

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE  
OF THE *GREAT LAKES*  
**CAMPING & RETREATS**



# **CAMPER & FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**SUMMER 2026**

**PAGE 1**

This resource was last updated: May 30, 2026 | More info/account management: [greatlakesepiscopalcamping.org](https://greatlakesepiscopalcamping.org)

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## **Dear campers and families,**

We are so glad you're here.

This summer is a special one. For the first time, our camping ministry is unified under one name — Great Lakes Episcopal: Camping & Retreats — bringing together two beloved programs, Camp Chickagami Youth Programming and Episcopal Youth Camp (EYC), with a shared vision and a combined 160+ years of Episcopal summer camping in Michigan behind us. The same grace, hope, and joy we've always offered to creation and to one another is very much alive. (And yes, we all still love s'mores.)

Whether this is your family's first summer with us or you've been coming long enough to have a favorite spot on the waterfront — welcome. You are stepping into something that has been shaping lives for generations, and we are genuinely honored to share it with you.

Summer camp offers young people something increasingly rare: a whole week to slow down, be fully themselves, and discover what it means to belong somewhere. Campers swim and try archery and make things with their hands and stay up a little too late laughing with their cabin. They ask hard questions about faith and find out they're not the only one asking. They leave knowing more about who they are and more certain that they are loved — by God and by this community.

This handbook has everything you need to prepare well. Please read it carefully, especially if this is your family's first summer. Knowing what to expect helps campers arrive ready, and it helps us take the best possible care of them.

We cannot wait to see you out here.

If you have questions or concerns before or during camp, you can reach our team at [camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org](mailto:camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org) or (616)-616-3507.

With s'mores, gratitude, & joy,

### **McKenzie Bade-Knill**

Director for Formation & Camping, Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes  
Executive Director, Camp Chickagami

### **Reilly McNamara**

Manager for Camping Ministries, Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes

### **Elly Knaggs & Val Bower**

Co-Directors for Programming, Great Lakes Episcopal Camping & Retreats

# INCLUSION STATEMENT

We believe that camp has the power to change lives — through even one week in a community that loves and celebrates one another unconditionally. And we believe that this experience belongs to every camper and staff member, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, family structure, ability, or background. **We believe every person is created in the image of God, exactly as they are, with perspectives and experiences that are precious and irreplaceable.**

**As an Episcopal ministry, rooted in the Baptismal Covenant, we strive to:**

- **Continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers.** The simple rhythms of daily life together — prayer, meals, rest, and play — draw us into relationship and community with one another and with God.
- **Seek and serve Christ in all people, loving our neighbors as ourselves.** Our staff is trained to listen deeply, consider each person's perspective, and treat people in the way they would like to be treated according to their own needs and identity. This is the posture we invite all campers into as we navigate life in community together.
- **Strive for justice and peace among all people, respecting the dignity of every human being, by:**
  - Removing barriers to participation through tiered pricing, scholarship support, and transportation assistance — so that financial circumstances are never a reason a child can't come to camp.
  - Making camp a safer place for campers of color by examining and changing practices that have centered whiteness as the default.
  - Affirming LGBTQ+ campers by using each person's chosen name and pronouns, offering gender-inclusive housing options, and creating space where every identity is welcomed and honored.

Whenever we fall short of these ideals, we repent and return. If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions, we welcome that conversation.

*You can reach us at [camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org](mailto:camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org) or review our full Inclusion Policy at [tinyurl.com/edglcampinclusion](https://tinyurl.com/edglcampinclusion)*

# LOGISTICS

## 2026 SESSION DATES & LOCATIONS



### **Camp Chickagami**

*(Sessions 1-3, All Local Day Camp, All Adult & Intergenerational Retreats)*

6952 Kauffman Road,  
Presque Isle, MI 49777

### **Stony Lake Camp**

*(Session 4)*

7898 W Stony Lake Rd,  
New Era, MI 49446

### **Elementary & Intermediate Overnight Camp**

*(rising grades 3–8)*

→ **Session 1: June 21–26**

*at Camp Chickagami*

→ **Session 2: June 28–July 3**

*at Camp Chickagami*

→ **Session 3: July 12–17**

*at Camp Chickagami*

→ **Session 4: July 26–31**

*at Stony Lake Lutheran Camp*

*(This session also includes optional add-on for grades 6–12:  
Provincial Youth Event - more info on page 30)*

### **High School Overnight Camp**

*(rising grades 9–12)*

→ **Session 1: June 21–26**

*at Camp Chickagami*

→ **Session 2: June 28–July 3**

*at Camp Chickagami*

→ **Counselors-In-Training: July 8–17**

*at Camp Chickagami*

→ **Session 4: July 26–31**

*at Stony Lake Lutheran Camp*

*(This session also includes optional add-on for grades 6–12:  
Provincial Youth Event - more info on page 30)*

### **Local Day Camp** *(rising grades 1–6)*

**Session 1: June 22–25** | Camp Chickagami | 8:30 AM–4:00 PM

**Session 2: June 29–July 2** | Camp Chickagami | 8:30 AM–4:00 PM

**Session 3: July 13–16** | Camp Chickagami | 8:30 AM–4:00 PM

### **Traveling Day Camp** *(rising grades 1-12; 1-7 grades as participants, 8-12 grades as helpers)*

**Session 1: July 21–23** | St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Grand Rapids | 10:00 AM–2:00 PM

## TRANSPORTATION

One of the things we're most proud of this summer: **free bus transportation is available for every overnight session.** We are committed to removing barriers so that any young person in Michigan can experience camp, regardless of where they live. Transportation is made possible through generous partnerships with the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan, the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes, and additional sponsors.



