

MARANATHA MOMENTS

Official Newsletter of Maranatha

SOUTH AFRICA DEDICATION!



TOM BOCK, CONNI VANDE BUNTE, ANN LEDSWORTH, DAVE VAN DYKE, & CHRIS PREUSS (LEFT TO RIGHT)

With a packed house of Maranatha members, guests, and staff gathered in the Skinner Room, the much-anticipated kick-off of the Time to Rise Capital Campaign and the dedication of the new South Africa Building happened this past July 6.

The event, thoughtfully planned by the Maranatha member team of Linda Bush, Lisa Heneveld, Haleigh Hieftje, and Courtney Eldersveld, included a time of worship and prayer, followed by an overview of the plans by Chris Preuss, Maranatha's Executive Director. Long-time Maranatha visiting speaker, Walt Wiley, gave a stirring call to action, and Gary Feenstra explained how the fund raising was coming along.

The headline of the event was the introduction of the South Africa Building as the first milestone in a series of upcoming developments. Next on the horizon is a remodeled Tabernacle, where historical elements will be preserved while making the space available year-round to support the expanding Retreat Season. In conjunction with the Tabernacle renovation, a new Coffee Shoppe/Bookstore will be added to the campus.

Later phases of the project will focus on updating several of our older cottages, providing the care they deserve and creating accommodations suited to the needs of growing families. The final stage, which Preuss described as the "crowning piece and the heartbeat of Paul Johnson," is construction of a Channel Lodge. This new lodge will replace the current Cambodia Cottage, allowing Maranatha to welcome even more families and groups to experience the presence of God on our cherished 88 acres.

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Maranatha
Bible and Missionary Conference



BABIAN FAMILY: Arthur, Janice, Sarah, Jennifer, Shiloh, Zion, Brantley have been coming to Maranatha since 1991! Their favorite ice cream flavor is mint chocolate chip,, their favorite activity is playing at the beach, and their favorite mission organization is Kids Alive.



BORGMAN FAMILY: Matt has been coming to maranatha for 40 years, his wife(Kristin) for the last 20 along with their children, Connor, Eleanor, and Thomas. Their favorite ice cream flavor is mint chocolate chip, and they love mini golf, ropes course, and zip line! The mission groups they love are Moody Bible Institute and Mission India.



CHAPMAN FAMILY: Jan, Dan, Libby, Brittni, Ben, Edward, Ruby, Lark, Azalea, Zoë, Delphine have been coming to Maranatha for 30 years! Their favorite ice cream flavor is Michigan pothole, they love attending the concerts, and their favorite mission organization is Mission India.



McCAULEY FAMILY: Matt, Marissa, Quinn, Emma, Joya, Cal have been coming to Maranatha for 30 years! Their favorite ice cream is anything ice cream Sunday's! They love going to the beach together as a family, and they enjoy the mission Keys for Kids.



ROLLENHAGEN FAMILY: Jake, Rhett, Whitney, Reese, & baby due in October have been coming to Maranatha since the summer of 2020, and their favorite activities are the hymn sing & penny fair. They love and appreciate the Children's Ministry so that the adults are able to be filled by the word of god!



ROST FAMILY: Mary Beth, Matthew, Audrey, and Aaron have been coming to maranatha for 12 years. they love having breakfast together in their cottage overlooking the still waters of lake Michigan. their favorite mission is On Eagles Wings.

Joni & Friends Recap



JONI & FRIENDS 2024

Maranatha hosted Joni & Friends (JAF) camp for the 15th year during the first three weeks of June led by Todd Bauer. There were 422 family members and 147 individual campers over the three weeks. Each week was filled with love, joy, and laughter among the campers, families, and the short term missionaries (STM's) while participating in all the activities. The families and STM's travel from all over the midwest to attend or volunteer at the camp.

The theme of JAF 2024 was Harvest Time: Bearing Fruit for the Father based on John 15:8. "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourself to be my disciples." The teachings for every age group was centered around the fruits of the spirit, and ways that we can bring those fruits into everyday situations.

There were many highlights throughout the weeks of camp, but the biggest one for all is the relationships that are formed and strengthened. "One of the things that makes living with a disability so hard for families can be the isolation they feel", Bauer said. "A lot of families do not go out anywhere because of physical or social barriers that feel too great." That is why JAF is something that these families look forward to every year-being able to connect with others and enjoy fellowship with one another.

