



# Outdoor Ministries News

Outdoor Ministries Association of the Church of the Brethren  
Editor: Dean Wenger  
Fall 2017

Contact at: (814) 667-2355 or BrethrenOMA@gmail.com

## OMA National Retreat at Camp Blue Diamond

The annual retreat for Church of the Brethren camp staff, volunteers and interested friends will be held Nov. 12-16 at Camp Blue Diamond near Petersburg, PA. Activities will begin with dinner at 6 p.m. on Sunday, but guests can arrive earlier in the day. The conference ends after breakfast on Thursday.

The OMA Conference is an event filled with workshops and roundtables designed to empower and aid camp staff and volunteers with their ministry. There will be recreation and fun time built into the retreat, as well as opportunities for worship, sharing and fellowship.

Keynote speaker for the conference is Ellen Will, Director of Outdoor School for Penn State's Shavers Creek Environmental Center. Ellen will lead discussion on: Environmental Education as the intersection between school and camp, and Creating a Unique Learning Setting, where your camp can use its values to guide and create year-round programming and planning. She will share about the unique program she directs at CBD, and invite guests to share their outdoor education programs & dreams.

Workshops will include: Communicating 'Camp Values' to Guests, Forest Management, Turkey in the Pit, An Open Dialogue with CoB General Secretary David Steele, How Camps Can Use New Technologies, Making Camp and College Connections, Camp Music Old and New, Games that Teach Ecological Concept, Celebrating Retiring or Leaving Staff, and Roundtables on Fundraising, Programming and Summer Camp Curriculum.

On Tuesday night OMA will conduct its Annual Membership Business Meeting, and a benefit auction will be held to raise funds for retreat and outdoor ministry scholarships. Attendees need to bring unique items from their camp or district to donate to the auction. Wednesday is fieldtrip day with an excursion to Juniata College, the Peace Chapel and dinner on the town. Registration is online at [www.OMA-COB.org](http://www.OMA-COB.org) or contact Camp Blue Diamond at [campbluediamond@verizon.net](mailto:campbluediamond@verizon.net) for a registration form. Cost for the event is \$225.



## In This Newsletter You Will Find!

- ) **Nomination Forms for the 2018 OMA Staff and Volunteer Awards**
- ) **An Application Form for a 2018 OMA Environmental Grant**
- ) **A request that each camp bring 5 digital photos on a thumb drive to the OMA Retreat**
- ) **Three Reminders that items are needed for the OMA Auction at the OMA Retreat**
- ) **Information on how to get a 10% discount on the 2018 Summer Camp Curriculum**
- ) **Information on where to get an application to be on the 2018 Youth Peace Travel Team**
- ) **News and photos from 14 different Brethren Camps!**

## **OMA Business Meeting and Auction on Tuesday Nov. 14**

On Tuesday evening of the OMA Retreat at Camp Blue Diamond, OMA will conduct its Annual Membership Meeting. Items of business at the meeting will include election of Steering Committee members, and a proposal seeking permission to incorporate OMA. Following the meeting there will be an auction to benefit the OMA Four Horsemen Fund. Don't forget to bring items to donate to the auction and your wallet!

The following slate is proposed by the steering committee for approval at the Annual Membership Meeting. If there are any other nominations for these positions, please contact Linetta Ballew (chair) prior to the meeting.

**Director/Manager** - Shannon Kahler (Inspiration Hills; second term)

**Volunteer** - Jonathan Stauffer (Camp Emmaus, primarily, but also others; first term)

**Treasurer** - Anna McAvoy-Emrick (Camp Brethren Heights)

**Curriculum Representative** - The steering committee is currently seeking a second person to represent OMA as part of the Chalis Press curriculum creation process. If you are interested in this role or would like more information, please contact Linetta Ballew (chair). A big thanks to Rex Miller for filling this role for many years and to Jerri Heiser-Wenger who is continuing as one of our representatives!!!

**Non-Profit Incorporation** - It is exciting to share that the Steering Committee will be bringing a proposal to the 2017 Annual Membership Meeting for OMA to become a non-profit incorporation! The push to move in this direction initially came out of ongoing conversations at Annual Retreats and Membership Meetings related to how to make OMA a more sustainable organization.

