

FLBC *Update*

FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends...

I suppose you are curious about the person the Board has called to serve as the next Executive Director of FLBC. Many of you love this camp and want to ensure its ministry is entrusted to someone invested in its success. Rest assured, God has used this camp to help shape my faith and the faith of my family for many years, and I am honored to help guide its ministry into the future.

Here are a few of the “obligatory facts”: I was raised on a cattle ranch in California and attended Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, where I met my wife, Jen, through Lutheran Campus Ministry. We were married in 1996 and I attended Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, receiving my Master of Divinity in 2004.

Jen and I are the proud parents of two children: Daniel, who lives in Boise, Idaho, and Taylor, who lives in Logan, Utah, with her husband, Caleb. Taylor and Caleb are expecting their first child in late October, making us soon-to-be first-time grandparents.

Over the years, I’ve had the privilege of serving in ministry across several communities. My internship year was spent in Broadus, Montana, and, after graduation, served congregations in Thief River Falls, Minnesota; Choteau, Montana; and most recently in Bennington, Nebraska. I also served as Associate to the Bishop in the Montana Synod under Bishops Jessica Crist and Laurie Jungling.

I am an outdoorsman who loves working with my hands, exploring

God’s creation, and spending time with people. A lifelong Lutheran, I am deeply passionate about following Jesus and serving God’s people while sharing the Gospel in an authentic manner. I’m also a devoted reader of Eugene Peterson and often reflect on his vision of faith, ministry, and the beauty of God’s kingdom.

My vision for Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp is rooted in gratitude and listening. I believe camp is a vital partnership between God’s creation and the church—a place where the story of God’s love and provision is told in powerful ways. For me, camp is a natural witness to youth and adults alike, a sacred space where faith is nurtured, lives are renewed, and people are sent back into the world filled with joy for God’s mission.

Jen has been my partner in ministry and in life for almost 30 years. Together we love to travel and connect with people. Jen’s gift as a leader is matched only by her love of hospitality and her entrepreneurial spirit. While in Nebraska, she started her own thriving sourdough cottage business where she baked nearly 100 loaves each week, built a community of followers on social media, and taught sourdough classes. She also loves the outdoors and enjoys hiking and camping. Jen holds a degree from Northern Arizona University in Parks and Recreation Management and Business Administration.

With formal introductions out of the way, I have a request of you. I can’t do this work alone. Camp ministry



has always been a ministry of the whole church, and you have a vital role in making sure this camp thrives and remains sustainable for generations to come. Spread the word—Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp is not just a kids’ camp. It’s a year-round retreat center for all ages. It’s a place where youth and adults can step into the majesty of God’s creation, deepen their faith, and grow in love for Jesus. Invite your friends. Come to an event or retreat yourself. Volunteer.

I look forward to hearing from you and visiting your congregation. I look forward to listening to your ideas and stories. I look forward to discovering ways FLBC has impacted your life and in the ways we can do better. Your stories and ideas matter, and they will help shape the future.

Please—stop by and say hello.

Peace,

Jason



Super Summer Summary!

by Karen Rummage, Program Director

Our summer theme verse, Romans 10:8 was *"God's word comes near, it is on our lips and in our hearts"*.

From specialty week with Cooking camp, Choir camp, Basketball camp, Art camp (and so much more) to Adventure camps like Climb and Kayak and custom youth groups and FLBC's traditional onsite overnight camp, one particular time of day stands out to me from this summer. It is our evening large group games in the big field. Now I know what you are thinking; kids could play big field games anywhere. At Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp we circle up and pray before we play... even run around activities are informed by camp's mission statement to *Experience Christ's Grace Through Meaningful Relationships, Shared Adventures, and Purposeful Service!*

This summer, I watched throughout the week as campers encouraged each other more and more while playing. Often, activities included a variety of age groups. I could see that as their community expanded so did their excitement and care for one another. Yes, Faith Formation happens during worship, bible study, and devotional time in cabin groups, and it is amazing how much growth occurs through play. Even in the camper reflections filled out at the end of the week, large group activities like "Jumangi" and "Mighty Mighty Scoop Noodle Challenge" often ranked up there with swimming and singing Worship songs.

