IMPACT REPORT · 2025

100 Years of Belonging





NORTH GEORGIA
CAMP & RETREAT MINISTRIES



For generations, Glisson has been a place where people have experienced belonging in Christian community – and then discovered and practiced ways they can serve to help create Christian community in their everyday lives. In 2025, 100th Anniversary Events brought alumni back to a place where they still belong – and then sent them back out into the world again. (Photo: April 100th Anniversary Event)

100 Years of Belonging...and Departing to Serve

How do you capture 100 years of ministry?

For years we've been attempting to share the impact of this family of ministries in annual reports like this one. They are imperfect messengers for the camp story: too few facts and figures for those who love data; too little storytelling for those who yearn for the tug that camp so often makes on the heart. Constrained as they are, they allow us to be accountable for the work of these ministries in the world.

Since 1925, children, youth, and adults have gathered at Glisson to grow closer to God and to one another – to practice Christian faith and servant leadership in ways that translate to everyday life so it can become a permanent part of who we are.

It's tempting, in the effort to capture camp's story, to recount the things that happen at camp – at Glisson, on the trail, at a church day camp – that foster a sense of belonging that makes camp "home". But the sense of belonging is only the beginning of the story.

Our full story is best captured in the hundreds of thousands of life stories of campers and retreat guests served in the past 100 years.

It's found in the campers and staff inspired by their experience with Sparrowwood campers to pursue a career in special education...

...in the ELI participant who noticed the inequality in the neighborhood served by a Grow Day Camps site and was inspired to spend two years with the Peace Corps serving at a clinic for people with AIDS and HIV...

...in campers who discovered gifts and abilities they didn't know they had and surprised their families with newfound confidence and engagement in their household, church, or school...

...in the counselor so inspired by Sparrowwood they established a summer camp focused on inclusion...

...in the campers and summer staffers who could tell you exactly where they were on Glisson's holy dirt when they heard God's small still voice calling them to a life of ministry.

Glisson's story starts with fostering a sense of belonging, pivots on facilitating discovery and practice, and regularly results in transformed individuals who depart to serve and transform their church and world.

95%
of campers felt accepted as part of their living group

It's a story far too expansive to be contained to 380 acres just north of Dahlonega. It's a story carried out into the world week after week, year after year, in the hearts and lives of those transformed by their experience here. It's a story a century in the making:

100 years of belonging; 100 years of departing to serve.

May we all together continue to be good stewards of this ongoing story for the next 100 years.

For Christ and Church,



C. Russell Davis
Executive Director



Rev. Bill Martin
Chairperson

Our Mission

North Georgia Camp and Retreat Ministries joins with the church to make disciples of Jesus Christ and to nurture leadership by creating experiences in Creation and in Christian community that encourage transformation, growth, and renewal for all people.

Core Values

At the close of Summer 2014, Grow Day Camps site directors were asked if day camp had felt like their summer camp experiences at Glisson and, if so, in what ways. The commonalities they identified, when examined further and by other staff, were recognized as values that have guided Glisson's ministry for decades that are core to who we are and to the experiences we strive to create.

Radical Acceptance

"Whoever you are..."

We accept one another for who we are — without exception.

Unconditional Love

"Whatever you do..."

We love one another as fellow children of God — not as a condition of perceived merit.

Christian Community

"You belong here..."

We serve one another by contributing our unique set of God-given strengths to the good of the group.

Experiential Learning

"You can grow here..."

We challenge one another to put our faith to practice, then reflect upon our experiences.

We Exist

to partner with churches and families in the pivotal work of faith formation



> *In life, there's some things that need to change. And at Camp Glisson, some things have changed for the better. And there's some things in life that need to stay the same.* **And the great things about Camp Glisson that need to stay the same have stayed the same.**
>
> *— Mary Lanford in 2025*
> *(wife of Rev. Bob Lanford, former Glisson Director from 1972-1981)*

For the First Time or

To a More Significant Degree...