Incorporation will allow OMA to be a more official and recognizable organization, as well as to issue tax deductible receipts for donations allowing more fundraising efforts to take place. The Steering Committee took up this work as part of their visioning process with Stan Dueck. A lot of work has been done to learn about the steps to incorporation and to explore the various options available. A smaller task force made up of Rex Miller, Marlin Houff, and Nancy Ferguson did most of this research and work. At the October 2017 Steering Committee meeting, the group reviewed the proposed Articles of Incorporation which will, if approved, serve as the new OMA by-laws. The group also decided to move forward with proposing Pennsylvania as the state of incorporation. Pennsylvania was chosen because there are four camps in that state making it easier to ensure that there will always be someone within the state that can act as the organizations "agent" or contact person for the state. In addition, the initial and annual fees are cost-effective and there are minimal paperwork filing requirements.



The Articles of Incorporation and Pennsylvania incorporation requirements will be available at the Annual Retreat for review prior to the Annual Membership Meeting. This is an exciting new step for OMA! Please feel free to direct any questions about this process to Linetta Ballew (chair) or Rex Miller (treasurer) by emailing [\*\*BrethrenOMA@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:BrethrenOMA@gmail.com).



## 2018 Summer Camp Bible Curriculum

OMA is very excited to encourage you to use the 2018 *InsideOut* summer camp Bible study resource '**Beyond Belief! - The Universe of God**'. This resource is available from Brethren Press (order before November 1 and save 10%!). If you would like to explore the material first-hand before purchasing, you'll have the opportunity to do so at the OMA Retreat at Camp Blue Diamond. Here's a sneak-peak at what the resource is all about:

'**Beyond Belief! - The Universe of God**' is an exciting resource that is ideal for the outdoor ministry setting. **Beyond Belief** will launch campers on an amazing adventure as they ask the big questions about God's endless love and explore the mysteries of God and creation.

Daily themes and scriptures are:

- What If We Belong to God? Psalm 139
- What If God is bigger? Luke 1:35-55
- What If Hope is Real? Mark 2:1-5
- What If There Is More than Enough? John 6:1-14
- What If We Speak Up? Mark 7:24-30
- What If We Change the World? Matthew 5:13-16
- What If We Go Beyond? Luke 10:1-9



Exploring these questions through scripture, campers will learn that they are already known and loved by God, and that God is bigger than they can imagine. They will also realize that hope is a necessary force, and to accomplish these hopes God will provide them with the tools they need to live life to the fullest. As campers reflect on their own lives they will be encouraged to use their gifts as God's voice in the world. In Matthew 5:16 Jesus tells us that as children of God we are '**To let our light shine before others that they may see our good deeds and glorify our God in heaven.**' Through these words of Christ, campers are encouraged to embrace the truth that God wants to use us to make the world a better place. The precious promise campers will take home is that they do not go alone, for there is nowhere they can go that God doesn't go with them, and through this truth they are challenged to proclaim God's vision for the future and invite others to participate.



## Bring Digital Photos to Conference!

The OMA Steering Committee is asking each camp to bring five digital photos with you to the retreat in November so that we will have photos to use for advertisements, the OMA display and social media posts. Please bring them on a thumb drive or other digital means so that we can put them on a thumb drive when you arrive. If you are unable to attend the annual retreat please email five photos to OMA Steering Committee member Brian Bert at [briansbert@gmail.com](mailto:briansbert@gmail.com). Plan to bring photos to the retreat every year so we can continue to keep our publications and displays fresh and relevant! Thank you!

## Spiritual Directors at Camp: Encouraging Spiritual Growth

For well over a decade, the Church of the Brethren has had a network of spiritual directors—men and women trained in the art of deep listening, willing to accompany people on their spiritual journeys. Spiritual directors meet with people one-on-one or in small groups. Directors' training includes various prayer disciplines and contemplative practices. Some lead retreats. Some write spiritual reflections. Some are now partnering with camps to provide opportunities for people to engage their desire for spiritual growth.



