

## Beware the Ides of March!

So wrote William Shakespeare in his tragedy Julius Caesar as a warning to the Emperor of his impending assassination. This ominous phrase has a very straightforward origin; it is simply a Roman mid-month marking (15th), so technically there is an ides of July and October as well. But the Ides of March also marked the occasion of settling all debts, given that March was the beginning of the Roman calendar year and those toga-loving citizens liked to start off the new year debt-free, much like many of us aspire to do.

March isn't quite the same for us in the modern age, but it is a bit of a funny month all the same. We're all a bit stir-crazy from the cold winter months, and March breathes in the first hint of spring in the air, fringed with warmth and freshness that speaks of the earth awakening from slumber. Of course March can also retract its goodwill by unleashing winter's leftovers in a frenzy; this has earned it quite a status to which many a phrase has been attributed. Most of us know March's in like a lion, out like a lamb phrase, but do you also know:

*A dry March and a wet May? Fill barns and bays with corn and hay.*

*As it rains in March, so it rains in June.*

*March winds and April showers? Bring forth May flowers.*

*So many mists in March you see, so many frosts in May will be.*

Why has this transition month become an important annual marker? I think the Romans had the right idea—it is the beginning of a cycle. And how you begin this cycle will dictate how the rest of the year will unfold. As it happens, this year March also coincides with the time we remember that Jesus paid our debts by dying for our sins, only to come back to remind us that out of death comes everlasting life. So as Christians, we can start off this cycle remembering this sacrifice and using our faith to set the tone for the rest of this year.

March also tends to mark the start of camp life too (even though retreats have been going on throughout the winter), as the first camp is launched at March Break and preparation begins for the exiting camp season ahead. There are so many things to look forward to—work weekends, meeting up with neighbours in the T&T community, and participating in the exciting programs over the summer. Bruce Howard, our new Executive Director, is also looking forward to meeting all of you too! Perhaps we should greet him in the words of Julius Caesar, et tu Bruce, eh?

See you up at camp and may your year ahead be filled with God's promise!

### FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Why work at a Christian summer camp?

A number of articles have come across my desktop in the past months and it seems to me that summer camp is exactly the place you would want a young person to work, or even a not so young person like myself. Of course, summer camp isn't the only thing we do here at GCCRC, but I think it is an experience that resonates deeply with those who've spent a summer at camp.

### FIVE REASONS TO WORK AT CAMP:

1. Strengthen your faith.
2. The opportunity to develop your leadership and coaching skills.
3. Impact on the life of a camper.
4. The opportunity to unplug for a while.
5. Lifelong friends are made at camp.

Working at camp looks good on a resume—being a team player, knowing how to communicate and be a creative problem solver. [Check out this article](#) on whom Google wants to hire and what they're looking for. It says it all.

And these experiences are for everyone who comes to stay at GCCRC. Setting time apart from your every day experience of life can shift your focus just enough to see and hear the face and voice of God present in this world. So come spend some time with us, slow your roll and meet Jesus.

Grace and peace,

*Bruce*



## Tent & Trailer Breakfast

Season site holders past and present came together for their annual breakfast on March 3. This was a chance for the T&T community to gather over bacon and eggs and catch up on news, discuss summer plans, and meet Bruce. It was also an opportunity to hear about plans for Gracefield in the coming months.

The Gracefield camping sites officially open on May 15. If you are interested in a long-term site or camping over the summer, please contact the camp office.



## New Cash Crop

Gracefield is thinking about growing a new product in some space recently made available by the new septic system. That's right, white candy canes—ready for red or green stripes—will be grown in the winter months...

See, there's already a few coming up that are ready to be harvested! Actually this is our new septic bed with venting tubes. Not as exciting, but great to have!



## Staff Alert!

The camp is still in need of staff and volunteers to help make the summer a success. Specifically we are looking for a **waterfront director, male + female camp counsellors, an assistant cook, and kitchen assistant, as well as someone to provide maintenance around the camp.** [Apply here!](#)

If you are trained in first aid, or happen to be a nurse or doctor, we'd love for you to come to camp and take care of the occasional boo-boo that happens over the summer.

To look after our spiritual health, we are in need of some Chaplains to help guide the campers, staff, and community to experience God's wonder in this beautiful setting.



## Gracefield Wish List

The camp needs a few key items that will help in its operation and programs:

- a new or recently refurbished PC laptop
- a lectern
- a portable sound system that can support inputs for both a mic and iPod (with speaker stand would be preferable)

If you have any of these items, or would like to make a donation to offset a purchase, please contact Barb to make the necessary arrangements.

## Church Visits

Want to have a Gracefield experience in your home church? Just give us a call and we'll come on a designated Sunday to talk about the mission of the camp and provide some information on upcoming programs.

Here is the schedule for church visits coming up—please come visit or arrange for your own Gracefield Sunday.