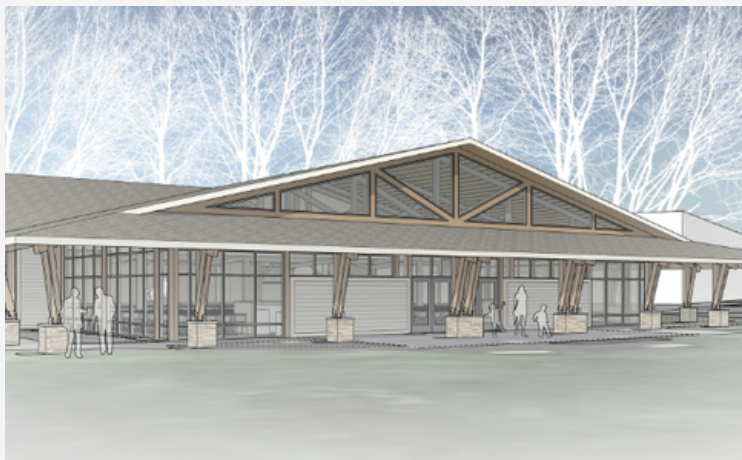
Another highlight was the afternoon activities including: zip-lining, climbing wall, high ropes course, horseback riding, pontoon & wave runner rides, tubing, and spending time at the beach or the pool. A lot of the families do not get to do these types of activities so it is a blast for them to experience it.

The Lord was working through JAF camp, and we saw that in the campers, the families, and the volunteers. Many people who come carry things with them, and the Lord met each person where they were at. There were comments such as: "The work of God really hit home. Love is so important to feel connected and it was so evident with all the volunteers and other campers" and "I had a fresh infusion of hope and reconnection with Jesus. this program and camp was an oasis in our desert". God met each person in different ways at camp!

"I am so glad for all that everyone at Maranatha does for us. I really mean it when I say that you doing your thing allows us to do our thing, and God blesses both of us through it!"

-Todd Bauer, Joni & Friends Operations Manager

TIME TO RISE BRICK CAMPAIGN



TABERNACLE RENOVATIONS



COFFEE SHOPPE & BOOKSTORE

Don't miss out on being a part of The Time To Rise project by buying a brick(s) to help build our beautiful patio in front of the renovated Tabernacle. It will take a lot of bricks, and we hope to have all our members and friends have at least one legacy brick in place.

The bricks can have family names, Bible verses, quotes, legacy memorials, history, or other ideas. Many families have begun to purchase them in honor of parents, children, grandchildren, pastors, and many have added a Bible reference or verse. Be creative and be a part of the Maranatha legacy!

You can fill out the form for your order by going to this link <https://donate.brickmarkers.com/mar> or go to the QR code . There is no cut-off date, but we hope to have orders by early spring so we can have your bricks in the patio as it is created. Please note that there are 2 sizes of bricks, 3 line (4X8) and 6 line (8X8). Call Gary Feenstra (616-836-5062) if you have questions or need assistance.

4X8

LINE 1
LINE 2
LINE 3

8X8

LINE 1
LINE 2
LINE 3
LINE 4
LINE 5
LINE 6



SCAN for additional details

MARANATHA TRIVIA!

Answers on Page 7

1. Who built the first prayer tower in the 1920s?
2. What was the name of the chalk artist who would draw while Ada Skinner played songs?
3. Who are the four "S" founders of Maranatha?
4. What were the two buildings called that would house guests before the lodge was built?

Sports Camps

Baseball Camp Recap

Maranatha started sports camps off with baseball. 70 kids attended the camp and were led by six coaches: Brian Hommel, Tyler Keele, Terry Evans, Bill Curtis, Nick Hundley, and Mark Melancon who all had experience in professional baseball.

The theme of the camp was "Faith" from Hebrews 11:1 & 6 where it talks about how faith isn't just about understanding who God is, but also understanding how God sees you.

Throughout the week, the theme of joy seemed to unfold in the hearts of the kids and the dads. The Lord was working as the kids began to understand who they are and how God sees them.

-Brian Hommel, Summer Campus Pastor & Teen Supervisor



BASEBALL CAMP 2024

Tennis Camp Recap

During week two, there 60 kids who attended tennis camp led by Tanner Evans & Shellie Salazar. Tanner turned pro at 18, who both had experience with playing the sport at a higher level.

The theme verse for the week was Psalm 139: 14 which says, "I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Tanner and Shellie shared about God's love for each child and how He uniquely made each one with different talents & abilities. They also focused on how God has a plan and purpose for each life!

It was a great week despite some rain and gym time. The kids learned all the correct grips and form for ground strokes, volleys and serves, as well as how to start a match and keep score. They also played a lot of fun games along the way.

