

Welcome to our monthly email newsletter. Our intention is to keep you informed and connected with what's happening in our OMA-UCC family.

Campfire Connection

February 2024 Edition



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

OMA

OUTDOOR MINISTRIES ASSOCIATION

Advise, Connect, Advocate, Support

Monthly Zoom Call

OMA-UCC hosts a monthly zoom meeting for our association every 4th Thursday of the month at 1 PM EST.

Conversation will include discussion on staffing, curriculum, grant opportunities and the upcoming Earthkeepers Event.

We hope you will join us on **Thursday, February 22** for a time of sharing and supporting our colleagues in ministry.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4405928132>



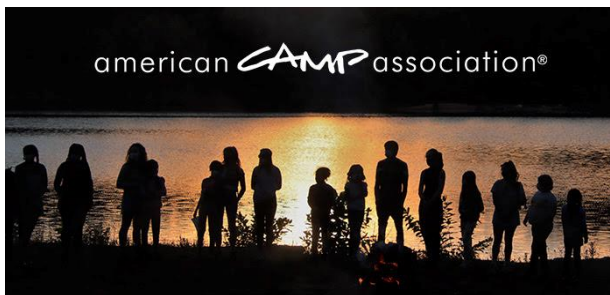
EARTHKEEPING & JUSTICE

A Call For Camp To Embrace Our Unique Role Within The Church Camp Fowler - October 7-10, 2024

Based in the Southern Adirondack Mountains, [Fowler](#) is an ideal location to explore our role as “Earthkeepers” and what that means for our camps as we steward the land and the lives of those who stay at our facilities.

Along with presentations, there will be time to remember WHY we chose to answer the call to outdoor ministry. With 245 acres and sited on a mountain lake, your time here will both empower and renew your call to these sacred ministries. This gathering may be what we all need.

[Watch for more info in our next newsletter.](#)



The American Camp Association (ACA) is honored to announce that Lilly Endowment Inc. has awarded ACA a \$45.5 million grant to support the creation of a new, multiyear initiative to grow, improve, and celebrate character development at camps across the United States.

For more than a century, character development has been foundational to the camp experience, as each camp distinctively offers a variety of opportunities to develop important character skills and traits. Camps provide young people with experiences in less-distracting settings, often surrounded by nature, that can help support character development through social interactions with peers and counselors, time for reflection and other activities. In today’s world, the benefits of building character skills and traits such as gratitude, kindness, creativity, curiosity, perseverance, resiliency, empathy, courage, and teamwork could not be more important. Read more about this initiative and grant opportunity [here](#).



Partners in Service Grants Awarded!

OMA-UCC is excited to collaborate with Volunteer Ministries for a second summer. Grants for this project have been awarded.

The following camps received 2 grants for this summer:

Daycholah Center, Horton Center, Pilgrim Lodge and Tower Hill.

Camp Fowler and Templd Hills each received 1 grant.

The funds are dedicated to supporting the onsite presence of a young adult at the specific UCC location. Congratulations!



Have you signed up for one of these groups? There is still time...

The 2023-2024 season of Intentional Leadership Groups (ILGs) will be

dedicated to fostering inspiration and growth through meaningful connections with others who share similar aspirations. These groups warmly welcome all camp and conference leaders affiliated with the Outdoor Ministries Connection (OMC). Choose from the following program cohorts:

Creation Justice, Nonprofit Management, Productivity, Program Director's Cohort, United Methodist Executives & Conference CRM Staff, Summer Staffing Strategies, Women in Leadership, Balancing Family & Ministry, and Disciple Bible Study.

Find out more info and sign up [here](#).



Leader Wellness Matters Too

A resource to support you as a leader in your mental, physical, and spiritual well-being

We often share a lot about the realities of mental well-being among our youth and emerging adults. We've also shared

how leaders need to model good practices and perspectives in self-care. Yet, many leaders in ministry model self-sacrifice first. While this usually comes from somewhere genuinely altruistic, the truth is we need support, for ourselves, **for our own sake**, to live and feel and lead well.

If podcast listening works for you, the Non-Anxious Leader Podcast with

Jack Shitama might be a good way to build yourself some support. You'll find research-backed information paired with practical wisdom and action steps. [Find](#) an episode and settle in, faithful leader. Thank you to [Sacred Playgrounds](#) for sharing this info.



Compass Points Classes Offered in March

The next classes for our Compass Points certificate program will be held at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. The Biblical and Theological Foundations course is scheduled for March 10-13 and the Program Design and Implementation course will be offered on March 13-16.

Participants have the option of taking one of these classes or both. Find out more info [here](#).

OMA-UCC has scholarships available for these classes.

Contact [Bill Bourdon](#) for more info.



If you would like to learn more about the Outdoor Ministries Association, please visit us at www.omaucc.org.

[Kaila Russell](#), Communications Chair

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