

## **Mar-Lu-Ridge Camp and Retreat Center**

It was a joy to welcome over 250 people to our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in June! We shared stories of our days at Mar-Lu-Ridge, enjoyed the pool and hiking trails, feasted on Chef Tim's delicious food, and worshipped in the chapel. Many former staff members gathered to bless the current staff and both Bishops were present for worship and festivities. It was a wonderful time of thanking God for 60 years of ministry on our mountain-top and out in the community. We also looked to the future as we shared news of projects accomplished as well as plans for the coming years. The community of Mar-Lu-Ridge is constantly growing, and we are thankful for each person who shares their time, talents, and prayers.

We were able to use income from a reconfiguration of our American Tower lease to improve many facilities, including concrete and asphalt work, and a major renovation of the Ridge Inn conference center's meeting space. The new space is filled with light and provides a comfortable, beautiful meeting area for groups of all sizes. The funds helped us purchase new mattresses for the cabin area, a new riding mower, a donation to the Lutheran Outdoor Ministries emergency fund, and a new roof for Potomac Lodge. We also placed a large portion into reserves.

The heart of our year-round work is providing hospitality and a safe space for our retreat guests and campers. We are committed to welcoming everyone to Mar-Lu-Ridge and caring for their spiritual growth through programming and worship. A new summer community worship service led by our Extended Stay campers will surely become tradition. It was a very special morning on the Ridge.

Summer camp was a joyful time of learning about the 2019 curriculum which focused on Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect." Throughout the summer, we discussed how God is present in our communities, and how we are transformed by these gifts from God: Generosity, Inclusion, Compassion, Forgiveness, and Justice.

Needless to say, Summer 2020 is shaping up to be a very different time due to COVID-19. For the safety of our campers and staff, we are cancelling our summer session but will offer on-line activities and interactive worships and Bible lessons with the help of our staff and volunteer pastors. We are thankful for the strong community that is Mar-Lu-Ridge and we look forward to the day we can safely gather on the mountain again.

We are so grateful to be in partnership with the congregations and pastors of the Metro DC Synod. Your prayers and support for our outdoor ministry are a blessing.

God's peace, Sarah Lefler