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## February 2024 Newsletter

“For the Lord your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful song.” Zephaniah 3:17

Greetings! I am sitting down to write this letter on Valentine’s Day and have texted the above verse to a few people today, reminding them of God’s amazing love for and delight in us. It really is so crazy that the great and mighty powerful God of the universe chooses to lavish His love on us humans who fail Him over and over again. The word in this Zephaniah verse that seems the most surprising to me is “delight”. Like, He really takes delight in me? Yes, I choose to believe that because that is what the scripture says. The word delight conjures up images of a bursting heart, never-ending smiles, and maybe even a giddy little dance. And God does that all the while rejoicing over me with joyful song? To be honest, this is not usually the first image that comes to my mind when I think about God’s feelings towards me. It’s easier for me to think He is frustrated or disappointed with me, sitting up in heaven shaking His head over my failures to love Him and others well. How different my life might look if I daily took to heart these truths in Zephaniah! I think I would live in more confident freedom, knowing my acceptance is secure in Him. It would pull me out of the pity-party I can sometimes throw myself if things aren’t going my way. I am so grateful that this is who our God is. And I am so grateful that we get to take this message about God to others, as well, giving them the same hope, confidence and security. Thank you for allowing Colby and I to do that in a full-time fashion here at the U of Michigan. Your influence here is far reaching, and we are so very grateful! May we all feel delighted in by our God this day!

## Guy Highlights

God has been at work in the men Colby has been leading. They are catching a strong vision of who God is and how He wants to use them in the Great Commission. Here are some recent highlights:

- ♦ Hot off of the National Championship, Greg is trusting God to add to his football discipleship group. In January, the new early enrollee freshmen on the team arrived on campus and Greg has been busy inviting them to be a part of the group. So far a couple new freshmen are coming!
- ♦ Ryan, a senior on the lacrosse team who is a fairly young believer, has a desire to be a spiritual leader on his team. Colby has been meeting weekly with him to guide and disciple him, going over bible studies in the book of James. Ryan is now taking what he is learning and teaching it on a weekly basis to his team!
- ♦ Sometimes dating relationships can be a bit of a distraction to these students as they seek to walk with God :) Josh, one of Colby’s student leaders, recently broke up with his girlfriend and has decided he wants to use his “extra” time to invest more deeply into his own walk with God, along with helping others to know God. Currently he has guys from the soccer, tennis, golf and gymnastics team in his group.
- ♦ There has been a ton of interest lately on the baseball team. Colby has been meeting with those guys who said they wanted more info about AIA when he visited their team in the fall. One guy showed up and said, “I grew up in an atheist family, but I want to hear what you have to say.” He has even attended a couple Bible studies.



Some of the football guys that come to Greg’s discipleship group every week!

## Lacrosse Explosion

Pretty much ever since Colby and I arrived on campus at Michigan in 2009 we have been trusting God to move and work on the women's lacrosse team, as there was NOBODY involved from that team, EVER. Well, (and you can guess where this story is going!) this year there has been a mini revival on the lacrosse team with almost half of the 35 women on the team involved in or checking out AIA!

It all started a year and a half ago when I met Erin, a now junior on the team. She showed up to our 2022 AIA kick off party after having been invited by her friend on another athletic team. I got to know Erin throughout that year and it was apparent that she was a young believer who had a strong desire to grow in her faith.

When it came time to choose student leaders for this school year, I felt like God was asking me to challenge Erin to leadership. She was super nervous to take that step of faith, but with some coaxing, Erin said yes and began leading a weekly discipleship group with her team in September.

I don't think any of us could have envisioned what is going on spiritually with Erin's lacrosse team now! In Erin's words, it has "become a norm" to talk about faith and discipleship group now amongst the team members. All four of the senior captains come to Erin's group, with two of them never having been exposed to Christianity before. Responding to Erin's individual regular invitations, more and more girls are coming to check things out...and are being exposed to God's Word!

One player in particular, Rylee, is really experiencing God's transformation in her life. Rylee has been plagued with injuries during her lacrosse career. Most recently, she had meniscus surgery in September and has been slowly working her way back into playing. Whereas in the past, injuries have been devastating to her, Rylee is now able to see things with an eternal perspective. Of course she is disappointed she is having to walk this road of recovery, but now she is looking for God's hand and perspective in it. Erin has told me that the way Rylee is walking through this injury with the Lord is having a huge impact on her teammates. God really is so faithful and He can make a way where there seems to be no way forward! All glory to Him for drawing these women to Himself and using sweet Erin in the process!



Before their first game of the season a few weeks ago, Erin invited her team to pray with her. Not knowing who might say yes, this group of girls showed up. Someone caught this beautiful picture of them all!



To the left: Erin brought some of her teammates to Detroit to serve alongside our community development partnership there.

To the right: Erin and Rylee on their lacrosse team trip to Europe last summer.



*Please pray...*

*...for our 13 student leaders as they lead their peers in weekly discipleship groups (Amber, Aubrey, Avery, Delaney, Erin, Jordan, Julianna, Naomi, Greg, Josh, Colton, Lawrence & Joseph). Pray God would protect their walks with Him and cause their ministries to bear fruit.*

*...for the senior transition, faith foundation and equipped disciple groups we are forming soon. Pray many students would take part.*

*...for our love for Jesus to grow stronger as we pour out.*

*Your partnership is changing lives here! May God bless you in the giving of your prayers and finances!*



We celebrated our son Jackson's senior night for his high school basketball team this month. Definitely a proud moment!