

Athletes in Action

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“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story...”
Psalms 107:1-2a

Happy belated Thanksgiving to you and yours! We were blessed to spend the holiday with Colby's family an hour north of here in Holly, MI. His amazing 89 year-old grandma hosted the extended family for the big Thanksgiving meal, and then we spent time making memories with his parents and sister's family for the next few days. Nine cousins in one house makes for very loud and rambunctious living quarters, but we wouldn't have it any other way! Now we are onto the final push in the semester before the students take their exams and go home for Christmas. This has been a very full semester of ministry so far with many opportunities to reach out to students, as well as the formation of eleven different student-led discipleship groups. We are so thankful to the Lord for how He has guided us as staff and students for His glory. The remainder of this letter highlights some of the recent things we are thankful for. Like in the verse above, we want to tell our story of God's incredible goodness...

Thankful for student generosity!

We have made it an annual tradition to partner with Samaritan's Purse and their Operation Christmas Child outreach which provides gifts for underprivileged kids around the world. This year a HUGE group of students from Michigan, Eastern Michigan and Concordia came and packed exactly 300 shoeboxes full of toys, school supplies and hygiene items for those kids...yay!

This event always draws a ton of new students and we are excited to follow up with them and hopefully have a chance to share about the Lord.

Thankful for what our kids are seeing!

Our kids LOVE to be around the student-athletes! So whether it's the Operation Christmas Child wrapping party, packing Thanksgiving food boxes in Detroit, or just having students over to our home, we treasure the time our littlest disciples get to spend with role models who look to Jesus.

Thankful God is growing students through His Word!

At our last monthly gathering we asked a few of our student leaders to share briefly about what God has been teaching them through the book of John as we have been stud-

ying it this semester. Kevin shared about how seeing Jesus reach out to the marginalized and outcasts of His day has caused him to rethink how he interacts with others. Whether that be a homeless person on the street or a person that sits by themselves in a class, Kevin spoke about having a new passion to be like Christ and lovingly reach out to them.



Thankful for international student-athletes!

Back in September we were praying through some of the Michigan team rosters and noticed that there were quite a few international students listed. God's Word says to go out into all the world and preach the gospel...and here was the world right in front of us!

It was from that prayer time that God gave us the idea to host an international student-athlete Thanksgiving dinner in our home. We wanted to create an environment where people would feel loved and valued while getting a taste of this American tradition.

So we individually emailed all FIFTY of these internationals, and twelve of them came!! This was a major step of faith as we only had a relationship with one of them before the dinner. And to God be the glory, we all had a fantastic time! We shared the meal together, learned a bit about each other's countries, and then wrapped up the night with a game that got everyone laughing.

One of the many blessings that came from the night was that we finally got to meet two of the Michigan men's golfers, a team that has had little AIA representation. Charlie and Henry (from New Zealand and Australia) had a blast interacting with our kids and we look forward to how God will grow our relationship.

Another blessing was being able to meet Katarina, a volleyball player from Croatia. Katarina transferred to Michigan this fall and hasn't been able to meet too many people yet. When she was leaving our house she told us to let her know if we ever planned on coming to one of her matches as after each match most of the players come out to say hi to people waiting for them. Katarina said she usually chooses to go straight home as no one is ever looking for her. So, guess who was waiting for her a few days later after her next game...the crazy Keefer crew :) It was so fun to see the smile light up on her face as our kids ran over to greet her!



Top: The international students that came over for Thanksgiving.
Bottom: Katarina with the Keefer's

Please pray...

...for the 12 international students who were in our home. Pray relationships would continue to grow with them and that God would allow us to someday share the good news of Christ with each of them.
...for students to begin to register for the annual AIA Winter retreat taking place at the end of January.
...for favor for our staff and student as we reach out to new students.
...for wisdom as we evaluate this semester and plan for the next.
...that our family's focus would be on Christ this Christmas season.

This letter of thanksgiving would not be complete without thanking YOU. Your prayers and financial gifts make all of this possible. May God's richest blessings be yours! Thank you!

Thankful for students who are really "getting it"!

Recently, I asked my core leader women to text out prayer requests to our group. Here are some of the things they are asking the Lord for:

~pray I would fully put my worth in the Lord ~pray for the women in my discipleship group, that God works in their lives this semester ~pray God grants me boldness as a daughter of Christ so that I can be an example to those around me ~pray that God keeps making His presence known to me ~pray for me to continue to reach out to my teammates and that I spend good time with God.

We are grateful for how God is moving and working in and through their precious lives!



We are also **thankful** for the newest member of the Keefer family- Phoebe the kitty cat!