If you registered with transportation, you're all set. Details on exact pickup logistics will be sent before camp. If your situation has changed and you'd like to add or remove transportation, contact us at [camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org](mailto:camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org) — we'll do our best to accommodate.

**Session 1 (June 21–26) — Camp Chickagami** Two stops, one bus:

- **St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Flint** — 711 S. Saginaw St., Flint, MI 48502 Camper check-in: 7:30–8:10 AM | Bus departs no later than 8:30 AM
- **St. David's Episcopal Church, Lansing** — 1519 Elmwood Rd., Lansing, MI 48917 Camper check-in: 8:30–9:10 AM | Bus departs no later than 9:45 AM

The bus will stop for lunch on the way to camp (campers will remain on the bus). Return bus departs camp at 1:00 PM Friday, with an estimated arrival of 5:15 PM in Lansing and 6:30 PM in Flint. An updated ETA will be emailed on the day of return.

**Session 2 (June 28–July 3) — Camp Chickagami** Same stops and schedule as Session 1:

- **St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Flint** — 711 S. Saginaw St., Flint, MI 48502 Camper check-in: 7:30–8:10 AM | Bus departs no later than 8:30 AM
- **St. David's Episcopal Church, Lansing** — 1519 Elmwood Rd., Lansing, MI 48917 Camper check-in: 8:30–9:10 AM | Bus departs no later than 9:45 AM

The bus will stop for lunch on the way (campers remain on bus). Return bus departs camp at 1:00 PM Friday, arriving approximately 5:15 PM in Lansing and 6:30 PM in Flint.

**Session 3 (July 12–17) — Camp Chickagami** One stop:

- **St. John's Episcopal Church, Plymouth** — 574 S. Sheldon Rd., Plymouth, MI 48170 Camper check-in: 7:45–8:40 AM | Bus departs no later than 9:00 AM

The bus will stop for lunch on the way (campers remain on bus). Return bus departs camp at 1:00 PM Friday, arriving approximately 5:15 PM in Plymouth.

**Session 4 (July 26–31) — Stony Lake Camp** Two stops, one bus:

- **St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Flint** — 711 S. Saginaw St., Flint, MI 48502 Camper check-in: 8:30–9:10 AM | Bus departs no later than 9:30 AM
- **St. David's Episcopal Church, Lansing** — 1519 Elmwood Rd., Lansing, MI 48917 Camper check-in: 9:30–10:10 AM | Bus departs no later than 10:45 AM

The bus will stop for lunch on the way (campers remain on bus). Return bus departs camp at 1:00 PM Friday, arriving approximately 3:30 PM in Lansing and 4:45 PM in Flint.

*For all sessions: an updated ETA will be emailed on the day of return with more specific arrival times.*

**Day Camp Transportation from Alpena:** Bus pick-up at 8:30 AM, drop-off between 4:25–4:35 PM. Opt in during registration or contact us to make arrangements.

## ARRIVAL & CHECK-IN

**Before you arrive:** Please complete all required forms in your Ultracamp account at least two weeks before your session. This includes your camper's health history form, insurance card, and immunization records — our medical staff needs adequate time to review them before you arrive.

### Check-in times:

- Sessions 1–3 at Camp Chickagami: 1:00–2:00 PM Sunday
- Session 4 at Stony Lake: 1:00–2:00 PM Sunday

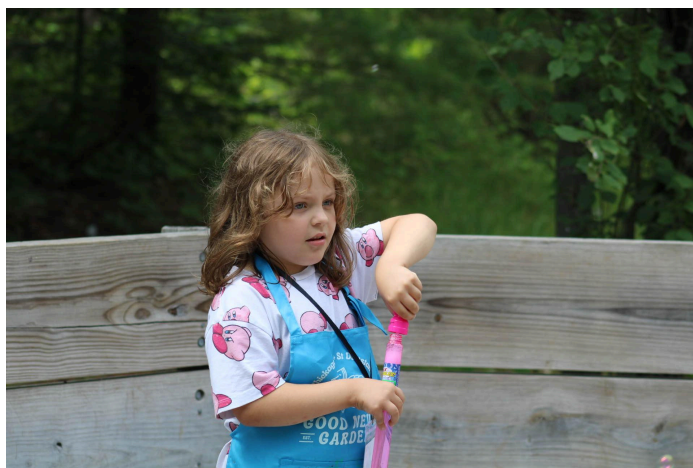
*We are not able to accommodate early arrivals or early departures. If you anticipate a late arrival, please contact us as soon as possible at [camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org](mailto:camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org).*

**What to expect at check-in:** The process takes about 30–45 minutes. You'll move through a few stations:

- Verifying paperwork, forms, and contact information with our team
- Health screening and medication drop-off with the Camp Nurse
- Receiving your cabin assignment and meeting your counselors

Families are welcome to help campers settle into their cabin space and meet their counselors.

**A note on mail:** Bring any letters or care packages to the camp post office at check-in and we'll distribute them throughout the week. Families are often surprised at how much campers treasure a handwritten note — this becomes one of campers' favorite parts of the week. Mail delivery through USPS can be unpredictable, so bringing letters to check-in is the best way to guarantee your camper receives them.



