

INTRODUCTION

The summer of 2026 was a season of growth, renewed energy, and exciting momentum for Cairn Family of Camps. We are excited to share with the members of our Synod the many successes that have, and continue to occur, in this beautiful place thanks to the support of those who believe in the power of camp.

Building on our exceptional legacy of Camping Ministry and the momentum of our 95th anniversary year, we entered this summer with a strong sense of purpose and a clear vision for the future.

Our staff and Board of Directors continue to embrace their shared commitment to providing a meaningful camp experience for everyone who arrives at their “home away from home.” Together, they are creating opportunities for connection, faith formation, community, and growth, ensuring that the legacy of the past continues to inspire the ministry of the future.

It is at Cairn where people can rest, rejuvenate and hear God’s voice. A place where lifelong friendships are formed, leaders are born, and adventures in creation are made possible. **A place to find community, confidence, and Christ.**

Together we can keep building a modern, sustainable, and accessible path that gives every child the opportunity to experience a Presbyterian summer camp.

OVERVIEW OF REPORT

The report outlines our continued growth reflected in our camper registrations and staff recruitment numbers.

It highlights what is being done to take care of the property God has entrusted us with. Plus, it celebrates the bold vision of fundraising efforts happening in the committed partnership between our donors, alumni, Synod, and year-round staff. It also looks ahead to 2027 with recommendations intended to support the continued growth and sustainability of Cairn’s ministry.

RECOMMENDATIONS & MOTION

Our board would like to bring forward the following recommendations for 2027:

Recommendation 1 – Increasing seasonal staff salaries to \$85/day

Context from the Working Group recommendations - “Synod budget an additional **\$61,000** to allow seasonal staff compensation of **\$75/day**, with the goal of increasing compensation incrementally toward minimum wage. The report then proposes **\$85/day in 2027** and **\$95/day in 2028**” [CNOB](#)

Recommendation #2 – Support the recommendations from the Fundraising Working Group as can be found in the Fundraising Working Group Report.

Recommendation #3 – Support the Cairn Family of Camps Board in Applying for Grants

Motion - *That the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda move to give the Cairn Board of Directions permission and support to apply for various grants within the PCC and beyond.*

2026 SUMMER PROGRAMMING OVERVIEW

Our Programs

This summer Cairn provided a series of programs over the course of the summer and fall. We boast not only programming for children and youth, but for the entire family.

Summer Camp

- **Glen Mhor Program:** 7 weeks of summer camp programs for youth between the ages of 5-16
- **Iona Program:** 2, 1 weeklong canoe trips for youth ages 10-14, 1 weeklong canoe trip for Leaders in Training
- **Leader In Training Program:** A month-long leadership program for youth aged 15-16
- **Integration:** 5 weeks of 1:1 staff support for youth and adults with disabilities so they can have a successful camp experience, 1 week of a new program called “*Adult Empower*” where integration participants who did not need the 1:1 ratio were a cabin group.

All Ages Programs

- **Family Camp:** 4-day family-based program
- **Away at the Lake:** Small-group and family camp stays with optional programming
- **Retreats:** Spring and Fall Volunteer Work Weekends, Women’s Wellness Weekend, and Fall by the Fireside,

Camper Registration

We saw increased numbers with a total of **636 registrations** across our all programs.

Integration saw a high level of participation with a total of **22 campers** for 2026 in comparison to 16 in 2025. Our new program called “*Adult Empower*” was very successful as it offered another option for participants who required some support but did not need the direct 1:1 ratio.

The Iona trip programming saw a bump in registration. We are happy to report that our Intermediate trip sold out.

Family Camp was a huge success! The site was entirely full and the dining hall packed. **135** people attended the long weekend including several alumni, past directors, and many long-time camp supporters.

Colour Games remains one of the most popular program offerings. This year, the camp sold out within one week of registration opening and saw **95** campers on site. This program historically sells out within a few days of registration opening.

2027 Plans

Registration will open November 3rd, 2026! Cairn’s teen leadership development is poised for growth. We will be expanding our Leader in Training (LIT) program, to provide a second 3 weeklong session with the goal of keeping more teens actively engaged in ministry, empowering them to grow as confident, faith-filled leaders within both our camp community and the broader church.

Staffing

Last year, we reported that Cairn’s salaries were well below comparable camps, making staff recruitment difficult. Thanks to the increase from Synod, we were able to increase both our seasonal and year-round staff remuneration.

We are thrilled to report that, for the first time since before 2018, Cairn had a full summer staff roster, with over 45 seasonal staff joining us in ministry. Recruiting internationally was also a successful new initiative, bringing older, experienced staff from Spain, the United Kingdom, and Ireland who helped strengthen the team and address identified staffing gaps.

