



Photos By: Connor Nelson

Virtual Week of Prayer Touches Young Hearts

In January, Oakwood Adventist Academy (OAA) in Taylor, Mich., was scheduled to participate in Outdoor Education at Camp AuSable with resident naturalist Dr. Gordon

Atkins and retired teacher Craig Morgan. Unfortunately, COVID-19 restrictions snarled any plans for what is normally an exciting opportunity for

5th graders to travel north and experience an encounter with God through His created works.

Because Outdoor Education was cancelled, the Michigan Conference offered a virtual Week of Prayer with Dr. Atkins, available to any schools who requested it. Seeing the value and importance of spiritual programming, OAA principal Connie Hickman arranged for a

"This really has been a team effort. It's amazing to see how God has worked through parents, teachers, the ministry of Camp Au Sable, and local church pastors."

school-wide Week of Prayer to be held January 4-8. Niles Junior Academy 5th and 6th graders joined online, too.

Instead of basking in the beauty of camp, students huddled around their computers and tablets at home while engaging in nature talks over Zoom. Would it be possible to simultaneously minister to children ranging from Kindergarten to 8th grade via virtual education? The answer was a resounding 'Yes!'



Siblings Lila Loeffler and Luke were baptized in the chilly waters of Camp Au Sable's Lake Shellenbarger at the close of their week-long camp experience this summer.

By Chad Bernard,
Youth Director



“Do you know the names of the people who live within one mile of your home or church? Do they know you? If not, why not make an effort to get to know them.”

REACHING YOUR COMMUNITY: HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL

What causes you to listen to someone? The eloquence of their speech? Their position in society or how they dress? Maybe their content motivates you. What causes you to listen to and actually do what they say?

Years ago, I was leaving the Houghton Lake church after service on Sabbath. As I was heading to my vehicle, I came across a camouflaged, bandana-wearing little dachshund. He was lying in the grass across the street from the church, staring at me. I looked for his owner but saw nothing but trees and church attendees’ parked cars.

As I got into my vehicle, I noticed the dog heading out onto the shoulder of M-55, the highway on which the church is located. I glanced in my rearview mirror and saw all of the people coming out to their cars. A graphic picture popped into my brain as I thought of the potentially horrific scene we could all encounter in the next few moments.

I quickly got out of my car and headed towards the dog who was perched on the side of the road. “Here, boy!” I shouted, praying that he would obey my pleasant-sounding plea. I gave

my best “I’m your friend” smile and posture, but he wasn’t buying it. He turned and headed out onto the busy highway.

Throwing caution (as well as large amounts of common sense) out the window, I chased after the dog, holding my hands in the air towards oncoming traffic. Thankfully, the cars decided to comply and before I knew it, all traffic on M-55 had come to a complete standstill.

Cars were parked up and down the highway as they watched an anxious looking man, dressed in church shoes, chase a dog straight down the middle of the highway. After a few moments, people started to get out of their vehicles to help this obviously pathetic man, who couldn’t catch a dog the size of his shoe. It was quite a scene.

In the end, the dog decided not to come to any of us. Instead, he chose to head straight into woods where he might still be to this day. Why didn’t he listen to any of us? Couldn’t he see that we all had his best interest in mind? Why else would we be chasing him around while yelling at him?

After sin entered the world, humanity acted quite a bit like that little

dachshund. When God tried to talk to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3, they hid from Him. When He tried to talk to the Children of Israel in Exodus 20, they hid from Him. They said to Moses, “You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” What was God’s response? In an epic move, He sent His Son to Earth to become our friend, Savior, and more than that, to show us what He and His Father are really like. As a result, people throughout time have opened their hearts to God and have become best friends.

You want to know how Jesus made friends on Earth? Check out this quote: “The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, “Follow Me.” Pretty straight-forward process. Seems like it could work with anyone. This got me thinking about the dachshund.

What if I would have known the dog’s name, if he had known me and considered me a friend? Would the story be different? I am quite positive it would. At the risk of you thinking that Houghton Lake has a serious dog

problem on its hands, let me tell you about another dog in that community. Her name is Sadie and she lives on Old 27 across from my parent's house.