Our daily themes of God's word coming near through trusting, blessing, listening, serving, and following were put into practice in moments of teammates letting loose, cheering one another on, and working together to accomplish a goal. That lasts beyond the game! Feeling empowered, self-confident, supported, encouraged to try new things, and praising the Lord in new ways are incredible things campers learned at camp this summer that they take with them to apply at home!

Summer 2025 by the Numbers!

604 FLBC on-site campers
108 Family Camp Week
186 Glacier Wilderness campers
753 Summer Weekend Retreats
377 Summer Retreat Groups
14 Day camps throughout the state
50+ Incredible Volunteers & Pastors
45 Summer staff from **10** different states and **6** countries joined our year-round staff =
1 AWESOME TEAM!



Thank You to our 2025 summer staff!



**Applications for Summer Staff 2026
a Nov. 1st**

BACK ROW L TO R: Jayden Silver, Evan Moore, Marshall Astle, Justin Sikkema, Riley Doman

FOURTH ROW L TO R: Dayaris Soto, Denali Rusch, Emma Hochhalter, Maddee Hochhalter, Gretchen Radtke, Elliana Cunneen

THIRD ROW L TO R: Daniela Guzzmann, Taylor Ball, Hallie Kuebelbeck, Helen Schweickert, Sonna Larson, Jhoan Almanzar, Brianna Hintz, Joao Fabio Costa, Aidan Link, Logan Haugestuen, Luke Mendenall

SECOND ROW L TO R: Megan Mikelson, Sarah Kimmel, Greta Oldenkamp, Stella Overstreet, Loni Jorgensen, Maddie Anderson, Lily Krogstad, Taylor Dryeson, Lelianie Lima, Rosalinda Garcia Ramos, Hannah Isbell, Roderick Burdick

FRONT ROW L TO R: Zada Cardinal, Brynn Kosters, Grace Weaver, Suvi Swenson, Paula Miranda Suazo, Maddy Bussmann, Nahuma Ambole

NOT PICTURED: Hannah Richer, Emily Mullin, Ben Richer, Justin Shaffer

**WANT A 2025 STAFF POSTER?
CONTACT THE OFFICE AT 406-752-6602!**

Transformational Thanks Giving Inspiring FLBC Generosity Moving Forward

by Grace Schroeder Scott, FLBC Senior Development Consultant



Mindful of God's blessings, we focus on giving thanks for the donors, staff and volunteers, as well as those who serve on the Board of Trustees. We are grateful for each and every donor who generously supports Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp throughout the year. Our faithful Partners make gifts to support the unrestricted, general and current needs, as well as the Endowment and capital funds.

Moving forward, we offer blessings and give thanks for our new Executive Director, Jason Asselstine and his wife Jennifer; Judy Engh and John Grebe who graciously served as the

FLBC Interim co-Executive Directors, and our past Executive Director, Margie Fiedler. We encourage our Partners, Legacy Partners and prospective donors to generously contribute current and planned gifts to the FLBC named and General Endowment funds.

We are grateful to receive endowment and annual support for the FLBC year round and summer staff, programs, youth campers, ongoing maintenance of buildings and grounds, and capital funding projects. Gifts can be given with cash, appreciated securities, tax-free qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) from IRAs and distributions from donor-advised funds (DAFs). We also appreciate convenient gifts made with a check, a credit card or an electronic online donation. Reminder: Gifts may be designated in memory of or in honor of a loved one. If you have not yet given a major gift, please join us in becoming Gold (\$5,000+), Platinum (\$10,000+), or Sapphire (\$25,000+) Partners.

Planned gifts for Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp can be made through your Will and/or estate plan, revocable living trusts, charitable life estates (gifting a personal residence and/or farm land – while reserving the right to live there and maintain the property as long as you wish), designating gifts of life insurance, making charitable gifts from retirement assets during your lifetime or designating the remaining retirement fund assets to be distributed to FLBC upon death of the donor. You can also make gifts that produce supplemental life income for you, your spouse and others, with the remainder interest to one or more charities. Charitable gift annuities and various charitable trusts are advantageous to the donors, income recipients and charities. You are welcome to call 406-752-6602, send an email request to office@flbc.net and/or to grace@flbc.net for gift planning assistance. We will love to serve you!

FLBC is moving forward into a vibrant, inspiring and expansive future. Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp engages in Outdoor Christian Ministry (Wilderness and Environmental Education) and offers transformational summer camps for youth and families, year round programs, retreats, wedding weekends, reunions, classes and conferences.

