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*From the Desk of  
 Doug Kading*

*A Promise*

Camp Okoboji has been providing a site for 68 years where individuals can go for rest and relaxation in an outdoor ministry setting. The Walther League of Iowa and several pastors were instrumental in securing the financial resources to purchase the original 27 acres of property on Emerson Bay of West Lake Okoboji in order “to serve all ages and provide a Christian environment for recreation” as originally stated by Rev. Elmer Greene.

Today Camp Okoboji has 29 wooded acres on a peninsula bordered by the waters of Emerson Bay. Since the June 2, 1940 dedication Camp Okoboji has provided a place where people can come to be with Jesus at the Lake.

Camp Okoboji is more than a place surrounded by water. It is a place where you can reflect upon the value of God’s love and the importance that His grace and forgiveness has for your heart. Once you come to this quiet and peaceful place and meet the people whom God places in your path you will want to return to meet them again and to be with Jesus at the Lake.

Is Jesus in your home? Is He in your life? Is He in your church? Is He in your family of believers? Absolutely! Jesus is always with you (Matt. 28:20b) even on the shores of Emerson Bay at Camp Okoboji.

Jesus promises to be with you and His promises are above any that you or I can make.

With that in mind I want you to know that the staff at Camp Okoboji has a promise too. It is not on the same level as God’s promise and it applies only when you are here with Jesus at the Lake.

*“Our Promise of Jesus at the Lake – a friendly, safe, refreshing and relaxing experience – an exceptional value for you and for your family”*

Come to Camp Okoboji this year, and meet the friendly people...feel safe...return home refreshed and relaxed...and discover Camp Okoboji as a place where you will receive the most exceptional value for you and for your family.

*From the Desk of  
 Larry Stille*

*Thrivent Financial Supports “Jesus at the Lake”!*

Support through Thrivent Financial for Lutherans gifting programs continues to be an important source of funds for Camp Okoboji. In 2008, \$6,000 was received by the Auxiliary through the Care in Regions Program in support of their Annual Quilt Auction. Over \$3,233 was received from other fund raisers through *Join Hands Day* and the *Care in Communities Program* administered by county chapters. Finally, over \$28,658 was received through the GivingPlus program which supplemented many individual donations. These efforts resulted in a total of \$37,891 for which we are most grateful!

The GivingPlus program will continue in 2009 with little change. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Thrivent Asset Management, LLC, and Thrivent Life Insurance Company have earmarked funding for GivingPlus in 2009 to supplement donations members make, thus increasing their support to the Lutheran community. Benefit members age 16 or older are eligible to participate and Thrivent Financial will supplement \$1 for every \$2 donated to Camp up to a total of \$300 in supplemental funds for a \$600 donation. Another \$25 will be added in recognition of 25 or more hours of volunteer service to Camp during the year. Gifts do not have to be given all at once – they may accumulate toward the \$600 limit during the year; however, each gift must be accompanied by a GivingPlus form. Each benefit member may direct supplemental funds for their gifts to a limit of only two organizations. (Note: approximately 30 supplemental gifts were denied last year because the individual had already donated to two other organizations.) A husband and wife who are both benefit members may then direct their gifts qualifying for supplemental funds to a total of four different organizations – each receiving a gift of up to \$600 (or more) plus up to the limit of \$300 from the Thrivent GivingPlus program!

The GivingPlus program is intended to only supplement qualifying donations. A monetary gift of cash, check or money order will be supplemented by Thrivent Financial or one of their subsidiaries. Stock or mutual fund share transfers are also eligible. Gifts ineligible for matching include fund-raising activities such as benefit dinners or auctions or any activity where donors receive goods, services or discounts in exchange for their gifts. The value of “gifts-in-kind” is also not eligible.

The 2009 GivingPlus form is the same as the 2008 form and requires only that you print your name and address plus your secure identification consisting of the first five letters of your last name, the last four digits of your social Security number, and your written signature. Forms are available on-line from the Thrivent website at [www.Thrivent.com](http://www.Thrivent.com) or from the Camp Office at 712-337-3325. Please consider including a completed GivingPlus form if you are making a gift to Camp.

