

Community of Christ

South Central States Mission Center
909 E. Battlefield Springfield MO 65807
417-886-7537

Dear Friends,

On May 10, 2008, the Ozark Camp and Retreat Center was hit by a tornado. Many trees and buildings were damaged or destroyed. Although the initial surveying has been disheartening, those involved also see this as an opportunity to bring the campgrounds to a new high. The history of the grounds and the support shown by the members over the past years is a living testimony of God's love.

The History

More than sixty years ago, a group of people from the Community of Christ faith movement walked onto the acreage now known as the Ozark Camp and Retreat Center. Descendants of that first group state that their relatives knew immediately that "they were on holy ground."

The grounds were empty except for some trees and streams. Those early members had a vision. They saw the beauty of the area, felt the presence of the Holy Spirit, and knew that these grounds could become a special place. **They had a vision of community.**

There was no Internet or even TV then. No air conditioning or electricity for a fan. People set up tents, cooked over open fires, and worshiped God and His son, Jesus. A group of strangers were brought together by a common belief system and a desire to share with one another and became a community.

In the early days, anywhere from 200-350 people attended reunions. Over the years, the grounds began to develop. Groups of men and women gathered from around the area and built the lodge and original tabernacle. Trees were planted. Cabins were built. The serenity and peacefulness that was felt from the first day continued to enhance the camping experience for all ages.

The Growth

Today, we find ourselves in a different time. Our communication is by email or cell phone. Entertainment is found in videogames and DVDs. The campgrounds also changed, with buildings added or other structures replaced. The small saplings grew into large trees that provided a natural barrier from the outside world. Instead of tents, spaces for RVs were created.

Some things remained the same. Families found time to gather at the campgrounds for worship and fellowship. Camps offered children and youth a chance to get away from the bustle of their everyday lives. Each summer, people experienced the Holy Spirit that has been present since the first days of the campgrounds.

The Need

Now, the physical campgrounds have been HURT. Many trees that were planted decades ago have been uprooted. The buildings on the grounds have structural damage or have disappeared. Insurance will pay for a lot of the repairs but we all know that insurance won't cover everything. The swimming pool project that was started before the storm needs to be completed once site access is available.

Our Response

We have had an outpouring of offers to help and volunteer labor will be needed later. At this time, the Ozark Campground Board has created an "**Ozark Campground Renewal Fund.**" These funds will be used to pay for items not covered by insurance or improvements to enhance the campground for years to come. **You may make your tax-deductible contributions to this fund using the form below or write on your weekly envelope - "Ozark Campground Renewal Fund."** You may also include donations to help bring the pool project to completion without loans. Please consider donating each week through the end of the year. *(Also, please feel free to share this information with others.)*

Sometimes it's easier to donate money to somebody who has a need when you can see that hurt. Pictures of the damages can be found at www.southcentralstatesmissioncenter.net/. Our natural human to human compassion makes our hearts and our pocketbooks open up to help relieve the pain.

The Future

From 1st Corinthians 12:12: "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts, they form one body." The Ozark Camp and Retreat Center is one part of the Community of Christ in this area.

With your assistance, the campgrounds will again fulfill the vision that was begun so many years ago. Camps and reunions will once again meet on the grounds as soon as can safely be arranged. Our children and our grandchildren will see trees that are full-grown. These future generations will know that they were planted by people who believed that maintaining and reclaiming this Holy Ground is part of their response to God's calling.

The Spirit that was felt on the campgrounds so many years ago is still there. You can feel it as you walk through the gates. You may not recognize the physical surroundings from your last visit to the campgrounds but **the sense of peace and power that only God can provide is there.**

Sixty years ago, that spirit was felt by a small group of people. That spirit has touched lives throughout the years of the campground and will continue to touch lives. Thank you for being part of this re-growth!

The Board of the Ozark Campground and Retreat Center

My Response

(Retain this portion for your records) Date: _____ Amount Donated: \$ _____

(Ozark Campground Renewal Fund \$ _____ Ozark Pool Project \$ _____)

(Please fill out this portion and return in the enclosed envelope, with your check made out to "Community of Christ" to: Ozark Campground Renewal Fund, SCS Mission Center, 909 E. Battlefield, Springfield, MO 65807)

Date: _____ Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

My Total Donation: \$ _____ *(If no amount is designated, donation will be split 50/50.)*

Amount for Ozark Campground Renewal Fund \$ _____

Amount for Ozark Pool Project \$ _____