bags were picked up from the synod office on November 10th by Seafarers International.

In conversation with Pastor Drege, he spoke of how grateful they are for this response, especially in the midst of a pandemic. Most of the seafarers cannot leave the ship and some have been on board for a year, so these gifts will be a blessing. So, THANK YOU to all who contributed to this outreach ministry. Pastor Drege also shared his concern for the continued ministry of Seafarers International House. The House is their main source of income and during the pandemic the Seafarers International House has been closed to visitors – overnight visitors that pay for this housing. With the pandemic continuing, and the House staying closed, there is a growing financial need by Seafarers this year.

Jesus

And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6

May you have the gift of faith, the blessing of hope and the peace of His love at Christmas and always.

Bishop Collins, Rev. Craig Miller, Ms. Brenda Krouse and Mr. Chad Hershberger
PCM Celebrates 50

This November marked the 50th Anniversary of Protestant Campus Ministry at Bloomsburg University! Since 1970 PCM has had a presence on BU’s campus nurturing students in faith, growing Christian leaders, providing pastoral care, and serving the Bloomsburg community. Their ministry to young adults is as important as ever! In these uncertain times they have not stopped offering vital pastoral support, authentic faith community, and vocational discernment tools to students, even if primarily virtually. PCM is also listed in BU’s new “Husky Success” portal, which is a place where students can access various resources and supports on campus and set up appointments to meet via Zoom.

Up and Down the Valleys

You are encouraged to consider a year-end gift to the synod. This year is a great year to give because of new tax changes for 2020. The CARES Act included a provision to expand access to the tax benefits of charitable donations so that eligible individuals who do not itemize deductions can now deduct $300 in charitable donations from their adjusted gross income. For itemizers, the upper limit has increased. If you are itemizing on your return, the IRS has increased the limit for charitable tax deductions from 60% to 100% of your Annual Gross Income. For itemizers, contributions above that 100% threshold may be carried over into the next tax year. To donate to the synod and other ministries, visit https://www.uss-elca.org/give/. You can designate to several synod ministries via this link.

Due to the pandemic, Camp Mount Luther will not be holding a Summer Brochure Release Party this December. However, the summer schedule for 2021 is being developed and it will be shared by the end of the year. Then, be looking for some videos in early 2021 as they tell you all about next summer.

Pastor Tom Glasoe (Follmer Parish) resigned from his call due to his family relocating to the Erie area. He also resigned as synod secretary. Pastor Cinda Brucker (Trinity, Hughesville) retires December 31. Her last Sunday was November 29. Deacon Shelby Wyland was granted On-Leave-From-Call status by synod council. Pastor William Jones (Emmanuel, Middleburg) has been granted disability. Pastor Craig Miller will serve as interim, in addition to his synod responsibilities.

Joan Fulkroad of St. Stephen’s, Licking Creek (Interim Pastor Jerri Carlin) was featured in the Fall 2020 issue of ALS Greater Philadelphia’s newsletter. The publication featured ALS healthcare heroes. Joan has been battling the disease for five years. She has been very active in Women of the ELCA.

Congratulations to Mitzi Kurtz, longtime treasurer of St. John’s, Delaware Run (Interim Pastor Justin Lingenfelter). Mitzi is retiring at the end of December after 50 years as the church treasurer.

The Upper Susquehanna Synod Office will be closed from Thursday, December 24, 2020, to Friday, January 1, 2021, in observance of the Christmas and New Year’s holidays. The office will reopen at 8:30 a.m. on Monday, January 4, 2021. If you have an emergency, please call the synod office (570-524-9778) and the voicemail will give you phone numbers that you can call. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Upper Susquehanna Synod Staff.

Mitzi Kurtz

USS ARK is a publication of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA. Permission is granted for congregations to reproduce this newsletter. Send mission stories and ministry ideas by the first of the month to Chad Hershberger, Director of Communications, at news@uss-elca.org.