From the Mid-Atlantic District, Ed Poling reports that Shepherd's Spring Outdoor Ministry Center has in the last two years established a Spiritual Formation Planning Team engaging spiritual directors and retreat leaders in assisting camp staff in offering:

- ) Spiritual formation events such as retreats, quiet days, group spiritual direction programs, etc. for interested persons in the local and district community.
- ) Spiritual direction and spiritually-focused programs to retreat groups renting the camp.
- ) Opportunities for personal meditation and prayer to camp guests through the maintenance of a labyrinth, a prayer trail, meditation benches, prayer space, and a library of books on spirituality.
- ) Sacred Listening Circles, a monthly gathering for those in the set-apart ministry to find spiritual companionship through prayer, faith-sharing, and attending to the presence and leading of the Spirit.

This is an ecumenical offering, open to those of various denominations and faiths.

The Planning Team meets six times a year to do this work. Ed would be happy to talk with those in other camps about what the folks at Shepherd's Spring have learned and how these opportunities have been received. He can be reached at 301-766-9005 or [elpoling1@gmail.com](mailto:elpoling1@gmail.com).

Debbie Eisenbise, director of intergenerational ministries for the denomination (and a spiritual director herself) is currently overseeing our network of spiritual directors. Once a year in May they gather for fellowship and education at a three-day working retreat. Information about this event and a survey to join the network can be found at <http://www.brethren.org/spiritualdirection/>. A flier about spiritual direction for download and printing is available there as well.



## Environment Grant Recipient Inspiration Hills Camp Garden Project

In 2017 OMA awarded Inspiration Hills an Environmental Grant in the amount of \$1000 to start a new gardening program for our summer campers and Outdoor Education program. Why gardens? With a user base made up of families mostly from rural areas and small towns, we wanted to show the youth of our district some of the many options that exist for growing vegetables outside of traditional gardens or farms. It also gave us a chance to incorporate into our nature time something that most of our campers see regularly, but may not understand or know much about.

Camp planted three different gardens: a traditional soil garden in raised beds, a straw bale garden, and a hydroponic garden. Program staff undertook research into the three methods long before camp started so we could be prepared right from the beginning, and built the gardens into daily nature time during camp. Campers visited the gardens and learned how each system works from nitrogen cycle and water intake to how plants in a hydroponic garden get nutrients without soil. We discussed basics like how growth happens and why weeding is important for campers who didn't know, and talked about the pros and cons of each system. This led to discussions about why the different types of gardens were good for different environments, and what factors might keep someone from being able to plant in soil or straw and the necessity for hydroponics options.



Part of our project was a comparison of what plants did better in the different mediums, or if each one produced similar results for the chosen vegetables. To that end we planted tomatoes, zucchini, peppers, and wax beans in each garden. These vegetables were chosen for familiarity to campers and because of their ability to flourish in the Ohio climate. Throughout the summer our goal was to maintain consistency through the gardens so we watered them all at the same time of day and made sure each one had similar amounts of sun and shade.

Having grown produce in a hydroponic garden a few years ago we had very high expectations for our hydroponic system all around. We went back to the drawing board this year to create a bigger, better hydroponic garden and unfortunately the system didn't work well, which caused several plants to die early on, so we transplanted the remainder of the plants and spent the summer altering the build to ensure its usability for 2018.

While we expected the soil garden and straw bale gardens to have similar yields, we saw a marked difference in how each plant grew in both places. Tomatoes and zucchini both did better in the traditional soil garden, both producing about twice as much in the traditional garden as in the straw bales. The straw bale garden didn't produce any peppers or beans at all. The wax bean plants died out before producing anything and while the pepper plants survived, they didn't produce either. The traditional garden did produce both, although the summer was a bad one for peppers all around us, so our pepper crop was very small while our wax beans did very well.

