Your gifts make a difference: the impact of a camp

“Those who attend camp as youth are over three times more likely to remain connected to a congregation five years later.”
— National study of youth and religion

1 The Christian camp experience has positive and lasting impacts including increased:
   - Self-confidence
   - Devotional practices
   - Church attendance
   - Faith conversation in the home
   - Faith relevance

2 Christian camp experiences lead to greater engagement in congregations

3 Parents are looking for impact

Camp is more than fun and games

Information taken from a study of 2000 Lutheran summer camps, repurposed from Lutheran Outdoors’ Spring 2018 newsletter

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Christikon has value beyond campers’ one-week visit

I highlight a few things that caught my attention this spring as we prepared for the start of our 67th season.

New camping ministry study
For over 30 years I have experienced and shared the importance of outdoor ministry to the life and health of our Church and our world. I recently came across an article in the winter 2018 of Word & World (Luther Seminary’s Theological Journal) that highlighted a revolutionary study by Jake Sorenson. He served as camp consultant for The Confirmation Project, described as “the first major youth-ministry study to take seriously the role of the camp experience in Christian education and faith formation,” and found that confirmation “programs making extensive use of the camp form showed significantly higher results on measures of Christian education and faith formation.” A few of his major findings are highlighted at the beginning of this newsletter, and confirm through robust survey research what most of us have known for years, namely camping ministry makes a huge difference not only to guests attending camp, but to their home congregations, communities and world as well.

The six “big ideas” they lift up are things camps like Christikon routinely do:

Big Idea 1: Camp Is More than Fun and Games

Continued on the next page
Thank you for your donations through Thrivent

The following list is those who have chosen Christikon to receive Thrivent Choice Dollars from October 2017 through May 2018. If you are eligible, please consider choosing Christikon.

Thank you to all those who have chosen this ministry over the years. We are grateful!

Mary and Paul Alexander.............Circle Pines, MN
Gina Allen................................Bozeman, MT
Mary Ambuehl................................Billings, MT
Dewey Anderson..........................Billings, MT
Dennis and Kim Bar........................Billings, MT
Mark and Beth Beeken....................Eden Prairie, MN
Dennis and Kim Bar........................Billings, MT
Barber.....................................Wh Sulphur Sprgs, MT
Kelly Kaiser Borning......................Chandler, AZ
Terry Kaiser Borning......................Chandler, AZ
Timothy and Kathleen Carlson.............Austin, MN
Kathleen Cypher............................Billings, MT
Jim and Lana Donald.......................Ham Lake, MN
Mark and Julie Donald......................Billings, MT
Thurston and Betty Dotson..............Helena, MT
Marva and Donald Drai.................Billings, MT
John C. and Vicki Folkerts............Brookings, SD
Warren and Judy Frank..................Billings, MT
Phyllis Friesz.............................Great Falls, MT
Debra Gardner..........................White Bear Lake, MN
Kay Grant................................Billings, MT
Kathleen Hansen..........................Billings, MT
Jo Ann and John Hillard...............Livingston, MT
Ron and Phyllis Jarrett..................Big Timber, MT
Corky and Lois Johnson.................Bozeman, MT
Pastor Darla A. Kratzer...............Billings, MT
Joy Lindberg..............................Billings, MT
Karl Loch................................Billings, MT
Patricia O’Hearn.........................Havre, MT

Janice Quanbeck........................Long Beach, CA
Ashley and Tim Quanbeck..............Hardin, MT
Rich Reed................................Billings, SD
Jaris and Gary Restad...................Billings, MT
Karl Rosenau..............................Willow River, MN
Neal and Mary Ruedisili...............Helena, MT
Kathryn Schifferdecker and Doug Steinke...........Lake Elmo, MN
Alan and Maria Tjeltveit...............Allentown, PA
Andy and Grete Willis................Springfield, VA
Dan & Cathy Wittgen.....................Absarokee, MT
Lois Wynecoope........................Saint Cloud, MN

Capital Campaign

You recently received word of our first capital campaign in nearly 20 years, and many have already committed to be part of this exciting step in advancing Christikon’s mission and ministry. At this point we have put the first phase (Blackfoot Lodge remodel) out to bid, and anticipate project’s completion yet this summer. You may recall Blackfoot is 100 years old this year, and we look forward to returning it to its former use and glory. Thanks to all who have pledged support thus far, and if you have yet to do so, please go to growchristikon.org for information on how you can be part of things.

Billings offices move

For over 30 years Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd has provided Christikon winter office space. They recently celebrated the opening of a new office and classroom addition, and early in the planning process made clear their desire to continue housing us.

We moved into our lovely new offices last month, and celebrate the gracious and profound gift LCGS provides Christikon.

Christikon’s new, year-round offices are shown — the director’s office above, and the secretary’s office below.

