

BEAVERTALES



Official Newsletter of Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre



Thanksgiving Message

I really like a Turkey Dinner. It is a meal that I feel as though I could eat over and over and not grow tired of. It's not just about the bird for me, but the side dishes are of equal importance. I can be flexible with what those are, as long as there is stuffing (even the stove top version)! I am just as thankful to eat the leftovers three days later.

I wonder, however, if am I always filled with gratitude for the blessings in my life? Sure, I can say that I am thankful for the big stuff and can express deep gratitude for the wonderful blessings that God has given me. But am I as thankful for the everyday things that sustain me? I'm not sure that I am.

Romans 8:28 says "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." I certainly know that I have a long way to go in getting to this level of gratitude!

Corrie ten Boom was sent to a prison camp for hiding Jews from the Nazis. There, her sister said they should thank God for everything in their barracks. Corrie initially refused to give thanks for the fleas that infested their bedding, until later she found out that those fleas kept the guards from entering the barracks, enabling them to have daily prayer meetings. So she said, "Thank you, Lord, for the fleas!"

Our Creator is with us when we celebrate and when we mourn. While we are thankful for the blessings we have, we can trust that our God has a purpose for all that we face. God is good all the time, and all the time God is good.

Grace & Peace,

Mark Hamilton
Managing Director

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Letter from the Board of Directors

On behalf of the GCCRC board of directors, I would like to offer up some words of thanks and acknowledgement to close out our 2022 camping season.

First of all, thank you for being here at Gracefield this season! Your presence, your service, your desire simply to come to this beautiful place to rest, recharge, and connect are all a part of what makes Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre such a unique and life giving place that has so much to offer. Our desire is that you engage with nature and community, taking time to pause and detach from your busy lives.

Gracefield Camp is so blessed to have amazing staff and volunteers who help facilitate governance and oversight, programming, property services and stewardship, spiritual direction and care, fundraising, and so much more. So, on behalf of the Board of Directors I wish to extend a heartfelt thanks to all of our staff and volunteers for the hard work you have poured into making Gracefield the special place it is.

As I leave my role as Board Chair having finished my term, I am grateful to the Lord for sustaining our entire Board and this camp through these past three years, and how the Lord has raised up a strong group of board volunteers for the coming year. To that end, let me introduce you to our new line-up for 2022/2023.

Ruth Draffin is our new Board Chair, but has been filling the role of Co-Chair for the last year. She has purposefully engaged many in our community over the past summer as she desires to hear your stories of camp life and all your great insight and ideas. Ruth brings great insight, direction, and godly oversight.

Johneen Everson is our returning secretary. She has done an amazing job of keeping and cultivating order, clarity and direction, and will continue to do so with ease and grace.

Marc-Phillipe Lauren is stepping into the role of Vice Chair this term. Marc brings strong people management skills and has a fantastic sense of fun, musicality, and engagement.

Brian Laughton, our returning treasurer, works tirelessly and is also full of practical wisdom as he speaks to every matter of the Board at Gracefield. Brian has done a fantastic job collaborating with our finance committee, our Managing Director, and our wonderful book keeper Marianne Rasmus to oversee the financials here at camp.

Joan Coulter returns to chair our Finance Committee, and as Program Committee member. Her capacity to organize and share information, vision cast, and bring institutional memory to the Board is essential and acts as a ballast to keep us on an even keel.



Dan Plant is part of our Executive Committee and brings strong wisdom to all we do. Dan also sits on our Fund Development and Communication Committee and helps to oversee and manage our technology infrastructure at Gracefield Camp.

Manon Campbell will chair our Fund Development and Communication committee this term. She also sits on our Sustainability Committee and has done a brilliant job chairing our 60th Anniversary Committee. She brings boundless streams of energy and institutional insight to all she puts her hands to, and we are so grateful for her many contributions.

Chris Bolger continues his role as Program Committee Chair. He brings program experience and much insight to this position, and we are so grateful for his dedication and drive to create programming that will engage visitors of all ages.

George Herbert will continue in his role as Property Committee Chair, and has provided discernment, direction and oversight to assessing infrastructure and planning current and future projects which will allow us to steward our camp property well.

Topher Whithead will stay on in his capacity serving on the Property Committee - bringing expertise in building project management. He also speaks wisely to many aspects of board-related issues due to his familiarity with the history of Gracefield.

Alex Heath, a continuing board member, brings a huge capacity to vision cast and strategize, bringing clarity and integrity to the Board's decision-making processes. Alex is a vital member of the camp's Sustainability Committee.

We have the pleasure of welcoming two new members this Fall, and are grateful for their willingness and passion to serve.

Jenny DeMelo, an elementary school teacher in Ottawa, has a lifelong connection to Gracefield. She came to camp with family at a young age, worked as staff as a young adult, and was camp Director in 2017. She was previously on the Program Committee and will be a great asset!

Janet Gellately, a vice principal of an elementary school in Cornwall, joins the Board as well. She grew up coming to Gracefield with her family, and has volunteered in various capacities over the years - even working as camp cook one summer when there was an urgent need! Janet brings energy and wisdom to the Board this year. Welcome to Jenny and Janet!

So, as I pass the torch to a new Board Chair, I pray the Lord continues to lead, guide and bless all members in their various roles and responsibilities. May they have energy, wisdom, capacity and community support as they care for and oversee the work and life of Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre.

