



TM

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER 2020



**PRAIRIE RIVER CAMP**

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## DEAR PRAIRIE RIVER CAMP PARTNERS,

Despite the pandemic, camp is very busy working on projects to make camps more successful for the future as well as ministry right now in a pandemic culture. This summer as many of you know we were able to hold a Middle School Camp and a High School Camp. **Seventeen youth prayed to receive Christ for the first time and over fifty rededicated their lives to following Christ.**

One of the girls that was in attendance had been through some very hurtful things in her life. She understood and talked about forgiveness and trusting Jesus with the shame and guilt. She shared about how she believes Jesus is who He said He is but has yet to trust Him as Savior. She wants to. Please pray for this young lady to trust and receive the healing Jesus is offering her.

Staff are currently planning for winter camps and next summer's camps. We also recently had the Underground Bible Study at Prairie River Camp. It was cold but over forty youth showed up for the event. **Six youth prayed to receive Christ as Savior.** Praise God! That's what it's all about.

In addition, we continue to work on adding more youth activities and building. The Camp has received funding to finish the Dining Hall as well as meeting the matching funds goal from the Hanson Foundation for adding youth activities. Praise God! Part of this money is being used to turn the current Picnic Shelter into a Canteen / Game Room area for young people. We have also poured a concrete basketball court. If you have any time to help with what is going on please contact Peter or Caleb. They are looking for help in many areas.

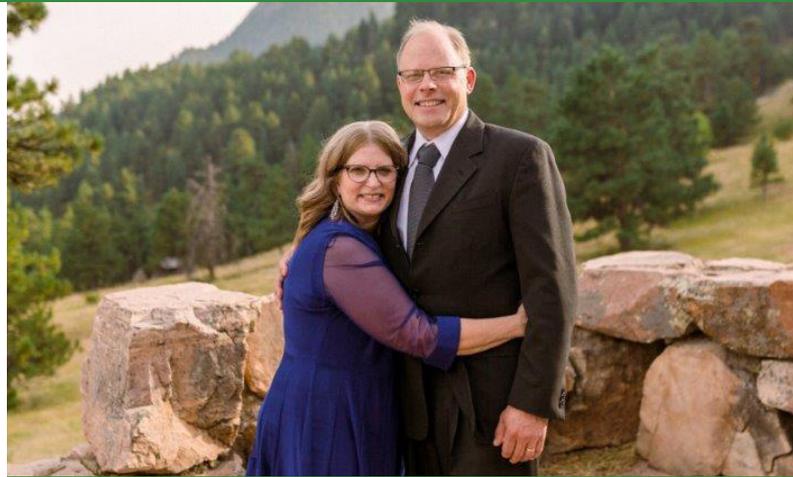
Thank you for your partnership with Prairie River Camp to share Christ with kids!

Reaching lost youth,

Greg Gudal  
Executive Director



South Central MN Youth For Christ



## OUR PASTOR'S KIDS/ MISSIONARY'S KIDS RETREAT IS COMING!

We have rescheduled for Feb. 2021!  
Lookout for more details on  
[facebook.com/prairierivercamp](https://facebook.com/prairierivercamp)



# PRAIRIE RIVER CAMP

# 2021

To register, visit  
[prairierivercamp.org](http://prairierivercamp.org)  
Or call 507.653.4700

## HIGH SCHOOL WINTER CAMP

9th-12th Grade Students

| JANUARY 29 - 31

## MIDDLE SCHOOL WINTER CAMP

6th-8th Grade Students

| FEBRUARY 26 - 28

## PASTOR'S KIDS/ MISSIONARY'S KIDS

6th-12th Grade

| FEBRUARY 19 - 21

## MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER CAMP

6th-8th Grade Students

| JUNE 14 - 18

## HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER CAMP

9th-12th Grade Students

| JULY 12 - 17

## PAINTBALL CAMP

7-12th Grade Boys

| JUNE 22 - 26

## PAINTBALL CAMP

7-12th Grade Boys &  
Girls

| JUNE 28 - JULY 2

## BEGINNER HORSE CAMP

8th-12th Grade Girls

| TBD

## ADVANCED HORSE CAMP

9th-12th Grade Girls

| TBD



Due to the ever changing pandemic,  
dates are subject to change.

