

New Hampshire Conference United Church of Christ



May 1, 2020

Dear Horton Center Campers, Parents, Deans, Counselors, Staff and Supporters:

Each week of our summer camping season, we hold a Sunday night full camp gathering that includes introductions and a discussion of our core values at Horton Center. I know that many of our campers could recite these by memory. Foremost among these core values is the reminder that our first priority is to keep everyone safe.

Given the Covid-19 pandemic, I have been engaged in weeks of conversation with Interim Executive Director Tim Hughes, New Hampshire Conference Board members, and our outdoor ministry partners in the Maine and Vermont Conferences about how we could hold camp at Horton Center while remaining steadfast to our value of keeping the entire community safe. Given our site, structure, and staffing, I have come to the realization we cannot. Despite considering a variety of program modifications, it remained clear that our type of live in, overnight camp experience would provide some significant risk to our campers, deans, counselors, and staff, as well as the families to whom they will all return. Given our core value of keeping one another safe, this is not acceptable. I, therefore, am announcing we will not be holding on-site camp at Horton Center this summer.

This decision effects not only our summer camps, but also means we will not be holding our Spring Work Weekend, our Extreme Leadership Weekend, our annual Open House, nor any of our summer Vacation Bible Camps. We will make decisions regarding our post-camp retreat availability and our September programming at a later date.

Campers and Parents, over the next couple of weeks we will be refunding in full deposits you made when registering for camp. We are not, however, cancelling your registration. And here is why...

While we will not be able to hold camp on top of Pine Mountain this summer, it does not mean we are not holding camp. For the summer of 2020, we are introducing a new camp program which will be known as:



HC@Home will be Monday through Friday camps that will include a combination of on-line and on your own activities. Campers will still have the opportunity to interact with some of their favorite deans, counselors, and staff members. We will be registering campers to participate in our HC@Home camps, but there will be no cost for participation. Interim Executive Director Tim Hughes and Summer Director Tivvi Paré will be rolling out all the details on our HC@Home program as the month of May progresses.

I want to thank all of those who are a part of the Horton Center family for your support, understanding, and prayer. Horton Center is not just a sacred place, it is a beloved community. And I am convinced that community will thrive in the summer of 2020.

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordon Rankin".

Reverend Gordon Rankin
Conference Minister
New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