



January 2025

It's a new year, thank the Good Lord! 2024 was a year of transition in staffing, board membership and function, and programming. This is the year we move forward with these changes. We *must* be resource neutral. This will happen through a variety of ways, outlined below.

Helping us decrease our annual deficit was a group of 150 boys that stayed on site from December 21-26. They kept us busy during the holiday and provided over \$20k revenue to end the year.

Our 2024 partnership with Clay Electric proved a fruitful one. We housed a total of 60 linemen in the aftermath of Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Not only was this a great boost to our finances at a normally slow time of year, it also served our communities well by providing a clean and comfortable space for linemen to stay as they returned power from Gainesville to Lake City.

Staffing

In the spring of last year, our payroll was \$12k every two weeks. It is currently \$6k. That said, we have been grossly understaffed for months, and I have been carrying the weight of five jobs. However, two summer staff have recently taken on more responsibility in administration, bookings, and marketing. I have also enlisted an intern this semester to help with programming and prepare a new format for summer camp. We have fewer staff members on our regular payroll and more on call, as is the case with all of our cooks. This group of staff is also the most mission-driven and team-oriented I have witnessed since I joined the board in 2019.

Summer Rates and Schedule

After a careful cost-analysis, it was brought to light that we were losing *\$100 per day, per summer camper*. In response, our rates increased at the start of the year, from \$550 to \$850 per week of summer camp. This puts us more in line with camp rates locally and around the nation. This will certainly have an impact on our registration numbers, however, as many families attend on scholarship and church sponsorships. We must grow our scholarship fund, which totaled just \$3405 in 2024.

To increase our summer revenue potential, I have cut our overnight camp program to just three weeks, filling the rest of the summer with guest groups promising 100 to 150 campers weekly. This will be a huge boost to our summer revenue, as each of these guest groups will bring in \$25k to \$45k per week, while keeping our staff expenses low.

As we saw great growth in our day camp program from 2023 to 2024, we increased that program from 4 to 6 weeks this summer, running alongside our overnight camps and guest groups, providing a needed service for working families in the local community.

Fundraising

I received help from both a local dedicated church volunteer, as well as a retired couple whom I met at the annual Campfire Collective conference, to write year-end solicitation letters. These letters garnered over \$13,000 in matching gifts after just one day's work for a few staff members and volunteers. Thank you to all who have submitted your matching gift donations!

As Thanksgiving Pies and the Christmas Gala have not proven to be successful fundraisers for several years, these will be eliminated in 2025, allowing the team to instead focus our energy on guest groups and programs.

Programming

We are simplifying our programming, only focusing on the activities that fulfill the mission. We have closed high ropes for 2025, saving us close to \$10k in inspection, training, and facilitation costs. We will continue to evaluate our programming costs throughout the year.

I am looking ahead to plan an Advent workshop to be held in November, offering education and crafts for any who would like to prepare for the season. I am currently seeking volunteers to serve on this planning team to provide this fun resource for our presbytery family.

I am also finalizing details for our 3-year youth leadership development program, with a soft launch this summer. The goal is to engage youth through their high school years, encourage them as leaders in the Church, and train future counselors who have grown to love Montgomery as campers.

Accountability

The Board of Trustees has voted to meet monthly in 2025 to ensure we continue to work in collaboration toward common goals. Additionally, the Executive Committee will meet monthly following the release of financial statements to comb through the numbers, raise any questions, and ensure the will of the board is being carried out financially.

We are a resource for the presbytery! This was the original purpose for Montgomery Center. As a product of both Presbyterian Camps and Conference Centers as well as small churches, I see the value in working together in mission to provide programs, space, and services for the churches in our presbytery.

I am excited about what God has in store for us in 2025. Thank you for your continued support and prayers as we move forward with intention and enthusiasm this year.

In Christ's service,
Rebekah Rodgers
Executive Director