

June 24, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Psalm 133 is so peaceful. I don't understand the imagery of precious oil running down the neck and beard of Aaron. I do understand the beauty of mountain dew in the quiet of a morning. And I believe in a Zion where we will gather in unity and there will be the blessing of life forevermore. The psalm is a total of three verses. I've left out verse 2, about the anointing of Aaron.

"How good and pleasant it is when kindred dwell in unity. It is like the dew of Hermon which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the Lord has commanded a blessing, life forevermore."



We invite you to spend time at Koinonia where Christ unites us as brothers and sisters, where the beauty of unity with God, with one another and with nature will renew you!

News from the Board of Directors:

May 21-23 the Board met in person at Koinonia at the Conference Center! The place was beautiful. The individual room HVAC units were great. The WIFI allowed us to zoom with a couple of members who could not attend in person. The food was wonderful. Everything was clean. AND, we had an excellent weekend. The business part of our meeting was mundane (thankfully). The bonding, the UNITY, we found in one another was the best.

The finances of Koinonia are "ok." We can pay our executive director and one additional staff person, plus utilities! Thanks to your donations and the ELCA Mission Investment Fund loan (we have spent about half of the \$300,000 available) we continue to make repairs. Our weak financial line is rental income, especially at the Conference Center. If we can bring in more guests we will increase our income.

The capital Campaign, KOINONIA NEXT:FORWARD TO THE FUTURE, is active but at a slow pace while we get strategic planning going.

Strategic planning is now an area of concentration. The committee members include Kathleen (Executive Director), Patricia Rose (Board Secretary), Rev. Christopher Schultze, Steve Manlove, Jay Ratto, Esther Schultze, Kristi Robinson, Rev. Marc Stutzel, Dr. Abe Caceres, Kuye Harris, and me (Rev. Bob Wollenburg, Board president). Keith Johnson, Board Coach, is consulting with the group.

I hesitate to mention this, but the Conference Center may need a new roof sooner rather than later. We have several contractors inspecting and giving quotes.

Staff and volunteers at Koinonia continue to do outstanding work. Kathleen, our Executive Director, diligently works on all fronts. Bob Bliefert is our very busy volunteer bookkeeper who also provides excellent building management advice. Jean is constantly doing water testing and office work. Art and Tom are all over the camp cutting grass and doing maintenance work.

The Board encourages you to make Koinonia a “destination.” Talk to Kathleen if you need help managing the rates at the Conference Center. There is a lot to do at Camp – fishing, boating and swimming, hiking, clearing trails, picnicking, birding, meditating, splitting and moving firewood, worship in the Chapel of the Pines (Sunday mornings). In the area is the Woodstock grounds and museum, many antique shops, fine dining, craft breweries, rafting the Delaware River, golf. God’s whole creation in rural New York awaits your visit!

-- Rev. Bob Wollenburg, Board President

And now, good news from our Executive Director.

Greetings and Blessings to you all,

It is my pleasure to let you know that the Town of Highland has given us the go ahead to officially open Koinonia. The board, volunteers, member churches, donors, and those working on staff have been focused on this for over a year. And together, we have done it! Congratulations, Koinonia! This is a huge accomplishment. Thank you, everyone.

Summer is here – and Koinonia is open to those yearning to re-connect with God, with nature, and with others. We invite and welcome you to come up with your family, with your congregation, or on your own. Our retreat buildings are nearing capacity for July and are filling up for August. The conference center has typically not been in use for the summer, but we are sure that once folks experience the comfort of our air-conditioning, WiFi, and food service, it will not stay empty for long. If you would like to inquire about a reservation, please email register@koinoniany.org

Thank you to all who participated in the Spring Appeal. We raised over \$33,000 and added 62 more donors to our Common Ground Family. We are at the beginning of a new summer fundraiser encouraging folks to set up a monthly recurring donation, and we will send you a t-shirt as a thank you. We hope you will consider giving to help sustain us as we continue to grow and minister to more people. Click [here](#) to find out more.

Koinonia’s soft opening on Memorial Day weekend was wonderful, even if it was wet and cold. We lit cozy fires in the retreat buildings and conference center. Eddie Lincoln’s interment was beautiful at the Chapel in the Pines. And 45 people arrived at the Conference Center on Sunday for worship. With masks on, we sang all together and it felt as if we were starting anew.

Since that weekend we have continued to prepare for the Port Jervis Day Camp, improve facilities, get the water systems fully up to date, and take in bookings. Our current focus is getting the Campground and Beachfront open by 4th of July Weekend. This next week will be crucial-please pray for many hands and strong bodies to get this work completed.

We have some staff news. After one month working as our Program Director, Mellissa McEvoy is leaving us to spend time with her family. We have officially hired Matt Baumhardt as our Retreat Director. Matt comes to Koinonia with 30 years of experience in Hospitality and hotel management, with 13 years of that time at Briarcliff, a LOM camp in Texas. His expected start date is July 15th, and we are getting the Caritas House ready for him and his family. Jeannine Fogler is the Day Camp Coordinator and doing a great job. We have also hired Diana and Ryan Fisk, an incredible cooking/housekeeping/waterfront/maintenance/groundskeeping team who will live on site this summer and work for an hourly wage. We are looking for Day Camp Counselors and Support Staff. All inquiries can be emailed to info@koinoniany.org.

Weekend Programming this Summer:

August 15th – Community Day at the Waterfront

August 20-22nd – Healing for Koinonia Hurt

September 3rd-5th – GRAND OPENING WEEKEND!

I recently received a phone call from a father who had been at Koinonia as a child. He said it has been a hard year, especially for his two teenage boys. He felt that a week at the Lakeside Cabin might be just what his family needs to begin to heal. It looks as if they are coming in July. This is just one example of how Koinonia can minister to people. We have so much work to do, and we have so much we can give to the region and the world, with God's guidance and strength.

Let's begin!

God Bless,

Kathleen

