

Swat! Squish! Flick! Smack!

At this time of year we often ask ourselves, why did God create blackflies, mosquitos, no-see-ums, and all manner of annoying insects that make life miserable, and sometimes deadly?

Those itchy welts and bumps that can drive one to distraction—especially on the ankles or those hard to scratch places—and who hasn't slept a wink in a tent with that one annoying mamma mosquito bearing down on those uncovered body parts. Industry has created a whole culture of prevention, avoidance and remedy which have us looking like giant fish nets with head to toe mesh, spraying repellants in all sorts of pleasant and not so pleasant scents, and then applying camomile lotion (why is it always runny?).



We eat garlic, have citronella candles and wear light coloured clothing. We strike, we slap, we squish and sometimes we even swallow! All in all, these pesky bugs ruin what for most of us is the shedding of our winter mantle into the welcoming wafts of spring! Like it or not, these insects play a role in our ecosystem, that fragile network of life that sustains our planet.

Each animal, each bird, each plant, and yes, each insect, have a role to play to glorify and serve God's creation. We all know that mosquitos make up a large part of the diet of amphibians and bats. But did you know that black fly larvae are also an important part of the food chain in rivers and streams? That male no-see-ums are the primary pollinators of the cacao plant—which gives us chocolate!?

At this time of year, as we prepare to welcome back staff, campers, T&Ters, visitors and old friends, we also have to, begrudgingly, greet those pesky yet important beasties and just hope that in fulfilling their duty, they don't interfere to much with us fulfilling ours, as we have some busy months ahead!

In this issue of Beaver Tales, you'll see how busy we are—and have been—planning for camps, work weekends, youth events, summer fun and even planning for next year's gala is underway. So welcome all! We can't wait to see you at Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre!



LES
JOURNÉES
DE LA
NATURE

David Suzuki Nature Day

Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre has been chosen as one of the participating organizations for Days of Nature organized by the David Suzuki Foundation, to be held May 23rd.

Let our guest naturalist help you unearth the wonder of nature and discover what keeps our lakes healthy.

A perfect place for families to picnic and children to create a hiking survival kit prior to exploring our 280 acre property or venturing through the wheelchair accessible Trans Canada Trail.

Children young and old will enjoy taking time to play in our giant log fort or spending quiet time in a reflective walk through an inspirational Kumbayah trial or prayer labyrinth.

**Everyone
welcome!**

**May 23, 2015
10am–3pm**



Message from Our Co-Executive Directors

Beaver Tales is such an inspiration to us. It is a joy to see all that God is doing through many people in different ways! We are blessed to be in the midst of it all and see so much more than can be captured and shared.

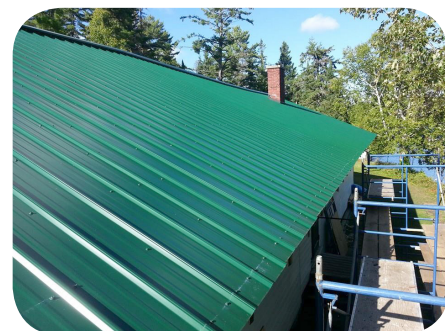
The scripture verse that has been thematic this year is: "To equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:12). This is a core purpose in all that we do. We will not lose sight of this as we partner with Churches, as we work together as summer staff and are blessed with a multitude of supportive encouraging volunteers.

The new roof for Jolly Roger has been a priority and Phase Two is in progress! During the April 25th work weekend, we began the roof and plan to finish before the middle of May. We have received close to \$5,000 of the \$15,000 that we require to complete all sections of the building. It was inspiring to see three generations of one family working together on the JR roof. Now the next three generations can benefit from this versatile lakeside lodge.

Please enjoy all the good news, capture the vision and join in on all that is going on here at Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre!

In His Service,

Brian & Janet Ham



Work Weekends... We Need You!

Water on, check. Cabins cleaned, check. Paths raked, check. Canoes out, check. Deck chairs ready, check. Deadly trees leaning to one side that need to come down, check. Camp ready? Almost!

