

THE 

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LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

LET'S
GO TO

*Bible
Camp!*





THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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WHO IS THIS LORD OF MINE?

BY RACHEL MATTSON

"I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God" (Isaiah 45:5).

A

statement of power.
A statement of love.
A statement of reality.
A statement of victory.

Between the chapters of Isaiah 45 and 46 there are nearly a dozen references to the Lord being the only God and none existing besides Him. This repetition causes me to pay more attention and ask the question, "Who is this God?"

He is the LORD, the One who causes the sun to rise and who sets it in place. The One who created the light and separated it from the darkness. The One who stretched out the heavens and placed out the starry host. The One who created the earth and formed it to be inhabited with people. The one who provided everlasting salvation for all mankind. He is the only LORD and there is no other! (Isaiah 45)

In the midst of these amazing facts about God I am reminded of some facts about me. My heart does not always believe that He is the only God and so it clings to other gods. The god of money, the god of comparison, the god of comfort, the god of pleasure, the god of reputation, the god of power, the god of perfection, the god of security, the god of control ... and I'm afraid the list could go on and on. There are other lords ruling my heart, and my thoughts, actions, and attitudes prove it. But they all leave me empty. Why wouldn't I give my heart to the God who can save it? Who is this God? These are daily questions that drive me to know

God more through His Word.

The Psalms continually encourage us to look to the LORD and believe that He is the only One who can give us what our hearts really need.

- "Find rest, O my soul, in God alone" (Psalm 62:1). Does your heart believe it?
- "My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me" (Psalm 63:8). Does your heart know it?
- "For you are great and do wondrous deeds; You alone are God" (Psalm 86:10). Does your heart see it?

He is the only One who can save us from giving our hearts to another. Apart from Him it just doesn't work! "For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty, and awesome God who shows no partiality and takes no bribe" (Deuteronomy 10:17). He is the one who can work faith in our hearts so that we can believe He is who He says He is!

"I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God."

Rest in this statement of power for He has defeated sin, death, and the devil.

Receive this statement of love for He cares who rules and captures your heart.

Reflect on this statement of reality, that He is God Almighty and yet provides a way for you to know Him.

Rejoice in this statement of victory, that He has won and will reign forever as the King of kings and the Lord of lords!

*Mattson is a member of Our Saviour's Lutheran,
Thief River Falls, Minn.*



Generational and eternal



By Tim Fugleberg

he district camps of the AFLC have touched my life as I'm sure they have for so many others. I know I couldn't possibly describe how deeply connected I am to them. The impact has been generational and eternal.

In the early '80s my maternal grandparents, Lawrence and Sylvia Dahlgren, donated land for what became the Wilderness Camp near Lake Park, Minn. As a kid, I remember camping in our green, canvas tent and carrying folding chairs to the open-air worship area. It has changed quite a bit since then with multiple buildings making things more comfortable, but tenting is still a great option.

I was a camper my entire childhood at Galilee Bible camp on Lake Bronson, Minn. The camp in the summer and the district retreats fill more memories than I can count. I would pack for camp weeks in advance, sure to bring a disposable camera, snacks, and mosquito spray! There was always a rush of excitement being reunited with great friends and scrambling to get the best room in the dorm. I remember the fun of playing basketball, soccer, and ping pong. The long walks from the camp to the public beach were never complete without a detour to jump off the T-dock along the way. Canteen treats and campfires were the best. Even KP was fun if you were assigned with the right crew.

Camp was always fun, and it was even more transformational. So many Bible school summer teams, AFLC pastors, and other volunteers invested their time, nourishing my growing faith. I still remember praying with my counselor Blair Johnson as I committed my life to Christ on the cement floor of the Joshua dorm. Knowing that others from camp were going to Bible school helped solidify my decision to attend, as well.

Galilee took on a different meaning to my life this last November. My dad, Tom Fugleberg, died tragically while volunteering his time at the camp. I can't describe how difficult and painful this loss has been. It is probably natural and even expected that I would struggle with accepting God's plan in a situation like this. It would be dishonest to say that I have complete peace with losing Dad, but there is no question that it is meaningful that he returned to the Lord just a short walk away from the chapel where he was born again. He too had attended camp as a child. The impact Galilee had on his life was passed down to me, and in just a few years my three sons will be campers, as well.

Fugleberg is a member of Rose Free Lutheran, Roseau, Minn.

B

By Jonathan Anderson

ack in Bible times, when Jacob camped under the stars one night, God spoke to him in a dream. In response, Jacob declared, “Surely the LORD is in this place” (Genesis 28:16), and he made a vow to God. Similarly, Bible camps in our time have often been marked by personal and life-changing encounters with God.

Perhaps not surprisingly, family Bible camp among American Lutherans originated with a man who had a personal encounter with God. Struck with conviction of sin one night at 31 years old, Enoch Scotvold met Him who is “able to save to the uttermost” (Hebrews 7:25). Desiring that others meet Jesus too, Scotvold became a lay evangelist. In that role, he also helped transplant the Bible conference model from Europe to North America in 1917. “Camrose Week” brought together hundreds of eager Christians each year from Alberta, Canada, and beyond for eight days of Bible study, preaching, and fellowship. Twenty years later, again through Scotvold’s vision, the Minneapolis-based Lutheran Evangelistic Movement (LEM) was formed and began spreading Bible conferences across the U.S. The most popular of these, the Deeper Life Conference, quickly grew from 1939 beginnings into the quintessential Bible camp for many Lutherans. There, thousands of all ages encountered God in a fresh and powerful way. Among the reasons for this, several stand out.

First, Deeper Life was a place of rest. For its first 25 years, the camp was held at Mission Farms on Medicine Lake (now Missions Inc., just northwest of the AFLC campus in Plymouth). Still outside the bustling city at that time, the grounds boasted natural beauty and picturesque lodges, cottages, and other accommodations (now mostly gone) that offered quiet retreat from the hectic pace of life. But the purpose of this respite was much more than just physical. It was when people got away from the busyness of life that they had space to hear God more clearly. With daily duties and distractions left behind and a week devoted to focusing on God’s Word, people had greater opportunities for a meeting with Jesus as the Holy Spirit revealed Him.

Second, people encountered God at Deeper Life Camp because, as its name indicated, the deeper Christian life was emphasized. Throughout the morning sessions (separate for adults, youth, and children) and the evening services, priority was given to sanctification, victory in daily life, Christian service, and the second coming.

For example, during a morning session in the majestic stone chapel, Pastor A. W. Knock explained, “If you are a Christian, then the Christ who saved you from the guilt of sin is able to save you from the bondage or power of sin.”

And in an evening sermon in the spacious Tabernacle, Pastor Evald Conrad declared, “The coming of the King is near at hand. To the world He will come as a thief ..., but to us He comes as the Bridegroom.”

Such messages, combined with exuberant congregational singing and warm fellowship, had a life-changing effect.



“We were assured of our salvation and Jesus became very real to us,” rejoiced one young couple.

Another person testified, “Through the searching, Christ-centered, Spirit-filled messages ..., there came a surging uplift that has not left me since.”

After 25 years at Mission Farms—with expansion to three weeks and attendance often reaching 2,000 on evenings and weekends—Deeper Life was forced to relocate when that conference center closed. Subsequently, the camp convened at the Lake Koronis Assembly Grounds in Paynesville, Minn., where it continued in the same spirit and power.

At Koronis, a third reason why people encountered God remained evident: the evangelistic message. The story of one camper in the late 1960s illustrates this well. She was only 11, yet she came lacking assurance of salvation,

Deeper Life CAMP



hating her younger brother, and being troubled by pride and selfishness in her life. The morning pre-teen sessions got her attention first; they talked about real-life problems and a faith in Jesus that was personal, not just intellectual. By Friday, she knew what she needed: Jesus.

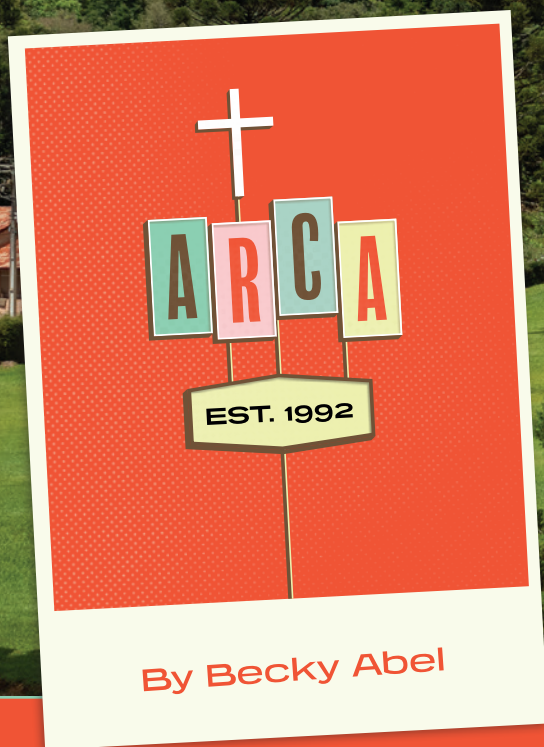
That evening in the towering, rustic Tabernacle, Pastor Carl Johansson concluded his sermon, "Jesus is waiting with arms open wide. Won't you come to Him?" With tears in her eyes and an approving nod from her father, the girl walked down to the altar and received Jesus as her Savior. And her life from then on, although not without struggles, was joyously different.



