

The CrossWay Current

April 2018

Notes from CrossWay Community – an Evangelical Free Church
3950 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

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The time has come to break the ground!

Praise the Lord! We have met our goal ahead of time!

Thanks to the generous giving of our congregation, spurred by the blessing and guidance of the Holy Spirit, more than the \$15,436 needed to begin construction on our Ministry Center addition has come in, weeks ahead of the April 16 target date. Given some cost-subtraction through contract negotiations, along with the addition of our recent building fund offerings, we've even moved past the next goal of providing for the main entrance canopy. Gifts now are being applied to completion and equipping of our new kitchen!

Thank you, Lord, for Your bountiful blessings! And a heartfelt thank-you to those who are answering the call.



**“Stay tuned”
for the big announcement
of our ceremonial groundbreaking!**



Reaching out “Go to this!”

Pastor Bob Manuel left us with this thought during Sunday School March 18,

encouraging all of us to go to CityFest's friendship evangelism training with Mark Mittelberg (pictured here), with your choice of date and venue: Tues., April 17, at Fair Haven Church in Hudsonville or Wed., April 18, at the new East Paris campus of Ada Bible Church, just north of CrossWay. Both events are free, and both begin at 7 p.m.

Luis Palau Evangelistic Assn. is bringing its highly successful festival model to West Michigan in early September, and as followers of Jesus Christ, it behooves us to be ready to do our part in reaching those whom God has chosen to hear His Gospel during that CityFest extravaganza.

And whether or not you see yourself as playing a role in CityFest, we all need a little refresher training for friendship evangelism from time to time. So, in the words of our pastor: “Go to it!” You, and someone you know, might well be eternally glad you did.

Growing in Hope CrossWay Community Church

Coming up at CrossWay Community

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| Every Sun. 10 a.m. | Worship together |
| Every Tues. 6 a.m. & 6 p.m. | <i>Every Man a Warrior</i> men's discipleship program |
| Every Tues. 1 p.m. | Women's Bible study |
| Every Thurs. 6:15 p.m. | <i>Wholyfit</i> exercise (church hosting) |
| Every Sat. 9 a.m. (exc. 1 st week) | Spiritual revival prayer mtg. |
| March 30 7 p.m. | Good Friday worship service |
| April 1 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. | Easter brunch |
| April 1 10 a.m. | Resurrection worship |
| April 1 11:30 a.m. | Groundbreaking ceremony |
| April 8 & 15 7 p.m. | Youth Group |
| April 7 9 a.m. | Women's breakfast @ IHOP |
| April 7 9 a.m. | Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans |
| April 17-18 | CityFest* friendship evangelism training (see details at left) |
| April 19 6:30 - 8 p.m. | Ladies' getting-to-know-you event @ Audrey Johnston's home |
| April 29 6 p.m. | Monthly prayer hour |
| May 5 11:30 a.m. | Ladies' spring salad luncheon |

* *CityFest* is the evangelistic festival of the Luis Palau Assn., being planned for next September in Grand Rapids.



The Gospel for little children

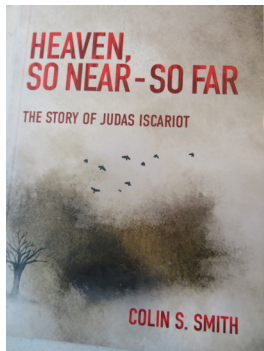
Our pastors don't often bring props to capture our attention during the weekly message from the pulpit. But the children's message — well, that's a different story!

A case in point: Cody Hinkle's charming use of a freshly baked loaf of bread that brought a lot of excitement to all those "small fry." One would think their parents had failed to feed them breakfast!

Thanks to Cody, Florence Funk and recently, Will Bell, for the creative efforts you put into leading our children (of all ages) from the front step. You truly offer the Bread of Life for those with ears to hear.

Reaching in ...

New at our church library



With perfect timing for this brand new book, now on our shelves for post-Easter reading, here's a slim volume from Pastor Colin Smith, senior pastor of The Orchard Evangelical Free Church, northwest suburban Chicago.

Pastor Smith draws from his study of Scripture to look at the divergent responses to the Cross by Judas and Peter, with the hope that those who are following Christ today would see His worth and continue on the path of faith, regardless of life circumstances. Know someone who's starting to drift? Read *Heaven, So Near — So Far*. 📖

Construction financial forecast



Our \$ goals to meet our timeline goals . . .

Balance needed to begin construction	\$15,436	by 4/13	✓
Add-ons needed . . .			
Main entry canopy	\$ 7,195	by 7/13	✓
Complete/equip new kitchen	\$12,310	by 9/14	
Furniture, fixtures & equipment	\$15,000	by 10/26	
Sanctuary air conditioning	\$24,034	by 6/2019	
Phase I renovations of existing bldg.	\$35,000	by 6/2020	
Phase II existing bldg. renovations	\$35,000	by 6/2021	

CrossWay Community Mission Statement:

God has called us to make disciples of Jesus Christ who respond to His Gospel by committing ourselves to loving God, one another and the world in Christ's name.

Ready for Easter?

