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April 2026 Newsletter

“Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.” Psalm 62:5-6

Hello again! We’ve come to the end of April and are baffled by how quickly the winter semester has gone. Graduation is fast approaching and before we know it we will be starting up our summer AIA programming. People often ask me what we do in the summer months, given that we work on a college campus where the typical academic year runs from September to May. Well, my answer to them is that we happen to work with a population (student athletes) who spend the majority of their summer “break” on campus training and taking a summer classes. There really is no break for them and therefore ministry opportunities are always available to us. We definitely don’t lack for students to reach out to, leaders to mentor, groups to run. Rather, in the summer months Colby and I need to be intentional to pull back and find some spiritual, emotional and physical rest and refreshment. This is not easy for us as we both are super driven and love what we do. However, God has me in a season of learning more about healthy life rhythms and the importance of my own personal times of rest. I want to be someone who is in ministry for the long-haul, and to do so I must get this right. So in the midst of summer bible studies, student leader development, football chaplaincy, a trip to Central Asia, fall planning and the like, would you pray along with us for some spiritual rest and refreshment? We are so grateful to be in this battle with you. Your love and support of the ministry here means the world to us!

AIA Staff Springboard Conference

This month found us in our old stomping grounds of Xenia, OH for a week at our Athletes in Action staff conference. This biennial event draws our AIA staff from across the U.S. to our ministry headquarters for a week of encouragement, training and vision casting. To be surrounded by 400 of our staff was amazing and I left with a full heart and a smile on my face.

On the first night of the conference we were all in a large banquet hall being led in worship. As we were signing the song “Goodness of God”, I took a moment to look around the room. I saw people scattered around the different tables who have been with AIA all of the 27 years (if not more!) that I have been on staff. To think that we have labored alongside each other for that long, trusting God to build spiritual movements in athletic departments, was humbling. I was in awe of the Lord’s goodness to sustain us and use us for all these years.

A few of the people I saw who brought particular encouragement to me are pictured here. Steve Newman mentored me as a new staff trainer from 2000-2005. The wisdom and encouragement he gave this young staff girl was priceless. He is now retired from AIA after having served over fifty years!

Judy Kirkpatrick is someone I have looked up to for a long time. She led an AIA volleyball tour I was on in 2002 to Kenya & Ethiopia and has pioneered much of our AIA international ministry. Her heart for the world and adventurous spirit is amazing!



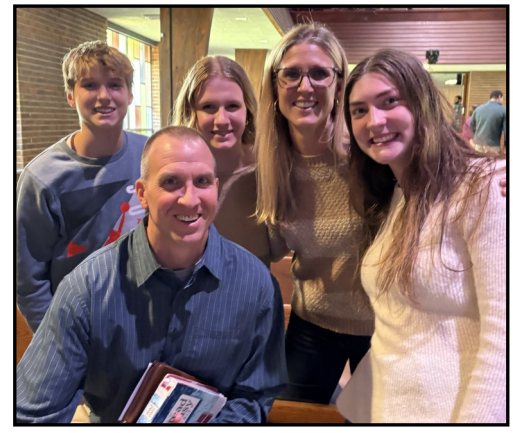
Me & Steve



Dee, Judy & Me

This month we had the blessing of celebrating one of our student leaders as she was baptized at a local church.

Alyssa, a senior on the Michigan women's basketball team, started following Christ her freshman year and it's been an absolute privilege to have had a front row seat to her growth over the past four years. She has gone from a timid new believer to one who is bold in her faith, leading her peers in weekly bible study. We are so proud of her!



Back row: Sarah, Colby, Bri, Sam, Mak, Kevin
Front row: Maleah, Tracy, Maggie

Senior Night!

This month we celebrated the graduating seniors at UM and EMU at our last monthly gathering on each campus. Senior night is always a bittersweet time as we remember what God has done in each precious life while sending them off to their next adventure. Some are starting jobs, while others are entering grad school. We even have one in the group (Bri) spending a year with AIA in Puerto Rico on mission there.

At senior night we give each senior a chance to share a bit about their time on campus and how God has worked in their life. One story in particular brought tears to my eyes. I asked her if I could share some of her written words with you and she said yes :) Enjoy reading snippets from Mak, a senior on the EMU lacrosse team:

"I wasn't raised in the church and I didn't grow up knowing who Jesus is or what His promises mean...When a teammate invited me to AIA large group during the first couple of weeks of school, saying, 'You should come, it's so fun!', I said yes. At that time, I didn't realize that this small step of faith she extended to me would completely change my life.

I attended large group in this room, and I kept coming back every month. I joined my team's small group and at first simply listened as the gospel was shared with me. Over time, I began praying and welcoming the Lord into my life, declaring Him as my Lord and Savior...Since becoming a Christian, I've been freed from so many things that once held me down—the constant anxiety that used to leave me with a stomach ache for days. The Lord has truly transformed me...I met my now sweet fiancé in this room at an AIA large group meeting and I can't wait to marry him in 74 days with Christ at the center of our marriage...I'm truly grateful for everything God has done in my life!"

We praise God for Mak! She is a precious sister in Christ!

Please pray...

...for our graduating seniors. Pray God provides them with Christian community and also opportunities to share their faith in the places God takes them.

...for our summer AIA meetings that will take place weekly in our home. Pray many students will come and be exposed to God's Word.

...for spiritual, emotional and physical rest for us over the summer.

...for God to raise up AIA staff, interns and volunteers who can labor alongside us during the next school year. The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few!

...for wisdom as we evaluate and plan for next year.

...for our kids to know and love Jesus, and for wisdom for us as we move through ever-changing stages of parenting!

Your partnership is making eternal deposits into many lives! Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!



Most of our family was able to be together for Easter. I am looking forward to this summer when ALL six of our kids will be home. Realizing this may be the last time we all live under one roof, I will definitely cherish each moment!