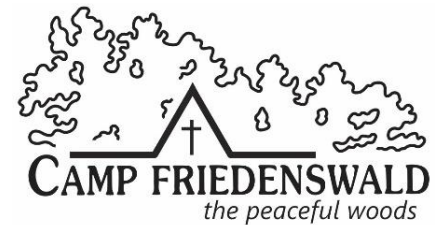


CDC Annual Report 2023

Submitted by Jenna Liechty Martin, executive director



The following highlights provide a glimpse into the past year and illustrate the interactions between Camp Friedenswald, Central District Conference, and its congregations.

- Winter youth camps brought together 220 youth from across the conference and beyond. Congregations participating in Senior and Junior High camps included: Assembly, Columbus, Eighth Street, Faith, FMC Bluffton, Maplewood, Milwaukee, Silverwood, Southside Fellowship, and FMC Sugarcreek.
- Camp Friedenswald partnered with CDC to provide hospitality and financial support to a queer leadership gathering in March 2023 as a part of a broader commitment to inclusion, repentance, and transformation.
- Camp was the host site for the spring and fall CDC board and leadership meetings.
- Hospitality was extended to 8 CDC congregations for a time of retreat, whether for a Sunday morning baptismal service or a weekend retreat. Churches served included: Mennonite Church of Normal, Assembly, Southside Fellowship, Silverwood, Keller Park, Grand Rapids, Hively Avenue, and Faith.
- We welcomed 607 campers (youth and family) in the summer of 2023. 50% of the 334 youth campers came from 24 different CDC congregations.
- Of the 31-summer staff, half came from six different CDC churches. Camp Friedenswald continues to be a place that cultivates and fosters leadership gifts within young adults across CDC.
- The 2023 summer theme was Water Ways and wove together the ecology of water with stories of water in biblical texts. Camp pastors from CDC congregations included: Brenda Sawatzky Paetkau (Eighth Street), Georgia Metz (Shalom, Harrisonburg), Alaina Dobkowski (Grand Rapids), Aimee Weishaupt (Silverwood), Julia Schmidt (Faith), and Michael Crosby (FMC Urbana-Champaign).
- Camp has an impact on the lives of people that can be hard to measure. One tangible expression of impact occurred in June 2023 when 10 youth from First Mennonite Church Bluffton were baptized at church. As the youth shared their stories of faith, Camp Friedenswald was mentioned by nine different youth. One person reflected on the morning sharing and the impact camp has had by writing: "For some [people] it was an experience in nature, others recalled a conversation with a counselor, for some it was friendships and conversations with other campers, and others mentioned the space to be alone, without distractions, to calm their mind and think."
- Camp planted 9,000 trees on land that had previously been conventionally farmed. Over 800 hours (of staff and volunteer time) was spent tending and stewarding the land. This work of repair and restoration is an extension of the work of CDC congregations and several volunteers from CDC churches actively participated in these efforts.
- Women's Retreat, an annual retreat hosted at Camp Friedenswald and planned by women from across CDC, was planned by a group representing several Ohio CDC congregations.
- Throughout the year \$52,790 of financial support was given through CDC or directly from congregations in support of Camp Friedenswald. Thank you for your support!