**Saying goodbye:** Once your camper is settled in, we'll invite families to say their goodbyes so campers can join welcome activities with their cabin group. The best gift you can give your camper is a short, warm, confident goodbye: a hug, an "I love you," and a genuine "I can't wait to hear all about it." We don't recommend slipping away while they're distracted, or lingering once they've joined their cabin group.

## PICK UP

### Pick-up times:

- Sessions 1–3 at Camp Chickagami: 1:00 PM Friday
- Session 4 at Stony Lake: 1:00 PM Friday

**Closing Eucharist:** Each session closes with a Eucharist service on **Friday morning after breakfast** — and families and friends are warmly invited to join us. We'll send a more specific schedule and streaming links by email before the end of the week. You can tune in live on **Facebook Live** and **YouTube** for the Closing Eucharist and other community events and services throughout the week.

Before leaving, please:

- Check lost and found for any familiar items
- Pick up and sign out any medications with the Camp Nurse
- Sign out your camper with a Camp Director or designated staff member

Campers will only be released to adults designated on their registration paperwork. If you need to change pick-up authorization, contact us by phone as soon as you know.

## COMMUNICATION

Camp is one of the last spaces where young people get to slow down, be fully present, and build real friendships without the constant pull of a screen. We believe deeply that this is a gift — one that builds confidence, resilience, and the kind of connections that last.

### STAYING IN TOUCH WITH YOUR CAMPER:

**One-Way Email via Ultracamp:** You can send one-way email messages to your camper directly through your Ultracamp account. Here's how:

1. Log in at [ultracamp.com/clientlogin.aspx?idCamp=837&campcode=4N3](http://ultracamp.com/clientlogin.aspx?idCamp=837&campcode=4N3)
2. Navigate to the menu and then to the “Message Center”
3. Select “Email a Camper” (note: you cannot send a message until your camper’s session begins.)
4. Type your message and submit

We print messages daily and deliver them to your camper as physical mail; please only send one email message per day. Please note that campers do not have internet access and cannot respond by email — but they can (and we encourage them to!) write letters back.

**Camp Post Office at Check-In:** Bring any packages and letters to our post office at check-in, and we'll hand them out during the week. (Seriously—this becomes campers' favorite part of camp. Parents are often shocked at how much their kid treasures a handwritten note!) Mail delivery through the postal service can be unpredictable, so we've created this system to ensure your camper gets their special messages.

**Snail mail:** You're welcome to send letters ahead of time. Address mail during the summer season to:

[Camper's Name] c/o Great Lakes Episcopal Camping PO Box 217 Presque Isle,  
Michigan 49777 (for Sessions 1–3 at Camp Chickagami)

**For Session 4 at Stony Lake Camp:** There is no mailing address for camper mail. Bring any letters or care packages with you to check-in, or send messages through your Ultracamp account (see above).

We understand that being away from home can feel big, especially for first-time campers. Here are ways to support your child while they're at camp and stay meaningfully connected:

**Supporting Other Campers:** If you're interested in sending extra cards or small packages for campers who might not receive mail at camp, we would love to include them in mail distribution!

*Providing Camp Snacks & Food Items:* Want to give back to camp? We'd love to have you provide snacks for all our campers! If you're interested in donating snacks for a session, plan for approximately 100 people and reach out to our leadership team at [camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org](mailto:camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org) to coordinate. We'll provide guidance on quantities, dietary needs, and timing.

**Important: Our camps are nut-free facilities.** Due to the serious risk posed by nut allergies, we maintain a strict nut-free environment. This means all snacks must be nut-free—including no tree nuts, peanuts, or products made in facilities that process nuts. We take this seriously to keep all our campers safe.

*Phone Calls:* This summer we have a strict no cell phone policy at camp, and we believe it makes for a richer, more connected experience for your camper. Please do not promise your camper they can call home whenever they want or that they can leave early if they're struggling — this creates a barrier to fully investing in the camp experience. If there is a genuine concern, our staff will reach out to you directly. That said, we know staying in touch matters. We're happy to arrange a brief phone call with your child once during their session.

Calls take place on Wednesday mornings in 5-minute slots. To schedule yours, use the link below to sign up in advance.

*Note: We'll send an Tuesday evening if anything about the Wednesday schedule needs to shift.*

**Link to sign up for a phone call:** <https://form.jotform.com/261490558277063>

If you have questions or need to make a change after signing up, email [camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org](mailto:camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org)

*Photos & updates:* Our staff posts photos to your Ultracamp account multiple times per week, and we send email updates home throughout the session so you can share in the camp experience from afar. Check your Ultracamp account and inbox regularly!

**Communicating about your camper:** If your camper's counselor or a member of the leadership team has a concern — homesickness, conflict, a health situation — you will hear from us. Likewise, if there's something you'd like us to know before camp: a recent loss, significant life change, social or behavioral pattern — please reach out. The more we know, the better we can support them. Email [camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org](mailto:camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org) or call 616-616-2821.

# HEALTH & SAFETY

## BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

Please do not bring your camper to camp if they have experienced any of the following in the 24 hours prior to arrival: fever, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, or shortness of breath. Contact us to arrange a late arrival if needed — we want every camper healthy and we'll work with you.

We recommend that all campers take a rapid COVID-19 test before traveling to camp. If the result is positive, please stay home and notify us. We have rapid tests available on-site and ask that anyone with symptoms remain home to protect our community.

