



Christmas at Country Lake has been a tradition for the last 17 years and has been a highlight of the Christmas holiday season for me, my family and our staff. We have to also recognize that we are in a new season of sorts in ministry at Country Lake as we continue to grow and see God at work in many ways. For that reason, we will not be hosting Christmas Dinners this year but hope to resume with a fresh and new concept in 2018. Although this has been a very difficult decision, I am confident that it will be a blessing as we look to the future.

During the month of December we will continue to host retreat groups, but we will also use this time to make some much needed improvements, repairs and upgrades to our facilities and grounds that have been a challenge to schedule because of a heavily booked calendar. I know how many of you support the ministry of Country Lake and have contributed time, resources and money to help us fulfill our mission over the years of Connecting People to Jesus and One Another, so you might appreciate a glimpse of what we are working on this December. Here are a few of the projects we have scheduled:

- ❖ Refurbishing the main hallway in the Retreat Center with new flooring and a beautiful stone chair rail down the hall (stone graciously donated by Coronado Stone)
- ❖ Fresh improvements to the Front Desk area at the Retreat Center to provide a nice warm and welcoming first impression to our guests
- ❖ New and improved flooring in the dining area that will eliminate carpet (lots of opportunity for terrible stains) and replace with a nice hard-surface flooring that will last a long time and will offer an exciting new look.
- ❖ We will be adding over 90 new signs (both directional and informational) around the grounds to improve the experience and the general awareness of our guests.
- ❖ The outdoor lighting in our sports complex and activity area has been a need for several years and we are happy to be adding nine new LED flood lights to upgrade the lighting in the entire area including the soccer field, beach volleyball and the basketball courts. We will also be adding lights on the roadway between the activity area and the new worship center for improved safety of our guests.

2017 has been a year of blessings at Country Lake from groups and retreats to a record summer camp season with 4,942 guests in June and July alone which resulted in 225 baptisms. We have a great deal to celebrate and to be thankful for. We have seen a tremendous increase in the number of groups who come during the week and have utilized the new dorms and the Worship Center to accommodate a growing number of guests. Our staff has grown as well and we continue to dedicate our efforts to serving the Lord in a manner that reflects I Peter 4:8-10. *"Above all, love each other deeply; for love covers a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling; And each one of you should use whatever gifts he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."*

For the last few years we have taken tips received from the Christmas Dinners and used them to bless families in need during the Christmas season. Many of you have contributed to that effort in the past and we would like to continue the tradition if we can. We have provided household items to families whose husbands and dads were deployed, repaired vehicles, delivered food baskets, offered gift cards for parents to go shopping and we have provided gifts and clothing to a variety of families who are facing difficult life circumstances. This has been a highlight of the Christmas season for our staff. We have already committed to delivering food baskets this year and would like to continue blessing families with other gifts as well if you will join us in the effort. There are two simple ways to contribute financially:

1. Online contribution via PayPal (no account is needed). Click [HERE](#) and follow the instructions.
2. Mail a check to:

**Country Lake Christian Retreat  
815 Country Lake Road  
Underwood, IN 47177**

Thank you for your continued prayers and support of the ministry at Country Lake Christian Retreat. We look forward to many new and exciting things to come in 2018.

Blessings,

Ross Knecht, Executive Director