



Luther Park Log

Fall 2020

"Where Faith is Nurtured Through Holy Play"

Summer Camp 2021

Registration for Camp 2021 is open now!

Due to camps response to Covid-19, camp will be reducing maximum numbers per week by about 20%.

We encourage campers and churches to plan their summer soon. We do not want to leave anyone out so pick a date soon.



Camps Responding to Covid-19 The brief article below is reposted from a colleague and has an interesting take on camps and our current situation.

*"I've been hearing the word "pivot" a lot less lately. It could just be that the word has moved on from our industry as we've leaned into whatever this fall looks like for us, but I also wonder if we've realized that **pivoting isn't enough**.*

In basketball, a pivot finds you new options, but you don't move anywhere if there's no passing lane or a teammate doesn't get open. You can pivot all you want, but if you do nothing else the shot clock runs out and you lose the ball.

(hard transition from sports metaphor to driving metaphor)

A friend of mine, introduced me to the concept of "swerve", and I really like it.

When you're driving down a road and there's a piece of debris in your path, you have the option to swerve around it and continue on your path.

For the camping industry this fall, we are all trying to stay on the road that leads us not just to summer 2021, but long-term thriving.

COVID is debris on that road.

If we stop on the road and pivot, pivot, pivot, we aren't continuing down that road. We need to swerve

How drastic that swerve is, and how easily we get back on the road depends on a two things:

1. *How big the object is. - We're all in uniquely challenging situations that look different and determine how much we need to swerve.*
2. *How skilled of a driver we are.*
Number two is a big one here. Just because COVID has taken away many of our traditional professional development opportunities, doesn't mean that you should stop learning and growing into a better "driver".

How we do camp ministry will change in the months ahead. However, the **ministry will not**. Luther Park will still be about keeping kids safe, making sure they have plenty of fun and above all hear the message of Christ.

Luther Park is truly a place where "Faith is Nurtured Through Holy Play."

Thank You for Your Prayers and Support!

Summer Program in Pictures—2019

Here's what the kids had to say...



"This was my first time at any camp. It was really fun!"

"Camp really made me open up way more than I ever have. I've never felt more safe."



"I enjoyed meeting all of the people in my cabin!"



"The counselors were welcoming, kind, positive, helpful, encouraging"



"My favorite thing this summer was being with my counselor and learning about God."



"I learned that I can step outside of my comfort zone, and that's okay."



The Luther Park Mission and Ministry 1932 to Present

Storm to Covid



The summer of 2019 was an eventful time because in the midst of ministering to almost 1900 campers we had the summer storm. The storm caused damage to a few buildings and we lost hundreds of trees. Logging of downed and hazardous trees began in October 2019 and was completed September 2020.

November of 2019 saw the beginning of the construction of the new Ministry Center. Through the winter in spite of cold and bad weather the building was on track to open by summer 2020

In January and February we had decreased usage as people began to be concerned about the virus. March saw the complete shut down of camp and the cancellation of groups through May.

Due to concerns that for the first time in it's long history of ministry Luther Park could not assure parents their children would be safe in the unknown condition of Covid-19, the Board made the decision to cancel camp summer programs. In part it also had to do with the massive amount of needed changes dictated by concerned agencies that would have also restricted the ability to do fun, effective ministry.

Most existing rental groups through the summer and fall also canceled due to their own concerns for safety. To date we also have decreased usage booked into spring 2021.

Our loss of income from programs, rentals and canteen sales is just over **\$460,000**. There was much of this camp was able to mitigate by cutting expenses, especially those that relate to summer programs. Luther Park went from 35% dependent on donors to almost 80%.

Luther Park did **hire four fantastic summer staff** who worked very hard on continuing the ministry by reaching out to campers in fun, and creative ways both virtually and with mailings. They were also able to help us continue camp improvements with lots of painting and grounds work as well as prepping program items for the 2021 summer camp season.

But God is good. Our very gracious and generous churches and donors kept up their giving. With those donations and a small PPP grant Luther Park was able to continue.

As it stands Luther Park has been able to make up all but \$75,000 in lost income through increased donations and cutting operational expenses. We ask that you our **friends and partners in ministry consider a year end gift** so that next years programs are not adversely affected by this year's loss.



Building and Rejoicing!

