



Camp Pride is coming up soon! We are Quinn and KJ and we are the Co-Deans (program leaders) of Camp Pride! We are very excited to welcome you to the beautiful campus of Pilgrim Lodge on Lake Cobbosseecontee. We're here to work with the camp staff and counselors to make sure you enjoy your week at camp to the fullest. Before you start packing, here are some important information, tips, and helpful reminders to make our week together fun, safe, and full of PRIDE!

Housing. Campers will be housed in our cabins by age/grade and not by gender marker. This means you will likely be housed with people with different genders than you (or you might finally have a cabin where gender doesn't matter!). If you have any questions or concerns about this housing structure, please feel free to reach out to us about this.

Technology. We understand that cell phones help everyone stay connected to families and friends, but we also want to help everyone form a community with people physically present at camp. So, cell phones will be allowed in cabins during bunk time and bedtime, but otherwise we request you leave them to the side. Counselors will hold onto phones for safekeeping. If you want a chance to deliberately leave your phone behind, this is a great opportunity! Another wrinkle about cell phone use is that PL has a safety policy of not posting photographs of campers while they are at camp. So you can post photos of the pretty sunset, or adults who give you their consent, but please wait until you go home to show the world about your lovely time at camp. Also, there may be people who simply don't want their photo published. This gets tricky in group shots or people in the background. We'll try to respect requests as best we are able under the circumstances.

Swim attire. Because some of us may be in transition, or not comfortable revealing our upper body to go swimming (as is sometimes culturally expected) we are asking everyone, regardless of gender identity, to wear a top to go swimming. Don't usually wear a top when you swim? Bring a rashguard, bathing suit top, exercise shirt, tank top, or just a T-shirt you don't mind getting wet. We want everyone to feel comfortable and free to swim.

Interfaith approach. One of the exciting aspects of Camp Pride is our intentionally interfaith approach. We're working to create a space where queer and trans people can explore faith, religion, spirituality, and tradition in ways that are affirming to their own lives. Throughout the week, we will have sacred times of gathering under broad traditions, as well as times to celebrate unique practices. Because Pilgrim Lodge is a church camp (the United Church of Christ is decidedly queer friendly) you may find Jesus, or God, or other bits of theology in things like the singing of graces, or signs on the wall. Please know that this is who we are, and we share it but do not expect you to "sign on" to any particular way of thinking or being. We want to learn from you too! A valuable part of our community is the sharing of communal meals. If you have any dietary needs—related to your faith or otherwise—we encourage you to reach out to us or the camp director as soon as possible so we can make a plan to accommodate it.

Sharing with our communities. Every summer, Pilgrim Lodge adopts a project to support. This year's project is *Tree Street Youth* in Lewiston, Maine. Tree Street supports young people of Lewiston & Auburn through after school programs, arts, academic, and leadership opportunities. Members of Tree Street Youth will join us one evening to discuss their work. Take a look at their website (treestreetyouth.org) and consider bringing a donation, or using a portion of your store account money (more below) to give to this worthy cause.

Out as you want to be. Camp Pride is for members of the LGBTQ community and its allies. Some campers will have been "out" for years, others might be not as "out" about various identities. And some people will be allies! We write this to remind you that Camp Pride is for everyone working on their own personal journeys of identity, whatever that means.

New Community. If you have been a PL camper in the past, know that we are welcoming in people from all over the country who have never been to PL before - so we need to be open to new ideas and extend our welcome wide! If you are new to Pilgrim Lodge, welcome! Our goal is that everyone be respected and allowed to be who they are. When conflict arises, as it is part of the human condition, we work to resolve it in ways that respect everyone. We ask people to Love God, Love self, and Love one another. (And if God is question mark for you, we might say "Love Creation/Existence")

Arranging Travel Plans. If you are coming to Maine by plane or bus, and you need to be picked up and brought to Pilgrim Lodge, and back to the airport or bus station, we absolutely need your travel itinerary as soon as possible to be able to arrange rides. Please, email your travel plans to both our Camp Director, Bryan at bryan@pilgrimlodge.org AND the person managing pickup drop off: Karen at kchoate3883@gmail.com Ideally your flight will come in on Sunday (August 6) before 2 pm and leave Saturday (August 12) after 9 am. However, we understand that travel plans are tricky and if it is simply not possible, we will arrange for an overnight and meals on Saturday night August 5 (we'll need signed permission from your parents if you are under 18) and we will get you to the airport early in the morning on Saturday (August 12).

What to bring. Here's a list of what to bring in addition to a week's worth of summer clothes:

- Warm sleeping clothes (for possible cold nights)
- Warm daytime clothes (just in case)
- A rain jacket or poncho (just in case)
- At least one pair of closed-toe shoes like sneakers, hiking boots, etc
- A Fancy and/or Fabulous outfit for the Dress-Up Dinner on Thursday
- Pillow & Pillowcase
- Bedding (sleeping bag or sheets/blanket)
- Towel for swimming and showering
- Soap & Shampoo
- Toothbrush & Toothpaste
- A notebook & pen
- Waterbottle
- Book(s) to read
- A sacred text (whatever text this means to you)
- Flashlight
- Bug Spray
- Sunscreen
- Money if you want to donate to mission or buy store stuff. We'll put it in an account so there is no cash at camp. You'll get what you don't spend back before you leave.
- Medications - ALL meds (over the counter included) must be given to the nurse at registration. If you need privacy when meds are being administered you will be able to work this out with the nurse.
- Supplies for your art: musical instruments, paints, etc. (We will have a coffee house for campers to share their art with one another at the end of the week.)
- Pride Swag: flags, tshirts, etc. All identity pride flags encouraged. (If you don't have any, don't worry—we'll make some).

And that's it! Thanks for reading this letter. If you have any questions about anything in this letter, we encourage to write to us (contact details below). We look forward to seeing you at camp!

Quinn & KJ

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