FALL 2026

BEAR CREEK CAMP Around the Fire

STORIES FROM BEAR CREEK CAMP

SUMMER 2026: Camp Makes an Impact

This summer, we engaged with a research project in conjunction with five other ecumenical camps in our geographic region. Across a series of metrics developed by Sacred Playgrounds Effective Camp Research Project, it was found that Bear Creek Camp was consistently rated highly in areas spanning programming, community connection, faith-centeredness, and safety. The survey also provided areas for focus as we strive to ensure that a camp experience at BCC is one of growth, learning, fun, and formation for all.

97% of campers agreed that, **"I had a lot of fun at camp"**

85% of campers agreed, **"I grew in my faith"**

97% agreed that they **could be their true self at camp**

90% of campers agreed they **enjoyed time spent interacting with nature**

97% of campers agreed that they **enjoyed their counselor**

88% agreed that **"My questions about God/faith were taken seriously"**

CAMPER PROFILE

Chloe's Camp Journey

Chloe Han has been going to Bear Creek Camp longer than she can remember, starting with Family Camp, and now in her sophomore year, she's never missed a summer. A member of Trinity Lutheran, Lansdale, Chloe sees camp as a place that is sacred and special. "It's the people. You never don't feel loved when you're at camp. There's always someone that's there cheering for you in your corner, and that's the most special part."

"Camp has made me a better person. It's given me a perspective on things. Like if my friends are planning a get-together or something, I'm always thinking if there's someone not invited, like I'm always thinking how I would feel if I were in their shoes. At home it's so easy for people to fly under the radar, but then at camp everyone's kind of put together so you have to include everyone. So without camp, I wouldn't be as aware about that type of thing."

Summer staff have made a big impact on Chloe: "They're a safe space where you can talk to them about things you might talk to your friends about and rely on them as an authority figure." And Chloe sees the value of passing along the impacts she's felt onto the next generation: "I'm 100% going to be a counselor someday, and it was cool to talk with all my friends this summer about what it might be like when we're on staff together."



SUMMER STAFF PROFILE:

From Brazil to Bear Creek



This summer, many campers hopped out of their cars expecting to be the ones who traveled the farthest to camp, but a two-hour drive seemed like nothing compared to their cabin leader, Ana Rossato, who made the 19-hour journey from Brazil. Ana came to BCC through the ELCA International Camp Counselor Program, which works with Lutheran camps across the country to pair summer staff from partner synods across the globe.

Like many of our summer staff, Ana found that the best way to learn was by teaching and leading the campers in her care. “I was afraid to talk in public about my faith and to do a Bible study, but after I started to do it with kids and see other staff sharing at chapel or watching the chaplains lead, I was like, ‘Okay, it’s not so hard; I can do it.”

Ana provided a glimpse into another culture for her staff peers and campers just as she was learning about life in Pennsylvania. She also was facilitating and enjoying the magic of camp with her campers. “My first overnight we did a Baldy sunset hike, and everyone was like ‘oh this is so hard,’ but then we got up there and were all singing and dancing, and I was so proud of them, and they said ‘Ana we’re going to miss you so much’ and that was one of my best moments.”

An appreciation of BCC is something that Ana heads back to Brazil with and she hopes to bring some of the camp magic back to her church. “We all worked together to make sure that kids feel like kids, feel at home, and have fun. Maybe they don’t have a lake close to them, or they never got to sleep in a hammock, and they can do that here. It’s fun here to learn about God, and I think everybody should have this experience.”

JOURNEYS OF FAITH:

Telling Summer Staff Stories

Stories of Christian Flourishing in College

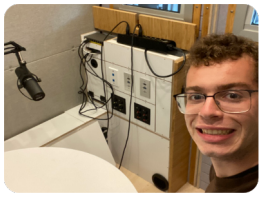
SACRED DISCOVERIES
AUGUSTANA UNIVERSITY

Intentional faith formation opportunities are at the heart of Bear Creek Camp. In the summer, the teaching, leading, and modeling of intentional faith community is carried forward by our college-aged summer staff as they lead bible studies, worship, and share about their faith with the campers and each other. While the general narrative is that young adults are rejecting faith at record levels, Bear Creek Camp staff practice modeling faith exploration and expression on a daily basis.



