Camp Freedom Courier

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It is our privilege to come to you again and share the happenings of Camp Freedom as we met at the campgrounds from Friday, January 26 through February 04, 2024 for our 61st Annual campmeeting! We have been blessed to gather with fellow believers, and to enjoy the blessings of the Lord.

Several things have marked this encampment. First, one of our evangelists, Rev Michael Avery, requested release from his appointment in order to finish a book he is writing. His spot on the program was filled by Rev Tim Wiford, who is new to the camp, and is a very able servant of God. The other speakers were Rev Daniel Stetler, former president of Hobe Sound Bible College, and Rev John Parker, who served as Day Speaker. Bro Stetler was asked by the college to come back to share in two important services, then he came back to camp, and helped us finish out the campmeeting. Bro Parker was recovering from surgery, but came to fulfill his responsibilities. He became ill toward the end of camp, went to an Urgent Care facility, who advised him to get back to his family doctor as soon as possible, so he left a day early. Bro Harrold Taylor filled in for him that last Sunday morning. We are glad to report that the Lord has helped Bro Parker in a special way since camp. One of our singing groups, the Craig Bradford Family, was not able to attend, but the Stephen Cassady Family filled that spot. Even with all those changes, there was still a sense of continuity and connection, as well as an awareness of the presence of the Spirit of the Lord. Bro Richard Lehman brought the Keynote Address, “The Face of Holiness”. Yours truly and Bro John Geyer taught the adult Sunday School classes.

Other workers included Rev Dan and Beverly Cope, and Rev Stephen Cassady and Family as song evangelists, the group “Redeemed” from Hobe Sound Bible College, Hobe Sound, FL, and “Majesty” from Penn View Bible Institute, Penns Creek, PA. Rev Harrold Taylor was the speaker for the youth services, and Linda and Betsy Redcay were in charge of the children’s services.

We were blessed on Missions Day with Keith Lavery, representing Society of Indian Missions, and Stephen Archibald and family representing All Tribes Mission. These two organizations have joined forces, with All Tribes coming under the umbrella of SIM. It was really encouraging to hear how God is working with Native Americans these days. We praise the Lord for the offering received for these works, which came to $2,500.00. The children also had a missionary project, raising funds to send a young person to youth camp in Romania. The cost was $20/child/day, and the children raised $1,240.30. Praise the Lord for these offerings!

If you’ve followed the campmeeting over the years, you know that we frequently do a roll-call of the states and provinces represented in the campmeeting. We did that on the last Sunday evening, and the following states were represented at some point through the week: New Mexico, West Virginia, Indiana, Ohio, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Florida, Illinois, South Dakota, South Carolina, Michigan, Kentucky, Virginia, and

Tennessee. While the majority of our attendees are from out of state, the number of persons from the local area is also a blessing, and we appreciate everyone who comes!

Attendance was down a little from last year, due in part to persons not being able to come because of illness, surgery, and the like. The highest attendance for any one service was 94 the last Sunday morning. The lowest was 45 on the very first night. The lower attendance was reflected in lodging, with a high overnight stay of 86 on Saturday evening, February 03. Our offering goal for general operating was $35,000; we fell short of that by $7,271.81 as of the end of camp. As with each of you, we rely on the God who has promised "to supply all our need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus". Phil 4:19.

The next event on the calendar for Camp Freedom is the Mini-camp which is held in the early fall. The Board of Directors meets during that time, but the highlight is the one day of services and a banquet. This year, the date is Saturday, August 31. We've changed the times of the services and the banquet in order to accommodate those who travel long distances to be with us, so the services will be at 10:30 AM, the banquet at noon, and the afternoon service at 1:30 PM. The workers for those meetings will be Rev Dan and Beverly Cope for both the music and preaching. We are looking forward to their ministry! RSVP's are needed for the banquet; letters of invitation will be sent out in August for those with a Pennsylvania address, but anyone is welcome to come, just let us know.

And then, permit us to inform you of the 2025 campmeeting. The dates are January 24-February 02. Our evangelists are Walter Hedstrom and Nathan Purdy, and the Day Speaker is Matt Ellison. Song evangelists are Donald and Valerie Quales. For reservations, call Joanna Ritchey at 717-360-0280, or email her at "JoannaRitchey@outlook.com, or by snail mail at 641 E Church St, Lock Haven, PA 17745. You can also use that contact information to reserve for the banquet in August.

We lay our plans, and seek the blessing of the Lord through prayer and waiting on Him, but all of the above is if the Lord tarries His coming, and is willing that we go ahead with the program!

In His Service,
Dennis L Ritchey, Director
Camp Freedom of St Petersburg, FL