

“In the highest sense, the work of education and the work of redemption are one, for in education, as in redemption, other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Ellen G. White



## Great Lakes Adventist Academy: Equipping the Next Generation

Great Lakes Adventist Academy (GLAA) is a special part of the Adventist Educational system in Michigan. Now in its 36<sup>th</sup> year of operation, GLAA has been a blessing to hundreds, if not thousands, of high school students from across the globe.

At GLAA, students and faculty members are family. Teachers incorporate spirituality into history and math, and it's not uncommon to see students studying the Bible together or reading *Desire of Ages* in the cafeteria.

Delwin Garcia, who has served as GLAA's principal for the past 11 years, understands the importance of this school, the importance of the responsibility God has entrusted to the staff. “We know statistically that kids are more likely to stay in the church if they attend Adventist schools,” Garcia says, “We see this as evangelism.”

Academic courses include the sciences, mathematics, English and literature courses, and, of course, Bible classes specifically designed for each age group

to draw closer to Christ. Staff don't bid the students farewell as soon as courses finish, rather, they take turns supervising dinner and recreation times in the evening. They take that time to minister to the students.

### Growth Happens Here

The first couple days can be quite shocking to a first-time student. Grace Busch, a senior, explains that when she came as a freshman, it was really hard. “I'm a homebody,” she says, laughing, “and I have a close relationship with my parents.” She had met GLAA staff at LIFT (Life Improvement for Teens, an annual retreat at Camp AuSable)



Naomi Uwineza, a sophomore from Rwanda, studies in the Business Office lobby. She had prayed for years to attend a Christian school.

*“Delwin Garcia, who has served as GLAA's principal for the past 11 years, understands the importance of this school, the importance of the responsibility God has entrusted to the staff.”*

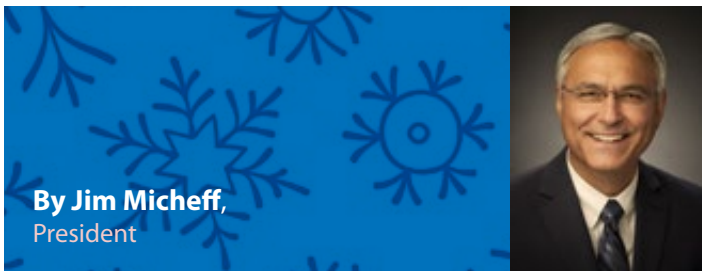
and knew that she wanted to attend.

“I'm honestly really happy to be here,” she says. “I feel like I've grown as a person here, and the staff are really supportive.” Busch explains that if she is having a bad day, the staff notice. She also credits GLAA with her spiritual growth. “I love the spiritual atmosphere,” she says “I have made great friends that I know will last for all of eternity. We try to keep our conversations spiritually minded, Christlike, and we can sense that among the way the staff interact with each other and with the students.” When Busch graduates, she plans to pursue veterinary medicine.

Spiritual growth among students is the faculty

(continued on page 6)

*“Whichever day we choose to identify with and how we observe it will determine who we acknowledge as our Master. The line in the sand between heaven and hell is over worship—more specifically who you worship.”*



By Jim Micheff,  
President

## THE FOUNDATION OF WORSHIP (PART III) Conclusion of the three part series on worship.

**W**orship starts as an attitude (reverence) and results in action (submission to God). Over time it becomes a state of being. The foundation of true worship is a reverent love so strong we are willing to give our entire self, our thoughts, and emotions, to God’s use. All of life then becomes an expression of our submission to God. Worship originates in the heart temple before any outward expression is given.

Paul describes this in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 when he says, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own. For you were bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God’s.”

Ellen White says, “All men have been bought with this infinite price. By pouring the whole treasury of heaven into this world, by giving us in Christ all heaven. God has purchased the will, the affections, the mind, the soul, of every human being. Whether believers or unbelievers all men are the Lord’s property” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 326).

God refuses to force allegiance, granting each of us the choice to accept His offer of reconciliation or reject it. If we accept it, we must also cooperate with Him in preparing us for heaven. We do this by exercising our power of choice. The Holy Spirit gives both instruction and power to obey but Satan is constantly opposing by suggesting doubts and mixing truth with error. Our choices in life shape who we become.