This summer we had a unique opportunity thanks to a grant from Sacred Discoveries at Augustana University to capture the faith stories of our summer staff and document the journey over the course of 11 weeks. The goals of the project encouraged three key components of faith practices: personally reflecting on your life journey as a story of faith; sharing stories with one another; and listening to faith stories from one another.

Each week, a summer staff person was designated as the “storytelling coordinator” and utilized a camera to interview their peers and record faith-sharing moments. A team of summer staff is now working on editing the content to share with our community and beyond - showcasing the faith journey and stories for a unique glimpse into this key part of our community.



Luke Neale is one member of the post-production team, and he reflected on the impact of the project. “It was cool to be on all sides of the camera, exploring my own faith, hearing how others were thinking about God in their lives. Now we’re putting it all together and trying to capture the magic of camp so others can see how much of an impact staff have on each other and campers and also the impact of this place.”

The final edited footage will be shared throughout the next year on Bear Creek Camp’s YouTube page and other digital spaces. See a trailer now by visiting **www.youtube.com/bearcreekcamp.**

FAMILY CAMP PROFILE:

Camp is for EVERYONE!

We often hear phrases like “Camp sounds amazing! I wish I would have gone when I was younger.”

We also hear things like “My kids aren’t camp age any more.” “It’s just me and my spouse and we don’t have kids.” or “I’d like to come with me and my best friends.”

Camp has a place and a program for everyone – Family & Friends Camp!

Everyone is a family and this year we’re hoping to make that even more clear by titling these programs **Family & Friends** camps. Each program includes outdoor activities, time in nature, and a unique expression of our shared BCC community. But we don’t want you just to take our word for it. Here’s what some of our family camp families had to say:







“My son and I get time together, sharing a place we both love. He lets down his guard. It’s something he asks to do with me when he’s fully in teen mode at home, where spending time with mom can seem cringe or a hassle.”

The Jones Family

“We live in such a beautiful, spirit- filled world, but the stresses of modern society and the growing hold of technology seems to pull us all further apart. ..My family and I look forward to the camp experience and all the varied activities that are offered, but more than anything, it’s the peace in those blessed woods that draws us year after year. Talking, singing, and laughing with old friends and new.... what a time!”

The Miller Family

“Many families are good about searching out a new place to sit during meals to make new connections. It amazes me to see how much the younger members of the families grow in one year and over the years. Teaching new families the customs, songs, and activities that they will then pass on to new families next year.”

The Gardner Family

“Each year, you see how families have grown and changed. New families become friends. Everyone can share in a special fellowship at a very special place. Best of all, the memories you make give you a sense of contentment and peace that is comfort in our ever-changing world.”

The Gumpert Family

Mark your calendars!

Family & Friends Spring Retreat
March 19-21, 2027

Family & Friends Summer Camp/ Artist’s Retreat
July 4-9, 2027

You Make a Difference at BCC

Your gift helps campers and guests of all ages grow in faith, have a space to be themselves, encounter nature, and have fun! Thank you for your support!

Scan the QR Code or visit

bearcreekcamp.org/donate

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Giving Tuesday	• December 1, 2026
Winter Connect	• January 8-10, 2027
Family & Friends Spring Retreat	• March 19-21, 2027
Spring Women's Retreat	• April 9-11, 2027
Explore Open House	• May 1, 2027
Experience Open House	• June 13, 2027
Family & Friends Camp /Artist's Retreat	• July 4-9, 2027
Fall Women's Retreat	• October 1-3, 2027

Register now for SUMMER 2027!

SESSION 1: June 20 - 25
SESSION 2: June 26 - July 2 *
SESSION 3: July 4 - 9 +
SESSION 4: July 11 - 16 *
SESSION 5: July 18 - 23 #
SESSION 6: July 25 - 30 *
SESSION 7: August 1 - 6
SESSION 8: August 8 - 13 *

* Try Camp + Family & Friends Camp, Artist's Retreat # Wilderness Camp option (Seniors Only)

Learn more and register online at **bearcreekcamp.org**