

Highland Episcopalian



A Quarterly Publication of the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina

CLOSER TO GOD:
Conference and camp ministries

Lake Logan

Summer 2017

Welcome to the Diocese!

Since the beginning of the year, we've had some new additions to diocesan staff:

The Rev. Canon Augusta Anderson



On February 1, Augusta Anderson began serving the diocese as Canon to the Ordinary and Chief of Staff. Her talents for administration, hospitality, interdisciplinary thought, and strategic planning will certainly be assets in this new role.

Augusta is passionate about clergy health and well-being, equipping the ministry of all the baptized, empowering young adults for their ministry in the world, and building community partnerships between the church and other organizations. She has also been an early advocate for exploring emerging models of mutual ministry between clergy and lay leadership in small congregations.

The Rev. Anderson previously served as rector of the Church of The Transfiguration in Saluda and as co-facilitator of Fresh Start for new clergy in the diocese. She is also a member of the Commission to Dismantle Racism. Beyond our diocese, Augusta is on the faculty for Biblical Studies in the Deacon school for the Dioceses of Virginia, Southern Virginia, and Southwest Virginia.

Since arriving in the diocese in 1999, Augusta has served as Canon to the Dean of Cathedral of All Souls, rector of St. Thomas in Burnsville, adjunct clergy at Trinity in Asheville, and as assistant rector at St. James in Black Mountain. Augusta has served on Executive Council, the Camp Henry Board and the Mission and Ministry Conference planning team. She has also represented the diocese as Deputy to General Convention (2003, 2006) and was appointed as a member of the Standing Commission on the State of the Church. In 2016, Augusta ably led our diocese during a time of transition as the President of Standing Committee.

Augusta was ordained in 1999 and holds a Master in Divinity from Virginia Theological Seminary and a Bachelor of Arts from Hobart & William Smith Colleges. Augusta grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area and Honolulu, Hawaii. She lives in Asheville with her husband, Steve, and four children, Jack, Anna Rose, Ruby Mae, and Mary Love.

About the *Highland Episcopalian*

Cover photo is by Robin Smith.

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If you would prefer to receive it electronically, please email Chris Goldman at cgoldman@diocesewnc.org.

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Kelly Stephenson



In July, Kelly Stephenson began serving as Assistant for Finance and Diocesan Life. This new position will equip us to serve our congregations with direct staff support in both financial services and operational assistance. In particular, Kelly will enable our Chief

Financial Officer to fulfill the increasing requests from our congregations for specialized financial support. This position will also serve as a resource for parish administrators in their various responsibilities. Additionally, the Assistant for Finance and Diocesan Life will support both the regular operations of the diocesan office and our ongoing diocesan-wide events.

Kelly's gifts in administration, finance, hospitality, organizational management, graphic design, and marketing will not only support and enhance the daily functioning of diocesan staff, but will also be a blessing to the entire diocese.

Kelly comes to us from St. James, Black Mountain where she has ably served that community for ten years as the Parish Administrator, managing both the details of church life and finance. While at St. James, she also served as the Administrative Assistant and Financial Bookkeeper for the Ministry of Hope Chaplaincy Program of Swannanoa Correctional Center for Women.

Kelly graduated from Millsaps College, Jackson, MS in 1996. After college, she and her husband, Jonathan, moved to Asheville where she co-founded Little Sprouts, a web-based retail business. The Stephensons have two children, Riley, a senior at Owen High School, and Maggie, a 7th grader at Evergreen Community Charter School.

Lauri SoJourney



On June 1, Lauri SoJourney joined the diocese as the Executive Director of Lake Logan Conference Center. Lauri's talents for strategic planning, administration, hospitality, and community partnerships will not only strengthen the conference center's mission, but will also be a blessing to the entire diocese.

Lauri comes to Lake Logan from Gravatt Camp and Conference Center, located in the Diocese of Upper South Carolina, where she served for ten years as executive director. Under her leadership, Gravatt has seen tremendous growth: a significant increase in number of guests and campers, renewed alumni support, a growing annual fund, several new outreach programs, two UTO grants supporting environmental and agricultural programs, four new constructions, a strengthened relationship in the diocese, and increased visibility in the community of Aiken, South Carolina.

Prior to serving at Gravatt, Lauri worked in the Division of Student Life at Winthrop University. Lauri earned her BA in English - Professional Communications from Winthrop, her MA in Student Personnel Administration from Ball State University, and a Certificate of Nonprofit Management from Winthrop.

Lauri is a life-long Episcopalian who grew up attending Episcopal summer camp and participating in youth retreats. She believes wholeheartedly in camp and conference ministry and the opportunity it provides to share the love of Christ in community.

Lauri is married to Travis Zach, and they have a blended family of six children ranging from ages 10 to 24: Arbie Schue and Anna Zach, who live in Minnesota; Sarah Mims Yeargin, who will start college at Kenyon in the fall; and Gracie, Daniel, and Jack Yeargin, who will live with them at Lake Logan, along with their dogs, cats, and chickens.

