



COVE VALLEY CAMP

News

Fall 2026 Volume 22 Issue 2

www.covevalleycamp.com

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Golden Age Retreat

What a great week we had at Golden Agers this summer, June 8-12, with 34 in attendance! Mid-afternoon on Monday, guests started arriving to settle into their rooms. At 5:00pm we shared a wonderful meal together and fellowship. There is always lots of talking and laughter. Our speakers for the week were our Franklin District Pastors. Each day we had a different pastor sharing from Matthew 5:13-16! Our pastors who spoke were Darrell Baer, Eric Lehman, Gary Zook, and Dave Possinger. On Friday, Jerry Roth and Allen Eshleman led a wrap-up session where we shared what we learned. Before lunch we had a prayer time with the young people that were at camp training for their ministry this summer!

Some of our highlights of the week were: our field trip to Mercer-Vu farm where we saw a large milking parlor with thousands of cows; a very competitive Shuffleboard Tournament; our Auction that brought in \$935 for the new playground; Bird/Nature walk at 7am each morning; fixing puzzles and knotting 6 comforters! But most important was all the memories that we made that week with everyone who attended! We hope to see you next summer, June 7-11, 2027! "COME APART AND REST AWHILE!"

- Anna Roth, Golden Age Retreat Committee Member (pictured left)



Family Camp

The 2026 Family Camp was a wonderful time of fellowship, learning, and fun for families of all ages. Mike Snavelly from Mission Imperative served as the speaker. He led the sessions on

Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday morning. His engaging presentations brought biblical truths and the wonders of God's creation to life in memorable ways.

One session that captured the attention of everyone was Mike's presentation on spiders. Children and adults alike were fascinated as he shared interesting facts and insights about these often-misunderstood creatures. The kids took part in the main sessions and paid close attention. Their curiosity about spiders was evident as they took in all the fascinating information Mike shared about spiders throughout the session. It was a great reminder that even the smallest parts of creation can spark curiosity and point us toward the wisdom and creativity of our Creator.

We replaced our long running Holey Canoe race that was traditionally on Sunday afternoon with an event on Saturday evening called Coves Got Talent. Campers of all ages shared their unique talents, making it a fun and memorable evening for everyone.

From worship and teaching to fellowship and recreation, Family Camp 2026 was a special reminder of the importance of faith, family, and community. - Royce Martin, Family Camp Committee Member (pictured left)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Young Adult Retreat

October 16-18

Chicken & Seafood Supper

FRIDAY, October 23

Fall Work Day

November 7

Membership Banquet

November 7, 6:30 pm

Hobby Retreat

December 4-6

Sr. High Retreat

Grades 9-12

January 8-10

Jr. High Retreat

Grades 6-8

January 15-17

Elementary Retreat

Grades 3-5

January 22-24

Primary Day Retreat

Grades K-2

February 6

Benefit Auction

February 19

Operation Cooperation

Jr. Staff Applicants

Ages 15-17

March 12-14

The Bobcat

This summer, I saw my first “bobcat” in the wild. I was a counselor for the week of Cricketeers (grades 4-5). On Tuesday evening of that week, we had decided to sleep in the hammocks on the playground for the night. As you know, 4th and 5th grade boys have an abundance of energy. My cabin was no different, just multiply the abundance of energy by 10. Once we were settled in the hammocks, it took at least an hour until the first camper became silent and fell asleep. Like dominoes, once one fell asleep, the others were soon to follow. As I soaked in the silence, I took the time to pray for each of my campers and to make sure that I didn’t fall asleep until they were all 100% sleeping.

With a crash, the silence is broken! “ERIC!!! ERIC!! ERIC!! A BOBCAT!!! HELP!! A BOBCAT!!” Immediately any fog that I had in my head was gone. I grabbed my glasses and spotlight, then rapidly sat up. “Where!?” He fearfully pointed to the Trading Post area. I excitedly panned my light in that direction ready to see my first ever bobcat in the wild. Sadly, it was just an orange tabby cat out for a leisurely stroll through the camp parking lot. Once his blankets were tucked back in, prayers were said, and his fears had subsided, he went back to sleep for the night and I did the same.

This is such a clear reflection of my relationship with God. I might look at something and be afraid, but Jesus calmly says, “Don’t be afraid, I am with you.” At the start of summer, there is always an overwhelming number of things that need done, questions that need answered, and plans that need made. Looking back now, God brought it all together. If I focus on those things too much, they can become a larger scarier monster than what they are. The Light of Jesus shines truth onto the things that I am afraid of. I need to trust God and know that He is with me through it all. I am safe in His presence.