Word from the director by Mark Donald continued from previous page
Remembering Christikon in the ‘real world’

By Emma Quinn

Afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed...

As I sit here writing, in the midst of my senior year of nursing school, no passage seems more applicable. I can’t imagine how anyone gets through college without God?

These are the words I read every day, breakfast, lunch, and dinner for five summers. Five summers of the hardest work I’ve come across, God’s work. Five summers that changed my life. Summers of early mornings and late nights in a small community high up and tucked away in the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness. Summers of singing and dancing together, of praying together, laughing around the table together. Summers of loving each other, forgiving each other, and growing into our Christian faith.

I won’t lie. No summer was perfect. Christikon is not a utopia, where driving through the gate dissolves every problem in existence. Christikon is not heaven, but it may just be the closest thing. There are disagreements, people stepping on toes, singing out of key, and jello in the chicken noodle soup, but with all those things is an extraordinary amount of love. There is anger and hurt, mistakes, maybe even regrets, but there is also a deep sense of grace that envelopes this place. The struggles in life are inevitable, and exist no matter where we are, but they never defeat us. Going to the mountains doesn’t free us from hardships, but going to God does, and I know that He spends a lot of time at Christikon.

This passage from 2 Corinthians means more and more to me as I get older. As I face the abundance of challenges in life, often feeling inadequate, sometimes helpless, this passage speaks. I am transported to a large handmade wooden table, eating tacos for the 400th time, surrounded by bright youthful faces ready to hike the afternoon away. I am surrounded by people who love me, despite my shortcomings. I am reminded that God is present in this place; that He is present in all places.

I won’t be working up at camp this summer, and it scares me. I will have to find God down in what we call the “real world,” but it is a challenge that I believe I’m up for. Christikon has taught me so many wonderful things, about God, about loving my neighbor, about forgiveness. It’s time for me to come down from my mountain top experience, and be God’s hands and feet in the world. I am so excited for those on staff this summer, and will be praying for each of you. Being a camp counselor is hard work, but it’s worth it, and God will be there every step of the way. No matter how hard this work may be, you will be enough. You are always enough.

There’s still room at this summer’s former staff retreat

There’s still space available for this summer’s former staff retreat July 27-30.

The session costs $180 per adult; $90 ages 6-12; $0 under age 6 with a family maximum of $400: Register.

You also can extend your Christikon stay by registering for the Continuing Education Retreat after the retreat. For more information or to register, visit christikon.org.

Photo courtesy of Hans Thomsen.
The sun sets over Christikon during Work Weekend 2018.
Christikon’s Network of Support

Gifts from individuals, congregations and auxiliaries make it possible for Christikon to carry on the work it is called to do. In addition to undesignated gifts from member congregations, we acknowledge with gratitude all gifts listed in this newsletter including these memorial and honorary gifts received between October 2017 and May 2018.

Memorial Gifts

“For all the saints who from their labors rest...your name, O Jesus, be forever blessed.”

We join with others in remembering and giving thanks for those listed here:

John Akre, Billings, MT
Dora Fahlgren, Bozeman, MT
Joyce Olson, Billings, MT

Jan Alberta, Billings, MT
Eric Fontaine, Billings, MT

Larry and Nancy Morris, Billings, MT
Laurie Riemann, Billings, MT

Dan and Cathy Wilgen, Absarokee, MT
Francie Riemann, Laurel, MT

Doug Brekke, Helena, MT
Laura Fontaine, Billings, MT

Carol Brenden, Scobey, MT
Toots Frickle, Billings, MT

Tammy and Charles Cahill, Scobey, MT
Francie Riemann, Laurel, MT

Thurston and Betty Dotson, Helena, MT
John V. Gronli, Laurel, MT

William and Cameroon Galt, Billings, MT
Mark and Clara Taylor, Plentywood, MT

Lois Gorseth, Billings, MT
Roland Grant, Billings, MT

Bruce Jacobs, Saint Paul, MN
George and JoRae Sarsten, Billings, MT

Cleo Koffeld, Laurel, MT
Robert and Cena Weatherford, Laurel, MT

Carol Nadinek, Bozeman, MT
Bud Holmlund, Laurel, MT

Ronald Riter, Big Timber, MT
Larry Tjeltveit and Joanne Yamamoto, APO, AE

Mary Kay and Ronald Teel, Fairbanks, AK
Steven Tjeltveit & Heidi Simpson, Minneapolis, MN