### **Who Will You Worship?**

Character formation is a normal

process but without divine power we will naturally develop characters stamped in resistance and defiance against God. If we accept God’s offer to recreate a Christlike character in us, we must also allow Him to establish an inseparable connection with Him maintained through reverence and submission. Your character will determine who you will serve and ultimately how you will worship.

When God set aside a special time to meet with Him, the Sabbath was established as an integral part of worship. The Bible tells us that the Sabbath is a sign of allegiance to God and Sunday is a sign or mark of the Beast’s authority. Whichever day we choose to identify with and how we observe it will determine who we acknowledge as our Master. The line in the sand between heaven and hell is over worship—more specifically who you worship.

The Seal of God and the Mark of the Beast both essentially delineate character. God reads the heart. Before Jesus’ second coming (Revelation 7:2, 3) an angel is sent to place the seal of God or the stamp of His approval on those who have Christlike characters. Everyone else has the stamp of Satan’s character set in insubordination and disobedience.

God’s plan is not to just rescue us out of this sinful world but to demonstrate His power to transform us in the very presence of rebellion. Because worship involves every aspect of our life there are many different factors that influence and even inhibit our connection with God. False worship is manifested when one gives lip service to God but their heart longs for the world.

The children of Israel had pledged their love and loyalty to God. While Moses was still on the mountain receiving the 10 Commandments, the leaders of Israel grew restless and desired to engage in the worship style they had been accustomed to in Egypt. With the sound of God’s voice ringing in their ears saying, “You shalt not make for yourself a carved image... you shall not bow down to them nor serve them...,” they demanded Aaron to make an image of a golden calf that would represent God. Under the pretense of worshiping Him, they proclaimed a special service to the Lord incorporating the false worship of Egypt. Satan was able to manipulate all who chose to participate by appealing to their emotions and carnal desires. The result was a total disregard for God and His law.

### **The Music, Worship Connection**

There is a special connection between music and worship. When King Nebuchadnezzar set up his image in the plain of Dura and called all the leaders throughout his kingdom to submit to his absolute authority by bowing down to his image, he was demanding that they worship him as god. To facilitate this, he incorporated music. Only those who refused to participate in this false worship were able to stand true to God.

God created music to draw His creatures to Him. Music itself is not worship, but it gives us a way to express our love and submission to God—which is worship. Music can be controversial, perhaps, because it can either enhance or inhibit true worship by subtly setting the attitude of the mind.

Paul explains in Romans 8:7 that *“the mind governed by the flesh is hostile*



to God, it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so." He is simply telling us that we are in rebellion against the authority of God and, without help from above, we will never change.

Lucifer, before his rebellion, led the heavenly choir and directed all praise and worship to God. He understands that when God is the center of worship the natural result is allegiance and loyalty. When creatures offer their praise through music, their hearts are naturally drawn to the Creator's goodness, love, and majesty.

After his rebellion, Satan tried to turn attention away from God. He cannot create something from nothing so the only thing he can do is rearrange what God has already created. By rearranging and reorganizing notes, beat and tempo, he can redirect the focus of music from God to man, strengthening the natural resistance to God.

Satan does this by subtly turning the focus, and unsuspectingly shifting the emphasis away from God to the performer's abilities and skills. The natural effect is applause for man. This type of music can be presented loud and fast or soft and slow, but both are in step with the beat of the carnal heart and instinctively we desire more. One of Satan's most successful deceptions is to get people to believe that the different music styles are just about preference. We must acquire a taste for heavenly things.

There are only two kinds of music – one that leads to God and one that leads away from Him. Because the devil tries to make some of his music appear to be God's music, it can be hard to distinguish between the two. It makes it even more complicated when the music resonates within us, and we experience an initial feeling of connection with spiritual things.