"My hope is that the kids experienced the love of God through myself, my sister, and the staff that helped out. I hope they gained a better understanding and love for tennis, but more importantly, a better understanding of who God is and how he sees and loves them."

-Tanner Evans, Tennis camp coach



TENNIS CAMP 2024

Sports Camps Cont.

Soccer Camp Recap

Maranatha hosted soccer camp the week of July 8-12 led by Mike Colago and his daughter Sage along with help from Maranatha & FCA staff! They had about 75 campers throughout the week. They did a lot of station work, specifically on dribbling, and target practice on a Maranatha staff member, Cohen!

Something special about the camp was that the coaches tried to defeat the idea of the kids feeling they couldn't do something, or being defeated by not being able to perform a particular skill. "I had a phrase: "YET!", meaning when I heard "I can't do this" I would say, "yet!" that's why we are practicing!" The skills do not just show up, they had to work to get better!

-Mike Colago, Soccer camp coach



SOCCER CAMP 2024

Volleyball Camp Recap

Week four was volleyball camp at Maranatha with almost 70 campers ranging 7-14 years old. The girls enjoyed nuke 'em volleyball, queen of the court, water balloon volleyball, and tournament play. It was a great week!

Something special throughout the camp was that most of the girls memorized the theme verse, Romans 15:13, and there was a lot of scripture used to encourage the girls with their relationships with God & others. "It was a great week glorifying God through sport!"

-Heather Bolhuis, Volleyball camp coach

Football Camp Recap

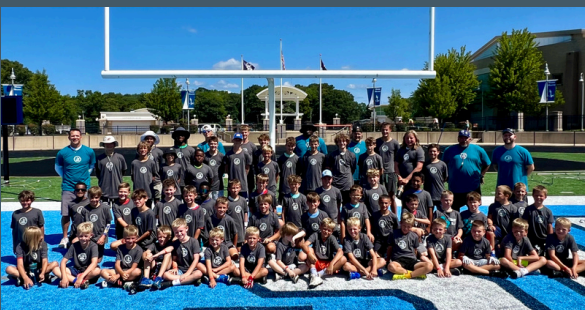
Football camp was hosted during week five and there were nearly 70 kids in attendance, mostly from the Muskegon community! The kids loved doing the different stations and the Air force football championship each day!

The Lord was working through the camp because of the joy that each of the campers had while being there. It was also really cool to see the growth from last year and their willingness to talk about Jesus!

-Tom Creuger, Football camp coach



VOLLEYBALL CAMP 2024



FOOTBALL CAMP 2024

SOUTH AFRICA DEDICATION CONT.



(continued)

Walt Wiley delivered an impactful speech on the significance of Bible camps and conferences, particularly for teens who encounter Christ at camp. Wiley's message culminated with a touching story about a boy named Jim Hoover, who invited a friend to his church camp, promising him basketball, a lake, and the chance to meet a special girl. However, the weekend didn't go as Hoover's friend expected—the boats were leaky, it rained the entire time, and the girl he hoped to meet was interested in someone else.

Despite these disappointments, Hoover informed his friend about the evening meetings held at the camp, and they both attended. During these meetings, a pastor spoke from the Bible, teaching that we are all sinners, separated from God because of our sins, and that this separation needed to be reconciled. After the first evening's meeting, the campers gathered around a campfire, where the pastor challenged them to accept Christ. It was there, by the campfire, that Jim Hoover's friend asked Jesus Christ to be his Lord and Savior.

That friend was Walt Wiley. It was during that weekend at camp, a camp much like Maranatha, that Wiley's life was transformed. His journey with God began when a 13-year-old boy invited him to a place like Maranatha, where he experienced a life-changing encounter with Christ.

(For Walt Wiley's full message, visit Maranatha's YouTube page.)

Gary Feenstra, Director of Development, provided an encouraging update on the progress of the Time to Rise campaign. With a goal of \$22 million, the Maranatha family has already raised over \$11 million.

The dedication of the South Africa building concluded with prayers led by Tom Bock, Maranatha Ministry Chair, and Brian Hommel, Maranatha Teens Supervisor & Staff Pastor.

Capping things off, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held, with Bock, Conni Vande Bunte (Board Chair), Ann Ledsworth (Director of HR, Programming & Hospitality), Dave Van Dyke (Task Force Chair), and Preuss participating. Once the ribbons were cut, the dedication was officially complete. Attendees were then invited to tour the new building and enjoy walking tacos, cookies, and snow cones as part of the celebration.