Work weekends are essential parts of getting Gracefield ready for the busy season ahead. Without the myriad of volunteers, young and old, the camp wouldn't be able to do the multitude of tasks needed to clean and make ready all the buildings, sites, and infrastructure needed to run a successful program and camping location.

This year we also added the JR roof as an important element to getting the camp ready, and we are thankful that we have a talented pool of volunteer roofers to help with this endeavour.

Missed out on the spring work weekends? We hit rewind in late October, and need people to put things away for the winter. *Tentatively, October 23–25, October 30–November 1, 2015*



Look Out—The Quilters Are Coming! Part 1

A PROFILE OF A RETREAT GROUP

By Chris Burbridge

It is hard to imagine that when the quilters of Glebe-St. James United Church Ottawa (GSJ UC) arrive at Gracefield Camp this September, it will mark the beginning of our ninth annual Patchwork Pilgrimage there.

About 20 years ago when GSJ UC held a women's retreat at Stewart House in Pakenham (the former training retreat centre of the Ottawa Presbytery of the United Church of Canada), we realized there were several quilters in the room and wouldn't this be a fun place to "play" all weekend. The accommodations were basic but comfortable; the meals were homemade; there were big work tables and spaces; and all of this was affordable. The retreat ran for several years before we took a break when busy lives and circumstances interrupted.

By 2007, there was renewed interest in the quilting retreat but Stewart House had closed. Judy and I discovered Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre. Although it wasn't available on the last weekend in September (our traditional date) that first year, we were able to reserve in early November. We drove up at the end of that summer to check it out and it was love at first sight!

The indoor and outdoor facilities were much more than we expected. Plans were begun and the call went out. (The only fly in the ointment that year was that by November the sun was setting fairly early and participants would have to find their way in the dark down those long and winding roads.)

We love learning and quilting. Each year our quilters make a personal project as part of a learning experience and then make baby quilts that are donated to St. Mary's Home

in Ottawa. The Executive Director of St. Mary's Home is Nancy MacNider, a member of the GSJ congregation and choir. St. Mary's focus is on providing care and support for pre- and post-natal mothers and babies. Baby quilts are usually simple projects.

Over the weekend retreat we can usually produce about 25 quilts, but often by the time we present the quilts in late October or November, the number has grown to 35 or 40. We dedicate them during one of the Sunday worship services at Glebe-St. James and have them draped over just about every railing in our sanctuary. We may be biased, but this colourful service is one of our favourites of the year!

Some of the camping community at Gracefield has come into White Pine after we have moved in and set up shop and been surprised to see what looks like a sweatshop. We fill the dining hall and adjacent meeting room with tables, fabric, sewing machines and lots of energy. It is often a challenge to find enough dining tables at meal times, but somehow it all happens. The whir of machines can often be heard into the late hours and the irons barely have time to cool down before the early risers are back at it.

We love that we are now a part of the Gracefield story. In 2012, Judy and I were pleased to create the banner that hangs in the reception area of White Pine to commemorate Gracefield's 50th anniversary. One of the campers (the late Sandy Nesbitt) was a close friend of one of our quilters. She passed along a box of camp T-shirts and asked what we could do with them. The challenge was to find a way to draw them together and blue denim seemed a natural for that.

In the next issue of Beaver Tales, we will have some tips for retreat organizers just in time to arrange your fall or winter getaway to Gracefield.





2014 ANNUAL REPORT
& 2015 STEWARDSHIP PACKAGE



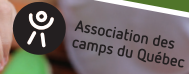
Situated on 280 acres
of pristine woodland
featuring two kilometres
of Lac Castor shoreline



Summer camp programs
for youth ages 5-18!
Adventure, leadership,
friendship & discovery!

