

Facilitating an encounter with Christ on the mountaintop



Partnering with congregations, Sky Ranch offers a variety of Christ-centered outdoor ministry experiences.

Campers experience the beauty of creation at an elevation of 9,200 feet and embrace the simplicity and joy of life in community, seeking to live out the gospel through the rhythms of camp.

Here, campers are immersed in a theological language counter to our culture's dominate voices:

- The gift of **gospel** in a world bound by law.
- The gift of **community** in a world of radical individualism.
- The gift of **hope** in a world of fear.
- The gift of **abundance** in a world of scarcity.

"Sky Ranch is a place of radical hospitality that welcomes me and others into the embrace of God

as we dive ever deeper into what it means to be followers of Christ."

—*summer staff*

"It was like an intergenerational monastery with spaghetti dinners and s'mores! It was like an example

of what the church is meant to be: meals, songs, worship, creation, justice and community! It was for me an image of God's kingdom."

—*pastoral intern*

Come join us this summer! Find more information at skyranchcolorado.org. ☒



What does it look like to be church "for the life of the world"?

High school youth from All Saints and Holy Love, Aurora, and Lord of the Hills, Centennial (Y3 Youth Group), share their thoughts on this question.

"A safe, nonjudgmental, loving place for everyone."

"It looks like a big community of different people with different looks, views, ideas, sexuality, opinions and identities, but we are all joyful and united under God and we support each other no matter what."

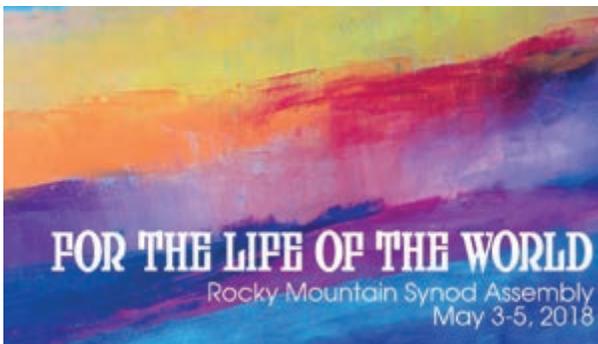
"It means helping the people who need it. Brightening their day. Brightening their life if only for a little bit. Because one spark of light can grow into a large, beautiful flame. A brilliant fire of hope, love and community."

"Helping those around the world with fresh clean water, abundant food and stable dwellings."

"A place of acceptance, equality and love for every member. It would look like a warm inviting place that has comfy pews and good coffee."

"A community that supports each other regardless of anything they could be discriminated against."

"By seeing the world around us and taking the time to understand other people's situations and problems; helping people deal with them; supporting our fellow man/woman and allowing the Holy Spirit to work through me." ☒



Walking the Emmaus Road:

Faith formation for the life of the world

By the Rev. Leslie Welton

In late January, 26 faith formation leaders from the Rocky Mountain Synod traveled to Houston for the Youth Ministry Extravaganza. For several days, we meditated, explored and talked about the road to Emmaus text in Luke 24 with a goal of learning to “find forward.”

The disciples walking with Jesus had the human tendency to look back only at the events of the crucifixion. Their conversation with Jesus, however, invited them to look back into Scripture to see where he had always been, and then supper was the catalyst in which they looked forward into the new life that was just beginning to unfold in the presence of the resurrected Christ. I have pondered this text in light of faith formation in the Rocky Mountain Synod ever since, asking: “How are we cognizant of our past as Lutherans in the southwest corner of the United States while at the same time remembering that our call is to make Christ known as he has been made known to us?”

I believe we are called to recognize our past as a starting point for engaging the life of discipleship and faith. Our geography puts us in the land of explorers and pioneers, shaping us to be courageous and innovative, but also in the context of colonizers and ravagers of land and native peoples.

The formation of our faith begins with recognition and repentance that allows us to move into teaching that does not repeat those patterns with our youth and children. It might be a relearning for those of us in the later stages of life for whom the

narrative is firsthand, but this Christ made known calls us to love of God and neighbor above all else.

Faith formation then takes on forms as varied as the landscapes of our synod. From the borderlands to the high plains of Wyoming, from metro Denver to the vastness of Utah, faith formation adapts to its context and invites us to share with one another.

Residents of Eben Ezer Lutheran Care Center in rural Brush, Colo., faithfully engage in weekly Bible studies while little ones in Sunday schools and pews elsewhere hear the love of God for the first time, in the most creative formats one can imagine. Our campus ministry students bear witness to the love of God at seven universities while also engaging Lutheran students across the country and learning from one another. Take a trip to El Paso, Texas, and the folks at *Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey* will help you and your congregation understand life on the border, immigration and love of neighbor through their specific lens of faith. In Utah, the conversation between faith and science invites new perspectives on old assumptions. The list goes on!