Closer to God: Conference and Camp Ministries in our Diocese

The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.
—Psalms 65:12-13

By Chris Goldman, diocesan staff

From the sound of bagpipes lofting across a sacred valley to the sight of a bald eagle over a highland lake, from a quiet chapel on a hill to a field of children shouting joyfully, our conference centers provide unique opportunities for a variety of experiences. Western North Carolina is a region known for its great natural beauty, and in our diocese we are doubly blessed to have Lake Logan Conference Center and Valle Crucis Conference Center, as well as Camp Henry for youth campers. These are places where we can step away from the day-to-day business of our lives and experience the wonder of nature and the presence of the Divine.

Our conference centers provide access to a wide variety of outdoor activities: hiking, sailing, fishing, labyrinth walks, bird watching, and swimming. They also give us historic spaces with modern amenities and a diverse range of options for conferences, retreats, seminars, trainings, and everything else that brings people together in our diocese. They are important partners in our faith community.

In this issue, we will explore our conference and camp ministries: their history, the way they create memories to last a lifetime, the sacred spaces they host for worship and retreat, and the special partnerships they create with their surrounding communities. In addition, we take a trip to Camp Henry to explore our ministry there, which has played a huge role in developing our youth through Christian formation, fellowship and fun.

CHERISHED MEMORIES

While we explore the history of the places where our conference centers were formed (*see pages 12-14*), each one also evokes strong personal memories for those who have experienced them.

Nancy Swann served on the Lake Logan Board of Directors after the property was acquired by the diocese, and then returned 12 years later to serve a second term. She cherishes the special time she spent on the lake as a young teenager, remembering her friendship with someone who had a unique link to Lake Logan. "I spent a day with Lollie Robertson and a group of friends from Asheville at Lake Logan," she says. "Lollie was Logan Robertson's oldest daughter. Lake Logan was named for her father, who was the younger son of Reuben Robertson, Chairman of Champion Paper. I have loved Lake Logan ever since that first visit. I was trying to learn to water ski behind the Robertson's Chris Craft boat, which was sleek and beautiful, but probably didn't go that fast!"

Randi Neff, a longtime volunteer and a Lake Logan Trailblazer donor, remembers, "My husband and I spent our courting days riding, hiking, picnicking and enjoying the beauty of everything on Highway 215 [Lake Logan Road] back in 1982," she says. "In those days, Lake Logan did not belong to the diocese and we could only dream of what the cabins and Sit 'n' Whittle actually looked like up close as we drove by and fantasized about the days when they were in use. Our first overnight was for a church retreat weekend, but I do not remember the year, only waking up to mist on the lake at Noonook [a cabin in the Sit 'n' Whittle Village]."



A cross with mountains in the background, Lake Logan Conference Center



A trail passes by this peaceful scene at Valle Crucis Conference Center

Paul Dismukes is a volunteer, board member and committee member at Lake Logan. He says, "I first came to Lake Logan in early 2001 to help clean up around Sit 'n' Whittle. I pulled brush out of the edge of the Lake and was really impressed by how beautiful the whole area was. My favorite memory of Lake Logan was when I had just learned how to fly fish in Wyoming and this was my first opportunity to practice my new skills. Although it was catch-and-release, what more beautiful place could a fisherman go to fish?"

Likewise, many people have fond memories of Valle Crucis. Diana White is a Valle Crucis resident, long-time Board member, contributor, and volunteer. She says, "I remember going there for Sunday lunch after church when my husband and I first moved here. The food was delicious. After that I participated in programs there when I was a member of Holy Cross Church. My father grew up here in Valle Crucis (he was the youngest son of W.W. Mast of the Mast Store fame) and he went to 7th grade at what was then the Mission School and is now the Conference Center."

White goes on to say, "There's a sense of history and nature that is so very real here. Every building has a story to tell and the grounds are conducive to walking, exploring or just stopping and praying. The hospitality that is offered is genuine and reminiscent of all the traditions that have been part of this area for so many generations."

The Rt. Rev. José Antonio McLoughlin, bishop of the diocese, remembers fondly the time he spent at Val-

le Crucis back when he was a lay leader in Virginia. He would bring youth to Valle Crucis for towel ministry, and after dinner, they would gather together in the Apple Barn and talk about their day.

He recalls, "One of my favorite memories is of those evenings, sitting in the Apple Barn and listening to these youth talk about the ways in which they've encountered God in the people they'd served that day."

SACRED GROUND

Perhaps the most important aspect of our camps and conference centers is the space they allow us to practice Christian hospitality and experience the Divine in sacred spaces.

"It is our job to welcome each guest with the love of Christ," says Lauri SoJourney, Executive Director of Lake Logan Conference Center. "People should see God in us, and we should see God in each guest as well. I stress to my staff that every person who comes here, we treat them like that."

It's clear that everyone involved with our conference centers considers them sacred spaces, and in fact, they are often referred to as "thin places"—an area where the divide between heaven and earth seems to dissolve, so that we feel closer to God than we normally do on a day-to-day basis.