"We will lovingly follow
the truth at all times -
speaking truly, dealing
truly, living truly, and so
become more and more in
every way like Christ."
-Ephesians 4:15

gracefieldcamp.ca



CP 420, 37 Chemin des Loisirs, Gracefield, Quebec J0X 1W0 | 819-463-2465 | info@gracefieldcamp.ca

This is *Your* Gracefield

Come to Camp!
For information and
registration, visit

www.gracefieldcamp.ca

If you think camp is only for the summer... Think again!

The greatest asset of winter is the cold and snow and March Break had the perfect weather to enjoy it.

Gracefield in the winter is breathtakingly beautiful! The snow is white and clean, the stars brighter and the fire in White Pine is more welcoming. In the winter, Lac Castor becomes a skating rink and Turtle Rock is a cross country ski destination. The playing field is ideal for building snow forts and for playing snow football and tag. Deep snow and winter clothing adds a whole new dimension to running and playing.

The March Break participants spent a wonderful winter week at camp sledding, playing hockey, hiking, star gazing and cooking out. We even did snow science and nature studies with our special guest Kringen Henein.

When we came into White Pine to warm up, we did the fun activities you expect to do at camp. We played games, did crafts, baked sticky buns, made ice cream sculptures, built home-made sleds, participated in daily Bible study and campfires.

Best of all we lived in Christian Community, sharing, learning, singing, caring and listening to each other.

Pictures are worth a thousand words—I am sure you will recognize the joy we all felt at being able to spend a week at Gracefield Camp in the winter.

Now is the perfect time to start planning to attend next year's March Break camp!



T&T News

And so it begins... Another year of happy camping, whether it be for a day, a weekend, a week or even the whole summer, Gracefield is ready to welcome new and returning campers to our community. There are [lots of exciting events this summer](#) to participate in, and T&Ters are welcome and encouraged to join in.

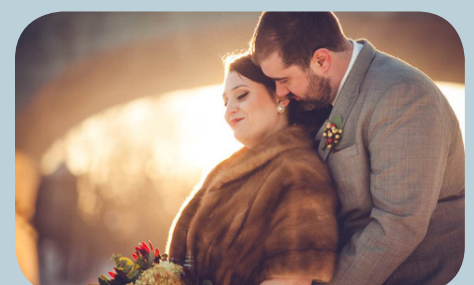
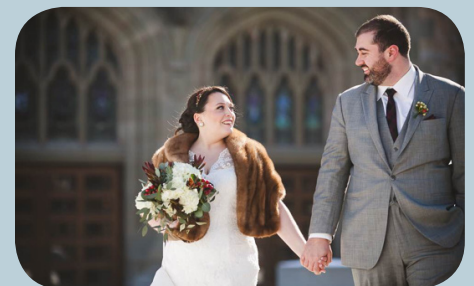
You may see a few physical changes to some of the sites, as quite a few trees came down over the winter, but they are now cleaned up and ready to use.

Just a reminder that the water from the taps is now fully useable for drinking, and hot water can be found behind East Block, close to the road.

T&T News Flash

The Campbell Family is very excited to share with the Gracefield community the happy news of their daughter Mary's wedding to Eli Kassis.

On February 28th of this year, family and friends joined them in the celebration of their union. Hélène, Elizabeth and David were thrilled and honoured to be part of the wedding party.



Retreats at Gracefield

YOUNG ADULT RETREAT MAY 22-24

Are you 18 or over and looking to get away from it all for a couple of days? Join us at Gracefield for this restorative weekend with guest speakers, Andre and Danielle Parris. They will talk with participants about "The Big Decisions: How to make the right decisions all the time", in addition to activities like the ropes course, archery, hiking and boating.

Contact the office for more information and to register. Cost is \$115 per person. Includes tax, cabin accommodations and meals.

GRACE ABOUNDS! Minister's Retreat, held April 2015

God is able to make every blessing of yours overflow for you, so that in every situation you will always have all you need for any good work.
(2 Corinthians 9:8).

