

Camp Deerpark

SUMMER 2026

A MINISTRY OF THE NEW YORK CITY MENNONITE CHURCHES

CAMP DEERPARK OWNER CHURCHES

Believers Mennonite Garifuna Ministries
Pastor Andrew Nuñez

Centro Misionero Cristiano
Pastor Aristidez Shee

Evangelical Garifuna Church
Pastor Lilian Flores
Retired Pastor Celso Jaime

Evangelical Garifuna Church of Brooklyn
Pastor Martin Alvarez

Evangelical Garifuna Church of Manhattan
Pastor Margarito Martinez

Friendship Community Church
Pastor Kenneth L. Thompson

Grace and Peace Mennonite Church
Pastor Anita Castle

Iglesia Evangelical Menonita Eben-Ezer
Pastors Julio and Ana Damaso

Immanuel Community Church
Pastor Mark Perri

Infinity Mennonite Church
Pastor Albert Taylor

King of Glory Tabernacle
Elder Pamela Lindsay

Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship

Mennonite Bible Fellowship, CT
Pastor Cedric Smith

Mennonite Evangelistic Tabernacle
Pastor Nestalis DeLeon

Muros de Fuegos
Pastor Maria Teresa Flores

North Bronx Mennonite Church
Pastor Ruth Wenger

United Revival Mennonite Church
Bishop Nicolas Angustia

Valley of Jesus Mennonite Church
Pastors Bernardo & Linda Rodriguez

SUMMER CAMP REFLECTIONS BY DANIEL ANGUSTIA, JR.

"Blessed is the people of whom this is true; blessed is the people whose God is the Lord." – Psalm 144:15

This summer, God ordained me as a summer camp participant for my seventh consecutive summer, and I can say for certain that I felt a shift within us as both staff and campers. The summer of 2026 was a summer of worship, prayer, and discernment. Campers and staff alike came to learn what it meant to shut their eyes and sing, scream, jump, and dance in order to praise God's love. Staff improved their abilities as leaders by leading prayers, activities, and moments to lift up the Kingdom of God. We saw God all around camp, in our hearts, and in our lives by rafting, playing field games, having chapel, and campfires.

As a child who has gone to camp since I was six years old, I would like to say that camp not only is a holy ground but also the foundation of future leaders, disciples, and worshippers of the Kingdom of God.

By looking back on seven summers spent at camp, I understand that camp is no longer just something that happens to me every year. I know now that I am not just returning each summer but growing each summer into who I am. As I grew from a child camp participant to staff to now someone who has been entrusted with the position of a leader, camp taught me that leadership is about more than simply being in charge. It is about serving, encouraging, listening, praying, and stepping up when God calls you.

One of the most amazing things about this summer was seeing other people grow in the same ways as me. I saw the campers come in unsure of themselves and slowly begin to gain confidence. I saw staff members move out of their comfort zones and see that

Continued on page 2



Continued from page 1

they were doing much more than organizing activities and watching campers. They were becoming examples of leadership.

Ministry could happen at any time this summer. It happened on the way back to the cabin in a conversation, around campfires, in a field game, and simply listening to a child who needed to be heard. Everything could become a ministry to uplift the Kingdom of God.

This is what makes camp special. Camp allows us the chance to put aside all the other aspects of life in order to make room for God. I felt his presence through worship, through prayers, through laughter, tears, through friendships, and even through silence. Above all of these things, I saw people become aware of God's presence.

Seven summers down, it has become clear to me that camp is about much more than just making memories. We are sowing seeds. We are creating relationships. We are cultivating leaders. We are teaching youth that faith isn't meant for within those walls of the church building only. Faith is meant to be lived out on the fields, in the cabins, in front of the campfires, and in everything we do.

My hope is that what has been gained this summer will last far beyond the days at camp. May our worship last a lifetime, may our friendships continue to inspire, and may our lessons of leadership and faith inspire each camper and each staff member.

I thank God as I reflect on my seventh summer here, thankful that God has chosen to allow me to play a small part in the ministry he continues to perform here. To see first-hand how God has changed the life of one person through this ministry, through one summer, and even one moment, and then to experience that in my own life is an honor.

Camp is sacred ground—not because the soil is any different, but because of the work that God continues to perform. I hope that this summer will carry with us and that we will worship, serve, lead, and seek God in everything we do.

“Blessed is the people of whom this is true; blessed is the people whose God is the Lord.”

To God be all the Glory.



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S HEART: WAVE OF RENEWAL?