Overall the garden project was a great success in terms of introducing our campers to new growing processes and teaching them about gardening and plant life as a whole. Campers engaged with the project and showed a great deal of interest in the different gardens. We were excited with the results of the project this first summer, and we are even more excited about the possibilities for next summer due to some adjustments we will make from what we learned this year. A few of the new directions we're pleased to explore next year are using kitchen compost for better growth, planting a wider variety of vegetables, and giving campers more ownership of the project by including them in choosing the plantings as well as asking them to take responsibility for watering the gardens and monitoring their progress.

## **The 2018 OMA Environmental Grants Forms**

Included in the Fall OMA Newsletter is an application for the 2018 OMA Environmental Grant. Environmental grant applications must be submitted to Shannon Kahler by Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>. Environmental grant applications must explain clearly the environmental impact the proposed project will have upon the camp (or church), and the educational applications of the project. Organizations requesting an environmental grant must supply matching funds. The maximum grant is \$500/year for two years. Nominations and grant applications received by the February deadline will be considered for both the 2018 and 2019 awards.

### **2018 OMA ENVIRONMENTAL GRANT FUNDING GUIDELINES**

#### **Objectives:**

This program is intended to encourage Brethren camps and congregations throughout to develop new & innovative programs in the field of environmental education. This program seeks to fulfill the church's stewardship mandate (see *Creation: Called to Care*, a position paper of the 1991 Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren).

#### **Procedure:**

The OMA Steering Committee on an annual basis will award grants toward a project in environmental education. Environmental education will be broadly defined as the application of Christian principles and ethics to environmental issues and stewardship development in a camping setting. Multiple year proposals will be considered but funding for each year will be contingent upon satisfactory progress reports to the OMA Steering Committee. Although matching funds are not criteria for the initial grant approval, it is encouraged that the environmental grant be used as leverage in seeking other funding support. Second year funding will require matching funds and a progress report. Grants of \$500 will be awarded with a maximum of \$1,000 per project.

Applications shall be submitted neatly typed. Supporting documents, endorsements or further details may be included. The Steering Committee shall advertise the grant program in the OMA newsletter and by other means. A deadline for all proposals is February 1, 2018. Applications received after the deadline will be considered during the next granting cycle. The Steering Committee's decisions on the awards at its spring meeting will be final.

#### **Each proposal shall include:**

- Goal of project
- Rationale of project
- Plan for dissemination of results (evaluation of project)
- Deadline for submission (lead time before OMA meeting)
- Plan for use as teaching program.
- Outline of plan of action including personnel involved with their specific skills and abilities
- Initiation date & place
- Use of funds including a detailed budget
- Length of time to complete project
- Amount of funds requesting

**Grants must be submitted by Feb. 1, 2018 to:**

**Shannon Kahler  
Inspiration Hills Camp  
4819 West Easton Road  
Burbank, Ohio 44214  
(419) 846-3010**

#### **Rational to be used in evaluating a proposal:**

- Proposal indicates adequate thought leading to successful implementation.
- Quality of goals proposed (originality)
- Unique, innovative and original aspects of the project should be emphasized
- One-time event or an on-going program.
- Number of camper days affected at the camp.
- Mechanism for results being disseminated to other camps and local groups.
- Effective use of funds including additional funds from local congregation, camp board, or outside groups.
- OMA Camp Membership Required.



# OMA ENVIRONMENTAL GRANT APPLICATION

## Outdoor Ministries Association of the Church of the Brethren



Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Application: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Application: Original \_\_\_\_\_ Follow-up \_\_\_\_\_ Re-File \_\_\_\_\_

Camp/Center Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Purpose:

Justification for Proposal:

Proposed Activities or Goals to be Achieved:

Number of Campers affected by the Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Schedule: Start Date \_\_\_\_\_

Completion Date \_\_\_\_\_

Final Project Report and Photos to OMA \_\_\_\_\_

Personnel Involved: (names and titles; identify special skills or abilities relevant to the project)

Funds requested from OMA: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Budget of total project (list below or attach separately):

Matching Funds or Additional Funding Support:

Endorsements:

Return all forms and enclosures by Feb. 1, 2018 to: Shannon Kahler  
Inspiration Hills Camp  
4819 West Easton Rd.  
Burbank, OH 44214  
419-846-3010