Fifty years later, this girl—now near retirement age—returned to Koronis to reflect. Deeper Life Camps had ended about 20 years earlier. The Tabernacle was gone. But standing there on its remaining asphalt floor, she distinctly felt, just as she had at age 11, "Surely the LORD is in this place." And she

praised Him for His work in her heart.

Anderson, a freelance Lutheran historian, is a member of St. Paul's Free Lutheran, Fargo, N.D. He can be contacted at jonathandanderson567@gmail.com. Top photo: attendees of the 1947 Deeper Life Conference. Center photo: A session in the Missions Farms chapel, 1948.



From youth, Bible camp has been an important part of my life and my husband, Paul's, life, as well. Following God's call to be church-planting missionaries in Brazil, we enthusiastically incorporated into our ministry the tradition of planning camps for children and teens during the summer and winter vacation periods. For the first seven years of our ministry, we coordinated trips to a Bible camp 300 miles away in Campo Mourão, making every effort to help youths experience God's presence in a different setting, away from the distractions of everyday life.

We dreamed of one day having a camp closer to home. In July 1991, Paul eyed an advertisement for a farm for sale 17 miles outside of Curitiba. The following day we took a leisurely drive away from the busy city to a rural area with rolling hills and small farms. The property was picturesque and the view spectacular. We enjoyed taking a look at the little prefab cabin and small caretaker's cabin before touring the "eyesore" on the property—a large brick rabbit barn 160 feet by 30 feet. As the real estate agent tried to take attention away from the ugly barn, we were already imagining how the building could easily be transformed into a retreat center with dorms at each end and a chapel and

dining hall in the middle. There was plenty of space for ball fields and woods galore for hiking on the 21-acre property. What a find!

We only had one problem—no money. That afternoon, in an encounter with the owners of the place, we received an unbelievable offer to trade our home in the city for their property in the country. By the end of the day, we were proud owners of a beautiful farm, and our life was changed forever. Only God can orchestrate circumstances in such perfect precision.

We moved to the farm in January 1992 and donated half of the property with the big rabbit barn to form a non-profit organization named the ARCA. That first year we witnessed the outpouring of miraculous provisions for transforming the rabbit barn into a camp building. Donations and volunteers appeared regularly to prepare the camp building in time for a Free Lutheran Youth Convention in September 1992, when 200 people gathered to praise God for His faithfulness in making a dream come true. Unforgettable!

One of the first volunteers was Joel, a recent convert to Christ, who came to help prepare the camp for the first retreat. He grew in his faith as he worked with Paul day



by day. We planned events at the ARCA and invited local youths to participate. Marilda was among the group of interested youths who came to check out the new people in town. She came to know Jesus through the camp ministry and got better acquainted with Joel. Others in the community came to Christ, and we began meeting regularly at the ARCA for Bible study, worship, and evangelistic outreaches. Soon a Free Lutheran Congregation was established in the town of Bateias.

Joel and Marilda's wedding was the first held at the ARCA. Eventually, Joel studied to become a pastor and has served our local congregation ever since. Now his son Lucas is part of the praise and worship team and serves as a camp counselor. This is just one testimony of lives transformed through camp ministry.

Since that first rustic retreat many improvements have been made on the camp, including a large gymnasium and a chalet for families. Many different church groups have enjoyed renting the facilities when we are not using the space. For 28 years we have planned camps for our Free Lutheran people and have used the ARCA for retreats, vacation Bible school, and other events. People grow in their

relationships with one another, with their counselors and pastors, and with the Lord. Our camps are very exciting events with lots of competition to encourage enthusiastic participation. We usually divide the campers into two or three larger groups, subdivided into groups with a small camper/counselor ratio. They compete in everything from Bible memorization to sports, and from cleaning their rooms to theatrical and musical presentations. At the end of the children's camps we usually have a presentation for the parents so that they can get a glimpse into the great week spent at camp. This includes singing, reciting memorized Bible verses, team cheers, and songs. It's quite exciting! We have lots of fun while doing the most important work in this world—leading people to Jesus.

Hundreds of lives are touched through this ministry every year as people get away from the distractions and busyness of everyday life and are immersed in the beauty of God's creation and in the teaching of His Word. The ARCA is a dream come true!

Abel is an AFLC missionary serving near Campo Largo, Brazil.



LIFE AND
Adventure
CAMP

SLOVAKIA



By Heather Olson

As leaders, we arrived on the mountain early Sunday afternoon. By mid-afternoon, campers had begun to appear as well, looking around shyly while keeping their distance from each other. It did not take long, however, for a group to begin kicking a ball around. Soon a group game was called to order.

“Everyone partner up and get in a circle.”

The game consisted of racing another duo around the circle to see who would get to the safe spot first while holding hands with a partner. My partner and I were tagged and off we ran around the circle, determined to be the first duo to safety. While rounding the circle of participants, I felt a foot tangle with mine and instantly I was flat on the grass with the wind knocked out of me. A camp leader quickly ran over and told me to sit out the rest of the game.

I held up a finger to say, “No, hold on,” as I tried to catch my breath. When I could take the deep breath I desperately needed, I said, “Give me a minute. I’m good.” I rejoined the game and thus began a week of active outdoor games, hiking, indoor games, tie dying t-shirts, worship and prayer times, small groups, large groups, movie night, campfires, and dormitory living with 40 teenagers.

It was July 2019, and the camp setting was near Púchov, Slovakia, on the mountain border with the Czech Republic. These ambitious, outgoing, funny, and exasperating campers were Slovakian teenagers, most of whom came from non-churched or Catholic homes where divorce, alcoholism, and abuse were common. I was a camp leader serving with Spiritual Orphans Network (SON, formerly EEMN) for a week of Life and Adventure Teen Camp along with co-leaders from the United States, Slovakia, Germany, and Switzerland. This international team came together to serve alongside local Lutheran churches.

Teen camp in Slovakia is really no different than Bible camp in America, except for the obvious language barrier, different food selections, and traipsing through the woods and mountains on less than desirable trails—at times in the dark. The goal of the Slovakian Lutheran Church is to draw in young people and share with them the truth of Jesus Christ. Camp is just one way to do that. SON partners with local churches in former communist countries to present week-long camps (in English and through translators), with the goal of making disciples. The church wants these young people to hear the gospel and have an opportunity to respond to the work of the Holy Spirit. Parents want their children at camp to learn English, a key to future success. The teenagers want to come because camp is fun, and they get to reconnect with friends and make new ones.

As I rejoined the game that first afternoon, I remember thinking it would have been easy to sit out. I am not anywhere close to being a teenager anymore and group games are not my



jam. But my stubbornness caused me to push myself to rejoin them. I needed to earn the respect of those Slovak teenagers if I was going to have any chance of building relationships that allowed me to share Jesus in a way that would be heard and received.

During the week, many conversations were had between campers and leaders. One 13-year-old girl was always smiling, laughing, and loudly singing the worship songs, despite growing up being physically abused. One afternoon she had a song about God’s love running through her head and told me that was bad because if she went home and sang it, her mom would be mad at her.

One teenage boy snuck out every night to smoke cigarettes. He got to talking to leader, a star runner at her high school, because he wanted to be a runner. She encouraged him to quit smoking to better help him run. He revealed to her that everyone in his family smoked and he knew that when he went home, he would not be able to fight their influences.

