

Considering Membership with Camp Onomia

A Guide for Congregational Discernment

Our Shared Calling

This guide is offered to help your congregation prayerfully discern formal membership with Camp Onomia, an affirmation of shared mission, mutual support, and intentional partnership in the Gospel. Congregations of the ELCA and its full communion partners are warmly invited into this relationship.

Camp Onomia is an outdoor ministry primarily of the ELCA, offering a sacred place set apart where all people are invited to encounter Christ through Creation and Community. For more than 75 years, Camp Onomia has partnered with congregations to nurture faith, strengthen relationships, and form disciples of every age.

Through summer youth camps, family programs, and year-round retreats, camp extends the ministry of the local congregation, raising up leaders, deepening discipleship, and cultivating Christ-centered community in every season of life.

The Purpose of Congregational Membership

Membership is a way for your congregation and Camp Onomia to partner in ministry. It is an expression of:

- Shared commitment to nurturing faith in Christ across all ages.
- Supporting one another in ministry and community.
- Investing together in a ministry that blesses your members and the wider Christian community.

Camp Onomia is not a replacement for your congregation's ministry; we exist to support, extend, and strengthen the work you are already doing. Membership strengthens camp's long-term sustainability and ensures congregational voices shape our ministry direction.

Expectations of Member Congregations

Member Congregations Commit To:

- Spiritual Partnership - Praying for camp regularly & Integrating camp into faith formation conversations
- Relational Engagement - Sharing opportunities, Encouraging participation, & Hosting occasional camp presence
- Financial Participation - Annual membership contribution (\$2.50 per baptized member suggested)

Congregations are welcome to contribute beyond the suggested amount as they are able. We also understand that financial circumstances vary, and we are always open to conversation with congregations experiencing challenges.

Creative support is encouraged. Some congregations host a Camp Sunday, inviting Camp Onomia staff to preach and partnering the day with a noisy offering or youth-led breakfast. Others designate a portion of proceeds from lutefisk dinners, garage sales, or other congregational fundraisers to support camp ministry.

Membership contributions support:

- Scholarship assistance for campers
- Summer Staff training and leadership development
- Retreat ministry operations
- Facility stewardship and capital improvements



Benefits of Membership:

Membership is about walking together in ministry, sharing ideas, resources, and opportunities so both your congregation and Camp Onomia can thrive in God's work.

Representation & Voice - You may send 2 delegates to the Annual Meeting to help shape the long-term direction of Camp Onomia.

Shared Ministry Opportunities

- Worship and Faith Formation Leadership – Camp Onomia staff can preach, lead confirmation classes, provide programming for adult ministries, attend events like trunk-or-treat, or offer other opportunities for your congregation.
- Council Retreats & Leadership Training – use Camp Onomia as a space for reflection, planning, and team building with Onomia staff available to facilitate programming.
- Volunteer Training & Workshops – collaborate with camp staff to equip your members for service.
- WELCA Meetings, Conference Gatherings, and Speaker Opportunities – partner with Onomia to provide programming and inspiration for your groups.

Financial & Participation Benefits

- Member discounts for year-round retreat center rentals
- Opportunities for members to volunteer at camp and participate in leadership development programs.
- Complimentary day visit meeting space, when available.

And more! Membership is a partnership of mutual support, encouragement, and shared ministry, where both your congregation and Camp Onomia can grow in faith, service, and community. Onomia staff wants to know your unique challenges, opportunities, and needs and create systems of support for you.

Camp Onomia is committed to: Faithful, Christ-centered teaching aligned with the ELCA teachings, Intergenerational discipleship, Excellence in safety and staff training, Stewardship of God's creation, and Long-term sustainability and responsible governance.

Questions for Church Council Discernment:

As you consider membership, your leadership may wish to reflect on:

- How does camp ministry currently support our congregation's youth and families?
- Do we see Camp Onomia as an extension of our discipleship strategy?
- How might a deeper partnership strengthen our faith formation efforts?
- Is the suggested giving formula appropriate for our congregation?
- How can we more intentionally connect church and camp ministry?

Becoming a Member:

To begin membership, simply submit a letter from the Church Council stating the desire to become a Member Congregation.

Thank you for considering becoming a Camp Onomia partner congregation.

Executive Director, Deacon Stephanie Engel, is available for conversation, council presentations, and other means to help assist in this decision. You can reach her at onomiaexec@gmail.com or 320-532-3767.