A big thank-you to Dr. Bob Funk for his toil in preparing us for Easter through his Lent Light series from Feb. 14 through March 21. Now we're ready for Good Friday's time for worship and reflection at 7 p.m. and then our glorious celebration of Christ's Resurrection, on Easter Sunday at 10 a.m. Let's prepare our hearts.

Ladies,
leaping...



Our Women's Ministry team is storing away their snow boots and throwing off the effects of cabin fever, now that spring is here!

Two ladies' events are speedily upon us, with a home gathering planned for April 19 and a second on May 5 in fellowship hall.

Audrey Johnston is opening her home for an evening that promises to be fun! Thursday, April 19, from 6:30 to 8 p.m., we're invited to "let down our hair" and get to know one another. Each of us is encouraged to bring friends and to make sure our recent lady visitors know about this event.

Then, on Saturday, May 5, we'll meet for a salad lunch in CrossWay's fellowship hall. Sign-up sheets will be posted on Sunday mornings, beginning April 8. Women's Ministry will arrange for the beverages, rolls and dessert. It's up to the rest of us to bring our favorite salads to share. A main feature of this spring luncheon will be guest speaker Amy Richey of EFCA's ReachGlobal, who will be challenging us on the crisis of human trafficking. More on this event in the May *CrossWay Current*. 🙄

This message
from Pastor Bob Funk

From vice to virtue to evangelism

We have just completed a six-week series of Wednesday Night Lent Light suppers followed by my teaching on “The 7 Deadly Sins for Today.” The theme focused on how God sanctifies us and fashions us into the likeness of Christ. That is the work of the Holy Spirit, combined with our intentional effort. It is called “sanctification,” growth in holiness. God has said, “But just as He Who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written, ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’” (I Peter 1: 15-16)

In the very briefest summary, our Lenten series taught us that the seven vices are traits of character to which we must die in order to live as people with Christlike character. Also, the virtues are qualities of character that everyone who wants to become Christlike must seek to cultivate. As the Apostle Paul put it, each of us must, by effort and the work of the Spirit, seek “to put off your old self which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Ephesians 4: 22-24) The graced movement from “deceitful desires” to “true righteousness and holiness” is the movement “**from vice to virtue.**”

But wait. There is more! As you know, our maturing in Christ is not all about us. It is about enabling us to love and serve God and others. In other words, our sanctification is meant to serve our Christian vocation, which we summarize as “Reach Up, Reach In and Reach Out.” That’s where evangelism comes in.

Our growth into spiritual maturity in Christ (Reaching Up) gradually sets us free from the besetting sins and vices that otherwise would make Christian community (Reaching In) impossible. Then, God gives to all of us — the church — the Great Commission to “make disciples” (Reaching Out). All of this means, simply, that there is meant to be, in the church, a built-in movement “**from vice to virtue to evangelism.**”



What will this mean for us at CrossWay Community? Among other things, it will mean:

1. That we will continue to engage in Bible study, preaching, prayer and teaching that helps us to continue to grow and mature individually and as a congregation.
2. That we will have a greater emphasis on being equipped to do the work of evangelism, learning how to share our faith, becoming more hospitable and invitational and fruitful in reaching those who do not know Christ.

I, personally, have plenty of room to grow in these areas. I have also led seminars at various churches on faith-sharing and on the church as a witnessing “system.” I will be sharing some of these things at CrossWay in the hope that, together, we can enter into a new season of energy and enthusiasm and growth as individuals and as a church. After all, we soon will have a bigger church facility to fill!

Soli Deo Gloria



Hallelujah!



*This message
from Pastor Bob Manuel*

Getting ready, getting equipped to share Jesus

Greetings, CrossWay Family! I know Pastor Funk also shared a bit in this newsletter about personal evangelism, and I'd like to piggy-back some on the same topic.

Mostly, I want to remind us of a great opportunity we are being presented with to receive some training in personal evangelism.

Let me say briefly, I realize for a number of reasons, many of us struggle in this area of personally sharing our faith in Jesus. This article is not meant to "guilt you" into obedience. Guilt is a terrible motivator. Mostly, I want us all to experience the joy of obedience and the joy of sharing Jesus with others, even if we do feel scared or awkward at first.

Sharing what Jesus has done for us is like anything else: the more you do it, the more comfortable you become. Sharing Him becomes a beautiful and simple "overflow" of His life in and through you. As we ponder this, may God give us the grace to encourage one another to grow in this area.

From CityFest's website, we read this . . . **"BE EQUIPPED TO SHARE YOUR FAITH!** God has called us all to be prepared to share our faith with friends, family and neighbors. And we want to make sure you're ready! Learn how to share your faith through this powerful training with Mark Mittelberg and be equipped to be a Friend of the Festival for West Michigan CityFest on September 2-9, 2018. Don't miss these exciting opportunities!"

The first session is April 17, Fair Haven Church, 2900 Baldwin St., Hudsonville. The second option is April 18 at Ada Bible Church, East Paris Ave. SE, Grand Rapids. Both events begin at 7 p.m., and you can register for free at www.cityfestwestmichigan.org.

