

## **SUMMER CAMP at N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs**

### **Faithful and Affordable**

Our United Church of Christ operates some wonderful camps across the country with theologically liberal, justice-oriented, and community-building emphases. If you have an idea in your head of "church camp" that's been planted there by exposure to horror stories of theologically conservative, indoctrinating, full-court-press Bible camps, know that couldn't be further from the experience of those who attend our church camps.

Rev Leah Atkinson Bilinski shared these thoughts from her early UCC camp experiences. "Here's what I found when I attended church camp for the first time as a 12 year-old (and it's what I've sought to recreate in the nearly 50 weeks of UCC summer camp that I have planned and led myself over the last 26 years): I found a community of diverse campers who came from all walks of life, experiences and personalities who, under the guidance of trained and caring volunteers, formed a strong community together where we could be our true selves, engage in both fun and meaningful conversation, and immerse ourselves in a vision for how the world can be – the world for which God dreams and Jesus worked. I also found a place where I could be my awkward, goofy self and feel like it was God-blessed that I was the way I was, rather than something I had to overcome to fit in. I, alongside all the other campers, felt safe, loved and invited into something greater together. To this day, I can still tell you things that happened on every single day of that first week of church camp I experienced. It had that big of an impact on me – both the fun and the beautiful."

These bedrock experiences of life are absolutely priceless. They are why Leah, members of Fautleroy Church and many other PNC-UCC congregations give of their time to direct summer camp sessions or serve as cabin leaders, nurses, chaplains and resource people at N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs. They believe in the power of church camp!

But of course, this priceless experience does have a price/cost of operation attached to it, and cost can be a barrier for some. We want to ensure that no young person is turned away due to an inability to pay, and that the experience is affordable for every family.

Here are steps that can be taken to lower the cost of camp. For a concrete example, we are going to walk through the options for Morice, a fictitious 7<sup>th</sup> grade camper:

1. First of all, our camps offer a TIERED PRICING SYSTEM. Do not think twice about choosing the subsidized cost for camp if that will help get your child to camp. For Morice, choosing the subsidized cost for junior high camp starts Morice's camp cost at \$535.
2. Second, you can lower the cost by registering by the EARLY BIRD DEADLINE - April 15. That will take \$50 off of Morice's camp cost, bringing total costs for Morice down to \$485.

3. If a camper is new or returning to camp and they bring a friend new to camp – both save. With the BRING A FRIEND discount, each saves \$100 for full-week camps or \$50 for part-weeks camps. The discount also works if two newbies link up. Morice brings a friend and now his fee is down to \$385.
4. Next, check with your church. A number pay a portion of the camp fee for their members. Surprised? Many congregations view church camp as a significant piece of their year-round faith formation program.
5. If costs are *still* too great for you, call N-Sid-Sen or Pilgrim Firs and ask for a scholarship to cover another portion of the expense.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, check out these links:**

N-Sid-Sen Camp & Retreat Center [www.n-sid-sen.org](http://www.n-sid-sen.org)

Pilgrim Firs Camp & Conference Center [www.pilgrim-firs.org](http://www.pilgrim-firs.org)

[Summer Camp Brochure](#)

Ways to Save and Tiered Pricing can be found [here](#).