

On March 16, 2020, COVID-19 caused all reservations for church and nonprofit groups at Epworth By The Sea to be cancelled. To say the least, the future looked bleak. Little did we know that when the Golden Ray capsized in the Saint Simons Sound on September 8, 2019, that Epworth By The Sea would play a vital role in the wreck's removal.

In order to remove the wreck, the salvage workers needed to be housed in a safe place to prevent infections from COVID. Epworth By The Sea was identified as the perfect place to provide housing, meals, recreational activities and river access for the salvage workers to reach the wreck. We began providing meals September 8, 2020 and the salvors arrived on our campus September 22, 2020. The crew departed December 15, 2021.

For 15 months, our staff provided a "home away from home" for the salvage workers who were from all over the world. Many spent months away from their families in order to do the work. Epworth staff made it easy by serving them with a "servant attitude" on a daily basis.

Our Food Service staff provided meals basically on a 24 hour schedule. Housekeeping and Maintenance staff attended to any needs. Our Reservations and Office staff continually stayed in contact with our groups as the work continued to be extended. It was a very fluid situation with workers coming and going and the changes related to the work on the wreck. It was a challenge, but all of our staff rose to meet the needs with a hospitable spirit.

We were advised by T&T Salvage that without the campus and facilities of Epworth, this removal of the wreck would not have been accomplished because of COVID. The wreck would still be in the sound as a rusting hulk.

This crew was not the typical group we serve. These workers told us they knew they were on Holy grounds and that they have never been deployed to such a positive environment. They heard the hymns from the Wright Prayer Tower each day and saw the Christian symbols across campus. Spiritual counseling and recorded sermons from the Lovely Lane Chapel worship services each week were available. We were told that 37 accepted Jesus Christ during their stay at Epworth. We can only imagine the positive impact made on each worker. During their stay, Epworth continued to provide a Christian place for Worship, Study and Fellowship just as we do for all of our groups each year.

I know many were disappointed that our campus was closed to the public during this period, but the campus closure worked. Not one worker was infected with the virus, and this enabled the work to continue.

Epworth's campus is now open to the public. However, in order to get our facilities ready for groups and individuals in January 2022, we are not taking any reservations

Even though Epworth had everything T&T Salvage needed in terms of facilities and location, it was our staff that made it work. I am very proud of each team member listed below. By housing the salvage workers, Epworth played an integral role in the removal of the wreck.

During this time, we were able to make improvements to our campus. Some of these improvements include: painting interior and replacing carpet with vinyl flooring in the 80 Pitts and Booth rooms and the 42 Robertson Inn rooms. We have also added mini-refrigerators and microwaves to Booth, Pitts, Robertson Inn and Turner motel rooms. Cabin 9-10 renovation is almost complete. An outdoor open air pavilion has been constructed near the Strickland Auditorium and an amphitheater is being added near the pavilion and gazebo.

We are looking forward to getting back to "normal" operations in 2022. We will continue to provide a Christian place for Worship, Study and Fellowship, just as we did for the salvage crew of the Golden Ray.

Happy New Year!

Glory Be To God,



Joel Willis
President/CEO
Epworth By The Sea

Thank you to our staff:

Food Service	Maintenance	Housekeeping	Administration
Kyah Aldridge	John Caldwell	Luisa Bautista-Villa	Erica Bautista
Selena Armstrong	Edward Carter	Reyna Condado	Jolie Chaney
Carl Carroll	Carlos Juarez	Joy Deliosa	June Davis
Kaylee Crane	Junior Lamb	Hermelinda Jimenez	Tiffany Flavell
Wandetta Floyd	John Logue	Busanbong Kirby	Mallery Hale
Cole Hanson	Jackie O'Berry	Katarina Margarito	Tammy Heath
April Hubbard	Victor Salazar	Nancy Moncus	Renthia Lewis
James Jackson	Santos Santos	Estela Morales	Ron Nichols
Charity Keith	Carlin Sizemore	Jackie Ramsey	Kelly Maloy
Derek Life	Blake Spratlin	Alex Reyes	Wayne Racz
Karen Parshley	David Wills	Juana Reyes	Trice Roberts
Jeremy Ramsey		Yuvia Reyes	Stephanie Sims
Tina Reese		Lulu Tresvant	Pam Spillers
Robbie Robinson		Monroe Turner	
Barbara Staten			
Delroy Watson			
Billy Xayavong			