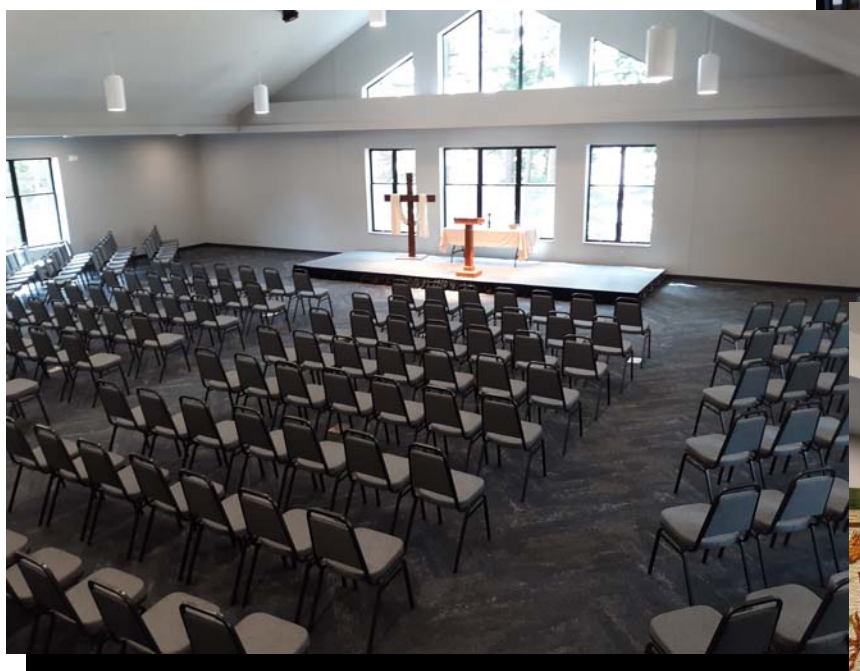


The New Ministry Center

Large meeting space for 280, small meeting for 20, beautiful lobby with coffee bar and room to relax and large beautiful bathrooms all handicap accessible



Lobby and Fireplace



Large meeting space configurable to large meeting and worship events, quilters and crafters or games and meetings for youth



\$600,000 in Matching Funds Update!

\$500,000 Church Match!

This incredibly generous match is from the Dave and Carolyn Cleveland. This **\$500,000** match is with any of our supporting churches. (The Menomonie area churches are matched by another donor.)

This is a dollar for dollar match up to \$500,000 that come from supporting churches over the 2020 and 2021 calendar years. To date we have raised just over \$200,000 of this match.

Menomonie Area Match!

One of the matching funds opportunities is from an anonymous donor who will match **\$100,000** in donations through the Menomonie area churches.

This long time supporter of Luther Park and Menomonie area ministries is very excited by this project.

To date we have raised almost \$40,000 toward this match.

These donors recognize that a strong **Camp and Retreat Ministry requires strong Church partnerships**. Their generous gifts along with several other substantial gifts have assured the growth of your camp ministry. But, to raise the necessary funds to complete the project we need church support. For just a few dollars (or more) per baptized member, we can quickly meet the match and honor the ministry as well as these amazing donors.

Covid has hindered Luther Park's ability to meet in churches to share this exciting news. **Once the church matches are complete Luther Park will have met our 2.2 million dollar goal!**

Building to Meet a Growing Need.

- The new **Ministry Center at Luther Park** will meet many needs of this growing camp including:
- Provide larger indoor worship space for a growing summer camp ministry.
- Provide more readily available restroom facilities for all ages and abilities.
- Provide much needed and larger storm shelter.
- Provide year-round meeting space for groups of 280+ thus allowing better usage of our existing cabins.
- Provide inclement weather program space for games, gatherings, Bible studies and more during Wisconsin's unpredictable weather.
- Provide increased income from user or guest groups allowing for a more stable budget.
- Provide future summer staff housing to allow for more summer campers.
- And more...



While Luther Park had been steadily growing from 2012 through 2019, **2020 was an unusually difficult year.**

Places like Luther Park are not meant to be empty and still in the summer. They are meant to be full of life, screams of excitement and laughter, songs of praise, and the gatherings of friends and fellowship.

While camp had to take a time of sabbatical and rest, Luther Park has been busily preparing for 2021 and many decades to come.

Heart for Luther Park Art and Quilt Auction!

The Heart For Luther Park Art and Quilt Auction was a wonderful success. There were many firsts including; the first time we held it in September, the first time with the new building, the first time with a new auctioneer who was doing her first event, and the first ever combination of online and in person bidding.

- 104 volunteer hours prior to event
- 176 hours during event
- 26 volunteers including 8 Board members
- 100+ Bidders
- 85 Live and 55 Silent Auction Items donated
- **\$28,875.53 raised!**

We are **deeply grateful and continually impressed and humbled** by the quality of items donated and by the hearts of those who bid and purchase these lovely items.