The Rev. Barbara J. Collins, Bishop
Upper Susquehanna Synod Events

Lessons and Carols for the First Sunday of Christmas
Our synod staff will provide a recorded service of Lessons and Carols for the First Sunday of Christmas. Congregations that wish to may use this service in place of their usual Sunday worship. The recording will drop on December 26 at 5:00 p.m. on the synod’s YouTube channel and Facebook page. Watch the website and Facebook for other online worship opportunities in this season.

Ignite the Church Conference 2021
We have gone online! Join us in 2021 for Adapting to a New Reality: Living into a Fresh Vision for God’s Church. Monthly webinars focus on key areas:
- January – Encouragement Beyond Fatigue
- February – Justice and the Common Good
- March – Hybrid Community: Virtual & In-Person
- April – Creative Expressions of Church
The Ignite the Church Conference movement continues to grow as leaders are encouraged and ministry is transformed! Please go to www.IgniteTheChurch.net to see the outstanding line up of speakers and panel leaders and to get more information on how you can join the movement. All conference proceeds are donated to the ELCA Fund for Leaders. Last year’s gift to future leaders totaled $6000. Links: https://video214.com/play/o5pHNJn7eW86vhiIpzkM9g/s/dark

Sunday, February 7, 2021: Camperson Meeting
The annual camperson meeting at Camp Mount Luther will be at 3:00 p.m. A camperson is a liaison between camp and your congregations. They are our ambassadors, regularly promoting camp news. Each synod congregation is asked to send a representative to this event to learn more about Mount Luther. Campersons will get Camel Bucks to the camp store for all those from their church who attend!

Sunday, February 14, 2021: Camp Mount Luther Sunday
Transfiguration Sunday has been designated by the Upper Susquehanna Synod Council to be recognized each year as “Mount Luther Sunday” to help promote outdoor ministries in the synod. We hope all of our congregations will join in celebrating outdoor ministries by offering financial support, by keeping the camp staff in prayer, and by participating in the numerous events and activities this ministry offers.

March 5-6, 2021: GROW in the Snow
All youth in 6-12th grade and their youth leaders are invited to attend this synod youth retreat. The theme of this year’s will be around scripture. Experience your Creator, play winter games and find refreshment in the peace of camp in winter. The retreat is from Friday night to Saturday afternoon, but there is an option for youth and leaders to come just for the day on Saturday. Cost is $60 (whole program) or $40 (Saturday only). Each registered group should provide one adult (21 or over) for every seven youth and at least one adult for each gender represented. Cabin assignments will be made based on available adults and number of youth attending. Contact chad@campmountluther.org with questions. A flyer and registration form will be available after the first of the year.

October 28, 2021: Lutheran Day at the Capital
As we continue to move through the pandemic, we look forward and invite you to mark your calendar for next year’s Lutheran Day. We will gather in Harrisburg on Thursday, October 28, 2021. We have moved this annual event from the spring into the fall in prayerful anticipation that we may safely gather by then. Learn more here: https://www.lutheranadvocacypa.org/save-the-date-for-lutheran-day-2021-october-28/
No Brochure Party this Year

Due to the pandemic, we will not be holding a Summer Brochure Release Party this December. However, the summer schedule for 2021 is being developed and it will be shared by the end of the year. Then, be looking for some videos in early 2021 as we tell you all about our camps and what we’ll need to do to run camp safely next summer. We are sad that we will not get to showcase our new programs at Christmastime like we have in the last few years, but we want to make sure everyone is safe so we’ll do it virtually this year!

Camperson Moves to February

The annual camperson meeting at Camp Mount Luther will be on Sunday, February 7, 2021, at 3:00 p.m. A camperson is a liaison between camp and your congregations. They are our ambassadors, regularly promoting camp news. Each synod congregation is asked to send a representative to this event to learn more about Mount Luther. Campersons will get Camel Bucks to the camp store for all those who attend from their congregation!

