



Cairn Family of Camps Report to Synod 2017

2017 has brought another extraordinary season to the Cairn Family of Camps. Staff and campers alike continue to reap the rewards of living within an inclusive, accepting Christian community. Together, we've created a space where kids, teens, and young adults are able to experience the feeling of safety and support that encourages them to try something new, express their opinions, and learn from each other - a true testament to the unfailing love and strength found in God. Both our seasonal and year-round staff find focus and inspiration when returning to our mission:

"To share God's love through Christian camping and to ensure that its family of camps, and their leaders, provide supportive ministry and transformative programming. We believe in the extraordinary."

Sharing God's love to all who come through our camping programs, or who visit our site as parents, guardians, alumni, or guests, is our primary focus. We are excited to share a few snapshots of our summer here with you.

Glen Mhor and Iona

Overview of 2017 Campers

		2016	2017	2018
Summer Campers	Total	716	707	325
	Glen Mhor	418	401	166
	Iona	61	56	14
	Trip	22	26	12
	LIT	24	23	8
	Integration Campers and Adult Volunteers	32	43	6
	Family Camp	159	158	119
Retreats	Junior High	45	32	
	Senior High	34	20	
	Alumni	53	18	
CYOB		172 campers, 7	210 campers, 8 churches	4 churches
Outdoor Education		5 schools, 297 students	3 schools, 195 students	5 schools, ~300 students
Staff		52: 20 new, 32 returning	53: 22 new, 31 returning	



Highlights

- The **Pay It Forward (PIF)** program continues to be a popular teen program at Glen Mhor, teaching the value in paying it forward to help others. 32 teens explored how to share God's love through service: singing at nursing homes, stocking shelves at the local food bank, cleaning and painting at local churches, and completing work projects around site. This is such a valuable way to both promote our relationships with the local community, and witness faith in action.
- **Peewee** (5-7 year olds at Glen Mhor) and **Junior Adventurers** (7-9 year olds at Iona) provided an introductory, four-day camp experience for our youngest campers, laying their foundation in the experiential worship opportunity of camp.
- **23 sixteen-year-old Leaders In Training** participated in Cairn's month-long leadership development program, experiencing the value of a faith community and learning how to lead and teach campers. These young leaders take what they learn at camp back to their schools and churches, many hopeful to return to Cairn next year as counsellors to take on greater responsibility within in our camping ministry.
- Our **Integration Program** provides an opportunity for kids and adults with differing abilities to experience, and be integrated into, summer camp. This branch of Cairn's camping program provides a unique opportunity for these individuals, who are often marginalized, to experience the love of God, community, and fellowship in the same way as any other camper. 4 of 7 weeks of camp were filled for Cairn's integration program, with an increasing number of referrals, and many campers wishing to stay for multiple weeks.
- **Family Camp** continues to burst at the seams, with consistent attendance maximizing our capacity every summer for the past number of years. Because of this, the 2018 camp schedule offers a second, week-long family camp to start off the summer.
- We were blessed to have a **full staff team** hired by the beginning of May, allowing efforts to be focused on program development, and staff training and development.
- In April, the Board hired Jon Fairly as a **year-round site manager**. He has done excellent work in addressing site concerns over the summer, and will continue in a part-time capacity over the winter for site security and snow removal. This is a much needed position, filled by a very capable, thoughtful individual.
- **Registration for 2018 was open mid-summer** this year (as opposed to October in previous years), enabling over 300 people to register for camp, to date. This will help fill the November financial lull, and provides a longer period for marketing our summer camps.

Faith Formation

Our Bible Study curriculum this summer was titled "It's all about the love", focusing each day on who we are called to love: loving your neighbour, loving creation, loving your enemy, loving yourself, and loving the Lord your God. Campers heard and dramatized Bible stories, then had a discussion and did activities to exemplify and consolidate the lessons learned. Exploring the theme of love created an additional connection between our campers and Cairn's mission: sharing God's love through supportive ministry and transformative programming. There is a greater understanding for our campers of how at camp, we truly live out our mission every day.



This was the third year we have invited Chaplains (ministers from across our Synod) to come as faith mentors for our campers and staff. Our Chaplains led camper Bible study at both Glen Mhor and Iona (referred to as “TLC”, or Talking and Learning in Christ at Glen Mhor and “Stibe”, a spoonerism for “Bible Study”, at Iona), and also guided our Staff TLC. Chaplains helped plan and lead our end-of-week Chapel, and were available throughout the day for “Chaplain Chats” with cabins, or just to experience and participate in the vibrant camp community. We are very grateful to the ministers who joined us up at Cairn this summer, and are excited to continue this very successful addition to our program.

Challenges

While Cairn has celebrated many successes this season, it was not without difficulties and setbacks. Most notably, an Executive Director has not been found or hired since David left in May 2016, during a year of transition between Camp Directors, from Chantal to Robynne. Bridget Tilly, our Administrator for 11 years, stepped in to fill some of the operational gaps, and Robynne filled the on-the-ground role. Considering that running camp is a job that has previously been held by two full-time directors, and a part-time administrator, we managed relatively smoothly. However it was exhausting, and placed a large burden on Robynne, Bridget, and other senior staff members as well.