“The idea of thin places is ancient,” says Margaret L. Love, executive director of Valle Crucis Conference Center. “My personal experience is that some places are just more naturally predisposed to people gathering together for worship and learning and prayer, and the more you do that in a place, the thinner it gets. Valle Crucis has had a concentrated amount of prayer and worship here since 1842, and you can tell. Spending time here, you just know.”

Likewise, Lake Logan is known as a sacred space. As SoJourney says, “What I’ve heard over and over is that this is a thin space. God is everywhere, but this is a place where you can truly feel the presence of God and the Spirit.”

Both Lake Logan and Valle Crucis host youth ministries and events, which makes them places for spiritual growth and Christian formation.

In addition, both have spaces for quiet reflection. At Valle Crucis, the Hermitages sit high up on the hills above the main campus, providing a place for renewal and retreat. The beautiful St. Anthony’s chapel, furnished with wood by a local artisan, sits between the two hermitage cabins, providing a place for worship. “It’s life changing to have opportunity for spiritual or silent retreat,” says Love. “We do our best to feather those little nests so that you don’t want for anything while you’re there,” includ-

ing providing things like table settings, coffee, tea, and even hiking sticks for trail walking.

At Lake Logan Conference Center, the Retreat House offers space to host retreats of all sizes, with seven bedrooms and bathrooms, a full kitchen, gas log fireplace, laundry facilities, a spacious living room, and porches with full views of the property. “We make it so people never even have to leave if they don’t want to,” says SoJourney. She notes that Jesus often went away to quiet retreats in the mountains, and called upon his disciples to do the same. “We need that,” she says. “To get away so that we can be closer to God and to each other.”

In addition to hosting spaces for formal retreats, both conference centers offer numerous opportunities for quiet reflection in nature. The majesty and beauty of God’s creation is evident throughout.

“Lake Logan and Valle Crucis are sacred places,” says Bishop José. “They’re sacred, holy ground. They’re really at the spiritual core of the diocese in that they provide a place of solace, a place of retreat, a place to be closer to one another as a community as well as to form a closer relationship to God. The beauty of the surroundings evoke an appreciation for the creation that we’ve been given.”

A rainbow over the Hermitages and St. Anthony’s Chapel, Valle Crucis Conference Center



The Retreat House at Lake Logan



PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY

Both of our conference centers are deeply connected to their communities, including the churches closest to them (*see sidebars on Holy Cross and St. Andrew's*).

The Rev. R. Allan McCaslin, Rector of Holy Cross, Valle Crucis, says, "There is a deep sense of cooperation and mutual respect in place today. Parish and Conference Center leadership are committed to supporting one another. Today, opportunities for shared ministry are approached from a perspective of 'let's make this happen.'"

Margaret Love says that there has been a productive interaction between the Conference Center and the church for as long as they share their history. Teachers and other employees at the Mission School, as well as students, became regular members of Holy Cross. The priest or curate at Holy Cross often worked at the Mission School as well.

In addition, Valle Crucis Conference Center has important ties to other organizations and companies in the area. Mast General Store, which has been in the area since 1883, holds most of its executive meetings and trainings at Valle Crucis. "They're great supporters financially as well," says Love. "Just good friends of the Conference."

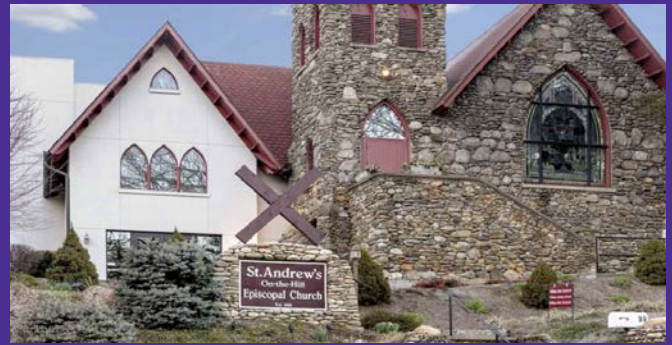
Valle Crucis also partners with the Blue Ridge Conservancy to manage the land that's protected under easements, and the Conference Center also supports community events, like the Valle Country Fair (*see page 11*) and Valle Crucis Community Park's "Music in the Valle" series.

Appalachian State, which is located in nearby Boone, holds many of its meetings at the Conference Center as well. Students come to study and track birds in the Conference Center's special habitat.

Perhaps most interestingly, the North American Academy of Piping and Drumming holds its school at Valle Crucis every year, transforming the valley into a place that resembles the Scottish highlands. "We love the energy they bring here," says Love. "A lot of them are world-class musicians."

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ST. ANDREW'S, CANTON



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church was first organized as a mission in 1906, the same year that Champion Paper and Fiber Company was built on the banks of the Pigeon River in Canton.

