

Gimme Shelter

THE FLOODS IS THREAT'NING, MY VERY LIFE TODAY, GIMME, GIMME SHELTER, OR I'M GONNA FADE AWAY

These lyrics of rock and roll legends the Rolling Stones seem very befitting for the spring we've had so far. Although many were not personally affected by the flooding of various Ottawa and Gatineau valley waterways (and felt bad for those that did), everything around town seemed so... soggy. Just as we were supposed to be switching out the winter boots for sandals, and heavy jackets with no outerwear, we continued to dodge mud puddles and keep our plants indoors for fear of frost. I remember wandering by a bed of tulips in early May who were trying their hardest to grow, with some stunted by the lack of sun and warmth, and wondering if they would make it in time for the festival.

The weather caused havoc at Gracefield too—the Beaver roof, already slated for a matching metal green mantle like the roof of JR, could no longer withstand the relentless rain and caused a leak through to the ceiling. Thankfully it was just a small portion in the room in front of the fireplace and the right people were there to help quickly fix it. Beaver has provided shelter for many a generation and it is time to give it a bit of TLC so it can continue to shelter for many more years to come.

Providing additional shelter is one of the recommendations of the Master Plan exercise that Gracefield undertook—an outcome that the camp is acting on this year. A cabin village is being planned for land between Second Beach and the Manager's Cottage so that more families and groups can enjoy the camp without pitching a tent but still be part of the community. You may also see a few cabins pop up near existing Cabin 3. These will be designated as staff quarters and will allow them to feel settled over the summer in order to concentrate on running the excellent program they have planned. These shelters will help Gracefield to enhance its mission on many fronts, providing the necessary infrastructure that will allow it to grow into the future.

No matter where we are and no matter what the weather, we know that God is our shelter from anything that life throws our way.

Psalm 18:2

***The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,
My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield
and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.***

I like to think that one of God's fortresses is Gracefield—a place to shelter from life's storms, calm the soul, speak to nature, find joy, sing praises. But it is also a place for celebration of what God has delivered and what He continues to give—55 years of Gracefield camping, 150 years of being the diverse, respectful and best country in the world! We have lots of events planned so we hope to see you all sheltering at Gracefield this summer. (And please God, no more rain... just sprinkles from time to time so we can have campfires and green lawns!)

Celebrate 150 years of Confederation at Gracefield

The summer is fast approaching and Gracefield is in full swing!

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Canadian confederation. With celebrations happening all across the country, Gracefield is no exception!

**We will be hosting our annual
Canada Day Celebration BBQ on
Saturday, July 1st starting at 3pm.**

There will be a wide array of activities for kids of all ages and spectacular fireworks for everyone to enjoy at the end of the night! The BBQ supper is open to everyone, and we encourage you to bring a salad or dessert to contribute to the pot blessing table.

**Bring your own pop, lawn chairs,
and Canadian spirit!**

Happy Canada Day!



Open Doors: Celebrating Canadian Heritage Discoveries at Camp

150 years ago Confederation began, and with it a new country was born. Canada has accomplished so much over the years as we celebrate the diversity that our country is known for. 55 years ago, Gracefield Christian Camp began its ministry to invite all people to experience the loving presence of the living God in creation, in Christ, and in Christian Community. In honour of both occasions, we are holding a very special event!

On **Saturday, August 19th, 2017**, we will be **#DiggingRoots**, discovering the diverse heritage of Gracefield Camp's community. We have invited members of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabe Band Council and Cultural Center Staff along with the Billings Estate National Heritage Site museum staff, and Gracefield Camp staff to lead programs and activities throughout the day. Come and visit Gracefield Christian Camp to learn more about not only its 55-year history as a camp and retreat centre, but also its long history with the Billing's Family of Ottawa and the deep roots of the Algonquin First Nation people in the region.

Make sure to check our Facebook page for regular program updates, times, and scheduling! This is an event you do not want to miss out on! Exploring all that Gracefield Christian Camp has to offer is a great way to celebrate God's gift of creation here in Canada. Make sure to save the date!

Ecumenical service

There will be a special ecumenical service led by the former Executive Director, Janet Ham, on **Sunday, August 20th**. Many community leaders, churches and townfolk from local villages will be participating and we want to see you there too! Come and join this special worship service.



Gracefield Fundraising Event

Thanks to the efforts of Gracefield staff alumni Geoff De Melo and Lori Williams, a fundraising event was held on April 1st in Ottawa at the Britannia Yacht Club.