We claim that God's grace abounds at Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre. People over the years have borne witness to finding God's presence and grace in the midst of the beauty and tranquility of creation. It is described as a place of peace, healing, and renewal. A place to come and retreat and find rest.

A place of grace allows people to come as they are and join for a few days, a week or month within this ever-changing community. It is where people choose to seek God's voice and direction in their lives. It a place of acceptance with spiritual resources available to enable the next step in one's life journey.

Gracefield encouraged ministers to take time after Easter and to enjoy a time of personal renewal and retreat by offering free accommodation in White Pine Lodge.

CARE FOR THE CAREGIVERS RETREAT OCTOBER 2-4

Enjoy nature, traditional camp activities, Bible study with Floyd McFee and a variety of speakers and resources to nourish and encourage us during the Care for the Caregivers weekend.

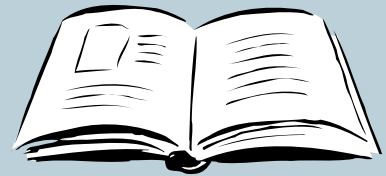
*Apply for Respite Care now to be ready for September/October.

Rev. William Ball and Rev. Floyd McPhee reflect on their time here:

"Experience tells us that the leaders in God's church are as much in need of grace and renewal as any others. This may be particularly so following times of high activity in church life, such as Christmas or Easter. We know where to go fill the gas tanks of our cars, to restock the refrigerator with good, health, life-giving food. Could Gracefield become for you a place of retreat and renewal as one called and equipped for ministry in Christ's church?" —Rev William Ball

"We came to Gracefield tired, bringing with us all the tensions and worries in our lives. At Gracefield we could really rest. We could feel the peace and quietness fill our souls. In the whisper of the pine trees, the beauty of the snow covered landscape, and as we read God's word in those peaceful surroundings we could hear Him speak. We left, praising God, refreshed and renewed in spirit and body." —Floyd and Claire McPhee

Consider making use of the blessings of God's grace and Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre.



In The News

For those readers of *Glad Tidings*, in the May/June 2015 issue there is an article about Gracefield's Grand Camp 2014 along with some photos. This edition is camp-focused and has articles from a few other Presbyterian camps.

Also the editorial by Coleen Wood claims:

"For me, when I think about camping and retreat ministries, I can't stop thinking about the verse, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13 (NRSV). That verse was the theme verse the first summer I worked at camp. That was a life changing summer.

That was the summer I came back to the church after leaving it for my University years. It was the summer where I worked at Gracefield Camp and Conference Centre, where my faith became real, relevant, and re-ignited.

So, it is no surprise that I am a strong supporter of the impact that camping and retreat ministries can have on the life of a child, youth, or adult."

Camp for All!

Thought camps were just for kids?

Not at Gracefield! This summer, there are several camps for young and old alike! Choose from fun camps that will inspire you for the rest of your life!

Do you want to take your canoe skills up a notch? Why not try Paddlemaster? Not only will you learn all the basics, including how to do a canoe-over-canoe rescue and safely portage a canoe—you'll even earn your [Ontario Recreational Canoeing and Kayaking Association's I to IV certification](#).

Do you have a child that's not quite sure about camping by themselves? Then Discovery is the camp for you. This is a weekend introduction to Christian camping designed for young children and their parents to enjoy together. The activities introduce parents and children to a variety of traditional camping activities such as canoeing, swimming, hiking and campfire programs. You even get to bunk together as a family in a cabin!

Have a teen that is just on the cusp of having a summer job, but not wanting to let go of their camp life? Then sign them up for a camp designed for them like Leadership in Training, The Way or Night Owl. These camps allow your teen to develop skills and undertake a volunteer project, while having fun and just being a kid! It may also lead to a summer job one day.

[For a full list of camps and their descriptions, check out our website!](#)

Staff Features

What makes a camp so much fun are the leaders. Gracefield has been blessed with great staff and this year is no exception! Here are profiles of three of the awesome senior staff:

CLAIRE MAHAFFY



My name is Claire Mahaffy and I am thrilled to be coming back for my fourth summer on GCCRC staff—this time as Co-Program Director.