God's music always leads to Him and magnifies His Word. For example, psalms/praise songs extol the goodness and mercy of God. Hymns contain theology written in poetry and set to music. Knowing that Jesus resisted temptation using scripture, Satan wants to distance us from hymns and the theology woven through. One method is to arrange and design praise songs so that there are few words placed in repetition, relieving the intellect from processing the content while the beat of the music moves the emotions. Jesus warned about vain repetitions in prayer and that principle can also be applied to music.

Meaningful words repeated can be constructive, but vain or shallow words set to the right beat can numb the mind and allow the emotions to direct the body. In many cases the produced effects on the body are like those at worldly events where emotions are heightened and jumping up and down and swaying to the beat of the music is expected. Our expressions in worship cannot be a mirror image of the world. In scripture, when people encountered the manifested presence of God, they immediately bowed down in reverence and submission recognizing God's power and authority.

John warned, "Do not love the world or the things in the

**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.



#### **NOVEMBER 7**

Battle Creek Tabernacle

**Pastor Rob Benardo**

Battle Creek Academy

#### **NOVEMBER 8**

Battle Creek Korean

**Pastor JinWon Lee**

Battle Creek ACS

Battle Creek Zomi

**Pastor SB Cin**

#### **NOVEMBER 14**

Delton

**Pastor Jeff Dowell**

Hastings

**Pastor Jeff Dowell**

Hastings SDA Elementary

Hillsdale/Pittsford

**Pastor Mario Reategui**

#### **NOVEMBER 21**

Burlington/Coldwater

**Pastor Bayani Pastrana**

Burlington ACS

#### **NOVEMBER 28**

Charlotte/Urbandale

**Pastor Philip Lee**

Charlotte Adventist

Christian School

#### **DECEMBER 5**

Detroit Metro

**Pastor Dan McGrath**

Metropolitan Jr Academy

Ann Arbor/Plymouth

**Pastor Daniel Rodriguez**

#### **DECEMBER 5 (Continued)**

Plymouth ACS Center

Ann Arbor Adventist Elementary

#### **DECEMBER 12**

Detroit Northwest

**Pastor Victor Thomas**

Detroit Northwest Food Pantry

Warren

**Pastor Giancarlo de Miranda**

Detroit Korean/Troy Korean Co

**Pastor Bomki Kim**

Belleville/Tecumseh

**Pastor Victor Vaughn**

#### **DECEMBER 19**

Cherry Hill/Farmington

**Pastor Jorge Neketela**

Cherry Hill Food Pantry

Detroit Romanian/Monroe/

Oakwood

**Pastor Jarod Thomas**

Detroit Oakwood Food Pantry

Oakwood Jr Academy

#### **DECEMBER 26**

Brighton/Lakes Area Co

**Pastor Steve Schefka**

Ann Arbor Korean

**Pastor Hyunho Suh**

Troy

**Pastor Steve Conway**

Troy ACS Center

Troy Adventist Academy

Troy Adventist PreSchool

world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him...." (1 John 2:15).

**How has God instructed us to worship who are alive just before Jesus comes?** Before the death of Christ, the worship service consisted of sin and thank offerings sacrificed to God on altars. This was a symbol of God's Gift to us. God accepted these sacrifices if offered with reverence and submission to God. It was by faith people offered blood sacrifices. It is still by faith that we claim Jesus' blood sacrifice and God's promise of redemption after His death.

Our form of worship, post-resurrection, is to bring ourselves, our own lives, as a living sacrifice to God. This is holy and pleasing to Him. "Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker, for He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture" (Psalm 95:6, 7).



Conference president Jim Micheff speaks to pastors and teachers at the one-day conference.

# Together in Mission: Pastor-Teacher Convention

By Communication team,  
Michigan Conference

**C**edar Lake, MI—For the first time since 2018, pastors and teachers from Michigan came together at Great Lakes Adventist Academy (GLAA), for a one-day pastor/teacher conference themed “Together in Mission.” Seventy-six pastors and 99 teachers spent Monday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, discussing how to streamline their individual ministries to be the most effective to the church, school, and community.