As I reflect on another summer, I am amazed once again at the goodness of God! He always provided the needed staff and I am so thankful for the many quality staff that willingly served at Cove Valley this summer. There are many options and responsibilities pulling at those who serve, but they each answered the Lord's calling and served here at camp with their whole heart.

God was at work this summer in the lives of the Campers and Staff.

- 8 Campers made a 1st time commitment to follow Jesus
- 9 Campers rededicated their lives to follow Jesus
- 120 Campers prayed for assurance of their salvation
- 57 Campers made other specific commitments

Something new that we did this summer was to give campers the opportunity to light a candle and share a testimony of what they saw God do in their heart that week and share how they were going to be Salt & Light in the world. This was always an encouraging time. Page 3 has pictures and a little more info about the closing campfire chapels.

Thank you for your prayers and for trusting Cove Valley Camp with your kids, grandkids, and anyone else's kids. I am so blessed and thankful to be a part of what God is doing here at Cove Valley Camp!

- Eric Roth, Program Director



Program Assistant

In October Lynn Buchanan (Hanson) will be moving on from the Program Assistant role here at camp. We are thankful for Lynn and her 2+ years of service in the office. Her organization, archery skills, and artistic abilities will be missed! We pray for God's best for Lynn and her new family!

We are currently accepting applications for the Program Assistant position. This is a year-round, seasonal position. It is a paid hourly full-time (January & May-July)/part-time position.

To apply, please visit our website and complete an application: www.covevalleycamp.com/employment/ For more info, please contact Eric at: program@covevalleycamp.com.



Camp Reflections

Endurance, the mental fortitude to keep going. That word came into my thoughts a lot this summer. Recognizing that God is the ultimate source of everything I need. He had all the wisdom, energy, love, and peace that I needed this summer. Giving everything to God and trusting Him had to be a conscious choice. Fixing my gaze on Christ was my most common prayer this summer, because I wanted to reflect Him, not any other self-centered stumbling blocks. I wanted to focus on the goodness and faithfulness of God, not on the trials and tribulations of life. Losing sight of my own importance to truly serve with an open heart. I was scared of failure, and of course it came... I had to get out of my comfort zone to learn and grow. At my lowest was His beginning. Glory be to God, praise Him that I got to witness His work. He allowed me to

make connections with campers that I didn't expect. I learned so much about what it really means to be called to be Salt & Light. I got to watch staff grow, campers' lives be molded, and prayers answered time and time again. God came and conquered, as we all knew He would. He filled camp with a strong community of believers to encourage each other, to support one another, and to teach about His love. Now we get the joy of continuing His work as we go home. We are chosen instruments, called to brighten and season the world. What are we going to do tonight? The same thing we do every night, be Salt & Light.

- Kara Hanson, 2026 Assistant Program Director



"HOW WAS CAMP?"

My usual response to the question "How was camp?" is "good" or "great," NOT because it is the go-to answer for such questions as that and NOT because everything that happened was good or great (although so much that happened would be considered so) and definitely NOT because I did everything right, BUT (activate verse hand motion) because camp is a front row seat to see God work.

"How did you see God work?" you might ask. And I would say through testimonies that were given by just the "right" person, through speakers who brought to light truth about salt and light, through cabin and support staff devotions, through super fun science created by The Head Scientist, through salvations and next steps in faith journeys of campers, and through so

many answers to prayer including my own frequent prayers asking God to show me Scripture or an idea to use in leading. And He did.

Perhaps an answer you might be surprised by is in the creativity in the craft room. Two plus tables filled with much randomness were utilized to make such cool, creative stuff! Just amazing! To see those created by the Creator being SO creative brought a smile to my face and a "wow" to my lips.

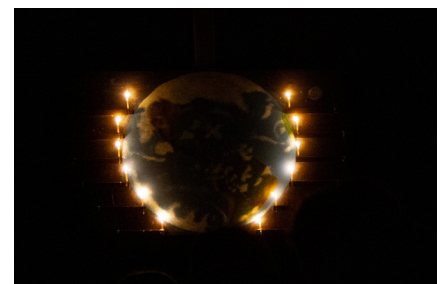
"How was camp?" "Great!" Because we saw God work!

- Julie Brookens, Bridge Coordinator & More



Camper Testimonies

At the last evening of each week of camp, we would have a campfire Chapel. At the end of these chapels, the campers had the opportunity to share a testimony and put a candle on the world board to symbolize that they are going to be a light to the world. This was always a special time to hear what God was doing in the hearts of the campers. It was also a great visual of our calling to be "Salt & Light", Matthew 5:13-16.