# CAMP DIRECTOR



Isaiah 55:8-11 NIV

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."*

*"...my thoughts are not your thoughts..."*

*Have you ever prayed, "Lord, I want to serve you, but..."*

*...I'm doing this right now.*

*...I don't know how.*

*...I really don't want to do that kind of work.*

*...I'd prefer not to go there.*

Our journey in camping ministry together started very early in our relationship. In fact, Sherry and I met at camp. Camp Carmel, in Dunbar, PA, is where we met, and it is where Sherry met the Lord. Since then, we have worked with 10 different camps in 7 different states. We are excited to be back in Minnesota, having served at camps in the Brainerd Lakes region from 2001-2006. I stress that **we are excited to be here** because when we were first called to Minnesota almost 20 years ago, Minnesota was the furthest from our minds.

Three years before, Sherry and I were volunteer directors at a Jr High/Sr High winter retreat over New Years in Central Maine, when we both felt the Lord press upon our hearts that we needed to be serving in camp ministry full-time. We had been volunteering and working seasonally in camps for years. Through some guidance of others in camping ministry, our search began, but with some parameters that we had set. Lord, can we stay in New England?

*"...my thoughts are not your thoughts..."*

After several months of little interest and camps that

weren't a good fit, we expanded our search to include the east coast as far south as Virginia and as far west as Ohio. Still, nothing that felt right.

*"...my ways are not your ways..."*

A friend who had been helping us in our journey encouraged us. "You are limiting yourself and you are limiting God. You have to open up your search to the whole United States." Deep breath. Ok, Lord, but could we possibly stay east of the Mississippi River?

Then the call came from Minnesota. We knew as soon as we walked onto the campus that this was where we were supposed to be... 1 mile WEST of the Mississippi.

Fast forward to December 2019. My father had passed away in November after having lived with us for three years. I was serving as the Sports Ministries Director at our church in Southwestern Pennsylvania. A call comes across my phone with a Minnesota phone number, and since we have so many friends in the state, I didn't think it was a spam call, so I answered. "Hi, this is Greg Gudal, Executive Director of South Central Minnesota Youth For Christ. I found your resume on Christian Camps and Conferences Association's page and wondered if you would be interested in talking with me about a Camp Director position we have available?"

*"...my ways are not your ways..."*

Thank you, Lord, for the constant reminder that our lives are in Your Hands, and that we don't have to totally understand or see the plan clearly, but You call us to go.

Isaiah 55:12 NIV *"You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands."*

In His Service,  
**Peter & Sherry Coffey**

# WAYS TO FUND THE MISSION

Your faithful support is vital to the ministry of Prairie River Camp. In addition to regular giving, there are several unique options available. Below is a list of ways that others have helped and may be a good fit for you. It is because of your prayers and support that we have been able to reach young people in the Southern Minnesota area.



## Become a Team PRC Member

Team PRC Members make a 3-year commitment to monthly pledges (i.e. \$25, \$100, \$500, etc) or annual pledges (i.e. \$1,000, \$10,000, \$25,000, etc). Pledges can be made online at [prairierivercamp.org](http://prairierivercamp.org) or by mail. Checks should be pay to the order of: Prairie River Camp, and mailed to **SCMYFC, 116 W Clark St. Albert Lea, MN 56007**



## Real Estate Donation:

The value of real estate can often greatly increase the size of your estate. A real estate donation entitles you to a significant current tax deduction and can reduce the value of your estate, which can save or eliminate estate taxes. It can also provide a lifetime monthly income.



