



IN TOUCH NEWSLETTER

December 2025

Pave the Way to Camp

By Executive Director Steve Pinkley

I hope this newsletter finds you well. We have recently dug Hidden Acres out from the massive snowstorm that hit the Midwest over Thanksgiving weekend. Camp looks like a peaceful winter wonderland, which always puts me in a reflective mood. As I think about 2025 as a whole, I feel so blessed. I saw God's blessings in continual improvements around camp, lives being transformed for the Kingdom, and numerous people choosing to partner with our ministry.



December kicks off a fundraising season at Hidden Acres and gives old and new friends another opportunity to partner with us. Each year, we set a goal to raise funds for a major project that improves your camp experience. Our mission statement is "A place set apart to encounter Jesus," and we truly believe these improvements will help foster Jesus encounters for many years to come. Two years ago, our fundraising season helped us build the Airnasium, a large indoor-outdoor worship and teaching center. Last year, we focused on improving infrastructure with both a new sewage lagoon and huge renovations to our indoor swimming pool. This year we've chosen a very exciting and beneficial project: we are going to **Pave the Way to Camp!**

Here are some details about the road paving project and why we've chosen this important improvement for 2026.

The Road Project

For many years, the gravel road has caused excitement as our guests anticipate their arrival at camp. God has richly blessed us with an amazing number of guests, and now our gravel road is heavily traveled. We have realized in recent years that the gravel road has become a cause for concern regarding safety, air quality, and vehicle wear and tear. Our goals for this new project are to increase safety, minimize dust, and improve guest experience.

Of course, the most important of these goals is safety. We are looking forward to improved visibility and a reliable, secure driving surface. If you have ever dropped off a camper on a busy Summer Camp Sunday or arrived for a weekend retreat, you know how quickly the dust can rise, creating dense clouds that make it hard to see. We have seen cars stop in the middle of the road because of low visibility, and many other drivers turn on their hazard lights in broad daylight just to be seen. There have been accidents, including one last summer when a counselor slid into the ditch due to loose gravel.

Our Executive Director, Steve Pinkley, has been working with the State of Iowa and Webster County for a couple years to find a way to fix this problem. We want to make sure the expense of the road does not fall solely on Hidden Acres. After multiple talks, the county is very excited to join us on this endeavor! We have had several meetings and emails with the County Supervisor, County Engineer, and lawyers to draw up a partnership that will work for both Hidden Acres and Webster County.

After these communications, we have determined that our share of the cost for 1.62 miles of asphalt road will be \$500,000. The new pavement will start where 390th St. meets county road P-70 and end at our maintenance shop road. We would love to raise more than \$500,000 so we could ask the asphalt company to extend the paved surface a little further into camp. Once we know which company the county chooses, we will discuss the costs and feasibilities of this plan. Right now, we think that for an additional \$150,000 we could also asphalt entrance areas of camp like the main road to the Welcome Center, the Dining Hall parking lot, the Inn parking lot, and the Welcome Center parking lot.



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Welcome the Candlishes!



Please join us in welcoming two new members to the Hidden Acres family! Matt and Kristi Candlish arrived from Indiana in November. Matt is serving on our team as the new Spiritual Formation Director. In this role, he will be leading the Project Path and Residency programs as well as supporting all staff as the Camp Chaplain. Kristi will be assisting with program administration and discipleship.

Matt and Kristi met on a study trip to Israel as college students. They have two daughters, Maya and Olivia, and an awesome son-in-law, Josh. They love to spend time together as a family and will often end up at a thrift store or coffee shop on their family outings.

Matt loves teaching and preaching God's Word. He and Kristi are passionate about helping and encouraging others to grow in their relationship with God. He also loves connecting with pastors and is excited to meet pastors in the EFCA Central District. Please pray for the Candlishes as they serve the students and staff of Hidden Acres!



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Hidden Acres Christian Center
3837 Union Ave, Dayton, IA 50530
www.hacamps.org
(515) 547-2751
steve.pinkley@hacamps.org

Pave the Way to Camp (cont.)

Now, can you imagine pulling off county road P-70 and driving all the way into Hidden Acres on a safe, smooth asphalt road? Please consider partnering with us on this important project!

Financial Goal

Even though we do not have the full details of the project yet, the county has assured us that our portion of the project will not exceed \$500,000. The county has sent the project out for bids, and we can see that utility companies have flagged the road already. The construction should start in the spring of 2026 and be completed in time for summer camp. And again, I'd love to see us raise more than that to extend the asphalt work onto our private property. Our total goal for this fundraising project is \$650,000.

A few days ago on Giving Tuesday, we held our first fundraiser of the season—a live telethon. We broadcast eight hours of fun videos, Hidden Acres updates, and a few silly antics through our Facebook page and asked viewers to support the road project. Between early donations and day-of giving, we've raised **\$217,671** so far! This is a great start toward our goal, and we hope you can join us as we continue on toward \$650,000.

Remember, Hidden Acres is a non-profit organization and donations are tax-deductible. Here are several ways to give:

- ♦ **By check:** Return the enclosed envelope with a check. Postmark it by December 31st to ensure it's recorded for the 2025 tax year.
- ♦ **By card:** Call the office at 515-547-2751 with debit or credit card info.
- ♦ **Online:** Give online at hacamps.org/donate. Click on the green **"DONATE ONLINE"** button, then choose "Road Paving Project" from the "Direct Your Donation" drop-down box.

Thank you for investing in the future ministry at Hidden Acres Christian Center!

Save the Date: Hidden Acres Gala & Auction, March 8th

Our next major fundraising event is our annual Gala & Auction, and you will not want to miss this evening at Hidden Acres! Not only will we have delicious food, great fellowship, and a lively schedule, but those attending will be the first to hear of our next major building project! This addition will shape the future of Hidden Acres, so make sure you attend the Gala!

Date: Sunday, March 8, 2026

Time: 3:30 - 8:30 pm

Cost: \$400/table (8 people) or \$50 per person

Attire: Business casual

To learn more and register online for the event, please visit:

www.hacamps.org/gala-and-auction