2026 Summer Camp Staff



Darrell Baer
Jason Bard
Genevieve Barthlow
Jason Barthlow
Adeline Bowman
Christine Bowman
Lauren Bowman
Levi Bowman*
Julie Brookens

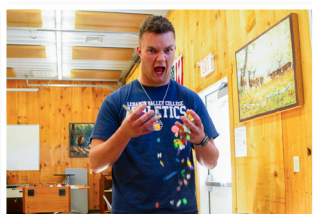


Gabriella Burns
Riley Burns
Darcie Crider
Ethan Crider*
Alleene Dean
Sophia Denlinger
Adelaide Dietrich
Rae'na Dieugenio



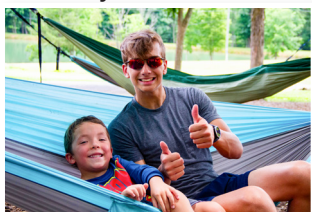
Asher Dunlap
Lilly Dunlap
Evelyn Ebersole*
Josiah Ebersole
Katie Ebersole

"I saw God help give campers a better understanding of His Word."



"Lives were changed for Christ!"

Bella Eby*
Brookelyn Eby
Deloris Elliot
Sarah Eshleman
Kaitlyn Faith
Benjamin Farmer



Sheila Forrester
Carrie Fortney
Emily Frey
Gary Frey*
Josh Frey
Josiah Frey
Ryan Gearhart
Heather Gilbert



Charlene Gingrich*
Maggie Gingrich
Norah Gingrich
Jodi Glenny
Ty Grove*
Israel Gunnell
Kara Hanson
Karen Kane



Brooklynn Kuhns
Mary Kyler
Anna Lehman
Asher Lehman*
Aviel Lehman
Braden Lehman
Colson Lehman
Delton Lehman
Eric Lehman



Hans Lehman*
Kristen Lehman
Rachel Lehman
Quinn Little
Connor Martin
Erin Martin
Hannah Martin
Jena Martin
Kim Martin



"God showed me to keep an eye out for His work and presence every day."

Lily Martin
Carson Morgan
Matt Morgan*
Wyatt Nolt



Cole Patullo
David Possinger
Mylin Priest
Yakaira Priest
Evelyn Puckett*
John Puckett*
Rubi Reyes
Samuel Roth
Valerie Roth
William Roth



"God provided guidance when I didn't know what to do."

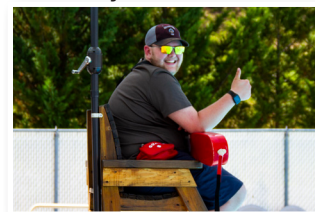
Hayden Runk
Valerie Runk*
Becky Sauder
Kevin Sheeler*
Luke Silcox



Ben Skroban
Fred Skroban*
Steph Skroban
Chloe Sollenberger
Joshua Sollenberger
Morgan Stevenson*
Rachel Stevenson*
Julianna Subirias



Brad Sweigert*
Josiah Toms
Emily Utermoehlen
Jolene Utermoehlen
Anthony Varner
Dylan Varner
Kristen Varner
Kylie Varner



Laura Whitlock
Gary Zook

Volunteers*

"Campers accepted Christ/rededicated their lives!"

"Many of the campers expressed a deeper understanding of 'Salt & Light' and that they are walking away encouraged and wanting to do more."

2026 Summer Camp



"We learned how to be Salt & Light."



"I felt God's love last night at Chapel and it really changed me."



"This was the best week of camp/spiritual awakening."



"God showed me how He works for our good."



"I felt encouraged to share my faith."



"We were united!"



Wilderness Hawks



This year at Wilderness Hawks we had a great summer. The campers had an exciting time living in the fully upgraded Moss Spring campsites. We hiked, canoed, and cooked over the fire. This year we incorporated low ropes as part of both weeks. We were blessed to have a full-time missionary as a counselor along with a full staff of enthusiastic counselors to fill out our weeks. Shout out to Delton Lehman and Fred Skroban for being the speakers for those two weeks. We had a blast spending time in God's nature and learning about camping skills and survival. Even with some hot weather this year the campers still enjoyed the activities. I was encouraged by the reviews from this year and look forward to the two weeks next year.

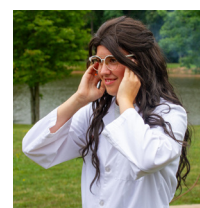
- Ben Skroban, Wilderness Hawks Leader



Science!!!

Picture yourself as a camper in 2026. You have your Trading Post snack and are sitting at your cabin's table in the Dining Hall. Suddenly the theme song from "Pinky and the Brain" begins to play and 3 crazy scientists burst through the doors. "Who could it be?" You have no idea until the end of the week that it is Eric, Julie, and Kara dressed in three "amazing" scientist disguises. There was even a guest pyro scientist (Paul), who helped us end Night Owls with a Bang!