The Rev. Tim McRee, rector of St. Andrew's, says, "Our Holy Smoke Ministry was founded in 2004 by Dean Hines, a parishioner who purchased our cooker trailer with his own funds to smoke and sell BBQ as a way to help pay down our mortgage of \$300,000 after a major capital expansion and renovation of our physical plant. In 2008, the vestry purchased the cooker and equipment to continue that work until the mortgage was paid off in 2012. Holy Smoke provided over \$80,000 of that total. Since that time, the proceeds of Holy Smoke, which produces its wares mostly at street festivals in Canton, Waynesville, Cullowhee and the surrounding areas, goes entirely to outreach ministry in the community.

"Our Backpacks of Love Ministry was the brainchild (under the urging of the Holy Spirit) of Barbara Monaghan, who, upon learning of the great number of homeless and hungry school children in Haywood County felt called to do something to alleviate this great need in our community. Our Team now supplies backpacks of food and toiletries to Pisgah High School and Meadowbrook Elementary students. Out of this effort, St. Andrew's was able to partner with some 14 congregations in the Canton area to form a Missional Network of churches who are working together to serve other school populations, provide summer nutritional sites for children, provide temporary housing for homeless families and a host of other ministries. Barbara's original vision for this ministry has grown into a wonderful ecumenical and racially diverse witness to the power of Jesus who calls and empowers disciples for ministry across all boundaries."

At Lake Logan Conference Center, one of the most conspicuous community relationships is with Camp Henry, the youth camp ministry of our diocese. Each summer, hundreds of children, along with counselors and camp chaplains, gather to play in the fields, swim and boat in the lake, and join in fellowship and worship (*for more about Camp Henry, see pages 15-17*).

Lake Logan Conference Center also partners with the community to host events, and many people from the nearby towns of Waynesville and Canton come to fish, hike or boat there.

In addition, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Canton has a special relationship with Lake Logan. The Rev. Tim McRee, rector of St. Andrew's, says, "The relationship of St. Andrew's to Lake Logan goes back decades. A number of our members (now most of whom are deceased) were management and employees at Champion Paper who had been there many times for events hosted by Champion. After our diocese acquired the property, we have been closely involved in the life of the Conference Center and Camp Henry. Our Men's Group designed and built the pavilion at the end of the field for the dedication and consecration of the property in 2000. Since that time, we have had many parish meals, events, a vestry retreat, and the wedding of a parishioner at Lake Logan."

In addition, four of the executive directors at Lake Logan have become members of St. Andrew's, and the Holy Smoke Barbecue ministry at St. Andrew's provided food for a number of diocesan picnics, CREDO conferences for clergy, and other diocesan events. Jean Santucci, the bookkeeper at Lake Logan, is also a parishioner at St. Andrew's, currently serving as treasurer of the parish.

Our conference centers are not just the sum of the buildings and facilities that they have, or even of the wonderful people who have helped them become mainstays of Christian hospitality. They have become woven into the lives of the people around them—a part of their work, their play, and their worship.

Holy Cross Episcopal Church, Valle Crucis



In 1925, construction of the Church of the Holy Cross began. Over the next 15 years or so, as roads improved and the population continued to grow, the Mission School became a boarding school for upper grade girls, many of whom came from the local community, as well as from throughout the country. In 1982, Holy Cross achieved full parish status, and in 1992 Holy Cross celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Episcopal Church in Valle Crucis.

Today, Holy Cross is home to 365 active members who gather weekly for worship, as well as for ongoing Christian education and formation through its many programs and ministries.

Holy Cross is a Christ-centered, close-knit community of faith that offers an active, loving, and welcoming place of worship, ministry, and Christian fellowship.

The Rev. R. Allan McCaslin, Rector of Holy Cross, says, "We are proud of our Summer Food Box Ministry. With the summer recess each year, children throughout our area no longer have access to lunch and many families simply do not have enough to eat this summer. For the 3rd consecutive year, Holy Cross parishioners, in partnership with several other churches, is helping to feed those families. Our Holy Cross volunteers donate quality foods (including garden-fresh vegetables), as well as pack and deliver the foods to families in need."



Crab Orchard Falls at Valle Crucis Conference Center

IMPORTANCE TO THE DIOCESE

Bishop José is clear in his dedication to our conference centers and camp ministry: “I want people to understand these beautiful gifts that we’ve been given, and it’s my commitment to preserve them for future generations,” he says. “I’m dedicated not only to protecting one of the greatest resources of Western North Carolina, which is the beauty of this land, but I’m also committed to expanding their presence and ministry so that at every age, people have these places as a space where they can meet God and each other.”

Father Tim of St. Andrew’s says, “Our diocesan conference centers and camps are of immense value to the life and vitality of our diocese. We are so blessed to have our two wonderful centers at Lake Logan and at Valle Crucis. These places, including Camp

“Ed” the bald eagle sits on a log in the middle of lake Logan



Henry, are incubators and formational centers for the nurturing and growth of Christian disciples.”

