

Why is Greenwood so Special?

We have been asked, “What makes Greenwood unique and special? Why this camp? Why not some other place? Aren’t all camps interchangeable? Other camps have way better stuff?”

Imagine this: the sun is beginning to set, and the stars are starting to shine through the amber colored sky. You make your way out to the Chapel in the Pines as you do every night. The whole camp gathers together as a new community of friends, counselors and staff. You see lightning bugs starting to fill up the woods around you, you hear a light breeze throughout the trees, you are in the midst of God’s great glorious presence. You begin to worship as a family, you feel a comforting presence and somehow you just know that God is in this place.

“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” -Matthew 18:20

Since 1975, The Presbytery of Lake Michigan has been involved in ministry on the land of Camp Greenwood, and before that it was The Synod of the Covenant in 1958. There is no question that Thousands of people have been blessed by the camping experience. Not only the fun activities at camp, but more importantly, the absolutely life changing experiences that can only happen when God is involved. For 58 or more years, God has been blessing children and changing lives here. For 58 or more years, believers have been praying and asking for God’s blessing on this land and on those who attend. At Greenwood there is a rich heritage of prayer and God’s blessing. Generations have been committed to this land, this spiritual place. That kind of activity leaves a lasting spiritual mark. A spiritual impression. It creates what is sometimes called, “Sacred Space” and it cannot be detected with the physical senses, but only with the spirit.

What do we mean by a “Sacred Space?” One night, after Greenwood’s traditional Faith Walk, a camper, a faithful Presbyterian Church kid pulled me aside. She was completely earnest

and her eyes shone with wonder. “Tonight for the very first time in my life, I heard God speak to me when I was praying. That has never happened to me before.” Could this spiritual awakening have also happened in a different place? Perhaps, but I know that it did and that it does happen at Greenwood. But when our purpose is to make disciples that follow Christ once they experience God, why would we even think to turn to any other place? Why would we ever stop doing the very thing that we are all called to do? We need to increase the opportunities for ministry at the Sacred Space of Camp Greenwood, not stifle them because we are afraid of the future! We need to continue the spiritual work that has so been so richly planted there.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'-Luke 10:27

Today's society looks for “What is in it for me? What do I get out of this?” But God’s people are called to look for, “What can I do for you? For you, my God? For you, my neighbor?” I could talk about how Greenwood’s geographical location reaches children of many different income brackets and exposes them to each other, sometimes for the first time; or how the camp location is on a chain of five lakes with good water quality and no public access that makes it safer for campers. I could also mention the Greenwood Ministries Association commitment to the environment and how we have unique bogs that potential partners are interested in keeping safe, just as they are now in order to study threatened species in an untouched natural setting. But again that is the world’s view of things, it is all “stuff” that is quantifiable and categorial. These are things you can point to or take a beautiful photo of. While those things may be unique and commercially valuable in the eyes of humanity, there is so much more happening on that property than meets the eye. Camp Greenwood has acted as a lens to focus and to intensify the sacred so often that seemingly ordinary experiences easily become symbolic, meaningful and life changing. Camp Greenwood has and it is making disciples. It is and has made a real

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difference in the spiritual and emotional lives of people from all walks of life. This is why it is so very beloved. This is why people feel so intensely about saving it, about expanding it so that Greenwood can continue to grow and reach its full potential. That is why the real answer to the question, "What makes Greenwood so unique and special?" --**God does!**