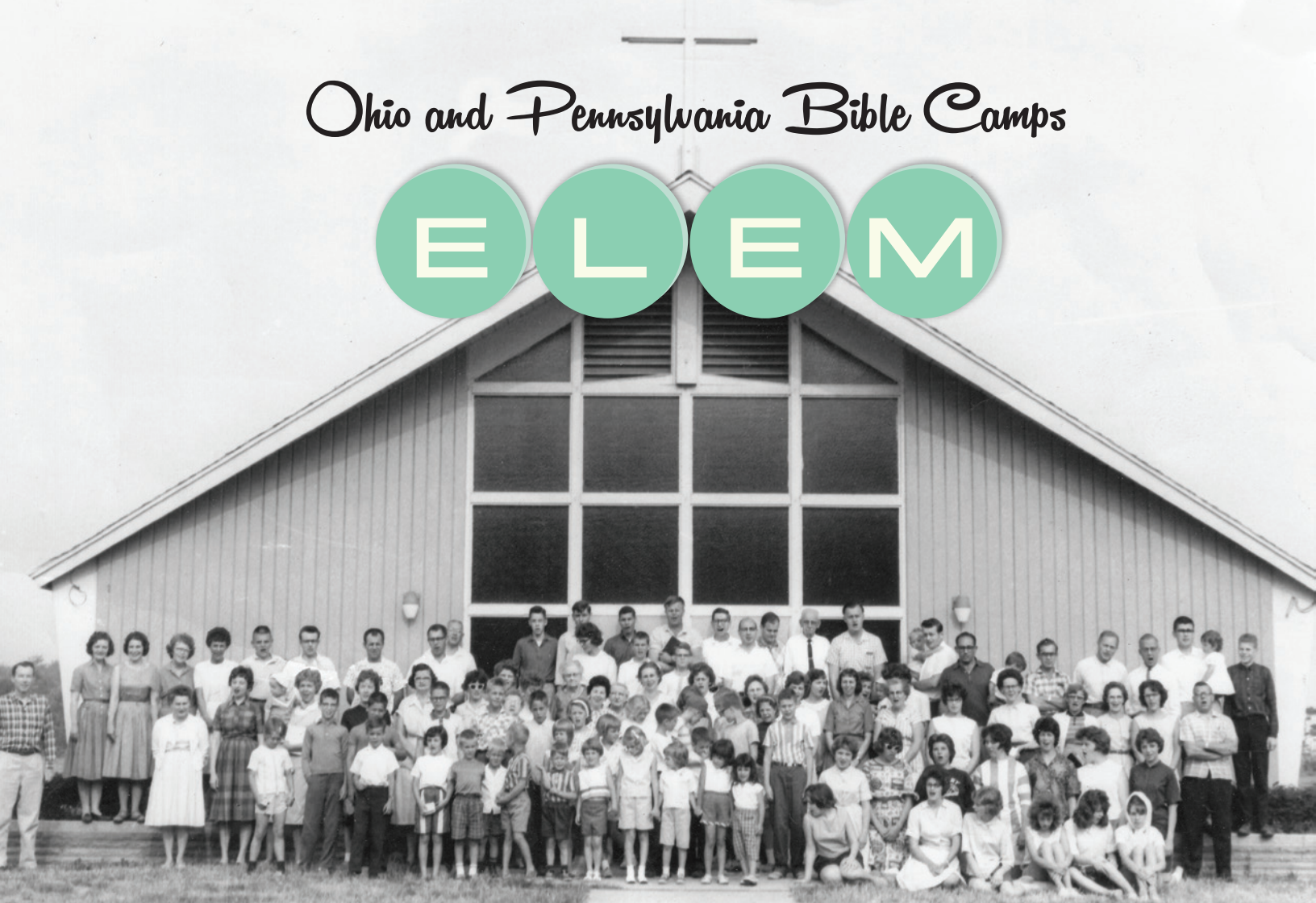
One lovely girl, Catholic by birth, was told by her family that she had to go to confession when she returned from camp because it was a Protestant camp. It also would not hurt to bake a cake as penance.

Others in my small group questioned just about everything from church, to traditions, and a relationship with God or others, because they did not feel comfortable asking such questions at home. One of my small group gals told me she once went to a church youth gathering where they sang songs, played games, and heard stories from the Bible. A family member told her it was a cult—it was the local Lutheran church.

Teen camp in Slovakia is not much different than Bible camp in America: a gathering of people from different walks of life, with a desire to have fun, explore nature, and connect with others. It is, however, possibly the only opportunity these young people have to hear the message of Jesus Christ and the saving work of the gospel.

Olson, counselor at the Free Lutheran Bible College, is a member of Hauge Lutheran, Kenyon, Minn.

Ohio and Pennsylvania Bible Camps



By Beverly Enderlein

Our Lord Jesus gave one of His most-loved promises when He said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6).

Come back in time with me to the 1960s in northeastern Ohio and let me tell you about God’s beautiful work among Lutheran people who were hungry for a personal relationship with Him.

To Midwestern families, a summer’s stay at Bible camp was a respected tradition which provided rest in a beautiful setting, the blessings of Bible study, evangelistic sermons, and gatherings for children and youths who hungered for God’s Word and rich Christian fellowship. Many Midwestern Lutherans were drawn to Deeper Life Camps through the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement (LEM) (see pages 4-5).

God is not limited to location, and He brings revival

wherever He wills. The prayers of many earnest Christians were answered when LEM Evangelist J.O. Gisselquist was led to mentor a group of Christians in Ohio. After a midwinter Bible conference of solid Bible teaching, the newly formed Ohio committee of lay people¹ planned their first Bible camp. They invited speakers² who would direct campers to a personal faith in Jesus Christ. As they sensed God’s leading, they committed to the rental of one week in June 1962 at Camp Luther, North Kingsville, Ohio, a beautiful, forested site of 66 acres along Lake Erie.

Approximately 100 campers attended—a good answer to prayer. Were these families hungry for the righteousness clearly found in God’s Word? Would God keep His promise of filling them with Himself? Yes. There was such a hungering for God’s Word in that camp setting that people surrendered to the gospel and testified of new

life in Christ. Pastor Gisselquist later told his Minneapolis staff that people at the camp were “so spiritually hungry, you could feed them with scoop shovels.” They planned a 1963 midwinter Bible conference to refresh believers and organized a second Ohio Bible Camp for the following summer of 1963.

June 1963 brought a 50 percent increase of hungry souls to the second Ohio Bible Camp, and the same pattern of successful Bible teaching brought forth joyous results. The morning hour was Bible study, usually verse by verse, emphasizing personal application, then discussion hour, followed by a Deeper Life Hour which promoted Christian living in practical ways. Children and teens attended their own study and application sessions and all enjoyed afternoon recreation. Entire families looked forward to a testimony hour before the evening evangelistic service, which always concluded with an opportunity to respond personally to Jesus.

Campers responded day after day. God’s Word changed lives. Campers of various ethnicities and from various age groups functioned together in perfect harmony. The hungering for Scripture was so strong that speakers gladly offered additional hours of instruction in the afternoons. God answered many prayers a result of these first Bible camps. People returned to their homes, congregations, work, and schools with enthusiastic commitment to serving the Lord.

The lay leaders of the committee officially called themselves the Eastern Lutheran Evangelistic Movement. When people have received the gospel, they long to share it with others! They made a courageous decision to increase the spread of the gospel to northeast Ohio and eastern Pennsylvania by sponsoring a weekly radio broadcast by Pastor Herbert Franz of Cloquet, Minn., whose evangelistic preaching would surely feed the hungry souls. Two men with radio electronics skills, Dan Antal and Gene Enderlein (my husband), were selected to prepare the weekly sermon tapes for broadcast. They spent countless hours preparing the tapes to be suitable for airing on a local radio station. Gene wryly remarked years afterward that he had to listen to Herb Franz preach “Religious but Lost” a dozen times until he was soundly converted.

The following summer of 1964 brought an even larger attendance to the third Bible camp, held at Camp Laurelville, west of Somerset, Pa. More gracious pastors with reputations for soul-winning and winsome preaching joined the ranks of leaders who delighted in ministering to this group of hungry Christians, which had grown to include people from southern Ohio and areas of western Pennsylvania. The Eastern LEM Bible camps continued through the next two decades but waned for lack of strong leadership after the 1980s.

Who can adequately measure the changed lives and gospel impact due to Bible camps? Only God knows.

From that early founding of camps have come ministries and faithful Christian servants who continue to serve Christ today. Emerson Anderson, an earnest Christian man from Cleveland, read about the camp in the LEM magazine *Evangelize*. He traveled with his family to our area for a rich spiritual experience and served for 25 years as director of Eastern LEM. He later attended the Free Lutheran Seminary and became an AFLC pastor. His son Jonathan Anderson is a respected author who has chronicled these people and events, the formation of the LEM and additional Lutheran historical writings, including *Our Fathers Saw His Mighty Works*. Dan Antal’s son and grandson became AFLC pastors.