Our Camp Director, Robynne Howard, began her maternity leave in May 2026 and welcomed a healthy baby boy this summer. Veteran staff member Chantal “Dello” Truscott has stepped into the interim role after seven years with Cairn. She will continue in the position through the 2027 summer season, with Robynne scheduled to return in October 2027.

In bittersweet news, Site Manager Jon Fairley will retire at the end of the fall season after 20 years of serving Cairn with joy, compassion, and a whole lot of labour. Jon was recognized at our end-of-season staff banquet and will be further honoured during Fall Work Weekend.

Faith Formation

This summer, Cairn held its first staff commissioning service in early July, celebrating and sending more than 40 staff into a summer of ministry. We welcomed 40 guests, coming from local churches, Synod, The Presbytery of Barrie, and camp community joined us. Many staff shared how meaningful it was to have the church “show up” for them. We look forward to making this an annual event!

This year, our camper Bible study, TLC (Talking and Learning in Christ), followed a two-week rotation with the themes “What is Home?” and “Fully Alive in God,” giving repeat campers more variety. For the first time, each theme included a theme song, while Mhorning Has Broken and Vespers activities connected the day’s scripture and TLC message throughout the camp experience.

SITE IMPROVEMENTS

It has been a busy year at camp as much of the planning for capital projects came to fruition. Our focus has been upgrading our washroom facilities. Other projects have looked at updating spaces and mitigating potential risk to ensure that camp remains a safe place for everyone.

We remain incredibly thankful for the generosity of Synod last Fall, grants from PCC, and donations from churches and Presbyteries, as well as a substantial donation from the Norval congregation upon dissolution. These were just some of the key contributions that helped get these big projects off the ground.

2026 Site Projects

- Washhouse Refurbishment - Gender neutral washroom and shower facilities. Completed June 2026.
- The Lookout - Washroom renovation is operational with outstanding details scheduled for completion Fall 2026.
- The Lodge Breezeway - Universal Washroom is operational with outstanding details scheduled for completion Fall 2026.
- Lodge - Replacement of walk-in fridge condenser unit
- Technology - Upgraded WIFI throughout centre camp.
- Site Survey - Completed and registered with the township

- Roof Repairs - Replaced on several buildings.
- Main Lodge - New steps constructed to lower playing field
- Cabins – All lighting replaced with LED lights.
- The Thicket - Process to remove and remediate mould in basement. Scheduled for Fall 2026.

2027 Proposed Projects

- Main Lodge - Updated Electrical panel
- Maintenance Shed – Replacement with a Sea Container. Permitting, and compliance work already underway with the Township
- Roof Replacement - Several roofs with including Health Centre roof and Haven
- Pike Memorial Chapel - Refurbishment and rejuvenation
- Road and Paths – Resurfacing and drainage management. Creation of accessible pathways/ramps allowing individuals using assistive devices to access additional areas of the site

ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

“On the road to 100”

The Anniversary Committee is preparing for our big centennial event, which will take place in four years. To give this milestone the attention it deserves, planning is already underway! To be involved in this once-in-a-lifetime event, please visit: <https://www.ilovecamp.org/anniversary-get-involved>

There you can complete the 100th Anniversary Interest Survey, “Share Your Story” with memories, photos or milestones, connect with the alumni team, and stay up to date on anniversary events.

FINANCIALS

Attached are Cairn’s 2026 Interim Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet as of August 31, 2026 - NOTE, these statements reflect the position as of August 31 and therefore do not capture the full season give that there is still Fall 2026 program revenue yet to be recognized, as well as 4 months of expenses yet to be incurred beyond the figures reflected in these financial statements. We are continuing to work through estimates concerning our expenses and cash flow through the end of the year, but it is simply too early to predict what the net outcome will be as of December 31, 2026.

Grant Endorsements

Cairn is seeking Synod Executive’s endorsement to submit applications for the following PCC grant opportunities for the upcoming 2026/2027 season:

- The Creative Ministry with Children and Youth grant
- Special Projects Grants

- Conference Support Grant
- Bursary Fund for Lay Education

Seasonal Staff Salaries

Cairn's ministry is carried by the young leaders who run our summer programs and care for our campers. Rising university and living costs mean many simply cannot afford to work at camp without additional financial support.

Camp provides these young adults with opportunities for leadership development, faith formation, mentorship, and meaningful connection to the church. For many, it becomes one of the most significant faith-building experiences of their young adult lives. Strengthening staff wages is not only an operational necessity, but an investment in the next generation of church leaders.

This year, Cairn increased the base rate for seasonal staff was raised by 44%. We were able to go ***\$52 a dollar a day to \$75 per day.***

Full-Time Staff Salaries

Compensation for some year-round staff was identified as an ongoing challenge in 2025. Synod provided \$15,972 toward wage increases, which was greatly appreciated. Continued investment will be needed to remain competitive and retain experienced staff who would be costly to replace.

