



**Camp, Conference & Retreat Center**  
of the Moravian Church, Southern Province

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## Report to the Synod of 2014 Laurel Ridge Moravian Camp and Conference Center

### Mission, Purpose and Values

The mission statement for Laurel Ridge is *'Laurel Ridge is a mountain place set apart for forming disciples of Jesus Christ who live and learn in a community to serve the world.'* Laurel Ridge is uniquely qualified through its outdoor environment and secluded setting to provide opportunities for spiritual growth to individuals or groups and to youth or adults. Laurel Ridge accomplishes this through its own programs and events as well as through its hospitality ministry to groups renting our facilities.

### Responsibilities

During the time since the 2010 Synod, Laurel Ridge has taken several organizational steps to assure its responsibility to, stewardship of, and relevancy for its role in serving the ongoing needs of its constituents and guests. A specific 'assignment' of the 2010 Synod was approval for the *Feed My Sheep* capital campaign. A goal of \$900,000 was established to cover all costs of the Summer Camp kitchen remodel with the balance going to debt retirement. The campaign was closed December 31, 2012. A total of \$726,000+ has been received with an additional \$55,000 in pledges. The kitchen was completely paid for and over \$200,000 went for debt reduction. The remaining pledges will also go toward debt reduction when received.

### Summary of Activities

Many significant activities and physical improvements have continued, begun, or been completed during this reporting period. They include:

- The successful "Feed My Sheep" campaign resulting in complete renovation of the Summer Camp kitchen as well as debt reduction of approximately \$300,000.
- Expanding our Mission Camp programs to include an Eco-Action! Camp which is a natural progression of our Junior age Eco-Camp program.
- New roofs on all Summer Camp cabins and lodges through a gift from Salem Congregation.
- Continued improvements and upgrades with the help of churches and volunteers through the 'Adopt-a-Cabin' program.
- Complete renovation of our Infirmary through the support of several individuals.
- Mission Camps that continue to provide positive results ministering to and meeting the needs of our local mountain communities.

### Summary of Activities – continued

- Introduction of ‘Friends Forever’ in the Fall of 2013 as an ongoing annual appeal to address the general needs, endowment funding, and debt reduction for long term financial viability.
- Completion of unresolved concerns with Salem Wing addition to Higgins Lodge.
- Higgins Lodge and Office buildings upgraded with fiber optic connectivity.
- Staffing and organizational restructuring. All of our existing management team are new to Laurel Ridge since the 2010 Synod.
- Restructure of the Laurel Ridge Board and its responsibilities.
- Development, adoption, and accountability to a Strategic Plan.
- Development of an extensive Marketing Plan.
- Completion of our Re-Accreditation through American Camp Association.

### Future Direction and Opportunities

It is the goal of the Laurel Ridge Staff and Board to provide the best stewardship possible of this ministry that has been entrusted to us. This can be accomplished in many ways including:

- Continue nurturing and developing our strong volunteer support.
- Regular review for relevancy of existing programs and events.
- Ongoing consideration of needs for our constituents and guests.
- Continue striving for operational efficiency.
- Expand our programs focused on environmental stewardship and education.
- Grow our youth camps to maximum capacity for maximum impact!
- Continue our goals of financial self-sufficiency and debt retirement.
- Responsibly maintain our existing buildings and equipment while actively seeking improvements that will help us maintain and grow our mission.
- Continue educating and building relationships within our churches that will clarify our abilities to be an expansion of their ministries.

### Summary

The theme of this Synod is “Jesus, Still Lead On”. A line from the hymn of the same title states, “heav’nly leader, still direct us, still support, console, protect us”. It is our hope and prayer that He will continue to direct, support, console, and protect Laurel Ridge as we continue to seek His will for this wonderful and unique ministry entrusted to us.

The Mission of Laurel Ridge will stay the same, however, the methods continue to change. God has truly blessed the ministry of Laurel Ridge for fifty plus years and we are anxious and excited to see what He has in store for 2014 and beyond!

Submitted by Warren Kaestner, Director – Laurel Ridge