

## CAMP CHICKAGAMI PRESENTATION

Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan 2008 Annual Convention  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
Flint, Michigan  
October 18, 2008

**Good morning, my name is John Pettipher.** I am a member of St. Jude's in Fenton, Michigan (Flint River Convocation). I am a member of your Camp Chickagami board. I would like to briefly describe to you our camp's past, present, and what is possible for our camp's future.

### PAST

**[Camp History]** Camp Chickagami was established in 1929 -- 80 years ago. The Fletcher family donated the land after the Fletcher lumber camp completed the last regional "log off" in the area when the Great Depression was starting. During the 1930's the camp served as a work camp under a State of Michigan program that evolved into the Federal Government's Civilian Conservation Corp ("CCC") for unemployed boys, and veterans from World War I. During the 1950's – 1960's it was a boys' camp with 100 campers, ages 9-16, during each 2-week session. There were 400-500 boys & staff each summer! It was a **wonderful** period in the camp's 80-year history. And it was the **best** 5-year period in at least one teenager's life – **mine!** And I **also** know those were the best teenage and young adult summers for several others that I happened to meet and got to know for the **first** time this May at our Camp Chickagami Work Weekend.

Now, let me briefly share some of my personal history.

**[John Pettipher History]** I was introduced to Camp Chickagami in 1956 when I was 13 years old. My parents drove me and my friend Frank Wilson -- also from St. Paul's Memorial Episcopal Church in northwest Detroit -- to the **Greyhound bus terminal** in downtown Detroit. After **many** stops along the 250-mile distance from Detroit to Presque Isle, Michigan – including stops in Royal Oak, Pontiac, Flint, Saginaw, Bay City, and Alpena -- we arrived at camp. **My life changed forever.** Over my 5 years at camp from 1956-1960 I was first a Cabin #11 camper, and then a Pioneer Camper the first year pioneer camp was offered. We slept in large 6-8 man tents in the woods for a month. Next, I was a kitchen boy, and I earned \$50 for the summer peeling 100-pound bags of potatoes – among many other things. The following summer I was the Cabin #3 counselor for 9 year old campers, earning \$75 for the summer. Finally, in my 5<sup>th</sup> summer I was the assistant business manager, managing the camp store, laundry, and camp registration for \$150 for the summer. I left Camp Chickagami in 1960 as a 17 year old who **loved camp – and felt more secure and loved at camp than almost anywhere else.**

After a BA in economics, an MBA, 3 years as an economics teacher, 2 years in banking, and almost 30 years in the finance area of Ford Motor Company – including 13 recent years in California, **I am now back at Camp Chickagami as one of your camp board members. I loved Camp Chickagami when I was 13, I loved camp when I was 17, and I love Camp Chickagami today.** I **don't expect** it to be the same great camp it was for me 52 years ago. I

**do expect** it to be different today and tomorrow from what it was in earlier years. Most importantly – I expect it to be **better** for our youth and adults of our Diocese **today** and **tomorrow**. I have **great expectations** for making Camp Chickagami be the **best** it can be. Your camp board and Bishop Todd also have great expectations for Camp Chickagami.

Let me now share my views with you about where Camp Chickagami is today and what we hope and need going forward.

### **PRESENT (2008)**

**In 2008**, our Work Week & Weekend over & around Memorial Day Weekend in May was a **huge success**, involving over **60** dedicated volunteers ages 6-86 from throughout our Diocese. In the past we typically had fewer than 20. Because most of our camp's major and minor improvements and maintenance projects for the entire year are completed over Work Week & Weekend, volunteering and having fun over Work Weekend is extremely important. Since Camp Chickagami continues to operate almost entirely by volunteers, the success of future Work Weeks is crucial. **We need your help, and we sure got it in 2008 – thank you so much!** The July 2008 issue of **Anglican Connections** provides much more information about the great joy many of us experienced over Work Weekend. We hope you can be with us in May 2009.

**During a 2-week period this summer, our 46 youth campers and their 25 counselors and staff from throughout the Diocese participated in 3 camping programs involving Christian Formation.** We had an Intermediate Camp, Junior High Camp, and a Senior High Camp. Camper registrations of 46 were about the same as the 42 registrations in 2007. However, we were hoping substantially better communications and marketing efforts in 2008 compared with 2007 and earlier years would have produced significantly more youth campers. The worsening Michigan economy in 2008 probably held camper enrollment to only slightly above the 2007 enrollment.

**Our Clergy's Community Gathering Camp in June was successful, relaxing, and lots of fun for our clergy and their families** [25 participants]. We hope our clergy will make their Camp Chickagami gathering an annual relaxing, renewal, and fun time for them.

