



November 2018

# CrossWay Community Current

*an Evangelical Free Church*

3950 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546 • 616.949.5690

## Here it comes!



The walls are up, and the roof structure is on the way! Before we know it, those basketball hoops will have a new home, inside our new building extension, where we can welcome young bucketeers to practice their skills. We'll have a new kitchen, where we can all practice our hospitality gifts and share home-cooked meals together and with neighbors. We'll have new classroom space and a new main entrance/foyer, where we'll be welcoming newcomers to enter and dig deep along with us into the Word of our Lord. Congratulations . . . and thanks be to God!

## CityFest aftermath . . . time for celebration

Thousands of believers, seekers and just-plain neighbors looking for some cool music came together in September for a weekend of challenge and deliverance, brought to western Michigan in a CityFest offered by the Luis Palau Evangelistic Assn.

Crossway Community folks participated in various ways, some paying more attention than others. Now comes an opportunity to participate in the celebration of thousands of our neighbors finding redemption through the Word of God that echoed throughout Grand Rapids.

We're all invited to a free concert by worship artist Tauren Wells, to come together in prayer and worship, to celebrate together what God has done and to hear how we as the Church can continue making an impact on our community.

Keynoting the celebration will be Cornerstone President Dr. Joe Stowell.

Calvary Church at 707 East Beltline is hosting the celebration on Thursday, Nov. 8, getting underway at 7 p.m. Free admission. Register at [cityfestwestmichigan.org](http://cityfestwestmichigan.org) or see Pastor Manuel.



## We need your input!

If you consider yourself part of the CrossWay Community, we hope you will want to be listed in our fellowship directory, due out in January. Please pick up a form on Sunday or call the church to request one so we have your up-to-date info.



## Coming up at CrossWay Community

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|-------------------------|--|
| Every Sun. 10 a.m.      | Worship together                               |
| Every Sun. 11:30 a.m.   | Sunday school                                  |
| Every Mon. 7 p.m.       | Every Man A Warrior discipleship training      |
| Every Tues. 1:15 p.m.   | Ladies Bible study                             |
| Every Thurs. 10 a.m.    | CrossWay Cradles Bible study (church hosting)  |
| Every Thurs. 6:15 p.m.  | Wholyfit exercise (church hosting)             |
| Every Thurs. 6:30 p.m.  | Hinkles' small group                           |
| Nov. 3 9 a.m.           | Ladies' breakfast @ IHOP                       |
| Nov. 3 9 a.m.           | Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans                    |
| Nov. 4 11:30 a.m.       | Christmas card party for persecuted believers  |
| Nov. 8 7 pm             | CityFest celebration @ Calvary Church          |
| Nov. 10, 17, 24 10 a.m. | Spiritual revival prayer meeting               |
| Nov. 11                 | Deadline: Christmas shoeboxes                  |
| Nov. 11 7 p.m.          | Youth group @ Immanuel RC on East Beltline     |
| Nov. 17 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. | VOM Advance Conference @ Kentwood Comm. Church |
| Nov. 21 6:30 p.m.       | Women's ministry event                         |
| Nov. 24 6 p.m.          | Monthly prayer hour                            |



*Florence Funk offers tips & insight on buying on a tight budget as kickoff speaker Oct. 17 for our Women's Ministry's new Wednesday night gatherings — third Wednesday monthly. Join us, ladies, for the fellowship!*

## Greeting cards sending love

Gather with your CrossWay friends on Sunday, Nov. 4, at 11:30 a.m. to send messages of hope to our brothers and sisters in China, Eritrea, Iran, Pakistan and Tajikistan, in chains for their faith in our Lord. Our annual Christmas-card-writing “party” shows those in chains — and their captors — that we are praying and that we care about them.

Please bring some sacred Christmas cards to address; we'll have a supply on hand for those who forget! We'll also provide heart-language Scripture verses to include in the envelopes. Please be prepared to donate funds to cover the postage, as the overseas rate runs \$1.20 per card mailed, and we anticipate a mailing list of 14 Christians imprisoned in some of the worst conditions imaginable. (The government of Eritrea routinely houses Christians in shipping containers with no ventilation and certainly no HVAC systems.) We obtain addresses and prisoner profiles from the Voice of the Martyrs website [www.prisoneralert.com](http://www.prisoneralert.com).

Our card party is scheduled this year to coincide with the International Day of Prayer (IDOP) for persecuted Christians. We will be praying with other churches around the world that day, crying out to God for strength and mercy for His faithful witnesses.

During the past year, *CrossWay Current* has reported on the release of three prisoners to whom we sent cards last November. Praise the Lord!

### **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.*

### **November Sunday School topics for *The God Who Speaks* video/discussion series:**

Nov. 11	Battles for the Bible
Nov. 18	Drifting from the Word
Nov. 25	Series summary

## **Be a blessing**

Christmas is a-comin' ... and it's time to bless a child!

