



# The Messenger

## Fall 2023

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### Hear Our Prayer: A Story About 2023

*By Daniel Sanchez, Camp Director*

*"Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my pleas for mercy! In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!" - Psalm 143:1*

This past year, summer camp almost didn't happen for hundreds of campers. On Friday, May 12, due to a projected staffing/counselor shortage, I emailed with members of our Camp Board of Directors plans of suspending incoming registrations and enacting rolling cancellations of about 150 already received registrations across the summer. At that time, we were only able to accommodate about 275 of our current registrations for the summer, about half of what we hoped for in total attendance. Despite many recruiting efforts, it was time to start planning for the worst: a limited and reduced summer camp.

Our 2023 summer camp theme was *Hear Our Prayer* based on Psalm 143. It was evident early on in the year that we had a lot of ground to make up in finding summer staff. After some gains in February and March, the search for staff stalled in April. Even though significant efforts were being made, including raising salaries for summer staff positions, it didn't seem like there was much else to do but pray. For a little while, despite our best efforts, it seemed as if the answer from God was going to be "No."

By the time I came into the office after the weekend on Monday, May 15, several wonderful Christian servants had come forward about serving over the course of the summer, some for a few weeks, others for the bulk of the summer. Thanks be to God, we were able to do summer largely as we wrote it down, though several campers weren't able to get into their session of choice as we were unable to add cabin groups. Yet instead of cancelling over 200 camper registrations, we ended up just 14 campers behind last summer's attendance, which is only about 2 campers per week less. I could not have anticipated that outcome.

The final staff meeting of the year is always a positive one where each staff member gives out affirmations to other members of the staff. At our final staff dinner, each staff member gets their own individualized award for the summer! At that final staff meeting, I explained to the staff this story of how summer camp almost didn't happen, but I went into detail about what that really meant. What makes Camp truly special isn't the success of total numbers or financial stability that comes with a well attended program, but the Christian moments which are centered around the Word of God and the proclamation of the good

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## Keeping Up With The Costs

Our value as a non-profit Lutheran mission isn't found in the revenue of the services we provide but in creating a safe environment where campers can grow in God's Word while having a ton of fun doing so. We also take great joy in hosting all kinds of groups throughout the year! I'm very pleased to report that from a revenue perspective, Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca has either met, is projected to meet, or will come close to meeting just about every major revenue area of the budget! This marks our very first "regular" budget year since COVID. Thanks be to God!

As God provided us with guests to serve, we now look to the costs, which have gone through the roof. Meeting our revenue is one thing, but keeping up with the costs in another. Food costs have spiked, and we're looking at the reality of being significantly over budget in food. In order to recruit for summer staff, we raised summer staff pay by almost \$25% for this year. So while we've been provided with the revenue that is in line with our budget, Camp's expenses have ballooned. From utilities to food to staff to maintenance, our 2023 expense budget is bursting at the seams.

Then there are unforeseen but necessary repairs and improvements, which have been more numerous this year than any other in recent memory. Repairs to vehicles and air conditioning units along with replacing broken refrigerators and freezers, washers and dryers, bathrooms, and water heaters all proved to be costly repairs that cannot go ignored in providing a quality experience for our guests. We replaced two roofs in dire shape, the one from Mary Cabin where many of our horse campers stay during the summer, and the roof at the pavilion at the family campground. Additionally, we have repainted the dining and activity hall to a much brighter gray color that brings a lot more life to the room! These updates look fantastic, and we're thankful to the volunteers that made these improvement possible.

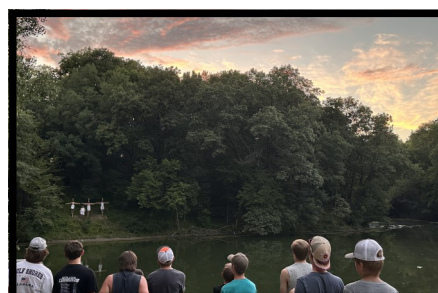
All this is to say it's been an expensive year, and with your support, we hope to close the gap of this years operating deficit. As of the end of October, we're trying to make up a \$40,000 operating deficit for this year. While its not unusual for Camp to be making up an operating deficit at the end of the year, it would only normally be about 1/2 or 1/4 of that, which just goes to show how much inflation has impacted Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca this year. So while it's encouraging that Camp has been able to reach her revenue benchmarks, we need your help in keeping up with the costs as we close out 2023. Please consider blessing Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca this giving season in our efforts to ensure Camp stays safe, working, and beautiful! You can donate today by mailing in a check with the provided envelope or by donating online at <https://campiodiseca.org/believe/>. Thank you for your support, and we look forward to a blessed 2024!



A newly painted dining/activity hall.



New roofs on Mary Cabin and the Campground Pavilion.







news of Jesus. Sure, if summer camp doesn't happen, families and kids are disappointed and the mission of the camp is hurt, but the true loss would have been losing the moments of learning, worship, Bible study, and Christian friendship that make up the core part of our mission. It's moments like that final staff meeting of the season that make up a great summer. It's a big deal if those times don't happen!

Thankfully, God hears our prayers! He listens to our pleas for mercy and He answers them according to His will. Our prayer throughout the spring, and even through the summer (that's right, Camp was still looking staff in July!) was that He would provide Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca with the staff we need. In His mercy, God blessed Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca with the people needed to carry out our mission of providing Christ-centered education, recreation, and inspiration for our campers.

Most years, our theme is learned with it simply being taught by our staff and pastors to our campers. For those of us behind-the-scenes at Camp, we learned the comfort of our theme first-hand this year, and it had so much more to do that with how it was answered, but rather knowing that in our moments of need that God is listening and attentive to us. When we had no idea how to staff the upcoming summer, there was no confidence other than that of having the ear of God who has promised to *Hear Our Prayer*, that we might ask him for our needs "as dear children ask their dear father." Our sights are now set to 2024 with the same prayer that God would continue to provide staff once again! The summer staff application process is open for the season, and we look forward to our 2024 summer under the theme: **Immanuel—God With Us.**



**Camp staff with their awards at the end of summer.**

## **2024 IMPORTANT DATES**

**January 15**

***Summer Camp Registration Opens***

**March 1**

***Registration Discount Deadline #1***

**June 12**

***First Day of Summer Camp***

**July 27**

***Auction Fundraiser***

## **A Few Goodbyes...**

This year, Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca said "goodbye" to two wonderful servants in Beverly Ahlemeyer (27 years as Office Administrator) and Kathy Milroy (14 years as Cook/Kitchen Manager). Thanks be to God for their many years of service to our campers and guests and we hope you enjoy your retirements!





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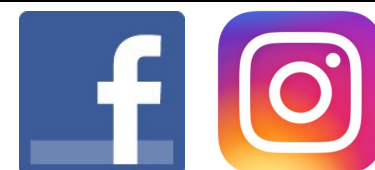
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## Thrivent Choice

In 2022 our Thrivent Choice participants designated around \$10,000 in support of Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca. Help make this year an even better year in Thrivent Choice donations by designating your dollars today! Go to [www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice](http://www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice) or call 800-THRIVENT (800-847-4836), state "Thrivent Choice", and designate your choice dollars for Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca. Thank you for making Thrivent Choice a valuable stream of revenue for Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca!

**Each donation must be completed manually as funds can no longer be designated via automatic repeat.**



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