

Pumpkin Snickerdoodles

Ingredients

- * 1 cup shortening
- * 1 cup white sugar
- * 1/2 cup light brown sugar
- * 3/4 cup pumpkin puree
- * 1 large egg
- * 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- * 3 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- * 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- * 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- * 1 teaspoon cream of tartar
- * 1 teaspoon salt
- * 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- * **Topping:**
- * 1/2 cup white sugar
- * 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- * 1/4 teaspoon allspice

Directions

- ◆ Beat shortening, 1 cup white sugar, and light brown sugar together in a bowl until light and fluffy. Stir in pumpkin puree; beat in eggs and vanilla extract.
- ◆ Whisk flour, baking powder, 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon, cream of tartar, salt, and nutmeg together in a bowl. Gradually stir flour mixture into pumpkin mixture until dough is just combined. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate until chilled, at least 1 hour.
- ◆ Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
- ◆ Whisk 1/2 cup white sugar, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, and allspice together in a small bowl. Roll dough into 1-inch balls; roll balls in cinnamon-sugar mixture and place 2 inches apart on prepared baking sheets. Slightly flatten each ball with a flat-bottomed glass.
- ◆ Bake in the preheated oven until golden and set, 12 to 13 minutes. Cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

Creative Writing as a Spiritual Practice



Come away from the busyness of your life to experience creative writing as a spiritual practice. When we write creatively, we open ourselves to grow in spiritual

practices like attentiveness, intentionality, empathy, and gratitude – gifts we want to grow as disciples of Christ.

We are pleased to have the Rev. Dr. Debbie Bronkema, our former co-executive director, leading this retreat. Debbie received her doctorate in this very topic and has led seminars and retreats in other parts of the country. She states that there is not a requirement for any particular writing skills or creativity. It is about enjoying writing and using writing as a way to explore and express our spirituality. Debbie has been encouraged by the comments of those who have walked with her through this practice; how they have found deeper faith through this process.

We hope you consider joining us for this new program. For more information please visit our website and click the Cedarkirk programs tab.

Christmas International House



Cedarkirk will be hosting international college students over the Christmas holidays again. Christmas International House is a program providing hospitality to international students during the Christmas holidays. We are excited to be a part of this national ministry

of hospitality and peace making.

One way you can partner with us is to host a student or two from Dec 23-27. Cedarkirk will host the remainder of their stay. If you are interested, please contact Mark Orendorf for more information at mark@cedarkirk.org or 813.685.4224 x4.



Winter 2015

Upcoming Events:

- **Christmas Retreat**
December 18—20, 2015
- **Mission: Encounter**
January 17—18, 2016
- **Creative Writing as a Spiritual Practice**
January 25—27, 2016
- **Open House**
February 6, 2016
- **Confirmation Retreat**
March 4—6, 2016
March 11—13, 2016
- **Spring Bash**
April 8—9, 2016
April 15—16, 2016
April 22—23, 2016

Visit our website for more information on these and other programs that Cedarkirk offers.

Cedarkirk Staff:

- Rev. John Reiter**
Executive Director
- Mark Orendorf**
Assistant Director
- Matt Shick**
Program Director
- Kevin Taylor**
Facilities Director
- Jackie Butler**
Food Service Director
- Karin Dale**
Event Coordinator
- Patricia Holloway**
Office Manager

S'mores & More

The Newsletter of the Presbyterian Camp & Conference Ministries of SW FL

You Make a Difference

This summer, we began a new effort to take the photos and videos recorded in a session of camp and create an “end of the week” video. These videos enabled campers to reflect on a great week filled with fun, friends, and faith-building experiences and parents could see and hear what happened during the week and better appreciate the experience of their child.

One of the neat aspects was that many campers shared what Cedarkirk meant to them and why they come back to camp. As these campers spoke, themes emerged. Cedarkirk is...

- a place where I feel at home;
- a place where I feel close to God;
- a place where I can get away from the stress of the everyday;
- a place where I am accepted;
- a place where I am loved for who I am.

When you know more about the background of some of our campers, these comments become even more powerful: campers who have parents in the process of divorce, campers who struggle to be accepted at school and even church, campers who have just experienced the loss of a parent, or campers who are overwhelmed with the demands of school, work, and extra curricular activities. After watching one of these closing videos, I overheard a parent say to their spouse, “This is what the

church should be.”

At Cedarkirk, we strive to answer Christ's call to be a community; to be in relationship with God and with one another. It is our hope that campers and staff will experience Christian community in new and different ways and take those experiences with them to model that type of relationship in their homes, schools, and churches.

I invite you to check out some of these videos on our YouTube channel (CedarkirkVideos). These life changing experiences don't happen on their own. Dedicated staff, volunteers, and supporters give of their time and talents to make space for the Holy Spirit to transform lives.

Your help is critical to provide these types of summer camp experiences and the ministry of hospitality year-round that allows God's children of all ages to encounter God in new ways and return home changed people.

I invite you to consider making a year end gift of support to Cedarkirk by sending a check to the camp office or by using our online donation tab at www.cedarkirk.org (click on the Donate Online button). You can also make a recurring gift online to help sustain this ministry throughout the year.