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## MEDICATIONS

All medications are kept and administered by the Camp Nurse. **No medications (unless emergency medications authorized to self-carry) — prescription or over-the-counter, including vitamins — may be kept in cabin spaces.**

To bring any medication to camp:

- It must be in its original container, labeled with your camper's name and dosage
- It must be noted in your camper's Ultracamp account. Please update that information prior to arrival at camp.

**Over-the-counter medications:** Your camper's health form includes a checklist of common OTC medications we keep stocked on-site. You can authorize our nurse to administer these as needed. If your camper takes an OTC medication not on that list — like melatonin or a daily vitamin — bring it in original packaging.

**Emergency medications** (epi-pens, rescue inhalers): These are kept with the Camp Nurse unless authorized for self-carry, and travel with your camper's group anytime they leave the main camp area.

**Immunizations:** Please upload your camper's immunization record to your Ultracamp account document center before arrival. Your current insurance card is also required.

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## MEDICAL STAFF & HEALTH OFFICE

A qualified health officer is on-site for every session. Most other camp staff are First Aid and CPR certified. The Health Office is your camper's first stop for any medical need during the week.

The Camp Nurse distributes medications at mealtimes, bedtime, and as otherwise designated. Our staff will reach out to you if your camper spends the night in the Health Office for any reason, requires off-site care, or repeatedly visits with the same concern. Please understand that our staff cannot call for every minor visit — scrapes, ice packs, toe soaks, and insect bites are routine. We often allow tired campers to rest and rehydrate in the Health Office.

**In a medical emergency,** emergency services will be called first; the designated parent or guardian will be contacted as soon as safely possible.

**Off-site medical care — Camp Chickagami:** If your camper requires X-rays, lab work, or care beyond what our Health Office can provide, we have arrangements with **MyMichigan Medical Center Alpena** and **MyMichigan Urgent Care Alpena**. We will make every effort to contact you before off-site care occurs, though we will not delay treatment if we cannot reach you.

**Off-site medical care — Stony Lake Camp:** We have arrangements with **Trinity Health Urgent Care – Whitehall, Mercy Health Urgent Care – North Muskegon, Trinity Health Muskegon Hospital,** and **Trinity Health Shelby Hospital**. Same contact commitment applies.

*Parents/guardians are financially responsible for any off-site care.*

The Camp Nurse will contact you if your camper has an injury or illness that prevents participation for more than half a day, if they need care beyond what we can provide on-site, or if we have any questions about their health.

## MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Every camper comes to us with their own full story — and more and more young people are navigating anxiety, depression, sensory processing differences, and other mental health needs. The more we know about your camper, the better we can support them.

Health and diagnostic information is kept confidential and shared only with the Camp Nurse and leadership staff — and only on a need-to-know basis with your camper's counselors.

If anything may affect your camper's experience — a recent loss, divorce, move, or significant social or behavioral pattern — please reach out before the session. We're happy to talk by phone if that's more comfortable than writing it down.

**A note on medications for ADHD, anxiety, depression, and similar conditions:** Some physicians recommend pausing these medications over summer. We'd encourage you to discuss camp specifically with your doctor — camp involves routines, social dynamics, and attention demands more similar to school than you might expect. We're happy to be a resource for that conversation.

## FOOD & DIETARY NEEDS

Three meals are served daily, plus snacks. Meals are served **buffet-style**, and sometimes **family-style**. We always have a robust salad bar at lunch and dinner, and each meal offers a wide range of choices so every camper can find something they love.

We accommodate most dietary restrictions, including vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, and most common allergens. **We maintain a strict nut-free facility** due to serious allergies among our campers. Please do not send nut-containing snacks or care package items.



If your camper prefers a nut-free butter (like sunflower seed butter), you're welcome to send it — we'll make sure they have access to it.

Please note all dietary restrictions on your camper's health form. Contact us before camp if you'd like to talk through specifics.

Campers may not bring food from home unless specific arrangements have been made in advance. Food in cabin spaces attracts pests. Any food found in cabin areas will be removed.

*Would you like to donate snacks for a session? Plan for approximately 100 people and reach out to us at [camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org](mailto:camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org) to coordinate quantities, timing, and nut-free requirements.*

# WHAT TO EXPECT AT CAMP

## OUR STAFF

Camp is led by an intergenerational team of counselors — carefully selected for their kindness, creativity, energy, and maturity, and their passion for working with young people.

**Senior Counselors** are the backbone of each session: young adults employed for the duration of the summer. They receive comprehensive training including child development, group leadership, conflict resolution, bullying prevention, equity and inclusion, and activity safety. At least two adults are with every cabin group during every activity. Our staff-to-camper ratio is one counselor for every five campers.



Our team also includes **chaplains**, who lead worship and support the spiritual life of camp; a **Camp Nurse** on-site for every session; and **adult volunteers**, all of whom are background-checked.

Our counselors specialize in creating environments that are physically, emotionally, and spiritually safe — where all campers are welcomed and invited to participate at their own pace, through "challenge by choice."

Questions about our staff, or interested in joining the team? Visit [greatlakesepiscopalcamping.org/work-at-camp](https://greatlakesepiscopalcamping.org/work-at-camp) or email [camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org](mailto:camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org).