For Randi Neff, our conference centers are important for the effect they have on the larger community. “Lake Logan is a commitment to Western North Carolina,” she says. “It is where we introduce all of the things we love to the next generation of Episcopalians. We show them the importance of the natural world by the example of this place and by the love that is poured into the maintenance of its natural beauty. Lake Logan is a treasure for all of us—it feeds the soul of our diocese.”

Diana White has something similar to say about Valle Crucis: “Valle Crucis Conference Center is a true treasure,” she says. “Nothing else comes close to being like it here in the mountains. The history of the buildings and the property is evident in every step and in every corner. This is community and church at its finest.”

Father Tim says, “We need places like Lake Logan and Valle Crucis to remind us of our stewardship obligations to God’s creation—including ourselves. It is a place of Sabbath rest away from the craziness that surrounds and threatens to overwhelm us in this world. It is a place to meet Jesus, be formed by the Holy Spirit and to give thanks to the Creator.”

Bishop José says that we’re blessed in our diocese by having Lauri and Margaret as leaders of our conference centers – “two really amazing people with tremendous gifts,” he notes – and that it makes him excited for the future of our conference and camp ministries. “I truly see that in the future, these places will be spiritual hubs, spiritual centers, for this diocese,” he says. “I will continue to be committed to preserving this creation that we’ve been gifted.”

Continued on next page

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SUPPORT OUR CONFERENCE CENTERS!

There are many ways to support our conference and camp ministries, but first, if you've never been to Lake Logan or Valle Crucis, you should visit.

At Lake Logan, day passes for fishing, swimming, boating or hiking are available through the website at www.lakelogan.org. A day on the Alpine Tower is also an option for guests. There are shorter



Snow at Valle Crucis

day hikes as well as connections to longer trails, or hike the Gazebo Trail to view the famed Cold Mountain.

At Valle Crucis, day visitors are also welcome. "People stopping by can walk the lovely waterfalls trail (a half-mile hike), explore our creekside labyrinth, stop in to Holy Cross Church (which is open 24/7), or sit and rock a while on the Inn porch," says Love.

Lodging is available for families, couples, groups or individuals at both facilities.

You can also schedule events at either conference center. Both facilities host a wide-range of groups for retreats, seminars, trainings, special events, family reunions, weddings, and just about any other activity that you can think of.

In addition, both venues host special events and formation programming. You can learn more by visiting their websites or contacting the center:

Lake Logan Conference Center

25 Wormy Chestnut Lane
Canton, NC 28716
(828) 646-0095
Info@lakelogan.org
www.lakelogan.org

Valle Crucis Conference Center

146 Skiles Way
Banner Elk, NC 28604
(828) 963-4453
Email: info@vcconferences.org
www.vcconferences.org

Oktoberfest

Lake Logan Style

Sunday, October 1, 2017 at 5 PM

Cooking Demo
Beer

5-Course Meal
Live Music

Pool, Ping Pong, Foosball, and Cornhole

Visit Lakelogan.org or call 828.646.0095 to register.





SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

Lake Logan Conference Center

multi-organization and multi-family yard sale

vendors and food for sale

inflatables for the kids

boating and paddle boarding

fishing - bring your own pole

Alpine Tower - fee

Sarge's animals ready for adoption

MORE!

Entry to the event and parking are FREE. No registration is required.

Booths are available for crafters and those wanting to participate in the yard sale for only \$20. Other vendor opportunities are also available.

Register for a space at lakelogan.org/special-events, or call 828.646.0095 for more details.

Valle Country Fair

Saturday, October 21 is the 39th annual Valle Country Fair, an overgrown church bazaar set in the center of one of the most picturesque valleys in the North Carolina mountains — Valle Crucis.

Holy Cross Church members and friends come together every year for months in advance to stage this gathering, an authentic harvest-season community celebration that revolves around quality, hand-made crafts with 160-plus exhibitors displaying their art, home-cooked food, and music and entertainment. Enjoy live local mountain music and bluegrass all day, as well as pony rides, story-telling and face painting for children. You'll even see an alpaca or two!

The goal is to return 100 percent of the net proceeds to the community through grants to local non-profit, charitable organizations, and to families needing emergency assistance. The proceeds help folks pay rent or a power bill, put food on the table, keep a car running, or fill a medical prescription. The 2016 Valle Country Fair distributed more than \$60,000 to such causes.

So come on out to enjoy local music, lots of homemade food, exhibitors' art and crafts, and lots of family fun. You'll meet nice people and have a great time knowing that every dollar you spend on Fair day will help those with the greatest needs tomorrow.



- Saturday October 21, 2017 (always the 3rd Saturday in October), 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- VCCC Fair Grounds, Hwy 194S, 1 mile south of the intersection of Broadstone Rd. and 194 in the heart of Valle Crucis, NC, 28691
- Admission: free
- Parking: \$10/car adjacent to fair grounds as early as 7 a.m. (\$25/van, \$50/bus). Handicap parking available
- Please, no pets

A Rich History: how Valle Crucis and Lake Logan came to be

HISTORY OF VALLE CRUCIS CONFERENCE CENTER

Margaret L. Love, Executive Director of Valle Crucis Conference Center, says she is reminded of the history of the place nearly every day. "Every time I walk through the Inn living room, I see the picture of the girls gathered around the fireplace from 1939 in my head."