We are grateful for the variety of ways that people support Cedarkirk and are especially grateful for your prayers. May God continue to bless you and your family during this joyous season!

“Thank you for a place we can come and not be judged.”



You have probably read articles in previous editions about groups that are not part of our own churches enjoying Cedarkirk. Retreats for groups in narcotics anonymous, teen moms and their mentors, residents of a homeless shelter, and foster children. This past November Cedarkirk hosted another such “outside” group. Tourette’s Syndrome Assoc. held a retreat for high school students here at Cedarkirk. They were as prompt to meals as the women’s retreat that coincided with their

weekend were late. It was decided to begin the meal and then pray upon the women’s arrival. However, one table decided to give thanks on their own (seeing high school students take this initiative is an encouraging story in itself but that is a story for another day). One line of the prayer was “thank you for a place where we can come and not be judged.” These were particularly powerful words from this young man in this setting as we can all imagine the judgment that may come their way at times. This is a prayer we all should be able to pray as we hopefully have that community where we are loved and accepted.

Time and time again we witness this love here at Cedarkirk and we echo this prayer of giving thanks for a community and space where we find acceptance.



Eating Simply So Others May Simply Eat

Each Wednesday during summer camp, our campers eat a simple meal. Instead of the usual delicious fare, campers and staff are served black beans, rice, and tortillas, or peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. For nearly 15 years we have called this the Meal of Simplicity.

It enables us to highlight for our campers a staple meal for many around the world. It also opens discussion to issues of food scarcity, food justice, and creative ways we can all be better stewards of the resources and food we consume. It is a call to action to feed our neighbors in our communities and around the world who lack basic nourishment. Some folks like the meal. Some don’t. Regardless, the meal

engages each of us who partake and it invites us to reflect on what it might be like to wonder where our next meal is coming from, or to consider the fact that not everyone in the world has so many choices when it comes to food.

At the end of the summer, we calculate the difference between what was spent on our Meals of Simplicity and what we would have spent on standard lunch meals. All of the excess funds are donated to an organization dedicated to combating hunger. The Meal of Simplicity has been so successful because it is simple. This project doesn’t take much to arrange (in fact, it’s less work for our busy kitchen staff), but it is a potentially experiential,

educational, and mission-focused opportunity for our campers and staff.

As you continue through the season of Thanksgiving, we invite you to eat simply. Pick up a bag of beans and rice and a package of tortillas the next time you’re at the grocery store: it is a *tasty, speedy, and embarrassingly easy* weeknight dinner for you and your family. Give thanks for your blessings and pray for those who go hungry every day. Donate a bag of groceries to your local food pantry or write a check to an organization doing good work in your community.

Eat simply so others may simply eat.

Board Member Corner—Nancy Donovan

“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”

Colossians 3:23-24

Every year the lives of children are changed and challenged by Cedarkirk. My daughters have enjoyed growing up with Cedarkirk. Whether it be a church retreat weekend or Confirmation study or summer events: they love the opportunity to step away from the everyday hustle and bustle to relax, engage, learn, and serve. My oldest has especially enjoyed serving under the SHL/Senior High Leadership program. For me, a ministry like Cedarkirk was not available while growing up. My dad served in the military and we

traveled often making it a bit challenging to become engaged, because just as we got settled it was moving time again. I love hearing stories from people that spent many summers attending various camps as campers, and campers that became counselors, and counselors that created such a unique bond with fellow counselors. It is very clear that Cedarkirk was a great influence in their lives.

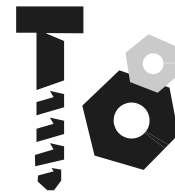
Cedarkirk isn’t just about the children; camp also impacts the lives of the people who are willing to give of their time to invest in the ministry at Cedarkirk. I personally find great joy volunteering during the summer programs or gathering around the table for a Board meeting. During the summer I can be found checking-in campers at

the Pavilion. As each camper is checked in you can sense their excitement knowing that the next week will be fun-filled and action-packed. I stumbled upon a quote the other day that said, “I don’t engage in acts of kindness to be rewarded later, I engage in acts of kindness because it makes me feel good to give. – Unknown”. I feel good sharing and giving of my time at such a special place.

Every interaction, whether it is with a camp counselor or a behind-the-scenes person, is a special encounter to make a difference and strengthen your relationship with God.

May your joy be full,
Nancy Donovan

Nuts and Bolts



Do you have a group at your church that might be interested in working together to help the ministry at Cedarkirk? Your camp and conference center has a variety of work projects for every skill level, from adopting a Rustic Cabin to spruce up, painting interior or exterior spaces, stairway construction, or brush trimming and trail maintenance. The list goes on and on—we can find something

for every person or group. If you would like more information about volunteering or bringing a group, please contact Kevin Taylor at (813) 685-4224 ext. 6 or kevin@cedarkirk.org. Cedarkirk will be setting up a spring work weekend, so watch for further details as the New Year rolls around. We take great joy in keeping Cedarkirk “a special place apart” and are grateful for the many helping hands that support this ministry.

Camp Continuum
Founding Director AT Brown shared with a group the vision and dream of our beloved swimming pool.