Wild and Free at CML

The homeschool group, Wild and Free, started using Mount Luther grounds in late 2018 as a place to gather during the winter months. The usual spot they gathered on Fridays for outdoor exploration was not available in the winter.

Well, this fall, their old home was not available, and they decided to come to us year-round. So, every Friday, except the last Friday of the month, families that are involved in the group visit camp. They meet at the Bottom of the Field fire circle, hike the grounds, and do nature education. And they eat lunch here.

“We all really appreciate the opportunity to meet regularly at the camp. The kids and adults are having an amazing time. There is so much to see, discover, and enjoy,” said Jen Duperon, one of the parents. She added, “Everyone is really enjoying exploring. We find something new like a snakeskin, salamanders, skink, turtles, deer, every time we come!”

Camp is happy to host this group and share our surroundings with these young explorers!

Camp Mount Luther Sunday

Transfiguration Sunday, February 14, 2021, has been designated by the Upper Susquehanna Synod Council to be recognized each year as “Mount Luther Sunday” to help promote outdoor ministries in the synod. We hope all of our congregations will join in celebrating outdoor ministries by offering financial support, by keeping the camp staff in prayer, and by participating in the numerous events and activities this ministry offers.
GROW in the Snow Theme:
The Good Book

All youth in 6-12th grade and their youth leaders are invited to attend this synod youth retreat, tentatively set for March 4-6, 2021. The theme of this year’s will be around scripture. Experience your Creator, play winter games and find refreshment in the peace of camp in winter. The retreat is from Friday night to Saturday afternoon, but there is an option for youth and leaders to come just for the day on Saturday. Cost is $60 (whole program) or $40 (Saturday only). Each registered group should provide one adult (21 or over) for every seven youth and at least one adult for each gender represented. Cabin assignments will be made based on available adults and number of youth attending. Contact chad@campmountluther.org with questions. A flyer and registration form will be available after the first of the year.

Camp Benefits from George & Doris Robinson Memorial Golf Tournament

Proceeds from this annual tournament, held in September, came to Mount Luther. Director Chad Hershberger was there to help at the Hole in One Contest all day and at the end of the day, they presented us with a check for $20,000. On a Facebook post, the family said, “Camp Mount Luther is a cause the Robinson family could get behind not only because of their need (NO campers in 2020❤️), but because the camp is near and dear to many of us. A large portion of the family members in this family attended the beloved camp as far back as the 1960s!” We thank them for their generosity and are grateful for this gift!

Straight From the Camel’s Mouth

By Kyros T. Camel

In this season of thankfulness and preparation, we are grateful for so much this year at camp. As we look ahead and plan for 2021, we know it will be different, but we hope we can start to return to some new normal and make more memories that last!

Two fundraisers were held in November that will help our ministry as we move into the second fiscal year of the pandemic. The first ever Lutheran Outdoor Ministries’ Run4Camp was held on November 1. We had 16 runners/walkers/bikers who raised funds for CML. Seven of our participants were also part of the Facebook Live broadcast that afternoon. We were able to raise about $3,700 for Mount Luther as part of this event.

Our Evening at Shade Mountain was a success, despite the pandemic precautions and a smaller crowd than usual. We raised about $1,800 that night and the subsequent wine sales that week. About 20 people attended in-person and enjoyed food and music.

This year’s Advent Appeal is underway. Please see the letter attached to this newsletter and consider an end-of-year gift to help support what we do at camp. It’s been an unusual year, but it has been made great thanks to the support from all of our friends.
Dear Friends of Camp Mount Luther:

_The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.” --Luke 2:20_

Greetings of peace and joy to you this blessed Advent season, a time for us to celebrate new beginnings and the hope that is Jesus, the Word of God made flesh. This summer made me feel like the shepherds in the Christmas story. For three weeks, I was part of a returning staff team who did leadership training, service work, and developed Virtual CML that we did since on-site camp was cancelled due to COVID-19. One of my favorite memories was our first live campfire. The energy from the staff was electric, both on camera and behind the scenes. We were ecstatic to see all the people watching us. This was a hope-filled moment when we knew we had found new ways to grow our camp community.