Every evening of camp, the scientists would show up and conduct an experiment with the campers. "What are we going to do tonight?" "The same thing we do every night!" "SCIENCE!!!" The campers participated in the experiments and were assistants. After every experiment, there was a Biblical application given by the campers and scientists for how it related to Matthew 5:13-16 and how we are to be "Salt & Light".



Playground Upgrades

This spring and summer, multiple upgrades were made to our Playground by our skilled maintenance team and friends.

1. The old swingset/slides were removed and replaced with a large 8 person swingset.
2. The old gaga pit and climbing structure were torn down and replaced with a firepit, benches, and lights. This was a Trail Life Freedom Project by Isaac Frey.
3. The biggest addition is the new gaga pit, with a new concrete foundation and rubber playing surface. The roof is currently still under construction.



Thank you to the Playground Committee and the many other people that made these projects possible. Our goal is to continue to modify and update our playground over the next few years. Keep an eye out for ways to help!

Upcoming Support Opportunities

Chicken & Seafood Supper

FRIDAY, October 23
4-7 pm

Prices are subject to change.

Adults.....\$30

Children.....\$10

(Ages 6-12)

Take Out*....\$20

*Take out meals are pre-portioned.

Meal Includes:

All you can eat BBQ Chicken, Steamed & Fried Shrimp, Homemade Pies & Cakes, and much more!

Fall Work Day

Saturday, November 7
8 am - 4 pm

Lunch is provided. If you are planning to attend, please contact Paul at:
maintenance@covevalleycamp.com.

Membership Banquet

Saturday, November 7
Meal starts at 6:30 pm

Come see how God has been using your money through the camp to change lives. Email Allen or call the camp to reserve your spot: execdiretor@covevalleycamp.com.

Opportunities to Give

Would you consider a donation to Cove Valley Camp? We have a variety of ways for you to make a tax-deductible financial gift.

1. Appreciated Stocks, Bonds & Mutual Funds
2. IRA Charitable Rollover Gift – Starting at 70 1/2, you can send a gift from your IRA without paying income tax on the withdrawal, satisfy your required minimum distribution, and reduce your taxable income.

What better way for your hard-earned donation to be invested! Thank you for considering these options and please share with your friends! Please contact your financial advisor if you have any questions.

Board of Directors

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President
Charles Dean (26)
Vice President
Stephanie Smith (29)
Secretary
David Cook (27)
Treasurer

Evan Dean (27)
Royce Eby (26)
Peter Frey (29)
Devin Horst (28)
Delton Lehman (28)
Hans Lehman (29)
Scott Sollenberger (26)
Chad Wadel (27)

Full Time Staff

Allen Eshleman
Camp Director

Paul Frey
Maintenance Director

Eric Roth
Program Director

Part Time Staff

Lynn Buchanan
Program Assistant

Sarah Eshleman
Food Service Assistant

Amy Frey
Food Service Director

Josh Frey
Campground Host

Darlene Shaffer
Housekeeping

Ben Skroban
Maintenance Assistant

Cove Valley News is a triannual publication of Cove Valley Christian Youth Camp.

Editors: Lynn Buchanan & Eric Roth





5357 Little Cove Rd
Mercersburg, PA 17236

Follow us on
Facebook and
Instagram to stay
updated on the
latest camp events
and to see some
fun memories.



@covevalleycamp

Cove Valley
Christian Youth
Camp exists to
provide a place and
the opportunity for
Christian teaching
and fellowship
along with
wholesome and
guided recreation
in a Christ-like
atmosphere.

Upcoming Events

Chicken & Seafood Supper Friday, October 23	Young Adult Retreat October 16-18
Work Day/Membership Banquet November 7	Hobby Retreat December 4-6

Help us save money on postage and printing by receiving the newsletter electronically.
To do so, email programassistant@covevalleycamp.com and provide us with your email address.

Change Service
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Open Rental Dates

Weekdays Available (call for open dates)

To check for open weekends go to www.covevalleycamp.com and select "Check Availability" under the "Rental Facilities" menu.

For more information visit: www.covevalleycamp.com.

Praises:

- * 412 total camper registrations
- * The 196 Campers that made a commitment this summer (Rededication, Assurance, Other)
- * 9 campers made a 1st time commitment to follow Jesus
- * The many Summer Staff that served God with their whole heart

Needs/Wish List:

- * Solid Cornhole Boards
- * Air Hockey Table
- * Donations for new maintenance equipment
- * Donations to help replenish the Scholarship Fund

Prayer Requests:

- * God's Wisdom and Direction for the upcoming Winter Retreats
- * For lives to be impacted for Christ at our Young Adult and Winter Retreats
- * God's provision through the Chicken & Seafood Supper and Membership Banquet
- * Wisdom & Discernment for the Board as they lead