Financial constraints paired with our increasing maintenance requirements are resulting in our capital funds depleting without means to replenish them within our operating budget. This summer, our septic pump needed to be replaced for a cost of \$10,000. This was obviously an unanticipated cost, but reinforced the need for available funds to replace old equipment, sometimes unexpectedly.

A Request

Our site and buildings need regular maintenance, and occasional upgrades and renovations. These projects include, but are not limited to: creating accessible bathroom stalls; installing ramps to all buildings to make them wheelchair accessible; re-shingling cabin roofs; replacing kitchen appliances including a walk-in fridge and Hobart industrial dishwasher; building a barn or gymnasium as another indoor program space; and improving staff accommodations. To see such projects come to fruition, Cairn will be fundraising among camper families and alumni, but we also request financial support from the Synod to help invest in our camp’s physical site. Should specific grants, bursaries, or funds be available through the church, direction or referrals would also be much appreciated.

Robynne Howard
Camp Director
Cairn Family of Camps



Presbyterian Music Camp

Presbyterian Music Camp is a camp for families and individuals who enjoy music and spending time growing in Christian community. It is a place to grow musically and spiritually, a place where people of all ages can learn new skills and share their gifts with one another. This year, our week-long camp ran from Sunday, August 20th to Sunday, August 27th. We had 121 campers attend PMC at Camp Tamarack this year.

This Year's Theme

The 2017 theme, ***Navigating Change: Hope in a constantly changing world***, was a theme that enabled us, as a community, to consider the changes in our lives. We considered that change is a reality and it can either be imposed on us or initiated by us. We acknowledged that sometimes change feels horrible and can make us tired and angry. Accepting that life is a continuing cycle of these things and using the stories of our faith, the stories of the Bible and the stories of others, we explored how to best navigate change. We were left with a sense of hope in the knowledge that we are not alone on this journey.

Pam and Doug Kendall were our Deans for PMC 2016 and 2017. They did an excellent job of planning the theme and finding leaders to lead the morning worship services. Individual campers were invited to take on leadership roles in the evening services which were designed to be more reflective and introspective in nature. A time of quiet reflection was offered before each evening service with an opportunity to listen to quiet instrumental music and light candles. Again this year, campers participated in "Worship Without Walls" – a guided meditation created by Doug and Pam to use the natural setting of Camp Tamarack as a background for a focused and meditative worship that could be enjoyed as individuals or small groups.

Successes

We enjoyed a wonderful week using our theme, times of worship, workshops and activities as tools to grow together in community. With the exception of one rainy day, the weather was excellent and many of our workshops were held outdoors. One of our campers offered to take on the role of ensuring eye safety during Monday's solar eclipse. Appropriate safety glasses were purchased and shared between campers for those who wished to safely view the eclipse. Our evening programs included Campfire, Live Band Karaoke, Variety Night, Coffee House and Sampler Night. Sampler Night offered options of a family movie ([Finding Dory](#)), opportunity to learn Salsa Dancing, Canoe Choir, sing-a-long, board games, recorder jam, or canoe choir. An Agape or "sharing of gifts" service was enjoyed on our final night of camp, which included the sharing of the sacraments of Communion. The workshops available included: camp choir, children's choir, concert band, children's games, movement, relaxation, children's crafts, adult



crafts, intermediate bells, several levels of guitar, several levels of ukulele, teen choir, garage band, jazz band, folk group, banjo, bagpipes, sound improvisation, drama improvisation, song writing, intermediate bells, advanced choir, and beginner drums.

Music – Worship and workshop leaders were encouraged to use songs incorporating the theme. Our week culminated in a concert where workshop participants performed one or two pieces of music or drama to share what had been learned over the week. It was wonderful to hear the children’s choir singing songs of change and protest from years gone by such as “Blowing In the Wind” – and was just one of many examples of music incorporating our theme.

Advertising – For the first year in recent PMC history, we decided not to put a poster in the PC Pack and experienced no significant difference in the number of campers. Our most successful form of advertising continues to be through word of mouth, although we continue to maintain and improve our website over time. We have a social media presence on Facebook and Twitter and will continue to explore other forms of social media which might help to grow our ministry. We have requested new advertising ideas as part of our end of camp survey, and look forward to reviewing those surveys at our September PMC Committee meeting.

Ongoing Concerns

No one applied for a Tom Gemmell bursary this year, which is designed to help a music director, minister or student minister attend camp for the first time. Our committee will need to discuss how to encourage individuals to apply and to spread the word about this opportunity.

As identified in last year’s report, we continue to support individuals with financial need to come to camp through the Alison Stewart Patterson (ASP) fund and this was maintained through donation only this year, as our committee is experiencing a lack of human resources and, as such, was unable to hold any fundraisers throughout the year. Again this year, we had to transfer a small amount of money from our General Fund into the ASP fund.

Over the past few years, we have had difficulty attracting new families with young children to attend PMC. With the exception on one infant born to long-standing campers, any new campers this year were adults. We did not even run a Cherubs program this year, as there were only 2 children (from the same family) between the ages of 2 – 6. It is important for us to provide programs that are attractive to families with young children and to actively recruit such campers to ensure the future of PMC.

Ruth Anne Robertson
Committee Convenor
Presbyterian Music Camp