Indeed, there's a sense of that history in every part of Valle Crucis; the presence of The Episcopal Church in this area goes all the way back to 1842, when Bishop Levi Silliman Ives visited.

Bishop Ives traveled throughout the valley, held services, and talked to the people he met. He promised to send them a missionary to teach them and preach the word of God. According to legend, Bishop Ives saw the image of a St. Andrew's Cross, either in the two streams in the valley or in their accompanying mist, and named this valley *Valle*

Crucis, which is Latin for *Vale of the Cross*.

In December 1842, Bishop Ives sent a priest to begin the Episcopal ministry in Valle Crucis. During the next 10 years, land was purchased, and simple buildings were constructed to start the Mission School.

Bishop Ives bought a large shipment of cattle from Pennsylvania and hired an experienced farmer to run his farm operation, William West Skiles. Mr. Skiles became invaluable to Bishop Ives and the local people until his death, which caused much of the Church's work came to a halt.

In 1895, Bishop Joseph Cheshire came to Valle Crucis to revive the work of the church. The Taylor family, who had bought much of the land from the church, gave him three acres; he built the Mission House and the original Church of the Holy Cross (now Crab Orchard Hall).

Girls gather together before the fireplace in the living room of the Inn at Valle Crucis, 1939





Original building of the Church of the Holy Cross (now Crab Orchard Hall, a meeting space).



The historic St. John's Episcopal Church

In 1898, Bishop Junius M. Horner became the new Bishop of the Asheville Diocese. He was known for his belief in education, and he purchased 500 acres by 1903 with the intention of expanding the school operations. Over time on this 500 acres, apple orchards were set out, a herd of registered Holstein cattle was brought in from Ohio to start a dairy, timber was cut, and a saw mill and wagon factory were built. A power plant was constructed to provide power for the new school and surrounding area, with the idea that the Mission School could pay for itself. There were barns built to store apples and to house dairy cattle. Both were two-story structures and are still standing a century later, though the dairy barn is now a wedding venue and meeting space, and the apple storage barn now houses youth groups as the Bunk House.

By 1910, new buildings were started upon the hill. The first, known locally as the Auxiliary Hall, consisted of a dormitory, an assembly hall, three classrooms, a dining room and a kitchen. It burned in 1919 and was replaced by the Annex on the same spot. At that time, Hugh A. Dobbins was in charge of Valle Crucis. Eighty-two attended Sunday School and 99 students attended the "Agricultural and Industrial School" – 45 girl boarders and 54 boy day students. Classes were from primary through high school and provided training in kitchen, laundry, housework, and weaving for the girls, and farming, blacksmithing, woodworking, and wagon making for the boys. They had a chaplain, a principal, five academic and two industrial teachers.

The wonderful Auchmuty Hall, the main three-story building with a porch that wraps around three sides, was funded by a generous philanthropist from New York and completed in 1911.

In 1925, the church had outgrown its building by the Mission House and money was raised to build a fine stone church on the hill overlooking the valley. Holy Cross Church remains an active and dynamic parish today.

In 1936, the school became a girls-only boarding school. It struggled over the next few years and, with teacher shortages and dwindling student support, closed in 1942.

Over the next few decades, the school again became a missionary training school. In 1967, most of the apple orchards were cut down and in the 1970s, the Mission School was transformed into the Valle Crucis Conference Center. Today it thrives once again, serving groups of people through Christian hospitality.

All of the lodging buildings, as well as the Apple Barn, are on the National Register of Historic Places. "Both I and my staff consider it a privilege to be here," says Love. "I consider us to be curators of a sacred space, and that's really important to us."

Much of the information in this article is courtesy of the Valle Crucis Conference Center archives.

THE HISTORY OF LAKE LOGAN CONFERENCE CENTER

Lake Logan began in the late 1800s as a planned community called "Sunburst," built to house the people who worked at Champion Coated Paper Company in Canton. At its height, about 1,500 people lived there on the banks of the Pigeon River, floating logs down to the paper company.

By the early 1930s, logging operations had depleted the surrounding mountains. The town of Sunburst had become deserted, and the president of the company, Reuben Robertson, decided to dam the river and form a lake, assuring a reserve water source for the mill. So the town was disassembled, the dam was built and the water from the river was impounded to form Lake Logan, named for Mr. Robertson's brother-in-law, Logan Thomson.