53% learned more about the life and teachings of Jesus
41% spent time in prayer
21% read from the Bible
21% led a group in prayer
18% shared faith with another person
17% led a group activity
10% accepted Christ

(% of 326 respondents to camper+parent surveys)



We Offer

immersive experiences of practicing Christian faith and servant leadership in ways that translate to everyday life

The Result

is transformed individuals who depart to serve and transform their church and world



> *Glisson has held a special place in our family for (now) 3 generations. The counselors always do an excellent job helping our camper grow in her relationship with and understanding of God to where she's starting to initiate her own learning and growth...***She feels safe and loved here and calls it "home".**
>
> *— 2025 Camper Parent*

VILLAGE
since 1925

An Experiential Christian Community

To truly become something – an athlete, an artist, a mathematician – takes more than study; it takes practice. Village is an immersive experience of practicing Christian faith together in ways that translate to everyday life.

















OUTPOST
since 1958*

Small Groups, Big Adventure

Safe opportunities for kids to explore God's creation are becoming less common. Outpost facilitates teamwork and learning new outdoor adventure skills in ways that help campers grow in faith, collaboration, and self-confidence.

*Former names and iterations include: Pioneer, Summit, Wilderness, Journeys





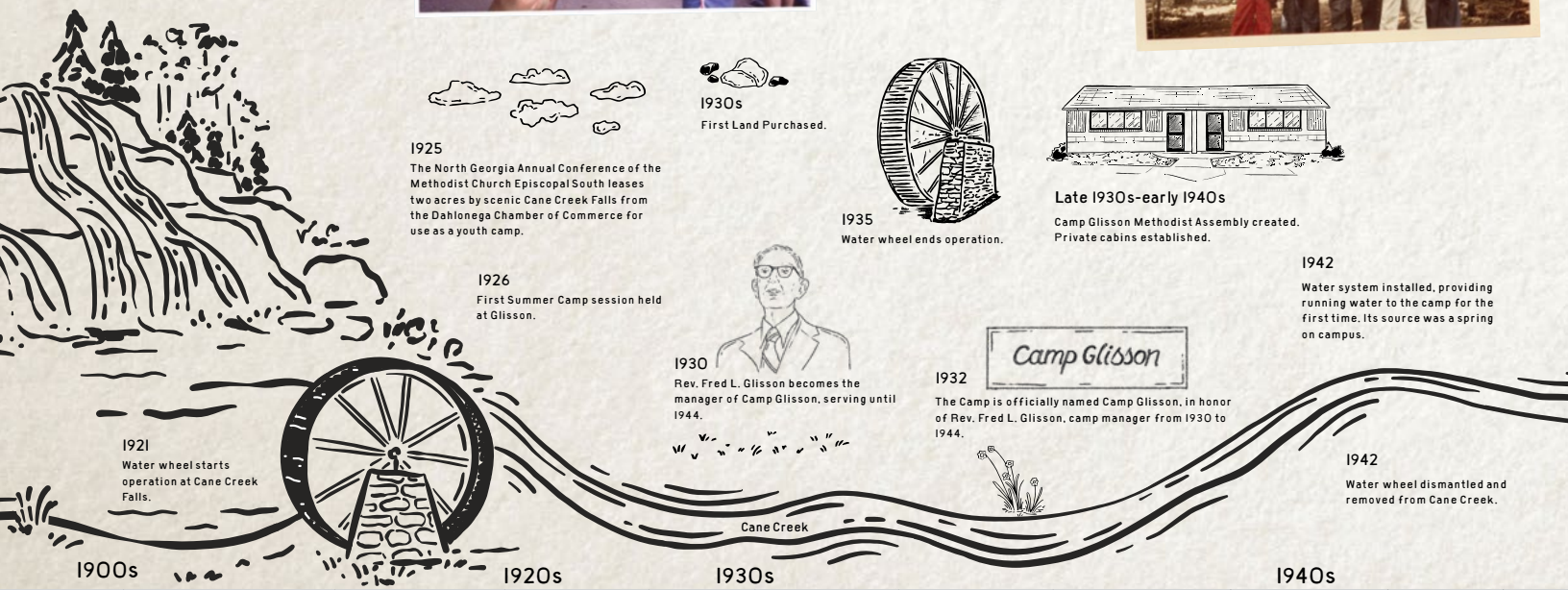












1921
Water wheel starts operation at Cane Creek Falls.

1925
The North Georgia Annual Conference of the Methodist Church Episcopal South leases two acres by scenic Cane Creek Falls from the Dahlonega Chamber of Commerce for use as a youth camp.

1926
First Summer Camp session held at Glisson.

1930
Rev. Fred L. Glisson becomes the manager of Camp Glisson, serving until 1944.

1930s
First Land Purchased.

1935
Water wheel ends operation.

Late 1930s-early 1940s
Camp Glisson Methodist Assembly created. Private cabins established.

1932
The Camp is officially named Camp Glisson, in honor of Rev. Fred L. Glisson, camp manager from 1930 to 1944.

1942