We have scheduled the 2021 Heart for Luther Park Quilt and Art Auction for Sunday, August 8, 2021. Please mark your calendar to participate in this event. If you have questions or would like to donate, please email camp at info@lutherpark.org or call 715-859-2215.



Thank you to all the
quilters, donors,
purchasers and
volunteers!

Luther Park Quilt Retreats

Luther Park Bible Camp offers several Quilt Retreats each year. These are open to anyone from beginner to expert.

The Quilt Retreats start on a Thursday (with early arrivals coming in on Wednesday evening) and run through Sunday afternoon. You can come for all or part of the event.

The **quilters share techniques, stories, patterns and community** all while also sharing good food, laughter, fun and games. The Luther Park Quilt Retreats are hosted by retired camp staff and quilter extraordinaire Diana Thompson.

If you have a sewing machine gathering dust and maybe just need a push to get going, these ladies are helpful, patient and generous with their support and guidance.

Each event has 25-40 quilters and the next events are Feb. 3-7, and March 17-21.

Enjoy quilting in the beautiful new Ministry Center!



Camp and Church Leadership Project

A study by Sacred Playgrounds

While there have been many studies several studies over the years point to the high value of camp for kids, this new study is about summer staff. In phase one of this new study pastors and lay leaders from several Lutheran camps were interviewed (Luther Park was one of the camps involved). All had been past summer staff and the ages and genders were mixed.

Three Major Elements of the Summer Staff Experience:

1. **Set-apart community of common purpose:** Commitment to the mission and ministry of the camp unites the staff. They forge deep relationships through the oftentimes demanding and exhausting work, creating a place of acceptance and safety.
2. **Experiential leadership:** Staff not only learn through doing; they learn through leading and teaching, thereby discovering their own personal gifts.
3. **Openness to experiences of God:** Staff participate in daily Christian practices and interpret experiences with Christian language, creating an openness to God's activity in the world, particularly through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Major Outcomes: The interaction of particular life stories with the three key elements lead directly to major life outcomes. These often include lasting relationships, a strong sense of vocation/calling, faith formation, valuable new life skills, and an **ongoing connection to the camp and its model of ministry.**

Below are a few quotes from those interviewed.

"I wouldn't be in ministry today if it wasn't for camp...It not only created the space to wrestle and process and be okay with that, but it provided people who 'got it' and were willing to push when that was needed but also to just be there and realize that it was okay to cry and that I wasn't going to have all the answers at that time. And so, I really don't know that I'd be where I'm at today if it wasn't for that space." – Female pastor

"Faith seemed so real for me when I was on staff, and that sense of comradery that you have with one another, it's such a wonderful feeling, even the summers where it didn't feel like the staff gelled well together. I think that, I've wondered if God lets you rewind and live a year of your life over again I would say put all four summers together, let's do that again." – Male pastor

"I think it's important to first, feel safe, but then also feel challenged and overcome that challenge so that when you're put in the position to be the leader, you know that you can do it." – Female lay person

"I think it means the sense of opportunity and variety. There are so many settings where you can worship and there are so many settings where you can learn. And that's, I think, the bottom line that I really took from working at and attending a Christian summer camp that it doesn't have to be in a sanctuary. It can be out in a field with a guitar and a Bible opened up. Boom, you have a worship." – Male lay person

Luther Park is excited to see what comes out of this study next!

Direct Your Thrivent Choice Dollars

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans offers a great benefit to members called Thrivent Choice! If you are a qualifying member, you decide where Thrivent Financial directs their charitable gifting dollars. We hope you select Luther Park Bible Camp as a recipient of a portion of your choice dollars! Your Choice Dollars:

Go to www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice or call 800-THRIVENT (800-847-4836) to direct dollars.

THANK YOU! If you have any questions about giving to Luther Park Bible Camp through Thrivent Financial, please contact us at

info@lutherpark.org or call 715-859-2215.



What pastor is this? Circa 1990



Which one is in Seminary? 2013



Luther Park Bible Camp

944 24 1/4 St.

Chetek, WI 54728

(715) 859-2215 phone

(715) 859-6474 fax

www.lutherpark.org

Non-Profit
Organization U.S.
Postage
PAID

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Transformation 2021!
Luther Park Summer Camp
Register now!



Kids!

Do you want to:

Make new friends

Have fun

Try new things

Be a little crazy

Get away from parents

Sign up now!

Parents—Feel free to contact the camp about upcoming safety protocols. We will have complete information posted soon.