As a young couple from suburban Cleveland at the time, we can attest that our spiritual hungering was met by the person of Jesus through faithful teaching of His Word. Gene and I discovered that Bible camp would provide the setting for our lives to be dramatically changed by the Spirit of God. Through the influence of Pastor Harold and Jerri Libert of southern Ohio, who introduced us to Wycliffe missionary Cecil Hawkins, we entered a time of study and preparation to be accepted to JAARS/Wycliffe Bible Translators. And through the godly influence of Pastor Herb and Sylvia Franz, we were led to the AFLC pastoral ministry, became FLBCS instructors, and served in world mission leadership.

Jesus has been faithfully filling many with righteousness. His Holy Spirit is powerfully at work through God’s Word during a Bible Camp experience. Try attending Bible camp this summer! Be sure to come with a hungry heart.

Enderlein is a member of Hope Lutheran, Minneapolis, Minn.



ABOVE: Pastor Harry Fullilove (one of the camp speakers) and Gene and Beverly Enderlein at Laurelville Camp and Church Center in Mt. Pleasant, Pa., in 1964.

LEFT: The entire camp group in front of the chapel at Camp Luther on Lake Erie in 1963.

1. Laymen who led that original fellowship and shared leadership in future years are the families of Emerson Anderson, Harold Walck, Dan Antal, Gordon Peterson, Harold Libert, Mauno Lehti, and many more.

2. Some of the pastors who taught the Word of God in the first three formative years of the Ohio/Pennsylvania Bible camps were J.O. Gisselquist, Theodore Hax (California LBI), Harry Fullilove (Bronx, N.Y.), Clair Jennings, Harvey Carlson, Herbert Franz, and Carroll Satre (Minneapolis).



By Ilona Fouks

For generations, the AFLC has hosted summer Bible camps, which are an effective tool for introducing the gospel and renewing, reviving, and growing one's relationship with Christ.

Summer Bible camp became an integral part of my life as a young teen. When I attended my first camp, I was a first-year confirmand at Scandia Free Lutheran Church in rural Brooten, Minn. Our church was in the West Central Minnesota District which meant district retreats and summer camp were often held at Faith Haven Camp on Eagle Lake.

I didn't choose to go to my first summer camp, rather, I felt coerced. You see, I was an extremely introverted teen with some social anxiety. Most kids I knew were excited to go to summer camp, where they met up with their friends from other youth groups in the district. I went, at least the first time, because it was a confirmation requirement. Thankfully, there were about eight in confirmation that year, so I didn't go alone.

The grounds of Faith Haven Camp lie on the north shore of Eagle Lake. As you enter the campus, there is a ball field and then the other buildings laid out along the shore. Starting at one end is the girl's and boy's dorms, a bathhouse, recreation center, and a chalet building that housed the dining hall below and the chapel up above.

Being a bit obsessive-compulsive, I was relieved by the daily schedule laid out for the week. There was an air of excitement at camp. Everyone anticipated making and renewing friendships, studying the Word, singing, praying, and playing. There were often missionary families and the AFLBS Ambassador team in attendance. Everyone was eager to meet with and talk to them.

The first morning, I was startled awake at 5 a.m. by hoots, hollers, and splashes—the sunrise swim. It was definitely for the brave since Eagle Lake was deep and chilly, even in June and July. Not finding an ice-cold plunge inviting, I opted for a hot shower and breakfast. Mornings were filled with group Bible studies covering a few topics usually coinciding with that year's theme. The teachers were district pastors, lay people, and youth directors.

The afternoons were for free time and recreation. Swimming, canoeing, and water skiing topped the list. Indoor and outdoor basketball and volleyball, along with ping pong and softball, completed the list. A few night owls and usually their counselors fit in a nap, too.

Supper in the dining hall was delicious after outdoor play. Then we headed upstairs for the evening service, which was presented by a designated speaker for the week. I remember Pastor Franz, Pastor Michael Brandt, and Verle Dean.

We sang hymns and often special musical numbers were featured. I loved the music and singing scriptural songs about Jesus and His love. They were all new to me. The practical Bible teachings and the talk of personal relationship touched my heart.

The afterglow was even more profound. Gathered around the campfire, my mind was set a whirl by the singing, praying, and the sharing of Scripture and personal testimonies.

Back at the dorm for bedtime devotions, I couldn't silence the knocking on my heart. But I was afraid. How could a great God care about me? Because of my quiet compliance, people thought I was a good girl. I knew I wasn't. Inside I was selfish and rebellious. I wasn't good enough to be a part of God's family.

The week quickly went by, each day with more studying, more truth, more examples played out by all those in the camp that Jesus wanted a relationship with me. So, on Friday night in my bunk, after the lights went out and everyone drifted off to sleep, I repented and invited Jesus into my heart and life.

In the years that followed, Bible camp became a key part of my Christian life. I went from lost camper, to saved camper, to counselor, and over the years sent my own children to camp.

Summer Bible camp is an opportunity to come away and gather with others to study the Word and have fellowship, to share life with and refresh each other. What a joy to do this in so many different camp settings where we can rest, refresh, and recreate. I was privileged to participate in some of the first camps and retreats at the Association Retreat Center. God has given the AFLC a wonderful place to carry on the camp ministry. My children have made lifelong friends and introduced some of them to Jesus at camp. As a family, we have enjoyed several family camps at the ARC. Family camp is such a blessing to the younger children. They have a safe place to meet and play with other children their age.

I think camp ministry will be even more vital in light of the pandemic. Believers now, more than ever, need fellowship and refreshing. It is also a great opportunity to reach out to those who need Christ and are in a place of hopelessness.

Pray that summer Bible camp will continue to be a time to rest, revive, and renew.

Fouks is a member of Amery Free Lutheran Church, Amery, Wis.

I MET JESUS AT BIBLE CAMP

THE SUNRISE SWIM



SINGING, PRAYING,
AND PERSONAL
TESTIMONIES

GROUP BIBLE STUDIES,
EVENING SERVICES,
BEDTIME DEVOTIONS



MISSIONARIES &
AMBASSADOR
SUMMER TEAMS



AFTERNOON RECREATION

LATE-NIGHT PRAYER,
ASKING JESUS INTO MY
HEART AND LIFE



MON-DAK-ADA

Mon-Dak-Ada District Family Bible Camp is held in northwestern North Dakota. Jesus said to His disciples, “Come away by yourselves ... and rest a little while” (Mark 6:31). This is how I would describe our family camp—a place of rest. For five days each year, families can get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, and come to hear and study God’s Word and fellowship with other believers at Mon-Dak-Ada District Family Camp. It is truly a refreshing week. All are invited to come!

Our 2021 Family Camp is planned for July 25-29 at Mt. Carmel Bible Camp, 30 miles east of Minot, N.D., on Hwy 2, north of mile marker 177.

Pastor Phil Haugen is scheduled to be our morning Bible study leader, while evening messages will be shared by district pastors. Youth worker Seth Larson will lead the teens in Bible studies, and an FLBC summer team is being requested to teach the younger children.

Come, join us, and rest a while!

Pastor Rodney Johnson lives in Stanley, N.D.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Congregations in the Pacific Northwest District of the AFLC host a family Bible camp at the end of June every year at the Cedar Springs Bible Camp, just east of Lake Stevens, Wash. Pastor Rick Long has been elected dean of the camp since recorded history, with Pastor Craig Johnson assisting. The camp usually hosts about 250 in attendance, including parents and kids, from the 12 district congregations. Morning Bible studies are taught by district pastors; FLBC teams lead vacation Bible school for youths, followed by afternoon recreation and evening worship. Evening speakers have included Pastors Wade Mobley, Mike Brandt, Eric Westlake, and others.

Given all of the restrictions in the state of Washington at the time of publication, there will likely be no Bible camp in Washington this year again.

Pastor Cal Willard serves Calvary Lutheran, Everett, Wash.

ILLINOIS

Members of AFLC congregations in the Illinois District used to meet at Cedar Lake Ministries camp in Cedar Lake, Ind. Dating back to 2008, the camp boasted a good representation from a number of the congregations. With dwindling participation in recent years, the camp board made the decision to host a one-day camp in 2020 at Freedom Lutheran in Ottawa, Ill. A date for this year’s camp has yet to be set and is dependent on the speaker’s schedule.

Patrick Lohse serves Bethlehem Lutheran in Morris, Ill.



BETHANY BIBLE CAMP

Grace Lake, Bemidji, Minn.

bethanybiblecamp.com

The history of Bethany Bible Camp runs deep. The Lord has been the Solid Rock on which it has been built and continues in ministry. “He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken” (Psalm 62:2).

The first lot of our property was purchased for \$426 in September 1939. In 1941 a chapel, kitchen, and two dormitories were built. In August of that year, the first Bible camp was held at BBC. The two dormitories were occupied by the female campers and pastors’ wives. The boys and pastors set up cots in the chapel. Tables placed out under the trees provided the dining area.