Water system installed, providing running water to the camp for the first time. Its source was a spring on campus.

1942
Water wheel dismantled and removed from Cane Creek.

Cane Creek

1900s

1900 — US population nears 76 million

1920 — Ratification of the 19th Amendment

1927 — Lindbergh makes first solo nonstop transatlantic flight

1929 — Stock Market crash

1930s

1930-1939 — The Great Depression

1931 — The Star Spangled Banner adopted as national anthem

1934 — The New Deal enacted by congress

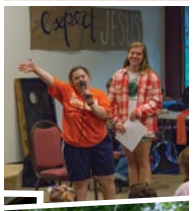
1940s

1936 — Jesse Owens wins multiple gold medals at the Berlin Olympics

1941 — Pearl Harbor

1945 — World War II ends: UN established

SPARROWWOOD
since 1978*



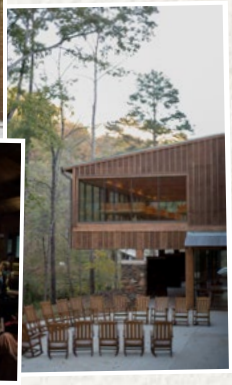
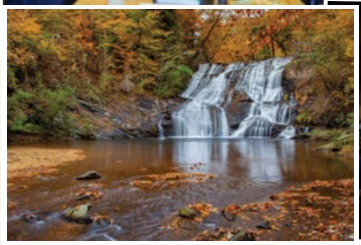


Where All Abilities Are Celebrated

Sparrowwood is a chance for campers with different developmental needs to be accepted for who they are and celebrated for all they offer. Focusing on abilities helps all involved see we are more alike than different.

*A precursor to the Sparrowwood program ran at Hartwell Youth Camp starting in 1970 before moving to Glisson in 1978.




GROUP RETREATS
since 1925 and the 1960s*

Get Away & Grow Together

Time away together is rare. The chance for a group to be fully immersed in an experience is uniquely powerful. At Glisson, we specialize in hosting retreat experiences that facilitate transformation, growth, and renewal.

*Core camp facilities were winterized during the 1960s allowing camp to host retreat groups in colder weather.

GROW & ELI
since 2008

Grow Spiritually, Socially, Individually

You can find a day camp for just about anything. What about one focused on forming faith and friendships? Grow brings the powerful experience of camp ministry to local churches and their surrounding communities.







Learn To Lead, Lead To Serve

Most people never dive deeply into who God created them to be and how God created them to lead. ELI is a multi-week, immersive leadership development experience custom-designed to be that deep dive.

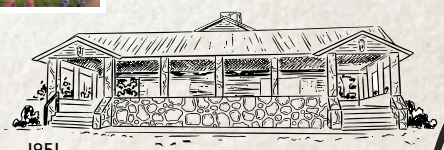


1945-1946
The Old Rec Hall was built with funds raised by the youth of the Methodist Church's North Georgia Annual Conference.



