



2017 was another amazing year for Caroline Furnace. Our LORD continues to use this place for **faith, education, and renewal** opportunities in HIS creation for all of HIS people. Our summer kicked off with a fun-filled 60th Anniversary celebration on Memorial Day weekend with over 120 of our friends, including the Bishops from all three of our supporting synods (VA, Metro DC & WV-WM). The highlights included a wonderful worship service at St. John's Chapel in our Spring Field, camp games and activities, a formal dinner, and a closing time-capsule ceremony. We are so grateful for the continued outpour of love and grace from our ministry partners, neighbors, friends and staff to Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp and Retreat Center.

This place continues to shape the faith of so many - through retreat groups, youth groups, summer campers, and staff. Once again this year, we have a summer camp counselor entering Seminary in the fall. He joins three other Staff Alumni who are currently in seminary and will be the 39th member of our staff to answer the "Call to Ministry". Caroline Furnace is truly a place where each one of us can discover the awe of nature and the power of the spirit together.

A couple of our many Caroline Furnace "God stories" are shared below:

A six year old camper was walking down the lake road with her counselor for an afternoon swim session. Surrounded by the pines, the camper stopped and asked "*Is God real?*". Her counselor knelt down and pointed out the beauty of the shimmering water, the sound of the creek nearby, the comfort provided by the shade of the pine trees, and the animals around them. Then she told the little girl "*Of course God is real!*" and the young camper responded with a big smile and a resounding "*I knew it!*".

An 18 year old who applied for Summer Staff has wanted to be a counselor since she was 5 years old, after attending Family Camp. During her interview, she was posed with the question of why she wanted to be a counselor, as it entails much more work and less pay than many summer jobs. She quickly responded that Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp and Retreat Center has shaped her appreciation of the outdoors and even helped lead her to pursue a degree in Natural Resources. She went on to say that she found her faith and courage while attending summer camp and it helped her make good decisions during her first year at college. Camp influenced her to get involved in campus ministry, community action, and support services. She concluded with how her outdoor ministry background makes it easy to "explain the gospel to young children", by breaking it down into simple languages and examples of the power of nature.

It's hard to explain the feeling of comfort you'll feel when you drive into Fort Valley and through our gate at Caroline Furnace. God has provided this place for all, that we might come together to celebrate his love and grace. Come join us to celebrate HIS creation and your Outdoor Ministry.