Recent years have seen extensive updates to our pastors’ cabin and the start of a new bath house. The camp is owned and operated by 15 churches in the North Central Minnesota District of the AFLC. Our mission statement is “To provide an atmosphere and facility where people are established, nurtured, and equipped to be disciples of Jesus Christ.”

In the last 80 years some things have changed at BBC, but much has remained the same. The main constant throughout these years has been the Word of God. Our Bible camps are grounded in God’s Word, and for that we are thankful.

The Bible camps we offer are: junior camp (June 15-19) and senior camp (June 19-24), WMF Day (July 8), Women’s Retreat, and Men’s Retreat (Aug. 14-16). We also rent out our camp for other church camps and family reunions.

We are located at 51497 Tanager Drive, Bemidji, MN 56601 approximately 12 miles west of Bemidji on beautiful Grace Lake.

Angie Berg, a member of Bethany Free Lutheran, Bemidji, Minn., is the marketing and outreach liaison for BBC, and board member.

WILDERNESS BIBLE CAMP

Lake Park, Minn.

The AFLC Wilderness Bible Camp is located on 77 wooded acres in the beautiful lakes country of central Minnesota. Wilderness Camp provides a restful setting for renewal, fellowship, and solid biblical study.

Family Bible Camp will be held July 13-18. The schedule at family camp is relaxed, which allows for family time and fellowship with other campers and plenty of time for activities such as forest trail hikes, swimming at nearby beaches, basketball, volleyball, raspberry picking, or simply sitting around chatting. The spacious camp and outdoor facilities allowed the camp to function last year in spite of COVID-19.

The name of the facility continues to be Wilderness Bible Camp, but that is not an entirely accurate description. Over the years, the camp has continued to develop and has a long list of amenities. There are a number of sleeping rooms available for use, as well as kitchen storage, preparation, and eating facilities, a large bathhouse, RV campsites with water and electricity, and a dump station. God has truly been generous to the AFLC, as this entire camp has been established, built up, and maintained by the gifts and labor of individuals.

The use of the camp is also available through the whole of camping season for all AFLC pastors, members, and churches. There are no fees charged, but free-will offerings are accepted to support the ongoing work of the camp.

The camp is located 11 miles south of Lake Park, Minn. We hope that you will consider making the Wilderness Camp a part of your summer plans.

Nathan Dalager is a member of Westaker Free Lutheran, Newfolden, Minn.

PICKEREL LAKE LUTHERAN BIBLE CAMP

Pickerel Lake, Grenville, S.D.



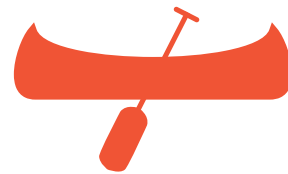
pllbc.wordpress.com

Pickerel Lake Lutheran Bible Camp (PLLBC) was started in 1940 by a group of Lutheran Free Church congregations in northeast South Dakota. Land was first leased, and then purchased, on the east side of Pickerel Lake, Day County, S.D., and the first camp was held June 18-24, 1940, with 41 campers registered. One of the two original buildings, The Cottage, is still used for storage and staff housing, and even after 80 years, the original camp bell is rung to mark a change in activity on campus.

In the early 2000s, the PLLBC Association started organizing two weeks of camps, rather than just one for all sixth through twelfth grade students. Currently, each week of camp averages 50-60 students. For 2021, senior high week, for students who have completed eighth through twelfth grades, is scheduled for June 27-July 1, and junior high week, for students who have completed fifth through seventh grades, is scheduled for July 25-30.

The Lord has continued to bless PLLBC with the donations and volunteers needed to keep the camp functioning with minimal cost to campers. The prayer is that PLLBC will continue to be a place where students can come to hear and be transformed by God's Word, build relationships with other believers, and maybe play some 9-square. You can find out more on our website or by looking up Pickerel Lake Lutheran Bible Camp on Facebook.

Liz McCarlson is a member of Faith Free Lutheran, Minneapolis.



ASSOCIATION RETREAT CENTER

East Farmington, Wis.



arc-aflc.org

The Association Retreat Center is located in west central Wisconsin, near the St. Croix River Valley. Formerly a radar base for the United States Air Force, the property was purchased by the AFLC in 1979 for \$200,000, with the vision to convert the grounds into a Bible camp. Taking on the role as the first director of the camp was Bob Dietsche, former television retailer and aerial photographer. Others who have served in this role include Ken Hokkanen, Pastor Eric Westlake, Pat Flanders, and Kirk Rautio.

The first pastor's conference was held on site in January 1980, a tradition that continued until recent years. The first family camp was held that August. Updates on existing facilities include the refurbishment of dormitories, the conversion of a bomb shelter into the Tabernacle (with a capacity of 500), and turning a mess hall into a cafeteria. Later, a small lake was dredged into a portion of the 80 acres, RV camp sites were installed, a ball field was created, a gym constructed, a small chapel and director's home built, and many more improvements. Much of the work has been completed by volunteers and many materials were donated.

The ministry of the ARC continues to focus on the Word and its theme to "Come away and rest awhile" (Mark 6:33). The camp can be rented for small or large groups. AFLC camps and retreats planned for 2021 include:

- Women's Retreat (April 23-25)
- Spring family work weekend (May 28-31)
- Onward (high school, June 27-July 1)
- FLY Zone (grades 5-8, July 18-22)
- Family Camp (August 1-7)
- Young Adult retreat (September 24-26)
- ARC Holiday Shop (November 6)

For more information about attending an AFLC camp or retreat or hosting a group at the ARC, visit their website.



EASTERN ND

For two weeks each summer, the Eastern North Dakota District of the AFLC rents the facilities of FaHoCha (Faith-Hope-Charity) Bible camp for their own youth camps. Located approximately 10 miles south of Warwick, N.D., the camp is nestled on South Lake Washington in a very beautiful setting.

Facilities include air-conditioned cabins for campers, private rooms for pastors and staff, a chapel, and an activity room. A wide variety of group games and sporting options include swimming, canoeing, softball, soccer, volleyball, Foosball, billiards, carpet pool, and much more. Superb meals are served by a top-notch kitchen staff.

Morning and evening sessions are devoted to Bible study, a worship service, and a time for sharing testimonies around a campfire. Camps planned for 2021 include:

- Teen Bible Camp (August 1-6)
Teens who have completed grades 6-12
Deans: Pastors Dennis Norby and Micah Hjermstad
Morning Bible study: District pastors
- Pre-Teen Bible Camp (August 8-12)
Those who have completed grades 3-5
Deans: Pastors Ryan Patenaude and Tom Olson
Speaker: Pastor Brian Westerbur
Morning Bible study: District Pastors

Brochures and registration forms can be obtained by contacting any of the pastors in the Eastern North Dakota District.

Lynn Kinneberg serves New Luther Valley, McVile, N.D., and Bethany Lutheran, Binford, N.D.

GALILEE BIBLE CAMP



galileebiblecampmn.org

Lying within the boundaries of Lake Bronson State Park, Galilee Bible Camp sits on 10 acres in northern Minnesota. Incorporated in 1953 and under development in the 1950s, the camp was transferred to the AFLC in 1974. Facilities include girls and boys dorms, cabins for speakers, the cook, and staff, a bathhouse, dinning hall, chapel, picnic shelter and 20 campsites. The lake is accessible via a dock. Individual congregations within the district are responsible for maintaining, cleaning, and preparing the camp for use each year.

Camps planned for 2021 include:

- Teen Bible Camp (June 22-27)
- Pre-Teen Bible Camp (June 27-July 1)
- Family Camp (July 14-18)



LAY LEADERSHIP

Thirty years ago I met a young pastor who had just taken a call to Mt. Carmel Free Lutheran in McIntosh, Minn. I was not a believer at that point in my life, but it wouldn't be long before Pastor Tom Tuura would help lead my wife and me to the Lord. It also wouldn't be long before Pastor Tuura would encourage me to be a counselor at our district Bible camp in Bemidji, Bethany Bible Camp.

As a new Christian I was still learning the basics myself. "Who am I to teach some kids about this Jesus who changed my life?" I wondered. I soon found out that the basics were exactly what the kids at camp needed to hear. Whether they came from a Christian home (which my own children would grow up in) or a rough upbringing (which I grew up in), these kids still needed to hear about Jesus Christ who died on the cross in their place for the forgiveness of their sins.

I also observed that our young district pastors were doing all of the work at camp in addition to their normal congregational roles. I saw a need for our lay people to either take over some of the leadership tasks at camp or assist. I encouraged our congregations to send their own members to camp. As of today, most of our leadership at Bethany Bible Camp is lay-led with pastors in shepherding roles.