## Donation of Stocks & Mutual Funds:

Donating appreciated stocks or mutual funds can be a great benefit to both the donor and Prairie River Camp. As a donor of an appreciated stock or mutual fund, you are able to avoid paying capital gains tax on the appreciation of the asset. Also, as the donor of that security, you get to deduct the full fair market value of the security at the time of the gift, if you have held the security for longer than 12 months.



## Wills & Trust Bequests:

A bequest through a will or trust is the most popular form of planned giving. By remembering Prairie River Camp in a will or trust, you are looking past your own lifetime to further the work of the kingdom through the Prairie River Camp Endowment Fund. These gifts ensure that Prairie River Camp will always be ready to reach out to young people.



## Charitable Gift Annuities:

You make an irrevocable gift, generally using cash, maturing CD's, or securities in exchange for lifetime guaranteed payments, the amount of which is based on the value of your gift and the age(s) of the payment recipients. In addition, the donor receives an immediate income tax deduction, and a portion of each payment is income tax free!

## CAMP STORIES

We were able to have one-week of Middle School Camp, and one-week of High School Camp this summer. We praise God that campers were allowed to come. We followed the guidelines set forth by the Minnesota Department of Health, and zero cases of Covid-19 were reported by any campers or staff!

### **Below are some of the stories of the lives that were touched by camp this summer:**

- Julie\* told us about toxic relationships she had with friends. She shared the night before in group time that she doesn't believe in God. As the week of camp continued to progress, the following night she said, "I know God has a plan or a purpose for me. God is still working!"
- "I loved meeting tons of people and experiencing lots of laughter. I felt a peace from God. This week was very refreshing"
- "This week I was able to come closer to God, and stop running away from Him."

### **When asked what God has taught them, these were the replies:**

- "To learn how to start forgiving others for the way they have hurt me in the past."
- "I'm loved by Jesus. Learn to forgive myself and my enemies."
- "No matter what happens He will forgive you."
- "To respect others' opinions even if I strongly disagree. To not try to change their opinions."
- "That He loves me regardless of my messy life."
- "How to love everyone because you never know what they are going through."

While the schedule was shortened, God's power was not! We had over 100 campers and camp staff come together (with social-distancing of course!), and the amount of teamwork that was displayed by both was unforgettable.

**17 campers prayed to receive Christ for the first time, and over 50 rededicated their lives!**

*\*All names were changed to protect campers' privacy.*

# PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Greetings, from the Melins!

I am Alex, the new Program Director at Prairie River Camp! I, along with my wife, Ashley, and daughter Katie, are so excited to start the journey that the Lord has presented us with at PRC.

Ashley and I got married in September of 2017, and on August 12, 2020 we welcomed our little girl to the world! Becoming a parent has been the most unbelievable blessing we could have asked for! She has opened our eyes to how much love we can give and a slight understanding on how much our Father loves us! My wife and I spent the first three years of our life together in Crookston, Minnesota. I was the Youth Pastor at Harvest Church, and Ashley worked as the financial specialist at the Northwestern Mental Health Center. The best part of living up there were the kids and families that we grew to love. They were our family away from family, and our kids before we had our own, but life changes and our path started looking a little different. The Lord called us to start looking for a different job. Our family was growing and our needs were changing.

Accepting the position as the Program Director came with some emotions. We were excited. I was finally going to be in my dream job, and this was going to be a new adventure for us. We were nervous about having conversations with our friends and family about supporting us and moving to a place where we would need to build a new family away from family. However, we prayed, and trusted, and the Lord showed up! Every step along the way has been a confirmation that this is what the Lord was wanting us to do. The funds came in, the house sold, and we were on our way!

We cannot wait to start loving on these kids and watching their faith grow from their experience at Prairie River Camp. Helping the staff to build the camp into what the Lord wants for it, and starting the friendships the Lord has given us down here.

Thank you all for your endless prayers for this camp, these kids, the staff, and their families.

