

SYNOD NEWS

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ELCA

Mission

*STRONGER
together*

Bear
Creek

I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:18-19)

The verse above centers the theme of Bear Creek Camp for its Summer 2022 season: "Wild Abundance." Whenever I get to visit the Camp - which is the geographically largest camp in the ELCA Outdoor Ministry system - I am always struck with how big God's blessings are to us, and for us. The "Wild Abundance" of BCC also points to the whole point of God's abundant grace and gifts: we are blessed to be a blessing. God gives, without conditions, so that we may give the same way, and share joy and life, in an unlimited and everlasting spiral - reaching down to those in need, reaching up towards forgiveness and strength from God, who out of love for us and for Christ's sake promises to raise us all. So we give, to Mission Support - to bless ministries like BCC, so they may bless all who come to them, with God's Wild Abundance.

+ Bishop Christopher deForest



The Summer of 2021 at Bear Creek Camp was one of rediscovery of much of what had put on hold in 2020 and one of reinvention of new ways to live out our calling of building community and individuals while exploring, celebrating, and growing in God's creation. As we look forward to continuing to build on this foundation in for Summer Camp in 2022, we reflect back on one of the most powerful moments of returning to camp in 2021.

The first Sunday night of this past summer's Session One after a tasty dinner of spaghetti and meatballs, all the campers gathered together as a large group for the very first time around the bonfire circle. While learning and singing songs, the woods once again fully echoed with the glee of campers returning to this place so many call their second home. Near the midpoint of that first gathering, there was a quiet moment of pause. Looking around the circle, summer staff were in their brand-new teal tee-shirts keeping their heads on a swivel making sure their campers were all okay. Two campers that hadn't seen each other since camp two years prior held hands in that way only best camp friends do. Nervous first-time campers reacted every time a hemlock log would pop in the fire shooting sparks high up in the sky. This small moment in time was the manifestation of all the work our community had done over the past two years came to fruition; all the supporters that it took to get to that point of sharing in God's love as a community around a simple campfire.

Everything we do at camp throughout the year is building to moments like those opening bonfires. Whether facilities projects, summer staff salaries, food purchases or camperships - every resource we steward is moving us towards living into our shared mission. With your generous individual and congregational gifts and Mission Support throughout this past year and prayerfully continuing into the future, we look forward to further building the BCC community and welcoming all to experience the power of God within this place. + Collin Grooms, Executive Director

Bear Creek Camp seeks to provide a place apart: to live and grow in God's creation. Your mission support allows campers and staff to experience God in a new way. Campers discover young adult role models, and staff put their faith into action. In fact, the majority of seminarians cite outdoor ministry as key to their vocation story. Thank you for your faithful, generous, and consistent giving to Mission Support! It makes a difference as we endeavor to live out that mission.

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