Attendees spent most of the morning listening to a panel of six—three teachers and three pastors—discuss practical ways to work together effectively, while also addressing various circumstances that arise from time-to-time in both the pastor’s and teachers’ day-to-day ministry. Audience questions for the panel were texted to Cody Francis, Ministerial secretary, and Jeremy Hall, Education superintendent. “There are difficult challenges that pastors and teachers can face, and being able to openly discuss them is essential,” says Francis. “When pastors and teachers have a strong working relationship, it greatly enhances the ministry of both the church and the school.”

Francis explains that, at times, differences may arise with pastors and teachers due to the particular focus of each ministry. For the pastor, the church is the ultimate priority, while the teacher’s main priority is the school

and the students. The various focal points can lead to differences as to how much time the pastor should be spending at the school, or how much money should be given to the school from church budgets. For churches with schools, a significant portion of their budget may be allotted to the school. Some could wonder if they’re seeing the returns on their investments, which can lead to jitters with their budgets.



Cody Francis (Ministerial director) and Jeremy Hall (Education superintendent) moderate a panel discussion.

Michigan Conference is proud to have pastors and teachers that are dedicated to their roles. That dedication can also lead to focusing on little things instead of the bigger picture of the church-school relationship, and the potential for witnessing and evangelism comes through a healthy relationship between the two.

Hall says, “while both the pastor

and teacher are in an evangelistic work, it is easy for both to become isolated.” Sometimes, he explains, it is misunderstanding of the individual roles, while other times it is busyness. Francis elaborates that for the majority of cases where there are differences, each party can be led to believe that the other is not invested enough.

“The pastor needs to see the school as a powerful, evangelistic potential, and teachers as evangelistic coworkers. He needs to see students as not only people he can reach, but as missionaries he can train and mentor,” he says. “The teacher should see their role as reaching out not just to the students, but as a vital part of the church in ministering to the families of students and non-students alike.”

The conference was held out of a desire for “pastors and teachers to come together and work in an even closer way,” Hall says. The Ministerial Association and Education Department sees the beauty in what can come out of pastors and teachers working in harmony to minister to their churches, schools, and communities.

After the panel discussion, the pastors and teachers worked on group projects. Hall is grateful that pastors and teachers were able to get together to “emphasize the beautiful relationship that both roles play in a church community, and



how it is critical to have respect, communication, and clarification for mission success.”

All of the groups’ ideas were compiled and sent to pastors and teachers for their personal benefit. The day ended with pastors and teachers kneeling in prayer, pleading with the Lord for wisdom and guidance as they went

back to serve and evangelize their schools and districts.

Pastor and teacher roles vary greatly, but in essence, they are the same: they minister to those in their vicinity, whether it is church members or students in a classroom. They nurture, grow, and teach those who are searching, and they point all to Jesus.

“We know we need to have both the pastors and the teachers united on the same page in mission in order to move the conference forward—and constructive dialogue is part of that,” says Francis. This event was, according to Hall, “the beginning of forging relationships even tighter than they’ve been in the past.”



The medical clinic team up bright and early. Left to right: Miriam Hansen, Pastor EJ Wolf, Eujin Wolf, Mayah Sullivan, Bob Button, Dr. Ryan Williams, Trudy Richardson, Kristi Wernholm, Fletcher Wernholm, and Ari Muljono.

“Every year the Potato Festival in Edmore is full of happy families celebrating the harvest and having fun with their neighbors. What better time to let the community know the Adventist church cares?”

## Edmore Potato Festival

Jesus often went out to the crowds to see how He could be of service. At the close of His earthly ministry He gave His disciples their commission, saying, “These signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” Mark 16:17, 18.

Every year the Potato Festival in Edmore is full of happy families celebrating the harvest and having fun with their neighbors. What better time to let the community know the Adventist church cares? The Edmore church decided to rent a vendor space at the festival, focusing their attention on providing healthy-lifestyle education to the community. Pastor EJ Wolff had never organized a health fair but stepped out in faith by assembling a team.

The team asked several medical professionals in the area to help. A dentist, two dental hygienists, five nurses, and several others from the Edmore, Alma, Frost, Cedar Lake, and Lakeview churches joined the effort. The conference health department gave them NEWSTART banners and a local elder offered his new tent. An area business donated an identical tent for medical mission work. God was going before them, preparing the way!