God Bless,

**Alex, Ashley & Katie Melin**





# INTERN LIFE

Greetings!

As a six month intern, the camp experience has been one that I will never forget. When I first arrived at Prairie River Camp, I was welcomed by the staff and a beautiful double rainbow. The double rainbow made me feel at peace as if God was promising that things would be okay throughout my time at PRC. In the first month, I was able to learn how to do a lot of outside work, which was different for me since I had only worked inside jobs. I felt inadequate to accomplish these tasks and overwhelmed because there was so much to get done with very few workers (Rigel and I). That is when Peter and Sherry arrived. I can honestly say that it was a blessing when the Coffeys arrived. Peter came alongside us and taught us how to do things when we were struggling, and Sherry welcomed us with open arms into her home (her hospitality made it feel like home and not just a place to get food). As the week of staff training began, it excited me to know that there would no longer be a few people at camp, and by the end of the week, it felt like our staff was a family.

Then the Russian group arrived, and I was genuinely thrilled. During the week, I helped prepare food, clean equipment, clean dishes, clean the bathrooms, and prepare activities. One day, Carrie, another intern, and I prepared archery for the group. When the youth arrived, we split them into two groups: the older youth and the other with the younger youth. I was serving with the younger youth, in which they decided they wanted to rest instead of doing archery. I was surprised by their idea, but as we sat down in a circle and talked, I learned that they were exhausted. They enjoyed doing lots of activities, but they felt that they had no time for themselves. One girl from Belarus asked, "Why can't we just rest and be together?" I was unable to respond at that time because I never thought that a person would be ready to rest at the age of nine. However, I have now realized that we take for granted resting and being together. Sometimes the most influential time you can have with others/youth is by being at their side in the still and quiet; that way, you can be there to listen when they are ready to speak.

Of course, this is only the beginning of my experience at PRC, and there are plenty more stories throughout my time here, but I think this was one of the most prestigious moments that I have experienced.

**Erin Mushett - Crown College, PRC Intern**



# FACILITIES DIRECTOR

Greetings PRC Friends,

Our family has been praying for years for God's guidance on how He would use us, and the boldness to follow His will! As a family we have been blessed to be a part of many short-term and local missions, and felt the pull of full-time missions, but we weren't quite sure what that looked like for our family. After becoming a full-time travel family while I worked in the oil field, we knew God was working towards removing boundaries and excuses for us to fully commit to His plan!

In December 2019 we began researching Christian retreats, and Prairie River Camp in Southern Minnesota became a clear answer from those prayers. After multiple phone/zoom calls with the PRC team, we were invited to visit the camp in Feb. 2020, and fell in love with the people and the mission this facility offered. The mission of Youth for Christ is: *"Reach young people everywhere. Working together with the local church and other like-minded partners to raise up lifelong followers of Jesus who lead by their godliness in lifestyle, devotion to the word of God and prayer, passion for sharing the love of Christ, and commitment to social involvement."*

We felt this was exactly in-line with God's direction for our family, but would God really choose to send us to Minnesota?! Initially in February driving home from our visit, of course, we questioned the 17-hour move across-country, but our prayer became "If this is your will God, keep us moving towards it."

Then chaos struck our nation. We entered into a global pandemic where families feared for their safety; churches, schools and businesses shut down; and many people relied on government stimulus and/or assistance. Was this a message from God? If we prayed for clarity of His will; and Caleb, being laid off from his oil-field position, lost his means of income; was it really God's will for us to continue fundraising during this unprecedented time? It was absolutely a sign from God; but not to change directions, to

continue moving towards His will! We quickly found out that fundraising takes a lot of time, especially with two wild boys! Being able to focus all of our time on fundraising for God's will at Prairie River Camp was an immense blessing in light of the pandemic. God showed up. From March through the beginning of May we were able to stay with my parents in East Texas and help them with a few projects while they built irreplaceable memories with their grandsons! In our worldly view, fundraising during a pandemic would be impossible, but God showed up.