One day she strayed out onto the highway. The difference, though, is I know her. I've petted her and actually know her family. When I saw her in danger, I simply called her name, and she came to me. I didn't need a leash; she felt comfortable with me and trusted my lead. We then walked together until she was home and safe. Sounds like Christ's method works with animals, as well.

We live in a world that is far more dangerous than Old 27. Jesus is coming soon. Are you willing to become friends with those who are lost around you? Running through the streets in our church clothes telling people to stop what they are doing, without any attempt to become their friends before or after we proclaim truth, doesn't seem to be working any better than it did for me and that dachshund.

What if we pivot our approach a bit and use Christ's method more? Consider the next paragraph in the earlier quote: "There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit."

Do you know the names of the people who live within one mile of your home or church? Do they know you? If not, why not make an effort to get to know them. Make them some cookies or bread and take it on over. If you can't bake, then buy some or just knock on their door. It is every bit a part of ministry as preaching, and according to the prophet, will bring true success in reaching them for the Kingdom. In fact, it "cannot be without fruit."

Every Monday morning, the Michigan Conference staff meets for worship and prayer. Here is the list for the following dates. Please join us as we pray for these churches and ministries.



AUGUST 2

Grand Blanc/Holly
Pastor Daniel Ferraz
Adelphian Jr Academy
Holly ACS Center

AUGUST 9

Clio/First Flint
Pastor Tony Messer
First Flint SDA Elementary
First Flint ACS & Food Pantry

AUGUST 16

Fenton/South Flint
Pastor Christien Hodet
South Flint Food Pantry

AUGUST 23

New Haven/Port Huron
New Haven Children's Food Pantry

AUGUST 30

Livingston/Waterford
Pastor Todd Ervin
Lapeer/Orion Oxford/Otter Lake
Pastor Victor Vaughn
Lapeer ACS Center

May God inspire you to contact your neighbors this week and may your friendships strengthen to such an extent, that they will follow you, as you follow Jesus, all the way home.

1 *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ex 20:19). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

2 White, E. G. (1905). *The Ministry of Healing* (pp. 143). Pacific Press Publishing Association.

3 White, E. G. (1905). *The Ministry of Healing* (pp. 143-144). Pacific Press Publishing Association.

"Let me tell you about another dog in that community. Her name is Sadie and she lives on Old 27 across from my parent's house."





Photos By: Nancy Coon

Fieldwork: Cedar Lake Church

By Jill Carter,
Member, Cedar Lake Church

On Sunday, March 28, members of the Cedar Lake SDA Church bundled up against the Michigan spring air and headed out for Fieldwork in various locations in the area. Fieldwork, an initiative set in place by the Michigan Conference and partnered with Cedar Lake's Acts of Kindness group, is designed to help people who are unable to complete household tasks. The work can be anything from mechanical fixes, basic repairs around the home, or helping to complete some yardwork. Seth Roberts, the Bible worker at Cedar Lake, said, "As a Bible worker, we most often are concerned with helping people with their spiritual needs; but there's practical things they

need, too. Fieldwork gives me an opportunity to help holistically." Some of the projects completed were assisting a disabled community member with yard work, repairing and cleaning an elderly couple's shed, and finishing renovations on a home so the resident could move in. David Carter, a church member, spoke of his experience after changing someone's oil. "We spent about thirty minutes talking, attending to their engine's health and spiritual health."



Steve Roderick, one of the organizers of this local outreach, plans to have a



The work can be anything from mechanical fixes, basic repairs around the home, or helping to complete some yardwork.



Fieldwork event quarterly. He noted they make project selections through Bible study contacts, members needing help, other outreach programs, and word of mouth. "We had a great time," he said, "[everyone was] very grateful and appreciative."

Jacob Gibbs, pastor of the Cedar Lake SDA Church, detailed his passion for this mission. "When I first heard of [Fieldwork], I knew this was something I wanted to be involved with. I knew that this could be a vital piece of our ministry. Fieldwork is energized by people's acts of kindness and is organized to help those who need it. The idea is not new because Fieldwork's heartbeat is the Gospel through actions and its pulse can be traced from the dawn of the Christian era. Fieldwork follows in the wake of God's passion, and it brings the joy of Jesus to the one serving and being served."

