



Camp Alexander Mack  
PO Box 158  
1113 E Camp Mack Rd  
Milford, IN 46542

574.658.4831

[info@campmack.org](mailto:info@campmack.org)

# Camp Alexander Mack

## News from the Director

December 3<sup>rd</sup> begins the season of Advent—four weeks leading up to the celebration of Christmas. In our churches, we light candles of peace, love, hope, and joy to help us reflect on the magnitude of the gift God gave us in Jesus.

Advent also anticipates a new way of being the people of God. It is the beginning of God's message to us through His son, the one recognized as the Christ—the Messiah. Therefore, not only do we celebrate the miraculous birth of "the Word made flesh," but we also celebrate the message Jesus brings. His radical message changed the very nature of how we are to experience God.

In all of life, we experience change. What we once knew as children has changed to a greater understanding as adults. We gain new knowledge as we experience and study more of anything. This is one of the wonderful things about our humanity. Yet, while we may learn more and begin to see things in a different way, we also find that what is at the heart of our experience, rarely changes.

Jesus affirmed the Ten Commandments. He frequently quoted the prophets. He demonstrated that love—love for God and for others—is the foundation on which faith is built.

In the next few years, there will be changes here at Camp Mack. These are changes that come out of the strategic plan we are developing now. They are changes that address the concerns and ideas many have shared over the last several months. Some of these will be so small that hardly anyone will notice. Others will be hard to miss. But even though we change as the result of our study and work together, what lays at our heart will stay the same: sanctuary, connecting people with God, developing faith, caring for Creation, and encouraging full Christian community.

The heavens opened to the shepherds at Christmas; kings travelled from a faraway land at Christmas; God's plan for redemption was unveiled at Christmas. As we plan for the future using the solid foundation of our past, we also celebrate the new opportunities God will bring us beginning this Christmas.

May you anticipate the wonders God will reveal to you through this Advent season and the joy of Christmas that follows. May your celebration of Jesus uncover new blessings throughout the new year to come.

Gene Hollenberg, Executive Director



## Be Our Guest

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### You're the Mack to our camp

You may be wondering what we're doing at camp these days now that the weather is cooler and we don't have little campers running around all the time. I can assure you that we are never short on things to do around here. From running retreats to processing mailings to working on the brochure to preparing for next year, we keep busy with several events and tasks. Our hard-workers who tend to camp's facility have been putting in several hours to winterize camp and take care of some projects they aren't able to complete during the busier guest times.

I've also been taking care of some other things now that we don't have as many groups in (though, if you'd like to bring a group in, we'd be more than happy to host you). I am in the process of some research. My hope is for registration and your interactions with Camp Mack to be easier and more convenient. It might take some time, but I think we're headed in a good direction. We are limited by the capabilities of the system in some ways, but we have options. If you have feedback or comments about your experience with registration, donations, or any other process, please let me know. I won't know what to fix if I don't know what hasn't been working well or has been confusing for you, so I welcome your thoughts. I cannot control whether the system freezes or other issues like that, but I can notify our database provider if you're having problems, and they can address it. I can also try to make adjustments on the back end to make filling forms out more clear. Please send comments to [deanna@campmack.org](mailto:deanna@campmack.org). You matter to camp, and we want you to feel that.

Below is the poem I wrote for those who have volunteered at Camp Mack in the last year. I recited it at the Volunteer Banquet about a month ago, but I believe it applies to so many people who love Camp Mack and have been continual carers or supporters of it. I hope it brings a little happiness to your day.

#### **Volunteers, you're the Mack to our camp.**

*You're the cinnamon to our toast because you make the days at camp sweeter.*

*You're the fan to our team because you make it cool even when the outdoors feels like a heater.*

*You're the flame to our campfires because you make Camp Mack brighter.*

*You're the water to our boats because you make staff's work lighter.*

*You're the slide to our swim beach because you make camp life more fun.*

*You're the gas to our camp van because without you, we couldn't run.*

*You're the Waubee to our waves because you keep good memories alive.*

*You're the kettle to our popcorn because you support us and help us thrive.*

*You're the boardwalk to our yurt village because you have so many connections.*

*You're the logo to our letterhead because you likely have some Camp Mack apparel collections.*

*You're the song to our camp circle because you are energetic with just a hint of weird.*

*You're the lake to our beach because you're here when it's sunny and when it's as white as Galen's beard.*

*You're the rock to our wall because you provide stepping stones for campers to grow.*

*You're the Mack to our camp because we love and need you more than you know. And we're so very glad that where God sends you, you're willing to go.*

Thank you to everyone who supports camp in one way or another. Whether it's by time, money, recommendations, or prayer, we appreciate the love you give to Camp Mack, and we hope to see you around here again soon! I wish you blessings during this advent season.