Samaritan's Purse is once again enlisting our participation in Operation Christmas Child, by which Christians provide “shoeboxes” of gifts to show the love of Christ to needy children throughout the world.



Brochures giving us guidelines for participating in this blessing are in the narthex behind the sanctuary, and that's where we'll be collecting the boxes, due Sunday, Nov. 11.

After you pack the box (boxes?) with toys and school supplies, Samaritan's Purse will tuck in a booklet, *The Greatest Gift Gospel*, to reach the hearts and minds of these needy little ones.

Said Franklin Graham, president of this international ministry, “For the past 25 years, we have been collecting shoeboxes filled with gifts and delivering them to children in need around the world. Each box is an opportunity,” he stressed, “for a boy or girl to experience the love of God in a tangible way and hear the Gospel. Many boys and girls who receive shoebox gifts also participate in our follow-up discipleship program, *The Greatest Journey*, which teaches them how to faithfully follow Christ and share Him with others.”

A quick shopping trip with a child in mind can become a blessing forever in the life of a family somewhere in this world.

## **First-hand stories of courage**

The Voice of the Martyrs is bringing its free-admission Advance conference to Kentwood Community Church Saturday, Nov. 17, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Speakers include Gracia Burnham, Bob Fu and Todd Nettleton, with Amy Shreve leading worship. Register: [www.vomadvance.com](http://www.vomadvance.com).



*This message*  
*from Pastor Bob Funk*

## The Scriptures, the Spirit and Salvation

“... the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness ... .” (II Tim. 3:15-16)

As many of you know, we have been learning about the authority of the Bible in our adult Sunday School class utilizing a DVD series entitled *The God Who Speaks*. It is a vast topic, dealing with many subjects such as general and special revelation, inspiration, manuscript evidence, Jesus as “the Word,” the canon of Scripture and the tests of authenticity, Jesus’s view of Scripture, and more.

We have good reasons for considering the Bible to be the Word of God. It is important that we understand why we trust the Scriptures as our guide for all matters of faith and practice. Further, we should be able to give some answers to those who have honest questions about the Bible and our faith. However, we will not lead anyone to faith and salvation with answers and arguments alone. This leads to the point I want to emphasize in this brief article:

The *external* witness of the Scriptures must be empowered by the *internal* witness of the Holy Spirit. That is to say, it is God Himself who confirms the testimony of the Scriptures by the testimony of the Spirit in our hearts.

The Apostle Paul reminds us that the Gospel is “veiled to those who are perishing” and that “the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ.” (II Cor. 4:3-4) He speaks of the role of the Spirit, saying, “We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us . . . the man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him,



and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (I Cor. 2:12,14)

There are some important, practical ramifications that follow from all of this. For instance:

1. **A Christian, alone, cannot persuade people to believe.** All of God’s witnesses must pray and seek the power of the Holy Spirit to do what only God can do: give the lost eyes to see and ears to hear, that they might turn from their sin and darkness and may be saved.
2. **Satan has blinded people to God’s truth.** Satan does this “through the world system he has created. Without a Godly influence, man left to himself will follow that system, which panders to the depravity of unbelievers and deepens their moral darkness.” (John MacArthur)
3. **God himself authenticates the Scriptures to us as His Word.** This goes beyond mere human argument, persuasion and testimony. God opens hearts and enlightens minds to receive and believe the testimony of the Word written in Scripture and the Word incarnate in Jesus Christ.

Think about that. How amazing is the grace that saved you and me! We were blind, but now we see.

We see the glory of God in the face of Christ.

We hear the voice of God in the pages of the Holy Scriptures.

In other words, it is God, through the testimony of the Word of God, inspired and illuminated by the Spirit of God, who has saved us through the work of the Son of God.

I am convinced that, the more we understand these truths, the more we will realize that we have a joyful privilege and a sacred obligation to study and to share God’s Word with others so that they, too, may know God’s life and salvation. To that end –

See you in church. And Sunday School!



*This message  
from Pastor Bob Manuel*

## Thanks-Giving for Who You Are

Okay, here's my confession. It may mean little to those of you who do not share this struggle, but I assure you, there's someone close to you who does need to hear this. And I'd be so bold to say, you most likely, at some level, need to hear it, too!

My confession is this: I've spent a lot of time over the years trying to figure out "who I am." Early on I was Russ (my Dad) and Dorothy's (my Mom) little boy. That was enough. Yet when I got older, I became the "kid from a broken home with shabby clothes." A sense of "not enough" and something was wrong with me crept into my psyche. Theologians call it shame.

So what's a kid, a young man, a young Dad, older Dad and now Pastor to do with this shame? Well, my (our) automatic response is the sewing of "fig leaves." (Gen. 3:7-10) Adam and Eve's self-covering is perhaps the earliest expression of what we call "religion."

In our religious impulse, we try to find acceptance with God and one another through all sorts of self-righteous efforts. WE ALL DO IT — that is, cover our shame with "fig leaves."