While it seemed everything around us was falling apart, we were able to reconnect with friends, and hear how the pandemic brought amazing blessings to so many! Of course, we heard trials, heartbreak and worry from some, but God showed up there too. In many of the conversations we had, we were able to laugh, cry and pray together. In a world where direct contact has been pushed aside and even forbidden, God made a way for us to connect and build stronger relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ!

Originally we set a "big scary goal" to be fully funded by August or September of 2020. Through God alone, we were able to move to camp the first week of July 2020, surpassing our goal! We praised God for every donation whether it was \$20 or \$200, each partnership brought us closer to being able to impact the lives of youth here in Southern Minnesota, and God showed up. Our faith waivers, but His goodness never does! "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!" Psalm 34:8

We are pumped to share this mission and be able to partner with the PRC team to reach youth for Christ! God has called us out of our comfort (and climate) zones, and we could not be more excited! Thank you for your prayers and support,

Caleb, Rebekah, Luke & Levi Sutton  
Facilities Director & Family





New Office Space



Rec. Room



Basketball Court in Progress



Dining Hall

## CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

As the Fall season is coming to a close, winter work season is ramping up at Prairie River Camp! There are LOADS of new projects going on, and a few on-going that are wrapping up. We received the final funding in order to finish the Dining Hall at camp. This project has been a huge undertaking spanning over 5 years, and the team is thrilled to be able to finish the home stretch. Why is this project such a big deal? Once finished, the dining hall will allow us to seat over 150 campers indoors! It will have an awesome commercial kitchen, walk-in cooler/freezer, big dining area, and the basement serves as a storm shelter, if needed! There have been many hands helping on the Dining Hall project over the years, and **we are grateful for each and every person who has continued to move this project forward!**

We are also looking towards continuing to make repairs to the church on-site! The building itself is an awesome historical addition to the PRC grounds, and we want to preserve its integrity as a structure. Repairs will be made to the steeple and interior to continue using this as an indoor praise and worship space. The power of having the history of many Christians worshipping in that space is certainly praise-worthy, and the team can not wait to have campers in this building during retreats and winter camps this season!

Lastly, and probably the biggest undertaking currently at camp, is our new office space! When you visit PRC this season, the office will no longer be located in the bottom floor of The Lodge. It has been moved to the building next to the previous outdoor picnic area. This entire pavilion will be enclosed, and turned into the office, canteen, and rec. room!! The design will allow campers access to the canteen indoors, and the rec. room will include a wonderful "chill-out" space for campers. Surrounding the rec. room will be multiple landscape picture windows for parents and campers to enjoy those playing sand volleyball, corn-hole, ga-ga ball and the brand new concrete basketball court outside the building! The design of this space has been thought out to increase the enjoyment of all campers and visitors to PRC, and the project is already underway!

Have suggestions of other things you'd LOVE to see at camp? Send our Facilities Director, Caleb Sutton, an email at [caleb@prairierivercamp.org](mailto:caleb@prairierivercamp.org). We are so excited to see campers this season and continue changing lives for Christ!



## Follow Us On Social Media!

We are excited to update you regularly on what is happening at camp! We also post contests and prizes for you to WIN camp goodies!

**@prairierivercamp**

Follow us on instagram and facebook!



# Online Donations Accepted

Would you like to give via credit card or set up a regular monthly donation? Visit [prairierivercamp.org](http://prairierivercamp.org) and click on **Giving**.

## THRIVENT ACTION TEAMS

Thrivent policy holders may qualify to apply for one or more \$250 Action Team projects each year. If you would like to know how these funds can help Prairie River Camp, please contact Greg at 507.383.1782.

# STAY AT PRC!

## LODGE, CABIN, RV & SEASONAL TENT CAMPING!

Here at Prairie River Camp, we want to invite you to bring your family or church group to spend quality time at our facilities!