1950
Stone chapel built.

1950
Camp Roads paved.



1951
Stone Dining Hall completed.This led to the creation of the tradition of singing on the porch.



1958
Pioneer Camp begins, an outdoor adventure camp that would later reappear as Summit Camp in the early 1990s, and ultimately as Outpost.begins 2008.

1955
Water Tank and reservoir were built. Later the tank was decommissioned and converted in the current day climbing tower.

1951
Lake Hale Created.



1957
Holland Building built.

1961
Camp Glisson Inc. incorporated as a not-for-profit organization.

1960
A granite and concrete amphitheater is constructed at Lake Hale, replacing a log structure.

1962
Camp Glisson hosts a retreat on "Christian Race Relations," an integrated meeting of white and black Methodists.



1967
Nettie Tate Craft Building built and dedicated.

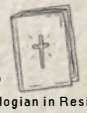
1968
Bob Cagle appointed as First manager/director.

1979
Sparrowwood Program moved to Glisson from Hartwell Location.

1960s
Winterization of camp buildings completed, allowing for greater use by retreat groups in colder weather.



1969
Swimming Pool built.



1979
Theologian in Residence program established.

1977
"My Friend" begins to be used as closing blessing.

1950s | 1960s | 1970s

1947 The Cold War begins | 1951 First broadcast of a color TV program | 1952 Puerto Rico becomes a US commonwealth | 1953 Polio Vaccine developed by Jonas Salk | 1958 First American satellite launched | 1961 Building of the Berlin Wall | 1963 MLK, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech | 1964 Truman signs Civil Rights Act | 1967 First Super Bowl | 1968 United Methodist Church officially created | 1968 Woodstock Festival | 1975 Last U.S. troops left Vietnam | 1977 Star Wars released

2024 Annual Fund & Campership Fund Donors

Generous donations from supporters on this page (and hundreds more linked online) help keep the price of camp lower, fund camperships, enhance programming, renovate facilities, and expand programs to reach new populations.

Mountain Climbers — $10,000 and up

Steve & Angie Collins · Dunwoody UMC · Susan Posey
Keller & Lynette Smith · Susan & Jarrett Wallace
Watkins Christian Foundation, Inc.

Creek Hikers — $5,000 to $9,999

Matthew & Bonnie Deininger · Steve Harrison · Karla Jacobs
Elijah Moore Endowment · Robert & Cindy Scott · Ethel Spruill Estate
Doug & Debbie Thrasher

The 1925 Society — $1,925 to $4,999

Jeff Brothers · Matt & Christina Cassidy · Katie & Drew Chrisohon
Laura & Richard Current · Russell & Rebecca Davis
Eveland Family Foundation of Georgia · Bucky & Lee Highsmith
Sydney & Jarrett Holcomb · Robert Moore & Julie Hotchkiss
Laura Lamb · Ian & Stephanie Lloyd · Laura & Brent Lloyd
Phillip & Amy Nierodzik · Aimee & Derek Nobs · Barrett & Barbara Smith
Eric & Jennifer Wahlen · Jackson Wegmet · Joe & Cathy Wiegand
Walt & Dee Ann Wilcox