This was an opportunity for the community to come together and celebrate God's ministry that is the foundation of Gracefield. It was also an excellent opportunity for creating new connections and introducing people to camp and its various ministries.

The event hosted 93 attendees which included, campers, staff, T&Ts, past-Executive Directors and many old friends. Of note, out of the 93 attendees, 16% were people who had never attended or been involved with Gracefield before. The \$60 tickets provided a full night of eating and entertainment—from appetizers to a 3-course meal, followed by a live comedian, music and dancing post dinner. Also part of the fun was a live and online silent auction. Lucky Reverend Shaun Seaman won a beautiful canoe!

The event raised \$4,719.76, designated to be used for the summer of 2017, divided evenly between camperships and summer programming needs.

Kudos and big thanks to Geoff and Lori and their many helpers for making this evening a great success! Also a huge merci beaucoup to those who donated items for the auctions, especially Alan Herbert who gave up a fine, rare bottle of scotch, and Stuart Gentle who provide many fine items that raised lots of funds for the camp. Trailhead, an Ottawa outdoor/camping store, generously donated the canoe.

Successful Spring Sweep

After a long winter, it was nice to finally start getting the camp open and ready for a busy summer ahead. We had lots of new volunteer groups, including groups from Brockville and a teen group from the Gracefield/Kaz and surrounding area. Lots of work was accomplished including some unexpected tasks... for example, all the rain we received in early May caused part of the Beaver roof to collapse. Thankfully a group from Ottawa that often come and use JR/Beaver were present and had the skills to do a quick fix before the damage was too great. This was immensely helpful and we were extremely blessed that Ben Sikkema, Alex Goldsmith and Geoff de Melo finished off fixing the ceiling.

Speaking of which, Beaver is getting a brand new one—roof, that is! Matching with the new green roof of JR, a new metal roof has been put on. The timing was perfect given that the roof was sending the signs that it could no longer provide shelter as it has done for decades.

Thanks to all who participated in the spring work weekends and don't forget, in five months or so we'll be putting it all away again, so plan now to attend a fall work weekend!



Our 2017 Program Directors

We are happy to introduce this year's Summer Camp Program Directors—Jenny and Geoff De Melo. Jenny De Melo (Née Shortt) has ties with Gracefield that go back a long time. Jenny started to attend Gracefield with her family when she was just an infant, through the years she continued to attend Gracefield with her family and then on her own as a camper and finally as a staff member. Jenny is now a teacher in the Ottawa Carleton District School Board. She currently teaches French at the elementary level and has a true passion for working with children. Geoff started working at Gracefield back in 2001 and worked at Gracefield for several years serving in nearly every capacity. Geoff is now a member of the Board of Directors for Gracefield. Geoff is a soldier in the Canadian Armed Forces and enjoys all things active and outdoors. Together with their two children Benjamin and Thalia they are all very excited to welcome you to camp this summer.



OUR 2017 SUMMER STAFF!

Gracefield Senior Staff consists of Chris "Fox 40" Bolger, David "Argo" Campbell, Charlotte "Ruby" Rozon and Ben "Rafiki" Goldsmith. They have been spending most of the spring setting up the camp, planning activities for the summer campers, running staff training sessions and having a 10/10 good time. They will continue to guide the counsellors and lifeguards to lead and foster campers this summer, and prepare the LITs for years of Gracefield camps to come. When you come to Gracefield, say hello to them, and you surely will be greeted with a friendly smile and an energetic hello!



Our Summer Program Staff recently shared what Gracefield means to them:

Gracefield is a great place for experiencing the beauty of nature, to be spiritually renewed, and be surrounded by wonderful people. —Merlin

Camp. I like that. It's fun to do. —Benji

Gracefield is a really fun place to be. Everyone is nice and amazing. —Zazu

Gracefield is my second home. The community present within everyone is strong. Gracefield camp is fun, amazing, and I've made so many awesome memories! —Rosie

Gracefield is a wonderful place that fosters spiritual growth and playfulness! I'm very excited to grow in so many different ways this summer at camp! —Hobbs

Camp is lovely. I like camp a lot" —Doggo

I love Gracefield for the people and the beautiful nature. —Alaska

For me, Gracefield is a great place to get away from the city and learn about God. —Peacock

Camp is the muse to the artist. It is the fuel to the fire, the stars to the light. —Pinguino

I have been coming to Gracefield my whole life. Gracefield is my home and it is the tight knit family community that keeps me coming back. —Raffiki

Camp is like real fancy cheese... *super gouda!* —Argo

Camp is like a hole... a *whole* lot of fun. —Fox 40

Gracefield is a 10/10. There is no better place to experience the pure love of God, through creation and through community. —Ruby

Gracefield is the perfect sanctuary to experience deep and meaningful relationships with God. —Brother Bear

Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre Master Plan

After a year of workshops, led by Run River Enterprises, involving a 20-person cross-section of the Centre's stakeholders, a Master Plan for the Centre was finalized and approved by the Board [[View PDF](#)].

