



December 2018

# CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

3950 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546 • 616.949.5690

**Give yourself & family a gift this Christmas  
to keep CrossWay close to your heart all next year**

During the month of December, we are offering a unique calendar for 2019 . . . a flip calendar heralding CrossWay Community Church: Looking Back to Look Ahead, featuring photos of our members engaged in mission as well as early phases of our building project. You might recognize some of the photos from back issues of *CrossWay Current*!

A donation of \$5 is requested for each calendar, and we encourage you to pick one up for home and office, where you can use it as a tool of invitation to your church.

See Penny Pullen for your CrossWay calendars.



*Looking back to look ahead: Our 2019 calendar for you!*



Christmas is a-comin' and it's time to deck the halls of CrossWay Community Church! All are welcome to join the volunteer crew to get the job done quickly on Saturday morning, Dec. 1, right after the Ladies' and Men's Breakfasts, around 10:30 a.m. Just come to church, and we'll put you to work!

## How can we find you?

Time to turn in your personal info form for our 2019 Fellowship Directory, due out in January.



Please pick up a form on Sunday (lobby table just outside the sanctuary) or call the church to request one so we have your up-to-date family & location info.



**A bump of progress! Be sure  
to see page 6 for cool pix!**

**To God be the Glory!**



**See Page 2  
for  
Sermon  
Schedule**

## Coming up at CrossWay Community

Every Sun. 10 a.m.	Worship together
Every Thurs. 6:15 p.m.	Wholyfit exercise (church hosting)
Every Thurs. 6:30 p.m.	Hinkles' small group
Dec. 1 9 a.m.	Ladies' breakfast @ IHOP
Dec. 1 9 a.m.	Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans
Dec. 1 after breakfasts	Christmas season church decorating
Dec. 2, 16 6 p.m.	Alveses' small group @ Doerrs'
Dec. 2 11:30 a.m.	Sunday School (thereafter suspended for season)
Dec. 3, 10, 17 7 p.m.	Every Man A Warrior discipleship training
Dec. 4, 11, 18 1:15 p.m.	Ladies' Bible Study
Dec. 8, 15, 22, 29 10 a.m.	Spiritual revival prayer meeting
Dec. 9 11:30 a.m.	Christmas potluck
Dec. 15	Fellowship directory form deadline
Dec. 19 6:30 p.m.	Women's ministry Christmas tea
Dec. 23 6 p.m.	Monthly prayer hour
Dec. 24 7 p.m.	Christmas Eve worship
Dec. 25	Christmas!

## Sermons to anticipate in the Advent/Christmas Season

### *Advent — As We Wait and Watch for Christ's Coming*

- Dec. 2 "Your Redemption Is Drawing Near"  
Luke 21: 25-36
- Dec. 9 "He Who Began a Good Work in You . . ."  
Philippians 1: 3-11
- Dec. 16 "What Then Should We Do?"  
Luke 3: 7-18
- Dec. 23 "The Blessedness of Believing"  
Luke 1: 39-55, esp. v. 45
- Dec. 24 "Between Christmas and the Blessed Hope"  
7 p.m. Titus 2: 11-14
- Dec. 25 No Service

## Getting together . . .



CrossWay youth met at Immanuel Reformed Church for a November evening with their peers from Immanuel and from the House of God youth fellowship.

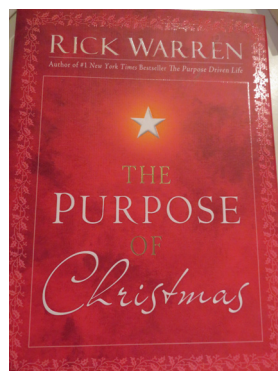
The evening opened with a time of worship led by our own Hannah Samuelson, Ezra Alves, Rachel & Gabe

Stevens, joined by a student from Immanuel on guitar.

Immanuel's youth director led a spiritual lesson on the goodness of fellowship, and the evening was topped off by a half-hour of dodge ball, played nerf-style, showing off the remarkable dexterity of Michael Stevens & Will Bell. Homemade snacks and sweets topped off the evening of fun and fellowship.