Thanks for Giving!

A Word from your Interim Executive Directors

Judy & John

This time of interim at FLBC has been special. We knew coming to Flathead that it would be an enriching experience given the strong history of Lutheran outdoor ministry under the leadership of Gary Cockrell and most recently, Margie Fiedler. It has been a gift to walk with the staff during this time of transition.

It has also been a gift to meet so many incredible people associated with this ministry! This operation is big and it takes a strong community to make things run smoothly. The year round staff are incredibly talented and dedicated and deserve so much support. Camps are notorious for underpaying and overworking their staff members. We are continually working to change that camp model into one that is sustainable and healthy for all.

Because of the financial health of FLBC, we are able to help staff members live by the motto of "work smarter not harder." We've upgraded tools and vehicles to make the work easier and less stressful. We are now working on increasing salaries even slightly to show the staff how valued they are.

Again, we can do this because of the incredible support of so many people and congregations!

Thank you all!

Summer Staff are a Blessing

by John Grebe

We often associate Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp with kids, families, and retreat guests exploring, playing, eating, and resting. The purpose of the ministry is hopefully self-evident based on the ways in which we serve you, the members of this community. One instrumental facet of our ministry that might be less noticeable at times is the growth and development of summer staff or seasonal staff who join the year round staff in service. When asked to reflect on the experience one staffer wrote, *"Through my time at camp I've grown in ways I didn't expect. I've learned the importance of patience, leadership, and showing up fully for others, even on hard days. I have had the chance to connect deeply with campers and fellow staff, create unforgettable memories, and be a part of a community that encourages faith, growth, and kindness."* ~ Taylor Ball. The staff grow together to create a community that lasts a lifetime over.

We owe them a debt of gratitude for their willingness to serve and put in exceptionally long hours throughout most of the summer. We invite these fine people to do some amazing work with little to no advanced training. After all, how can we adequately train anyone to be a counselor to be willing to work 23 hours a day. We ask them to sing, teach, cook, clean, listen, play silly games, and perform skits. These are our leadership staff, counselors, support staff, and seasonal workers that do a variety of tasks as needed. When it is all said and done the staff are well represented by this sentiment:

"Being able to see campers grow in awareness of the beauty and mystery of God at camp is incredible." ~ Aidan Link

All of the staff at FLBC work hard and love even harder! For many it is their first full time job — what a gift it is to help develop a strong work ethic and to acknowledge their growth in empathy.

"This is my first Summer as a counselor and I have been so lucky to experience the love and joy of God through adventures with children." ~ Maddie Bussman.

There are always challenges working in close quarters and this summer was no exception, we had our ups and downs and for 6 of us there was loss of a loved one. This is never easy but it was comforting seeing a supportive community gather in support of the sorrow individuals experienced.

My hope and prayer is that the experiences of summer staff will abide with them so that in the future they will draw upon the experience to build community in the world around them. Although we can romanticize camp life, we know it is possible to create intentional community and here at camp we are modeling this for guests, campers, and staff.





Summer Reflections: Glacier Wilderness Adventure Program

by Justin Sikkema, Outdoor Adventure Program & Environmental Education Director

There is a reoccurring story throughout the Christian and Jewish scriptures of the Divine meeting people in the Wilderness. Moses, Elijah, John the Baptist, Hagar, and Jesus all have stories of encountering God when they stepped into the Wild, the Unknown, the Mystery. This summer I was blessed to see this story come alive again through our Glacier Wilderness Adventure Program. Individuals and groups from all over the country hiked and backpacked throughout the Jewel Basin, kayaked, climbed rocks, and camped on Lake Kootenai, white water rafted the Lower Flathead River, and spent time together in intentional community swimming, cooking, worshiping, playing, and just being. In reflection, I am grateful for all the ways God showed up — in the food, the animals, the lake, the discomforts and challenges, the music and the silences, and all the wonderful relationships cultivated at camp. To all those who were a part of the Glacier Wilderness Program — staff, participants, donors, and all supporters near and far — I send much gratitude.