When the festival began, volunteers stood at the front of the tent surveying community guests. At stations throughout the tent, visitors could test their blood glucose levels, blood pressure, oxygen levels, and learn God’s Biblical principles of mental, physical, and spiritual health.

Twenty-two people came through the tent. Ari Muljono, one of the volunteer nurses, remarked how remarkable God’s plans are.

Providentially, the Edmore church, health fair tent and Daniel’s Kitchen, a local Adventist center of influence, were all within a few blocks of each other, “so we can let people know where to find us,” she said.

The divine commission has not changed. Christ’s way of presenting truth cannot be improved upon. The Savior gave the disciples practical lessons, teaching them how to work in such a way as to make souls eager to hear the truth. He sympathized with the weak, weary, and oppressed. He fed the hungry and healed the sick. He constantly went about doing good. By His loving words and kind deeds, He lived out the gospel to men.

The Edmore church is simply following in His footsteps.

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**By EJ Wolf,**  
Edmore, Frost, and Lakeview pastor

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**(Great Lakes Adventist Academy: Equipping the Next Generation)**

members' goal. Linda Johnson, ladies' dean, wakes up early every morning and walks the halls of the dorm. Johnson stops by every single door and prays for every single girl, every single morning. Rhett Sietz, taskforce mens' dean, explains that dorm worships are tailored to combat the issues and struggles the deans see in the student body.

**Training Leaders**

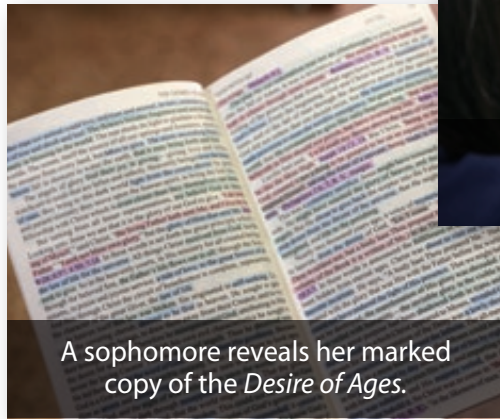
Students are given the opportunity to have spiritual leadership positions in the church, as well as the school. Jeff Akenberger, GLAA's chaplain, explains that the students are teaching the entirety of the adult Sabbath School for Cedar Lake, and also rotating between the children's divisions.

They do the job of the Sabbath School Superintendent as well. "Sometimes it takes longer for them," he says, "they bumble a little bit, but that's okay. This is a training ground." Akenberger is taking the high school years, when minds are impressionable, and showing students that they *can* be in leadership positions. They are being "prepared to be church members," says Akenberger, members who are active.

Akenberger also teaches Sophomore and Junior Bible classes. Each class has two textbooks. Sophomores have the Bible and *Desire of Ages*, and Juniors have the Bible and *The Great Controversy*. "One of the best things," says Akenberger, "is familiarizing students and encouraging them in the reading of Spirit of Prophecy." Students often leave high school and college and transition to young adults without a foundation, without an understanding of what they believe and why we read Spirit of Prophecy. Akenberger is instilling in his students a love for the Word of God and Spirit of Prophecy. "The idea that you take a 14 to 16 year old, and they just spent the last 10 months of their life reading [Spirit of Prophecy] every day—that's life changing," Akenberger says. "These books prepare them to be church members."

The Juniors memorize Bible studies on Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. They work through the texts, memorizing key texts from the studies, and then take a test. Akenberger acknowledges that while all of texts may not stick longer than the test, they will remember certain verses and, more than that, they will realize that our beliefs are pulled straight from the Bible. Every belief can be backed by Scripture.

Only after the students have been steeped in Spirit of Prophecy and our beliefs do they transition to World Religions and Ethics in Senior year. Often, students will be



A sophomore reveals her marked copy of the *Desire of Ages*.



Students hold hands in prayer prior to their study of the *Great Controversy*.

thrown into world religion classes when they have no idea of what we believe. Akenberger is building his students a foundation. Studying the Spirit of Prophecy will "embed our beliefs into their mind and develop their characters," he says.

