

Mar-Lu-Ridge Camp and Retreat Center

“So now you are no longer strangers and aliens. Rather, you are fellow citizens with God’s people, and you belong to God’s household. As God’s household, you are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone. The whole building is joined together in Christ, and it grows up into a temple that is dedicated to the Lord. Christ is building you into a place where God lives through the Spirit.” Eph. 2:19-22

Knowing that Christ is our strong foundation, we stepped out in faith in several areas in 2017. Thanks to a generous gift from the community of Second English Lutheran Church, we were able to invest in several deferred capital projects which improved the safety and appearance of our facilities. This included new roofs for the Chapel and the Ridge Inn, as well as one of our cabins. We also invested in our programming by participating in the Effective Camp Research Project in an effort to learn about the impact of summer camp in our camper’s lives. The results confirmed that Mar-Lu-Ridge is 100% fun (!), and that our staff and volunteer pastors play an important role in mentoring our young people, helping guide them in their faith journey. Many of our programming expenses, including an increase in summer staff pay and Camperships for families in need, were met in large part because of Second English Lutheran’s desire to continue its ministry through organizations such as Mar-Lu-Ridge. We are grateful and faithful in our use of this gift – and more plans are on the horizon!

We stepped out in faith by increasing our online and in person presence with a goal of bringing more youth to camp, and more retreat guests to our year-round facilities. We are pleased to report that we showed growth in both areas. One of the highlights of summer camp was our partnership with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) and Lutheran Social Services/National Capital Area (LSS NCA). Our campers made Welcome Cards for children who are housed in temporary detention centers, waiting for a home for their family. They also assembled Welcome Home cleaning kits and hygiene kits for immigrants and refugee families. It was exciting to see the campers as they worked to make a neighbor feel welcome and safe, and to hear the discussions as they prayed about ways to continue this welcome in their own communities. Camp families and campers donated leftover store money, which was matched by a grant from the Forward in Faith initiative, and given to LIRS and LSS NCA. Both organizations were amazed by our camp community’s generosity.

We welcomed a new Associate Director, Amy Sowers, in June. Amy worked alongside Karl Muhlbach to learn the many aspects of the job, and the transition was positive for everyone. As we prepare for the 60th Anniversary of Mar-Lu-Ridge in 2019, we remain committed to providing community, service, and sanctuary for all!