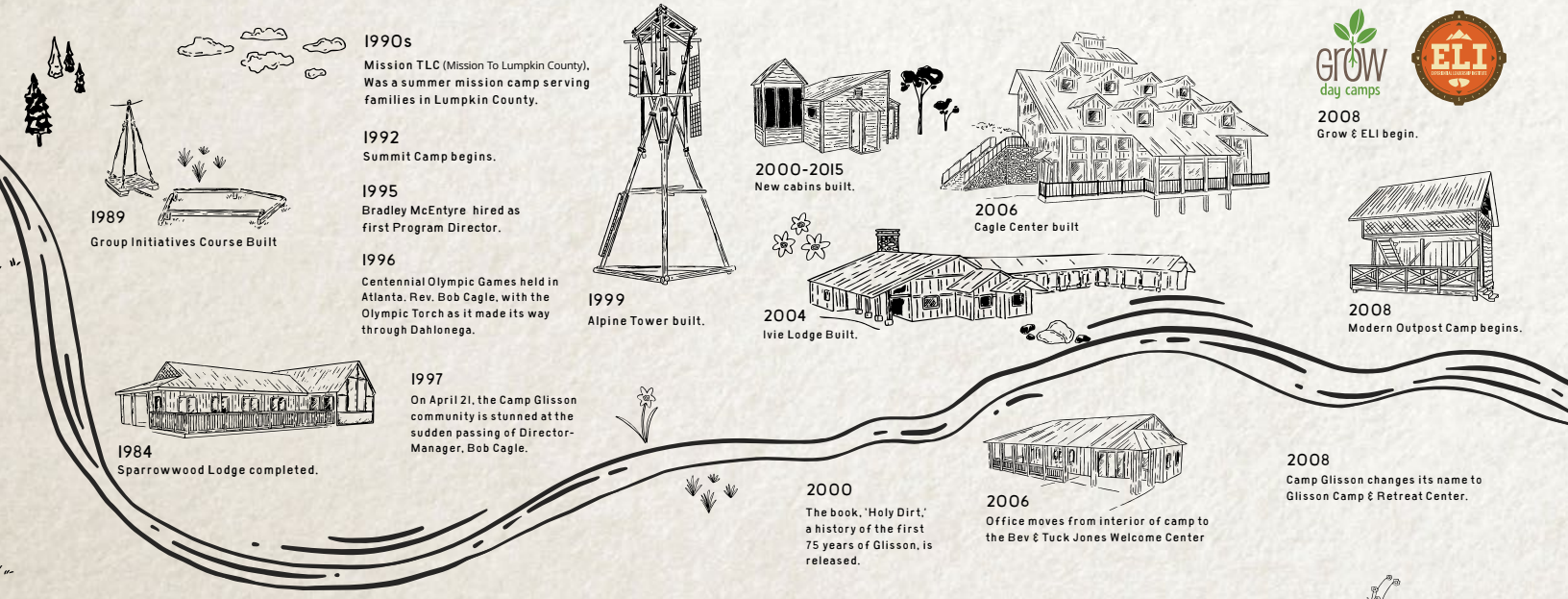
The Circle of 100 — $1,200 to $1,924

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Emily Lamb · Mary Lanford · John & Nancy Morris · Hilary & Michael Moses
John & Lisa Prunkl · Mark & Roxanne Robinson · Brandon & Kristen Schultze
David & Mary Lee Stubblefield · Pam Tidwell · Stephen & Ellen Ward
Doug & Susan White

Fire Builders — $250 to $1,199

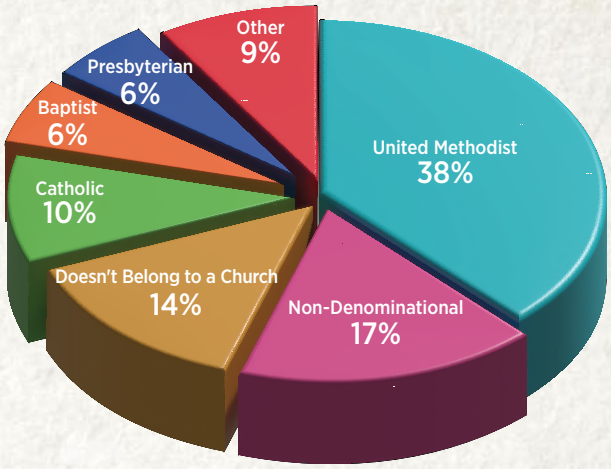
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Due to page constraints, we are unable to print the names of all donors to the 2024 Annual Fund and Campership Fund.
For complete lists, visit: **glisson.org/donors**