If you are interested in bringing Fieldwork to your church, reach out to Chad Bernard (cbernard@misda.org) or visit www.fieldwork.love for more information on getting started.

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(Virtual Week of Prayer Touches Young Hearts)

Usually, when a parent sends their child to camp, they only hear of the activities and experiences after they take place. This time, I listened to all of the presentations, questions from students and spiritual lessons as I supervised my 10 year-old's morning routine. Dr. Atkins spoke of everything from birds and beasts to the bonds of water molecules, and wove observations about our loving Creator throughout. After a week of presenting these kind of object lessons, Dr. Atkins appealed to the students' deepening spiritual interest. I overheard his appeal to those who were thinking about surrendering their lives to Christ in baptism, and saw my son's hand raise as he accepted Christ's invitation.

Through discussions in her 6th-8th grade classroom, Hickman could tell the Week of Prayer made a lasting impression. "If you ask the students what the speaker talked about the day before and they remember it, you know it's making an impact," she said.

Sixth-grader Carely Ramos said, "I liked how he did Science-Bible type of lessons and applied them to our daily life." Fourth-grader Charlie Thomas observed, "He shared an interesting thought that butterfly metamorphosis is like baptism, going into the water and coming out clean." Fifth-grader Luke Loeffler liked how Dr. Atkins connected his teaching with spiritual lessons. "His

ministry was helpful in my walk with God," he said.

Follow-Up

Shortly after the week concluded, Hickman reached out to Taylor Oakwood church pastor Jarod Thomas, sharing that 14 of OAA's students had made or reaffirmed a decision to be baptized.

OAA 3rd-5th grade teacher Patricia Costa invited Pastor Thomas to share follow-up Bible studies with her students once a week. "The students were interested, and it was a huge opportunity for them to continue purposefully learning more about the Bible," she said. Hickman and K-2nd grade teacher Jennifer Brummett arranged for the pastor to study in their classrooms, too. For the older students, the teachers made time in the class schedule, not just for those who made decisions, but for the entire class, knowing that everyone would benefit from a focused review of the fundamentals of our faith. As a result, seven additional young people decided to surrender their lives to Christ.

When asked why Dr. Atkins' presentations and appeal were so well received, Costa said, "I think some students were scared, confused, and overwhelmed with the pandemic's requirements, the coronavirus effects, and having to be isolated from each other. Dr. Atkins was another person,

not a teacher or a parent, that reminded them that God is in control. If God cares for the smallest animals and plants in nature, He certainly cares for children."

A number of factors influenced these young people's decisions for Christ, and many church ministries had a hand in encouraging and supporting these students. Hickman says that seeds were planted in multiple ways: parents studying with their own children, meaningful Bible classes, intentional Weeks of Prayer and Friday morning Chapel sessions with district pastors.

Pastor Thomas agreed. "This really has been a team effort. It's amazing to see how God has worked through parents, teachers, the ministry of Camp AuSable, and local church pastors to reach the hearts of these kids. Everyone is participating in the ministry, but ultimately it is God that gets all of the glory," he said.

Recently, Pastor Thomas was privileged to baptize the first-fruits of the 21 Oakwood students who made their decision during virtual Week of Prayer. Siblings Lila Loeffler and Luke were baptized in the chilly waters of Camp AuSable's Lake Shellenbarger at the close of their week-long camp experience this summer.

Conclusion

While the virtual option was a "less-than-ideal" substitute for the Outdoor Education program usually run at camp, Dr. Atkins says that its success has prompted them to think about continuing this program after COVID restrictions are lifted and students are able to return to camp for Outdoor Education. Across the conference, 18 schools participated in the virtual Week of Prayer and 104 students made decisions for Christ.

By Beth Thomas,
Member, Oakwood Church



Photo By: Connor Nelson

NEWS BRIEF

Camp Meeting Sermons & Seminars



Sermons and seminars that took place in the main auditorium are archived on the Michigan Conference website at www.misda.org/video2021. The audio recordings of the camp meeting seminars and presentations are archived at

www.misda.org/audio2021. We are also making available the handouts that were distributed for some of the seminar presentations. They can be accessed at www.misda.org/seminar-handouts.

