

Swan Lake

Christian Camp & Retreat Center

MARCH 2023

605-326-5690

Summer is Coming!

I know it is hard to believe...

Even though we continue to deal with piles of snow, fluctuating forecasts, and poor traveling conditions, there is an underlying current at camp circulating the message that indeed summer will soon be here.

And with the warmer weather, the summer staff, counselors, and campers will once again flood the facilities, bringing excitement and joy with them.

Please join us in our anticipation—believing in faith for the stirring of hearts to move us all closer to God.

NOW HIRING

Counselors and Summer Staff

Join us for an unforgettable summer!

Check it out and apply online

www.myslcc.com/employment



SUMMER CAMP SCHEDULE

Day Camp 1 (PreK—2nd).....	June 15
Day Camp 2 (PreK—2nd).....	June 16
Day Camp 3 (PreK—2nd).....	June 19
3rd & 4th Grade 1.....	June 7-9
3rd & 4th Grade 2.....	June 11-14
5th & 6th Grade 1.....	July 9-14
5th & 6th Grade 2.....	July 16-21
7th & 8th Grade 1.....	July 2-7
7th & 8th Grade 2.....	July 23-28
Senor High Camp.....	June 25-30

Registration open at www.myslcc.com

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You!

Judi and I are part of a small group that meets each Sunday evening and, right now, we are studying the book of Acts. For my own purposes, I have been looking for incidents of joy in these passages. I was so taken with this idea that as I read Acts chapter two, I felt compelled to paraphrase it. What follows are my words taken from verses 42-47.

All the believers committed themselves to gaining a fuller understanding of God's plan, which existed from the beginning, from their leaders and to enjoying time spent with other believers, including eating together and observing the Lord's Supper and to prayer.

An incredible sense of awe and wonder came over all of them, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. All the believers met together in one place, and they shared everything that they had. They sold their property and their possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day; they met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and they took great joy in eating together, sharing what they had with each other with such enthusiasm that this also became a time of worship, of praising God for sending Jesus and the plan of redemption. There was a pervasive sense of goodwill between all the people. And each day, the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Having just written these words, I was immediately drawn to Philippians 2:2 which says, "Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind."

I ask myself this question, do I feel great joy? And if I am honest, I feel great joy when I am spending time with God whether in small group, personal devotions, or when I work with the groups here at camp that are earnestly seeking God. However, when I concentrate on the work of moving snow, maintaining the buildings, or planning what is for supper, I do not feel great amounts of joy. I am not saying that I dread those activities, just that Christ is really the source of my joy and my accomplishments are not. If you relate to this in any way, let's increase our joy by seeking to spend more time with Jesus.

Awe and Wonder

I want to share with all of you of the generosity of James Merk towards Swan Lake Christian Camp. Upon his passing, James left the camp with a gift of just over \$150,000. Years ago, Judi and I were a part of a Sunday school class that Jimmy attended that met in the corner room on the south end of the hall at Salem Mennonite. I don't recall Jimmy attending many camp events, but certainly he was very aware of the camp. The timing of his gift, as we are considering a new worship space, is not lost on me. I see us being able to honor Jimmy's legacy by using it to declare the goodness of God to another generation of people who come to camp. I wish to thank all of you who helped James with his farming and with the distribution of his estate.





WORSHIP SPACE UPDATE

Years ago, Rosie Epp encouraged me to put bathrooms in each of the guest rooms as we considered building the retreat center. Her words were that she didn't mind, so much, having to go down the hall for the restroom at night, but that she hated meeting someone else on the return trip. Many folks have benefitted greatly from her advice as we attempted to build space that honored the needs of each of our guests.

Now, as we consider building additional worship space, I hear people wanting to keep their weekend activities all under one roof, especially during the winter season. Currently, we are hosting seven weekends of ministry intensive adult groups that overflow our dining hall, our chapel and completely fill all of the rooms in the retreat center. Praise God for that. I am proposing an addition to the south of the camp office that would add space which can be used for both more worship space and more dining space.