OFFICE USE ONLY

Action by Steering Committee: Accepted \_\_\_\_\_ Rejected \_\_\_\_\_

Returned for more information \_\_\_\_\_

Date of OMA Steering Committee Action: \_\_\_\_\_



## Youth Peace Travel Team



The Youth Peace Travel Team is a team of three to four college students between the ages of 18-22 who are selected to travel to camps throughout the Church of the Brethren to talk with other young people about the Christian message and the Brethren tradition of peacemaking. Team members are also a part of the Church of the Brethren Ministry Summer Service program and receive a scholarship of \$2500 after their summer. OMA sponsors the team along with On Earth Peace, the Church of the Brethren Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office and Peace Witness Office, and Bethany Theological Seminary. Bekah Houff represents the OMA Steering Committee on the YPTT coordinating team. Bekah is responsible for creating the team's camp schedule for each summer. If you have questions or are interested in hosting the team sometime contact Bekah at

[bekahhouff@gmail.com](mailto:bekahhouff@gmail.com). Applications are being accepted now through Jan. 5. You can find the application on the Church of the Brethren & On Earth Peace websites: <http://www.brethren.org/yya/mss/>. Please encourage your young leaders to apply today! The members of the 2016 YPTT team are, from L to R: Kiana Simonson, Jenna Walmer, Sara White and Phoebe Hart.

## 2017 OMA Steering Committee Contact Info:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Term &amp; Exp.</u>
Linetta Ballew	<a href="mailto:linetta@campswatara.org">linetta@campswatara.org</a>	Wk: 717-933-8510 Cell: 717-821-3044	Chair (Director)	1 <sup>st</sup> Term; 2018
Brian Bert	<a href="mailto:briansbert@gmail.com">briansbert@gmail.com</a>	Cell: 814-207-3637 Wk: 814-667-2355	To Do List (Associate)	1 <sup>st</sup> Term; 2018
Pete Haynes	<a href="mailto:rockhay@gmail.com">rockhay@gmail.com</a>	Cell: 410-627-9455 Wk: 410-592-9300	(Theologian)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term; 2019
Bruce Holderreed	<a href="mailto:bholderreed@brethren.org">bholderreed@brethren.org</a>	Cell: 208-420-0971	(District Exec.)	Appointed
Bekah Houff	<a href="mailto:bekahhouff@gmail.com">bekahhouff@gmail.com</a>	Cell: 717-926-5257	YPTT/Minutes (Volunteer)	1 <sup>st</sup> Term; 2019
Jan Hurst	<a href="mailto:jancampleader@cox.net">jancampleader@cox.net</a>	Hm: 620-245-0009 Cell: 410-259-0299	Membership (Volunteer)	1 <sup>st</sup> Term; 2017
Shannon Kahler	<a href="mailto:shannon@inspirationhillscamp.org">shannon@inspirationhillscamp.org</a>	Cell: 330-621-4571	Grants/Awards (Director)	1 <sup>st</sup> Term; 2017
Rex Miller	<a href="mailto:millerrex34@yahoo.com">millerrex34@yahoo.com</a>	Cell: 574-337-3796	Treasurer	Renew Yearly
Randall Westfall	<a href="mailto:brethrenheights@gmail.com">brethrenheights@gmail.com</a>	Wk: 231-867-3618 Cell: 815-297-4435	Vice-Chair (Director)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term; 2019
<b>Ex-Officio Members</b>				
Josh Brockway	<a href="mailto:jbrockway@brethren.org">jbrockway@brethren.org</a>	Cell: 404-840-8310	Denominational Rep (Spring)	
Debbie Eisenbise	<a href="mailto:deisenbise@brethren.org">deisenbise@brethren.org</a>	Cell: 269-598-8275	Denominational Rep (Autumn)	

## The 2018 OMA Staff and Volunteer Award Forms,

Included in the OMA Newsletter are the forms needed to nominate someone for the 2018 OMA Staff Award and the 2018 OMA Volunteer Award. Each form is two pages. Nominations and environmental grant applications must be mailed submitted by Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>. A recipient of the staff or volunteer award must have at least ten years of employment or volunteer history with his or her nominating camp.