We in this synod walk the Emmaus road daily. We look at where we’ve been—ethnic congregations settled in new places—and where we are headed together in the company of Jesus, who makes himself known in the breaking of bread and the call to be disciples unafraid of the new realities that challenge us to be Christians, not for our own sake, but for the life of the world. **L**

Leslie Welton is assistant to the bishop for faith formation and candidacy.

Faith formation through mentorship and justice work

By Carol McDivitt



Sophia Behrens (right) and Carol McDivitt with Peter Severson, director of Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-Colorado, at the ELCA World Hunger Gathering in Washington, D.C.

Prior to the youth gathering held in Fort Collins, Colo., in January 2017, I learned about a high school student named Sophia Behrens. She had worked with ELCA World Hunger to develop a hunger meal for the gathering, so she obviously came highly recommended by churchwide staff.

Sophia gladly accepted an invitation to be part of the core team of the Rocky Mountain Synod's Hunger Network. We've traveled and roomed together, talked together, worked together. My life is so blessed because Sophia is in it.

Maybe because of my prior experiences with youth, I've never hesitated to think about inviting them to be part of our team. Those of us who have been around for a while do have some responsibility for helping any new members learn as much as possible about how ELCA World Hunger does its amazing work on behalf of our whole church. But, mostly, our journey of service

is a cooperative adventure to which we all bring our passions, knowledge and energy. No one but God is in charge of this journey, and all are part of God's story. I'm pretty sure I've learned more from Sophia than she has learned from me—and that is just great.

When the Rocky Mountain Synod became a pilot synod for the ELCA World Hunger Ambassador Program, a new high school student joined us. Megan Barnhouse is from El Paso, Texas, and, like Sophia, is a full and integral participant in our work together. I look forward to seeing all that Megan will bring to our work. Barbara Ripperger, coordinator of our ambassador program, is thrilled about the energy and enthusiasm our high school members share with us.

If faith formation is a lifelong journey, every age group has something to bring. From the comfort with mystery characteristic of the very young to the experienced contemplation of those who have practiced faith for many years—all God's people travel together. *All are welcome!* **L**

"For me, working with ELCA World Hunger means that I get to follow my passion while working with people who are willing to mentor and lead me in order for me to become a more mindful, educated and rounded-out person. ELCA World Hunger has a special place in my heart through leadership and knowing you're making a difference."

—Sophia Behrens, Hunger Ambassador

 **ELCA World Hunger**
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Carol McDivitt is chair of the Rocky Mountain Synod Hunger Network.



2018 Summer Registration begins November 1, 2017

This changes everything!

"For by GRACE you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is a gift of God."
—Ephesians 2:8



RAINBOWTRAIL.ORG

Come Home to Rainbow Trail...

Retreats	Bridging Borders	On-Site	Day Camp	Compass Points
<p>Relax, rejuvenate, and refocus at Rainbow Trail during Retreat Season. Throughout non-summer months, RTLCL hosts and leads dozens of retreats. Whether you are a Confirmation student, a high school youth group, a family looking for a getaway, or a ski group wanting to hit the slopes, there is a retreat at Rainbow Trail for you!</p> 	<p>Spend a week alongside RTLCL staff, serving brothers and sisters in Christ in locations both domestic and abroad. Despite cultural and language differences, love is universal. Through the physical work you will do and the relationships you will build, Bridging Borders trips aim to share the love of God with all people it touches.</p> 	<p>Rainbow Trail's On-Site program is centered on faith in Christ and focused on campers. Through the "Village System" at RTLCL, campers get to select their counselors, create their schedules, and participate fully in leading worship and other camp activities in a safe environment. Week-long summer camps are available for all ages, including Family Camps!</p> 	<p>Rainbow Trail's Day Camp program brings camp to congregations within the Rocky Mountain Synod and beyond. Teams of RTLCL staff lead elementary-age campers in a week of Bible study, crafts, games, and song. Day Camp brings Christ's message of unconditional love into communities through a fun and energetic program.</p> 	<p>Adventure into the Rocky Mountain wilderness with a Rainbow Trail guide leading the way. Experience a rewarding week of physical and spiritual challenges in God's wild country. Through Bible study, conquering mountain peaks, and preparing delicious on-trail meals, you will love your week on Compass Points!</p> 

Home of the Mountaintop Experience!