

Silver Lake Parent Information Guide



Silver Lake Conference Center
223 Low Rd.
Sharon, CT 06069

Phone: 860-364-5526
Fax: 860-364-1000

Ryan Gackenheimer
Executive Director
ryang@ctucc.org



www.silverlakect.org

Welcome to Silver Lake! If you've never been here before, or if you're coming back for the umpteenth time, you're in for a treat! Our dedicated summer staff are ready to help you experience incredible, fun-filled times with new friends and great stuff to do in the magnificent beauty of God's creation, and to help you discover your spiritual gifts. We are grateful you'll be joining the adventure of Silver Lake this summer. In this booklet, we've explained the nuts and bolts of what you and your parents need to know to have a successful time, to bring what you need, and to find out how to get here!

Please read the whole guide, and feel free to call us or email us with any questions you have. Come back often, and enjoy what's been so special, for many generations, about coming to The Lake. See you this summer.

**Peace in Christ,
Ryan Gackenheimer
Executive Director**

Open House at Silver Lake...

Open House tours for parents and visitors will be held on a Sunday afternoon in May. Check the website for the dates. This is a wonderful opportunity for families and conferees to learn more about Silver Lake and to meet staff. We highly recommend that you attend an Open House, especially if your child will be attending Silver Lake for the first time. If you are unable to attend the Open House and would like a tour of camp, please call the office at 860-364-5526 to arrange a visit.

A Sample Day at Silver Lake...

7:30 a.m.	Morning Dip at the lake (optional)
8:00 a.m.	Wake Up Bell
8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00 a.m.	Cabin Clean Up/Composting
9:15 a.m.	Morning Watch/Opening Circle
9:45 a.m.	Conference Programs
12:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:15 p.m.	Cabin Quiet Time
2:00 p.m.	Ceramics, Arts & Crafts, Nature, Music, Theater
2:45 p.m.	Camp Store
3:00 p.m.	Swim Time
4:00 p.m.	High or Low ropes/Challenge course
5:00 p.m.	Conference Programs
6:00 p.m.	Dinner
7:30 p.m.	All Conference Worship
8:00 p.m.	Evening Programs/Campfires
8:30 pm	Snack time
9:00 p.m. through 10:30 p.m.	In cabin - get ready for bed (depending on grade level)

Please see conference descriptions in the summer calendar for individual conference program themes and special events.

Summer Conference Check-In/Check-Out Times...

Please observe arrival and departure times, as these are busy days when the camp must be cleaned and prepared between the time one group leaves and the next arrives.

CHECK – IN	Sunday 2:00 p.m. -4:00 p.m.
CHECK – OUT	Saturday (from cabin/building area) 10:00 a.m.

What to bring to Silver Lake . . .

We recommend that each child bring the following clothing and supplies when attending a conference at Silver Lake:

Bedding/Linen

Sleeping bag or bedding
Pillow
Bath Towels
Washcloths
Beach Towels
Blanket

Clothing

Shirts
Underwear
Socks
Pants
Shorts
Raincoat
Sneakers or closed-toed shoes
(for Challenge Course)
Shower Flip-flops
Windbreaker
Swimsuit (s)
Sweatshirt

Toiletries

Shower Caddy
(to carry supplies)
Toothbrush
Toothpaste
Shampoo
Soap
Hairbrush/comb
Insect Repellant
Sunscreen
Flashlight

Supplies

Bible
Water Bottle
Camera
Stationary/stamps

***Everyone who comes to Silver Lake during the summer must have a complete health record (even adults attending Family Camp!). Please see your online registration account for health forms. The Doctor Signature page is good for 2 years from the date of the doctor's signature. The Medication Authorization form (to dispense medication) must be updated annually.**

What NOT to bring to Silver Lake...

Cell phones are **NOT** permitted and will be confiscated. Please do **NOT** bring: alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, weapons, expensive jewelry, pets, pocket knives, fireworks, gum, candy, food, or valuables, including electronic and handheld devices: cell phones, radios, mp3 players, CD players, beepers, laptops, walkmans, or video games. Silver Lake cannot be responsible for items that may be lost, stolen, or broken.

Insects...