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## CABIN LIFE & HOUSING

Overnight campers live in cabin groups of 6–12 peers, with at least two adult staff (18 or older) in every cabin. There are always at least two adults present at all times. Cabin groups explore the lakes, forests, trails, and outdoor spaces of camp together — and more importantly, they practice

what it means to truly belong somewhere.

At least two adult counselors sleep in the cabins with the campers. Campers change clothes either in the privacy of their beds, in the bath-houses or in changing pods within the cabin spaces. Each night before bed, cabins participate in Cabin Closing activities. These activities sometimes include reading stories, saying prayers and gratitudes, reflecting on the day. Counselors will go around and ensure each camper is tucked in and comfortable before sleep and if campers need to go to the bathroom in the night, they will wake up their counselors to let them know.

At **Camp Chickagami**, bathhouses are in close proximity to the cabin spaces. At **Stony Lake Camp**, some cabins have bathrooms located within the cabin itself, while others are in close proximity to a bathhouse.

**Gender-inclusive housing:** Gender inclusive housing is offered in addition to same-gender housing we have traditionally offered at camp. Campers of all gender identities and expressions can opt-in to gender inclusive housing, allowing each camper to stay in a dorm that feels safe and comfortable for them. Gender-inclusive housing creates room for gender non-conforming campers and their allies to fully represent themselves, furthering our mission to be a camp where everyone is seen and treated as a beloved child of God. This is offered in addition to same-gender housing options.

Our full Gender-Inclusive Housing FAQ is available at [tinyurl.com/edglgenderinclusivehousing](https://tinyurl.com/edglgenderinclusivehousing) and is part of our registration process.

**Cabin requests:** As you complete your registration paperwork, please note that there is a section where you may request a roommate pairing for your camper. **We will honor one pairing per camper.** Any larger groups of campers that request to stay together in the same dorm will be split up. Camp is a unique opportunity to meet new and different people, build relationships across typical social divides, and experience life in a community that may be a little different from the one you live in at home. While it is understandable to want your camper to have a familiar touchpoint, we encourage you to get your camper excited about the possibilities that arise out of embracing a new experience. Daily activities generally do not take place by cabin group, so there are plenty of opportunities at camp to socialize outside of cabins!

Please note also that for the safest dorm experience, cabin assignments are generally grouped by developmental/age ranges. For this reason we may not always be able to honor sibling

roommate requests. And, unless specifically requested in the Camper Application, siblings and known cousins/family members are intentionally split up.

*If you have any questions, email [camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org](mailto:camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org).*

## CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Great Lakes Episcopal: Camping & Retreats is a Christian formation ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes. Camp is grounded in Scripture and tradition, and invites campers and staff to use their whole selves to explore the Christian story.

At least one chaplain and a team of Christian Formation volunteers are present for each session to lead worship and support the community. Chaplains are Episcopal clergy or qualified lay ministers.

Every morning includes **Morning Worship** — led by chaplains, staff, and often by campers themselves — including music, prayer, and scripture. Each day, campers also participate in **Christian Formation**: dedicated program time to engage with a Bible story or theme through art, music, games, conversation, and hands-on activities.

Each session includes at least one **Eucharist** (communion) service. Campers are invited to receive or to come forward for a blessing — always by choice, never by pressure. We do not practice altar calls or place young people in situations where they are asked to profess a particular belief.

There is no church membership or religious background required to attend camp. What we invite every camper into is exploration: wondering, questioning, reflecting, and discovering what it means to be loved and known by God.

*"By living in Christian community, we are always trying to see and treat each other the way God sees us: loved, accepted, and celebrated, just the way we are."*

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

Every day at camp has its own rhythm and surprises. Here's a general sense of what your camper's week looks like:

Time	Activity
7:00 AM	Wake up
7:45 AM	Camp chores
8:00 AM	Breakfast
8:45 AM	Cabin cleanup
9:00 AM–12:00 PM	Morning activity block: Christian Formation, Camper's Choice, Field Trips, Cabin Time
12:30 PM	Lunch
1:15–5:30 PM	Afternoon activity block: Waterfront & swim time, Camper's Choice, Rest Hour
5:30 PM	Dinner
6:15–8:30 PM	Evening activities: community events, cabin time, games
8:30 PM	Compline & Night Prayer
9:00 PM	Getting ready for bed, cabin reflections
10:30 PM	Lights out

Activities throughout the week include swimming, archery, arts and crafts, field games, waterfront time, campfires, and more. Each session at Camp Chickagami also includes a special field trip to Ocqueoc Falls — see below.

## FIELD TRIP: OCQUEOC FALLS (CAMP CHICKAGAMI OVERNIGHT SESSIONS)

Each overnight week at Camp Chickagami, campers take a trip to **Ocqueoc Falls** near Rogers City — a beautiful natural waterfall where campers wade, splash, and play in the water together. It's a camp favorite and a truly special experience.

### What to pack for the falls:

*Water shoes are required* — specifically shoes that securely fasten to your camper's foot and can get wet. Good options include water sandals like Keens or Chacos, or snug-fitting water shoes. Crocs with a back strap can work in a pinch but aren't ideal. Regular flip-flops are not appropriate for the falls.

*A one-piece swimsuit is required for Ocqueoc Falls.* The water can move with some force, and we want every camper to be able to play fully and freely without worrying about their suit. A two-piece suit or swim trunks may be fine for calm swimming at camp, but please pack a one-piece (or a snug rash guard/swim shirt tucked into bottoms) for the falls. This is about safety and freedom of movement — nothing more.