I know Pastor Funk has taught similar material over the years, and he might be offering some of his own training on evangelism in the future. Even if you receive some of Pastor Funk's teaching on the subject, I would still urge you to go to one of the CityFest training opportunities.

The most important reason I'd urge your participation with CityFest training is because it is an honoring and recognition of the wider body of Christ here in West Michigan. From God's perspective, there really is only ONE CHURCH in Grand Rapids (in the world actually!). This one church for which Jesus died just meets at different locations, under different names and denominations. An event like CityFest – including its training – is one very practical and tangible way we recognize this truth and, become a small part of the answer to His prayer in John 17:20-23. (Read it!).

I also believe CityFest may perhaps be part of the answer to the prayers of many for revival in West Michigan. Won't it be wonderful, to be a part of that?! The big CityFest event takes place from September 2-9, but many things are starting to be rolled out already that offer us opportunities for growth and connection to see what God is up to here in West Michigan. I'd encourage you to frequent the website at www.cityfestwestmichigan.org.

And last but not least, may I say, "Happy Easter" as we anticipate celebrating Jesus's resurrection! His death, burial and resurrection are what made this one church possible. Thank You, Jesus, for all You've done, all You are currently doing, and all that You will do for the glory of Your Father! **Amen.**

Thank you!

A special note of thanks to Bob Greenhoe and Mike Kramer for your unique presentations in our Sunday School hour on recent weeks.

We are all encouraged by your faithful witness and by the experiences you shared. God bless you!

Reaching up ...

EFCA Statement of Faith

We have copied this statement directly from the web (<https://www.efca.org/resources/document/efca-statement-faith>) for your convenience and as a reminder:

The Evangelical Free Church of America is an association of autonomous churches united around these theological convictions:

God

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

The Bible

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

The Human Condition

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

Jesus Christ

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus — Israel's promised Messiah — was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

The Work of Christ

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

The Holy Spirit

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

The Church

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the Gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

Christian Living

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the Gospel in word and deed.

Christ's Return

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

Response and Eternal Destiny

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the Gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

Where Christian service = *terrorism*?


After nearly a year-and-a-half in a Turkish prison with no charge against him, American pastor Andrew Brunson now knows the charge against him: Christianization, which a 62-page indictment characterizes as “terrorism.” The activities that led to this charge? Pastor Brunson has been living out his Christian faith, including providing “humanitarian aid, education and training.”

He and his family have lovingly served the people of Turkey for 23 years. But he became a person of interest to the regime in that Muslim-majority country following a coup attempt, one that has resulted in tension between our own government and our NATO ally Turkey. It seems the Turkish regime that remained in power found an opportunity to arrest Pastor Brunson so they could use him as a bargaining chip to force the United States to extradite to Turkey the presumed leader of that coup. Their President Erdogan has demanded a prisoner swap.

Support our missionary:

In September 2017, we were visited by one of our missionaries who went overseas for Christ directly from our congregation. Anita was trained as a nurse and has been applying her skills professionally and serving the Lord through building relationships in the Middle East. Finding a surprising openness to her as a Westerner, she has been sharing Wisdom passages with her new friends.


During her time addressing our adult Sunday School, Anita asked for prayer in her ministry. But she also brought a personal prayer request: She announced that she had met someone special from the States while in the field and asked for prayer for wisdom and balance as she entered a new phase of her life, planning from abroad an April 21, 2018, wedding to Peter in Atlanta, which her fiance calls home.

The time is approaching for that spring wedding, and CrossWay Community Church has the opportunity to bless this missionary in a very special way. During April, please place gifts in the white basket outside the sanctuary. Cash is okay. Checks should be written to CrossWay Community. We'll take it from there. (In compliance with the IRS, please do not write her name on checks.) 



Pastor Brunson was arrested in October 2016 and has remained imprisoned without charge until mid-March. At last, he anticipates an initial trial date of April 16. If convicted, he faces a 35-year sentence. Pastor Brunson is 50 years old.

What can *we* do? President Trump and our State Department are very well aware of the situation. His case is a major priority for our newly confirmed Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, Sam Brownback. And we know that God knows His servant's plight. But God has invited us to bring Him our petitions. He longs to see His people express their hearts to Him in prayer.

The situation is urgent and imminent. And so, let us pray for Pastor Brunson, his family and his Turkish church members. It's the least we can do for our family. 

Prayer
support
needed



west michigan
FRIENDSHIP CENTER

We have the opportunity to undergird with prayer a new outreach to refugees who live in the Grand Rapids area. Though there are similar ministries in cities across our country, to our knowledge, the West Michigan Friendship Center, opening April 14, is unique in our area. Located nearby, on 29th Street between East Beltline and East Paris, it has a full complement of volunteers to provide hospitality and programming for visitors to the center who have come to America from Muslim-majority countries.

It's an ambitious endeavor, particularly because of the tensions between participants' countries of origin. Indeed, Islam itself is divided in its practices. So the staff of the new center have asked us to pray for them in preparations for the grand opening and for their success in serving and building relationships, with opportunities for Christian witness anticipated on an individual basis down the road.