Cleo Koffeld, Laurel, MT
Norm Tjeltveit, Billings, MT

Jeffrey C. Benich, Philadelphia, PA
Linda Hildebrandt, Livingston, MT

Margaret Benich, Philadelphia, PA
Mick Hogg, Billings, MT

Jane Burt, Fredericksburg, TX
Marylys Hog, Billings, MT

Terri and George James, Fredericksburg, TX
Peg Hulteng, Billings, MT

Jim Burt, Fredericksburg, TX
Dan and Cathy Wilgen, Absarokee, MT

Jim Burrows, Fredericksburg, TX
Margaret A. Jones, Billings, MT

Robert and Cena Weatherford, Laurel, MT
Bill and Evie Donald, Ham Lake, MN

Kenneth Beeken, Laurel, MT
Donna Kibbe, Billings, MT

Eric and Karen Beeken, Sidney, MT
Francie Riemann, Laurel, MT

Charlene Fischer-Crawford
Margaret A. Jones, Billings, MT

Kenneth and Teresa Hatfield, Billings, MT
Margaret A. Jones, Billings, MT

Kristie Carter
Margaret A. Jones, Billings, MT

Steven and Kimberlee Creaser Larsen, White Salmon, WA
Nan Kahl, Billings, MT

Sonia Clark
Lee and LaWanda Sherseth, Billings, MT

James Clark, Billings, MT
Vicki and Allan Haugo, Waubun, MN

Tena and Bob Davidson, Billings, MT
Vince Koeckl, Billings, MT

Tiffany and John Blades, Billings, MT
Kristi Bummer, Billings, MT

Gordon Eliason, Billings, MT
Calvin Lavold, Laurel, MT

Alice Eliason, Billings, MT
Delores Lapp, Laurel, MT

Margaret Ekland, Billings, MT
Ray Leone, Billings, MT

Ted Ekland, Billings, MT
Delores Kembel, Billings, MT

Donald Eklund, Billings, MT

Alexander Eklund, Billings, MT

Bunny Mobley, Laurel, MT

Jane Eklund, Billings, MT
Bunny Mobley, Laurel, MT

Brian Nelson, Billings, MT
Bunny Mobley, Laurel, MT

Jeffrey Eklund, Billings, MT
Bunny Mobley, Laurel, MT

Kathy Eklund, Billings, MT
Edward and Mary ODell, Torrington, WY

Bill Eklund, Billings, MT
Loren Pudwill, Billings, MT

Corey and Meredith Johnson, Bozeman, MT
Kristi Bummer, Billings, MT

Twin Bedding Set and Pillow
Bill Eklund, Bozeman, MT

In addition to undesignated gifts from member congregations, we acknowledge with gratitude all gifts listed in this newsletter including these memorial and honorary gifts received between October 2017 and May 2018.

Directed gifts:

Benefit Auction items
Jan Cates, Billings, MT

Gallatin Gathering Event
Corey and Meredith Johnson, Bozeman, MT

Twin Bedding Set and Pillow
Jane Nelson, Billings, MT

Lois Gorseth, Billings, MT

Board Meeting
Will and Kaia Sappington, Billings, MT

Toward new food processor
Lauren Pierson, Billings, MT

Auxiliary gifts:

Immanuel Lutheran Church Women, Absarokee, MT

Bethlehem Lutheran WELCA, Billings, MT

WELCA of Our Saviors Luth Ch., Laurel, MT

WELCA of American Luth. Ch., Livingstone, MT

WELCA of Hope Lutheran Church, Powell, WY

Shields River Luth. Ch. Women, Wilsall, MT
Gifts celebrating special people and events — In Honor of:

Bennie and Mary Buntjer
Geanine Frost........................................... Kennewick, WA
Katie and Danny Burke
Terry and Judy May...................................... Billings, MT
Lukas Becken-Gaddo
Corrine Becken......................................... Big Timber, MT
Mary & Bennie Buntjer
60th wedding anniversary
Jeri Buntjer Kowo ....................................... Minneapolis, MN
Doris Creaser
Steven and Kimberlee Creaser Larsen.................. White Salmon, WA

Jen Downs and Jimmy Taber Marriage
Lynnette Downs......................................... Billings, MT
Mark Donald
Judy G. Johnson......................................... Billings, MT
Mark Donald’s height
Jay and Suzanne Rudi.................................. Edina, MN
Kerry Ellertson
Judy G. Johnson......................................... Billings, MT
Donald Family-Friends in Faith & Raising
Jennifer Andrus......................................... Billings, MT
Liliana Becken-Gaddo
Corrine Becken......................................... Big Timber, MT
Heidi Hornung
Laurie Hornung......................................... Billings, MT
Heidi and Stuart Hornung and family
Mark and Carol Ramseh................................ Bozeman, MT
Ernie Larsen
Steven and Kimberlee Creaser Larsen.................. White Salmon, WA

Ernie Larsen’s 84th birthday
Steven and Kimberlee Creaser Larsen.................. White Salmon, WA
Joann Larsen
Steven and Kimberlee Creaser Larsen.................. White Salmon, WA
John Liggett
David and Pam Liggett.................................. Roundup, MT
Amanda and Derek Liggett................................ Roundup, MT
our grandkids: Sofia, Luke, & Owen
Dale and Sharlene Molyneaux................................ Billings, MT

