

Dean's Letter
Family Camp 2017

Dear Campers,

Hello! Hope your summer has been excellent so far. We are your deans; Andrew Hunter, Ian Hunter, and Tom Beesley. The goal of this letter is to tell you about Family Camp 2017, Labor Day Weekend September 1st-4th. For those of you who have attended before, welcome back. We hope this letter activates fond memories. For those of you who are coming to Family Camp or even Pilgrim Lodge for the first time, we hope this letter informs, excites, and allays any anxieties you may have.

At Pilgrim Lodge, campers come from congregations and communities across the state. The camp itself is beautiful, and everyone who comes has their own favorite place. Maybe the porch of a cabin listening to the loons on the lake at night. Maybe sitting in the chapel at sunset saying good night to the echo. Maybe the labyrinth, walking alone during a quiet moment. Maybe on a canoe with a fishing pole. Or, our consensus favorite, sitting in a rocking chair on the deck of the Lodge eating ice cream. It is these kinds of experiences that the British poet William Wordsworth refers to in his poem "I wandered lonely as a cloud":

*For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.*

...or the cone of Moose Tracks.

Family Camp holds a special place in our hearts. It is a weekend to connect with old friends and make new ones. A time to set the cares of home and work aside and abide in the beautiful presence of the holy spirit. To swim, hike, play cards, worship, and eat meals together. It is a time, place, and community that brings families coming back year after year.

This year our goal as Deans is to facilitate a weekend where every camper can both "unplug" and "tune in," to go from digital back to analog. In the 19th century, New England writer Henry David Thoreau examined this concept, and the negative effect, as he saw it, of the transitions he was experiencing in his American society, which is worth quoting at some length:

I am alarmed when it happens that I have walked a mile into the woods bodily, without getting there in spirit. In my afternoon walk I would fain forget all my morning occupations and my obligations to society. But it sometimes happens that I cannot easily shake off the village. The thought of some work will run in my head and I am not where my body is – I am out of my senses. In my walks I would fain return to my senses. What business have I in the woods, if I am thinking of something out of the

woods? I suspect myself, and cannot help a shudder when I find myself so implicated even in what are called good works.

Pilgrim Lodge works its magic best when campers are able to “unplug,” from work, school, and devices, and “tune in” to the magic of Family Camp in both “body and spirit” as Thoreau describes.

With all that in mind, some specifics.

Schedule

Friday:

Check in will go from 4:00PM to 7:00PM on Friday, September 1st. Check in will be on the Ping Pong Porch of the Lodge. Families will get their cabin number at that time, and will be asked to make a family poster and camper nametags (materials will be provided). The evening program will begin at 7:00 in the Main Room in the Lodge. We understand that some families will be late. All families arriving after 7:00 can check in at the middle room of the Lodge. Quiet boardwalk begins at 9:00 every night for the benefit of families with young children. However, campers of all ages are invited to enjoy the lodge until 11:00, playing board games, ping pong (until 9:00) and participating in the annual Trivial Pursuit tournament.

Saturday:

Full schedules will be handed out at check-in, but Saturday will involve a mix of indoor and outdoor activities. Campers should bring a variety of clothing for the activities. As a reminder, meals are provided by the camp, however a list of “jumpers” (to set the tables) from each family for each meal will also be provided Friday night. Families sit with other families, a different one every meal! Special events include a cookout and morning program facilitated by the Deans. At night, a movie screening (Moana) will be held in the Lodge for all ages, middle school students can participate in a late-night, glow-stick labyrinth walk, and high schoolers have the option of a sleepover in the Lodge (pending adult chaperone volunteers).

Sunday:

Special events include a presentation from this summer’s Pilgrim Lodge Mission partner, Tree Street Youth, a really cool Lewiston-based resource center. Additional information can be found on their website: <http://treestreetyouth.org>. We will also have a waterfront carnival, featuring a “crazy dive” competition and a “dunk the deans” ordeal (for us). Teenagers deliver a chapel service they have planned in the morning. In the evening, we will have a “dress up” dinner, take a camp photo, and enjoy a camp-wide “Talent Show.” Typically each family presents a showcase: music, skits, dance, lessons, etc. All acts are welcome! Think ahead and come prepared!

Monday:

A final meal and worship together before we officially close summer at Pilgrim Lodge. Families can choose to stay through lunch.

Volunteers

One thing that makes Family Camp so special is the generosity of its campers in volunteering for tasks that collectively “make” the experience. If you would like to volunteer for one of the following responsibilities, please email Andrew Hunter, who will be coordinating volunteers, at ahunter6892@gmail.com.

- Leading a midnight labyrinth walk with Middle Schoolers (glow sticks and Ian Hunter co-chaperone provided)
- Two adult chaperones (one man, one woman) for sleepover in the Lodge with high schoolers.
- Family for Saturday night vespers (consultation with dean and scripture reading provided, otherwise come and tell your best stories!)
- Family for Sunday night vespers
- Consult for the Middle School/High School led chapel service Sunday morning
- Interest Group Leaders
 - Interest Groups is a 75 min block of time saturday and sunday mornings before lunch where campers can choose to attend any of several camper-led events. Could be a yoga session, soccer or basketball game, craft party, nature walk, etc.
 - If you have an activity you would like to lead or a passion you would like to share, please reach out. Make sure to bring any supplies you will need (ex. Soccer, bring a ball and some cones; ex. Knitting, bring yarn and some extra sets of needles).

Packing list (in addition to standard camp stuff)

- If volunteering...
 - Materials for your interest group
 - Materials for your vespers service
- Materials for your talent show skit
- A good book for the porch
- Cash for ice cream
- Mission donation

If you have any other questions, please reach out to any of us and we will try to answer them. We look forward to seeing you all soon!

Best,

Andrew, Ian, and Tom