



**Outdoor Ministries Connection  
Great Gathering 2025  
Request for Proposals - September 5, 2023**

Event Name and Purpose:

The Outdoor Ministries Connection will hold the second “OMC Great Gathering” in the fall of 2025. This event brings together leaders of mainline denominational camp and retreat center leaders for a five-day event. We seek a site to help us achieve our goals of worshiping, learning, and fellowshiping together. We want to encourage, inspire, and provide renewal for the participants.

Event History:

This event has been held one time previously, in 2019. At that time, it was hosted by Lake Junaluska in western North Carolina. Our participants will come from all over the United States and Canada.

Attendee Profile:

We are preparing to welcome 600+ people to our event. Most of our attendees are working adult professionals. There may be a small number of children attending with their parents. The need for childcare options is a possibility but not a significant consideration. Mobility considerations will need to be addressed for a few of our participants.

Dates:

Our steering committee strongly prefers November 2-5, 2025 (Sunday-Thursday). However, adjacent weeks will be considered for the right venue. We will need accommodations and meals for the early arrival of our planning team approximately three days before the event and their departure one day after the event ends. We expect the participants to arrive in time for dinner on Sunday, November 2, and depart early on Thursday, November 5, many before breakfast.

Accommodation Needs:

As mentioned above, we expect up to 600 participants. Approximately 35% will prefer single rooms and private baths. The rest will need double or triple-occupancy rooms with private or minimally shared baths (two rooms or less sharing). We will likely need at least five rooms that are ADA-accessible. Rooms for speakers and other VIPs are included in the above.

We will have some participants who will prefer to commute from local Air BNBs and similar accommodations. They are also included in the total of 600. We expect at most 100 commuters, which may be closer to 70. If the site we choose does not have such local options, then we will expect all 600 to be able to be hosted by the selected location.

Exhibitors for our vendor hall and some workshop leaders and presenters will be transient throughout the event.

#### Food and Beverage Requirements:

Our group can be discerning in their meal preferences. Expect as many as 75-100 special diets, including gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan, and dairy-free. Meal services for the bulk of our participants will be needed from dinner on Sunday through breakfast on Thursday. Many of our group may arrive after dinner on Sunday and depart before breakfast on Thursday due to travel schedules, delays, etc. We would appreciate a “to-go” option for breakfast for early Thursday departures.

In addition to meals, we will ask for coffee breaks/snacks during the event. Those specific details have yet to be finalized at this time. However, the host site should be aware of that need. We expect 1-2 such snacks per day for all participants. Coffee/hot water options should be available for participants to serve themselves throughout the day at at least 2-3 stations.

We understand that a group this size may require more effort to feed efficiently. At the first event, multiple dining rooms were used; while this is not ideal, it can work for us. Eating at numerous times or in “shifts” is not workable for this event.

#### Reservation Procedures:

We require that the individual attendees make room reservations through the host site. We have a strong preference for the use of online reservation systems. Event registrations, including workshops and the like, will be handled by the OMC team. When the participants arrive for check-in, we require space near that area for our event check-in. This will include room and set-up for up to 10 tables and 30 chairs. The ability to flow through both spaces and out of the building is preferred.

#### Meeting Spaces:

We will need up to 20 meeting spaces. This includes two spaces where the entire group can gather (or one that can be easily converted). The large meeting space needs. A stage area that can accommodate a five-piece band, multiple podiums, background drapes, and at least two projectors and screens. Spaces for workshops will be used up to four times a day, Monday-Wednesday, and should accommodate at least 50 people in primarily classroom and theatre setups. Open meeting spaces may be required for some more active workshops. OMC will provide some A/V equipment, but much will be required of the host site. These needs are primarily TBD at this time. Sound, lighting, and projection for the large gathering (worship/keynotes) will be provided by a third-party vendor.

In addition to the above, we will need a space (or multiple adjacent spaces) to accommodate our exhibitor hall and bookstore. The exhibit hall will be open for one long day (likely Tuesday) of the event. We will require space, tables, electricity, and Wi-Fi connectivity for approximately 100 exhibitors, each with a 10'x10' space. The availability of pipe and drape for the booths from the host site or a local trusted vendor is a plus.

Guest Services:

Wi-Fi connectivity, at no charge, is a requirement for our participants. Reliable connectivity, as well as cellular coverage, is essential. If cell coverage is unreliable at the site, we need to communicate that well to our participants and provide an alternative.

We would appreciate help coordinating with local transportation companies to help our participants manage transfers to and from the closest major airport. Please include information on the name and proximity of that airport in any responses to this RFP.

We may require a space for childcare should the issue arise. That is TBD at this time.

Selection Process:

We will receive responses to this request through October 15, 2023. If we have multiple appropriate sites, a sub-committee of the event team will follow up with each site. We will visit any sites that meet our stated needs before making a final selection. We plan to choose a location and sign a contract by December 15, 2023. Any questions about this RFP or the general event may be directed to Heather Withrow, the co-chair, at 724-439-4912 or [heather@jumonville.org](mailto:heather@jumonville.org).