Beside his new lake, Mr. Robertson created a family compound called Sit 'n' Whittle Village, consisting of a main lodge and six log mountain cabins moved from the Great Smokey Mountains National Park and reconstructed at Lake Logan. Sit 'n' Whittle became the nucleus of Champion Paper Company's Executive Retreat, which eventually grew to accommodate 80-plus visitors. In the late 1990s, Champion sold out to its employees; and in 2000 the Executive Retreat was divested to the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina for its present use as a conference center. That same year, the

This historic photo shows staff and campers from Camp Henry's original facility, In-the-Oaks



diocese decided to sell its camp and conference center in Black Mountain, called "In-the-Oaks," to Montreat College.

In-the-Oaks was one of the last of the grand estates built between the coming of the railroad to western North Carolina in 1880 and the Great Depression. The property was donated to the diocese in 1957 by Mrs. Lillian Boscovitch, daughter of industrialist Franklin Terry and his wife Lillian Estelle Slocumb Emerson. After receipt of the property, the diocese established Camp Henry for young people and began programs in 1959.

The difficult decision to sell this beloved property was made to better suit the growing needs of Camp Henry and to provide a new home for programs.

Beginning in 2001, the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina began developing the Lake Logan property into a Camp and Conference Center designed to accommodate a wide variety of groups. At that time, construction of the Bishop Robert Johnson Dining Hall began, as well as the refurbishment of the Lodge, and many of the cabins. Lake Logan Conference Center opened its doors in the summer of 2002, welcoming Camp Henry to its new home.

Much of the information in this article is courtesy of Lake Logan Conference Center archives.

Sunburst Village, which was later flooded to form Lake Logan



Camp Henry: the soul of the diocese

By Chris Goldman, diocesan staff

During a recent trip to Lake Logan to visit Camp Henry, I arrived to find children from the fifth-and-sixth grade camp gathering for small-group discussion. Afterwards, we filed into Celebration Hall for Morning Prayer, led by a camp chaplain, the Rev. Jim Dahlin (Priest-in-Charge at St. Stephen's and St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Morganton).

"I first went to Camp Henry last year as the Camp Henry Outdoor School [CHOS] chaplain," Dahlin says. "It was really beautiful and fun to connect with a small group of 13-to-15-year-old campers learning rigorous, outdoor adventure skills. And the views were amazing!"

I asked why he decided to come back. "I decided to be a chaplain because they needed people and I wanted to connect with campers in a beautiful, outdoor setting," he says. "Camping ministry is pretty amazing and Camp Henry does it well."

Campers play on the field, with mountains as a backdrop

After morning prayer, we headed down to the large field on the south end of Lake Logan. This gorgeous, open space has been the site of many diocesan picnics, as well as this year's Cold Mountain Music festival. The counselors did a great job with the kids, making sure everyone was safe (and had lots of sunscreen), and that everyone felt included. The kids broke up into groups to either play whiffle ball or ultimate Frisbee in the sunny field, as quieter groups gathered on the shaded stage to play giant Jenga and rhyming games. After working up a good appetite, the kids broke for lunch.

I spoke briefly with one of the counselors, Austin. He had been attending Camp Henry for 12 years as a camper. "I decided to become a counselor because I thought it was so cool to come here as a camper, and being a counselor would be even better," he said. "And it is."

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We are blessed to have a safe, fun, and spiritually uplifting program set in one of the most beautiful and magical settings in Western North Carolina.

Bishop José certainly thinks so. "I think it's the heart of this diocese, I think it's the soul of this diocese," he says. He goes on to say that he hears about the impact of Camp Henry almost every day from individuals he meets. "They talk about their encounter with God there, the impact it had on them, relationships that were formed there, people who attended Camp Henry and ended up becoming clergy, people who later married after having met there as kids...I can consistently see the connections back to people who were formed, moved, and touched by their own experience, or that of their children, at Camp Henry."

Campers participate in creative, engaging, and diverse programs based on scripture, liturgy, environmental education, and conservation. Counselors provide opportunities for the campers to have fun and learn through traditional and nontraditional sports and games, boating, fishing, sailing, hiking, arts and crafts, singing, storytelling, worship, and much more.

In addition, campers experience morning and evening prayer, Holy Eucharist, and a spiritual formation program as essential elements to the Camp Henry experience.

"Camp Henry is really important to the diocese because it's impacting the lives of so many youth, not just Episcopalians," says the Rev. Dahlin. "Camp Henry takes kids out of their normal routine and

An Advent Retreat: Making Space for Christmas



**December 8-9, 2017
at Lake Logan
Conference Center**

In the midst of all the sounds, activities, and preparations for the Christmas Season it is possible to miss our own annunciations and opportunities for giving birth to Christ in our lives. This quiet overnight retreat will include contemplative prayer, presentations, and personal reflecting time, and end with a contemplative Eucharist.

Learn more and register at lakelogan.org.

puts them in a new environment where they're more likely to learn new habits and practices and actually feel the love of God. It's really amazing to witness."

Camp Henry Director Kathryn Florack first came to Camp Henry when she was 11 years old.

"I had no idea how big of an influence this place would be on my life, all I knew was that my brother loved it, and I wanted to be just like him," says Florack. "And quickly I fell in love with Camp too. So for the next 18 years, I spent every summer at Camp Henry, as a camper, later as a counselor, then as the assistant director, and now, I am completely lucky to be the director."

