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Journey To Bethlehem 2023

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 a night (plus live animals). Mark your calendars now to join us for one of four nights (December 8-9, 15-16).

Pre-registration is now open on our website and is strongly encouraged (a limited number of walk-ins will be accepted each night). The cost remains only \$10/person (\$5 for children ages 4-16 and free for those 3 and under).

Register Online at:

www.woodcrestretreat/events/journey



Growing for Kingdom Impact

By Bill Klees, Executive Director

Last December we kicked off Phase 1 of an ambitious project that will enable Woodcrest Retreat to become a year-round retreat facility. We look forward to offering programs that will allow us to fulfill our mission to introduce people to Jesus Christ and encourage Christian growth during all four seasons—not just summer.

The first phase was the completion of a new shower house for our overnight campers and expansion of our sewer lines.

Thanks to the generosity of our camp community, we received full funding for this project on April 12th (less than five months after launching the initiative) and had it ready for use by the opening day of summer camp. Even after a busy summer, it still smells new and looks great!

On September 16th, at our Fall Fest, we officially kicked off Phase 2 of our Mission 4:12 Campaign. This phase includes bringing in 10 Lancaster Log Cabins to provide up to 140 beds for year-round use. The total cost of Phase 2 is roughly \$1.8 million. Because of the continued generosity of our supporters, we were able to announce at the Fall Fest that we are already 25% funded for this phase. We obviously have a way to go, but we are excited to see how God is going to provide.

Our year-end letter will offer more information on this project and invite you to help us toward our goal. We look forward to the completion of this phase and the opportunity to grow God's Kingdom through life transforming programs and partnerships.

Wish List

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

- One 42" or larger television
- 2 Canoes (without holes!)
- 12-15 passenger van (to use for outbound trips and weekend programming)
- Wood Splitting Groups
- "New" Vacuum Cleaners
- White Christmas lights

Celebration Banquet — April 4, 2024

We want you to put it on your calendar now because this year's Celebration Banquet is shaping up to be a memorable event. Attendance continues to grow for our annual dinner; however, our Indian Rock Center dining hall is limited to 200 guests. Registration will open in January of 2024, but please mark your calendars now to attend the banquet on Thursday, April 4th. We will be providing updates on Phase 2 of our Mission 4:12 initiative, highlighting the amazing things God is doing through Woodcrest's summer camps, have some fun games, and enjoy delicious food together. There are always a few surprises too, so you will not want to miss it. Look for full details in our Winter Newsletter and on our social media pages.



Thanks to over 400 donors, the \$350,000 needed to complete Phase 1 was raised by April 12, 2023. It is a true blessing to be able to look ahead to the next phase and being us closer to when Woodcrest can offer year-round programs and retreats.

A Fabulous Fall Fest

The weekend of September 16th was beautiful! The campground was full, the sun was shining, and the temperature was a comfortable 75 degrees. It was the perfect day for Woodcrest's annual **Fall Family Fun Fest**. This event continues to grow. We had the most families ever come out for games, food trucks, and fun. Nearly 200 people enjoyed a delicious pulled pork dinner. For our evening concert, over 450 people came out to celebrate and worship our great God. We were delighted to have **Piercing Word** perform, as well as Dove Award-winning artist **Steve Green** who sang many of his hit songs.

On Friday evening, we hosted a gathering for pastors and ministry leaders. During this event, Steve Green shared from his 38 years of ministry experience and led a time of worship as a way for us to bless and encourage those who are serving faithfully in ministry. Our weekend ended on Sunday morning with a time of worship at our Outdoor Chapel. Woodcrest staff led in singing and our director, Bill Klees, shared on Woodcrest's commitment to proclaim the Word of God as the source of our truth and hope for all generations (Hebrews 4:12).

Special thanks to Lancaster Log Cabins and Garman Builders for being the main sponsors for this event. Other sponsors were **Martin's Flooring, WebTek, Lehman Insurance, and Piercing Word**. We also appreciate support from Esbenshade's Greenhouse, Gingrich Builders, and Conestoga Wood.



Save the Date

Next year's Fall Family Fun Fest is scheduled for September 14, 2024. We are already planning new and exciting things. Our featured artist for the evening concert is the hilarious duo known as **THE SKIT GUYS**. Tommy Woodard and Eddie James have been creating laughs together since high school. The campground filled up this year, so be sure to reserve your site early.