Next summer we are excited to expand and rebuild elements of the program to continue fulfilling our mission of *“Sharing Christ’s Grace through shared adventures, meaningful relationships, and purposeful service”*. We are looking to return our incredibly unique sailing and rafting programs to the Flathead Lake and the North Fork of the Flathead River respectively. We are also excited to develop our outdoor adventure program to better fulfill and accommodate the needs of everyone — beginner to advanced — and so will begin offering programs tiered to the different skill levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced). We are of the firm belief that adventure and the opportunity to connect with the Wilderness is God’s gift to all, regardless of ability or experience.

Whether you were able to join us this year or not, we would love to have you adventure with us next year! Many blessings and hope to see you soon!



SIT GRANT & PROGRAM

We are blessed to have received a grant from the Hetzel Foundation to build up our Staff In Training (SIT) program for 2026.

We will be expanding the program as we intentionally develop high school age leaders. Throughout the summer they will have opportunities to practice those leadership skills in a variety of areas at camp. Part of the goal in further developing this program is to send participants out to be leaders in their communities and congregations.

We want to partner with congregations and the synod so that the campers who are part of the program have a place to grow both at camp and in their faith community.

FLBC is grateful for the support of the Hetzel Foundation in this journey!





We had a GREAT Labor Day Volunteer Work Weekend! Around 25 folks of all ages came to FLBC to help with projects, worship together, swim, play, and just enjoy being the Body of Christ. Together we accomplished so many things from cutting up trees, splitting wood, restocking wood piles, to cleaning out old boats, to upgrading the sand volleyball court, to repairing the gaga ball structure, to repairing and painting picnic tables. Volunteer projects at camp are endless and we'd love for you to come join the volunteers either at a specific volunteer weekend, or ANY day that you are available! If you are local and can help in a pinch with cleaning during a quick turnover day between groups, or helping in the kitchen, please let us know!

Contact the office at office@flbc.net or call 406-752-6602.

Big Thanks

to Volunteers and Pastors of Summer 2025

Thank you! We couldn't do it without you!

Pastor Holly Johnson
 Pastor Melanie Martin-Dent
 Jeff Miles
 Rae Montilla
 Laurie Wretling
 Chamene Plum
 Pastor Elizabeth Sillerud
 Vanessa Steiger
 Pastor Megan Hoewisch
 Matt Erdel
 Heidi Mitchell
 Colter Murphy
 Pastor Annela Rova
 Pastor Sarah Schilcher
 Pastor Dawn Busch
 Pastor Julia Seymour
 Margaret Corcoran
 Sandy Drollman
 Alanah Barnes
 Kyah Olson-Sola
 Carla Jenewein
 Kurt Jenewein
 Stephanie Richardson
 Kathy Olson
 Linda Coty
 Ethan Kunka

Dinah Helgeson
 Kendra Schmidt
 Gretchen Mundinger
 Kelly Johnson
 Pastor Abe Johnson
 Kaylee Benjamin
 Rev. Barbara Gwynn
 K'Lynn Sloan Harris
 Pastor Paul Anderson
 Philip Sauer
 Pastor Paul Oman
 Julie Ramirez
 Jim Allen
 Pastor Brad Ulgenes
 Madison Reed
 Taylor Bradbury
 John Masterson
 Cynthia Willyard
 Russel Aldrich
 Amelia Smart
 Casey Anderson
 Kristine Highness Soedal
 Linda Simon
 Joe Kresl
 Christopher Mitchell



The Capital Campaign Update

by Ben & Kim Haugestuen, Campaign Chairs

The Capital Campaign committee is off and running! In 2023 the Board of Directors and the Association of FLBC adopted a Strategic Plan. The plan included areas of Governance, Program and the need for a Master plan, along with many other items being worked on!

The Master plan was prepared and adopted... thanks to input from hundreds of people including staff, board, donors, congregation's, volunteers, etc. The master (facilities) plan led to a feasibility study, conducted in the spring of 2025. While \$6M was tested, the plan came back saying \$2.8–\$3.8M should be the goal for the first phase of the plan.

While we have not set a theme for the campaign yet... we know one thing...

"It's all about the children and youth!"

We know that ministering to youth is the #1 most important thing that FLBC is about! Helping youth feel safe, enabling them to be themselves, experiencing and learning about caring for God's creation and learning more about the love, grace and mercy of Jesus Christ.