The Plan is 66 pages and is worth the read as it goes into vision, mandate and the core elements of programming among other important points.

Already a number of identified actions have been taken: a Search Committee for the Executive Director has been formed led by Rev. Karen Dimock, a volunteer data bank configured (and taking deposits), a cabin village is in the advance stages of planning, wilderness first aid and skills training are scheduled, and adjustments to the committee structure are being made.

Below is an excerpt of the summary which should entice you to dig further into the Plan:

MISSION AND VISION

The mission of Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre (GCCRC) focuses on welcoming all people into the beauty of creation, and into a community that is characterized by Christ-like service.

One scripture passage that supports this mission is Matthew 22:8

“Then the King said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’”

Gracefield Centre seeks to be an expression of the church that is particularly capable of “inviting everyone they find.”

The identification of concentric rings of belonging and the development of intentional strategies to invite persons and congregations into successive and deeper levels of participation is fundamental to fulfilling the mission.

The vision for the future of Gracefield is to be a “leading edge” of the church that has the capacity to draw people into profound experiences of community in Christ. Several experiences are fundamental to the realization of this vision, and form a common foundation for all program: worship, music, creation, and service. These are “core elements,” and should become defining characteristics of all that Gracefield Centre offers.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

There are three areas of focus for the ministry of Gracefield Centre: 1) children and youth; 2) families, which includes single adults; and, 3) guest groups. Each area of focus is integral to accomplishing the mission of GCCRC, and includes multiple specific programs. The primary program pursuits of GCCRC currently include the summer camp, the family campground, hosting guest groups, and other events sponsored by the site.

In all aspects of program, it is essential to identify the outcomes that are consistent with the realization of the mission and goals of GCCRC. It is also necessary to determine the means of testing for those outcomes.

In the area of serving children and youth, the planning team confirmed continuing to strengthen summer camp, especially in rustic and wilderness camping opportunities, and leadership development. Additional non-summer youth events, particularly leadership and confirmation retreats, will reinforce summer outcomes and offer points of entry for new participants.

Lifelong spiritual formation and growth in faith commitments often begins in the summer camp program. These can be continued in the program focus for families and adults. While the current family ministry is concentrated in the campground, there are many ways to expand this area of program through additional events and in expanded facilities.

Outcomes for guest groups may be more subtle, but are no less important. Though Gracefield Centre may not control the content of a group's experience, it can influence and shape the experience through the setting and the service. Hospitality, understood as the ways in which the “stranger” is welcomed and served, is an essential outgrowth of community.

Join us for camp this summer!

Our theme for summer is BRANCHING OUT based on scripture from John 15:5:

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

We are looking forward to welcoming campers to both our kids and family camps. Come and enjoy canoeing, swimming, ropes course, archery, worship, crafts, wide games and more! New this summer we will be offering transportation from Ottawa to camp for our GRAND camp and FAMILY camp running from July 30–August 4 and every week for our kids camps. Family camp will include activities for all ages and this year will feature a canoe daytrip, pirate theme day, amazing race and adult only activities in the evening with childcare provided.

Fall/Winter Retreats

It is never too early to think about that fall or winter getaway with your church, organization or group. White Pine is a perfect base to cozy up by the fire after a day of cross country skiing or hiking the trails, or to host a workshop or speaker in the dining hall. Cabins are also available for larger groups. Please contact the office for more info or to make your booking. See previous issues of BeaverTales for tips to make your event a success!



Keep in Touch!

If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns please contact us!

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BeaverTales is generously curated and edited by Jen Buie-Richardson, and designed by Joanne T. Lauzon.

Please Donate

The ministries at Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre depend on a variety of fundraising efforts and generous donors. You may choose to contribute to Gracefield for a specific project, or on a more general basis. You may also consider donating to the Campership Fund which helps children and young adults enjoy our camp experience, who would not otherwise be able to do so.

You can donate by mailing a cheque, calling the office with your credit card, or online through our [website](http://www.gracefieldcamp.ca). Monthly donations are possible though the PAR program—please call the office for more information.

A tax receipt will be issued for all monetary donations.