Amanda Kayleen Nelson
Kathy Cypher............................................. Billings, MT
Heidi Anne Nelson
Kathy Cypher............................................. Billings, MT

Staff Training Meadow Nymphing
Jay and Suzanne Rudi.................................. Edina, MN
Norma Pittack
Van and Cheryl Pittack.................................. Billings, MT
Jay Rudi FF Champion
Elisa and Ken Carrothers................................ Boise, ID
The Christikon Staff
Donell and Leslie Small.................................. Billings, MT
All former Christikon Staff
Jeff and Kate Smith...................................... Stillwater, MN
Pastor Elizabeth Sillerud

Other gifts to be used where needed:

G. Todd and Linda R. Baugh.............................. Billings, MT
Loren and Carolyn Beling................................ Big Timber, MT
Larry and Sherry Boucholz................................ Choteau, MT
Danica and Donald Burk................................ Missoula, MT
Mona Clark .................................................. Billings, MT
Julie Dickinson............................................. Roscoe, MT
Bonnie and Jim Evanston................................ Livingston, MT
Harold and Dorothy Everson............................. Billings, MT
Gary and Lori Fink......................................... Billings, MT
John Gaddo and Nancy North............................. Lanesboro, MN
Bob and Donna Haines.................................... Willmar, MN
Philip Hanson.............................................. Fort Collins, CO
Gerald and Janice Hauge................................. Big Timber, MT
Kenneth and Lena Heikes................................ Billings, MT
Kenneth and Carol Hoefer................................ Billings, MT
Dave and Jeanette Hughes.............................. Bozeman, MT
Carl E. and Janice Jahr................................... Billings, MT
James and Joan Johnson................................. Bozeman, MT
Anne and Calvin Keasling............................... Minneapolis, MN
Pamela Landsteiner....................................... Duluth, MN
Inga Larsen.................................................. Billings, MT
Janice Larson............................................... Billings, MT
Emily Green and Jim Manolis............................. Minneapolis, MN
Steve and Joyce Matheson............................... Mound, MN
Paul and Ann Miller...................................... Billings, MT
Robert Nut .................................................. Northfield, MN
Rod and Terri Nygaard.................................... Bloomer, WI
William and Shirley Olinger............................. Scottsdale, AZ
John and Marilyn Olson................................. Sidney, MT
Oscar and Mary Olson..................................... Billings, MT
Richard and Barbara Olson.............................. Billings, MT
Jamie Ponce.................................................. Chicago, IL
Becca Stelle.................................................. Washington, DC
Katja & Abdallah Stromnes Elias.......................... Helena, MT
Erin Walding-Heitman................................. Minneapolis, MN
William and Shaya Walker............................... Billings, MT
Jenry and Jan Wolf........................................ Billings, MT
Olson Family Fund........................................ Stillwater, MN
By Phil Wold
Pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Sheridan, Wyoming

I had the great privilege of spending a week at Christikon this past June. Our congregation, Trinity Lutheran Church in Sheridan, Wyoming, sent two young people to Confirmation Camp, and I got to accompany them on the journey. While I had fantastic week, our kids had an even greater time!

I love the mission statement of Christikon, which is:

“It is the mission of Christikon to awaken and nurture faith in Christ — exploring God’s creation and the adventure of life together.”

As a member of the Christikon Board of Directors, I looked forward to seeing Christikon with campers and counselors, and seeing that mission take on flesh and blood. I found that being a part of the Confirmation Week; I got to be involved in that mission as well.

As we all know, Christikon is a beautiful place. We seek to be good stewards of the facilities we are blessed to have there, and we are working hard to plan ahead for the best way to be prepared for our future. This is important work, and I am excited about what is in store for our camp.

Yet, I suspect that we all know that it is the people who serve at Christikon that are most important of all. Pastor Mark Donald wears at least a dozen different hats in his role as Director of Christikon, and he knows well that hiring and training the counseling staff is key.

I wish each and every one of you who prays for and supports Christikon — I wish you could see these young men and women as they work with our campers! What a gift they are as they lead, what gifts they receive, as they share the Gospel.

One story from my week at Christikon:

Toward the end of the week, it is a Christikon tradition to have a night of folk dancing. I got there a little late, and the kids were in the middle of dancing around the hall. What I saw brought tears to my eyes. I do not remember ever seeing so many junior high kids un-self-consciously smiling and enjoying themselves together. They were there, with their bodies, hearts and souls, enjoying one another, enjoying themselves and enjoying the time. It was priceless, and I got to be there. What a gift.

When I returned our Confirmation students to their parents, they were delighted to hear story after story of the wonderful time they had at Christikon. As I recruit youth for this coming summer, I have two more advocates working to convince others to join us this coming June at Christikon!