Deanna Beckner, Guest Services Director

# Sunny Camp Mack

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## Bits and Pieces

Two weeks ago, we had volunteer work days here at Camp. On Tuesday, a van load of folks came from Plymouth to help us. We had a great day of work and fellowship. We had just cut down sixteen trees. Our red pine trees are nearing the end of their natural life and need to be replaced. Dana Snyder has an Amish friend who came down with him and cut the trees down for us. We have a buyer for the logs and we pulled those out. We next rented a chipper and chipped up the smaller branches which just left a lot of firewood, which needed picked up. So, on Tuesday, we picked up load after load of firewood and filled our firewood storage buildings. We are all set for next summer's campfires! We surely appreciate our volunteers!

We are all done with the siding on the front and back of Ulrich. We just finished taking down the last of the scaffolding, and it looks so nice. If you get a chance, come by and look at the new siding. Ulrich is starting to look pretty again! We plan to finish the two ends next summer.

Lynn and his volunteers are putting the finishing touches on the Good Shepherd window which is on the east end of the auditorium. We had some aluminum frames made and we put Plexiglas in them and mounted that on the outside of the windows. This should protect the beautiful stained glass from stray Frisbees and the normal weather we get here.

All in all, it has been a busy fall and a very productive one here at Camp. Thanks to our volunteers, we have taken some big steps in keeping this place "... a Sanctuary where people connect with God."

Galen Jay, Facility Director





“I go to nature every day for inspiration in the day’s work.” - Frank Lloyd Wright

Three years in a row, REI has done something most businesses would never dream of by closing their doors for Thanksgiving and Black Friday, opting outside, and encouraging the rest of the country to do the same. Was it a marketing ploy? Not really. Opting outside is at the core of what REI is all about. They see the value in time off and finding a connection to something bigger.

What is it that draws us outside and into nature? Is it that connection to something bigger? Is it because when we are surrounded by wildlife, we can let go of the stresses of our lives, breathe a little deeper, and be able to focus again? Maybe it’s the beauty of nature that draws us to join it for even a little time. Time spent in nature has been shown to lessen anxiety, improve concentration, and have great impacts on physical health. Are you opting outside in your life?

Personally, I know when I have been spending too much time indoors. I find it hard to focus; I can feel overwhelmed by work at times, and I feel a longing to hear the birds sing or the leaves rustle. Taking a 15 minute walk by the lake after lunch can be the most productive part of my day as I return to the office relaxed and focused. Even better are the days I spend time sitting by the pond, walking in the prairie, or walking a trail with my camera in hand. Time spent in nature is needed.

As fall turns to winter and you want to curl up in a blanket for a long winter hibernation, I encourage you and your family to bundle up, grab your binoculars, and head on outside for a bit. Let me know what you see. Try the Nature Passport app on your phone to get started, join a hiking group in your community, spend time in a state park, and explore your own backyard. Whatever it is that you do, opt outside and experience what time in nature can do for you.

Jessie Kreider, Program Director

## Celebration

December is a great time for celebrations. Not only are we celebrating the birth of our Savior, but we also celebrate the ending of one year and the beginning of another. I also get to add one more celebration into December every year, my wedding anniversary. For those of you who don't know me that well, my husband and I were married in the John Kline Gathering Room at camp on New Year's Eve in 2011. We had the whole room decorated with tulle and candles, and it was absolutely beautiful. Our reception was in the dining hall, and we spent the whole day before the wedding hanging paper lanterns and giant snowflakes from the rafters. Besides getting to marry my best friend, my favorite part of the whole event was getting to decorate and set up beforehand. I even asked Tony, the food service manager, if we could fold the cloth napkins ourselves while we were decorating. I loved watching the whole room become something new as the decorations were hung and the tables were set.

Camp has special table settings that are used specifically for banquets and special events. I have always loved getting all the silverware polished and setting out the china plates, but from the time I first started helping serve banquets at camp (I think it was around 2007), my favorite part of setting the table was placing the glass drinking goblets on the table. I don't know why I love these goblets so much, but there is just something so charming and elegant about them that makes me a little giddy. They make a table setting look very classy and add just the right amount of sparkle. For my wedding, Tony and I came up with a great dessert option that would highlight my love for our goblets. We made individual strawberry trifles in the goblets for all the guests. It was both delicious and pretty, although the dishwashers that night probably disliked having to wash so many goblets. I hope you enjoy this month of celebrations and maybe try out the strawberry trifle recipe.

