



**Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania  
Youth Program  
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St. Tikhon's Summer Camp**

January 22, 2023

St Tikhon's Summer Camp Report

New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia.  
Apostle Timothy of the Seventy

Your Eminence, Master Bless!

Archpriests, Priests, Deacons, Matushki, Lay Delegates,

I greet you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of St Tikhon's Summer Camp. St Tikhon's Summer Camp's Mission is dedicated to the building up of the Holy Orthodox Church by providing a one-week sleep-away camp program for Orthodox Christian children between the ages of seven and 17. Our participants enjoy a superior religious education program and daily church services as well as plenty of outdoor recreational activities with their peers. This is a monumental task. Within the first two days that our online registration has been open, we already have 50 campers and 3 counselors pre-registered. The youth of our diocese are excited about this ministry. We not only have campers pre-registered from within our diocese, but also from nearby states such as Virginia, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Ohio. As of right now, the laborers are few, but with God's grace, all of our former counselors, who have dedicated so much of their time, talent, and treasure to the camp, will return to continue this vital ministry to our youth.

With Vladyka's blessing to continue this ministry, we started to quickly prioritize our planning in order to prepared for the camp, which will be upon us quickly, beginning July 1, 2023. Fr Silouan Burns, Fr Vjekoslav Jovičić, and myself, at the direction of His Eminence, Archbishop Mark, compromise the camp board of directors. Fr Timothy Hojnicky will be our camp chaplain. We had a team come together, of about eight to ten people, on the first zoom meeting to brainstorm ideas and prioritize planning-beginning with registration and a new website under the diocesan website, the theme of the camp, finances, cooking and food, to name a few. The board is also working hard to gather information on the camp's institutional knowledge for a standard operating book (SOP), timeline on when to order supplies for the camp, and submit the proper state documents to run the camp.

In today's technologically savvy age, we needed to revamp the website and bring it under the diocesan website as it is a department and ministry of the diocese. Fr John Parsells, of Orthodox Web Solution (OWS), went above and beyond to ensure both the website and the registration process was to our satisfaction. We went through several zoom meetings, and a long list of email instructions, to ensure OWS had the capability and we had the technical ability to run the website with registration. Registration was/is an area of emphasis as we wanted to have the ability for campers to register online. Providing an online registration would allow us to better track camper pre-registration and fill the slots on a first come first serve basis. However,

slots for campers are not officially filled until all paperwork is received by the camp board and that we would be able to accommodate any camper who may have a medical condition, if one exists.

The St Tikhon's Summer Camp Website and Registration was not launched until we worked out the bugs, ensured the registration documents were written properly, and the online registration was working properly to include online payment. Once these criteria were met and we were all satisfied with the order of operations, His Eminence gave his blessing to launch the website. So far, it is working with little to no bugs and has reduced the workload of tracking registration with the click of a button. Online registration for counselors and staff was a number one priority as this allowed us to work closely with Carmen Hodson, the Administrative Assistant at the Diocesan Chancery, to ensure all counselors and staff, including myself, have the proper background checks, fingerprints, and training required to volunteer at the camp.

Mrs Ann Marie Black, Matushka Masha Solak, & Matushka Emilia Shepherd worked together on their own time with zoom meetings to put together this year's camp theme, "Word, Image, and Song." His Eminence has given his blessing for this year's camp theme and our three Camp Education Co-Directors are working together to plan the camp education, which includes daily scripture readings as well as a program to prepare our counselors on the daily focus for each age group.

Mark Linehan, the diocesan treasurer, along with Fr Silouan who will be the camp financial director, reviewed our budget and expenses along with the registration fees from last year so we can move forward with preparing to order food, paddle boats, port a johns, pool preparation, t-shirts and any other logistical needs required.

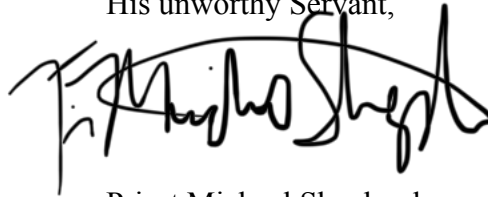
Ginger Smith, the cook for St Tikhon's seminary, will lead our kitchen staff to provide all the meals and snacks for the campers. In order to reduce the amount of paper and plastic products used during meal times, we have permission to use the seminary's refectory. This will allow us to utilize the plates, cups, glasses, and silverware and to be able to wash them in the 30 second industrial dishwashing machine. I do understand that not everyone will fit into the seminary's refectory, but this is by design. We are still working through the scheduling on this. However, I do see it as a proper way to follow safety protocols because only so many people are allowed in both the monastery trapeza and the seminary refectory at a single time.

Olivia Long, parishioner of St Michael's Wilmington, DE, has been working on keeping our camp social media sites updated with posts, consisting of how many campers have pre-registered, meeting the staff, and dates to remember. She will also work on collecting pictures for each day of the camp and posting them on the social media sites. It is our goal to make a video with the pictures for the end of camp.

Olivia Zawatski, wife to seminarian Tyler Zawatski, initially worked on the old website and new website, migrating information. She also drew up several designs for the camp's new logo and submitted the designs to His Eminence. Through his guidance, the new logo was blessed and is the one we now are using.

In closing, I want to thank everyone who has volunteered and worked hard, both named and unnamed, to ensure the camp's continued success and dedication to the youth of our diocese, especially to Vladyka Mark. Over the past several weeks, His Eminence has worked hard to ensure this camp will continue successfully. As you may know, once again, out of love and dedication to our youth, "the diocesan council voted unanimously to waive all fees for the youth of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania who otherwise may not be able to attend, and are in good standing with a parish of our Diocese." The goal of, "Next year every parish will cover the cost of their own youth to attend" doesn't have to wait until next year. You and your parish can donate now, along with those parishes who have already committed to sponsor our youth. If we want to keep our youth in the Church, we need to dedicate our time, talent, and treasure to better support and facilitate the ministry of our parishes, this diocese, and this camp. If you have any questions regarding the camp, please contact me or the board. We would love to discuss the future of the camp with you.

His unworthy Servant,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Priest Michael Shepherd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Priest Michael Shepherd  
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St Tikhon's Summer Camp  
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