*Optional:* If your camper has their own Coast Guard–approved life jacket and you'd like to send it along, you are welcome to do so. We will also have life jackets available; all shallow water swimmers (swimmers who don't pass our swim test or opt out, are required to wear a life jacket in the falls and any time in the deeper water at Camp Chickagami's waterfront).

*An update from the registration process:* This year, our Chickagami field trips for Overnight Camp will focus on Ocqueoc Falls. We won't be offering the Lighthouse or Glass Bottom Boat tour in 2026 as we planned, but we're already dreaming about bringing those back — and adding new ones — in future summers.

## HOMESICKNESS

It's extremely common for campers of all ages to experience homesickness. Our staff are trained to respond with care, providing a listening ear to campers and helping them find ways to connect at camp. Homesickness can be an opportunity for campers to learn to experience their emotions, find coping strategies, and build resilience. **We encourage you to talk with your camper about homesickness before camp, especially if they are feeling nervous.** *Your positive framing and encouragement has the biggest impact on your camper's outlook on their camp experience.*

In the case of extreme and persistent homesickness, the Camp Director will call parents/guardians to keep them informed of the camper's well-being and determine appropriate steps forward. **In most cases, we do not permit phone calls home between a camper and parent. Please, do not promise that your child can call you or go home if they are not having a good time.** This creates a barrier to your child's full investment in the camp experience and all it has to offer.

**Here are a few ways you can help your camper prepare for camp, especially if this is their first time away from home or if they are worried about being homesick.**

- Pack a few **photos** of loved ones or a comforting item from home.
- **Send (e)mail to/leave mail for your camper.** Tell them about day-to-day things happening at home that will reassure them that things are going well: what's for dinner, what you did that day. Remind them how excited you are to hear about camp.
- **Some tips to talk about homesickness before your camper's session:**
  - Ask what they're excited about at camp: (ziplining! swimming! new friends! arts and crafts!), and ask if there's anything they're nervous about. Help them plan strategies for when they feel sad or afraid: "It can be hard to be in a new place with new people. What's something you like that you could talk about to make a new friend?" or "When you feel sad because you miss me, hug the blanket from home/practice deep breaths/write a letter and remember that I love you very much!"
  - **Promote secure attachment** by showing confidence that your camper can miss loved ones and enjoy camp at the same time: "I'll miss you, too--we always miss the people we love when we're apart, and that's okay! One thing that will make it easier for me when I miss you is to think about the fun time you'll be having at camp. I can't wait to hear all about it!"

## BEHAVIOR & COMMUNITY STANDARDS

Disciplinary issues will be addressed with respect for the camper's dignity, and with the goal of helping campers reach their full potential. Whenever possible, consequences seek to hold campers directly accountable for their words and actions (ex: helping to clean up messes or damaged items, conflict resolution mediated by a staff member). Other consequences may include short periods of time withheld from recreational activities such as pool time. **Camp staff will never use corporal punishment or speak to children in a way meant to embarrass them or that demeans their value as individuals.**

**Right to Search:** Personal belongings, luggage, backpacks, sleeping space, and pockets are subject to search by the Executive Director, the Programs/Camp Director, or a staff person designated by them.

**Sending Participants Home:** Our disciplinary policy is to first seek a way to invite campers into reconciliation as members of the camp community. However, in extreme circumstances, staff reserves the right to decide that a camper's behavior poses too great a risk to others for them to remain at camp. These behaviors may lead to a youth being sent home: persistent defiance or insubordination that threaten the safety of self or others, actions that threaten the physical or emotional safety of self or others, continued disruption of community life, and disrespect for community and community property.

**The following behaviors will result in the participant being sent home: fighting, use of physical violence, blatant disregard for the rights and welfare of others, possession of weapons, drugs, or alcohol, or sexual activity.** At the Director for Formation & Camping's discretion, and for the safety of other campers, a camper who is sent home for these reasons may be excluded from future camps.

# WHAT TO BRING (& WHAT NOT TO BRING)

## ELECTRONICS POLICY

This summer we are implementing a **strict no-cell-phone policy**. Cell phones and all personal electronic devices (smart watches, tablets, gaming devices) are not permitted at camp. Any devices brought by campers will be held securely by the Camp Director and returned to the family at pick-up.

### Why screen-free?

Campers who disconnect tend to have more fun, make deeper friendships, and actually experience camp rather than document it. In a world of constant content, a week without screens allows campers to build real presence — with each other, with creation, and with themselves.

[Research consistently links](#)

reduced screen time to improved mental health in young people, and we've seen it firsthand at camp for years. We promise it's good medicine.



Smart devices also pose real safety and privacy risks: location-sharing apps, the ability to photograph sleeping spaces, and contact with people outside camp all make it harder to keep your camper and their peers safe. Keeping devices away isn't just about presence — it's protective.

### What if I need to reach my camper?

Sleepaway camp is a milestone experience for campers and parents alike as a safe environment for children to practice independence. It is a big step for both campers and families to give up the security of immediate contact. **We ask for your trust in our expertise in creating a safe environment, which includes preventing covert smart device use. It is our honor to be**

**trusted with your camper, and we do not take it lightly. Please do not put your and other campers at risk and encourage rule-breaking by sending them to camp with contraband electronics you have instructed them to hide.**

If you would still like to connect with your camper during their week away, we can arrange one brief phone call per week.