Our programs are held outside as much as possible, which brings us into contact with various biting insects. We recommend sending a non-aerosol insect repellent (make sure that it works against ticks) with your child with instructions to apply daily. Counselors will help with reminders. As in all parts of Connecticut, ticks can be found at Silver Lake. Please instruct your child in how to do a tick check. Conferees are encouraged to do a tick check daily, and we have mirrors with posted reminders in every bathroom. If your child is bitten by a tick, they will be taken to the nurse, who will remove it. You will receive a "tick letter" when you pick up your child with information on after care.

Deans and Counselors ...

In the tradition of United Church of Christ summer camps and conferences, Silver Lake Deans and Counselors are volunteer leaders predominantly from UCC Churches. They make a one week (or more) commitment to Silver Lake as a form of service to the church and the Christian community. Deans are selected by the Director, in conjunction with the Silver Lake Board. Deans attend a training weekend in March, develop their conference program, and recruit their volunteer staff of counselors. Counselors are at least 16 years old and have been recommended by local church pastors. Counselors must attend training sessions at Silver Lake and do online training as well. We perform background checks on all volunteers over 18.

Cabin and Bunking Assignments...

We have found throughout our long and rich history of summer conferences that conferees make new friends faster and easier if they room with new people. We encourage parents to help their children understand that part of the Silver Lake experience is making new friends. If your child registers for a conference with a close friend, please assure the children that they will see each other throughout the day even if they are not assigned to the same cabin or bunkroom.

Scholarships and Financial Aid...

Scholarships and financial aid are available through many local churches. Please check with your local church regarding assistance in paying for a conference at Silver Lake. Scholarships are also available, on a limited basis, through the Scholarship Fund of Silver Lake. The scholarship application is available through your online account. Please call us for more information. Money need not be a barrier for attending.

Medical Needs...

Please fill out the online Camper Health History form for each of your children attending camp. It can be accessed through your online registration account.

Your child will still need to be examined by a physician, who must sign a form indicating an exam has been performed. You may download Silver Lake's form while logged into your account, or you may substitute another form (school form, state form, doctor's office form). In accordance with ACA standards, a signed physical is current for two (2) years from the date of the exam. If you are not able to upload the Silver Lake form to your online account, please send it to Silver Lake in advance of your conference. Fax: 860-364-1000. Email: slcc@ctucc.org. Mail: SLCC attn: Registrar, 223 Low Road, Sharon, CT 06069.

Connecticut Law prohibits Silver Lake Conference Center from admitting any child without a current health record signed by a physician. Please

make sure that the health record is updated with proper emergency contacts, allergies, etc.

If your child is taking prescription medication, you must provide a Medication Authorization form completed by the doctor who prescribed it. As with the Doctor's Signature form, you may download Silver Lake's form while logged into your account. If you are not able to upload the form to your account, please send it to Silver Lake in advance of your conference. State law requires that all prescription medication be properly labeled in its original container with only the amount of medication needed for the week. Please do not bring over-the-counter medications such as Benadryl and Tylenol as a supply of these medications is available in the Health Center, from the camp nurse. A full list of the medications the nurse will have stocked can be found on the online Camper Health History form under the heading "Medication." A Medication Authorization form will be needed to administer any supplements (including vitamins) or non-prescription medication not covered by the nurse's standing orders.

Instructions on how to complete your health record will be sent to you in an email with the confirmation of your registration. If you have further questions, please call our office for clarification: 860-364-5526. All forms should be completed and turned in to Silver Lake (electronically or in paper form) at least two weeks before you arrive at camp.

A full-time nurse is on site for medication administration and minor medical needs. If there is a medical emergency, every effort will be made to contact you (parent/guardian) immediately. Your child's medical insurance (or yours) will be used first by the physician or emergency medical service. Silver Lake provides limited medical coverage for accidental injury, subject to the group policy terms and conditions. Pre-existing conditions must be covered by the parent's medical plan. Conferees who are not medically restricted are expected to participate fully in all activities, programs, meals, worship, and recreation.

Special Needs...