At camp we have two songs entitled the 'Banana song'. To some this might seem like an excess of songs about fruit. However, each of the songs has taught me something different.

The first song directed me, amongst lyrics about papayas and mangos, to open my Bible to Galatians 5:22 and learn about the fruits of the Spirit.

The second Banana song, on the other hand, ends with as many people as you can gather dancing in circles shouting "Go Bananas! Go, Go Bananas!"

My goal for this summer is to take to heart the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control; and to remember that sometimes when all else fails you just need to go a little bananas.

JAMES WILLIAMS



Assistant LIT Director

I'm a fourth year university student that enjoys the outdoors and engaging in intramural sports with friends. If not doing that, I'll probably be hanging out with friends and having a good laugh.

My goal is to bring the same or better LIT experience that kept me coming back to Gracefield for all these years.

Bible Verse: Proverbs 22:6—Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

DAN HAINS



Hey Y'all, my name is Dan Hains. I will be in charge of the "outdoorsy" type stuff this summer; canoeing, nature skills, and adventure.

This will be, I believe, my tenth summer on staff at Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre. I enjoy all camp activities and look forward to sharing them with others. I enjoy playing guitar and am often complimented on my spaghetti sauce. I have been working in a bbq tank factory but am in the process of a career change into youth work.

My goal for the summer is to enhance our adventure and canoeing programs. 1 Timothy 4:12 has stuck with me since I was a teenager. And don't let anyone put you down because you're young. Teach believers with your life: by word, by demeanor, by love, by faith, by integrity.
— MSG, Peterson, NavPress, 2002.

We'd like to introduce you to our amazing 2015 Summer Staff!

[Please visit our website to meet them!](#)

Mark Your Calendars!

There are many other activities and retreats that happen over the summer and fall. Here is a list of upcoming events. If any of them peak your interest, contact the office or visit our website for more details.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Young Adult Retreat

Friday, May 22–14

David Suzuki Nature Day

Saturday, May 23

Outdoor activities in conjunction with David Suzuki's Nature Day.

Summer Camp!

June 26, 2015–August 21

Begins with Discovery Camp and ends with GRAND Camp!

Happy Birthday Canada!

Wednesday, July 1

Games for kids of all ages, BBQ and pot blessings supper, and fireworks to end the day.

Pontiac Region Ecumenical Service

Sunday, July 12

Outdoor service with plenty of music and participation from a variety of churches in the region. A BBQ with a pot blessing lunch and games and activities for the kids throughout the day! Come and enjoy the day of fellowship!

FALL ACTIVITIES

The fall is a perfect time to come to Gracefield to relish the autumn colours and reflect on the changing of the season.

You are welcome to package these activities in a way that suits you. Come for one day, or 3 nights, or 5 nights.

Fall Colours Day

Tuesday, September 29

Senior's Camp

Tuesday, September 29–
Friday, October 2

Care for the Caregivers

Friday, October 2–
Sunday, October 4

Thanksgiving Delight & Feast

October 9–12

Fall Work Weekends

Tentatively:

October 23–25,
October 30–November 1



Keep in Touch!

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

Gracefield Christian Camp & Retreat Centre

37 Chemin des Loisirs; CP 420
Gracefield, Quebec J0X 1W0

Email

info@gracefieldcamp.ca

Website

www.gracefieldcamp.ca

Facebook

[/GracefieldCampConf](https://www.facebook.com/GracefieldCampConf)

Twitter

[@GracefieldCCRC](https://twitter.com/GracefieldCCRC)

Instagram

[@GracefieldCCRC](https://www.instagram.com/GracefieldCCRC)

Toll Free

888-493-CAMP (2267)

Local Call

819-463-2465

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 secure [Canada Helps website](#). Monthly donations are possible through the PAR program—please call the office for more information.

A tax receipt will be issued for all monetary donations.