Group rental users [50+] of Camp Chickagami this year, representing about 8 groups of 50-100 users, generated about \$30,000 in annual revenue for us. Group rentals very importantly help pay for some of our youth camp expenses that annually exceed our youth camp registration fees.

Also this year, we substantially improved our Camp Chickagami communications throughout our Diocese with timely Chickagami Cheer Newsletters [December 2007 & soon-to-be November 2008], Anglican Connections articles [May & July 2008], Diocesan website/emich ongoing information, and improving & adding to our great [www.CampChickagami.org](http://www.CampChickagami.org) web site that is very informative and fun to browse if you have access to a computer. We also introduced a brand new, attractive Diocesan Youth Camp Brochure in 2008.

Now, what does your Camp Chickagami board see for our camp's future – 2009 and beyond?

### **FUTURE (2009 & BEYOND)**

**In 2009** -- late June/early July – we are planning to add an all new, weeklong Diocesan Family Camp for families from throughout our Diocese. We have started our planning process, we will be sharing information with you, and we are very excited about 2009 Family Camp.

**Remember how I got to Camp Chickagami for the first time when I was 13 on a Greyhound Bus?** Well, we are hoping, investigating, and expect to offer a bus transportation plan from our Blue Water, Flint River, and Saginaw Valley Convocations to camp for our youth campers for 2009. The transportation vehicle will likely be better than a school bus, or a Greyhound bus, but not as luxurious as the chauffeur-driven private limousine that a Camp Chickagami camper stepped out of upon arrival at camp in the 1950's – who happened to be a camper from the **Henry Ford family!** Whatever transportation service we select, we hope a bus option for our youth in 2009 will make it easy, convenient, and more economical for our youth and their families to say “yes” to a 2009 Youth Camp.

**We need many important things now -- and in the near and distant future -- that many of you sitting here now in St. Paul's – and many others from throughout our Diocese -- can help us achieve. We need:**

- Better strategic and financial plans
- **Improved existing facilities**, including:
  - Heating of buildings for 3-season availability & utilization,
  - New kitchens & appliances and bathrooms in 4 existing family-type cottages, [Esau, Huron, Grand Lake, and Albany],
  - Newer furniture and beds in 4 cottages
- **We need a new building for large group meetings & gatherings** – maybe the new building could be a church or church-like building that could also be used for church services to complement Camp Chickagami's great outdoor-only St. Andrew's Chapel. Maybe we could even find, buy, and move an existing church building to Camp Chickagami?
- **We need new bunk houses** to replace existing bunk houses that really need replacing [Lower Units],
- We also need and are seeking **additional dedicated volunteers year-round for many things, including:**
  - Board members for our authorized 12-member camp board of directors,
  - Volunteers for Work Week and Weekend around Memorial Day 2009 – and each future year,
  - Program leaders for our youth camp, as well as other programs we need to imagine, create, plan for and implement.
- **We need three-season availability & greater utilization of Camp Chickagami & it's facilities,**

- **Most importantly, we need better & more utilization of Camp Chickagami from May-October by our entire Diocese for church-related activities, including:**
  - **Diocese-wide meetings**, events, and programs – like Youth Camp, Family Camp, Clergy Gatherings, and Christian Leadership Gatherings
  - **Convocation meetings**, events, and programs by each of our 4 convocations,
  - **Church meetings**, events, and programs by many of our 50 churches – such as individual church family camps over spring and/or fall weekends,
  - Large- and small-group meetings from organizations within each convocation, and by small and large groups from throughout our diocese.
- **We need additional Christian Formation and other programs held at Camp Chickagami for our youth, adults, clergy, and others:**
  - A Communicants retreat, for example, and
  - Higher youth camp enrollment is needed.
- **Greater and more sources of funding for our camp is certainly needed, including:**
  - Possible additional grants from each of our convocations. We know there are important and competing funding requirements within each convocation. **Your camp board really appreciates what each convocation is able to contribute. We hope each convocation will consider contributing more to Camp Chickagami in 2009 and beyond.**
  - **We hope Camp Chickagami will be a part of your convocation's – and your -- stewardship prayer process.**
  - **Tougher times require more giving by those able to do so.**
  - We also plan to consider individual church-sponsored & funded building improvements and new buildings and facilities.

Thank you for your time, thank you for listening, and your camp board and I hope and pray you will be a part of Camp Chickagami and Camp Chickagami will be -- or will become -- a part of you. Your board and I want Camp Chickagami to be a part of -- and help lead -- our Diocese into the **BEST OF TIMES.**

THANK YOU!