**April 15:** Knox Church, Ottawa

**April 22:** St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Kars and Osgoode Presbyterian Church, Vernon.

**May 13:** St. David and St. Martin Presbyterian Church, Ottawa.

**May 20:** St. Andrew's, Stittsville

# VOLUNTOLD TO PARTICIPATE IN SPRING WORK WEEKENDS!

You know when someone volunteers you before you have a chance? That's when you have been **voluntold**. But I am telling you, helping in the spring work weekends is great because it's:

- an opportunity to open up the camp and get it ready for the summer
- a chance to meet new people, young and old
- a chance to work outside, usually bug free, and breathe in the scents of spring
- an occasion to be part of a Christian community
- time to have fun and be silly
- a chance to wield a mop, broom, chainsaw, garbage bag, rake....
- an opportunity to make-up some volunteer hours for high school
- a chance to stay overnight with free room and board!

So please volunteer the last two weekends of **April (20-22, 27-29)** as it's a good opportunity to help get the camp prepared for the busy season ahead.

Please contact the camp if you plan to come. Consider yourself voluntold!

## It Takes a Community to Raise a Village

As we reported in a previous issue of BeaverTales, there were two new cedar staff cabins erected in 2017 (shown below). These cabins are used by summer staff and can be rented in other seasons. Each cabin has been equipped with two sets of bunks to sleep four persons in each cabin.

These cabins are part of the children's camp facility renewal programme being funded by a grant from part of the proceeds from the sale of Camp Bitobi—a much loved older Christian camp located across the river in Gracefield which has continued life as Camp Misquah—a summer camp for individuals with special needs.

In addition to these staff accommodations, a new Family Cabin Village is currently being planned which will include five individual cabins for rent. This village is tentatively being planned to be located along the lake between Second Beach and the Manager's Cottage. There will be two cabins 10x16ft, three cabins 10x12ft, and two outhouses similar to the one already located at Second Beach. Each cabin will be equipped with two sets of bunks—one twin size, one with a lower double, to sleep 4-5 persons in each cabin.

The cabin village is being built with a portion of the grant received as the Erskine Legacy after the closure of Erskine Presbyterian Church in Ottawa. The Erskine congregation were long-time supporters of Christian camping and we are pleased to see their legacy continue at Gracefield.

All the cabins and outhouses for these projects are being built and installed by Kaza Cabana, a local cedar manufacturing business located on highway 105 in Kazabazua. It is worth noting that the founder's daughter was a camper at Gracefield in the 1990s.

[Watch the camp website](#) as to when the new village will be ready for rentals.



*The staff cabins before the front decks were installed.*

## 2018 Camp Theme: **Beyond Belief—The Universe of God**

During the week, campers will ponder the BIG questions about God. What if God is bigger than you ever imagined? What if hope is real? What if you could change the world? Campers will explore how God can be seen in the vastness of creation, the power of community, and even in their own hearts. They'll also discover how God's endless love launches amazing adventures and that God always has new mysteries to explore. Through community-building games and challenges, creative art projects, Bible study, daily opportunities to serve, and meaningful experiences of prayer, worship, and God's creation, our prayer is that by week's end, campers will be inspired and equipped to take their faith back into the world to share with their communities, churches, families, and friends.



## Drop Everything... and Register Now!

This summer is going to be pretty exciting and fun for campers of all ages. The program theme for the 2018 co-ed camps is Beyond Belief, The Universe of God. And where else can you experience God's universe better than at Gracefield, where days are filled with God's gifts of nature, friendship, and fun, and by night at the campfire, you can look up and see the universe in all its glory (plus the occasional shooting star and sometimes even the aurora borealis!) This year we're excited to offer Outdoor Adventure camps for those campers who want a focus on paddling and wilderness skills.

And for those who enjoy attending camp as a family, Family Camp is over the long weekend in August with our speaker is Phil Kim, current Minister of Knox Manotick.

[Check out all the camps and their dates on our website!](#)

## Cabin Fever!

This spring, the Property Committee will be working to rejuvenate a long-standing tradition at Gracefield of 'adopting a cabin'. This was something that Brian Ham in his time as Camp Co-Director had 'a fever' for (actually it was more like passion and a vision) and something that has been very well supported by some congregations past and present, most recently by Knox Manotick.

In partnership with Bruce Howard, the plan will be to create a standard design for the cabin structures and their features as well as a planned maintenance/rejuvenation program. Coupled to this will be a structured stewardship program that will permit congregations, individuals and other benefactors to contribute time, talent, treasure—or a combination of all three—to a cabin or cabins of their choice.

The goal is to ensure all of the cabins provide a safe and welcoming 'home away from home' and to enhance the camp experience and contribute to cherished memories of Gracefield. A sub-committee is currently being formed and its work will start with getting input from cabin adopters and volunteers past and present and finding out what works, what doesn't and just as important, what inspires them to contribute in this way.

If you would like to get involved or have any comments or questions, please contact Owen Mahaffy at [owenmahaffy@gmail.com](mailto:owenmahaffy@gmail.com).



## 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](#). 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.***