## Strawberry Trifle

### Ingredients

2 lbs. fresh strawberries, washed and stemmed  
1-2 Tbsp. sugar  
3 cups strawberry glaze  
Prepared angel food cake  
16 oz. whipped topping  
16 oz. sour cream  
16 fl. oz. sweetened condensed milk

Slice strawberries.

Place  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the sliced strawberries in a food processor and add sugar. Pulse the sugar and berries until pureed.

Add puree to the remaining strawberries and mix well. Mix glaze into the berry mixture.

Slice Angel food cake into 1 inch cubes.

In a mixing bowl, combine the whipped topping and sour cream (more or less to taste).

Slowly stir in the condensed milk. (more or less to taste)

If a large bowl or individual bowls, begin with a layer of cake followed by a layer of strawberry mixture, followed by a layer of whipped topping mixture. Repeat until you have used all or most of your mixtures. Refrigerate until ready to serve.



Vanessa Bohannon, Food Service Director

## Christmas and Holiday Parties

**Camp Mack** is the perfect location to host your Christmas and holiday parties and banquets. Our dining hall has the capacity to host parties of 25-300 people. For banquets, we offer everything from buffet style service to plated dinners. So if your club, business, church, or family reunion is looking for place this holiday season, give Camp Mack a call at 574-658-4831 or email us at [info@campmack.org](mailto:info@campmack.org). We look forward to serving you!



## Camp Mack Wish List

- Large reusable Christmas tree
- Pre-lit candles sets
- Generous response to our annual giving invitation
- Prayers for our strategic planning process

**A blessed and spiritual Christmas for all in our  
Camp Mack family!**



## Upcoming Get-A-Way Days

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***\*Please sign up for Get-a-Way Days 1–2 weeks in advance.***

**December 2, Wreaths and Swags:** Get started decorating for the Christmas season as you make a traditional Williamsburg Wreath, Christmas wreath, or a swag using fresh greens and fruit to grace your door. Cost is \$30 (lunch and all materials included). **9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.**

**December 2, Christmas Ornaments:** Gain new skills in the woodshop as you make beautiful Christmas ornaments on the lathe. Cost is \$20 (lunch and all materials included). **9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.**

**December 2/3, Christmas Cookies:** Fill your cookie jar for the holidays! Camp provides the ingredients and supplies. You mix the dough, sample cookies, and decorate to your heart's delight. Best of all, camp cleans up the mess! Choose 4 batches of cookies (each batch makes about three dozen cookies). Cost is \$45 (lunch and all baking materials included).

**Choice of 3 sessions: December 2 (Both Saturday sessions are FULL), 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m./12:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. and December 3, 12:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.)**



-For more information, check out Get-a-Way Days at [www.campmack.org/get-a-way-days](http://www.campmack.org/get-a-way-days) or by emailing [info@campmack.org](mailto:info@campmack.org).



# Upcoming Events at Camp Mack:

## Camp Mack Calendar

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Dec 31–Jan 1 New Year's Eve Retreat

Jan 13 Camp Rep Meeting

### New Year's Eve Retreat

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**BEYOND BELIEF!** Why bring in the new year sitting at home when you can be at Camp Mack reuniting with friends from summer and introducing someone new to camp? Camp Mack is the place to be on New Year's Eve as you count down the minutes until the ball drops at our very own "Times Square" event. This overnight event is filled with awesome activities indoors and out, live DJs, dancing, pizza, games, Bible studies, workshops... the list goes on and on!



This event is for all youth in the 6th through 12th grades. **Be sure to register before December 5 to pay the early registration price of \$60 and to be guaranteed a one of a kind event t-shirt.** A scholarship of \$10 is available during the early registration period. After December 5, the price goes up to \$70.

**December 31, 2017–January 1, 2018.** Sunday 2 p.m.–Monday 12:30 p.m.

### Camp Rep Meeting

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Talking about summer camp and all the programs that happen at Camp Mack throughout the year starts now. We want all camp reps to attend the camp rep meeting on Saturday, January 13, 2018. We will be sending out response cards closer to Christmas. When you attend, you will have brunch provided for you, you get all the print resources, camp staff will let you know about any important changes, and most important, you get to network with other camp reps to see what special things they are doing within their churches.