We are no longer offering CD or DVD recordings of camp meeting presentations for purchase or otherwise.

Refreshed Camp Au Sable Store



The camp store located at Camp Au Sable is now offering a variety of health products, food items, and more. For more information, call the camp store at: **(989) 348-5491**. You may also email them at cas@misda.org. The store is located at: 2590 Camp Au Sable Rd, Grayling, MI 49738.

PASTORAL TRANSITIONS



Prescott Khair is the assistant pastor of the Pioneer Memorial Church in Berrien Springs. He previously pastored in the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference.



Sang-Gyu Seo is the new lead pastor of the Andrews Korean Church in Berrien Springs. Prior to Michigan, he pastored in the state of Illinois.



Mabio Neto is the pastor of the Midland and Mt. Pleasant churches. He began his ministry there in May 2021.



Travis Smith is the new pastor of the Clare and Edenville churches. He previously pastored the Troy church.

PASTORAL TRANSITIONS CONTINUED



Daniel Rodriguez is the new pastor of the Ann Arbor and Plymouth churches. Prior to his new assignment, he pastored the Escanaba and Riverside churches.



Edgar Luna is the new assistant pastor at the Berrien Springs Spanish church.



Bruno Menezes is the new assistant pastor at the St. Joseph On the Way Company church.



Donald Sparks is the new pastor of the Fenton and South Flint churches. He previously served as pastor of the Estey, Gladwin, and Marion churches.

TRANSITIONS IN LEADERSHIP



Cody Francis: On Tuesday May 25, the Michigan Conference Executive Committee elected Elder Cody Francis to become the next Ministerial Director of the Michigan Conference.



Darryl Bentley: The Executive Committee appointed Elder Darryl Bentley to be the new Ministerial Associate Director. He previously served as pastor of the Metropolitan Church.



Charlotte Green: She accepted the call to serve as the new Associate Superintendent of Education for the Michigan Conference. She was the previous principal of Grand Rapids Adventist Academy.

Camp meeting seminars and presentations are archived at www.misda.org/audio2021



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MONTHLY CALENDAR

Due to COVID-19, events on the schedule are subject to change.

AUGUST

- 1-4 Ministerial Retreat
- 4-6 Teacher Convention
- 6-8 iShare Conference
- 8 Lay Advisory Coordinating Committee
- 15-20 PCM Bible Boot Camp – Northwoods
- 20-22 Adventurer Leadershop
- 27-29 Pathfinder Leadershop

SEPTEMBER

- 2-5 UP Camp Meeting
- 6 Office Closed – Labor Day
- 9-12 Rest & Renew Retreat
- 10-12 Adventurer Family Camp – Northwoods
- 12-16 Golden Years Retreat
- 17-19 Michigan Pathfinder Camporee

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NATURE NUGGET

Pronghorns – They Don't Follow the Rules!

By Dr. Gordon Atkins,
Camp Au Sable Naturalist



Photo By: Gordon Atkins

If you drive west from southern Michigan towards the Rocky Mountains, you will likely see small herds of pronghorn along the way. They prefer the short-grass prairies in the far western plains and they are the fastest mammal in North America. Pronghorns are not true antelope, but they are often mistakenly called “prong-horned antelope.” Their horns are made of a cutaneous protein similar to your hair and finger nails, and this protein is compacted together to make a hard structure that grows on a boney nub protruding from the skull. Horns usually have no branches or “tines” and they are not replaced each year. Antlers, on the other hand, are made of bone, have branches, and they shed each year. Here is where pronghorns are different.

Their horns have a forward-facing tine or branch (this is what gives them their name—pronghorn). Not only that, but each year their horns shed like antlers and new ones begin to grow from the boney nub!

Pronghorns are different in that they don't follow the normal rules of horns and antlers found in the rest of the animal kingdom. God has called us to be different, as well. He asks us to follow His guidelines for living and not follow the norms in society around us. He expects our “differences” to mean something, however. He expects us to positively affect those around us. I have shared this quote before: “If you are different, and your difference does not make a difference, then you are not different, you are just weird.” Think about it!