BY BEN CHEEK

In the course of three weeks this summer, I stood on the edge of the Camp pool and watched 38 baptisms. Every confessor was under the age of 25. This is Gen Z – known to pollsters as the least religious generation in modern history. I had been hearing different rumors about them -- not of hardness and skepticism – but of real spiritual hunger, of demands for real discipleship, and of a passion for mission. It's not a rumor anymore when you see it for yourself. Here they were: running back to witness to their watching friends, dripping tears and soaking wet -- and then leading them back by the hand to meet Jesus in the waiting water.

From the very first day, Camp has served youth. Our Summer Camp slogan has long been "Empowering Youth to Serve Christ in the City." When we've done that well, we've listened humbly to young people's experience and their deep questions and waited with them for God's compassionate answer. In 1969, when Camp started, the youth-driven Jesus Movement was sweeping the nation, answering the tumultuous Countercultural Revolution. Whether or not any of Camp's young people thought of themselves as "Jesus freaks" or not, I believe Camp was a tiny part of the big thing God was doing to raise up an entire generation to himself.

As I watched the beautiful signs of revival in our pool, I couldn't help but wonder if He isn't about to do it again. In my opinion, the times are ripe. These youth have grown up during pandemic, political chaos, social justice struggle, environmental catastrophe, economic disparity, mental health crisis, and technological cataclysm -- all towards a very uncer-

tain future. This raises deep questions. But if we have ears to hear, their questions go beyond the reasonableness of faith all the way to the root of identity – who are we as humans, the Children of God?

I've been having a lot of conversations with God about this. Unfortunately, they're not simple, joyous chitchat. Mostly, my faith has been really challenged. Honestly, I don't really even want to be writing this right now. That's because I'm allergic to hype and I hate the idea of manipulating people by saying the word "big" and "now" repeatedly. I don't want to drink the Kool-Aid much less sell it -- but if Father is going to pour out new wine, I want to be his vessel. And if this is what he might be doing, I have to let others know how to get in on the bottom level. Like getting a piece of a soon-to-be billion dollar company when the founders are still working in their dad's garage, this may be an opportunity to be part of something with staggering returns.

I don't think it's ever a mistake to invest in the young or hope great things for them – they're our future. But I'm wondering if Camp Deerpark – as a community of people – is ready for something more? Are we ready to believe that God would lead us out of four-walls and into the fields ripe with harvest? Do we believe that he has invested uniquely in us the resources and graces for exactly this hour, so that we can pour into those who he is now raising up? I don't know if that's us or what God's going to do, but I'm beginning to believe it. More than anything, I want us to be ready.

CAMP DEERPARK HOMECOMING FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2026

This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know the Camp Deerpark family.

There will be many activities & games for children and adults, plenty of food, fun, and fellowship.

You do not want to miss the fun and exciting auction! If you have homemade, homegrown, new or gently used items to donate, please contact camp.

For more info, to donate items or to make a reservation call the camp office at 877-754-8669 or deerparkguests@gmail.com.

There is a charge of \$25 for adults (ages 12-up) and \$15 for kids (ages 5-11) for this event. *Please make reservations.*

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

PA Benefit Banquet
Friday, April 9, 2027
at Shady Maple Restaurant
in East Earl, PA.

Please call 845-754-8669
or email deerparkguests@gmail.com to RSVP or sponsor a table for this event.

It will be a buffet-style meal.

THANK YOU FOR A GREAT 2026 SUMMER SEASON!



The newsletter is published four times a year and is distributed without charge to members and friends.



Camp Deerpark is owned by the Mennonite Churches of New York City.

P.O. Box 394
Westbrookville, NY 12785
(845) 754-8669
Email: deerparkofficestaff@gmail.com
www.campdeerpark.org

Camp Deerpark

WISH LIST

- 18-volt Power Tool Kit Milwaukee or Makita -\$600
- (2) Makita BLI830B-2 18V LXT Lithium-Ion 3.0Ah Batteries -\$170
- Backup generator for kitchen -\$5,000
- Hot water heater for Spruce Lodge -\$2,000
- (10) Vacuums -\$200 each

THANK YOU!

- Dump trailer
- Hot water tank for admin house

DID YOU KNOW?

You can receive your newsletter via email. Just call 845-754-8669 or email deerparkguests@gmail.com to switch over to an emailed newsletter.

Camp Deerpark
WWW.CAMPDEERPARK.ORG

STAY CONNECTED!



Follow us on Facebook!