OUTDOOR MINISTRIES ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP AWARDS  
NOMINATION FORM

**CAMP STAFF AWARD**

Qualified nominees for this award are persons employed in a Church of the Brethren Camp on a part-time or full-time basis. The nominees will be judged on long-term commitment to outdoor ministry, significant contribution to the development of a district outdoor ministries program, visionary leadership and a minimum of ten years of service.

Please send this completed form to:  
Shannon Kahler  
4819 West Easton Rd.  
Burbank, OH 44214

**NOMINATIONS ARE DUE:  
FEBRUARY 1, 2018**

Nominee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Nominated: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ NEW nomination.                      \_\_\_ Update to a previous nomination.

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Camp(s) Served \_\_\_\_\_

Staff position(s) held:

Length of service (minimum combined 10 years total):

List the contributions of this person to outdoor ministries:

List the contributions of this person to the total church:

What, in your judgment, qualifies this person for special recognition? Some areas to include, but are not limited to: relationship with staff or board, relationship with campers, administrative skills, vision for outdoor ministries, leadership gifts or program/facilities development.

(use additional pages as necessary)

Nomination made by: \_\_\_\_\_

Form Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_





OUTDOOR MINISTRIES ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP AWARDS  
NOMINATION FORM  
**CAMP VOLUNTEER AWARD**

Nominees for such recognition may be members of district camp boards/committees, district board, counselors, directors or individuals committed to outdoor ministries. The nominees will be judged on long-term commitment, creativity, vision, service and leadership in the area of outdoor ministries and service to the total church.

Please send this completed form to:  
Shannon Kahler  
4819 West Easton Rd.  
Burbank, OH 44214

**NOMINATIONS ARE DUE:  
FEBRUARY 1, 2018**

Nominee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Nominated: \_\_\_\_\_

NEW nomination.  Update to a previous nomination.

Address of Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Camp(s) Served \_\_\_\_\_

Capacity in which this person served:

Length of service:

List the contributions of this person to outdoor ministries:

List the contributions of this person to the total church:

(use additional pages as necessary)

What, in your judgment, qualifies this person for special recognition? Some areas to include, but are not limited to: relationship with peers, staff or board, relationship with campers, administrative skills, vision for outdoor ministries, leadership gifts or program/facilities development. Please share their passions of volunteerism at Camp.

(use additional pages as necessary)

Nomination made by: \_\_\_\_\_

Form Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Around The Campfire:

**Hurricane Irma and Camp Ithiel (FL)** - Preparations caused a retreat group to cancel the weekend the storm arrived. This freed the camp staff to fully prepare in the sunny days that always precede the rainy and windy days of a hurricane. Preparations include creating a shelter in the basement meeting room. The windows are covered with plywood and the door cracks are sealed shut with modeling clay. Key tools and supplies are carried to the room. Camp staff spent the night in the basement and whenever the wind woke us up, we said a prayer and went back to sleep. In the morning we had power and minor building damage. There was a large tree limb "laying hands" on the chapel and a large oak tree down in the parking area. Thus began a two week process of chain-sawing and hauling. Many student volunteers helped get the camp back in shape and a retreat group came the next weekend. Now the trees are putting out new leaves to replace the ones blown away, fallen limbs are gone and the chainsaws are sharpened and stored.



### **Camp Carmel (NC)**

- Camp Carmel's girls bathhouse has been completed and dedicated as of June 3, 2017. We are looking forward to starting the boys' bathhouse on November 3 and have it completed by camping season 2018.

**Camp Harmony (W PA)** - The summer of 2017 went well despite having a very rough start when our complete sewage system for the whole camp broke down in April. God is good since the correct people were sent our way. We only had to cancel one retreat and they returned later in September. By completely overhauling our existing system we became compliant with all the proper authorities and continued with business as usual. The number of campers increased this year in relation to 2016 - as mentioned in the beginning God is good as many blessings came our way.

