



Report to the Diocese of East Carolina
- January 2022 -

On Maundy Thursday the liturgy begins just like any other, but at the end, we know that something is different because there is no dismissal. We then return to church on Good Friday and pick up as if in mid-sentence, and again, no dismissal. Only when we attend the Great Vigil of Easter, proclaiming that Christ is Risen, do we once again hear those words, “go in peace to love and serve the Lord.” In other words, the liturgy itself reminds us that as Christ moves toward the cross, he likewise moves toward resurrection. Nothing stops God’s light from shining in the darkness. Nothing stops God’s movement to new life.

We have concluded our first spring, summer, autumn, Thanksgiving, and Christmas seasons since 2019, and the transition from Maundy Thursday to Good Friday to Easter continues to speak to me. It sums up how I feel slowly emerging from the darkness, reconnecting with people, seeking new life, and of course, being tremendously grateful for all we have learned over the past year and a half. Kanuga’s friends and supporters have joined us in confronting the challenges of the pandemic, our Good Friday of sorts, and their outpouring of love sustains Kanuga. We look forward to sharing an Easter moment filled with hope for the wonders to come.

Kanuga is in a much stronger position than we were a year ago. In spring—with health and safety protocols in place—we welcomed conferences back to Kanuga: some online, some in person, and some hybrid. These included Youth Week, Kanuga Christian Formation, Kanuga Renewal, and The Haden Institute. In early June, we were blessed with a visit from The Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers, who worked with our trustees, conference leaders, campers, and youth week participants to open hearts and minds to our role in developing Beloved Community. We hosted an outdoor concert and celebration of life for longtime Kanuga friend and musician Fran McKendree. It was a delight as well to be able to open Guest Period and Camp Kanuga this summer, and bookings are strong through the Thanksgiving season. In November, we hosted the first-ever Kanuga Homecoming, inviting friends and supporters to come together to celebrate community and offer their hands to the work of the Lord through service to Kanuga. Kanuga Lake Inn and Cottages are once again thriving with lively and grateful guests. Mountain Trail Outdoor School operated a daytime field trip series for local students in October, and is at near capacity for its spring 2022 overnight program. We have welcomed back with great joy a number of parishes and other Episcopal groups, including Daughters of the King and the planning team for *Nuevo Amanecer*, which (God willing) will be held at Kanuga in June 2022. As we greet the year 2022, our board and leadership is engaged in a strategic planning process for Kanuga, to provide critical navigation toward our North Star—our mission—to welcome all people to connect with each other, nature, and the Creator.

Certainly, we continue to navigate a difficult job market and ongoing challenges related to COVID-19, but these are not the existential threats we faced a year ago. We have taken the time during the pandemic to think strategically about how Kanuga should be rebuilt and reborn,

and about what is needed for the life of this place to continue and to thrive. With this intentionality at the core of our work, we have incorporated much that has been learned, and made operational changes that will ensure Kanuga's legacy. For example, we contracted with an experienced hospitality company to manage our lodging and food and beverage operations so that Kanuga staff can focus on mission and programming, where our strength lies.

Supporters and friends helped keep Kanuga's doors open when our camps, conferences, and programs were almost completely shut down. These generous gifts, combined with strategic operating decisions and federal relief funds, strengthened our fiscal position. We are on track to meet our goals, and will be increasingly able to leverage donor support toward improving programming, upgrading facilities, and expanding access to this place we all love. We finished the fiscal year 2021 with a modest surplus—with gratitude for federal relief funds and a PPP loan that was forgiven.

Uncertainty remains, of course, as we all keep a watchful eye on the virus—but I write this report with boundless gratitude and enthusiastic optimism. Above all, I write to thank all who have shared their fellowship, partnership, and commitment to Kanuga's bright future. Together, we can build and sustain Kanuga for generations to come, ensuring that the coming Easter moment is shared and celebrated among all who are lucky enough to stand on this holy ground.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael".

Michael R. Sullivan
President / CEO