Students also give each other Bible studies. If a student wants to study with someone, Akenberger sends a student. "Giving Bible studies is not difficult," he says, "they're just following the Bible study guide, and they don't pretend like they have all the answers. Adults feel like they need to know all the answers." Akenberger is breaking down barriers that prevent people from witnessing. Often, adults feel that they are unable to give a Bible study because someone may ask a question they are unprepared to answer. Akenberger is showing GLAA students that it's okay to not have all the answers all the time. "They just call me if they have a question," he says, "and that's okay."

Akenberger has a special passion for Youth ministry. He has been working with youth for years, and sees the significance of mentoring youth through their teen and high school years. "The whole conference can change in a decade based on what we do here," Akenberger says. Millions of dollars are invested into GLAA for that very reason. GLAA is the future church: future church members, Sabbath School leaders, treasurers and pastors.

If every student leaves GLAA with Adventist beliefs cemented into their minds, the church will be blessed and grow, not only with the flood of students returning after college, but with the missionaries being trained during their high school years. The teaching staff and the rest of the faculty members trust daily that the Lord will give them opportunities to "live and breathe Jesus Christ" to the students.

If you would like more information about GLAA, or would like to speak to a staff member, please visit [glaa.net](http://glaa.net).

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**By Judy Klein,**  
Communication





The Clough family on vacation in the Upper Peninsula.

“I realized how great a vacation can be when it isn’t just about me, but it’s about allowing Jesus to help me help others wherever I am.”

## When Jesus Goes on Vacation

This year our family took a vacation to the Upper Peninsula (U.P.). I have lived in Michigan my entire life and never realized the beauty and unique culture the U.P. has to offer. True, the cell phone service is spotty and eating out can be difficult if you’re a vegetarian. But sometimes getting out of our comfortable daily routines shows us what we can really live without.

We rented the Timberdoodle Lodge with some of our closest relatives. We spent time visiting, swimming in frigid Lake Michigan, playing pool and enjoying bonfires outside. We hiked waterfalls, stood in awe of Kitch-iti-kipi, Michigan’s largest freshwater natural spring, and visited historical villages. It was a wonderful vacation! But what happened on this vacation set it apart from any other. It changed me.

It was a beautiful day to visit the Fayette Historic Ghost Town. As we listened to our tour guide, we learned that another couple had lost their car keys that day at the park. I remember thinking, “How awful to lose your keys on vacation!” We continued exploring for another hour or two before we made our way back up to the visitor center for lunch.

When we got up to the top of the hill, my eldest daughter dramatically informed me that the people had still not found their keys! Concerned, I

asked the couple if there was anything we could do? Hope had already been lost. They had searched everywhere. The nearest Toyota dealership was two hours away, with little hope they had the correct key fob. They said that there was nothing anyone could do.

For some reason it really disturbed me. How would I feel if this was us and all of our vacation plans hinged on finding those keys? How could I go on enjoying my vacation when theirs was in such turmoil? I went to my family seeking alternatives to help them. It seemed there wasn’t much we could do but pray for them. Surely, God would help them.

I went down to bother the couple again. This time the woman was on the phone so I spoke to the man, asking him questions that might give us clues of where to look. His name was Tim. In a few minutes, my husband Jay arrived, asking Tim if he believed in prayer. He replied, “Well, I’m Catholic (sorta) and I pray in my own way.” Jay said “Well, we believe God answers our prayers and He can help you find your keys.” We all bowed our heads and prayed.

As soon as we prayed, Jay and I left to look for the keys trusting that somehow, someday, God would find them for us. We remembered and shared with each other the story of the axe head and how God showed Elijah where it was. But, would He find them

for us? What if He didn’t? How would it look? We dismissed those thoughts and chose to trust God.

As we were walking, God impressed me to just start asking everyone I saw if they had seen any keys. It seemed silly since most of these people had probably just arrived there. The third group we came in contact with had indeed seen a set of keys hanging behind an electrical box facing the opposite direction of where the crowd would walk or see. We ran and struggled to find them at first, but sure enough they were the keys described to us! In less than five minutes, God showed us the keys in a place we could have never found ourselves.

