

THE EMMAUS ROAD

Camp Emmaus • PO Box 128, Mt. Morris, IL 61054
www.campemmaus.org



Camp logo by Debbie Noffsinger

DECEMBER 2023



CAMP MANAGER'S CORNER

I watched the first dark-eyed junco appear at our bird feeder about a week prior to Thanksgiving. These are the harbingers of the winter season. And it wasn't but a few days after we saw them pecking the ground around our feeders that the temperatures dropped 20 degrees.



Wintertime is one of germination, a process of growth and transformation that we are unable to see with our own eyes. Yet deep within the soil, life is beginning the process of reactivating. Wintertime at camp feels much the same way. It is a season of preparation in which we don't always see the effects like we might in the summertime, but we know that camp is beginning to reactivate.

During this season of change at Camp Emmaus, we are assured that just as Advent is a time for waiting, so is the good work that we are doing here at Emmaus, not only for the coming summer but in the coming years.

Advent is a season of waiting, with pregnant pause to greet the new thing God is doing. So, I'm going to enjoy watching the juncos as I anticipate my first winter at Emmaus to be a time for germinating new ideas, direction, and energy into what the Holy Spirit will direct in the coming year(s).

May this season at Emmaus be one of true waiting (*and dreaming and imagining*). In doing so, we can greet the arrival of camp's 76th year of ministry knowing that this season of waiting and preparation will reactivate camp in an innovative and fresh way.

Respectfully in Christ,
Randall Westfall

3 CHEERS FOR 75 YEARS!

Camp Emmaus celebrated three-quarters of a century of outdoor ministry on Sept. 16, with nearly 70 people gathering for an afternoon of storytelling, music, a bountiful buffet luncheon, and enjoying the beauty of the camp setting.

The camp was organized by Brethren on former farmland in 1948, with the first full camp program occurring the following summer. Bill and Betty Hare served as managers for many of those years, retiring last fall after 58 years of service.

At the September event, new manager Randall Westfall shared reflections

about outdoor ministry and some of his vision for camp, and the first Bill and Betty Hare Volunteer of Distinction award was presented to Doug Firebaugh (above left) of the Freeport congregation for his many dedicated years of volunteering.

Peg Lehman of the Highland Avenue congregation shared some songs, and a slide show of summer highlights prepared by the camp board reviewed the camp's current ministry. New items from the camp store were also available for perusal and purchase.

Here's to the next 75 years of rich ministry at Emmaus!



Volunteers leave no leaf unraked at rite of fall



About 40 people came together at camp on Saturday, Nov. 11, for an event that has become an annual Emmaus tradition: Leaf Raking Day!

Volunteers help clear the main camp areas of abundant leaves to preserve the grass and clean up the pool area while preparing camp for winter retreat groups.



Donuts, warm beverages, and other treats were available as a thank you to those who helped. A youth retreat also took place in the retreat lodge during the weekend.

2024 DATES

May 24-27 Memorial Day weekend Family Camp

July 7-11 Intermediate Camp (grades 3-5)

July 12-14 Young Adult/Young at Heart Camp

July 14-20 Senior High Camp (grades 9-12)

July 21-27 Middle School Camp (grades 6-8)

Aug. 2-4 CIT training

Aug. 3-4 Elementary Camp (grades 1-2)

Aug. 8-10 Women's Camp

Aug. 16-18 Men's Camp

Aug. 30-Sept. 2 Labor Day weekend Family Camp

A fest for fall

More than three dozen people of all ages gathered on a chilly, windy late afternoon and evening on Saturday, Oct. 21 for the second district campfire and fall festivities.

This year's activities included time to explore camp, a pumpkin-decorating contest, pizza and snacks, and a campfire filled with singing and stories and sharing about gratitude, capped off with s'mores.

New camp manager Randall Westfall shared his musical talent in leading several songs, with help from camp board member Sara Garner, and Ralph Miner shared a story titled "You Are Special."

Randall also shared a devotional reflection, encouraging all present to take notice of the unique wonder that's present in nature.

CAMP ADDS A RING OF STONE



A stone 'council ring' joined the Camp Emmaus landscape in late November. Find it at the end of the Boys' Meadow.

CAMP NEWS & NOTES

- **Firewood** is available for sale at the camp. For information, contact the camp at 815-734-4268.
- Winter is a perfect time to **schedule a retreat** at camp in the cozy retreat lodge or log cabin. Call 815-734-4268 to check availability.
- **DID YOU KNOW?** A total of 110 campers from a variety of congregations took part in camp this past summer. Can we hit 150 in 2024?
- The annual **Labor Day Family Camp** Sept. 1-4 drew several dozen people for good food, fellowship, and burning lots of wood.
- Welcome to **new camp board members** Callie Surber and Mike Sondgeroth! And thank you to Aaron Gerdes and Jan Dietrich, who are completing their terms of service.

THE GRACE OF GIVING

Consider a year-end (or any time) gift to Camp Emmaus! In addition to its regular annual fund, the camp is also building a new endowment to secure the ministries of camp for the future.

You can give online at: <https://campemmaus.churchcenter.com/giving>, or contact treasurer Dan Radcliff at Dev.Chair.CampEmmaus@gmail.com for more information.

CAMP BOARD: Sara Garner; Dan Radcliff, treasurer; Gary Baisden; Patrick Benasi; Michelle Bowman; Amanda Burch; Shannon McNeil Smith; Elizabeth Patterson; Mike Sondgeroth; Callie Surber; Austin Weaver, recording secretary; Randall Westfall, camp manager

Photos by Ralph Miner, Walt Wiltschek