



## THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MISSOURI

1210 Locust Street | St. Louis, MO 63103 | 314-231-1220 | [diocesemo.org](http://diocesemo.org)

*"Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." -Luke 9:48a*

February 7, 2023

Dear Siblings in Christ,

For more than a hundred years the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri has enhanced the formation of young people through the residential camping experience. Lifelong connections have been formed, caring communities have been built, and bonds of affection have been strengthened in countless ways. Most recently Camp Phoenix has served as a gathering space for young people to focus on three main priorities: to value each other, to love each other, to provide a positive experience and opportunities for spiritual growth.

Having gathered virtually and on a limited basis during the global pandemic, Camp Phoenix continued its legacy of gathering and forming young people in the Episcopal understanding of following Jesus even in the midst of declining enrollment and several setbacks caused by the pandemic.

At this time, I have determined that Camp Phoenix will take a deliberate pause in in 2023 in order to intentionally discern the future ministry of young people within the Diocese. While I know that this news may be disappointing, I want to assure you that it is my ultimate goal to enhance and fully support young people within the Diocese and to ensure that this ministry is sustainable and thriving for years to come. I see this pause as the perfect time to purposefully strengthen the experience of young people with the Diocese.

While we will miss having Camp Phoenix in 2023, we believe this time of strategic dreaming is necessary and appropriate, especially with the arrival of the Rev. Erin Pickersgill, serving as Ministry Developer for Children and Youth. It is my hope that with Erin's leadership and the formation of a Children and Youth Ministry Discernment Task Force, we can continue to build on the lasting legacy of Camp Phoenix, as we continue to grow its mission for a changing world.



## THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MISSOURI

1210 Locust Street | St. Louis, MO 63103 | 314-231-1220 | [diocesemo.org](http://diocesemo.org)

Know that I care deeply for the experience of children and youth within the Diocese of Missouri and I look forward to celebrating the renewed vision of Camp Phoenix in 2024. I ask you to pray for our young people, to pray for the task force, and to pray for our Diocese as we seek to more fully follow in the way of Jesus our Savior.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, starting with a cross symbol and the name "Deon K. Johnson".

The Rt. Rev. Deon K. Johnson  
XI Bishop of Missouri