



**HAPPY CAMPERS** — Camp Dickenson, located in Fries, Va., is one of seven Holston Conference summer camps experiencing rising attendance.

### Camp ministry report

## Thankful for rising attendance, 'working hard' to fix problems

Attendance at Holston Conference summer camps continues to rise. This past season, attendance increased by eight percent over 2000 figures, from 2,851 to 3,103.

Nonetheless, Holston Conference Camping and Leisure Ministries faces a financial crisis that has conference leaders "working very hard" to remedy, says Camping Coordinator Rev. Randy Pasqua. The leadership is also examining its mission, "preparing for a vital future." In a nutshell: "We're on the threshold of change," he said.



**Randy Pasqua**

About 100 conference leaders, including the camping board and Discipleship Team, are reviewing preliminary results of a study commissioned by the conference in 1999. The study will address a cumulative camping ministry deficit of more than \$250,000, as reported in the "Conference Journal 2000." The 2001 budget for Holston Conference Camping & Leisure Ministries is \$1.8 million.

Rising attendances at summer camps shows the program "has quality," Pasqua said. "We're delighted that we're meeting our campers' needs."

But aging facilities, rising expectations from kids and parents, and a decline in adult retreat attendance put the squeeze on camp budgets, forcing directors to spend more money on campers each year while upgrading buildings and infrastructure.

Built more than 30 years ago, the majority of Holston's seven camps "do not meet contemporary needs for comfort and convenience," the study found, negatively impacting adult retreat participants.

"Our facilities were built to be summer camps. They've lagged behind in keeping up with standards for adult retreats," Pasqua said.

As child-care industry standards rise, summer camp ministries also must meet higher requirements for training, supervision, space and facilities.

According to the study, suggested changes include offering camp ministries through fewer sites and revamping financial and leadership structures. No dramatic changes are expected before the 2002 summer season.

Pasqua said the preliminary results of the study are being treated as a "working document. We're working it into a plan that everybody can get behind. Whenever you propose change, that scares a lot of people. But we need to be poised for future ministry. It costs significant dollars to have a quality program."

### Camp Stats

<b>Total 2001 summer attendance:</b>	3,103
<b>Total 2000 summer attendance:</b>	2,851
<b>Percentage of campers from United Methodist churches:</b>	71
<b>Number of churches represented:</b>	308
<b>Dollars spent by Holston groups on scholarships:</b>	\$190,557
<b>Camp with largest attendance increase:</b>	Camp Dickenson, from 508 last year to 601 this year
<b>2001 theme:</b>	With Open Arms
<b>Next summer's theme:</b>	In the Majesty of the Earth

## Not your typical hospital food

### Chattanooga ministry serves ICU family members

By Clint Cooper  
*Chattanooga Times Free Press*

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn.—Many of the individuals who walked out of the intensive care waiting rooms and headed for the table of food at Memorial Hospital last month had haggard looks from worry and lack of sleep.

Some probably hadn't eaten in 24 hours. Others needed to stay close to await word from a doctor. Still more couldn't risk leaving lest there be a change in the condition of a loved one.

The food on the table was purchased, prepared and brought in by a group at Jones Memorial UMC, but it might have been St. Gerard Catholic Church, Spring Creek Road Baptist Church or any of more than 30 churches, groups or individuals who are part of Memorial's Lunch Program for Intensive Care Families.

Lunch is brought in every weekday around 11:30 a.m. by one of the groups, and dinner is served on Thursday and Friday nights. There is no charge for any of the meals.

"I am inspired at the dedication of those who do serve lunch," said Sister Marie Ann Ballard, a patient advocate at Memorial and the coordinator of the program. "It's a faith experience and a beautiful thing — like Christ is present doing it for them."

Faye Carney, a member of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, began the program 11 years ago. She had seen a similar program in another hospital when her brother was a patient there and sought to start it at Memorial.

"We do it in the name of the church," she said. "When you get something started, you like to see it grow. It's tickled me to death (the way it has grown). I was proud to get it started. It's one of the best ministries we could do."

Today, the program has expanded so much that groups are asked to bring lunch or dinner only once a month.

Sister Ballard said groups are asked to bring in simple food for 50 to 60 people. Some groups bring so much she is able to

distribute it to other waiting areas, she said.

Lanier Davenport is among those who took advantage of the program. Davenport's late father was in the medical intensive care unit of the hospital for nearly 60 days, and his mother stayed as close to her husband as she could. Davenport himself was there as often as possible.

"It's been a real godsend," he said of the lunches. "The people that prepare them have a real feeling of compassion."

On the day Jones Memorial UMC was responsible for lunch, church members Doris Weir, Edna Earl Henson and Norma Ezzell served it. They put out assorted sandwiches, fruit, chips, Little Debbie's, soft drinks and the accompanying plates, cups and napkins.

"The entire church is involved," said Weir. She said the church rotates the monthly chore of making sandwiches among "six or seven ladies" out of "20 to 25" volunteers.

"It's the easiest thing (we've) ever done, and it's not (money) out of the church treasury," Weir said. "It's such a blessing. We've even had some people who wanted to pay (for lunch), but we feel like it's a ministry."

While churches make up the majority of the groups that serve lunch, they are not allowed to use the occasion to recruit new church members.

"This is not a place to evangelize," said Sister Ballard.

She said individuals who have partaken of the lunches have gone back to their own churches and have become a part of the ministry. Indeed, she said every weekday but one for the rest of the year had been taken. And since she still has inquiries, she said, she is thinking of allowing churches to bring in a continental breakfast for the ICU waiting rooms.

"This is a reflection of Memorial and our mission (to) further the healing ministry of Christ," said Jean Payne, a hospital spokeswoman.

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Photo by Alex McMahan/ *Chattanooga Times Free Press*

**INTENSIVE CARE**—Jones Memorial UMC members set out a homemade lunch for weary family members in a Chattanooga hospital waiting room. ☛