In Christ,
Paula Whaley



Summer Program Overview



Staffing

We started the summer with a very small team of dedicated workers. 10 program staff and 7 operations staff helped to make a safe and successful start to the summer at GCCRC. 2 more operations staff and 1 more program staff member joined us to help us push past the finish line and their contributions were greatly appreciated!

Program

We ran 9 overnight Children & Youth camps this summer and weekend programming focused mainly on the 3 long weekends for Adults and Families. We were greatly encouraged by an increase in engagement with our weekend programming and we financially benefited from it through our weekend program pass sales, which began to develop a stable revenue stream from our program activities.

Campers

In the overnight Children's camps we had 94 camper registrations which was slightly smaller than the pre-covid camper numbers but was a very successful number to restart this area of ministry for us.

Chaplaincy

Volunteer Chaplains helped to lead our spiritual focus throughout the Children's camp sessions. A big thank you to Dorothy Herbert, Paul Wu, Andrew Schep, Chris Clarke, and Amanda Currie for being chaplains. An extra big thank you to Meg Patterson who was also a chaplain this summer and has also been a huge help as a member of the Program Committee and did a great job in working to find the volunteer Chaplains for us!



We are profoundly grateful to all who regularly donate to the ministry at Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre. We appreciate all of the donations that have helped us operate this summer and for so many years. As we approach the end of our 60th year, we are wanting to ask a question to all of those who love GCCRC.

Above and beyond your regular giving to GCCRC, can you pledge to give a bit more?

- \$60 one time donation
- \$60 per season = \$240
- \$60 per month = \$720
- \$60 per week = \$3120

Check out our website or contact the office for more information on ways to give info@gracfieldcamp.ca





A summer of celebrations and shared memories.

After two years of pandemic, Gracefield's community was finally able to gather and celebrate sixty years of ministry. The campsites were buzzing with people most weekends, kids were playing, laughing and taking part in program activities led by summer staff.

The inauguration of our 60th anniversary took place on Canada Day weekend. Volunteers put together activity booklets and special craft projects. Pineview hosted many artifacts and information about the camp's history, including stories about the Billings family who first owned the place. Of course, the day wouldn't be complete without Josh's famous cooking, especially his cinnamon buns and Bruce's spectacular fireworks.

Special community coffee hours, hosted by volunteers, were held on weekends. People got to sample Gracefield's own coffee roast, Contemplation, and purchase it for their continued enjoyment at home - all thanks to a great partnership with Bluebarn Coffee Roasters, located in Wakefield. If you haven't had a chance to try it, it is still available for purchase. Contact info@gracefeildcamp.ca to find out how you can obtain some.

Alumni reunion weekends for the 80's and early 90's were successful with former staff reconnecting at camp. Chatter and laughter filled the warm summer air late into the night when some of the groups finished their days off with star gazing and midnight swims!



The Paddle-a-Thon fundraiser on August 20th was a great success thanks to the contributions from many donors and all of the participants who paddled the shores of Lac Castor to raise funds for new docks at the Boathouse. We surpassed our goal of \$10,000 and ended up raising \$11,045 - Thank you to all who joined the campaign and donated their time or money, as well as to Metro Kelly from Gracefield, who donated bags of goodies to all our participants. We could not have done it without you!



There were some great fundraising initiatives this summer. Former camper James Martinez, now a published artist in the Ottawa area, painted a beautiful scene "The Canoe Lesson" that was auctioned off. We also auctioned off amazing prints of Gracefield night sky produced by Mark Ashfield, a Gracefield guest.

The culmination of the summer events and celebrations ended on the Labor day weekend. Once again, the community gathered to participate in outdoor games, enjoyed the still warm waters of the lake and got to experience a live concert presented by the band "Schoolhouse".

All of which ended with once again, Bruce's fantastic fireworks.

We are grateful to the staff and all who volunteered throughout the summer to make our anniversary celebrations a success. In joining your hands, you demonstrated the power of a loving, caring and supportive community. Gracefield wouldn't be what it is without the tireless work and efforts of its staff and volunteers. Thank you!





We Remember

Since the last edition of BeaverTales, our community has lost some members who have had an important impact on our camp and on the lives of our community members over the years.

Psalm 34:18-19

If your heart is broken, you'll find God right there; if you're kicked in the gut, he'll help you catch your breath. Disciples so often get into trouble; still, God is there every time.



We mourn with those who mourn the loss of Rev. Dr. Cheryl Gaver; and Alex Hay. We are thankful for the lasting contributions to Gracefield Christian Camp and Retreat Centre made by Betty Neelin; Floyd McPhee; and David Kilgour, and we pray God's comfort will sustain those who grieve their loss. We were blessed by the ministry of Michael Neelin while he was the director here, and we pray that God's Spirit would be close to those left to carry on.

May the peace that surpasses all understanding guard our hearts and minds in this season of mourning.



Volunteer Opportunities and Work Weekends

We are so thankful for everyone who pitches in to help with the work of GCCRC. Our fall work weekends are set for October 21-23 and October 28-30.

If you would like to volunteer for one of those weekends please email our Operations Manager, Matt Sayers at operations@gracefieldcamp.ca. We have a limited amount of space available for volunteers on these weekends so please be sure to email Matt to ensure that there is sleeping space, food and a job that suits your skill set.



Could you pledge to give 60 hours of your time?

- Blaze a trail team
- Paint the town GREEN team
- Community connections team

For more information on volunteering or to sign up, please email operations@gracefieldcamp.ca



Keep In Touch!

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

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