



PUGET SOUND STRATEGIC MINISTRIES

Teaching and Training Youth with Biblical Truth.

To all,

First, as we continue to face these uncertain times, we want to acknowledge the God whom we serve. The one from whom comes love, mercy and grace also gives us power, strength and wisdom. Romans 15:13 says “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” We as a leadership pray this over all of you as we look to the hope we have in this life, above all the struggles we face.

Now, as we consider the future, we want to be sure to address thoughts, hopes, fears and concerns that will arise as the days continue. As you may know, Puget Sound Camp dates have been moved. Not cancelled. Why? Because we believe God has opened up dates (within phase 4 of the Governor’s “Safe Start” plan) to allow for us to still hold camp at Mayfield Lake Youth Camps (MLYC). We are encouraged with this hope and desire not to allow fear to hold us back from every possibility of the gospel of Jesus Christ taking hold of our hearts. FUN FACT: Beginning 1982, when Awana Scholarship Camp began in Western Washington, MLYC was the facility used in those first few years.

Our desire is to be as transparent as possible so that everyone is able to feel safe, heard and cared for as we move forward. We must also remember that our current decision is based on careful study of the “Safe Start” plan and much deliberation in regards to the health and safety of all. However, these measures and decisions may also be changed or adjusted as the pandemic evolves and new information is brought to light and if each phase moves as hoped for (three weeks per phase) by the Governor and his council.

Below are answers to some of the most commonly asked questions and concerns to date. More may be added as time continues:

1. **What are the plans to address “social distancing” and other matters for health and safety?**

- a. Safety has *and always will be* our priority at camp. We intend to adhere to the stated guidelines to the extent appropriate for the various “full public interaction” circumstances we face at camp.
 - i. On top of supplying hand sanitizer where possible and necessary (such as at the dining hall before each meal) and a resident practicing nurse who oversees needed *normal* health and safety practices; precautions like daily temperature checks and the use of masks may be used if deemed necessary.
 - ii. Aside from the resident practicing nurse, we will have multiple other state certified health care personnel at camp to also monitor the situation for any signs of illness.
 - iii. IF there were to be a sickness to break out, there are and have been plans in place to handle them as is necessary. In respect to the COVID-19 virus, the same care will be applied and best practices utilized.
 - iv. If you are among the *High Risk population, we suggest you use wisdom in whether or not to participate. However, (unless it is known or highly suspected you are infected or a carrier) we will not deny any persons the opportunity to be a part of camp. It is suggested in the

“Safe Start” plan that you “Resume public interactions, with physical distancing.” * High-risk populations are currently denoted by the CDC as: “Persons 65 years of age and older; people of all ages with underlying medical conditions (particularly not well controlled), including people with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma, people who have serious heart conditions, people who are immunocompromised, people with severe obesity, people with diabetes, people with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis, and people with liver disease; people who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility” (*copied directly from Washington’s Phased Approach graphic*)

2. Is removing the requirement to complete a book giving allowance to undue growth in attendance? Is this creating a greater potential for the susceptibility for our youth and communities to be adversely affected?

- a. Removing the requirement for book completion has many reasons behind it. And we should consider all.
 - i. Due to the upset and even cancelation of clubs around the Pacific Northwest many were not given the opportunity to complete their books. Should we punish them for something out of their hands? This is not showing grace.
 - ii. Because of these unprecedented times our goal is to offer something for our youth to look forward to in the midst of all this turmoil and upset. This allows for many who would not normally get the chance; to experience something that could be spirit, heart and life changing.
 - iii. According to the CDC, WHO, worldometers.info, ourworldindata.org and other sources, among all recorded cases, the percentage of children and youth, most of which have only been mildly affected by the virus is 5% (DOH). And of those affected adversely and worse, of those 100% had previously underlying conditions (NY City Health). This encourages us that there is a VERY LOW percentage of adverse effects to the majority of our youth.
 - iv. If you are among the “high risk population”, please consider question 1-a-iv above.
- b. Let us consider the following; IF the Safe Start plan proceeds as hoped, this would mean we are seeing a positive increase in the ability to fight and deter the spread of the virus. Therefore, since the “curve” will have been flattened even more, this would show the ability to return to more normal social practices that we used to have. I.E. “Allow gatherings with >50 people” etc.

3. Why are you so set on having camp? What if the dates of returning to phase 4 are extended past the camp’s new dates?

- a. We are not going to “make camp happen at all costs”. Many factors help us look forward to the future and the potential we have to continue.
 - i. The MLYC facility had already chosen to close their doors until July 17th, prior to the governor’s announcement of the Safe Start Plan.
 - ii. We were made aware of a week that was opened up due to the cancelation of another group at the MLYC facility.
 - iii. Because of the open week, we have chosen to live in the hope all goes well and we are able to continue with camp.
 - iv. If the Safe Start - Phase 4 is extended past our new dates, we will have to cancel.

- v. When we (as a board and it's council members) meet in June at the end of Phase 2, we will be reassessing the situation, what the progression and knowledge of the virus is, the health and safety issues we still face and more to as we make plans to continue or cancel.
- vi. There are many factors (some of which were not covered here) that affect our ability to continue as hoped. These are ALL being taken into account and even one could offset our desired outcome making it necessary for us to cancel Puget Sound Camp for this year.

4. How do you know that the current dates fall within phase 4 of the Safe Start Plan?

- a. After careful examination of the plan and following with the Governor's desired 3 week/phase plan, if all goes well and there are no extensions, Phase 4 would begin July 8th. This puts Camp 10 days into phase 4 thus allowing camp to proceed as hoped.

5. I've heard the camp isn't really in good enough condition to support having camp.

- a. It's true, MLYC facilities are not quite as "fancy" as we've had it for many years. It will be a different experience at different levels for many. However, over the course of this last year, many improvements have been made, with more to come prior to us even holding camp in July (if we are able).
- b. Board members (along with many council members) have made many visits to the camp, assessed the possibilities, looked at the potential risks, helped make improvements and made calculated considerations in order to decide if the facilities both fit and meet the needs and safety of our camp/campers.

6. What about Counselors and Camp staff? How will they be affected?

- a. We know that everyone is built differently. And we want you to honor the convictions God places on your heart in regards to attending or not. We cannot guarantee there will be no exposure (as with any other disease, sickness or virus). However, as always, the health and safety of those attending is a major concern of ours and you will not be taken lightly.

As we look to the future, we continue to pray for you all; that God will give you hope in this present world and that we as PSSM can serve you to the best of our abilities. We do not ever want to be controlled by the fear that so easily entangles us, but rather (with God's help) use wisdom as we provide a place for spiritual growth, strength and resilience against an enemy that will stop at nothing to make us ineffective in Christ's calling for our lives. Looking to the future, we set our eyes on Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith who will never let us down.

If there are more questions that remain on your mind or heart, we welcome them and will continue to give answers and guidance as we are able.

For Christ and His Kingdom,

The PSSM Board