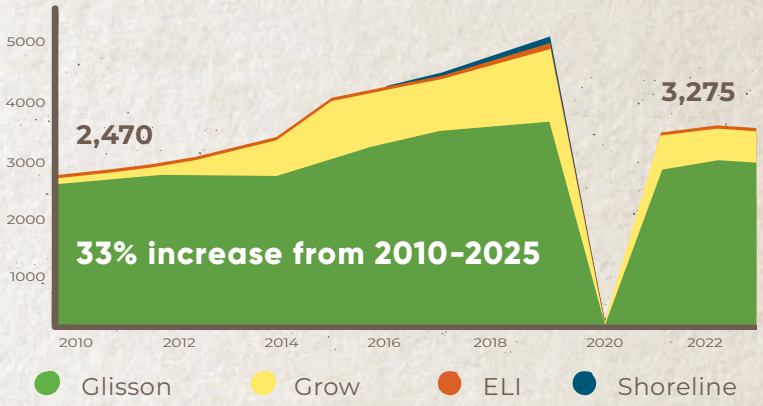


Who Comes To Camp On Holy Dirt?

Self-reported denominational affiliation of 2,392 Glisson 2025 campers



2025 Ministry Participation



98%
of campers felt safe at camp

Glisson Retreats Fall '24 - Spring '25
Guests: 8,383
Nights: 14,805
Meals: 25,975

87%
of campers grew closer to God at camp

Board of Directors

Board Class of 2026
Rev. Joya Abrams, Vice Chairperson
Mike Lane, Secretary
Rev. Bill Martin, Chairperson
Meredith Shelnutt Thrasher

Board Class of 2027
Rev. Sam Halverson
Tonya Murphy
Tim Poolos, Treasurer
Amanda Seals

Board Class of 2029
Rev. Angela Johnson
Rev. Melissa Kime-Hall
Rev. John Moeller, Jr
Thad Thompson

Special Directors by Appointment
Rev. Doug Gilreath

NGCRM Staff

Adam Buchanan · Facilities Assistant
Audrey LeSage · Outpost & Sparrowwood Program Director
Autumn Kuykendoll · Retreats Coordinator Grow & ELI Administrator
Blake Corbin · Director of Facilities
Brittney Martin · Retreats Coordinator
Bryant Clay · Facilities Assistant
C. Russell Davis · Executive Director
Cameron Jones · Director of Communications & Program Advancement
Garrett Queen · Facilities Assistant
Hannah Becker · Program Intern
Ian Lloyd · Director of Development & Retreats
James Marler · Program Intern
Laura Lamb · Executive Assistant
Rachel McGuire · Village Program Director
Sarah Shelnutt · Summer Camp Registrar
Stephanie Gaines Lloyd · Director of Glisson Summer Camp
Will Rhinehart · Business Manager

Financials for NGCRM, Inc.

2024 Preliminary

Ministry Generated Income	$3,339,805
Donations	$728,138
Conference Apportionment Support	$178,433
Annual Fund Giving	$317,442
Capital/Campership Giving/Grants	$232,263
Other Income	$187,011
Total Income	$4,254,954
Total Expense	$3,730,876*

* Does not include 2024 capital expenditures totalling $412,001



2015
Lake Hale Waterfront (towers) built.



2019
Dedication of Glisson's expanded stone chapel.

2020
Summer Camp Cancelled.
For the first and only time in its 100-year history, Glisson cancels all summer camp programs, a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



2021
Glisson resumes summer camp programs with size restrictions and Covid protection protocols.



Glisson celebrates its 100th anniversary

March 25, 2025
Glisson is recognized by the Georgia Senate with a resolution commending Glisson for its 100th anniversary.



Glisson 100 Years of Belonging Book Designed and Published

April 7, 2025
The city of Dahlonega honors Glisson with a Proclamation by the City Council and encourages residents to recognize Glisson for its contribution to both church and society.



