



SUGAR CREEK
BIBLE CAMP

A Camping/Retreat Ministry

June 12, 2020

Dear Sugar Creek Bible Camp Family,

In a lengthy and emotional meeting last night, the Sugar Creek Board of Directors reached consensus on the very difficult issue of whether to hold residential youth camp programs during the global pandemic. It was decided, based on developing information about the coronavirus, that tragically, we will not be able to offer traditional summer camp this year.

Since the beginning of March when communities began practicing *Safer at Home*, we have worked to craft programs involving safe experiences for all of our youth – while still achieving the elements that define the Lutheran outdoor ministry experience. With the guidance of the CDC, Crawford County Health Dept., the American Camping Association, and other camps within our Lutheran Outdoor Ministry network, we believed we could achieve a 99% safe camp, but the coronavirus is an insidious enemy. Even with full attention to all aspects of health sanitation and a camp uniquely and powerfully equipped for small group ministry, asymptomatic exposure remained likely. The board felt it was not an acceptable risk to send a potentially infected camper home to a household of unknown vulnerabilities.

However, you will have good, safe camp opportunities here this summer. We are expanding “Family Camp” offerings to many additional 3-day programs! Each household here can reside safely separated and experience life-giving community outdoors. Classic and meaningful camp activities will be enjoyed in the context of safe distancing and healthy practices *as a family*. ☺

Our staff also developed creative new resources for church-based Day Camps, with engaging online programs for elementary, middle-school and high-school age groups. Our *Day Camp 2-Go* VBS curriculum offers Bible study videos, devotions, and faith-building activities made with the help of our camp counselors. It will be available to all churches.

Summer camp fees make up over half of our annual income. As costs to operate camp and retreats are also significant, this loss of income forces us to be creative and frugal, perhaps to the point of reduced work and pay schedules. We have been developing financial projections based on a variety of operational models, seeking financial health to build strong ministries in the year ahead without compromising physical health and safety. Your financial support makes the difference now. We are preparing for a future where our kids need camp more than ever.

The Board of Directors has full confidence in our professional staff, under the Direction of Jesse Klosterboer, to make the right decisions on specific camp operations going forward. We will keep our website and Facebook postings current with camp-related updates. Please know that deposits and fees that have been paid towards summer camp to-date can, at your family’s option, be applied to allow your whole family to experience Sugar Creek this summer – or credited back in a manner that can be chosen from a list of options on our webpage. Check our Facebook page, website, or call for information. Housing will be first-come, first serve...

At summer camp this weekend, hundreds of children and young adults would normally be heard for miles around singing praises to God. *These holy sounds will echo again over the sacred places of Sugar Creek.* Today we grieve the loss of traditional camp, for now. Tomorrow, we will joyfully welcome people to experience the healing and blessings of this sacred place where all generations encounter Christ, experience God’s grace, and are empowered by the Holy Spirit to go forth in faith.

Your servants in the Gospel,


Michael Douglass, Board President


Jesse Klosterboer, Executive Director