WATER'S EDGE MINISTRIES
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Organizational Profile

Formerly Green Lake Lutheran Ministries - new name, same mission.

Who We Are

Water's Edge Ministries (WEM), formerly Green Lake Lutheran Ministries, is a ministry of camps and congregations stretching across Minnesota and beyond. Three locations house our on-site camping and retreat programs:

- **Green Lake Bible Camp (Spicer, MN)**: Our foundational property is known for numerous year-round camps and retreats.
- **Shores of St. Andrew (New London, MN)**: Adjacent to Sibley State Park, this tranquil setting offers vibrant youth and family retreat options.
- **Camp House (Brimson, MN)**: This peaceful haven offers a rustic retreat in tune with the calming rhythm of the North Woods.

All three are situated on beautiful lakes and include significant wooded areas as part of the property. In addition, WEM offers ministries outside of our physical locations, including Day Camp and Serve Boldly.

Green Lake Bible Camp, WEM's original property, was founded in **1938** by a group of congregations from the Twin Cities and Southern Minnesota eager to dip their toes in the summer Bible camp movement. In 1941, the iconic Stave Chapel (modeled after the Fortune church in Bergen, Norway) was built. This gorgeous chapel was remodeled in 1995 and is often used for weddings and by local congregations for summer worship.

As the ministry grew, a retreat center was added to the Spicer site in 1981. The decision to build a year-round facility was innovative and forward-thinking, as most camps were still hosting youth primarily in the summertime. The vision was for ministry to be "for all ages and in all seasons." Green Lake quickly became a leader in this new era of camping and retreat ministry. Today, WEM has continued to grow its ministry by adding spaces such as Medayto Lodge, a six-bedroom, three-bathroom guest house that can accommodate family reunions and other groups seeking a lakeside retreat.

Through a 1991 merger with the Lutheran Camp Board, **Shores of St. Andrew** and **Camp House** were added as ministry sites. While Camp House remained closed for several years, the Shores property enhanced youth camping ministry by programming for younger campers and families. Facility renovations occurred in 1998, 2000, 2004, 2016, 2021, and 2024. In 2004, a chapel was added when Marble Lutheran Church in Canby, MN, closed its doors and donated its building to Shores. Like the GLBC Chapel, it is used for summer worship and is also available to local congregations for weddings and weekly services.

Camp House, originally a youth camp for railroad workers' families, opened its doors as part of WEM in **2001**. Situated on the peaceful shoreline of Lake George in northeast Minnesota, Camp House offers a unique setting to reconnect with others. A week designed for Confirmation-aged youth has been a long-standing program, and Ordinary Time was introduced in 2024. Designed with all ages in mind, Ordinary Time builds on what is loved about Camp House by adding opportunities for worship, learning, creativity, and community. Programming is led by guest resources and Camp House staff, and participants are invited to come for any length of stay. Retreat guests enjoy Camp House in late summer and early fall.

Much of WEM's ministry happens outside of summer on-site camping. Increasingly, WEM is looking to expand its footprint by bringing programming back to congregations and communities through day camps, Ministry Associates (year-round, young-adult staff), and other partnerships. Water's Edge Ministries has 177-member congregations. Many more (non-member) congregations and organizations participate in its ministry. Positioned near both the prairie of southwest Minnesota and the Twin Cities metro area, WEM proudly serves rural, urban, and suburban demographics.

Serve Boldly began in **2012** as three ELCA congregations passionate about serving others. Those three youth groups gathered in Nashville, TN, to provide a meaningful opportunity to serve, grounded in a Lutheran understanding of loving your neighbor. That first trip sparked many relationships: friendships among youth, partnerships with congregations, connections with community organizations, and deep bonds with those they served. Serve Boldly quickly became a 501(c)(3) organization with a board of directors and a staff. Like many organizations, Serve Boldly experienced a pause due to Covid-19 from 2020 to 2022. In **2022**, the WEM Board of Directors accepted the gift of Serve Boldly as part of Water's Edge Ministries.

At the heart of Serve Boldly are the relationships that God has placed in our path with one another. We see this ministry as a journey, and this journey, taken with many companions, shows us the unexpected and sometimes unrecognized Christ who walks with us. In this journey, we will break bread together, teach, and move towards accompaniment.

Theology

Water's Edge Ministries is a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Most WEM member congregations are ELCA congregations. WEM participates in the Lutheran Outdoor Ministries network and is closely connected to several ELCA synods, including the Southwest Minnesota Synod. WEM's theology and programmatic philosophy are rooted in the Lutheran Christian tradition, which emphasizes that the saving grace of Jesus Christ is at the heart of the life of faith. Through means of grace such as worship, sacraments, and the study of God's word, we are strengthened to serve in Christ's name. Community and hospitality, modeled after Jesus' teachings, are central to our core values. Our ministry strives to offer an extravagant welcome, embracing each person as a beloved child of God. As an outdoor ministry, we also find that a robust theology of creation guides our mission. We celebrate God's hand at work in waves lapping the lake shore, birds chirping wake-up calls on cabin window sills, and on wooded trails winding into grassy meadows. We seek to be good stewards of these precious and beautiful gifts.

Programs
Traditional summer youth camping has been a priority at WEM since its inception. Year-round retreat opportunities range from first communion retreats for elementary students to crafting weekends and “good news, good brews” gatherings.

Year-round retreats are held at the Green Lake Bible Camp and the Shores of St. Andrew Bible Camp site, accommodating a variety of groups. Quilting and other craft groups, youth groups, confirmation groups, synod groups, corporate conferences, and family groups make up the largest part of the total. Radical hospitality is a core value of our ministry and is a pillar of our retreat ministry.

As WEM looks to the future, we seek to sustain the quality of youth summer camp, while intentionally growing our retreat ministries and family camping opportunities. We are eager to invite new groups of guests to experience radical hospitality at all three sites and to imagine new and creative ways to engage campers and retreaters with the life-changing love of Jesus.

Attendance
In 2025, our summer ministry numbers broke records, serving nearly 2,500 youth and families while our retreat ministry also flourished, serving over 7,000 guests. The trajectory of all our ministries is growing!

Financials
The organization's 2026 budget is $3.5 million, with income split evenly among summer camp, retreats, and fundraising. Our largest organizational expense is staffing, with seasonal and full-time staffing equaling approximately half of our yearly budget.

Staff
Led by the Executive Director (CEO), twenty permanent staff members serve WEM. Key positions include Associate Director (COO), Director of Marketing and Communications, Director of Development, Director of Hospitality Ministries, Program Directors, Director of Property and Facilities, Director of Finance and Administration, and Food Service Director. In 2026, ninety-five seasonal staff were hired to run summer programs.