

WELCOME TO CAMP PRIDE AT PILGRIM LODGE

Hello Fabulous Camper!

Camp Pride is just around the corner and we are so excited to welcome you to Pilgrim Lodge! We are Skyler and Cassie, the Co-Deans (program leaders) of Camp Pride. We're here to work with the camp staff and counselors to make sure you enjoy your week on the shore of Lake Cobbessseecontee to the fullest. 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!

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, while others may have just come out or may still be questioning. And some will be allies! Camp Pride is for everyone working on their own personal journey, whatever that means, and all are welcome in our camp community.

Interfaith Approach. Camp Pride is an intentionally interfaith community, with people of all faiths and no faith welcome. This means that there will be times throughout the week to consider spirituality and celebrate different faiths from LGBTQ+ perspectives. Sometimes this will look like exploring specific faith traditions that our campers and counselors come from (for example: Judaism, Protestant and Catholic Christianity, Wicca, Islam, and others), and sometimes we will ask our community to reflect on spirituality more broadly (for example: what does it mean for something to be sacred? How do you feel connected to the wider world?).

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 and traditions.

Housing. Cabin assignments for Camp Pride are done by grade/age and not by gender. This means that you will likely be housed with campers of different genders – and maybe you'll finally be in 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.

Cell Phones. The focus of our week will be on forming intentional community with those physically present at camp with us. However, we recognize the importance of being able to stay connected to family and friends. Cell phones will be allowed in the morning before breakfast on Tuesday-Friday. During other times counselors will place phones in a lockbox for safe keeping. We encourage you to bring a film/digital camera if you want to take pictures at camp (Pilgrim Lodge also has a camp photographer) or an iPod/MP3 listening device (with headphones) if you like to listen to music at bunk/bed time.

For everyone's safety, our policy is that no one - campers, staff or volunteers - should post any content about camp until after the week is over. After camp, please be conscious of posting photos of other people on social media, and always ask permission!

Medications, Health Forms, and Accommodations. We have a wonderful support staff, including a nurse, social worker, and chaplain (as well as our wonderful cabin counselors) who are ready to support you and your needs! If you will need any special accommodations throughout the week, please don't hesitate to reach out so that we can make your transition into camp as smooth as possible. We heartily encourage all guardians to submit health forms earlier than the first day of camp, so we can best serve the camp's med schedules and prepare for any extra needs.

Arranging Travel Plans. Check-in will happen between 2-3pm on Sunday, June 23. It is important that campers arrive at Pilgrim Lodge no later than 3pm, as programming will begin promptly at that time. Pick-up will be at 9:30am on Saturday, June 29. Families and guardians are welcome to join us for a closing circle at that time!

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, 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 pickup and dropoff to the airport.

A comprehensive travel document can be found at <https://www.pilgrimlodge.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Transportation-Information-for-Parents.pdf>. Please don't hesitate to write to ksteelhammer@pilgrimlodge.org, if you have questions after reading.

Facilities. Pilgrim Lodge is a rustic camp in central Maine. There are reasonable amenities on site - each cabin has electricity, potable running water, its own bathroom/shower, and bunk beds with mattresses - but come prepared to be close to nature!

Swim Check. Trained lifeguards will be supervising whenever *anyone* is boating or swimming in the lake. Campers will be asked to complete a brief swim check on Monday morning so that staff know how to support the camper in safe swimming and boating. This is not a competition or test - we encourage all campers to complete it so they have plenty of time for waterfront fun!

General + Swim Attire. We ask everyone, regardless of gender identity, to cover both their waist and chest areas at camp, even when down at the waterfront. This helps ensure that everyone is more comfortable during physical activities and swimming, including those in our community who are transitioning. Please note that, for safety, no binders (even 'swim binders') are allowed to be worn into the lake.

What to Pack.

- A week's worth of summer clothes (*daytime: 75F, nighttime: 55F*)
- Warm sleeping clothes (for possible cold nights)
- Sweatshirt + long pants (just in case)
- Rain jacket and/or umbrella (just in case)
- At least one pair of closed-toe shoes (sneakers, hiking boots, etc)
- A fun/fabulous + gender affirming outfit for Fancy Dinner on Thursday
- Bedding (sleeping bag or sheets + warm blanket, pillow)
- Towels for swimming and showering
- Deodorant, soap/shampoo + other essential toiletries
- Toothbrush + toothpaste
- Notebook + writing utensil(s)
- Reusable water bottle
- Book(s) to read, including a sacred text (whatever this means for you!)
- Flashlight
- Bug spray - insect repellent wipes are a great alternative if you don't like sprays!
- Sunscreen + sunglasses or hat
- Money if you want to buy things at the camp store. We'll put it in an account so there's no cash at camp. You'll get what you don't spend back before you leave.
- Any prescribed medications. The nurse stocks many over-the-counter meds.
- Supplies for your art: musical instruments, sketchbook, etc. (We will have a coffeehouse/talent show for campers to share their art at the end of the week.)
- Pride swag like flags, t-shirts, etc. All identity pride flags encouraged. (If you don't have any, don't worry—we'll make some!)

Our Camp Community. The Pilgrim Lodge community is based on a deep commitment to mutual respect, integrity, and celebration of both our differences, and what brings us together. Camp is a place where we challenge ourselves to grow, and trust each other to offer care and compassion. And it is a place to experience freedom, laughter and joy!

In order to build this community, we have expectations about how we treat ourselves and others at Camp Pride. There may be experiences at camp that are new, or even uncomfortable. That is normal and beautiful! But unsafe or harmful behavior is not acceptable at camp. If you feel that you are at risk of harming yourself or someone else during the week, this community might not be the best place for you at this time.

What to Expect.

Throughout the week, you might:

- Sing a song at a late-night jam session
- Write a silly poem
- Jump into the lake
- Get crafty!
- Learn about LGBTQ+ history
- Make friends from around the country
- Eat ice cream (daily?)
- Read a book on the porch of the lodge
- Plan a sacred service
- Dress up in your most fabulous outfit
- Figure stuff out about yourself
- Paddle a canoe
- Learn about different faiths
- Ask questions
- Walk a meditation labyrinth
- Tie-dye a t-shirt
- Hit the dance floor!
- Remember that it's okay to cry
- Play capture the flag
- Hang out by the campfire
- Take a deeeeep breath
- Have so much fun!

We can't wait to meet you! Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

**IN GLITTER AND SOLIDARITY,
DEAN SKYLER & DEAN CASSIE**

Contact Pilgrim Lodge + your deans:
info@pilgrimlodge.org