Fig leaves are most often good things that, if we are not careful, we trust apart from, or in addition to, the grace of God, just in case His grace is not enough.

I suppose one way to measure our growth in maturity as Christ-followers is this: When we go about covering ourselves with a righteousness other than the one we find by faith in Jesus (see Phil. 3:6-9), we recognize and repent of it more quickly. Lord, have mercy.

To tie some of the above thoughts together with the idea of thanks during this Thanksgiving season, I'd suggest something like this: Thank God that your identity (who you are) is settled because of Jesus and what He has done. (Read Rom. 6:1-7, Gal. 2:20, Col. 3:1-4)

YOU are a deeply beloved child of God. Learning to live into that, to "become what you are," is what the Christian life is all about. Completely forgiven and

completely His, you are now His child, walking in the light and empowered to love God and love one another! (Gal. 5:1,6,13)

You see, when we walk according to the truth of who we are in Jesus, we begin to love more, sin less, and begin to take off our self-imposed fig leaves and religious masks.

Again, our walk with Him becomes less about "sin management" and more about enjoying Him, being loved by Him, loving Him and others.

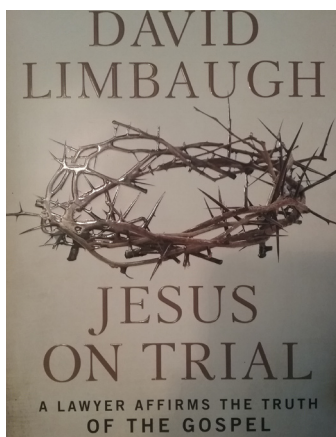
I will close with a few quotes to help illustrate. I hope it helps you to live out of your new identity and to feel blessed and thankful during the advent of our holiday season!

"If we are ever to enter fully into the glorious liberty of the children of God, we are going to have to spend more time thinking about freedom than we do. The church, by and large, has had a poor record of encouraging freedom. It has spent so much time inculcating in us the fear of making mistakes that it has made us like ill-taught piano students: we play our pieces, but we never really hear them, because our main concern is not to make music but to avoid some flub that will get us in trouble. The church, having put itself *in loco parentis* (in the place of a parent), has been so afraid we will lose sight of the need to do it right that it has made us care more about how we look than about who Jesus is." ~ Robert Capon, *Between Noon and Three*, p. 149.

"What if it was less important that anything gets fixed than that nothing has to be hidden?" ~ *The Cure*, p. 67.

"What if there was a place so safe that the worst of me could be known, and I would discover that I would not be loved less but more in the telling of it?" ~ *The Cure*, p. 29.

## New to the CrossWay library



Christians are called to be ready with a defense of our faith. In 21<sup>st</sup>-century America, we can easily find ourselves on the front lines, as many are questioning the truth of the Gospel. *New York Times* bestselling author David Limbaugh puts his legal training to use in outlining powerful arguments for the

defense of the Bible. Now available for your study in the CrossWay Library.

Also new this month, for the serious Bible student, the NIV Hebrew-Greek *Key Word Study Bible*, presenting the English text augmented by both Hebrew and Greek dictionaries for key words marked in the Scripture.



## Support our co-workers: Steve and Merrilee Torgerson

Long-term CrossWay friend Steve Torgerson came for a visit the last weekend in October. His friends at our church doubtless missed seeing his wife Merrilee on this trip, but she remained in Hong Kong, as a Bible study she is leading was just getting underway.

Steve is CEO of Systematic Asian Leadership Training (SALT), a ministry in transition as the principal country of their focus is undergoing a fresh



*Steve Torgerson (l) joined us on Oct. 27 for our revival prayer and then walked "our" neighborhood with Paul Samuelson, Pastor Bob Manuel and Annette Doerr.*

### Please pray:



for God to continue to veil SALT in-country so that the government fails to become interested in its activities.



for safety for the staff, who may soon be limited in communication outside the country.



for wisdom for the staff, as they are eager to expand their ministry outreach in spite of the challenges they face.

## Reaching up ...

### Salvation

#### In Four Words

Salvation Needed  
Salvation Provided  
Salvation Offered  
Salvation Accepted

Romans 3:10,23  
I Peter 2:24; Romans 5:6-8  
Ephesians 2:8; John 3:16  
I John 5:12; John 3:36

#### A Salvation Summary

God's Part  
Christ's Part  
Your Part

John 3:16  
Romans 5:8  
John 6:37

## Only God ...

*A grateful  
Pastor Andrew  
Brunson pays  
it forward by  
praying for  
our President  
in the Oval Of-  
fice on his first  
day "home."*



evaluation of the government's response to the advancement of Christianity within its borders. The challenges are many, but SALT has been preparing for change for some time now, and Steve approaches his work with peace and joy, trusting in the Lord and in the staff he has trained "for such a time as this," as the Bible says in the Book of Esther.

Steve also graciously addressed those of us who remained for a potluck lunch after Sunday School.

**To join Torgersons' communications & prayer support team, contact Pam Reed.**