For this reason, Phase 1 of the master plan, includes:

- A volunteer/guest cabin, that will house 18 people with ADA accessibility in one of the bathrooms. Children need caring adults, and with FLBC's value of including people with different abilities, more adults are needed to assist camp counselor and staff, in helping with the campers. Volunteers may also help with Bible study, worship, passion play, kitchen work, maintenance help, laundry and cleaning, all of which contribute to the campers' experience.
- Updating the current bathrooms to bring them to standards for safety, privacy and amenities. (Phase 2 will include an additional bathhouse near the cabins on the hill, unless we go above our goal, then it will be added to Phase 1)
- Adding 12 more RV spots, ADA accessible pathways, and infrastructure items to move into the next phase
- Grow our endowment in outright gifts and 'expectancy's' by \$1M. FLBC has 3 endowment categories: Campership Endowment; Staff Endowment to sponsor a summer staff salary; and the General Endowment (facility upkeep and fun new program elements for campers) Currently our endowments provide approximately \$25,000 per year to our operating fund in these categories.

The team is at work, and our wonderful leader/chairpersons include:

- **Merv & Tolly Eriksson** – Leadership Team
- **Traci & Bruce Vatne** – Staff and Alumni staff Team
- **Jay & Krista Bates** – Board and Alumni Board Team
- **Anne Schularick** – Minnesota area Chair
- **Rev. Gary Cockrell & Rev. Mike Borge** – Honorary Chairs
- **Pastor Carol & Steve Seilhymer** – Congregation Chair

We invite you to be a part of this exciting ministry program! Let us know if you would like to be involved, and thank you for praying for this next phase of growth for FLBC.

All Thanks & Praise to God for these Wonderful Gifts!!

While we mourn the death of loved ones and longtime friends of FLBC, we thank God for their faithful stewardship.

Evelyn & Bud Wanke from Rudyard, MT and Louis & June Bierwagen from Big Sandy, MT made a planned gift in their estate plan to be dispersed to FLBC upon the death of the surviving spouse. Evelyn and June both passed away this spring/summer. These amazing stewards wanted FLBC to continue to grow and flourish long after they went on to greater glory. They knew and believed that everything we have 'or own' is God's, and we are to care for all of God's gifts to us.

Thank you to the Wanke and Bierwagen families. We will let you know soon how these amazing planned gifts are at work at FLBC.

If you would like more information on how you can leave a gift to FLBC, go to our website for the FREE WILL information, and/or contact our Sr. Development staff member who works with people planning their will/estate plan.

Grace Schroeder Scott

Grace@flbc.net

612-743-7035





Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp

603 S. Main Street
Kalispell, MT 59901

Find us on [f](#) [@](#) flatheadlutheranbiblecamp



Non Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Great Falls, MT
Permit No. 151

UPCOMING RETREATS

- Oct 24-26 **CAMPfirmation - Part 1**
- Oct 20-Nov 2 **FLBC Quilt & Craft Retreat**
- Nov 14-16 **FLBC Yoga Retreat**
- Dec 5-7 **Advent Family Festival**
- Jan 23-25 **FLBC Men's Retreat**
- Feb 13-16 **Ski & Snowboard Retreat**
- Mar 13-15 **Grand Camp**
- Apr 12-14 **Adult Spirituality Retreat:
Faith & Writing Retreat with Pastor Holly Johnson**

Upcoming Events Spotlight:

RECENTER - Yoga Spirituality Retreat November 14-16, 2025

Cost: \$215 / person (ages 16 & up)



This coming November 14-16, join Pastor Kelsey Beebe and recenter your heart, soul, and body with a weekend full of prayerful movement! Throughout the weekend, yoga classes will be offered in a variety of styles and levels. There will be opportunities for guided meditation and prayer, as well as dialogue around how we can use movement as a form of prayer. All levels of experience are welcome!



Advent Festival: Dec 5-7, 2025

Come to camp to prepare for Christmas! All are welcome to join FLBC's Family Advent Retreat Dec 5th-7th, 2025. It will be a cozy, crafty community gathering with leaders Pr. Annela Rova (top photo) and Pr. Melissa Johansen. Join as we take a weekend to practice self-compassion meditation, prayer, and discussion.

We will make little "mangers of meaning" for ourselves as we learn about receiving: affirmations of worth, a noticing of spiritual gifts, and help in remembering that there is good in this world that has been given. We may even make time to write thank you cards to people God has placed on our hearts. Gratitude abounds!



office: 406.752.6602 • fax: 406.752.6670 • email: office@flbc.net • www.flbc.net