### Winter Games Event

For the fifth consecutive year, the year-round Camp staff entered the “Chili Cook-off” contest that is a featured event of the Annual University of Okoboji Winter Games. This year over 2,300 people had the opportunity to sample a variety of chili entries and consumed nearly 400 gallons from 38 different vendors including area restaurants and organizations. Although Camp Okoboji again received many compliments on their secret recipe, we were not able to repeat our first place “2006 Best Non-Profit Entry” award. We did, however, achieve our objective of being a highly visible and involved Lutheran presence in the community. In addition to distributing many “Jesus Bracelets” and 2009 Summer Schedules, we answered many questions about Camp Okoboji thus raising the general awareness of our mission of “Serving Christ in Outdoor Ministry.”

### Dates Set For Sunday Brunches

Camp Okoboji will again be offering a series of Sunday brunches for guests, area residents and visitors featuring a variety popular brunch menus. The schedule will be as follows:

#### Date/ Menu/ Prepared by

- April 26/Pancakes & Sausages/Chris Cakes
- June 7/ “Omelets Your Way”/Red’s Cafe
- July 5/Old Fashioned Buffet/Camp Okoboji
- August 2/“Omelets Your Way”/Red’s Cafe
- August 30/Old Fashioned Buffet/Camp Okoboji
- October 4/Waffle Feed/Dad’s Belgian Waffles

All brunches will be served from 9:30 AM to 1:00 PM in the Ginny DeWall Dining Hall. A free will offering will be collected and will be used to support designated projects and the general fund.

### The Bridge

Early pictures of the YWCA Camp and pictures as late as those featured on the 1959 Camp Okoboji Schedule reveal the entry

bridge into Camp to be a wooden structure. Some remnants of the old wooden pilings, their work now long completed, may still be seen under the existing bridge today. Sometime in 1959-1960, the wooden bridge was removed. Mr. W.L. Juhl, Camp Manager, reported in the “Annual Report for Season of 1960” that the “Major Camp Improvements-Completed” included the statement “Removed Old Bridge at the entrance to camp and installed a steel culvert.” Details then become somewhat sketchy. (Can any readers provide more detail and share it with me – Larry at Camp?) There were fewer regulations in those days and fewer approvals needed for such a project. In conversations with those familiar with Camp and who were present at that time, it is noted that the placement of a culvert – although a large one – deeply concerned certain local citizens and some agencies at the state level. The canal was still considered to be a navigable waterway and the culvert was seen as a potential impediment to that activity and “a fuss was raised.” Coincidentally, within a short time, Osceola County was replacing some one-lane rural bridges with wider structures and one of these used, narrow steel bridges became available. The bridge was hauled to Camp, the culvert was removed, and our “rumbling bridge” was installed by Graves Construction Company.

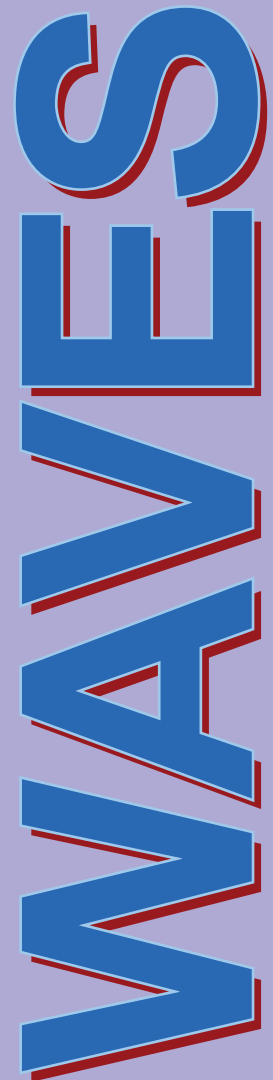
Now, after nearly fifty years of service at Camp Okoboji, the bridge must be replaced. The supports at either end are deteriorating as is the steel structure itself. Within the last year, a bridge inspection resulted in the load rating being reduced from 23 tons to 7 tons. Later this year the rating will be furthered to 3 tons and then to condemned. Many of the trucks that service Camp and buses that bring groups easily exceed these lower limits. As of this writing, a large steel culvert that meets the approval of all agencies is on order to provide a wider and safer two-lane entrance into Camp Okoboji. The estimated project cost is \$35,000 and we are seeking your designated contributions to help defray these costs.

