



# Suwannee Ripples

Published for Camp Suwannee by Advent Christian Village, The Office for Resource Development

## Celebrating 90 years of Exalting Christ through the Camping Ministry

In the summer of 1935, young people from across the southern region of Advent Christian Churches gathered at Dowling Park for a time of leadership training and Bible study. There was also a recreational program for fun and fellowship. Attendance was limited to young people 14 years old and up, with the upper age defined as “so long as one considered himself a youth.” That gathering marked the beginning of 90 consecutive years of Christian camping at Camp Suwannee (so far)!

From those earliest days, young people have enjoyed their time at camp. In 1937, a camper was said to have exclaimed, “I wish this institute could go on forever. We have been so happy. This has been the most Christian atmosphere that I have ever been in.” Ten days of camp cost \$10.00.

Campers were encouraged to give their hearts to the Lord and to consider fulltime Christian service. Campers were challenged to “commit one’s life for service, whether that was behind a desk, in front of a classroom, driving a truck, hoeing a garden, or washing dishes; since every vocation is a Christian call.”

Ten years after the first camp gathering, another important Camp Suwannee tradition began. A concrete cross was placed at the bottom of a sinkhole near the camp buildings where campers would gather for worship and Bible teaching. Thus in 1945, the Suwannee Bowl became the spiritual center of the camp. Over the past 80 years, scores of young people have given their hearts to the Lord at The Bowl, and many others have dedicated their lives to Christian service.

As we celebrate 90 years of camping ministry, we can rejoice that today these same traditions and priorities continue. Young people continue to love their week of camp and many remark that they feel closer to Christ at Camp Suwannee, and particularly the Suwannee



Bowl, than anywhere else. Each summer, youth accept Christ as their Savior and many others commit their lives to Christian service at Camp Suwannee. All are encouraged to represent Christ in whatever they do.

Today, camp costs a little more than \$10.00 for ten days. For some, it is a struggle to come up with the funds to attend a week at Camp. That is why your continued help is so important.

Last year, out of 111 campers, 70 received help from camperships. Finances should never keep a child from attending camp and having the opportunity to experience all that Camp offers.

As you read this edition of *Ripples* and the enclosed letter, please prayerfully consider how you can help. You can be certain your support is needed and much appreciated by those who will benefit from your generosity.

*Historical information taken from “The Camp Suwannee Story” published in 1985, in celebration of the Camp’s 50th Anniversary.*



# Director's Notes



Is it just me, or is time FLYING by? The New Year has made me realize again that time is short and we still have work to do. When is the last time you shared Jesus or your testimony with someone? Last year I was challenged by a line from the movie *The Sound of Freedom*: "When God tells you what to do, you cannot hesitate!" That's good advice for all Christians to be listening for the Holy Spirit's prompting and to act accordingly.

Volunteers are still a big blessing to us at Camp Suwannee. We have had several long-term volunteers that have recently moved on. RVICS is sending 11 volunteers in February. They will be doing several repair/replacement projects to fences, decks, and ramps due to damage from the hurricanes. They will also be doing a lot of painting and cleaning up. And those are just the projects at camp! They will also do work around the ACV campus. As is the case throughout ACV & Camp Suwannee's history, volunteers are a huge blessing here and have contributed countless hours towards upkeep of our facilities. We are grateful to each one.

The Florida Conference of Advent Christian Churches (FLCACC) Youth Retreat is scheduled for February 14-16 this year, with Shane Mumford as director. We know our youth look forward to camp all year, so this is a great midway point for them to gather for fellowship and encouragement.

Business at Camp Suwannee (the place) is steady, for which we are grateful. We have added a new group to the summer schedule, the American Heritage Girls. We have three weeks open this summer. If you know of groups that are looking for a place to hold a camp or other gathering, please refer them to us.

We here at ACV, Conference & Retreats and Camp Suwannee, invite you to come check us out. We would love to help you with planning retreats, reunions, church gatherings, school functions, business training, wedding receptions, etc.

Until then, we thank you for your prayers and financial support. May God richly bless you throughout 2025.

*Doug Mabey*  
*Director of Conference Services*

## Winter Retreat

**February 14-16, 2025**

Register online at  
[www.CampSuwanneeCamps.org](http://www.CampSuwanneeCamps.org)



## ILLUMINATE

SHINE CHRIST, LIGHT THE WAY

# Senior Camper Testimony

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This is how my week went at Camp Suwannee: It was definitely a blast. God moved through these beautiful people's lives. He also has definitely put his loving hand on me. He heard me, and He healed me.

I was baptized when I was nine, but I went through a lot in the past three years. My life definitely went down a rabbit hole and I thought God wasn't there when I needed Him. I thought He didn't hear me and I didn't have anyone. But now that I'm really looking back at it. He's here, He hears me and He knows my struggles, even though I don't always talk about my problems. I know He's here and He's listening, He is my Savior and my father and He's such a warrior.

