The Cathedral Domain
The Episcopal Diocese of Lexington
Report for 2020 Convention

As with the rest of the Diocese, and world, 2020 has been a difficult year for the Cathedral Domain. I am not going to get into to detail about what we have lost, as we are making this journey just like everyone else, and have been forced to cancel all of our organized in person events. I will instead focus on the positive things that we have experienced through this unprecedented year after a brief synopsis of where we stand at the moment. I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to the leadership of the Diocese of Lexington in working with the Cathedral Domain to help us get through this unprecedented year.

With all camps and organized events cancelled, there is obviously a huge hole in our budget. Through the leadership of the board, and the countless hours of work by our Director Andy Sigmon and financial guru Katherine Harper, we have submitted the best budget possible for this year. Best and worst case budgets have also been submitted for next year as well. PPP funds have been invaluable in keeping the Cathedral Domain staff paid this year. Additional income generated by climbing, CDS memberships, and logging are also important pieces to this year’s financial plan. Even with these funding avenues, our mission and ministry would not be possible without the continuing support of the Diocese.

The Domain Board is actively pursuing new ways of fundraising. When camp was cancelled, we offered Camp at Home, where campers could have a small slice of the camp experience mailed to them this past summer. My kitchen table was filled with camp crafts and s’mores. I’m still peeling the spilled paint off the floor!

Camp Indian Summer was held virtually this year, with Zoom presentation and online media, including a virtual hike, and other videos about the Domain. These are available for anyone on the Domain’s YouTube channel.

We have seen a steady number of people coming to the Domain to climb and hike. Information on our climbing program is online at mountainproject.com, one of the most popular guides for climbers. It includes, maps, descriptions, technical information, and reviews of the climbing routes on the property. The bath house is not yet completed. We were making final plans to finish it but these plans were put on hold, as paying staff and keeping the lights on became more important. The ultimate success of our climbing program depends on the completion of this project and the Board is exploring ways of funding its completion.

Though camps are cancelled, it’s not completely quiet up on the mountain. Families and other visitors have discovered it’s a perfect place to socially distance. There have been several new Domain Society registrations, as well as several membership renewals. Other families have been renting cabins and enjoying some time to themselves. There is plenty of room to socially distance at The Domain. With over 800 acres of land, staying 6 feet apart is a sure thing!
Work groups have been busy at the Cathedral Domain this year. With summer camps cancelled, work groups have had the opportunity to work through the summer. These dedicated volunteers contribute a significant amount of time and personal resources to continually improve the facilities that we have been entrusted to maintain.

Through a gift that had already been made, St. John’s Cabin has been renovated and is now available to year round use! The low ceilings have been removed and the cabin has been insulated and opened up. AC and heat has been replaced and a fresh coat of paint has made St. John’s cabin a welcoming and comfortable place to stay.

Hosea cabin has had its floors replaced. The floors wit close to the ground and were not constructed with treated lumber. This led to quite a bit of rot under the building, in particular in beneath the bathrooms. The floors and joists supporting then have been replaced with the appropriate treated lumber, which will last for many years to come.

Earlier this year, substantial damage was found in the electrical wiring in the Cathedral as a result of rodents eating the insulation of the unprotected wiring beneath the building. Power was immediately disconnected from the entire building and all new wiring was run in conduit. This allowed the electrical system in the Cathedral to be brought up to code. During this work, we made a decision answering a question that has plagued humanity since the dawn of time… “Do we light the Cathedral of St. George the Martyr?” We decided that the time had come to be able to use the Cathedral after the sun went down without flashlights and candles. Now, the Cathedral has been lit! Hidden reflective up-lighting and spot lights have been installed to light the building! These light were intentionally hidden so when they are not in use, they are not in sight so as to not distract from the rustic beauty we have all come to love.

This past year, AT&T has constructed a tower very close to the Domain. Most on the property not has excellent cell phone and 5G data service. The Domain has switched from land line phone and satellite based internet service to 5G data and VOIP phone service. This cuts our phone and internet bill be over half as well as well as provides reliable phone and high speed internet services to the Domain.

We will continue to work through Covid to the best of our ability. We will continue to save money as much as possible by continuing to implement new ideas and innovations. To continue to provide this mission and ministry to the youth and families of our Diocese and beyond, we look forward to our rewarding dialogue, work, and cooperation with the leadership of our church. The board has approved the printing of the 2021 camp brochures as we must plan to resume operations this coming summer. Before the 2020 camping season was cancelled, camper registrations were up 14 percent the last two summers! We are constantly re-assessing and adapting to the current situation with the ultimate goal of continuing our mission of being a place for all people with open acceptance in God’s love as safely and responsible as possible.