

# Vacation Bible School June 16-20, 2024

at Philadelphia Lutheran Church

5:30pm—8:30 pm



## A Summer Camp Adventure With God !

Theme: *Whenever I'm afraid, I put my trust in You.* Psalm 56:3

The Bible is full of stories about God and God's relationship with humanity. The first part of the Bible, the Old Testament, is about a group of people who were descendants of a man named Abraham. Genesis, the first book of Old Testament, mostly centers on Abraham's family through its first few generations: Abraham's family; the family of his son, Isaac; and the family of Isaac's son, Jacob. Although this family had a special relationship with God, its people were far from perfect. Genesis 28:10-22 tells a story about Jacob running away from home after tricking his father and stealing from his brother. Jacob was the second-born of twin boys and was therefore not entitled to the privileges that were customarily passed from a father to the eldest son—in Jacob's case, his older twin, Esau. Jacob's father, Isaac, was nearing the end of his life and wanted to pass along a blessing to his oldest son. With the help of his mother, Rebekah, Jacob tricked his father into blessing him instead of Esau. Esau was angry about Jacob's deception, and Jacob fled his home and ran into the unknown. Genesis 28 is the first time Jacob appears by himself in the Bible. This is a new beginning for him, and an introduction into a larger story. One night, while traveling to a new home, Jacob had a dream of a raised staircase—perhaps like a staircase on the ziggurats found throughout ancient Mesopotamia—with “its foundation on earth and its top touching the sky” (28:12). Jacob saw messengers from God ascending and descending this heavenly staircase, but the messengers did not speak to Jacob. Instead, God spoke directly to him. God did not condemn the underhanded way Jacob treated his family and obtained the blessing his father intended for his older brother. Instead, God repeated to Jacob the same promises made to his grandfather, Abraham, years before: promises about land, descendants, blessing, presence, protection, and more. God told Jacob that despite living a life that has, so far, been defined by deception, God still loves him, is present with him wherever he goes, and will be his God—just as he was the God of his father and grandfather. Jacob's dream confirmed to him that this place was sacred ground. When he woke up from his dream and divine message, he made his own covenant with God and marked the spot of this divine encounter with a stone pillar. Jacob named this special place Bethel, meaning “God's house.” Despite venturing into the unknown, Jacob was not alone. God was always with him, even if Jacob did not realize it all the time. And God would keep the promises made to Jacob, even if Jacob did not realize that, either. We can trust God to keep the promises made to us, as well—like the promise to be with us, even when we travel to our own unknowns! Whenever we are afraid, we know we can Trust God to Go with Us!

The following churches will be participating: Antioch, Bethel, Holly Communion,  
Our Saviour, Philadelphia and St. Paul's.