

I get excited about new beginnings. The end of the summer camp season (Memorial-Labor Day) is quite bittersweet in my eyes. Gone are the long days full of camper activity, the chatter amongst the staff on radios, and the personal opportunities to connect with campers and families from our ownership churches.

The Retreat Season brings about its own wonder and magic, a change of pace that brings its own idiosyncrasies. For many of our new hires who may have worked for us during the summer, the feeling of taking a deep breath is finally upon them. For our Year-Round staff, it means a few more deserved days off and a chance to hone in on creating a place set apart where the guest's heart, mind, body, and soul can encounter the living God. We may have fewer guests on the property during the fall-spiring, but it is a chance for us to rejuvenate and serve well.

This summer, we saw roughly the same number of campers on property as the past year, which is excellent. As Jodi notes in her letter, a great deal came to know Christ for the first time. I rejoice in knowing that Lake Beauty is still a place where God is moving and changing lives; working for him in this context is humbling. Many families came out for our three holiday family camps, and we had many weekends in July that were filled with guests from our churches. I love the aspect of my new role where I get the opportunity to walk around, sit by the fire, and just fellowship with our guests. These weekends are like none other, and it's a testament to hear evaluations like, "LBBC is a special place. It is time to stop, reflect, and recharge in the Lord from the busyness of life. Also, enjoy the beauty of nature...God's artwork."

As we step out of the heat of the summer (hopefully now for the last time!) and step into the crisp mornings of Autumn and the change of leaves and weather, I use this as an opportunity to implore you to come to see Lake Beauty in a different light. We host some excellent retreats in the fall – Senior Adult Day, Women's Retreat, Quilting Retreats – just to name a few. If you do not fit those categories, I invite you to bring up a group – men's, women's, youth, couples – and experience what God is doing and find the time to retreat. Allow Lake Beauty to be a place you can continue utilizing throughout the year and as the seasons change.

Phil Tolbert
Executive Director