

116th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Utah

Report of Camp Tuttle

Submitted by Ingrid VanZanten, Camp Director

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.

After having such a successful and safe summer, the fall of 2020 at Camp Tuttle was fairly quiet, in the way of in-person events, as our efforts continue to keep members of our community healthy and safe in the wake of a global pandemic.

In the fall of 2020, focus turned toward winter preparation efforts and on-going projects to improve camp facilities and grounds. New roofs were installed and/or improved on many of the buildings in camp, including snow fencing that has increased the longevity of the infirmary/shower house. The sewer road has been graded and now allows for vehicle access to the lower portions of camp. The lodge, chapel, infirmary, and many of the cabin facilities were decluttered and organized for the first time in many years. These spaces all feel lighter and are generally more pleasant to reside in. The outdoor chapel has been revamped and decorated with a handful of newly cut and stained benches that will increase seating and general aesthetics of the space. The wooden decks of all the buildings in camp were power washed, sanded, and stained anew. Once again, we find the general aesthetic and longevity of camp has been vastly improved over the last six months.

We are happy to announce that no buildings or structures were damaged in the big windstorm in early September. Many trees fell in the areas surrounding camp and will be taken care of this spring after the snow melts. Some of the fallen trees were used to build benches and will supply camp and neighboring cabins firewood for months to come.

We have the opportunity, once again, this summer to host a number of church and nonprofit groups from our community at camp. These groups will engage in family events, educational opportunities, outreach, and team building on the ropes course. Our improvements to facilities and grounds will support these efforts, and these efforts, in turn support the caring and programming for the youth of our diocese.

On-going projects and goals for facilities and programming for the spring and summer of 2021 include:

- Tree removal and maintenance
- Annual ropes course inspection
- Annual fire safety inspections
- Routine plumbing maintenance of pumphouse and lodge

- Successfully implement COVID protocols and procedures for the safety of campers and staff
- Continue donor cultivation via social media alumni groups
- Maintain communication with our community through social media and frequent email updates/check-ins
- Provide youth with space and time to stay connected, challenged, and engaged
- Collect an annual pledge from donors after weekly summer camp updates
- Engage camp staff with meaningful and intentional anti-racism work and training

Planning and preparation are underway for the 2021 summer. We have hired a staff of about 15 counselors who will join us for holding in-person, overnight camps at 50% capacity for 50% of time as a usual camp week. Arrangements for maximum outside time, social distancing, and mask wearing are all in place.

We are excited for the piloting of a couple new programs this summer. Our beginner camp will take place in early July and is designed for younger and new campers to attend camp with a family member to get a taste of camp life and activities. The hope is that this experience will prepare campers for a longer stay at camp, by themselves in the future. Our new women's retreat will take place in mid-September and will offer a space for women 18+ to find community, laughter, and fun together. Workshops will be held for women to discuss a variety of topics including family, sense of self, God, and recreation.

In order to serve the financial needs of our community better, we have introduced a new tier pricing system. This system allows parents to select a tier payment that best suits the needs of their family. In this way, combined with our on-going scholarship program, we are ensuring that every child and young person has the opportunity to attend camp.

Our work with clergy from around the diocese to select a meaningful summer theme is underway. Parents, campers, and clergy are excited and enthusiastic for the chance to be back at camp this summer! Through our meaningful work at Camp Tuttle, we intend to give young people a chance to connect with God in nature and to find God's love in the community we have built in the confines of our mountain home.

Please find a comprehensive report of the work and mission of Camp Tuttle and the Youth Ministry of the Episcopal Diocese presented to the Council on Ministry in December of 2020 here:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1SezpqQXzLidUv4fP2xoTv8lGfk6juLLF3EOPxTDfdU/edit?usp=sharing>