FUNDRAISING

Cairn's ministry remains strong thanks to the remarkable generosity of our community and partners across the PCC. Through careful stewardship, we work to ensure every dollar supports our campers, improves accessibility, and equips the next generation of young leaders.

2026 Grants

Cairn was successful in securing funding through three vital grant avenues this year:

- Canada Summer Jobs provided \$94,000 to support 18 seasonal positions for eight weeks. Fluctuations in annual funding continue to create budgeting and hiring challenges. Cairn plans to apply again for 2027.
- A PCC Conference Grant supported Cairn in hosting the Ontario Presbyterian Camps Conference with Kintail and Gracefield.
- A PCC grant supported staff participation in the PCCCA Great Gathering Conference.

Community Giving

- *Cornerstone Crew:* Our monthly giving community continues to grow, with 72 families providing recurring support and an annual matching campaign encouraging new members.
- *Clear the List:* This year's campaign saw a record 81 program and equipment items funded by 34 donors, supporting crafts, tripping, outdoor activities, and staff resources.
- *Events and Individual Donors:* The Echoes and Embers 95th Anniversary event, vintage tuck shop sale, community fan drive, and generous individual donors provided important support throughout the year.

- *Churches & Presbyteries:* We remain deeply grateful to congregations and Presbyteries across the Synod for their continued faithful support of Cairn's ministry.

Camperships

Ensuring that no child is turned away due to financial barriers remains central Cairn's mission. The December 2025 "Give the Gift of Camp" campership campaign successfully met its \$7,000 target to replenish fee subsidy reserves. Cairn's requests for financial assistance grew year-over-year, with over \$20,000 distributed to approximately 30% of our camper families to help make their time at camp possible.

Cairn Fundraising Working Group for Synod

For a complete breakdown of the Cairn Fundraising Working Group, please reference the report authored by Rev. Cherie Inksetter.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive

- Katherine Ward (Convenor)
- Karin Terblanche (Treasurer)
- Nichole Ruff (Secretary & Marketing)

Member at Large

- Heather Cavill (Fundraising)
- Rev. Sarah Hunter (Faith Formation)
- Dave Ogram (Member)
- Jenna Peart (Human Resources)
- Ian Rome (Facilities)

Ex Officio Voting Member

- Michelle Roberts (Executive Director)

Updates

In June, Dave Dougall stepped off the Board after seven years of service, with Katherine Ward assuming the role of Convenor. Dave leaves big shoes to fill, and we are grateful for his continued commitment to Cairn.

In August, Rev. Sarah Hunter joined. Rev. Hunter will take over as Faith Formation Lead from Bailey Eastwood who has transitioned off the board and will serve on the Faith Formation as a committee member going forward.

The Board will focus on how best to position our team by reviewing the skills we have and identifying those needed for future success. Increasing camper numbers and revenue, while strategically planning capital projects, will always remain our key priorities.

OUR THANKS

The strength and continued growth of our Camping Ministry is made possible through the remarkable generosity of the wider church in all its forms. We are especially grateful for the individuals, congregations, and supporters who show their support through personal donations, church contributions, and other gifts to make this ministry a success.

On behalf of the Cairn Board and Staff we would like to thank several organizations and donors that have contributed in 2026. These partnerships sustain day-to-day operations and help grow this ministry for our Synod and beyond.

Huge thanks to

- Armour Heights Presbyterian Church
- Cairn Cornerstone Crew
- Calvin Presbyterian Church, Toronto
- First Presbyterian Church, Collingwood
- Norway Point Community Church
- St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Aurora
- St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Hillsburgh
- St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Orillia
- St. Andrew's-Chalmers Presbyterian Church, Uxbridge
- The Presbytery of Barrie
- The Presbytery of Temiskaming
- The Women's Missionary Society Thornhill
- Weston Presbyterian Church, Jarett
- Cairn Community Members

CONCLUSION

As Cairn looks toward its 100th anniversary, we are reminded that this ministry has always been about something larger than any one camp or congregation. For nearly a century, Cairn has brought generations together to experience community, God's love, and the wonder of creation. With our camper population continuing to grow, that ministry is as vital as ever.

The Cairn Board extends its sincere thanks to Michelle Roberts, Chantal Truscott, and the entire Cairn staff for another successful year of spring, fall, and youth Camping Ministry season. We are grateful to all those who continue to serve Cairn in many ways, and to our churches for remaining a vital connection to families throughout the year.

Cairn is possible because of the greater community which recognizes its value and place in our Synod. As we look toward 100 years, we are grateful for the strong foundation built by generations before us and committed to ensuring this ministry continues to grow and thrive for generations to come.