Over the last 30 years I've seen kids come and go through our little camp. The Lord has seen to it to have me be a small part of many testimonies of His work in camper's lives. This is overwhelming to me. After all, I'm just a truck driver. What do I know? As the years have gone by, I now see why our laity is such an important part of our camp ministry. Campers expect pastors to know things about the Bible. But to hear these things from a truck driver, school teacher, nurse, stay-at-home parent, or farmer somehow makes it seem more applicable.

Personally, I've made lifelong friends with campers, parents, district pastors, and other men and women on staff. I don't know if I would have had the chance to get to know these folks without the Bethany Bible Camp ministry. In 30 years I've heard some of the best teaching from AFLC pastors who were guest speakers. That's the thing about the gospel, it's meant for all of us. Even if the sermon is directed toward young people, the old guy in the back can still learn a thing or two. He can be convicted of sin in his life where it's necessary and still be assured of his salvation.

Perhaps my favorite stories of camp are the ones of kids who have grown up and return as adults—my own included. Proverbs 22:6 comes to my mind, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he grows old he will not depart from it." Several young men and women who grew up going to Bethany Bible Camp now attend with families of their own. Some heard of Jesus for the first time there while others grew in their faith. These young people are now adult leaders at Bethany and in the AFLC at large—pastors and laity, alike. The law and gospel continue to be preached and taught faithfully to our new generations. It's humbling to be part of this legacy!

Bob Fritz is a member of Calvary Free Lutheran, Fosston, Minn.

FLY

FREE
LUTHERAN
YOUTH



"And he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new'" (Revelation 21:5).

Y

ou have, no doubt, heard the disappointing news that the FLY Convention

planned for this summer has been postponed until 2023. Yet, as tough as that news is to hear, I hope and pray it does not distract or detract from the good news that will yet be shared in 2023.

That good news is this: God is working to restore us and all things. Yes, you read that correctly. God is working to restore us and all things. That is, He has been and is working to pick us up from the fall, to breathe new life back into our dead souls, and to bring His creation back to its original glory, goodness, and beauty.

This is the work He set out to do immediately after the fall when everything was driven to chaos by sin. This is the work He continued by sending His Son to die for our sin and rise again, that we who trust in Him might find hope of salvation and life in Him. This is the work He will bring to completion when Christ returns again. And, yes, even now, although there is so

RESTORED: NOT JUST A THEME

BY PASTOR GIDEON JOHNSON

much brokenness evident in our world and so much chaos left to be put under Christ's control, our hope is sure, God's promises are true, and He is making all things new.

There are several pictures of such restoration throughout Scripture. In fact, every time God pours out His grace upon mankind, we catch a glimpse of this grand work of restoration. When God by His grace saved Noah from the flood, it was a glimpse of restoration. When God by His grace raised Joseph from the depths of prison to the head of Pharaoh's house and land, it was a glimpse of restoration. When God by His grace delivered Israel from Egypt into the Promised Land, it was a glimpse of restoration. When all creation quaked at the cross of Christ and sighed in relief at His resurrection, it was and is a glorious glimpse of restoration. When God by His grace, each day, calls out to the sun to rise and make itself known, it is a glimpse of restoration. When God by His grace raises sinners from death to life in Christ, it is a glimpse of restoration.

Members of the 2021 FLY Committee had great plans and expectations for what God would do this summer. Unfortunately, those plans changed. However, even in this, God's restorative



FLY ONE NIGHT

• July 7 •

Members of the 2021 FLY Committee have planned a one-night-only live-stream worship event for July 7. More details will be released in March.

plan does not change, and that's good news.

In the coming weeks you will be hearing about plans for a live-streamed event this summer, organized by the FLY Committee. No, it won't replace FLY, nor is it our intent. Rather, it's intended to be an opportunity for youths to come together, to hear of God's grace, and to remember, no matter what this life has in store, the Lord is at work to restore.

Johnson, who serves Hauge and Emmanuel Lutheran churches, Kenyon, Minn., is the president of the 2021 FLY Committee.

Olson accepts call as faculty

Alumnus of AFLC's Bible college and seminary programs will join faculty this summer

Members of the Board of Trustees for the Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary have announced that Dr. Nathan Olson, Savage, Minn., has accepted the call to serve as full-time faculty beginning June 1. Olson will teach a variety of classes in both the two-year Bible college program and the four-year seminary program.



Olson has served as pastor of Living Word Lutheran, Eagan, Minn., since 2017. Previously, he served Gloria Dei Free Lutheran, St. Louis, Mo., while completing his PhD in Doctrinal Theology at Concordia Seminary. He is married to Emily (Hoops, FLBC 2012). Together they have four children, Josiah (7), Caleb (5), Anna (3), and Rhoda (1). Olson is a

2015 graduate of the Free Lutheran Seminary and a 2009 graduate of the Bible college.

"Growing up in the AFLC, I have always appreciated what we have at our Schools—a training ground for life in the local congregation where we equip students with the Word of God and a Lutheran framework," said Olson. "It was at our Free Lutheran Schools where God opened my eyes to the gospel, encouraged me through a community of Christian believers, and prepared me for a life of ministry. I look forward to joining the team in proclaiming God's Word to the next generation."

Founded in 1964 by the AFLC, the Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary (FLBCS) includes a two-year, post-secondary program (FLBC) and a four-year Master of Divinity pastoral training program (FLS). FLBCS gained accreditation from the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) in 2018.

Project raises funds for Mexico missions

Members of St. Paul's Free Lutheran's women's missionary group found a unique way to raise funds for missions during a pandemic. Mary Ann Ward proposed selling a meal kit with all of the items prepackaged. The women agreed and with the help of funds from Thrivent, began planning.

Some of the women shopped for ingredients and put the meal kits together. After making a donation, members of the congregation picked up a kit and took it home for dinner.

The women chose a taco bake theme as the funds were designated for Pastor Todd and Barb Schierkolk, who serve as AFLC missionaries in Jerez, Mexico, and the Compassion Project.

"The Lord blessed this project and we raised \$1765," said Ward.



Mary Ann Ward and Linda Fugleberg sell the meal kits.



Youth Ministries hosts Youth Worker Weekends

It's always encouraging to see people gather together for the annual Youth Workers Weekends at the Association Retreat Center near Osceola, Wis. The gathering in mid-January was no exception. A wide variety of people with different backgrounds, ministry settings, and experience assembled for what has always been a weekend full of worship, fellowship, training, rest, encouragement, conversations, games, and plenty of laughter.

Emily Herset did an incredible job leading worship throughout the weekend with her team from Faith Free Lutheran (Kalispell, Mont.). Molly Barsness started the weekend's sessions off with her testimony and highlights from her ministry in Kenyon, Minn. Dr. Walt Mueller from the Center for Parent and Youth Understanding was also a highlight, sharing on Saturday morning about teenagers and anxiety. Attendees also benefited from having a time of Q&A with Mueller before lunch.

Several people took advantage of specialized coaching sessions with seasoned youth workers after lunch. Pastor Jason Holt, the director of AFLC Youth Ministries, closed our time on Saturday and Luke Long closed out the weekend on Sunday morning.

The value of this weekend extends beyond the training and coaching sessions. Spending time with other like-minded individuals is hard to quantify or briefly summarize. At the very least, it serves as an opportunity for people to be refreshed and refortified in their unique call in ministry. It's easy to feel isolated in ministry, like there's no one to really talk to or to serve as a sounding-board for thoughts or ideas. Youth Workers Weekends provides an opportunity for people to realize that they are not alone in ministry. It also allows them to form a network of accountability, ingenuity, and prayer support for when they head back home.

On behalf of the planning team, we're grateful for another terrific weekend and can't wait to see everyone back for YWW 2022.

Pastor Dan Hurner serves as the pastor of youth and family ministry at the Dalton Free Lutheran Parish, Dalton, Minn.



W

hat are your plans for June 16? You are invited to come and join us for WMF Day 2021

hosted by the Association Free Lutheran Schools campus in Plymouth, Minn. Sit back, relax, and feast on the messages that the Lord has laid on the hearts of the speakers we have lined up.

The WMF Day theme this year is, “Guard what has been entrusted to you,” and is taken from I Timothy 6:20-21 (NASB): “O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called ‘knowledge—which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.”

Members of the WMF Board are working on the schedule for the day, gathering speakers, and making plans. Our devotional time will be presented by Jeanette Berntson, our Bible study writer this year. The memorial service will be led by Jan Strand. Workshops will

PLANS MADE FOR WMF DAY

BY DEANNA LARSON & DAWN JOHNSON

be presented by Marian Christopherson, Mary Ann Ward, and Rebecca Moan.

