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lakewapo.org

Congregational Report 2024

Thank you for being a Partner Congregation! We are deeply grateful for the ongoing support and dedication of so many congregations that enable thousands of individuals each year to experience community and deepen their faith at Camp Wapo, Ox Lake, and Wilderness Canoe Base. We celebrate a year full of impactful moments with campers and retreat guests, and we are thankful for the generosity of our donors, the prayers of our supporters, and the commitment of YOU - our partner congregations.

Summer 2024 This summer, we had the privilege of welcoming nearly 4,000 campers and families to Camp Wapo, Ox Lake, and Wilderness Canoe Base, and over 11,000 guests year-round. Our summer staff was exceptional - demonstrating flexibility, resilience, and taking on key leadership roles. They met every challenge with energy, grace, and servant hearts. We are always seeking passionate young adults to join our team, and we encourage you to send anyone who might be a great fit our way! We're now hiring for summer 2025—if you know someone who would be interested, please reach out! You can contact Michael at michaelw@campwapo.org or Mari at maris@campwapo.org, or visit lakewapo.org/employment to apply.

Site Plans Strategic Initiative We continue to make progress on our Strategic Initiative, centering on comprehensive site plans. This important work will guide our decision-making process and help us prioritize deferred maintenance and program development. We're excited about several projects scheduled for this winter and spring that will have an immediate impact on the upcoming summer. These plans are designed to enhance and support transformative outdoor ministry experiences for everyone who comes to our camps.

Donor Engagement In 2024, partnership giving remained steady, while annual giving fell short of our intended goal. However, designated giving saw an increase, leading to an overall rise in contributions compared to 2023. We are currently in the leadership phase of the Room for More campaign to complete the dining hall/meeting space project at Camp Wapo. Soon, we will launch a congregational effort, reaching out to you - our partner churches. Joel Abenth, Director of Donor Engagement, will be working closely with congregations, individuals, and families who wish to support the camp in various ways. If you'd like to explore how you can contribute, please contact Joel at joela@campwapo.org.

Retreats and Events in 2024 Our non-summer season has been filled with a variety of retreats. Notable highlights include hosting large groups of students from the University of Minnesota-Duluth and Wheaton College just before the summer season kicked off at Wilderness Canoe Base, as well as two big middle school fall retreats at Camp Wapo. We offer a range of options for both programmed retreats and facility rentals if you're looking to organize your own event. Retreat opportunities can be found at lakewapo.org/news-events. For more details or to schedule your retreat, please contact Ryan at ryanb@campwapo.org. Additionally, we welcomed over 500 guests for our Memorial Day Pancake Extravaganza, celebrated the 22nd year of the Wapo Golf Tournament, and hosted over 1,200 guests and volunteers during Advent, including 8 performances of the 35th annual Christmas Dinner Theater, "A Stranger for Christmas."

Rhythms of Faith This summer we were thrilled to be selected as an exemplary ministry site participating in the Rhythms of Faith Project, a nationwide research initiative seeking to use the camp experience as a catalyst for family faith practices. This project is coordinated by Wheaton College's Center for Leadership Development (HoneyRock) and Sacred Playgrounds, and funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. The results from our part of the research and across all the camps that participated are so affirming of the work we do in outdoor ministry and how it impacts families, churches and communities. We'll continue to share those results throughout 2025.

2025 Theme Inspired by Romans 15:13, our 2025 theme is **Breathe**. *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

Whether it is singing around the campfire, in community with others, or in moments of quiet reflection, the Holy Spirit is our constant companion, leading us, comforting us, and helping us grow in faith and courage.

We look ahead with eager anticipation and a sure sense of hope. See you at camp in 2025!