The Rev. Dahlin has witnessed firsthand how Camp Henry can be a transformative experience.

"My favorite Camp Henry memory was last year," says the Rev. Dahlin. "It was seeing one of the CHOS campers go from a closed, wounded youth with a lot of baggage and issues to a regular, laughing and joking 14-year-old. He even took communion at the end of the week, after coming to camp an atheist. It was an honor to witness his transformation in a short period of time," says Dahlin.

Florack says that the theme this summer has been how to see the light of God in ourselves and each other and share that light with the world.

"During the Eucharist at our 7th-to-9th grade session, we brought this theme to fruition," says Florack. "For the offering, instead of money, one by one the campers and counselors came to the altar and proclaimed to the entire group how they were going to accept and share God's light and love when they got back home. They talked about being kind to friends and family; they talked about the power of a smile and reaching out to strangers and making new friends. They talked about accepting themselves and others. They talked about love. And this is what Camp Henry is all about to me: a place that, through games and singing, prayer and community, inspires all people, kids and adults, to love more, give more, enjoy more, be more. It is a place where we learn how to recognize our blessings and share those with all the world."

But the best way to show how Camp Henry affects youth is to listen to them talk about it. Here's what some campers had to say:

"What makes Camp Henry great? The loving counselors, who let us have fun and be free. The danc-

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Campers chat while waiting in line for lunch



Making new friends is an important part of Camp Henry



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ing and singing, whether it be Shakira, Beyoncé, or some hymns and songs sung in the church, but most of all, the presence of God in the field, the chapel or at beautiful Lake Logan.” — *Charlie*.

“Camp Henry is my happy place. When I come to camp the whole rest of the world disappears and all that matters is you’re dancing weird dances and sweating till you look like you jumped in the lake. Camp Henry is the thing that I look forward to for the whole year, it’s just filled with so much love!” — *Dottie*.

“At Camp Henry, you’re free to be yourself and they accept you for you are.” — *Destiny*.

Attending Camp Henry

Summer camp sessions are available for everyone from 2nd grade through high school students. There is also a parents-and-first-timers camp (to introduce kids to overnight camp), a family camp, the Camp Henry Outdoor School, and the Leadership-Adventure-and-Mission-Program. Camp takes place between mid-June and August, depending on the session.

For more information, visit www.camphenry.net, or email Kathryn Florack at director.camphenry@gmail.com.

Cold Mountain Music at Lake Logan

The inaugural Cold Mountain Music Festival was a huge success, drawing more than 1,000 attendees and featuring Emmy-award winning artists the Steep Canyon Rangers, a full lineup of other musicians, and food and fun for the whole family. The beautiful mountains surrounding Lake Logan were the backdrop for this event. Next year’s event will take place June 9. Stay tuned for more details!

Photos by Ken Wilson, Trinity Episcopal Church, Asheville. The top two photos are of the Steep Canyon Rangers.



A Short Advent Retreat

- Friday, December 8 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Valle Crucis Conference Center
- With Katerina Whitley
- \$40 includes lunch



What comes to your mind when you think of Advent? Can you stop worrying about decorating and gift buying to concentrate on the coming of the Christ Child? Every year, people of faith long for something different, spiritual and holy, to prepare them fully for a Christmas to remember.

Katerina Whitley will focus and refine this longing. The world waited for this “central event in the history of creation,” as C.S. Lewis called it. We will examine this waiting through writings, poetry, the prophets, the Birth Narratives, and our own hopes and desires for peace and joy. Katerina is well-known in the diocese and beyond. She is the author of several books, including two about Advent, and a writer of Advent Chancel dramas and plays.

For more information or to register, visit www.vcconferences.org/programs.

Advanced Centering Prayer Retreat: Deepening the Silence

- Sunday, November 26 through Sunday, December 2
- Valle Crucis Conference Center
- With Becky Hannah, Joan Ricci Thome, & the Rev. Bob Cook
- \$533 Full Program
- Housing in the Inn

This retreat is for those who would like a more prolonged experience of centering prayer and who are interested in entering into the more

profound levels of spiritual practice in an atmosphere of silence, solitude, and community.



Centering prayer is a silent form of prayer that directs a person's attention toward God, with ancient roots in

the mystical and monastic tradition. The retreat will help participants develop and sustain a regular centering prayer practice. In addition to several centering prayer periods, participants will also have opportunities for contemplative worship, individual meetings with retreat leaders, walks and hiking, labyrinth walks, and time for solitude and reflection.

Due to the length of this retreat, each participant should have an established practice of centering prayer for at least a year. This retreat is limited to the first 20 registrants. Participants must stay on campus and plan to attend the entire retreat.

If you have questions about the contents or itinerary for the retreat, please feel free to contact Becky Hannah at (828) 702-3518.

Visit www.vcconferences.org/programs for more information.

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