We hold our yearly business meeting in the afternoon and will be dealing with a couple of constitution issues. We will be voting on the recommended amendment of Article V Officers Section 5 of our constitution: “Officers shall be elected for a term of three years. All officers may be eligible for re-election, but no officers shall hold the same office for more than two successive terms. The President and Communications Secretary shall be elected one year; the First Vice-President and Recording Secretary the following year; the Second Vice-President and the Treasurer the third year. Newly elected officers shall officially assume their duties at the September meeting following their election.” We will also be voting on a by-laws correction to Article 1 Section 1 to update the schools names from AFLBS to Free Lutheran Bible College (FLBC)

and AFLTS to Free Lutheran Seminary (FLS).

Speaking at the Mission Festival service this year we will be Pastor Iran Goes, a pastor from AFLC-Brazil. He was scheduled to speak last year but the COVID-19 restrictions kept him from being able to travel to the United States. Pray that all his travels will go smoothly.

We look forward to seeing you there. Please be sure to register so all plans can be carried out well. Please be in prayer for members of our national board, our speakers, and all of those involved in preparing for this time together that all that is done would be for the glory of God.

Larson, Ortonville, Minn., is the WMF communications secretary. Johnson, Wilson, Wis., is the WMF executive secretary.



Letter to the editor

I just wanted to say thank you and maybe as an encouragement to remind you of the power of the ministry in *The Lutheran Ambassador*. I was reminded of this ... during an in-person visit with an elderly member who lives in an apartment in a senior facility here in Fargo. Yesterday was the first we could visit her because of COVID restrictions since October. She held up the *Ambassador* issue that arrived yesterday and stated, "I read it from cover to cover. It is the best thing I have to read."

Especially in this time of isolation, the Lord is using your efforts and faithfulness to sustain His people.

~Pastor Peter Ward



Bleachers installed in Student Life Center

The bleachers were installed Feb. 15-18 in the Student Life Center at the Free Lutheran Bible College, Plymouth, Minn. The building is schedule for completion by the end of February.

AFLC-Canada holds Annual Conference in Cypress Hills

AFLC-Canada held its 37th annual conference Oct. 19-20, 2020, at Cypress Hills Bible Camp in Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park, bordering Alberta and Saskatchewan. Our theme was "Jesus said to them again: 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you'" (John 20:21). The evening messages focused on how God's peace and encouragement and building one another up are of utmost importance in the midst of the increasing stress and turmoil in our world. Twenty-three souls braved the weather to attend the conference.

Pastor Manfred Kurschner led the opening service and Pastor Rob Lewis shared the message. Pastor Kelly Henning, president of AFLC-Canada, officially opened the conference.

On the first day, Pastor Dave Hesje from Bethel Lutheran, Elbow, Saskatchewan, led a Bible study. Pastor Henning sharing his report, recounting the need for pastors, the new ministry avenue of online services, and the importance



Back row (from left): Shannon Hundebly, Anita and Charles Jackson, Kelly Henning, Al and Dorothy Pinno, Renate and Manfred Kurschner, Dave Hesje, Ken Hagen. Front row: Ken Hundebly, John Attwood, Ron Hundebly, Dale Hundebly, Rob and Pat Lewis, Verna Rude, Grace Hagen.

of praying for and forgiving one another. Following reports from the coordinating committee, the treasurer, and *Ends of the Earth Courier for Christ*, Pastor Al Pinno led our prayer time.

Eleven ladies gathered for the WMF annual meeting. Debbie Hesje shared her personal testimony of the Lord's leading her to victory through her struggle with depression. WMF president Shannon Hundebly led the business meeting. Grace Hagen was elected as vice-president, Debbie

Hesje as secretary, and Dorothy Pinno as missions secretary.

Pastor Kelly Henning was re-elected to another three-year term as president, Pastor Al Pinno to a one-year term as vice-president, and Linda Lee to a one-year term as secretary. Those elected to the coordinating committee are as follows: Pastor John Attwood to a five-year term, Dale Hundebly to a four-year term, and Pastor Jason Siemens to a two-year term.

At the evening worship service, Pastor John Attwood shared a message of encouragement and Pastor Kelly Henning installed the newly elected officers and committee members.

We had planned to be together for fellowship and study time until early afternoon Oct. 21, but due to the forecast of a severe early winter snowstorm, the decision was made to conclude our conference early.

~By Pastor Al and Dorothy Pinno



BY JONNI SLIVER

I have been challenged by a quizzical comment Jesus made several times: “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.” It seems obvious that if I have two ears and they both work, I must be hearing. But any parent can tell you that a lot of sound can enter the auditory canal without having any apparent impact at all. Jesus knew that multitudes were observing His every move, throngs hung on every word, but there were only a few who actually heard what He was saying.

One of my favorite tasks here in the Miriam Home is taking the children to the myriad places they need to go. There is something interesting about conversations that take place in a car—it seems like filters are removed and defenses are let down. That is true of the chats that I have with our children in the car, but it is also true of the conversations I’ve

EARS THAT HEAR

heard coming from the back seat. Sometimes those dialogues are worrisome, revealing areas that need to be treated. But many times, the things I hear show exactly what Jesus was talking about—ears that hear!

It might not be surprising, but the conversation of the older girls often revolves around boys. On a recent ride to church one girl started teasing another because she was going to see her first crush—the son of our pastor. Before I could intervene another teen spoke up and asked, “What’s so funny? She likes a nice boy who goes to church, what could be better?” I almost stopped the car to give her a big hug, because that wasn’t her standard when she arrived at the Miriam Home.

But that doesn’t mean the younger children don’t also hear, and see, and apply. Juliano arrived with his younger brother and sister. At only 8 years old, he felt responsible for them, but he expressed his care with slaps and kicks and hollering at them. It was what he knew. He loves

his family a lot, and the four months he was with us was hard on him. But this little guy heard and saw everything that happened around him. Not long before he left, he told us his dreams for his family: that his dad would learn to be like Pastor Silvio. He doesn’t hit, he doesn’t drink, and he doesn’t call anyone bad names. When Juliano arrived, he only knew one form of parenting. Now he knew there were other ways. But what blesses my heart is that he not only saw the difference but chose which was right! And we are praying that God will be moving in a similar way in his father’s life.

It really is a blessing to be able to serve in the Miriam Home, to speak into the lives of the children that God brings to us, and to watch as they hear with their ears.

Sliver is an AFLC missionary serving at the Miriam Home in Campo Mourão, Brazil.

PEOPLE & PLACES

Pastor Mark Richardson has accepted a call to Calvary Free Lutheran, Fosston, Minn. He will begin his duties there at the end of May. He currently serves Emmanuel Free Lutheran, Eagle Butte, S.D., and Bethel Free Lutheran, Faith, S.D.

Loren Tungseth, Fergus Falls, Minn., has retired as the coordinator for the Alaska Mission, a ministry of AFLC Home Missions.

Pastor Brett Boe has accepted a call to serve Solid Rock Free Lutheran, Anoka, Minn., and will begin his duties there on May 1. He currently serves King of Glory Lutheran, Shakopee, Minn.

The Free Lutheran Seminary has announced internship assignments for two senior students. **Sam Willard** will serve at Christ the King Lutheran, Pipestone, Minn., under Pastor Tim Johnson. **Scott Erickson** will serve at Grace Free Lutheran, Valley City, N.D., under Pastor Dennis Norby. One-year internship assignments are served from June through May. **Josh Johnson**, an FLS senior, has accepted a position as coordinator of communications and recruitment for the Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary.

Pastor Tim Carlson was installed Aug. 9 as pastor of Timberland Ringebu Free Lutheran, Cumberland, Wis., with Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, AFLC president, officiating.

The AFLC **Home Missions Retreat**, planned for Jan. 25-28, was canceled due to concerns over the coronavirus.



Pastor Everett Hind

Pastor Everett Hind, 85, of Inman, Kan., died Jan. 1, at the Pleasant View Home. Born May 10, 1935, in northwest Iowa, he was the son of Willis and Alice (Davis) Hind. He married Verna Hobbie on June 18, 1954.

He graduated from high school in 1954. After marriage, they resided in Egan, S.D. They moved to Wilmore, Kan., where he attended Asbury Theological Seminary for one year, then transferred to Wessington Springs College and Seminary in Wessington Springs, S.D. He also took courses from Fuller Theological Seminary. After graduation, he served churches Wessington Springs, Huron, S.D., and Bemidji, Minn. In 1975, they moved to Peever, S.D., to work with Lowell Lundstrom ministries. Two years later, they moved to Holland, Minn., where he began Family Fulfillment Ministries, then later to Edgerton, Minn., where he became the chaplain of the Edgebrook Care Center. In the 1990s and early 2000s he served Christ the King Free Lutheran Church, Pipestone, Minn., and Maple Bay Free Lutheran Church in Maple Bay, Minn. In 2012, they moved to McPherson, Kan., before moving to Inman. He was a member of Kiwanis in Pipestone and served as the police chaplain in Bemidji.

