

Bulletin of Reports Mar-Lu-Ridge Camp and Retreat Center, Jefferson MD

This past summer's theme, Christ Carries Us, resonates with me as I reflect on 2014 and the many challenges and joys we experienced at Mar-Lu-Ridge. I know the love God has for us. I am sure of his mercies and his grace. When we get weighed down by the daily challenges such as broken furnaces or waterlines, I remember that Christ is our foundation – and I rejoice.

We saw continued growth in all areas of the ministry in 2014. Our retreat business has grown to the point that we are often busy during the week, and every weekend is full throughout the year. We welcome retreat guests from a variety of religious backgrounds, as well as community and school based organizations. It is a joy to show hospitality to each guest – providing a clean, comfortable, upgraded facility, delicious food that is healthy and nourishing, and programming that develops individual and group confidence. Recent projects to renovate cabin restrooms, seal cabins against weather and insects, and provide more accessible rooms at the Ridge Inn will increase our efficiency and provides better accommodations for all our guests. New windows in Salem on the Mountain Chapel improve an already beautiful view and we thank the community for providing the funds for this project.

We received two generous donations in 2014 that enabled us to plan for the future. A gift from the closure of St. Timothy Lutheran Church has been invested with the ELCA Foundation Fund A, creating an endowment that will be used to pay down the debt associated with Agape Hall. We are grateful for this gift and have been faithfully paying our mortgage each month, working toward the day when we can so utilize this gift and be debt-free. A second large gift from Divinity Lutheran Church allowed us to replace the furnace in the chapel, and complete the installation of our sound and projection system in Agape Hall. The remainder of this gift will be used to upgrade the Ridge Inn.

New programs during summer camp were very well received and we had a wonderful summer serving 750 campers on site through our residential and day camp programs. Cooking camp, Around the World camp, and Pioneer camp were all well attended, as were the old favorites such as Night Owls, Sr. High, Horseback, and Hammock camp. We served 8 different communities and congregations through our Mobile Mar Lu day camps, reaching 200 more campers, and we enjoyed the gifts and talents of a diverse staff. We were once again certified by the American Camp Association, and had a very safe summer.

Remembering that the community of Mar-Lu-Ridge is spread across the globe, we continue to use social media, our electronic newsletter, and personal invitations to events and activities to keep everyone connected. We are thankful for the many volunteers who serve the ministry as pastors and nurses during camp, and by caring for our facilities throughout the year. We are committed to upholding our mission statement: We welcome all people to a mountain-top experience of Christian community that changes lives, makes disciples, builds friendships and encourages care of God's creation.

In peace,

Sarah Lefler
Executive Director