This past summer, my fifth on staff, was unlike any other for us at Mount Luther, and for people all around the world. And while it was different, there was so much good that came out of new opportunities. Not having campers at camp was strange, but they were virtually present in our hearts, minds, and actions, as well as in online comments and pictures. We felt our camp community growing stronger even through the physical separation and celebrated that. Camp continued in new ways!

In our ever-changing world, it is evident that our future church needs to set new goals and expand our horizons to share the love of Christ in new ways. The time that the summer staff spent together this summer was an opportunity not only to provide online programming for campers and adults, but also helped the staff discern future programming and consider how to share the camp experience with more campers for years to come. Although it was very disappointing that we were unable to have campers on site this summer, it forced us to consider new ways to share Christ and plant seeds.

Won’t you join with us to help continue that work in 2021? It’s because of the generosity of people like you that the camp has been able to ride this wave during the pandemic. Your generous gift now will make it possible for us to continue our commitment to providing a Christian camping experience to our campers no matter the circumstances. Your gift, no matter the size, will help provide opportunities for children, youth, young adults, and families to grow in their faith and be connected to one another, nature, and God.

God’s blessings to you and your family during now and always!

Noah Roux, 2020 Mount Luther Summer Staff
2021 First Third Appeal

This year, the Camp Mount Luther Board decided to budget in thirds and appeal to our friends to help us meet the financial needs of our outdoor ministry. So, from now until the end of April, we estimate that to continue to provide ministry through salaries, operating overhead, and normal costs, we need to raise **$135,000**. That will allow us to do our ministry without relying on program fees that normally support us. Be part of this effort from the start with a gift to Camp Mount Luther this holiday season!

HOLIDAY GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

Are you having a hard time finding just the right gift for a loved one’s stocking? You can make a donation in honor or memory of someone as an alternative gift purchase. Please mark which item number you’d like your money to go toward. If you’d like, please request a gift card acknowledging the donation and put it in their stocking!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AF-1</td>
<td>One Staff Shirt or help maintain the ropes course for two campers</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF-2</td>
<td>Extra supplies for one camper</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF-3</td>
<td>Promotional and postage expenses for one camper</td>
<td>$20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF-4</td>
<td>Staff First Aid and CPR Training</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF-5</td>
<td>General summer supplies</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF-6</td>
<td>Utilities cost per day</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF-7</td>
<td>Cost for the summer curriculum</td>
<td>$325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF-8</td>
<td>Annual cost for our website and cost of medical supplies</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF-9</td>
<td>Vehicle fuel and maintenance for camper transportation</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF-10</td>
<td>Adopt a Staff Member! Donate expenses for one staff member</td>
<td>$2,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF-00</td>
<td>Donation toward the annual fund</td>
<td>Any amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOUSE</td>
<td>Donation toward the Campership Fund</td>
<td>Any amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BATH</td>
<td>Donation toward a potential new bathhouse for Maple Village</td>
<td>Any amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENDOW</td>
<td>Donation toward the Endowment Fund, which supports us through annual program and facility enhancements. Increasing the fund’s principal will increase the annual distribution. Invest in Mount Luther’s future.</td>
<td>Any amount</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Ways to Help:

**Thrivent Choice** is a charitable grant program that give eligible Thrivent Financial members the power to recommend Thrivent Financial distribute some of its charitable funds each year to Camp Mount Luther or other enrolled 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations. To learn more about Thrivent Choice, visit Thrivent.com/thriventchoice or call 800-847-4836.

Through **Thrivent Action Teams**, you can apply with Thrivent Financial to lead a volunteer team in a one-time fundraiser, service activity, or educational event. Gather your friends and help us do service work at camp. Contact Chad Hershberger, who keeps a list of ideas for Action Teams.

**Planned Giving** and the services of the Central PA Gift planner are available to help you arrange planned gifts and estate gifts. For more information, contact the camp office.