Pictured above is Steve Green, Woodcrest Director Bill Klees, and Piercing Word Director, Aaron House

Prayer—The Heartbeat of Camp

By Matthew Good, Director of Partnerships

Building the Kingdom of God has always been a major focus of Woodcrest. When talking with founders of the ministry, you quickly find that they had a desire to turn the pig farms and grassy fields of the Ephrata mountain into a beautiful place where people could come and rest in the presence of God.

This is still the focus that drives the mission of Woodcrest. None of the ministries that take place on this mountain can be accomplished without the work of the Holy Spirit amidst us.

We are seeking volunteers to serve in prayer asking for God's wisdom in our planning and for God to bear fruit in the work we do for His Kingdom. We invite you to join one of these two prayer opportunities.

- **The Prayer Taskforce:** Friends of Woodcrest gather at camp to pray over this ministry. Meetings take place one Monday night a month.
- **The Prayer Team:** Volunteer to pray at home for Woodcrest by receiving a monthly prayer letter.

For our summer campers, "Build Your Kingdom Here" is a defining song. The song is a prayer to God to: *"Build Your kingdom here, let the darkness fear. Show Your mighty hand. Heal our streets and land."*

This is an important heart posture not only for our campers, but the Church. We call upon God to work graciously to lead hearts and minds back to Himself.

As we gather to pray, we are asking God to work through Woodcrest to lead the young and *young at heart*, to our Savior and to serve Him. Now that is a mission worth praying for! Please consider

volunteering, whether at home or here at Woodcrest, to pray that God would use Woodcrest to glorify His name and build His Kingdom.

Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work.

~Oswald Chambers

Learn more and sign up at www.woodcrestretreat.org/prayer

Prayers & Praises

- Thank God for the amazing summer we experienced
- Praise God for the completion of the shower house project and the healthy start to Phase 2
- Pray that God would stir hearts to give toward the cabin project
- Pray that God would direct the right people to fill our open staff positions
- Praise God for His goodness that we see every day

New Year-Round Staff Position Open

Woodcrest has been blessed to be able to serve more groups. In 2022, we served over 275 churches. We anticipate that we will serve more than that in 2023. Our facilities are busy with families and organizations holding events while our cabins are rented most weekends. That has led us to seek a person who has a passion for making guests feel valued and appreciated while keeping our facilities clean and welcoming. **We are looking to hire a Hospitality Coordinator.** This is a 16-24 hours per week position that includes housekeeping (cleaning facilities after guests leave), prepping facilities for incoming groups, guest group follow up, scheduling other housekeepers, plus other duties that will further our mission and ensure that groups have a positive experience at Woodcrest.

You can download a complete job description from our website or call Bill at the camp office (717-738-2233) or email him at bill@woodcrestretreat.org for more information or to apply.

Experience *Summer* at Woodcrest an annual report

For three months life is kind of crazy here at Woodcrest. During that time, we had over 17,000 people step onto the mountain to enjoy creation and community. We want to make sure that our friends and supporters have an opportunity to catch a glimpse of what God is doing at Woodcrest during those busy months and how we are continuing to improve the facilities and make the Woodcrest experience a time for everyone to come and experience the wonder of God.

We served 1,930 summer campers in 2023, just shy of last year's record enrollment



We discipled over 70 young adults who serve on our summer ministry team, pouring into their lives as they poured into the lives of the campers



Woodcrest's mission is to introduce people to Jesus Christ and encourage Christian growth through programs and partnerships that emphasize creation and community.

Over 150 volunteers helped to make summer 2023 a success. Volunteers served as counselors, kitchen helpers, office workers, Bible teachers, weekend hosts, and housekeepers



837 families served by our award-winning camps



Churches baptized 64 new believers in Woodcrest's swimming pool this summer!

Woodcrest created over 88,000 hours of screen free time during summer camp



Woodcrest awarded over \$17K in camper scholarships to help families afford summer camp



Nearly 300 churches served through summer camp, pavilion rentals, and campground use



Woodcrest served over 4,000+ hotdogs during the 10 weeks of summer camp

This was my daughter's first time at camp and she really enjoyed her cabin, the activities, singing songs, and learning more about Jesus!



Over 14,000 lunches served during camp

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