**Camp Kintail – Synod Report 2023**

*By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.*

*- Galatians 5:22-23*

The theme of Camp Kintail for 2023 was “Fruit of the Spirit – Always in Season.” We have been learning about the fruit of the Spirit through worship, FLASH (Faith, Learning, and Sharing), music, and living in community. With low numbers of COVID this summer, we were able to all breathe (literally and figuratively) a bit easier. Spring, summer, and fall programming have been able to proceed as planned, and we are hopeful this trend will continue. It is a blessing to see the fruit of the Spirit in action at camp each and every day with our campers, guests, and staff.

**Summer Camp**

Our summer camp sessions were full with waiting lists. We ran Day Camp, Overnight Camp, Volunteers of Kintail, Leader in Training, and Family Camp. A new high challenge element, the giant swing, was added to the site, along with some new paddleboards and kayaks. Each week the campers learned about the Fruit of the Spirit through Philly the Fruit Bat who was just trying to find some good fruit to eat but instead learned about the best fruit of all. I guarantee that every camper can sing the “The Fruit of the Spirit’s Not a Coconut” song by heart!

**Spring, Fall, and Winter Seasons**

While summer camp remains at the heart of the ministry at Camp Kintail, the camp is a busy place all year round. In the spring and fall, we are busy everyday with school trips. Camp Kintail ran a Women’s Retreat, two Crafter’s Retreats, three Weekend Away Retreats (Victoria Day weekend, Canada Day Weekend, Advent), a Clergy Appreciation Day, two lay worship leadership events with the Rev. Dr. Sarah Travis, and co-hosted a Messy Church event. On weekends when we are not running a Kintail retreat, we provide rental space for groups and host weddings. It is a rare day for the camp to be empty.

We were delighted to host Presbyterian Music Camp this summer. This is a weeklong family camp that is bursting with creativity, energy, and music. It has been running for over 50 years, and we look forward to the camp returning next summer.

**COVID**

While there was only one early case of COVID in a staff member this spring, the pandemic continues to impact the work at Camp Kintail. We have estimated it will take up to five years for a full recovery. This is mostly seen in staff recruitment and training. Two years without overnight camp meant that many returning staff members were not able to return, and we are still missing senior staff members. As senior campers were not able to come to camp, our LIT and older camp groups have been smaller the last two years, and therefore our group of in-coming staff has been smaller. With larger camper groups in 2022 and 2023, we hope that we will be able to have a larger group of new and returning staff in the coming years. Each year, we will also be continuing to add back in program elements that were paused through COVID.

**Staff**

A wonderful group of staff were hired for this summer. They came from across southwestern Ontario and around the world. We continue to hire international staff to fill out our ranks and they have been a great addition to the camp staff. In the spring, there were forty staff, and there were eighty in the summer. This is addition to the twelve staff who work year-round to keep the camp and its year-round program running.

We are very grateful for the health care professionals (nurses, paramedics, and physicians) who guided the camp’s COVID protocols and staffed the Health Care Centre this summer. We have two health care professionals a week to keep everyone safe and healthy. We are also grateful for the chaplains who spent a week at camp leading worship (often wearing a fruit bat or fruit costume), leading Staff FLASH, and helping out around the camp. Several camp alumni came to camp for a week to share their skills, talents, and experience.

**Kirk in the Cedars & Sunday Suppers**

In 2022, Camp Kintail began hosting a monthly outdoor worship service in the chapel. It has been a delight to welcome families, cottagers, local neighbours, alumni, Presbyterians from further away, and current staff to these worship services. We began this year in March (in MacDonald Lodge) and then moved out to the chapel when it was warmer. We will be continuing until November and we invite everyone to come and join us. We have had guest preachers and musicians throughout the year as we have been looking at a different fruit of the Spirit each month. After worship, we gather for a meal together.

It is wonderful to welcome our friends and neighbours to the monthly Sunday Suppers. We started in March and will finish up in December. We have been sold out each month with a waiting list!

**Site**

Two major improvements occurred on the Kintail site this year. The MacDonald Lodge bathrooms (front and back) were all updated with new tiling and sinks. The back bathrooms also have renovated showers. Around the site we were able to add eight accessible doors though the Enabling Accessibility Grant from the Government of Canada. We hope to be able to continue to add more accessible doors to make the site barrier-free.

The next large project at Camp Kintail will be to replace the two septic fields. One is over twenty years old and the other is over forty years old! These projects will be costly and complicated, and we are working towards readiness so they can be replaced over the next two years. This might not as exciting as a new camper activity, but it is even more vital! I hope that I will have more specific information at the Synod meeting on the status of the replacement of the septic fields.

**Finances**

It has been a challenge to know how to budget the last three years. In 2022, we were very cautious with our budgeting, not being certain if we would be shut down due to government closures or the spread of COVID on site. We were able to be open most of 2022, which meant that we had a healthy surplus. The majority of the surplus will be allocated to the septic replacement and the start of a Kintail Legacy Fund. The Camp Board is currently working on these projects. We are so very grateful that the ministry at Kintail remains for the next generations that will need it.

**Conclusion**

It was good to experience the fruit of the Spirt in every season this past year at Camp Kintail. As we are turning the corner on the pandemic, we are grateful for all those across the Synod who prayed, donated, volunteered, drove campers, attended events, and cheered on the ministry at Camp Kintail. We hope that along with our campers, you were able to experience love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control!