When the Camp management staff worked through the VVM (Values, Vision, Mission) process with IDW leaders a few years ago, a list of seven core values were identified. These values serve to focus and anchor our mission of “Serving Christ in Outdoor Ministry.” The sixth value on that list was simply termed “A Bridge” and was inspired both symbolically and in a very real way by our very own bridge and its rumbling welcomes and good-byes.

We value our bridge and the rich symbolism it presents. We believe our connections to the lakes region, the broader community, the congregations of the District, the church at-large, and the world provide the op-



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# S E W A V E

opportunities to carry out the great commission, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).



The bridge is the way in and out between the world and Camp Okoboji just as Jesus Christ is the Way – or the “Bridge” - through whom God showed His indescribable love for us in giving us an intercessor through whom we can approach our Father. The bridge symbolizes the Christ connection to our mission commitments at Camp and in the world to other cultures, to the churches, and to the community. It is also the way that the world comes into the Camp to grow in its personal relationship with the Savior. God’s goals for His people are for us to know Christ, to become more Christ-like, and to share Christ – each of which is only accomplished through His gift of grace working a saving faith within us. The welcome rumble of the planks reminds us that activity is happening and that our mission opportunities are at hand through the Spirit that dwells within us!

Even though the familiar rumble of our beloved bridge may be lost (although a sound recording may be preserved), we pray that the new entry in and out of Camp will continue to remind us – whether we are coming or going – that we are now entering the mission field as we partner together in “Serving Christ in Outdoor Ministry”! Can you help us with this effort?

## From the Desk of Lori Gamble

### New Family Retreat

Building Families of Faith Retreat will launch its beginning in 2009! This retreat will run from Sunday, July 19 – Friday, July 24, 2009. This retreat is designed for young couples who are newly married and just

starting out through those who have been married for several years and have young children.

Each day will begin with devotional Bible studies led by The Reverend Ben Dose, pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Arcadia, IA. Following that the focus will be on a new topic each with presenters who are experts in those fields. The topics being considered at this time are: financial planning, how to do family devotions and what are some resources out there, medical questions during a “ask the doctor” session, playing with your children, faith stepping stones and celebrating those with your children, and parenting skills.

Activities for older children will be planned and child care for younger children will be provided!

Please check our Website, see our summer program brochure or contact Lori Gamble for more information by phone, email, or Face Book.

## Summer Staff & Volunteer Counselors Needed

We are still accepting applications for the 2009 summer season for general staff, program staff, life guards, and volunteer counselors. Please go to our Web site to download and mail in your application today!

## Grace Place 2009

Looking for a great way to honor your pastor, his wife and family or your DCE, their spouse and family? The dates for the 2009 Grace Place Retreat have been set for September 27 – October 2, 2009! Camp Okoboji will be hosting and is looking for financial contributions in order to keep the costs for these professional church workers at a minimum. If you’d like to contribute to the spiritual and physical well-being of the dedicated workers in Iowa District West please contact Doug Kading, Larry Stille or Lori Gamble.

## From the Desk of Lorene Unrau

### Cans for Camp

Information has been sent to each IDW Church Office Secretary about saving pop cans during Lent for Camp Okoboji Auxiliary. We have set a goal of \$2,000. The monies will be used to purchase new mattresses where needed and replace the old bunk bed frames. If you do not want to save cans but would like to make a donation, the monies can be sent to Camp Okoboji Auxiliary, Attention Lorene Unrau, 1531 Edgewood Dr, Milford, IA 51351.

## Theme Basket Auction & Bake Sale

The Auxiliary will hold a Theme Basket Auction and Bake Sale at the Annual Meeting on April 18. We are asking churches, church groups or individuals to donate a theme basket to be sold on a Silent Auction with a few select ones being auctioned off right after lunch at the Annual Meeting. These baskets can be dropped off at Camp prior to the Annual Meeting or send them with your delegate to the Annual Meeting. Bake sale items can be sent with your delegate or given to any of the Auxiliary Board members. If you have any questions about the Theme Basket Auction contact Kathy Ericksen at 712-728-2890. The Theme Basket monies will be used to replace the tables and chairs on the dining hall deck.

