



• JULY & AUGUST 2019 •

Building on a Rock: St. Peter's Monastery Youth Camp

By Oscar David Johnson



Church of the Annunciation youth and chaperones recently helped build a house on a rock in more ways than one. They lent a hand in God's work, while gaining insights into the faith and having fun with new friends in the Montana wilds.

June 23-30, eight youth and five chaperones journeyed to St. Peter's Monastery in Harrison, Mont., for its annual summer youth camp. In all, about 60 youth and staff came from as far as Pennsylvania and Colorado as well as Oregon. They helped build monastery facilities, attended workshops, and took in some of the pristine beauty of "Big Sky Country."

THIS ISSUE



Youth Camp	1
Catechesis Update	4
Parallel Love Film	6

UPCOMING EVENTS



August 1-15 - Dormition Fast

August 6 - Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ

August 15 - Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos

August 29 - Beheading of St. John the Baptist

*If you have submissions for the newsletter, please contact
Moses Ziegenfus
(evanziegenfus@gmail.com)*

Travelers from Annunciation included Cindy, Rebecca, and Anna Olsen; Aqualina Larkins; Aaron, Maddie and Kate Reynolds; Oscar David Johnson; Abu and Nataneem Senge; Dn. John and David Jensen, and Gavin Roth from St John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church. Halfway between the 12-hour drives to and from Montana, the group camped overnight in the Idaho Panhandle National Forests.

St. Peter's Monastery is located on sweeping ranchland in the center of the state surrounded by mountains and stunning panoramic views. The area is sparsely populated, and the monastery is off the grid. Female campers stayed in the mezzanine of a newly built barn, while male campers slept in tents under the stars. The food was Lenten, as the camp was during the Apostles' Fast. Each day of the camp offered a full schedule. Mornings began with an Akathist to the Apostles Peter and Paul and a hearty breakfast, followed by work on the monastery grounds that often was not for the faint of heart. Work crews helped prep and pour concrete, plant and prune trees, and refurbish a set of antique doors.

After a well-deserved lunch, afternoons alternated between workshops and recreation. An onsite lake was a boon for hygiene as well as swimming and boating. And campers were able to choose from field trips to a nearby hot springs, an impressive tour of Lewis and Clark Caverns, or a grueling hike nearly to the summit of Hollowtop Mountain. Workshop afternoons afforded opportunities to be immersed in crash courses on iconography, hymnography, and the Divine Liturgy

Following dinner, evenings closed with Vespers and circle time when participants shared personal highlights and challenges from the day. Hieromonk Innocent, from the Monastery of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco in Manton, Calif., provided daily talks inspired by St John Chrysostom. Everyone also received a binder containing the lives of several saints.

A full cadre of clergy ensured Confession was available and the Liturgy was served on two occasions—including the last day of camp for the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul! Archbishop Benjamin even visited on one day for an hour-long Q&A with the youth that ranged from the wisdom of good choices and friendships to the indispensable value of peanut butter and Tabasco on his many travels.





Although monks were on hand for the youth camp, St. Peter's Monastery is not yet home to monastics. It is a tax-exempt foundation recognized by the state of Montana; its board is chaired by Archbishop Benjamin.

Camp hosts David and Betsy Hicks reside on the land and donated it as a conservation easement to be taken over when they repose. The youth camp is part of their efforts to build the monastery facilities.

When complete and occupied by monastics, it will be the first Orthodox monastery in the area to support the growth of the Church in Montana and throughout the Mountain West (the closest is currently in Washington).

For more information on St. Peter's Monastery, visit: <http://stpetersmonastery.com>

Of her time at the camp, Maddie Reynolds wrote:

We exceeded youth camp host Mr. Hicks' expectations, and we were able to get all the cement pours done on time. We were able to prep for future pours as well as gather and set the rocks for the walls—and refinish the six church doors.

Aside from the work we did for the monastery, we had workshops and lessons about St. John Chrysostom with Fr. David and Fr. Innocent. We also took day trips to the Lewis and Clark Caverns, Hollowtop Lake and a local hot springs.

There were about 30 other campers from other parishes and an ever-fluctuating number of adults varying from 15 to about 30. We had group time every night right before Vespers and circle time followed by bedtime.