I prayed Friday night at the altar after Pastor Kenny Latimore read some scriptures from Bible. The band played and everyone who needed prayers, and a lot more, went to the altar and I prayed and prayed and asked God for forgiveness and repented of my sins. Now I see God. I hear Him; He's here. I'm going to get baptized because I gave my life to Christ.

Don't miss out next summer. Camp Suwannee is such a wonderful and sweet place.

*Journey Williams, 15*



# Counselor in Training Testimony

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This past summer at camp changed my life so much in so many good ways. It was my first time being a CIT (Counselor in Training), and I loved every minute of it. There were some rough times of course, (dealing with kids and making sure they listen and not hurt each other, or get hurt themselves) but that's just how things go with younger kids!

I was hesitant to open up when I first got to camp, but what changed that was all the staff who gave me a push in the right direction. One of those people was my co-counselor. He talked to me and showed me around. He wasn't closed off, he was openly himself, and when I saw that he was so close to everyone, I started opening up, too. I made so many good friends and I got their numbers and now we're planning to hang out together and that is the best thing I could ever ask for.

One of the things I loved doing was sharing at the Bowl, not just because it helped the kids, but it also helped me. I feel like I touched some of the kids' hearts and that's what I was praying for, but the biggest thing that happened that night is that I got healed from things in the past that I did to myself. I wasn't planning on sharing at all that week, to be honest, but one night at the bowl I had something come across me and it was about my past. I hated thinking about it because it hurt. I didn't realize it at first, but it was God telling me to share this memory with the kids there, because there are some campers that are going through the same thing. I told the director, Meagan, and she was really wanting me to share as well, so I shared my testimony that Wednesday at the bowl.

Ever since, I've felt more confident, I've felt happier and really connected with God. Before this week, I've never really been connected with God. I've always just felt distant and scared, but I changed and I'm glad I did. I'm still not where I want to be in my relationship with God but I'm closer than I was before that week. Before that week I was still in a dark place, like I was years ago, but now it's hard to describe how good I feel, and I love that. I'm so honored that I got the chance to be a CIT at camp this year because I will definitely be coming back next year.

*Clay Lumpkins, 17*

## My Camp Experience

*I enjoyed Camp Suwannee because the staff was all nice. The food was delicious. The activities were fun. I love the silly songs and the skits. It was very fun hanging out with my new friends and I love the bowl service. My favorite part is swim time and snack shack I had fun and can't wait to go back next year.*

Zoe Gilliland, 8

*Camp Suwannee is where you can make long lasting friendships, grow your relationship with God, stay up late, play games and create unforgettable memories. The fun is never ending. The staff is incredible and the experience is phenomenal. Camp Suwannee is always a blast and I hope to go back next year.*

Nevaeh Gilliland, 15

*I enjoyed Camp Suwannee because I had a great experience again this year. My relationship with God grew a tremendous amount. Staff was amazing. The food was excellent. The fact that I got the privilege to attend is wonderful. I'm definitely going back next summer. Thank you to all who make this possible for so many kids.*

Jazmine Gilliland, 12

## Where Christ is Exalted through Camping

### Camp Suwannee

PO Box 4313, Dowling Park, FL 32064

(386) 658-5100 • 800-371-8381

www.campsuwannee.net • dmabey@acvillage.net

ACV Conference & Retreat Center is part of ACV Community Services LLC, a wholly owned limited liability company of Advent Christian Village, Inc.

## Upcoming Groups

Dates	Group Name
Feb 3-6	AC Leaders Conference
Feb 10-27	RVICS
Feb 14-16	FLCACC Youth Retreat
Feb 21-22	Leadership Camp, Phase III
March 7-9	Dynamos
April 4-6	Leadership Camp Phase IV
April 9-13	Tres Dias Men
April 23-27	Tres Dias Women
June 8-13	Creation Arts Camp
June 15-21	American Heritage Girls
July 6-12	FLCACC Junior Camp
July 13-19	FLCACC Senior Camp
July 21-25	DSL Deaf Family Camp
July 28-Aug 1	First Assembly of God of Live Oak
Sept 18-20	WH&FMS
October 1-5	Tres Dias Men
October 15-19	Tres Dias Women

To schedule your group for a reunion, conference or retreat, call  
(386) 658-5100 or 1-800-371-8381.

## Most Wanted List

Thank you to those who support projects from the Most Wanted List! We appreciate your help with making Camp Suwannee the best it can be.

- Mattress Covers - \$15 each, or \$360
- Dry Erase Boards for the Youth Lodge (2) - \$360 each
- Golf Cart (Gas Operated/Used) - \$7,000
- New Roof for Pavilion - \$75,000
- Telescoping Flag Pole with Solar Light - \$400
- Metal roofing on flagpole pavilion - \$500
- AC Fences at the Pavilion - \$1,600
- Hurricane Repairs - all gifts appreciated