## "The Challenge"

St. Paul's Hartley, LWML is again offering a challenge to all congregations to hold some kind of fund raiser during the year for Camp Okoboji with the proceeds going to debt reduction at Camp. The congregation raising the most monies will win the use of one of the retreat centers for a weekend during the off-season. For more information contact Kathy Ericksen at 712-728-2890. She can help you plan an easy way to raise money.

## Quilt Auction 2009

The Camp Okoboji Auxiliary's Annual Quilt Auction will be held on Saturday, June 13, 2009. The monies will be used to put steel siding on Joppa Hall. If there is extra money it will be used toward the bed replacement project. Quilt description sheets have been mailed to each IDW church or you can get them off the internet or call Camp and have one sent to you. This year pictures of the quilts and a description of each will be on our website, [www.campokoboji.org](http://www.campokoboji.org). All you need to do is click on the quilt pin on our home page and it will take you right to the quilt booklet. If you can not attend but would like to leave a bid on one or more of the quilts, call the Camp Office, 712-337-3325, and give them the information.

## Cub Week Scholarships

The Auxiliary will be offering six full scholarships to Cub Weeks this year. Children interested in applying for these scholarships must fill out the form that was sent to each IDW congregation or contact Lorene at the Camp for a form. Completed forms must be sent to the Camp by April 6, 2009. The winners of these scholarships will be announced at the Annual Meeting.

## Open Facilities

With the economy the way it is this year, are you looking for a relaxing vacation spot close to home? Well Camp Okoboji is the answer. We have openings in the following family (housekeeping) cabins for this summer and they will be filled on a first come first serve basis: May 22-25 Memorial Weekend – Deuteronomy, Ecclesiastes, Exodus, Joshua, Kings, Numbers, Samuel; May 29-31 – Chronicles, Deuteronomy, Ecclesiastes, Exodus, Ezra, Immanuel, Joshua, Meyer, Nehemiah, Numbers, Proverbs, Samuel; May 31-June 7 – Exodus, Immanuel, Kings, Proverbs, Samuel; June 7-14 – Exodus, Numbers, Proverbs; June 14-21 – Ezra; June 24-28 – Immanuel; August 9-16 – Immanuel, Joshua; August 16-23 – Deuteronomy, Exodus, Ezra, Joshua, Meyer, Nehemiah, Numbers, Samuel; August 23-30 – Chronicles, Exodus, Ezra, Immanuel, Judges, Kings, Meyer, Nehemiah, Numbers, Proverbs, Samuel; Sept 4-7 (Labor Day – Numbers. If you are interested in any of these openings call Lorene at 712-337-3325. The openings are listed on our website [www.campokoboji.org](http://www.campokoboji.org) check it out in case there are cancellations.

## Retreat Center Openings

I have finished calling off of the waiting list for family reunions for this summer and still have openings in Bethel Retreat Center and Joppa Hall. If your family is looking for a great place to gather check our openings and see if any of these will work for your family. All openings will be filled on a first-come first-serve basis. You can stay for any number of days; you do not have to take the entire opening.

Bethel Retreat Center

Sun, May 24 to Thurs, May 28

Sun, May 31 to Fri, June 5

Sun, July 26 to Thurs, July 30

Sat, Aug 15 to Fri, Aug 21

Sun, Aug 23 to Fri, Aug 28

Sun, Aug 30 to Fri, Sept 4

Joppa Hall

Fri, May 22 to Fri, May 29

Sun, May 31 to Thurs, June 4

Sun, June 7 to Wed, June 10

Wed, Aug 19 to Fri, Aug 21

Sun, Aug 23 to Fri Aug 28

Sun Aug 30 to Mon, Sept 7

Call Lorene at 712-337-3325 if your family is interested in any of these open dates.

*"Teaching, Living,  
Sharing, Serving  
Jesus Christ, God's Son,  
Our Savior"*



**Lorene Unrau**  
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