Silver Lake Summer Conferences provide an environment that seeks to nurture children and youth of many ability levels so that all may have the opportunity to share in our Christian Community. It is our sincerest wish to ensure a positive conference experience for all God's children. We strongly encourage parental involvement ahead of their conference to ensure programs and facilities meet the requirements of your individual child. If your child has special physical, mental, developmental, or dietary needs that require special support, please contact the Program Director prior to the start of the conference. Every reasonable effort will be made to meet your child's special needs. Please inform the Program Director of any special circumstances that your child may be facing prior to arriving at Silver Lake. A recent death of a loved one, family divorce, or a change in medication may contribute to a child's behavior while at Silver Lake and any information you share with us will assist us in understanding and meeting the needs of your child. All information shared with the Program Director will be handled confidentially.

Misconduct...

Any conferee who uses illegal drugs or alcohol, abusive language, promotes or participates in sexual behavior/misconduct, or demonstrates aggressive/violent behavior will be asked to leave Silver Lake immediately. The conferee's parents/guardians and church pastor will be notified so that counseling or other relevant services may be arranged to assist the conferee and family. All issues related to misconduct will be managed by the Executive Director, or an Alternate Director if needed.

Homesickness...

Sometimes children experience homesickness, especially if they have not been away from home or have not been to Silver Lake. There are several effective ways of helping your child work through the sadness of being

away from home. Sometimes this may take a few days, so please be prepared! Based on our experience with children and homesickness, we suggest the following strategies:

- Please do not promise your child that you will come and pick them up if they call home. This may set them up for failure.
- Understand that there are many people working to help your child have a successful experience: Deans, counselors, the SLCC Nurse, chaplain, the Executive Director, the Program Director as well as the Summer Staff.
- Extreme cases of homesickness are managed by the Executive Director and the Program Director. If it is advisable, we will call you to discuss options about how to manage your child's situation.
- It is helpful if you make immediate contact with your child by sending a letter early in the week (some parents prepare them ahead of time so they can be mailed early enough to arrive on the Monday or Tuesday of the child's conference). You may also fax a message to your child at 860-364-1000. Please limit faxed messages to one page *without* a cover page and be sure to note what conference they are attending. Please keep the message upbeat and do not focus on how much you miss your child, as this can trigger homesickness.
- If you, as the parent, are really missing your child, please do not let on! Of course, let them know that they are loved, but encourage them to make new friends and to have a great time at Silver Lake!
- For further tips on avoiding homesickness, check the links on our website, www.silverlakeect.org.

Calling Home ...

We have found that children can avoid feelings of homesickness by getting involved in the conference. Conferees are discouraged from making telephone calls home, as this invariably makes them more homesick.

Swim Tests ...

Silver Lake provides two swimming areas at the waterfront. There is a shallow entrance area for conferees that do not wish to take or who do not complete the swim test, or who are beginner swimmers. The deeper swimming area is available for those who have successfully completed the swim test.

The swim test is optional and can be taken during Check-In on Sunday or at any swim time later in the week.

The swim test consists of the following:

- Swimming 6 lengths between the docks, any stroke, nonstop.
- Treading water for 90 seconds.

If a child does not successfully complete the swim test on their first try, they are encouraged to try again later in the week.

Camp Store, Care Packages, Spending Money...

Each day, your child will have a chance to visit the Camp Store to purchase a snack, drink, or Silver Lake memorabilia. On Wednesday, Missions Day, they will have the opportunity to donate some camp store money to the summer missions that they learn about on Tuesday. We suggest a total of \$25+ per week, which includes a contribution to missions on Wednesday (typical snack/beverage cost per day is \$3).

We encourage you to set up your child's Camp Store account online before you get to camp. This will make your Sunday Check-In speedier. To add money to a store account:

- Log into your online registration account
- Find "Additional Options" in the toolbar across the top.
- Select "Camp Store."
- Follow the directions from there.

If you do not set up your store account before you get to camp, you will be able to do so during Sunday Check-In. This system is designed to prevent

lost or stolen money during the week. On Saturday at checkout, stop by the Camp Store to collect any unspent money. Money left in store accounts at the end of the summer will be considered a donation. The Camp Store is open on Saturdays so that conferees and families may purchase the photo collection of their week and memorabilia items, which they may not have had time or money to get during the week of camp.