Centennial Trail
This monument trail is begun to commemorate the path of Glisson's story across the iconic valley in Dahlonega, Georgia.

100th Anniversary Events
April 25
June 21
July 19
November 22

2020
Singing on the PorchFest streamed during the pandemic, September 2020.



2011
The Eco Eternity Forest was consecrated at Glisson.



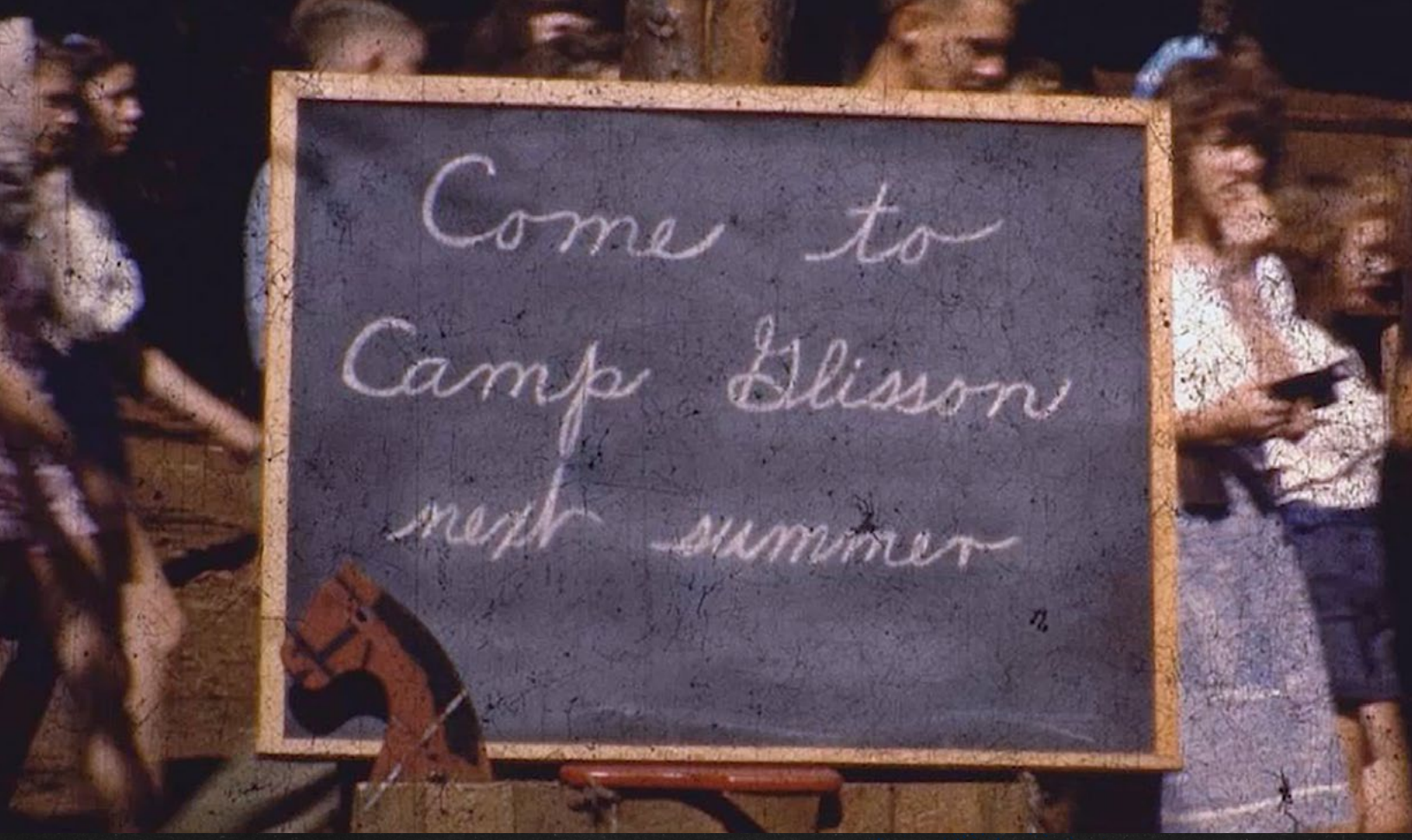
2015
The new dining hall was built to serve up to 460 guests.