Surviving are his wife; three children, Debbie (Robert) Bailey, McPherson, Kan., Jeff (Katherine) Hind, Sioux Falls, S.D., and Carmon (Don) Penner, Inman, Kan.; 17 grandchildren, and 28 great-grandchildren.

A private family service was held Jan. 9 at Christ the King Free Lutheran, Pipestone, Minn..

FLBCS to host AFLC Annual Conference

The 59th Annual Conference of the AFLC will be held June 16-19 on the campus of the Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary in Plymouth, Minn., in the newly completed Student Life Center.

Meeting on June 16 will be members of conference committees as well as those attending the Women's Missionary Federation Day. The opening service will be held in the evening, which will

include the ordination of graduating seminarians. Conference business will open on June 17 and conclude on June 19.

The theme of the conference, "Prepare the Way of the Lord," comes from Isaiah 40:3.

The conference schedule, housing and meal options, details about vacation Bible school and youth activities, as well as a registration form are all available on the AFLC website (aflc.org/conference).

JANUARY MEMORIALS

AED

Pastor Irvin Schmitke
Pastor Howard Kjos
Pastor Don Norr

Seminary

Pastor Henry
Johansen

Bible College

Ruth Claus
Art Twedt

WMF

Laverne Thompson
Thor Strand
Selmer Myren

FLAPS

Pastor Irvin Schmitke

World Missions

LeRoy Schierkolk
Leonard Stulen
Pastor Richard &
Leila Gilman
Clyde Peterson

Home Missions

Pastor Irvin Schmitke
Clyde Peterson

Vision

LeRoy Schierkolk

AFLC BENEVOLENCES January 1-January 31, 2021

FUND	REC'D IN JANUARY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$44,874	\$44,874	\$46,431
Evangelism	18,115	18,115	9,152
Youth Ministries	17,509	17,509	10,948
Parish Education	10,767	10,767	11,907
Seminary	20,883	20,883	30,682
Bible College	33,417	33,417	39,798
Home Missions	36,578	36,578	34,377
World Missions	37,679	37,679	44,930
Personal Support	94,144	94,144	70,569
TOTALS	\$313,966	\$313,966	\$298,794

For additional financial information for each department, go to www.aflc.org/giving

LAKE GENEVA

The title of this editorial will probably only resonate with the few of us who have been part of the AFLC from the beginning. For all of our readers it introduces an important and formative chapter in the life of our fellowship, and for us old-timers it brings back very happy memories. Please join me on a walk down memory lane.

We didn't even have a name yet, but in the fourth issue (March 26, 1963) of our new magazine, *The Lutheran Ambassador*, plans for a family Bible camp were announced. The dates were July 8-14, and the place was the Lake Geneva Bible



Pastor Robert Lee

Camp near Alexandria, Minn. This was the first project of the youth committee elected at the organizational conference in October 1962; Pastor Jay Erickson, Faith, S.D., served as the chairman, and Sheldon Mortrud,

Thief River Falls, Minn., the committee secretary, would be the camp manager with his wife Delores as the registrar. One could only guess how many people might attend a venture that was new to most of us, and it is quite overwhelming to imagine the planning (and praying) that must have been involved.

The Lake Geneva facilities were more than adequate for the more than 450 people of all ages who registered. Since the location was central to most of our first congregations, people were able to drive in for the evening services and swell the attendance. There were many families in attendance with children of all ages, and I still recall Pastor Trygve Dahle standing outside the registration building, surrounded by excited and happy children running in every direction. "What are these?" he asked with a big smile. "I thought it was only old people who were part of this new association."

There was a very wide range of

different speakers. Pastors John Strand, Arvid Hokonson, Richard Snipstead, Jay Erickson, Raynard Huglen, Joel Pederson, Harry Molstre, and John Abel spoke for the evening and Sunday services. Pastor Harold Schafer taught the teen Bible studies, Pastors John Abel and R.P. Haakenson spoke on missions and evangelism; and a morning fellowship hour was led by Pastors Fritjof Monseth, Harold Schafer, Morris Eggen, Trygve Dahle, and Karl Stendal.

Guest speakers were Pastor Chester Heikkinen, former instructor at Seattle Lutheran Bible Institute and current pastor of Morgan Avenue Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, and David Nelson, senior instructor at the Honeywell Institute, Minneapolis. Nelson spoke on creation-science, and Heikkinen's Bible studies included a unique illustration based on John 19:39-40 and 20:3-8, using a doll that he had wrapped in linen cloths with myrrh and aloes.

About 150 of the campers were teens, and the first Ambassadors gospel team, traveling throughout the new fellowship for the summer, was an important part of the life of the camp, serving as counselors and assisting with music and recreation. Francis Monseth directed a camp choir. Judith Wold, a public school teacher from Thief River Falls, directed sessions for the younger children with the help of numerous volunteers.

Food for the soul was available for all, but a camp also needs food for the body, and in this regard we especially remember the ministry of the Skramstad family from Valley City, N.D. Adeline was the head cook that first summer (together with Emma Dahl, Hampden, N.D.), ably assisted by the Skramstad men (Orion and three of his sons: Gary, Tim, and Ted).

Registration for the second AFLC family Bible camp the next summer passed the 650 mark, with a staff of more than 60. The growing attendance led to consideration of a possible two weeks of camp in the near future, but we learned that the facility was only available for one week. The AFLC continued to conduct family Bible camps at Lake Geneva through 1974, when the management announced that their expanding program meant that the facility would no longer be available for rent by other groups. Today our family Bible camp heritage continues at the ARC in Wisconsin, Galilee Bible Camp at Lake Bronson in northwestern Minnesota, the Wilderness Camp, Bethany Bible Camp, and through various district camps.

The soon-to-be-named AFLC was a brand-new association in 1963, and people were only beginning to really get acquainted

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and to work to together. It is impossible to overestimate, in my opinion, the impact of the first family Bible camps in the binding together of our fellowship as a family in Christ. Lake Geneva was also a place of significant spiritual growth for many, and there are still some among us who look back to the camps as the place where they came to know Him as personal Savior and Lord. To God be all the glory!

something to share

THE DAILY BATTLE FOR HOPE

BY GRACIA GILBERTSON

I wish I could say that I finished last year with my faith stronger than ever, but that would not be the truth. The events of 2020 took a heavy toll. First came the isolating COVID-19 pandemic which hit us in the spring, followed by the troubling racial unrest resulting in marches and riots, and ending with the most polarizing and contested presidential election of a lifetime. In the midst of all the disquieting turmoil brought on by these events, my own life was deeply impacted by a move across the mountains from the place that I have called “home” for most of my life, leaving our dear church family, friends, and loved ones. As if that was not enough, I struggled to believe that God was still working in the life of a dear loved one struggling with addiction.

I found myself feeling rather hopeless. Sometimes it felt like a daily battle to regain some sense of faith in God’s goodness, to hope again for a better day. Strangely,

what began to turn the tide and restore a fledgling sense of hope was this lyric of a favorite, familiar hymn: “strength for today, and bright hope for tomorrow.” Whenever I felt really low, the words of this lyric came to mind. I began to ponder the meaning of the word, hope, and search the Scriptures.

The word “hope” is commonly used to mean “wish.” Yet the real meaning of the word hope, according to *Webster’s Dictionary*, is: “a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.” In the Bible, hope is a confident expectation in what God has promised. As Eugene Peterson said, “Hope is an act—hope acts on the conviction that God will complete the work He has begun, even when appearances, especially when appearances, oppose it.”

A friend of mine, coming through the ravages of a heart wrenching divorce, said she was practicing “defiant hope, because of His unparalleled power to redeem, restore, and make whole again any story.”

As I read my Bible, passages containing the word “hope” seemed to leap off the page. “Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have *hope*. Because of the Lord’s great love, we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning, great is your faithfulness” (Lamentations 3:21-23). “Though he slay me, yet I will *hope* in him” (Job 13:15). “We have this *hope* as an anchor for our souls, firm and secure ...” (Hebrews 6:19). “Let us hold unswervingly to the *hope* we profess, for he who promised is faithful” (Hebrews 10:23).

When I was tempted to despair, God’s Word assured me that He will fulfill His promises. He truly is our rock, our safe anchor in all the uncertainties of life. As another loved hymn lyric says, “When all around my soul gives way, He then is all my hope and stay.”

Gilbertson lives in Leavenworth, Wash.