

Proposal to the Presbytery of Lake Michigan

From Greenwood Ministries Association

Submitted August 18th 2016 to PLM Leadership Team
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Overview

Greenwood Ministries Association (GMA) is a new, legally incorporated Michigan [501\(c\)3](#) nonprofit organization (see the [Articles of Incorporation](#) and [Amendments](#)) created for the purpose of responding to God's call to make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). The mission of the GMA is **“to establish a ministry where everyone can learn and live more fully into the joy of being a Christian. Through both traditional camp ministries and other new endeavors, we will facilitate spiritual growth, environmental stewardship, human development and service to our neighbors.”** The leaders of this effort have the prayerful support of many others who are hoping for a strong, new beginning for Camp Greenwood, as well as a vision for future expansion of new ministries taking root there.

Professional expertise in Christian camping has contributed to GMA planning, most especially from Suzanne and Jim Bates of [Camp Westminster on Higgins Lake](#). They have offered a future partnership with GMA. Research from the [Presbyterian Panel](#), the [Run River](#) camp consultation organization, and personal testimony indicates that Christian camping has been and can continue to be one of the most formative experiences for building faith in Christ. Many people have reported feeling **“[The Spirit of God is present at Camp Greenwood](#)”**, and while the Spirit of God is indeed present everywhere, the hand of God has been evident in many ways over the past year as this new organization was

formed. This, in tandem with the [unique environmental features](#) of the Camp Greenwood property as well as its long beloved history within the Presbytery of Lake Michigan is the overwhelming reason for GMA.

Operating Presbyterian camps by nonprofit organizations is increasingly being done by other Protestant denominations. It is estimated ten Presbyterian camps in the United States are going through a similar transitional process this year. A nonprofit organization working solely on the ministry of the camp can be more nimble and focused than a Presbytery with diverse responsibilities. Extensive efforts have been made to assure no future Presbytery financial contributions will be made after December 31, 2016. This will require well-planned transitional efforts and support from individuals and churches. However, multiple provisions have been made to provide cooperation with and opportunities for the Presbytery. The intent is for GMA to continue living into the Reformed tradition of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

This proposal includes a [Covenant Agreement with the Presbytery](#) to promote an ongoing positive relationship between the two entities. The Greenwood Ministries Association will reserve a spot on its Board for representation from the Presbytery of Lake Michigan to continue a collaborative relationship with the Presbytery. The proposal also includes a [letter of support from Camp Westminster at Higgins Lake](#) an already-approved [Covenant Agreement with Camp Westminster](#) for sharing of staff, resources and costs. This covenantal agreement grew out of the collaborative partnership that existed between both camps in the summer of 2016.

If the Presbytery of Lake Michigan approves this proposal, the GMA will

begin paying all bills and managing all operations on January 1, 2017. An [insurance policy](#) will need to be secured; utility accounts will need to be transferred; responsibilities of the Presbytery Greenwood Agency will be assumed by the GMA Board. Accounting services will be provided by Svoboda McDaniel Group in Northville, MI and payroll will be handled by ADP; both organizations are currently used effectively by Camp Westminster. GMA will be governed by a nine-member Board (see our [Amended Bylaws](#)); terms will be three years, subject to rotation. Board members will be elected by GMA members as a whole, (a process similar to electing church Elders.)

Planning for GMA has involved sustained and ongoing conversation with Suzanne and Jim Bates, who have a proven track record at Camp Westminster (bringing it back from the point of near-closure two decades ago and building it up to become a thriving and successful ministry), and with consultants Pam Harris and Garrie Stevens of Run River Enterprises, Inc. Run River's perspective and qualifications are described at the end of [the Run River report](#). They have been an integral part of developing the [five-year business plan](#) and [financial narrative comments](#), and will be involved in board training. More importantly, they will lead the new GMA board through a spiritually-based strategic planning process to determine future decisions on programming, facilities, finances, and more. Helpful information has been provided in a [letter by Brian Frick of the Presbyterian Mission Agency](#), the Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association, and the Christian Camp and Conference Association.

The first priority of GMA is to develop and strengthen a 21st-century summer camp ministry to be complemented by increasing off-season group rentals. [The five-year business plan](#) as explained in the [narrative comments](#) is a

conservative approach to camp revenues, which will be supplemented by an extensive fundraising effort which is already strongly underway and not reflected in the business plan. While actual camper and rental activity will probably will exceed these levels, the purpose of this plan is to show financial sustainability with modest increases and a minimum budget.

The second priority of GMA will be to offer new ministries, such as the proposed partnership with Alma College offering environmental classes on site in 2017. See the [enclosed letter from the President of Alma College](#) for more about this exciting opportunity.

Our current proposal does not call for a full-time director to be hired immediately. In the summer of 2016 the camp operated very successfully by sharing staff with Camp Westminster. Two highly mature, experienced young adults operated as the senior “on site” staff, under the supervision of Suzanne Bates, Director of Camp Westminster, who split her time between both camps and was always just a phone call away. The proposal envisions that a similar arrangement would continue for the next several years, developing young adults to become highly effective camp administrators. As the camp grows and increases campers, groups and revenue, the camp staff will be increased accordingly. A full-time camp director living on site is but one possibility among many for successful camp administration in this new era of technology and instant communication.

GMA has identified three options for its use of the Camp Greenwood property now owned by the Presbytery of Lake Michigan:

(1) Lease the camp property to GMA, retaining ownership and liability of the Presbytery.

(2) Create a legally separate trust between the Presbytery and GMA to help limit liability.

(3) Entrust the property entirely to GMA, limiting Presbytery liability; while ensuring that upon the dissolution of the GMA that all assets, including property, revert back to the Presbytery.

Restrictions or conditions can be developed for any of the three options. Assuming no future Presbytery funds will be contributed to the camp and to best protect the interests of the Presbytery, GMA wants to be “on record” recommending the safest approach. GMA would realize no significant advantage or disadvantage for any of the three options, and believes the Presbytery should determine which of the three is in its best interest from both a financial and a liability standpoint.

As a new entity, GMA must continue to develop and prove its capabilities. We believe we have established a strong foundation from which to build. We have diligently sought and received support from many sources in the development of this proposal, including pledges of financial support from a diverse array of people and organizations affiliated with Camp Greenwood. With the help of the Lord, we believe we will be able to build a strong, highly effective ministry that will be more fluid, limber, and adaptable to changing circumstances than the camp has been able to be working through the Presbytery structures.

The mission of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan is to “challenge, encourage, and equip worshiping communities to make disciples of Jesus Christ with the gifts God gives them.” We believe that Camp Greenwood is a gift that

God has given us for just this purpose. Over the decades past, thousands of children, youth, and young adults have learned about Jesus and grown in their discipleship in Christ at Camp Greenwood; over the decades to come, we hope, with God's help, to do the same with thousands more.