



WOODCREST Whisperings

Autumn 2022

Following Close to God

By Bill Klees, Executive Director

When we selected our year's theme of "Following His Course," it seemed like a nice idea to focus on our desire to follow God wherever He may lead us. Perhaps we didn't calculate what that fully means or maybe He was testing our resolve. Over the year, God has led us through some challenging times, but as His word promises, He has been with us through it all (Psalm 23:4; Isaiah 43:2; Matthew 28:20).

We anticipated some of the challenges. We knew that expenses were going to be much higher than we had budgeted. We knew that staffing might be a challenge. We also expected that the growth we are having would stretch our facilities. However, expecting something and experiencing it are two different things.

But whether it was God supplying the needed staff at just the right time or our church families generously donating to help cover higher food expenses, we found our faith strengthened even as it was stretched. You will find in this newsletter lots of evidence of how our Father upholds us as together we strive to follow close to Him.

**"I follow close to You;
Your right hand
holds on to me."
~PSALM 63:8**



Summer Snap Shot

It is a challenge to try to communicate how amazing summer 2022 was and the many ways that God revealed His majesty and faithfulness. Numbers are never the ultimate evidence of what God is doing, but they are one way that we can show our supporters that God is leading Woodcrest in exciting ways. Thank you being part of what God is doing through your support and prayers.

1,956

- God brought 1,956 campers to Woodcrest to hear the Gospel this summer (a new record!).

444

- Since the summer before Covid, God has grown Woodcrest by 444 campers (a 29% increase), which includes a 105% increase in our Trekkers Camp program.

857

Day

- We served 857 families.
- 20% of campers self-identified as unchurched.

226

- 226 churches were represented by campers this summer.

108

- 108 campers reported a significant spiritual moment including 33 first-time commitments to Christ.
- We partnered with Angle Tree Ministries to provide a free week of camp for 6 campers with an incarcerated parent.
- Campers came as far away as Texas and Florida.
- We awarded over \$14,000 in camper scholarship funds.
- 88,000+ hours of screen-free time because campers were at camp.

88,000

Stories of Grace

Words from Parents

This morning my son whined about his breakfast being ready because he was reading his Bible!! God is an Awesome God! This Momma's heart is SO blessed!! I feel so blessed to have an option like Woodcrest so close to home! AMAZING!!

This was a special time for our daughter and she seemed to enjoy the spiritual emphasis and grew in confidence by her time away from home.

My child does not like to read anything and he came home Friday and asked to read the children's bible that we have! He stayed up reading it Friday night!

My daughter had a lot of fun. This was her first camp experience and she can't wait to go back next year. She was definitely anxious on the first day but by the end she didn't want to leave.



Read more stories of God's grace at www.woodcrestretreat.org/stories

Staff Updates

At the end of the summer, we said good-bye to **Micah Martin**. He served this past year as our Assistant Program Director. He is



now a math teacher at Lititz Area Mennonite School.



Taking over Micah's role is **Joel Wayde**, who is no stranger to Woodcrest.

Joel has served since 2018 in various roles. His new position will have him handling registration for our various programs. Additionally, you will see him alongside Adam playing games and bringing smiles to our campers.

The new position of Ministry Partner Coordinator is being filled by **Matthew Good**. Part of Matthew's mission is to invest time into strengthening our relationship with churches and ministries plus developing new strategic partnerships. Matt started working at Woodcrest in 2019.





Summer 2022 Ministry Team

Serving on the frontlines of ministry, our summer 2022 staff worked hard to love the campers unselfishly. Whether as a counselor or support staff, this team sacrificed time and money to see that each child felt valued and loved by us and, more importantly, by their Creator who sent His Son to demonstrate His love. Join us in thanking God for each of them.

Row 1: Micah Martin, Gregg Gattuso, Caleb Horning, Joel Wayde, Brennan Hurst, Asher Christner, Ethan Hurst, Liam Ulrich, Aidan Yunginger, Emma Klees, Adam Fox **Row 2:** Mike Gattuso, Vanessa Klinger, Claudia Ebersole, Talia Christner, Faith VanHaxleden, Hannah Martin, Emilie Nissley, Kendall Furman, Lisa Hurst, Pearl Schoener, Doris Beachy **Row 3:** Ryan Blocksom, Will Hilliard, Caroline Baum, Abby Horning, Alaina Martin, Bevalee Tshudy, Aamirah Byrd, Kora Behrens, Kailey Hurst, Megan Zook, Erin Walsh, Carleigh Matz, Chloe Moody, Jason Martin.

Row 4: Seth Rose, Jake Edwards, Bill Klees, Matt Glantz, Cameron Cronk, Braden Buckwalter, Ty Jahraus, Brian Althouse, Nate Cassel, Jeremiah Bates, Caleb Haldeman, Corey Meyers, Tianna Musser. **Row 5:** Emily Buckwalter, Carlie Martin, Savannah Watson, Lisa Kesselring, Abby Rissler, Jenna Miller, Kaleigh Watkins.

Fall 22 Intern

We are excited to have Chloe Moody with us this fall in the role of Fall Intern. Chloe is spending time learning the various jobs that comprise camp ministry and helping with our School of Wonder field trips.

“Chloe helped me memorize verses and prayed with me every night. Thank you, Chloe, for being my counselor!” ~ 2022 overnight camper



S'moregasbord '22

You are invited to join us Friday, November 18th for our annual S'moregasbord Event. What is a S'moregasbord? It is a huge buffet of unique and traditional s'more ingredients for you to create and enjoy the ultimate s'more experience. Stop by the Indian Rock Dining Hall between 6:30-8:30. There will be plenty of campfire snacks plus games to play (or just sit by the fire and talk). Drop in to visit with old and new friends. There will be an opportunity for you to support Woodcrest during the Extra Give happening that day in Lancaster County. This is a great, free event for the family and a great way to get back to Woodcrest.



225 Woodcrest Drive
Ephrata, PA 17522
(717) 738-2233
www.WoodcrestRetreat.org

Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
EPHRATA, PA 17522
PERMIT NO. 75



Journey To Bethlehem 2022

Woodcrest's Journey to Bethlehem continues to be a part of many people's Christmas celebration. Nearly 2,600 people followed Mary and Joseph through the emotional trip to Bethlehem. Along the way they encounter a great group of characters that help bring the events of Christ's birth to life. This outreach event brings together a cast and crew of over 70 people (plus a collection of live animals). Mark your calendars now to join us for one of four nights (December 9-10, 16-17).

Pre-registration is now open on our website and is strongly encouraged (a limited number of walk-ins will be accepted each night) We are expecting that a new check-in procedure will keep wait times smaller and will help everyone to better experience the Wonder of Christmas.

Register Online at:
www.woodcrestretreat/events/journey



Wish List

We are in need of slightly used or new items from our wish list. Is there a way for you to help?

- Two 42" or larger televisions
- 4 Canoes (without holes!)
- 12-15 passenger van (to use for outbound trips and weekend programming)
- Fall Volunteer Work Groups
- "New" Vacuum Cleaners
- Gazebo

Fall Family Fun Fest

As we strive to create a family fun event, our Fall Fest continues to grow and evolve. We had beautiful weather for this year's festival and it brought out a record number of people to enjoy classic camp activities, delicious food, and a wide array of silent auction items. Thanks to everyone who made this event special.

For next fall, we are excited to add a delicious evening meal followed by a concert featuring Dove award winning artist, Steve Green. Steve will be our speaker for a new Family Camp Weekend which will culminate in a concert Saturday evening, September 16th. We are excited to welcome Steve to Woodcrest with this special benefit concert. Look for details coming in early 2023.

