



DIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA AND EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

The Most Rev. Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia • Orthodox Church in America

July 11, 2024

Dear beloved clergy and faithful,

Christ is in our midst! He is and ever shall be. By the grace of God and with the assistance of our clergy, Diocesan faithful and faithful from outside the Diocese, especially the Archdiocese of Washington D.C. we enjoyed a blessed week at our summer camp program. Through the sacrificial offering of time, talents and donations our youth enjoyed a wonderful time of prayer, fellowship, Christian education, boating, fishing, arts and crafts and many various activities.

We were incredibly blessed with the creative leadership of our new Camp Director Dan Peck. He truly is amazing in his ability to connect with the youth and his organizational skills as well. The success of the camp was due to his ability to coordinate and identify the talents of our gifted staff, volunteers as well as the mutual cooperation of staff and campers. Dan developed a flex schedule which allowed more options for activities simultaneously for each age group and provided opportunities for our campers to work in collaboration with the staff. We are grateful to all who participated in preparation, scheduling, education, food preparation, and overseeing and assisting with the many aspects of providing our Orthodox Youth with a quality program. We received many donations from parishes and individuals to sponsor our Diocesan Youth program. The financial support received covered the costs for numerous children, especially those with multiple siblings who otherwise would not been able to attend. The cost for just the food for campers and staff exceeded \$16,000. We also appreciate the donation of pierogis from our parishes and from Mrs. Ts, who donated 1152 pierogis (996 dozen). Through your generosity, last year and this year we had many first time campers and the percentage of our Diocesan campers is now in the majority for the last two years. The two exhaust fans added the week before camp to the pavilion cost \$5,000 and helped reduce the trapped hot air and make our daily programs more comfortable for everyone. We also purchased two more volley ball nets and three canopies (10' x 20').

We were blessed to have many talented and gifted adults who offered of themselves both before camp, during the week of camp and breaking things down. We are working to provide a debriefing for all who participated for their valuable feedback. There is always room for improvement, new ideas and new activities. We know the teens would appreciate the addition of kayaks for future camp activities.

Once again we are blessed to partner with St Tikhon's Seminary and St. Tikhon's Monastery for access and use of their facilities and participation. Given the wonderful response this year, we will likely see registration close within a week of opening. Our Fall Youth retreat will be October 18-20th at Camp Hebron for children 12-18. We have not asked for donation for the previous Winter Retreat or Fall Retreat, but donations are appreciated. Please encourage your youth to attend and your adults to volunteer to serve Christ and His Holy Church in the coming years!

Your unworthy father in Christ,

+ Mark

+ MARK, Archbishop of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

CC: Dan Peck, Camp Director