The Time to Rise Campaign is now in full swing. For more information about the campaign phases or to learn how you can contribute, please visit www.MaranathaMichigan.org/a-time-to-rise.

Trivia question answers:

1. Paul Rader
2. Karl Steele
3. Savage, Steele, Shufelt, & Skinner
4. "China" & "Island Inn"



The Latest with Chris Preuss

You feel it when you see two families reconnect after a year apart as they arrive and unload for their most anticipated week of the year. You see it in kids running, riding, swimming, and playing, caring only about being in the moment. And when the worship team is praising and God's word is resonating from the pulpit, you hear it as the Holy Spirit opens hearts to the Gospel. All of this is joyful worship of our God as people come each summer to Maranatha to be renewed, restored, and encouraged.

Our 2024 summer of "Contending for the Faith" (Jude 1:3) was remarkable in so many ways. As I reflect on my third summer in the role of helping to shepherd this wonderful ministry, several things come to mind. The first is thankfulness. I am thankful that God has sustained and grown this beloved ministry for nearly 90 years as His faithfulness endures. I am grateful for the remarkable missionaries we hosted and the gifted preachers who graced us with God's word. Our guests and members again gave several hundreds of thousands of dollars to support worldwide missions. Each week seemed to get better and better, and we once again witnessed the orchestration that only God can do, as all the sermons and mission themes connected into one continuous message.

The next word that comes to mind is encouragement.

I have learned to rely on God and seek His hand like never before in this role. As the months have passed, we have seen members and guests engage by giving their time, talent, and treasure to make our ministry thrive. The engagement of so many individuals, the sacrificial giving, the volunteer workers, the greeters, ushers, helpers at concerts, and the prayer warriors who meet each week make serving here a privilege and a joy. Our staff was also remarkable, with a wonderful crew of young adults supporting the season and the ever-faithful and hardworking full-time staff delivering every day this summer.

And the final word is excitement. I am so excited about the changes coming to the campus, with the South Africa building now open and our efforts turning toward the restoration of the Tabernacle. While we are maintaining the feel and substance of the Tabernacle, we are also addressing changes that will significantly enhance the experience for our guests, particularly in terms of safety, accessibility, comfort, easy access to restrooms, and better sightlines. We are also providing a much-improved experience for our speakers and concert artists with adequate climate control and upgraded A/V technology. The best part is the Tabernacle will be a year-round facility, making it a great opportunity for events and retreat groups.

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The Heart of Christmas

We are excited to introduce you to The Heart of Christmas Community event, taking place on December 6-7, 2024, at Maranatha in partnership with Unity Events (producers of the Unity Festival). This new annual celebration is designed to bring the true spirit of Christmas to our community in a way that uplifts, inspires, and brings us all closer together.

For this year, The Heart of Christmas will be a two-day open house event filled with joyful festivities, meaningful connections, and the sharing of the Gospel Message. Our vision is to create a warm, inviting atmosphere where families, friends, and neighbors can come together

to experience the heart of the Christmas story—God’s love for mankind. Throughout the event, attendees will enjoy walking beautifully lit paths, a self-guided walk through the story of Jesus’ birth, and family-friendly interactive activities. The goal is to offer something for everyone, from children’s activities that capture the wonder of Christmas to moving presentations that remind us all of the deeper meaning behind this special time of year.

This year’s event is a trial run of a much bigger concept that will be anchored in 2025 by two major Christmas concert weekends to be held in Maranatha’s newly renovated Tabernacle. The Heart of Christmas is more than just a holiday event; it’s an opportunity to strengthen our community bonds and make a lasting impact. We believe that in a world often filled with busyness and distractions, this event will provide a moment of reflection and connection—a chance to experience the love and hope that Christmas represents.

This is a wonderful opportunity for Maranatha to shine brightly at a most joyous time of the year, with a focus on telling the Gospel story and sharing the love of Christ with our local community. It will also help us fully utilize our wonderful facilities at a time when the campus is normally super quiet. There will be much more information coming on this wonderful new opportunity!

The Latest with Chris Preuss Cont.

(continued)

With much prayer and the faithful support of several member families who have contributed more than \$11 million to launch this effort, we are confident that we are moving in the right direction to take Maranatha forward into its next century of ministry. I hope you are as excited as the staff and board are about what is coming. We ask you to pray for the ministry as we move into the next phase of development. We also ask that you prayerfully consider participating in the funding campaign as well.

There is much more to say and much more to come that we will be communicating soon! While summer is winding down, our retreat and events schedule has us very busy all the way into the holiday season. May God richly bless and keep you as we go forth renewed, restored, and encouraged as we live out the Great Commission!

