

Camp Noel Porter Update

September 2018

As most people are aware by now, the decision has been made to close Camp Noel Porter. After over two years of research and discussion the Noel Porter Board has recommended the permanent closure of the camp, and the sale of the property. The Diocesan Board of Trustees has accepted their recommendation.

This has been a very hard decision, and it has not been easily arrived at. As we reported at Convention last November, there are many factors that have gone into this decision. First, the great expense that would be involved in bringing the facility up to the standards necessary to insure the safety of the children attending camp, as well as the ongoing expense of maintaining it had to be considered. But though these costs were high, and perhaps prohibitively so, this was not the only or decisive consideration. It also has become apparent that even with repairs, the camp location itself is increasingly unviable. In the past, it was located outside of Tahoe City, and the near-wilderness setting was part of what made the Camp what it was. Now, however, development has surrounded the Camp, creating security issues and causing it to lose its wilderness character. We considered adding buildings or upgrading existing ones to make the camp viable as a retreat or conference center; but the details of cost, size of the property, and the existence of other such facilities in the immediate area made this unrealistic. Finally, there are issues that have always made difficulties for Camp Noel Porter, particularly its lack of a waterfront. Attendance at the Camp has declined significantly over the years; yet since the camp has been suspended, a great many of our campers have been attending Camp Galilee, the Episcopal Diocese of Nevada's camp a few miles away on the other side of the lake, which has cabins and lakefront property. All of these factors together, drove both boards to the reluctant conclusion that, even if we were to expend the resources to repair and upgrade the camp, the location simply was no longer viable.

In making this decision, the Board of Trustees explored several options for the future of the property, besides the possibility of sale. But without a viable plan for operating a camp and conference center on the site, sale was the only option which made sense. But the Board intends that as far as possible, the property should end up being used in a way that is in accord with our values, and that any proceeds that might be received from a sale be used or dedicated to ministry to children, youth, and families. Also, we are committed to the preservation of the historic chapel, and we are exploring ways to continue the ministry of St. Nicholas' Episcopal Church, which is located on the property.

Again, we admit that this is a hard decision, and that many people will mourn. We mourn as well. But it is not the end our ministry to young people, or of the Camp experience in Northern California. There are opportunities for camp at Bishop's Ranch, at Dorothy's Rest, at Camp Galilee on the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe and of course, at Camp Living Waters. We are determined that though the end of Camp Noel Porter is sad, we will find new opportunities to carry on the ministry that it represents.

The Rev. Michael Monnot
Vice President, Board of Trustees