Calls take place on Wednesday mornings in 5-minute slots. To schedule yours, use the link below to sign up in advance.

*Note: We'll send an Tuesday evening if anything about the Wednesday schedule needs to shift.*

**Link to sign up for a phone call:** <https://form.jotform.com/261490558277063>

If there's an urgent need, contact us directly at [camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org](mailto:camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org) or 616-616-2821 and we will connect you.

**What about photos?** Our staff posts photos multiple times per week to your Ultracamp account, and we send email updates home throughout the session.

We are all used to our phones doubling as our cameras, and we encourage taking pictures at camp! We highly recommend planning ahead to go old-school: if there's an old digital camera at home, dig it out of the drawer and send it with your camper! Disposable cameras ([yes, you can still buy them!](#)) are another great option--be sure to label with your camper's name.

**If your camper drives themselves to camp** and needs a phone for safety, the phone must be turned in to the Camp Director at check-in for safekeeping.

## PACKING LIST

**Label EVERYTHING with your camper's first and last name — use a permanent marker.**

Labeled items found after camp are held for one week; unlabeled items are donated.

### Essentials:

- T-shirts and long-sleeved shirts
- Shorts and comfortable pants
- Underwear and socks (extras — things get wet)
- Jacket or sweatshirt
- Swimsuits (2 if possible)
- **One-piece bathing suit or secure-fitting swimwear for the Ocqueoc Falls field trip**  
(see Field Trip section)
- Pajamas
- Poncho or raincoat
- **Water shoes** (required for Ocqueoc Falls — must strap securely to the foot)
- Closed-toe shoes for running/activities
- Shower sandals
- Sleeping bag
- Pillow
- Twin-sized sheet and blanket
- Bath towel and washcloth
- Beach towel
- Reusable water bottle (labeled with name)
- Flashlight or headlamp with fresh batteries
- Toiletries — shampoo, conditioner, face wash, body wash, deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste
- Bug spray
- Sunscreen (Michigan summer sun is real)
- Medications in original containers, with completed authorization forms
- Laundry bag

- Preferred period care products, if applicable

**Nice to have:**

- Non-digital or disposable camera
- Letter writing supplies and stamped envelopes
- Watch
- Bible and Book of Common Prayer
- Shower caddy
- Hiking boots
- Small backpack or day bag
- Bandana
- Musical instrument
- Photos of family and friends
- Coast Guard–approved life jacket (optional, for Ocqueoc Falls or the waterfront; we have plenty of extras)

We are not responsible for lost or damaged belongings. If you're worried about losing something, leave it home. **There is no need for campers to bring money to camp.**

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## **WHAT NOT TO BRING (PROHIBITED ITEMS)**

When we come to camp, we intentionally set aside some comforts of home to focus on faith, community, and the people in front of us. The following items either compromise safety or pull us out of presence. Prohibited items will be confiscated, and families will be notified.

- Cell phones, smart watches, tablets, gaming devices, or any smart technology
- Money
- Food, gum, candy, or drink powder additives (*nut-containing items especially — we are a nut-free facility*)
- Pocket knives
- Medications not in original containers
- Skateboards, hoverboards, scooters

- Toy or fake weapons

**The following items are illegal and will result in immediate dismissal and notification of authorities:** Tobacco products (including vapes/e-cigarettes), alcohol, controlled substances, marijuana, firearms, fireworks, or any other weapon or illegal item.

# SPECIALTY PROGRAMS

## PROVINCIAL YOUTH EVENT AT THE BIG PROVINCIAL GATHERING (PYE+BPG) (GRADES 6–12 — JULY 30–AUGUST 1, KALAMAZOO)

This summer, the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes is joining youth from across Province V for a special gathering right here in Michigan — and we'd love for your camper to be part of it.

**What is PYE+BPG?** The Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes is part of Province V of the Episcopal Church. Every so often, Province V hosts a "Big Provincial Gathering" (BPG) — a convening of ministry leaders from across the region. This year it's happening in Kalamazoo, and right before it begins, there's a dedicated **Provincial Youth Event (PYE)** just for middle and high schoolers. This is a rare chance to connect with Episcopal youth from across the Midwest, worship together, and explore what it means to live out our shared faith in community.

**Theme:** *"We Will, With God's Help"* — rooted in the Baptismal Covenant and our shared call to live in community inside and outside the church.

**Who:** Any student who has completed grades 6–12. Youth do not need to be attending summer camp to participate — registration is open to all young people in our diocese.

**When:** July 30–August 1, 2026 | Registration deadline: July 15

**Where:**

- Programming: St. Luke's Episcopal, Kalamazoo & First Presbyterian Church, Kalamazoo
- Overnight accommodations: St. Barnabas, Portage

**What's included:** Lodging for the full event, all meals, and a full program of worship, reflection, and community-building.

**Basic Schedule:**

*Thursday:* Welcome lunch at 1:00 PM → afternoon program (campers from Stony Lake will arrive around Dinnertime) → dinner → evening program → Compline

*Friday:* Breakfast → Morning Prayer → lunch → Big Provincial Gathering begins → dinner → evening program

*Saturday*: Breakfast → worship → lunch → workshop/mission opportunity → Departure at 3:00 PM

**For Session 4 campers:** If your camper is registered for Session 4 at Stony Lake Camp (July 26–31), they have the option to extend their experience by joining PYE+BPG. Campers who choose this option will leave Stony Lake on **Thursday afternoon** — transportation to Kalamazoo is provided. Families will need to arrange pick-up from Kalamazoo on **Saturday, August 1** (departure time: approximately 3:00 PM). More specific logistics will be communicated by email.

