

## Mar-Lu-Ridge Camp and Retreat Center

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.” Eph. 2:8

Mar-Lu-Ridge experienced grace and community in many ways during 2018, and as we begin 2019 and the celebration of our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, I wanted to thank you, our synods and our community, for your continued prayers and support. We served 4,500 retreat guests and 600 on-site and off-site campers this year. So many people heard the Good News of God’s unconditional love!

One exciting addition to our summer programming was our Mountain Outreach day visit program. We welcomed 3 day camps from synod congregations for a day of lessons, hiking, swimming and joyful fun on the Ridge. Time spent in God’s creation is important for our young people, and we are committed to growing this program.

We also began our “Back to our Roots” campaign to reconnect and strengthen ties to our synod congregations. There are many ways we can support you through programming at your home congregation, space for discernment and study, and relationship building that benefits all ministry. Our Sabbath Day for pastors, vicars, youth leaders, and church workers was a wonderful day and we look forward to more events such as this.

Our camp parents had very positive feedback for us once again. We consider it a privilege to spend time with our campers and to lead activities that encourage personal growth as well as faith formation. One parent wrote, “The staff seems to be so welcoming and focused on making sure campers are having a great time.” Another mother added, “My camper had a great time, loved the food, and wants to go back next year...We thank God for you.”

The faithful donations of our synods and community members allow us to keep our operating costs low and focus on programming. This year was especially challenging with regard to unforeseen facilities projects. We are thankful for your support during these difficult times. Through much hard work, plans are now in place to continue upgrading our aging infrastructure and free up more funding for expanding our off-site programming.

Our Board of Directors has been hard at work and there is exciting news on the horizon that will create a firm foundation for future generations!

All are welcome as we celebrate 60 years of ministry and faith formation at Mar-Lu-Ridge, June 8-9. Family oriented events, good food, and time to connect and reconnect are just part of a special weekend of community and worship. We hope you’ll make plans to join us!

Lastly, on a personal note, I am forever grateful for the community of faithful people who lifted me up and encouraged me when I was a young camper and staff member. To continue offering that support to present campers and staff is our mission. We thank God for the strong foundation of community here at Mar-Lu-Ridge.

Peace, Sarah Lefler Executive Director