



Hello Camper!

Pack your bags and gather your pride swag! It's time for Camp Pride 2023!

We are Skyler and Josh and we are the Co-Deans (program leaders) of Camp Pride! We cannot wait 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.

This year, in addition to all the fun campy things we will do, we will be spending time thinking about names (given names, claimed names, names that empower and names that oppress). It will surely be a great week at Pilgrim Lodge!

Before you start packing, here is some important information, as well as 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 the morning before breakfast Tuesday to Friday, but otherwise we request you leave them to the side. Counselors will hold onto phones for safekeeping in secure lock boxes. Another dynamic 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 photos with people in the background. We'll try to respect requests for privacy 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 have their chest and below the waist area covered. Examples would include two-piece bathing suits, swim shirts, t-shirts, etc.

**Interfaith approach.** Camp Pride is an interfaith camp with people of all faith and no faith welcome. This means that multiple times a day we will have times to consider spirituality and celebrate different faiths through an LGBTQ lens. Some of these faiths include (but are not limited to): Protestant and Catholic Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Wicca, Bahai, and other approaches to spirituality. We also fully recognize that some LGBTQ+ people have been, and



are, wounded by involvement with religious organizations. No attempts to convert or indoctrinate anyone to a particular faith will take place, although the week will have a spiritual tone. Pilgrim Lodge is owned and operated by the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ, so there are Christian symbols (crosses, fish, etc) around the camp. Pilgrim Lodge and the Maine Conference affirm LGBTQ identities, and so do our Camp Pride counselors, who come from a variety of faith backgrounds.

**Out as you want to be.** Camp Pride is for members of the LGBTQ community and their allies. Some people will have been “out” for years, loud and proud, and others might be in that process, and others still thinking about it. And others will be allies! Camp Pride is for everyone working on their own personal journey, whatever that means.

**Pilgrim Lodge Community.** This is a camp in central Maine. It is rustic with reasonable amenities (each cabin has its own bathroom, shower, electricity, bunk beds, and porch), but please be prepared to meet some woodland creatures and get close to nature. The Pilgrim Lodge community is based on a system of mutual respect, courtesy, and celebration of our differences as well as what brings us together. Additionally, we have expectations about how we treat ourselves and others while in community at Camp Pride. If you feel that you are not able to get through a week without harming yourself or someone else, this community might not be the best place for you at this time.

### **Arranging Travel Plans.**

Check-in will happen between 2 and 4pm on Sunday, July 9<sup>th</sup>. **It is important that campers arrive at Pilgrim Lodge no later than 4pm if at all possible.** Pick-up will be at 9:30am on Saturday, July 15. **At 9:30am on pick-up day, we will gather with family and campers to share in a brief, 10-minute closing circle as we reflect on the joys of our camp week!** If you are coming to Maine by plane or bus and need to schedule pick-up or drop-off, we ask you to write to [ksteelhammer@pilgrimlodge.org](mailto:ksteelhammer@pilgrimlodge.org) as soon as plans are finalized, so as to facilitate communication. The ideal time for flights into Portland (PWM) airport are ones arriving before 2pm on the first day of camp, and leaving between 11am to 1pm on the last day of camp, to allow for pick-up and drop-off to the airport. A comprehensive travel document can be found [here](#).

Please don't hesitate to write to [ksteelhammer@pilgrimlodge.org](mailto:ksteelhammer@pilgrimlodge.org) if you have questions after reading that document.

**What to bring.** Here's a list of what to bring in addition to a week's worth of summer clothes (think average highs around 75 to 85F and lows 50 to 60F):

- 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 (gender affirming) outfit for the Dress-Up Dinner on Thursday
- Pillow & Pillowcase
- Bedding (sleeping bag or sheets+**warm** blanket), Pillow
- Towel for swimming and showering
- Soap & Shampoo
- Toothbrush & Toothpaste



- A notebook & pen
- Water bottle
- Book(s) to read
- A sacred text (whatever this means for you)
- Flashlight
- Bug Spray
- Sunscreen
- Money if you want to 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
- 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, t-shirts, etc. All identity pride flags encouraged. (If you don't have any, don't worry—we'll make some).

### **Health Forms and Meds**

We *heartily* encourage guardians to submit health forms by two weeks prior to the first day of camp, so we can best serve the camp's med schedules and prepare for any extra needs.

### **COVID Protocols**

Safety at camp is always a top priority. You will hear specifics from our Pilgrim Lodge staff regarding COVID safety guidelines and expectations for camp this year. Please know that, even if masks are not required in various settings, you are welcome to wear one as is comfortable to you and we will affirm that choice.

### **What to Expect at Camp**

During the week, here are some of what you might do as a camper:

Sing a song at a late night ukulele jam session, learn more about different faiths from the LGBTQ perspective, paddle a canoe for the first (or fiftieth) time, ask questions, write a poem, jump into the lake, get crafty in the arts and craft cabin, walk a meditation labyrinth, learn about LGBTQ history, share some of your story, tie-dye a t-shirt, make friends from around the country, attend a dance, read a book on the porch of the lodge, play capture the flag, plan a sacred service, dress up in your most fabulous outfit for a fancy dinner, learn to walk in high heels/tie a tie, make friends, have time to figure stuff out about yourself, take a deeeeeeep breath, and relax.

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

In glitter and peace,  
Skyler (they/he) & Josh (he/him)

To contact the deans about any questions or considerations before, reach out to us at Pilgrim Lodge at [info@pilgrimlodge.org](mailto:info@pilgrimlodge.org). We can't wait to welcome you!