**For youth not attending Session 4:** Any student in grades 6–12 from across the diocese is welcome to register for PYE+BPG directly — no summer camp required.

**To register directly for the youth event:** [form.jotform.com/261185528572160](https://form.jotform.com/261185528572160)

# MORE FROM GREAT LAKES EPISCOPAL CAMPING & RETREATS IN 2026



Youth summer camp is just the beginning. Great Lakes Episcopal: Camping & Retreats offers a full season of programming for all ages — families, individuals, multi-generational groups, friend squads, and everyone in between. All programs are at Camp Chickagami unless otherwise noted. All include lodging and meals. Scholarships are available for every program.

## **Generations Gathered | July**

**8–11 | All ages**

A creation care retreat centered on environmental stewardship and faith in action. Families garden, explore the land, take nature walks, and join service projects that teach us to care for God's creation — together, across generations. Lodging options across all family programs include private cabin units (with bathrooms and kitchens), bunkhouses, and tent camping. WiFi is available in select areas. Everyone has fridge access. All family programs welcome solo adults, couples, grandparents, friend groups — whoever your people are, there's room. *Pricing starts at \$300 per person + \$90 per additional person.*

## **Finding Your Peace: spiritual practices for peacemaking | July 17-19 | Adults Only Retreat**

What does it mean to find peace — not as an escape from the world, but as a way of moving through it? Join us this July for "Finding Peace: Spiritual Practices for Peacemaking," a retreat led by Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple, rooted in Scripture and the deep wells of the Christian tradition. Together we'll explore what it means to cultivate peace within ourselves and become channels of peace for the world around us. This is not a conference or a lecture series — it's a retreat, designed to hold both structure and breathing room. Camp Chickagami's setting does its own quiet work, and we'll let it. *Pricing starts at \$300 per person*

## **Days at the Lake | August 6–9 | All ages**

Intentionally flexible. Come for worship, optional programs, and creative activities — or simply enjoy the lake, rest, read, and be present with the people you love. These days are yours to shape. Lodging options

across all family programs include private cabin units (with bathrooms and kitchens), bunkhouses, and tent camping. WiFi is available in select areas. Everyone has fridge access. All family programs welcome solo adults, couples, grandparents, friend groups — whoever your people are, there's room. *Pricing starts at \$300 per person + \$90 per additional person.*

**Labor Day Work Camp** | September 4–7 | All ages

Help camp prepare for its winter rest, then enjoy swimming, games, and real community together. Meaningful work, shared effort, and genuine joy. Lodging options across all family programs include private cabin units (with bathrooms and kitchens), bunkhouses, and tent camping. WiFi is available in select areas. Everyone has fridge access. All family programs welcome solo adults, couples, grandparents, friend groups — whoever your people are, there's room. *Pricing starts at \$100 per person + \$75 per additional person.*

**Contemplative Fiber Arts Retreat** | September 25-27 | Adults Only Retreat

Weave together creativity, community, and contemplation amidst the vibrant autumn landscape of Northern Michigan. Join the Rev. Radha Michel-Trapaga for a restorative and inspiring retreat at Camp Chickagami, designed for fiber artists of all skill levels seeking a deeper connection with their craft, themselves, and the divine. This retreat offers a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in your creative process within a supportive community, while also nurturing your spiritual journey through contemplative practices. *Pricing starts at \$300 per person*

**Retreat in the Colors: a silent fall retreat** | October 2-4 | Adults Only Retreat

Embrace the vibrant hues of autumn and the quiet of inner reflection at Camp Chickagami. Join us this October for “Retreat in the Colors,” a silent retreat designed to immerse you in the beauty of the fall season while offering a sanctuary for introspection and spiritual renewal. This retreat provides a unique opportunity to disconnect from the noise of daily life and reconnect with your inner self and God amidst the stunning backdrop of Northern Michigan’s autumn foliage. *Pricing starts at \$300 per person*

**Camp Goes to Sleep - Fall Closing Work Weekend** | October 9-11 | All Ages (*youth must be supervised by a responsible adult*)

It takes many hands and lots of love to keep our beloved camp going. Volunteers of all types are welcome to share their gifts to help put Camp Chickagami to sleep for another winter season. *No cost; free.*

*Explore the full schedule and register at [greatlakesepiscopalcamping.org](http://greatlakesepiscopalcamping.org).*

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# We can't wait to see you at camp this summer!



**"Our camps are thin places. The distance between heaven and earth feels smaller here — in the community we're building together."**

**Questions?** We're always happy to talk. [camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org](mailto:camping@greatlakesepiscopal.org) | 616-616-2821  
[greatlakesepiscopalcamping.org](http://greatlakesepiscopalcamping.org)

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*Great Lakes Episcopal: Camping & Retreats is a program of the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes. Camp Chickagami holds full American Camp Association (ACA) accreditation. Both locations are licensed by the State of Michigan and are member programs of Episcopal Camps and Conference Centers (ECCC). Camp Chickagami sits on the ancestral homelands of the Anishinaabe peoples, in the Ocqueoc River Watershed. We give thanks for this land and for those who have called it home since time beyond memory.*