



Dear Colleagues in Outdoor Ministry,

Spring is upon us, and across the Church of the Brethren our camps continue to be places where all can feel safe, have fun, and grow. Camp changes lives—and it's important that we continue to share those stories.

One such story... This summer, Camp Mardela joined the Brethren United Mountain Adventure Camp at Camp Carmel. Many of our campers, coming from the flat Eastern Shore of Maryland, had never been in the mountains. One camper arrived having never been camping at all and was deeply anxious about hiking. On our first hike to a natural water slide, a sudden downpour turned the trail into mud, and the uphill climb was exhausting. She slipped, fell, and declared it the worst day she had ever had.

Later, she surprised herself by admitting how much fun she had on the water slide, realizing that hard moments didn't erase the joy of the experience. That night, despite her fear, she joined another hike to a scenic overlook. When she saw the sun setting over the mountains, she was awestruck by God's creation. From that point on, she eagerly looked forward to every hike. Through these challenges, she became more joyful, resilient, and faithful, learning that God often leads us through difficulty to reveal beauty and growth we never would have found on our own.

The Church of the Brethren Outdoor Ministry Association (OMA) has long connected our camps across the country. Through mentorship opportunities, our annual retreat, professional relationships, and communication with the wider denomination, OMA enlivens and supports the vital ministry of our camps. The support and connection the association provides truly reflect the "tending the fires."

To continue this work—and to remain connected even as our denomination evolves in unexpected ways—we invite every person moved by camp ministry to renew or begin their OMA membership for 2026. OMA membership is a commitment to shared financial, professional, and personal support among those who care deeply about outdoor ministry.

Your financial contributions allow OMA to:

- Provide Environmental Grants of up to \$1,000 annually to camps
- Offer scholarships for professional development
- Support minimal administrative needs that sustain OMA communications, including our website

Thank you for the ways you support and strengthen outdoor ministry. Together, we ensure that camps remain places of transformation, leadership development, and faithful community for generations to come.

Blessings,

Garry Pearson. Membership coordinator  
Outdoor Ministry Association