Scan to further explore our history timeline.

2010s | **2020s** | **2025**

2010 iPad is introduced
2011 Smartphones widely available; teen depression starts to rise
2012 Sandy Hook school shooting in Connecticut
2015 Paris Agreement signed
2017 "Me Too" movement
2019 Notre Dame in Paris damaged by fire
2020 COVID19 pandemic begins
2020 Death of George Floyd sparks protests across the US and beyond
2021 Juneteenth National Independence Day becomes a Federal holiday
2022 Queen Elizabeth dies



SUMMER SCHEDULE 2026

glisson.org | elileader.org | growdaycamps.org

RISING GRADE	Week 1 May 24-29	Week 2 May 31-June 5	Week 3 June 7-12	Week 4 June 14-19	Week 5 June 21-26	Week 6 June 28-July 3	Week 7 July 5-10	Week 8 July 12-17	Week 9 July 19-24
MINI CAMP Rising 2-4			VILLAGE Sun-Tue VILLAGE Wed-Fri	OUTPOST Sun-Tue OUTPOST Wed-Fri				OUTPOST Sun-Tue OUTPOST Wed-Fri	
ELEMENTARY Rising 3-6	VILLAGE	VILLAGE OUTPOST	VILLAGE	VILLAGE OUTPOST	OUTPOST	OUTPOST	VILLAGE OUTPOST	VILLAGE OUTPOST	VILLAGE OUTPOST
MID HIGH Rising 7-9	VILLAGE	VILLAGE OUTPOST KAYAKING or BACKPACKING	VILLAGE OUTPOST KAYAKING or CLIMBING OUTPOST FRONTIER 10-DAY ADVENTURE	VILLAGE	VILLAGE OUTPOST KAYAKING or CLIMBING	VILLAGE OUTPOST KAYAKING or BACKPACKING	VILLAGE OUTPOST KAYAKING or CLIMBING OUTPOST FRONTIER 10-DAY ADVENTURE	VILLAGE OUTPOST KAYAKING	VILLAGE OUTPOST KAYAKING or BACKPACKING
SENIOR HIGH Rising 10-12	ELI LEADER WEEK	OUTPOST WHITEWATER KAYAKING	OUTPOST CUMBERLAND ISLAND 10-DAY OUTPOST BACKPACKING		VILLAGE OUTPOST WHITEWATER KAYAKING	VILLAGE OUTPOST CLIMBING	OUTPOST BLUE RIDGE CANOE 10-DAY		OUTPOST WHITEWATER KAYAKING
SPARROWWOOD	SPARROWWOOD Young Adult	SPARROWWOOD Young Adult	SPARROWWOOD Youth	SPARROWWOOD Young Adult	SPARROWWOOD Young Adult Adult	SPARROWWOOD Young Adult Adult	SPARROWWOOD Young Adult Adult	SPARROWWOOD Young Adult	SPARROWWOOD Young Adult SPWD @ OUTPOST Young Adult
GROW DAY CAMP Rising 1-6		GROW DAY CAMPS SITES	GROW DAY CAMP SITES	GROW DAY CAMP SITES	GROW DAY CAMP SITES	GROW DAY CAMP SITES	GROW DAY CAMP SITES	GROW DAY CAMP SITES	GROW DAY CAMP SITES

North Georgia Camp & Retreat Ministries
690 Camp Glisson Road Dahlonega, GA 30533
706.864.6181

More detailed schedule at glisson.org

The Book
100 Years of Belonging