



## Our Decision – Fallow Ground

May 5, 2020



Here in the Midwest, fallow ground is a familiar concept. It refers to land that has been plowed but not seeded for one or more growing seasons. It is a ritual that helps restore the land's fertility.

Leaders of the Illinois South Conference and DuBois Center have spent the last month planning and preparing with great hope, while simultaneously reviewing current data to determine if we can safely serve children at camp this summer. The favorites bar on my monitor is littered with links to the Illinois (IDHP) and Missouri Departments of Public Health, John's Hopkins University, the American Camp Association, the CDC and others.

Latest projections and models show that COVID-19 may peak as late as the end of June in southern Illinois, although no one knows for certain what the current staged lifting of restrictions might bring. Our #1 priority at DuBois Center is the health and safety of our campers, guests and staff. After long and careful deliberations, leaders of the Conference and DuBois Center have come to accept that we cannot provide our summer camping programs as planned. Try as hard as we might, we just can't envision being able to offer a safe experience for children and youth this season.

At a regularly called meeting of the Illinois South Conference Council, after prayerful and tearful consideration, it was decided that this summer will be a season of fallow ground for DuBois Center. The vote was unanimous, though made with heavy hearts. Currently scheduled programs for June – August 9, 2020 are being postponed until summer 2021. The ground was plowed and harrowed as brochures were sent to eager families, potential staff were interviewed, and plans were set in place. But the seeds, our blessed campers and leaders, will not be sown at DuBois Center this summer.

The situation in our state and region may change, but we felt it was important to be proactive and make a decision sooner rather than later. New protocols for groups related to distancing, cleaning, safety in sleeping areas, food service, lifeguarding and participation in cherished activities are being established, but they need to be in place and practiced before camp can open. This is just not possible for DuBois Center by June or even July.

We are taking some time to grieve this decision and the loss of a summer of joy at camp. During the coming weeks, a team of creative volunteers will be exploring ways that our campers and their families can stay engaged with DuBois Center. Watch for news by the end of May.

We realize that finances are tight for many right now. That was one of our primary reasons for implementing a Register without Risk policy. However, before making a decision about the fees you have already paid, I hope you will consider all the options outlined in the attached document. Yes, you may still request a refund, transfer to a DuBois Center event in the fall, or donate the fees paid to camp. In addition, you may also transfer your payment to Summer Camp 2021. There is no rush to decide, so please take your time. No actual refunds will be made until early June. We want to ensure systems are in place and avoid wasting valuable staff time.

### **The Camp & Retreat Center of the Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ**

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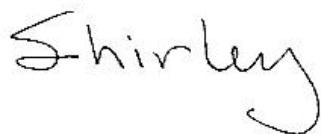
As you may be aware, our spring and summer programs take significant effort and resources to create, much of which is expended months before the first camper or guest arrives. Some of the expenses continue regardless - insurance, basic utilities, animal care, and critical maintenance and office work. The loss of this year's spring and summer seasons is tough on our hearts, but it is also challenging financially.

DuBois Center is resilient, but we do need your prayers and support. If you are able to make a donation at this critical time, it will go a long way to help DuBois Center withstand the loss of spring and summer revenue. Links to online giving can be found at [ISCUCC.org](http://ISCUCC.org) or [DuBoisCenter.org](http://DuBoisCenter.org) and the mailing address for DuBois Center is included below.

In 2020, DuBois Center and the Illinois South Conference celebrate 55 years of ministry and our work has only just begun. We believe in an Easter God, a God of joy and hope and peace. We enter this summer of fallow ground giving thanks to our loving Creator who truly does make all things new again.

Sending prayers to you, your families and communities.

Peace,



Shirley Asmussen AKA Kayak  
Director of Outdoor Ministries

This letter is being sent with the full support of the Illinois South Conference Council.

Dr. Jill Baker, Conference Moderator	Rev. Rosemary Captain
Rev. Christy Eckert, Conference Vice-Moderator	Ms. Virginia Ilch
Mr. Dwight Asselmeier, Conference Treasurer	Rev. R.J. Morgan
Rev. Ivan Horn, Conference Secretary	Rev. Mike Southcombe
Rev. Shana Johnson, IL South Conference Minister	Ms. Barbara VanAusdall

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## SUMMER CAMP 2020 Options for your Payments

With the postponement of our scheduled 2020 summer camp programs until 2021, there are options related to deposits and balances that have already been paid.

The Outdoor Ministries Team (OMT) is still hoping and planning for a great line-up of fall programming. Our Mother-Daughter Retreat is scheduled for October 16-18 and other events are in the works.

We are also exploring ways that family groups might be able to stay connected with DuBois Center prior to fall. Some of these options will have fees attached.

And last, but definitely not least, plans for Summer 2021 are moving forward.

Individuals and Families have these options:

- Donate any or all of your deposit and event fees paid to support the ministry of DuBois Center at this critical time.
- Transfer any or all of your deposit and event fee paid to a 2020 DuBois Center event.
- Transfer any or all of your deposit and event fee paid to a 2021 summer camp.  
***You'll definitely get the Early Bird rate and you'll get first pick of sessions!***
- Receive a refund of any or all of your deposit and event fee paid.

**There is no rush to decide, so please take your time. No actual refunds will be made until early June. We want to ensure systems and best practices are in place and avoid wasting valuable time – yours and that of our staff team.**

The best way to approach all of these options is to send an email to Julie our Registrar at [register@DuBoisCenter.org](mailto:register@DuBoisCenter.org) with all the details. This will give you and our office a virtual paper trail. Be sure to include the following information:

- Name of Camper(s)
- Session(s) Registered For
- Option or Options Selected
- The Dollar Amount(s) to be Donated, Transferred and/or Refunded
- If being Transferred, the Amount for 2020 and the Amount for 2021 (This designation can be changed at a later date.)

You will be sent a confirmation via email after the transaction has been completed.

**QUESTIONS?** Registration: 618.357.1809    [register@DuBoisCenter.org](mailto:register@DuBoisCenter.org)  
Program: 618.787.2202    [dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org](mailto:dcinfo@DuBoisCenter.org)