

115th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Utah Report of Camp Tuttle

Submitted by Ingrid VanZanten and Karen Gleeson, Camp & Youth Directors

Camp Tuttle is an outdoor ministry of the Episcopal Church of Utah. Our values are rooted deeply in the ideas of challenge, connection, and creation. Camp Tuttle provides a safe place for environmental, social, and personal transformation. Our mission is to provide a positive and inclusive learning environment that celebrates spiritual enlightenment in the outdoors. Campers and counselors work to create a safe place to challenge comfort zones, societal norms, thinking patterns, and understanding of the life and world around them. Through this work, we provide abundant opportunities to connect with self, others, nature, and the Divine. Mountain peaks and rushing rivers root us deeply to God and call for action in protecting, sustaining, and nurturing the creation for which we are responsible.

This year has come with unique challenges and many changes. In the spring of 2020 Camp Tuttle went through a change of leadership and is now being Directed by Ingrid VanZanten and Karen Gleeson. Karen and Ingrid have been working at Camp Tuttle for 15 years and 12 years, respectively. Their combined experience and work ethic are just what camp needs to lead the charge into 2021 to increase fundraising efforts, breath new life into day-to-day camp programming, and to navigate the everchanging needs of our community and youth during a global pandemic.

After conversations with Bishop Hayashi and many thoughtful planning meetings, we determined a course of action for the summer of 2020 that satisfied Utah state mandates and safety requirements, but that would also allow youth to join us for play and reflection in the mountains. Through the month of July, we hosted a series of day camps and overnight backpacking trips for youth ages 10-18. Day camps were spent outside playing in camp's lush and wooded backyard and the overnight backpacking groups got to experience a night under the stars at the beautiful Twin Lakes. Through three weeks we served a total of 96 campers.

Appropriate and cautious measures were taken at all times, during all camps, to ensure the safety of campers and staff. Campers and staff maintained appropriate social distance, wore a mask at all times, and participated in frequent hand washing and sanitization. Our precautions and safety measures allowed us to successfully run summer camp programming without contributing to the spread of COVID-19. Patrons from the community praised our efforts to keep campers safe while also providing a much-needed space for peer interaction and play.

Moving forward into the fall, camp leadership will work with Youth Ministry and the Youth Faith Formation to find safe and creative ways to keep our community and youth engaged.

Because of this unique summer and the current lack of outside camp rentals, we find ourselves in a position to make improvements to camp facilities. The following is a comprehensive list of all the past, on-going, and future maintenance efforts to the camp facilities:

- New roofing on four buildings
- Snow fence installation to help future snow damage
- Reorganization/Decluttering of lodge and infirmary
- Sewer road improvements to increase access to lower parts of camp
- Outdoor chapel space improvement; new benches/old bench improvement
- Annual tree removal/maintenance

- Annual ropes course inspection
- Power washing, sanding, staining of building decks
- Routine fire safety inspections
- Routine plumbing and electrical maintenance
- Annual snow removal

On-going goals for the 2020-2021 season include:

- Provide youth with space and time to stay connected, challenged, and engaged
- Continue facility improvement to support camp programming and outside rental of camp and ropes course
- Begin a compilation of prospective donors from past records/registries
- Maintain communication with our community through social media and frequent email updates/check-ins

Preparation for the 2021 summer will involve a focus on raising funds to help support the needs of camp facilities and camp programming. Current fundraising efforts have been focused on a few, small special events. Future fundraising will shift to building a culture of giving, through acquiring, retaining, and upgrading donors. Donor cultivation and building relationships with current and future donors will be prioritized. Connecting with current donors will look like more frequent and authentic contact to ensure they feel connected to camp and its efforts. Funds raised during the next six months will continue to support our rich and active scholarship fund, and to help continue a trend of camp upkeep and maintenance.