We had an amazing time!

For a stunning video of the St. Peter's Monastery grounds as well as the work done on the trip, see David Jensen's "St. Peter's Monastery Summer Camp, 2019" video on Youtube.

CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a program intended to teach 3-6 year-olds about the Christian life, the life of the Church, and the Biblical narrative through lessons, song, and, most importantly, hands-on activities. In particular, the program instructs in the practical life and the beginning of prayer through activities that require concentration, control of the body, and the starting and finishing of a work. The ultimate aim of CoGS is to help the children involved to fall in love with God.

Year One:

Since launching Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in the fall of 2018, the program has seen 15 of Annunciation's children participate. As the year progressed, the children were presented with the most essential elements of the Christian faith:

- In the fall, the children heard the prophecy of Isaiah about people who sat in darkness and saw a great light, then the Nativity of Christ coming as a baby
- After Nativity, they were introduced to Jesus as a man and his teaching on the Kingdom of God being like a mustard seed and precious pearl
- Next, they heard about how the Good Shepherd loves his sheep and calls each one by name. Older children linked this to the Eucharist and Christ's presence with us in the bread and wine
- Before Pascha, the presentations included the Last Supper, and after Pascha the Empty Tomb
- Pascha was linked to baptism. The children each received a candle representing the light of Christ that is for everyone through baptism.
- Our year ended with the celebration of Pentecost and the gifts of the Holy Spirit!

Moving Forward:

Six more 3-year-olds are expected to join Catechesis of the Good Shepherd at Level 1 (the cycle that was just completed), and 8 children are ready for Level 2. Level 2 honors the 6-9 year-old's different approach to learning, so the atrium - the learning space - is built around community work, history and their place in it, life and death, and moral development. In order to best accommodate the children who are moving to the next level, several of the Catechesis teachers will be attending the official Level 2 training at St. Herman's Seminary in Kodiak, AK, in March.



CATECHESIS UPDATE CONTINUED

Ways to Help:

There is much that can be done to support Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and its mission in the formation of Annunciation's kids. The below needs are just a few of the ways you could help the program, though if you have specific questions, feel free to contact either Matushka Connie (cshank33@gmail.com) or Lori Jensen (sixmoges@gmail.com):

- Donate Bibles in different languages
- Writing two geography booklets (all text is provided!)
- Donating items:
- 3-4 card tables
- 3 small tables (tv tray type, by sturdier)
- Painting items for the atrium
- Woodwork
- To recreate dioramas
- Plywood arrows, stars, merchant, sign post to Jerusalem, Pharisee, Tax collector
- Maxims on cut out boards and hinged tablet
- Create a True Vine
- Create Processional Cross and fans (child's size)
- Build shelves for Level 2 room



PARALLEL LOVE FILM

Courtesy of Orthodox Portland.org:

"We have the rare opportunity to attend the local premiere of The Covellite International Film Festival winning documentary, Parallel Love: The Story of a Band Called Luxury, about the Indie-Christian-Punk band, Luxury, and three of its members who became Orthodox Christian Priests. The film director, Matt Hinton, will be at the premiere and available for Q&A on **July 22.**"

"Tickets are on sale and available from the Hollywood Theater Website (hollywoodtheatre.org) and you can also view the trailer on Youtube ("Parallel Love: The Story of a Band Called Luxury Longform Trailer (2019)")."

"You can listen to the recent NPR interview ("The Curious Tale Of The Band Luxury, Who Escaped Tragedy And Embraced Faith") on the film where you can also sample songs from the band's latest album."

"This premiere presents a unique and fun opportunity for the local Orthodox Christian community to turn out for an "extracurricular" activity."

"Parallel Love asks a question you don't hear very often: What happens to a rock-and-roll band when three-fifths of its members become Eastern Orthodox priests? That's what Luxury, a band from Athens, Georgia, had to deal with after a devastating auto wreck they suffered on tour in 1995 while just on the cusp of success. Best described as The Smiths-meet-Fugazi, Luxury's hyper-articulate musicians tell their poignant story—and play their soaring melodies on top of wild post-punk instrumentation—in this vibrant, gripping film. "I couldn't take my eyes off it," says Paste Magazine."