We rejoiced with exceeding great joy as we presented those lost keys to Tim. I believe God’s love spoke to him that day. I am so grateful He used us to do it!

I love going on vacation. I will always cherish the memories we made with our family. But the way God moved and led us to those keys makes it the best vacation of all time! I realized how great a vacation can be when it isn’t just about me, but it’s about allowing Jesus to help me help others wherever I am. I am convinced there is no greater joy (John 16:24).

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**By Sharna Clough,**  
Grayling member

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### CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

# MONTHLY CALENDAR

## NOVEMBER

- 4-6 Public Hi-C Retreat
- 6-8 Prayer & Fasting (Pastors)
- 11-13 Crystal Mountain Marriage Retreat
- 20 Pathfinder Council
- 20-27 GLAA Home Leave
- 23-24 Office Closed – Thanksgiving

## DECEMBER

- 11 Lay Advisory Coordinating Committee
- 15-Jan 2 GLAA Home Leave
- 23-26 Office Closed – Christmas
- 30-Jan 2 Office Closed – New Year's

## JANUARY

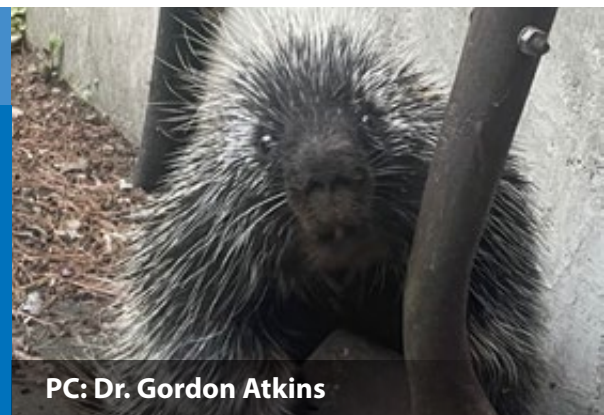
- 8 Women's Ministries Board
- 13-16 CAMPUS Staff Retreat
- 13-15 Teen Snow Outing – Camp Au Sable
- 23-26 Ministerial Retreat
- 25-29 GLAA Home Leave
- 27-29 Father-Son | Man Camp – Camp Au Sable
- 27-29 Pathfinder Area Coordinators Retreat – Camp Au Sable

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## NATURE NUGGET

### Introducing "Pokey"

By Dr. Gordon Atkins,  
Camp Au Sable Naturalist



PC: Dr. Gordon Atkins

Several of the resident staff at Camp Au Sable have bird feeders in their yard. Of course, more than just birds come for the free food! Several mammals have become natural "pets." There is "Blondie," the white-tailed deer. There are also lots of squirrels—not our favorite mammal friends.

This year a family of raccoons with five babies have come regularly. However, the most interesting of our mammal visitors is "Pokey" the porcupine! Pokey is a good name because she, of course, is covered with tens of thousands of quills. She (we know this because last year she brought her baby with her) loves corn. She also loves to visit with people. Pokey will climb up your leg, if you dare. I have even pet her on her nose, very carefully! She loves to follow me around the yard.

There is a second reason that "Pokey" is a suitable name. She does not move very fast! This is a problem. You see, Pokey travels back and forth between the camp manager's house and our house, depending on which feeding

station has the most corn available. This means that Pokey has to cross the camp main entrance road each time she moves from one feeder to the other. Please keep a watch out for Pokey and our other camp pets when you visit Camp Au Sable. I hope you get to see some of them!

You might ask how we trained these natural pets. Well, we did not do it purposely. They found the food source and kept coming back. They've gotten used to the sound of our vehicles and rather than running away, they stay by because they know that's when I'm most likely to put out some fresh bird seed.

This reminds me of our spiritual walk. God provides us with spiritual food in abundance through the Bible and prayer. We need to make it a habit to seek out this spiritual food. Unlike the mammals at our feeders, God's resources are available to us 24/7. We need to be deliberate in our daily routines to be sure we avail ourselves of these gifts that He has provided for us. What is your feeder routine?