

THE EMMAUS ROAD

Camp Emmaus • 3011 W. Camp Rd., Oregon, IL 61061
www.campemmaus.org

SPRING 2026



FIRELIGHT FINDINGS: *Reflections from our Camp Manager*



Have you ever tried to watch something grow in real time? A tomato plant, a child, even your own soul. You can stare for hours and never see a single change. But come back a day later ... and something has shifted. Growth happens quietly—without our permission, without our awareness, without our control.

Jesus says the Kingdom of God grows like that (Mark 4:26–29). Slow. Hidden. Unhurried. “The seed sprouts and grows, though we do not know how.”

Recently at our annual retreat, camp board members held small slices of wood cut from trees around Camp Emmaus. Each cross-section told a story: rings wide and narrow, rings from years of drought and years of abundance, rings formed during storms and during stillness. And while the tree was alive, no one could see those rings forming. They grew quietly, layer by layer, beneath the bark.

Camp ministry is the same. Every summer, every retreat, every porch conversation, every late-night campfire prayer adds another ring. Rings of courage in a teenager. Rings of healing in a family. Rings of calling in a young adult who doesn't yet know they're called. Most of the time, we don't get to see the growth—but Christ is shaping it all the same.

The outermost ring on a tree is always the newest one. The tree didn't plan it; it simply stayed rooted. And the ring appeared. You and I are standing in our newest ring right now. God is forming something in us—in this camp, in this season, in this community—that we can't yet see. But it's happening. Quietly. Faithfully. Inevitably.

As we step into spring, may we ask not, “Is God doing anything here?” but rather, “What ring is God forming in us now?”

As Emmaus begins forming our 78th ring this year, may it be another ring of grace that tells both our story and God's Love.

Respectfully in Christ,

Randall Westfall

2026 DATES

Summer Camp registration is open! Register online and find details at campemmaus.org.

May 22-25:
Memorial Day
Family Camp

June 12-14:
Counselor-in-
Training (CIT)

June 13-14: Elementary Camp
June 14-17: Target Sports Camp

July 5-11: Senior High Camp

July 12-18: Survivor Camp

July 19-23: Intermediate Camp

July 24-26: Young Adult/Young
at Heart Camp

July 26- Aug. 1: Middle School
Camp

August 6-8: Women's Camp

September 4-7: Labor Day
Weekend Family Camp



THINK SPRING!

Summer camp
season will be here
before you know it!

Join us as we
welcome the
warmer months with Camp



Emmaus' now-annual “Spring Into
Camp” event, **April 25**. Come for a
day of fellowship, fun, food, hiking,
a campfire, and more. Watch for
more details at

www.campemmaus.org.



IN THE WILDERNESS

The **2026 Outdoor Ministries Association (OMA) "InsideOut" camp curriculum** for summer camp will be titled "In the Wilderness."

An introduction to the theme notes: "Wilderness is a time or place where we encounter what is new, strange, scary, lonely, unknown or mysterious. The wilderness is a wild and beautiful time and place where we can discover the sacred within each person and all creation. ... The wilderness reveals our strengths, growing edges, and potential as God equips us for the unknown still to come. The wilderness awaits us all, and God meets us there." Daily themes will examine the nature of wilderness and how it's woven into our lives (Psalm 139:7-14); how we experience awe in the wilderness (Job 12:7-10); God's presence in our wilderness times (Exodus 13:17-22); Jesus' example of using the wilderness to recharge and renew our souls (Matt. 14:22-30); the sense of community and never being alone (Esther); and being equipped to face our wilderness moments (Jer. 29:11-14). The annual InsideOut camp curriculum is a partnership between the Church of the Brethren and other denominations.



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PROPERTY ENHANCEMENTS

Camp Emmaus has received a grant from the **Church of the Brethren Faith in Action Fund** to support improvements and additions to the basketball court and central fire pit area, with hopes of making this a more attractive and engaging area for visitors to camp. ... **Two truckloads of wood chips** are ready to be spread on camp trails. Watch for information on a workday this spring. Work on installation of the **new kitchen dishwasher** should also be happening soon. Thank you, donors!

Camp bee-uty: Does your church use the Living Word bulletin series from Brethren Press? If so, you might have seen a bit of Camp Emmaus in your sanctuary recently. Camp volunteer Jim Miner of Elgin took the cover photo for the March 8 bulletin at the camp, capturing a bumblebee on a pollination mission amid Emmaus' famous shooting stars. Spring is a great time to see camp's beautiful variety of wildflowers.

CAMP NEWS & NOTES



• **Brethren Volunteer Service** is coming to Camp Emmaus! This year's fall unit, BVS 340, will hold orientation at camp Sept. 15-23. We look forward to welcoming these volunteers as they prepare for a year of service across the country and around the world.

- Have you considered **holding a retreat** for your church group or other group at Camp Emmaus? The cozy retreat lodge and the log cabin are winterized and available year-round, while warmer weather has options in the cabins outside of summer camp season. Call camp to check pricing and availability!
- Please consider **giving a gift to camp**. Your gift can support general operations, scholarships, or special projects. Walk with us as we provide a sacred space for outdoor ministry. You can mail a check, donate on the website, or visit <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/8596dd75-871a-458b-b5d2-5f0f3054367c>.

CAMP BOARD: Sara Garner, chair; Gary Baisden; Patrick Benassi; Andy Brooks; Monika Pandya Burchfield; Melyssa Otake; Monica Rice Frye; Mike Sondgeroth; Jonathan Stauffer; Callie Surber; Everett Teetor, financial secretary; Randall Westfall, camp manager