

**TWK CAMP & RETREAT MINISTRY**  
**Russell Casteel, TWK Camp & Retreat Executive Director**

Camp and Retreat

As communities continue to transition and grow after the pandemic, churches, families, and young people have returned to camp and retreat with renewed energy in 2022. From an increase in summer campers, to a surge in church wide retreats, camp ministry continued its role as the front porch and backyard of our conference. We will continue to offer sabbath space for people to hear God's call, cultivate community, and experience transformation in creation.

Interested in finding out how your church or ministry can find gathering space, programming, spiritual renewal, or a summer camper experience? Contact TWK Camp and Retreat Executive Director Russell Casteel at [russell.casteel@twkumc.org](mailto:russell.casteel@twkumc.org).

Cedar Crest Camp

Cedar Crest celebrated a year of growth in summer campership and retreat ministry in 2022. In addition, a return of school groups for the Environmental Education program saw an increase of guest groups to be able to experience the grounds at Cedar Crest in a meaningful way. Cedar Crest continued to answer its call to be a place for young people and young adults to hear God's call and help them respond in Christian leadership in service as camp counselors and summer staff.

Since 2022, retreat grounds improvements have included a new deck at Cecil Lodge, removal of the fireplace at the Dining Hall, as well as extensive storm damage cleanup in Spring 2023. The 2023 Summer Camp season is off and running, with registrations tracking along with the largest seasons of the past 10 years. Cedar Crest celebrates its longtime staffer Jessi Persson in her acceptance of the Director of Potosi Pines UM Camp in the Desert Southwest Conference. New Program Director Audrey Jordan will begin her work at Cedar Crest during the summer.

Beersheba Springs Assembly

Continuing to adapt in this season, Beersheba Springs has supported hundreds of churches in their pursuit of spiritual retreat. Through "all church" retreats, meetings, planning opportunities, spiritual guidance, and retreats for United Methodist Men and United Women in Faith, Beersheba has helped thousands of area church members grow in their relationship with God.

Through significant renovations to the "Lower Neal" area in thanks to the Golden Cross Foundation, Beersheba has been able to offer the spiritual practice of retreat to more persons, offering intentional hospitality and sabbath.

Beersheba Springs has sustained its efforts to build partnerships with the surrounding community as well. Beginning in Spring 2022, Beersheba partnered with the South Cumberland Plateau AmeriCorps Hunger Relief Vista Project and offered meals to children and youth in the community. Meals were provided to students and families with the support of the Beersheba team. The annual Christmas party for the community, as well as connection and support for area firefighters and rescue squad, also continue to be important ministries for neighbors.

Churches, clergy, and conference members interested in spiritual renewal, or receiving Spiritual Direction can contact Beersheba Springs Assembly Director (and certified Spiritual Director) Sarah Ratz at [sarah.ratz@twkumc.org](mailto:sarah.ratz@twkumc.org).