**New Chapel at Inspiration Hills (N OH)** - A small storage cabin behind the camp garage was destroyed by a tree in a wind storm this past spring and it seemed like a shame to use the insurance money to build a new structure to house gardening tools, so the insurance money was used to build a needed camp chapel.

The chapel is large enough to seat up to 40 people at a time and we plan to use it year-round for Bible Study, worship and small group meeting space. We are already receiving requests from multiple groups to use the space for worship once it is ready. The interior will be completed in the next few months and we plan to host a dedication service in November or December before the snow flies!







**Brethren Woods (VA)** - Launched a Peace and Justice Program for all summer campers to learn about Jesus' call to peacemaking from a Biblical perspective and to teach practical conflict resolution skills to use in all aspects of life. Through engagement with Scripture, role plays, and other creative activities, campers had a chance to practice constructive ways of responding to conflict. We hope to equip the next generation with many tools in their toolboxes to navigate the inevitable conflicts of life from a Jesus-centered perspective.

**Camp Myrtlewood (OR)** -Has experienced another successful summer season. We are grateful

for all the volunteers that make our success possible. Camp's fragile water system has been protected by some improvements made to our redwood water tank that has functioned since 1973. We also have been blessed with the addition of a large wood shed that also functions as a carport.

Camp has added Jeff Wood as the Executive Director. Jeff has served camp as a board member for the last three years and has been on the management team since February of this year. Camp is grateful to have Solomon Weil and Monica Burmeister serve as Co-Managers. Both Sol and Monica bring countless talents to us and it is truly a gift to include them on our team. We look forward to another season of happy campers and to continue the wonderful ministry that is Camp Myrtlewood.



**Camp Bethel (VA)** - Elizabeth Haley began as Food Service Coordinator at Camp Bethel on August 1. From Roanoke, Elizabeth has been cooking since she was a child, and for several years more formally with her own catering business and as the Hospitality/Food Services Leader for Jesus Is Lord Assembly of Love in Roanoke. She and husband, Gene, and their children own a home in Roanoke, so she will commute to and from camp. Elizabeth "loves people, cooking, and singing" and she said, "I'm excited to serve others and use my God-given gifts to meet others' needs through planning and preparing meals."



Bethel held its 33rd Brethren Heritage Festival on Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>. Over 1,500 guests enjoyed foods, crafts, Apple Butter, activities, and more provided by 30 Virginia District congregations and groups to raised \$34,050 for Camp Bethel.

The inaugural "Camp Bethel PEP! 5K" on August 26 was a great success with 89 runners/walkers, 30 volunteers, and 15 sponsors raising \$3,665 toward a new camp vehicle.

**Camp Koinonia (WA)** - Hello! I am Wayne Laudahl and the new Director here at Camp Koinonia in Cle Elum, WA. My family and I are happy to be serving here in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. Before coming to serve here, we served as missionaries in Peru for 2-1/2 years. We came back to the States in late 2015 and waited for the Lord to direct us. Now here we are! The K House renovation is moving ahead nearing completion. The Gaga Pit has been installed, alongside a Human Foosball. We are preparing for winter and look forward to what God has in store for the future.



**Camp Pine Lake (IA)** - Was blessed to be able to host BVS Unit 318 for the fall orientation. In addition to all their learning, study, worship, discernment they helped us with some camp projects. They picked apples and made sliced apples and apple sauce which are now tucked in the freezer as one of these projects. Our 2018 campers will surely enjoy their labors. The apple sauce was excellent.



**Camp Mack (IN)** - Welcomed Vanessa Bohannon back to camp as Food Service Director this past summer. She is a past summer staffer who moved back to Indiana from Pennsylvania last fall. Vanessa and her husband Phil were married at camp on New Year's Eve in 2011 and have a 1 year old son Oliver (Ollie). She brings a background of working on summer staff, cafeteria work, and working in a restaurant and is the master at making a meal on the fly if needed.



Deanna Beckner, whom many of you have met through her two years of BVS as the coordinator for the 2016 and 2017 work camps, was hired on as our Guest Services Director after the retirement of Mike Kauffman. She is a Manchester graduate. You can see Deanna during any daylight hour giving prospective clients tours around camp and keeping all the groups and numerous details in order in the front office.



