

Rebound:
An Interview with Deacon Mindy Bugay
Incarnation Lutheran Church, Poway, California

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In the wake of the cancellation of the National Youth Gathering, 180 high school youth and chaperones travelled in July to Luther Glen Farm, a part of Lutheran Retreats, Camps, and Conferences in Yucaipa, California. There, they participated in a week of camp fun, community service, and traditional gathering activities. Twenty-one churches from Arizona, California, Hawaii, Minnesota, North and Washington State came to the event. Deacon Mindy's youth group was one of those that attended.

Describe the event, daily schedule and themes:

Each day was packed with activities, bible discussions, fellowship opportunities, and more. The students were encouraged to meet other students from other areas and churches. For example, on the first day, the leaders broke the large group into teams, mixing up the groups. Then they had to come together to design a team flag, a team chant, and team motto. They studied the theme verses: 1 Corinthians 3:9-11. Then all the teams came together and shared what they had created.

On other days, we took field trips to Disneyland, Helping Hands Food Pantry, and the Palm Spring Aerial Tramway. Speakers included Bishop Brenda Bos, Bishop Andy Taylor, Pastor Sarah Sumner-Eisenbraun and newly elected Pacifica Synod Bishop Dave Nagler.

The camp leaders were attentive and interacted well with the youth, including acting out skits to which the students really related. The evening worship times were very well planned with good music. All of it was interesting to the students and the food was good! To see a video of the week, watch the YouTube video posted by Pastor John Barton of Faith Lutheran Church: [REBOUND Camp Week at LRCC, July 24-29, 2022 at Luther Glen Farm - YouTube](#)

What were the growth areas and challenges for the youth at the event?

There was so much in that week that it is hard to parse out one experience that affected the kids the most. However, the speakers were impactful to their faith building. They talked about race and LGBTQ inclusivity, the difficulty of fitting in socially at school and home, and trusting that God loves everyone all the time. The youth loved being in a community where they didn't feel judged. They felt included in God's family all week. The week also challenged them to grow in trusting God and loving others.

As you reflect back, what do you remember most and what were the learnings?

This time with our youth and the youth of other churches was such a good experience. Some of the local groups, now that we are home and back in a routine, are scheduling ways to get the youth together again and bring along others who did not go to camp. The students I took would go again, given the opportunity.