

Lakeshore Camp and Retreat Center
The Rev. Gary D. Lawson Sr., Executive Director

The next couple of years will see some significant changes in leadership for Lakeshore. Vickie and I will retire effective December 31, 2024. The Board of Directors have established a transition team that is currently at work mapping out the process for moving into a new future of camp leadership. I am confident that they will set a course that will continue to maintain and grow the ministry of camps and retreats on the “Shore at Eva, Tennessee” with a firm commitment to the covenant partnership that we share with the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference.

I am delighted to share with you some thoughts on our impact report for this last year. It is a testament to the unwavering support and dedication of our incredible faith community and determined supporters. We are filled with gratitude and joy for the continued faithfulness and prayers of the annual conference that are pivotal in sustaining our mission and enhancing the lives of so many young people. (And a few of us older ones as well.)

As we move on from our 75th anniversary that was a highlight of our 2023 ministry, we believe that the future is bright. Our retreat schedule is almost back to our pre-pandemic levels. Our summer camp numbers still have a bit to go; however, we have every reason to expect those record numbers of 2019 to make their way back into the picture. Our mission, “providing ways for ALL to encounter life, love, and the God of grace” is still at the heart of all we do, and we were able to grant nearly \$100,000 in campership funding to families who would otherwise not be able to send their children to camp.

One of my greatest highlights of this last summer came during the baptism of a young Senior High camper. I will never forget the look on his face as he came up out of the water to the roaring celebration of 120 of his peers and, literally, jumped into my arms with the euphoria of it all. Camp is a means of God’s amazing grace that touches hearts and changes lives. Last season we celebrated four baptisms and several reaffirmations of faith within our camper community.

Our impact report highlights 23,101 volunteer hours served, mostly by young people in developing leadership skills in the areas of worship, community building, activity oversight, counseling, teaching, and organized direction. That is huge. Together, with your support, we are providing the means for God’s grace in Jesus the Christ to shape future leaders creating a positive ripple effect for generations to come.

Thank you for partnering with us in the work being done here on what I have always known to be sacred ground. It has been the honor of my life to have shared the last 32 plus years in the ministry of camps and retreats with the support, prayers, and encouragement of the annual conference.

We would love to see you, your group, or your local church at Lakeshore anytime in the coming year for a visit or a tour of the facility. In addition, our permanent staff are ready, willing, and prepared to come to your place to share this ministry. Give us a call. We are also proud to be in covenant partnership with Cedar Crest and Beersheba Springs as we go forward into these new and unusual days. Thanks to all of you for your prayers and support.