As many of you know, in the past few years I have drawn multiple building proposals that attempted to address the need for more chapel space, but we have found timing to be a very real limiting factor. We cannot tear down the current chapel because we still need it every season of the year. I have considered building a chapel in a new location, but that still requires us to go outside to access it. I believe that having this space attached to current dining hall addresses the needs for more dining space, more worship space and indoor access all in one package.

I believe this addition will serve the camp well as we continue to plan for the future. When I consider the upstairs lodge rooms that were added in 1990, I recognize the vision that would launch the camp from primarily a youth camp, mostly only used in the summer, to a year-round facility that would draw people of all ages to experience a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The retreat center only served to advance that vision. Now, we are again looking to the future and striving to seek God's guidance as we look to honor all that He has given to us. Join us in praying for wisdom and direction, and join us in the discussions as we seek the very best to honor our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

~Jerry Kroeker

Build a Boat

I find I get stuck meditating on one Bible story for awhile. About this time last year, I came across 2 Chronicles 20 in my chronological reading of the Bible and to this day Jerry and I still talk about it. At the time, God was teaching me to walk towards (not away from) my battles, praising Him with faith that He has already claimed the victory. I get goosebumps just thinking about it. When I look back at last summer, it was the Bible story I needed. I had to choose to make the conscious decision to praise God out loud even while moving towards a battle. Again and again God was faithful to me, just as he was to the Israelites.

So this year, I find myself once again thinking on one particular Bible story, the story of Noah and the Ark. Now this story is much more widely known than Jehoshaphat and his choir, but I have found it equally intriguing. I think sometimes Noah gets overlooked simply because we've heard the story so many times since childhood, but can we take a second to just marvel at God? I have so many questions for Him when I get to Heaven. Did the animals really line up two by two and not try to kill each other? Is there a replay movie I can watch? How did they all fit? I mean, I know the Ark was big, but have you been to the Omaha Zoo? It is massive and it doesn't even have ALL the animals. And let's not even get started on the water and where it came from and where it went. But the part that has captured my attention is Noah and the building of the boat.

First of all, we aren't given very much information about Noah. Here are the few important things we do know. Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God (Genesis 6:8-9).

The world was corrupt. Yep, check, our world is corrupt too. But Noah was righteous and blameless, and he walked with God. For me, I think that statement carries so much hope. Even in a world so corrupt that God himself desires to completely destroy it, Noah walked with God. We can walk with God too, and be righteous and blameless in His eyes even when the corrupt world surrounds us. But I find it so interesting what happens next. When God decides to destroy mankind, He doesn't simply lift Noah up out of the flood or whisk him away to the top of a mountain. Instead, he partners with Noah, giving him a job and instructions—build a boat.

When I think about Noah's obedience to God's instructions and the amount of time it would take him to build the ark, I'm in complete awe. It's estimated that Noah spent 120 years to complete the boat—that's dedication. Now, some might say, "But yeah, Noah lived to be 950". Okay, let's do some math. That's 12.6% of Noah's lifetime. If we live to 80 years, then 12.6% of our lifetime is 10 years. If God asked me to do something so strange, complicated, monumental, and outside of my skill set that it was going to take me 10 years to accomplish, would I be obedient and continue to be obedient day after day to completion?

In Hebrews, we find these words about Noah. "It was by faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God, who warned him about things that had never happened before." I wonder how much Noah understood about his task. I've heard that he built the boat in the desert where it had never rained before. It seems so risky. But when we are being obedient to God, it's not risk - it's faith.

A few weeks ago, we had our annual meeting at camp. We enjoyed stories of camp in the past, I talked about camp right now, and Jerry shared vision of camp in the future. As he was nearing the end, he made this statement, "I believe God is preparing us for something." As he continued talking, my mind stayed right there on those words. All I could hear in my head was, "things that have never happened before". Those thoughts have stayed with me since that evening. God is preparing the camp for things that have never happened before. When I think about Noah surviving a flood that killed everyone else, it's a scary thought. But what an honor to partner with God, to walk and work with Him and to find favor in His eyes. I pray that we would have a Noah-like obedience, persevering day after day building our "boat" even when we know the future will bring things that have never happened before.

~Kianne Gilles