Facilities include: Prayer Cabin, Six Year-Round Cabins (sleeps up to 10 people), River Lodge, Cups of Faith (kitchen), The Shelter (Dining Hall), Prayer Chapel, The Church, Amphitheater (summer only), Playgrounds & Firepits.

**For inquires, or to make reservations  
please call 507.653.4700**



# MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS



## In Memory Of:

## Given By:

Andy Gudal Shirley Gudal, Greg and Robin Gudal, Forrest and Ruth Delunger, J. Jeanne Nelson, Lester Volsen and Lorraine Haugland-Volsen, Lee and Sharyl Johnson, Dale and Sharron Becker, David and Missy Gudal, Charles and Lynette Goodnight, Connie Vick, Dale and Stacie Stensrud, Joseph and Trudy Allen, Chad and Amy Vogt, Steve and Lisa Hill, Rosa Beckman, Judy Prestegard, Jonathan and Christen Walberg, Justin and Michelle Lestrud, Steven Bowers, Mark and Julie Burns, Sandra Giese, Dave and Koni Sjulstad, Thomas Wetzell, Marybeth Gudal, Alan and Stephanie Davis, Brian and Char O'Daffer, Isaac Gudal, Lores and Jeff Vlaminck, Loren and Jean Eckhardt, John and Sharon Malso, Richard and Sarah Stadheim, Lyle and Janet Gesche, Deloris Johnson, Robert Scrobeck

## PRAYER REQUESTS

- Pray for safety in construction and completion of the camp projects before winter camps!
- Please pray for the upcoming winter camps/re-treats continuing with safe precautions in place.
- Prayers for all; including SCMYFC staff, recovering from COVID.
- Pray that our guest group numbers continue to increase in order to help increase funding for camp.

## PRAISES

- Praise God for the 17 youth who trusted Jesus as their Savior for the first time this summer!
- Praise God for the 50+ youth who recommitted their lives to follow Jesus!
- Praise God for our team all being together at camp!
- Praise God for the grants and special donations that have been given in order to complete our new facilities!
- Praise God for the health of our staff and families!

## CAMP NEEDS

- 3/4 or 1 ton, 4 door, 4x4 Truck
- Wood Chipper (PTO or Engine)
- Multiple Passenger or Utility Golf Carts
- 5.5' or Smaller Disc for JD 3720 (Model: DH1176)
- 65" or Smaller Tiller for JD 3720 (Model: RT1165)
- 70HP or Higher Skid Steer on Tracks (Grapple Bucket and Forks would be a plus)
- Front Mount Snow Blower for JD X748
- 6' depth 3-point Backhoe Attachment for JD 3720
- 2 Bottom Sub Soiler for JD 3720
- Gas Pole Saw

## VOLUNTEER NEEDS

- Helpers for winter and summer camps
- Painting, cleaning and assistance with general work projects around camp

LaVaun Morris

Ralph and Tammy Campbell, Jim and Pat Johnson, Melanie Lefebvre, Richard Morris

Rodney Schmidt

Deann Loge

Kevin Strube

Shirley Gudal

Mandel Aasland

Shirley Gudal

Deloris Steinhagen

Richard and Barb Wichmann

Stanley Stadheim

Richard and Barb Wichmann

Rochelle Langsev

Shirley Gudal

Alice Prestegard

Shirley Gudal

Don Grothe

Robert and Julie Aamodt

Nicholas Anderson

William Anderson

Every effort has been made to ensure this list is accurate and complete. If we have inadvertently omitted, misspelled, or otherwise improperly reported your name, please accept our apologies and contact us at 507.653.4700.

To volunteer, contact us at  
507.653.4700 or email  
[Peter@prairierivercamp.org](mailto:Peter@prairierivercamp.org)



# YOUTH FOR CHRIST

## PRAIRIE RIVER CAMP

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