The Silver Lake Camp Store encourages parents to purchase our Care & Share Packages and photo collection in advance. You can order one online through your registration account. For instructions on how to add a Care & Share Package or photo collection to your registration, please see the FAQ (under Additional Options on your online registration account). You may purchase a Care & Share Package or a photo collection during Check-In with a credit card or cash. We cannot accept checks.

Lost and Found Items...

The very best way to prevent the loss of an item while at Silver Lake is to label all articles of clothing, towels, bedding, and other personal items. If your child is missing a particular item, the staff will make every effort to help him/her find the item in the Lost and Found. At the end of each week, prior to and during departure, all items from the Lost and Found are displayed near the Summer Office and Camp Store. It is a good idea to check for any missing items before departing from Silver Lake.

All unclaimed, unmarked clothing/personal items are held at Silver Lake for 30 days. If unclaimed after 30 days, they are donated to charity.

Mail and Faxes...

We encourage you to write to your child while he/she is at Silver Lake. You may also send a fax to your child at 860-364-1000. Please limit faxes to one page, without a cover sheet. Please be sure to write the name of your child's conference on the fax. Mail may be sent to:

Conferee's Name
Title of Conference
S.L.C.C.
223 Low Road
Sharon, CT 06069

Transportation...

Transportation to and from Silver Lake is the responsibility of each conferee and their family. Check with others in your church to see who might be going the same week so you can carpool. If someone other than a parent or guardian is dropping off or picking up your child, please add them as an authorized pickup on your registration account. Authorized pickups must be added to your account by the Thursday before pickup.

Parent/Guardian Visiting Silver Lake. . .

In our experience, we have found that parents/guardians visiting their children during their conference can be extremely disruptive to the conferee's experience. Therefore, Parents/Guardians may only visit the Conference Center during their child's stay if prior authorization is obtained from the Executive Director.

Area Lodging...

Some families have found it helpful to stay in the area on Friday night before picking up their children at departure time on Saturday morning. Here are a few local lodging facilities that we recommend:

Wake Robin Inn
Lakeville
860-435-2000
www.wakerobininn.com

Mary Stuart House
Goshen
860-491-2260
www.marystuarthouse.com

Sharon Country Inn
(Formerly Sharon Motor Lodge)
Sharon
860-364-0036
www.sharoncountryinn.com

Camping Facilities:

Housatonic State Park
Cornwall
860-672-6772

Lone Oaks Camp Site
East Canaan
860-824-7051

Travel Directions for the Silver Lake Conference Center...

From Torrington:

- From Exit #44 on Route 8: Follow signs to Route 4 West. (from the South, go straight at the end of the ramp to the second light and turn left.)
- CT Route 4 into the center of Sharon, four way stop.
- Turn right on to Main Street; follow town green on your right.
- The road curves to the right, slight down hill, turn left on to Low Road (before the gas station)
- Follow Low Road to SLCC (ap. 1.5 miles)

From New Haven:

- Route 34 to Route 8 – continue with directions from Torrington.

From Waterbury:

- Route 8 North – continue with directions from Torrington.

From Danbury:

- Route 7 North to Cornwall Bridge and the intersection with Route 4
- Turn left on to Route 4, travel on Route 4 to the center of Sharon
- Follow directions above from center of Sharon

From Hartford:

- Route 84 West to Route 4 (Exit for Farmington)
- Follow Route 4 through Torrington, directions as above from Torrington, Route 4.

From New London:

- Route 9 North to Route I 91 South (exit 20S)
- I 91 to merge with I 691
- I 691 to Route 84 West to Waterbury
- Route 8 (exit 20) in Waterbury
- Follow directions as above from Route 8 in Torrington above.

Mission Statement

Silver Lake Conference Center, a year round outdoor ministry of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, is called to covenant with God and with the churches and people of the conference in the work of forming life-sustaining leaders for the church and the world, by offering:

- Experiences of inclusive and nurturing Christian community
- Opportunities to grow and participate as Christ's disciples
- A model of sustainable environmental stewardship of God's world.

We worship, learn, play, serve, and work together, respecting the right of private judgement. We seek to provide a safe environment of acceptance regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, reflecting our unity in Christ and respecting the faith journeys of all of God's children.

Revised Spring 2019