



Pilgrim Lodge

Maine Conference, United Church of Christ

Pilgrim Lodge is a multi-generational summer camp and retreat space centered on the spirit of extravagant welcome. Ours is a ministry of inclusion: no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, all who come in love have a seat at the table. We believe in providing space to slow down the rapid pace of modern life in order to tend to community.

SENIOR HIGH 2026 DEANS LETTER

Registration: July 12 @ 1:30PM

Pick Up: July 18th @ 9:30AM



DEAN ANDREW (HE/HIM)



DEAN EMILY (SHE/HER)

HELLO CAMPERS!

Hello, and thank you for joining us for Senior High week at Pilgrim Lodge! We are your excited deans, Emily and Andrew, and we hope this letter finds you well.

We can't wait to have you on the boardwalk to be part of
the continuing legacy of Senior High!



WHO ARE YOUR DEANS?

Andrew Hunter (he/him) teaches high school history at the Chewonki Foundation in Wiscasset, Maine. He enjoys long Ken Burns documentaries, having a catch, and going on adventures with his (as of a week after Senior High ended last summer) TWO kiddos. He is a longtime Pilgrim Lodge camper, and can't wait to make floral centerpieces for fancy dinner and get the big boat out on the lake.

Emily Southard (she/her) is the Director of Development + Marketing at Presumpscot Regional Land Trust. A lover of both nature and art, at camp she's as likely to be caught paddling a canoe as making friendship bracelets. She loves singing along (loudly and offkey) to every PL song but especially "Little Red Wagon." When not at camp in the summer, she can be found hiking mountains, eating as many ice cream cones as possible, and cheering on the Portland Sea Dogs and Hearts of Pine.



WHO ARE SENIOR HIGH CAMPERS?

They are upperclassmen who carry on treasured traditions. They are younger-now-older siblings, relatives, or friends who grew up with stories of Senior High and are eager to make their own memories. They are our treasured first time campers who bring a fresh perspective and new ideas to the community. They have no single kind of relationship with church or God or faith. They are musicians, artists, athletes, and nature-lovers. They are, in short, everyone you can imagine! Above all, they are passionate and thoughtful about the issues of the world, and they are fierce friends who know how to show up for one another. Whether you've been to Pilgrim Lodge a hundred times or this is your first time joining us, we are so ready to welcome you with a seat at the table and a place in the choir.

Here, you are a part of the family!

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT AT SENIOR HIGH?

At Senior High you will find a group of inspiring teens and caring adults who share the same radical idea: that **a robust community built on thick relationships can be built in a week, and that through the power of community transformative growth is possible.** To that end, authenticity is key, which means developing a space in which everyone feels a sense of belonging and can show up fully as themselves. Not only does this honor each person's diverse individuality, but it enables greater collective strength. And we have some seriously awesome campers and volunteer counselors and deans!

If community is the goal, what are the means? **Well, the wisdom of PL teaches us that nothing builds relationships and connections like ice cream cones and silly songs!** This summer we will engage with one another through fun games and activities, sleepy midday bunk times, and dress up dinners. We will cultivate connections with the natural world through swimming, boating, and time in the woods. And we hope to activate the mind and heart with quiet reflection, meaningful conversation, and spiritual fellowship.

Part of building such a grounded community means being present in the moment, and all campers will go without cell phones for the week of camp. But don't worry, you can still send regular mail and can receive letters and printed emails as well throughout the week (your families can set this up through UltraCamp). We hope this week is a chance to do something different and embrace face-to-face, intimate, and intentional relationships.

Reject the FOMO and bring other ways to connect with your fellow campers and counselors! Knitting circle on the Lodge porch? Schooling some fools with your favorite board game? Leading an interest group with a sport of your choice?



PACKING NOTES

Your packing should reflect these various activities. We encourage you to bring things that are important to some aspect of yourself: maybe an instrument, favorite pastime, or craft (perhaps something that you could show off in the end-of-camp talent show?!). In addition, you should, of course, plan on bringing clothes that can get dirty, swimming gear, and the clothes you feel most comfortable in, whatever that means for you.

Don't forget clothes for our "fancy dinner" later in the week and any goofy outfits! If this is your first time coming to camp, or if you need a refresher, please check out the packing list on the Pilgrim Lodge website, which contains a more comprehensive list of essential and nice-to-have items for your time at camp.

THIS SUMMER'S CURRICULUM – "IT ONLY TAKES A SPARK"

PL's theme for the summer of 2026 is "It Only Takes A Spark" inspired by the lyrics of our beloved camp song, "Pass It On." As you may have guessed, our camp curriculum was written by the Pilgrim Lodge community, for the Pilgrim Lodge community. The activities, stories, big questions, and programmatic content in this curriculum have been written especially for our campers. Throughout our time at camp together, we'll focus on themes of belonging, wonder, identity, courage, and community as we practice **finding the spark inside of each of us.**

THIS SUMMER'S OUTREACH PROJECT

Each year PL connects with different organizational partners doing work aligned with PL's values. This annual outreach project is an opportunity for campers to learn about other organizations and the amazing work they are doing and practice being in relationship with their larger community. This summer, we are building on the work of PL's Subcommittee on Indigenous Relations to learn more about our Wabanaki neighbors and support two local indigenous-led organizations:

The Speaking Place, a "Passamaquoddy-led nonprofit dedicated to keeping our language alive through immersive learning, community connection, and intergenerational teaching."; and **Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness**, which delivers high-quality, culturally relevant support to tribal members on and off reservations in Maine.

SHARING AND SHAPING PL TRADITIONS

As we have the past four years, we will be sharing Pilgrim Lodge with the Middler Spirit (middle school age) camp. This has been a lot of fun, including both good-natured competition (anyone remember who won the West Gardiner Olympics?) and meaningful collaboration. Who knows what this year will bring? (well, we do, but it's a surprise...). In sharing the space, we try to strike the balance of being good neighbors, working together, but also retaining the unique identity of our own community. So while we will, for instance, eat meals at the same time and share Option Time activities, for the most part the camps will operate separately. However, we are in the incredible position to be role models for the next generation of Senior High, and inspire them to dream big (and get jealous) of our awesome community.

That last point brings us to an important opportunity: on our last evening together we will have a talent show/coffeehouse/open-mic night! Everyone should feel invited to use this opportunity to share a poem, song, skit, etc. However, we want to extend a special invitation to our post grads (folks who just graduated high school) to share a "senior speech." These are in part a reflection on your summer(s) at camp and an offering of any advice you'd give to underclassmen. This is a true capstone experience to a camp career of any length, and we are excited to hear from this year's crew.

That's all for now – we can't wait to learn and grow with you as we share the best week of the summer!!

**BEST WISHES,
DEAN EMILY AND DEAN ANDREW**



PILGRIM LODGE SUMMER 2026 OUTREACH PROJECT



Speaking Place
IHTOLEWESTULTIMOK



Wabanaki Public
Health & Wellness

***An option to make a donation to the Summer 2026 outreach project will be available at registration and in the camp store.**



[LINK TO CAMPER GUIDE WITH FULL PACKING LIST](#)

SEE YOU AT CAMP!

Questions? Email or call Pilgrim Lodge:
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