**Camp Blue Diamond's (M PA)** – The summer camp offering project was *If a Tree Falls* a New Community Project that replants trees in South

Sudan and Myanmar, and the Amazon rainforest. Forests provide habitat, regulate rainfall, clean the air, store carbon, and provide natural medicines and homes for native communities. Through the summer camp offering project \$702.90 was raised, enough money to plant 7000 trees!

On a Sunday afternoon in June, Camp Blue Diamond held a fundraiser at four of the six Hoss's Restaurants in the Middle PA District. 20% of the restaurant checks from Brethren guests went to camp, raising \$1763. Proceeds from the event went to replace the waterfront's canoe shed, and buy four round corcl boats for summer camp. The old canoe shed needed to be replaced after being hit by a fallen pine tree in the spring, and the new, small, round boats were a big hit during summer camp.

Camp Blue Diamond had 104 golfers and 34 sponsors at its 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Brethren Open Golf Tournament in early August. The event netted over \$11,000, with half going toward summer camp expenses and half toward Middle PA District ministry projects.



**Shepherds Spring (MD)** – There’s not only new employees at Shepherd’s Spring, but new groups as well. We welcomed new retreat groups like Sierra Club, Inter-African Christian Group from DC, University of Maryland Muslim Life and more this past year. We hosted our first Boy Scout Camporee and it sounds like we will be added to their rotation of locations. As our retreat business grows, we hope our camper count will too. We served 152 campers this year and next year we have set the goal of 180 summer campers. Not only are we reaching out for more campers, but more global village groups as well. We have started picking up more IB schools in the surrounding states and good conversations have started with our public school district. This summer our big top tent went to the ground because of a storm. We raised the funds through an online fundraiser to buy a new one for next Spring. The fundraisers do not stop there. We are doing a phone-a-thon in November, a gala in March, a benefit concert in May, our annual golf tournament in June, and a Community Yard Sale/Car Show/5K in August. It’s an exciting new beginning for Shepherd’s Spring.

**Camp Brethren Heights (MI)** - Launched their nature preschool called Cedar Ascent Nature School (CANS)



this fall seeking to reach out to local surrounding communities. CBH is currently raising funds to put a new steel roof on the lodge and new lodge windows as well. We had a volunteer work group clean out our shop so that we can rebuild over that shop bay this fall (we had a 10 yd. dumpster full of “junk”). This summer camp added a splash pad and corcls to enhance our aquatic/swim activities. We’ve also been putting up trail signs along our wilderness hiking area. Lastly, we landed a Fiddle and Dance Camp rental group connected to our local music organization beginning next summer!

In May of 2017 **Camp Swatara (E PA)** Re-Dedicated our newly renovated West Retreat (check out the picture!) We are excited to

host groups, retreats and families in this terrific facility. You can even take a virtual tour of the building by heading over to [bridges.campswatara.org](http://bridges.campswatara.org). Throughout 2018 Camp Swatara will be Telling the Story and Celebrating 75 Years at the Base of Blue Mountain! We have a variety of events on the calendar to celebrate, so come out and join us!



### **OMA Luncheon at Grand Rapids**

About 40 people attended the OMA Luncheon on Friday, June 30 at the Amway Atrium in Grand Rapids, Michigan during Annual Conference. Attendees joined in a lively round of camp songs led by various camp staff attending conference. Randall Westfall, (OMA Vice-Chair) hosted the event where most of the denomination’s 27 camps were present. Gieta Gresh of **Camp Mardela (MD)** was awarded the Staff of the Year Award. Three Volunteer of the Year Awards were given

as well: Lyle Neher from **Camp Pine Lake (IA)** and Brenda King and Becky Phillips from **Camp Brethren Heights (MI)**. It was a great time to reflect, share stories and celebrate the amazing people, places and happenings in Church of the Brethren outdoor ministries. (Pictured L- R are Gieta and Brenda)





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## Church of the Brethren

