

Congregational Report 2020

Thank you for being an Association Member Church! 2020 was an incredibly difficult and unpredictable year for churches, camps, and communities. Amidst the challenges of 2020, we are thankful for your partnership and support, and look forward to the opportunities for ministry in 2021. Here are some highlights from 2020 that we lift up with grateful hearts:

An Updated Brand and New Website Way back at the beginning of 2020, before we knew anything about a pandemic, we started on a fantastic journey with a marketing company to create a refreshed brand for the camps of LWLBC and a new website. Check it out! lakewapo.org

Summer 2020 Despite having to cancel all of our traditional summer camp programming we were still able to hire a small summer staff for Wapo/Ox and Wilderness Canoe Base. This group of talented and dedicated young adults created incredible camp experiences that campers and families could enjoy at home. We were sad to not gather in person but so grateful for the ways we could engage with campers virtually. We were able to provide limited cabin space for family rentals and our staff at Wapo and Wilderness were so happy to host real live people!

Retreats and Events in 2020 The COVID-19 health crisis caused a major disruption in our retreat calendar as well. Because this landscape changes quickly and is unpredictable, most of our groups canceled for the year but we were able to safely host a few groups in the Fall. We have implemented even more rigorous cleaning and disinfecting protocols for all of our sites and require masks and social distancing. Many of our normal events had a new look this year as we adapted to drive through versions of the Memorial Day Pancake Breakfast and Christmas Dinner Theater, a shortened and physically distanced Boat-in Worship season, and a golf tournament with picnic meals.

Rooted and Renewed The Rooted & Renewed campaign for Wilderness Canoe Base reached a significant milestone when we raised the \$300,000 needed to pay off the loan used for the final purchase of that site. And now, we are so close to raising the remaining \$100,000 for needed upgrades in the Cove. If you'd like to learn more, please contact Nathan Berkas at nathanb@campwapo.org.

The Gather Campaign for a new Dining Hall and Hospitality Center With the support of our Board, we decided to begin Phase 1 of this project in 2020. We had the funds in hand to begin building and the time was right due to the disruption in hosting guests and events at Camp Wapo. We anticipate that Phase 1 will be complete in time for the summer 2021 program to begin. Please prayerfully consider how you might be able to financially support this important project as we continue to raise funds for Phase 3. See building progress at lakewapo.org.

Financial Gifts. 2020 was a rough financial year for so many families, businesses, and organizations. The financial impact of the pandemic is far reaching and long lasting. Here at camp we experienced an estimated \$2.3 million loss in summer and retreat program revenue. We adjusted our budget by reducing our expenses by 40% sustaining only our essential day to day operations. We could not have financially survived 2020 without the incredible support we have received from our partner churches and individuals. We are humbled and blessed by your generosity.

Leadership Transition. We are so grateful for the care and leadership that Pastor Jeff Barrow provided as Interim Program Director. As we said goodbye to Jeff in December, we welcomed Pastor Suzi Orlopp as the Director of Programs and Retreats for Camp Wapo and Ox Lake. Suzi brings a great deal of energy and expertise, coupled with her longstanding love and admiration for outdoor ministry.

Risk Management and Youth Protection In a year where nothing was normal, our mission was critical, "places of grace forming people of faith". LWLBC has the primary purpose of providing opportunities for campers to discover, build, and celebrate their relationships with Christ, the church and each other. We are passionate about proclaiming the good news of Jesus to kids in safe spaces. This year we prioritized improving our policies and procedures so we are well poised and ready for 2021. You can find our policies at lakewapo.org.

Our theme for 2021 is "Just Love" Psalm 33:5 says "The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord". This theme will help us focus on living out justice that is formed and shaped by the unearned and utterly gracious love of God, which is longer, higher, wider and deeper than we can imagine.

We look ahead with eager anticipation and a sure sense of hope.