

THE EMMAUS ROAD

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

SUMMER 2026



FIRELIGHT FINDINGS: *Reflections from the Camp Manager*



By the fourth day of my own wilderness immersion experience, the hunger in my stomach had quieted—but another kind of hunger had awakened. Alone in the Pacific Northwest with only basic skills and a small fire to keep me company, I found myself stripped of the noise and comforts that usually cushion my life. What remained was a deeper ache, a longing for God that had been buried beneath the pace of ordinary days.

Scripture tells this story repeatedly. Moses, Elijah, John the Baptizer, and Jesus himself all stepped into wild places—sometimes for preparation, sometimes for renewal, sometimes for a whole way of life. The wilderness has always been God's classroom. It is where distractions fall away, where identity is clarified, where the Spirit speaks in ways we can finally hear.

Jesus' forty days in the Judean desert were not simply a test of endurance. They were a threshold. A place where self-reliance gave way to Spirit-reliance. A place where temptation revealed truth. A place where mission was forged. John's long ministry in the desert was another kind of edge—an intentional life of simplicity and cultural deprivation so he could see clearly what others could not.

And edges still find us today. Sometimes they look like isolation, uncertainty, or loss. Sometimes they look like the inner terrain we're forced to face when the world slows down. These edges are uncomfortable, but they are holy ground. They reveal what we cling to—and what God is inviting us to release. The wilderness, whether external or internal, is never meant to leave us the same. Something truer, humbler, and more Spirit-shaped emerges.

May this summer at Camp Emmaus and the weeks ahead invite us to our own wilderness edges—where God still whispers, still forms, still calls us into the people we are becoming.

Respectfully in Christ,

Randall Westfall

2026 DATES

A few camp experiences are still available this year! Find more details at campemmaus.org.

September 4-7: Labor Day Weekend Family Camp

September 19: Camp Appreciation Day luncheon and celebration

FALL CAMP APPRECIATION DAY

Come to Camp Emmaus on **Saturday, Sept. 19**, for a celebration of all things camp-y! The day will include a luncheon, time to stroll around the camp and peruse new camp store items, an auction, highlights of the summer camp season, and an opportunity to say thank you to everyone who helps to make camp possible. See more at www.campemmaus.org.

WELCOME, BVS!



We're excited to have Brethren Volunteer Service hold their fall orientation unit at Camp Emmaus. Unit 340 will be here Sept. 15-24 as they train, build community, and prepare for a year of service at projects all around the US and the world. Please keep them in prayer!



SPARKLING CLEAN



A new kitchen dishwasher entered service this summer after the generous contributions of donors allowed it to be installed during the spring. Camp maintenance assistant Raiden Zimmerman kept the new appliance humming through the summer.

CAMP NEWS & NOTES

- Need a little “wilderness” in your life? Consider **holding a retreat** for your church group or others at Camp Emmaus! The cozy retreat lodge and the log cabin are both winterized and available year-round. In warmer weather, the cabins may also be available outside of summer camp season. Call camp to check pricing and availability.
- If the greenery around camp is looking extra manicured this year, thank the **brush hog mower** than camp received. This new-to-camp tool will help with managing camp trails and other spaces.

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



Enter God’s gates with praise: Another summer is in the books! More than 100 campers rolled through the Camp Emmaus gate this summer, from kindergarteners to young adults and beyond. Thank you to all the congregations and others who sent campers this year. Be sure to encourage additional children and youth to consider camp next year! Watch for highlights of the 2026 season in the next newsletter.

KING OF THE KITCHEN

THANK YOU to head chef **Reid Phillips** and his assistant (and brother) **Mason**, who kept good meals coming all summer. Reid, a professional chef in Nevada, has been serving in the role for a decade and said this year is likely his last. The age-group camps took time to express their gratitude for the excellent service of Reid and his team. We wish him all the best for the next chapter—and hope we’ll see him again!



PASS IT ON

Please consider **giving a gift to camp**. Your gift can support general operations, scholarships, or special projects. Help to provide an added spark for ministry in our sacred space! You can mail a check, donate on the website, or visit <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/8596dd75-871a-458b-b5d2-5f0f3054367c>.