

Christmount Christian Assembly, Inc.
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Mission Statement: Located in the Blue Ridge Mountain of North Carolina, Christmount is the camp, conference and retreat center for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), whose mission is to serve God by providing opportunities for life-changing and enriching experiences in faith, knowledge, leadership and personal relationships.

Christmount's ministry within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is one of hospitality, a biblical idea that has a rich tradition, providing rooms, meals, meeting spaces, and a safe and comfortable place for retreats. Because Christmount is in a peaceful mountain cove, attention is given to protecting the wilderness area, maintaining clean mountain streams, and witnessing to the presence of God in nature.

Christmount's programs are for all Christians but are grounded in the traditions and heritage of the Disciples of Christ. Laity and clergy, regardless of age, race, or national origin, are welcome. Our programs offer opportunities for spiritual, theological, and personal growth and reflection, with an emphasis on giving participants something to take home to enhance their faith and impact their local churches.

In 2008, Christmount will sponsor eight camps for ages six through adult, including two mission-oriented camps (Work Camp), camp for mentally challenged/developmentally disabled adults (Camp Sunshine), one for economically disadvantaged children (Camp Agape), and camps for Middle School Girls, one for elementary school age youth seeking a wilderness experience, and a camp for younger children. Christmount's unique philosophy of camping is directed especially to "the least of these," children who could not afford a camp experience otherwise. No camper will be turned down because of their economic situation.

Christmount's ministry to adults includes the annual Elders and Diaconate Workshop (co-sponsored with Lexington Theological Seminary), a new workshop for web site designers (Gigabytes for the Gospel), and annual events like Discovery Weekend Women's Retreat, Music Workshop, and Christmount Week. The Oreon E. Scott Clergy Conference each October gives local pastors and other clergy a unique opportunity to combine an educational event in the relaxing atmosphere of a mountain retreat setting. In 2007, Christmount also set aside an apartment in Guest House East for use by clergy on sabbatical, which includes a living room/kitchenette and a bedroom; clergy are charged a special rate when on sabbatical.

Within the priorities of the church, all of Christmount's events are designed to nurture leadership, inspire personal development, and strengthen spiritual depth in church members. Christmount works with surrounding regions to provide a place for retreats with topics that include leadership development, new church starts, spiritual growth, anti-racism training, and Bible study. In 2008, Christmount will partner with other expressions of the church through the South Carolina clergy retreat, Georgia Disciples Men Retreat, and North Carolina CWF and CMF retreats, North Carolina's CYF, Chi-Rho, and Junior camps, and the annual Southeast Regional Fellowship (SERF) staff retreat, as well as the second SERF Youth Leadership Event for regional youth cabinets. Christmount maintains a close relationship with Disciples Home Missions as well as other general units, often providing a location for inter-regional training events. Christmount is involved with congregations through our programs and through providing leadership at

local church events (filling pulpits, leading elders and diaconate training events, and local and regional youth events). Christmount staff is often invited to be part of the program during regional assemblies and district meetings as well, leading workshops and serving on panels.

The completion of the Walk to Remember, a handicapped-accessible walkway from the Guest House to the Dining Hall, was one example of Christmount's commitment to making all buildings accessible to all people. In an extremely hilly area of the grounds, the walk from the hotel to the dining hall, Christmount has constructed a gently-sloping sidewalk. The bricks in the walk have been given to honor and memorialize churches and individuals. Especially for people with walking difficulties, it makes moving to and from the two buildings much easier.

Christmount is active in the ecumenical ministry of the church, being a witness to this important aspect of Disciples heritage. The Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church Christian Educators meet here; western North Carolina Walk to Emmaus holds several events at Christmount each year. Southern Baptists, Cooperative Baptists, Presbyterian, Christian Church, Church of Christ, and Church of God are among the groups that are using Christmount regularly. In the past couple of years, Christmount has been discovered by non-denominational groups including those from African-American and Hispanic heritages. Because of Christmount's smaller size, we are able to give more personal attention to smaller-sized groups, offering to them a style of hospitality that makes them feel welcome and special and helps them to feel at home here. In this, we witness to the hospitality that the whole church is supposed to represent.

In addition to these church groups, Christmount has hosted the North Carolina Autism Society's Mountain Adventure Camp since 1998. Each week for seven to eight weeks of the summer, around 15 campers of a different age group each week and 30 staff use part of the Christmount camp area. There has been excellent cooperation between the Christmount Summer Staff and the Mountain Adventure Camp Staff, including the Mountain Adventure Camp Director speaking to Christmount's campers each week to explain Autism to them and help them minister to the campers with Autism by learning to be considerate in shared spaces, like the Dining Hall.

The barriers in carrying out this ministry are common to the whole church. We are in competition with other ministries for financial support. We compete with other conference and camp centers in a geographic location where there are probably more conference and camp grounds than any other place on the planet. Since we own and maintain our own water system, we struggle with government regulations, monitoring and testing, keeping staff trained and certified in water systems, and charging a reasonable fee to the 85 houses on the grounds for their water. Like all non-profits, Christmount is monitored by governments to make sure that we are not overstepping the rules governing non-profit organizations in any way. There are financial challenges that come with not having a single community from which to draw support; Christmount, like most somewhat-independent church organizations, seeks to find financial support within the Disciples of Christ without breaking covenants. Christmount's Board remains firmly committed to our identity and mission within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

2007 was Christmount's best financial year on record. In addition to the above-mentioned Walk to Remember, the Bill and Dot Spearman Dining Hall was paid in full. This was made possible by Christmount placing about 400 acres of its wilderness under the protection of the NC Clean Water Trust Fund; the grant from this organization made possible the burning of the mortgage on the Dining Hall. Cash contributions, stock gifts, and bequests, plus the remainder of the Clean Water Trust Grant increased Christmount's Endowment Fund by \$1,046,523. The Christmount Patrons Association had its most successful year ever, with 700 members from 22 states and 21 regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) giving \$168,215 to support the day-to-day ministry of Christmount.

Christmount appreciates the continued support of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It is our hope to be of greater use to the whole church.