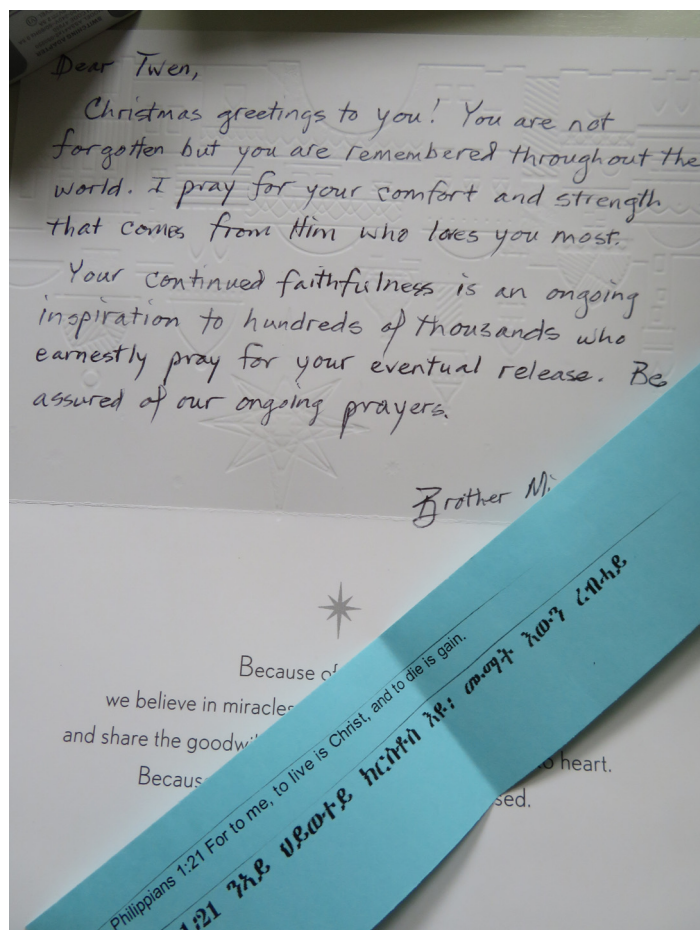
## New to the CrossWay library

If you're serious about getting the most out of the Advent season, you'll want to be the first to check out Rick Warren's *The Purpose of Christmas*, newly shelved in the CrossWay library. Enjoy!



## 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.*



## Messages to brothers & sisters in harm's way . . . today's heroes in the faith

About 35 CrossWay members and friends gathered in early November for two hours of reaching out to 14 persecuted Christians imprisoned for their faith in six countries, chiefly in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

The outreach was expressed through personally signed Christmas cards, many with heartwarming personal messages and each enclosing a slip bearing scripture in the prisoner's heart language.

More than 200 cards were sent this year to prisoners identified by Voice of the Martyrs, a ministry founded by celebrated evangelist Richard Wurmbrand. Also in November, several CrossWay Christians participated in VOM's full-day regional conference hosted by Kentwood Community Church.

This was the third year for CrossWay to participate in this unique Christmas-season blessing, and organizers plan to invite Kentwood Community Church members to participate next year in our new ministry center.



*This message*  
*from Pastor Bob Funk*  
**“Keep Watch” —**  
**He Is Coming Again!**

*“No one knows about that day or hour; not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man... Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.”*

(Matt.24: 36-42)

On the southwest coast of Italy lies the ancient city of Pompeii, just a short distance from Mt. Vesuvius. In the year 79 AD, this volcano erupted, destroying Pompeii, covering it with ash, cinders, stones and pumice at the rate of six inches per hour, amounting to nine feet in 17 hours. Many bodies were found by archaeologists in deep vaults, as if trying to escape the volcano's destruction. There was also one notable exception. The guard, or sentinel-watchman, who stood at the gate of the city, was found at his post. His hands were still clutching his weapon. You see, he had been commanded by his captain to continue his watch, and even in the face of death, he remained at his post.

In this season of Advent, we not only remember the first coming of Christ into the world, but we also look forward to His second coming. We are to be like the



guard, the watchman who remained at his post; we are to be about doing what our Lord commanded us to do, until He comes again.

To this day Jesus says to us all, “Keep watch.” In other words, remain at your post. He is coming again! This is the second Advent and, rather than death, Christ is coming to bless us with life with Him forever and ever.

As the Scriptures promise:

*“At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And He will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”* (Matt.24: 30-31)

I hope you will all be edified by our Advent sermon series for 2018. The theme is, “Advent — As We Wait and Watch for Christ's Coming.”

Merry Advent-Christmas!



Pastor & Mrs. Funk (center) host CrossWay friends at the Pregnancy Resource Center November banquet.  
From left: Julie Davidson, Pam Reed, Penny Pullen, Florence & Bob, Bob & Marcy Greenhoe and Sandy Williams.



Christmas is a time known for many festivities, singing being one of them. We have our Christmas songs, echoing Jesus's birth announcement by the angels (Luke 2:13-14).

I want to encourage you this Christmas not only to sing but to listen to the singing of the One Whom we sing to and about. That is, listen to Jesus singing among us when we meet for our worship this Advent/Christmas season.

Perhaps you've heard the old country song titled "Daddy sang Bass." A few lines go like this: "Daddy sings bass, momma sings tenor, brother and sister join right in there . . ." Well, I don't know what "part" Jesus sings (bass, tenor, baritone?!), but I do know He sings. Let me explain.

Professor Reggie Kidd, in his book *With One Voice, Discovering Christ's Song in our Worship*, writes this:

"Barbershop quartet singers claim that when their voices blend just right, they hear a 'fifth voice.' That aural illusion created by harmonics is, I believe, a divine whisper of something that is absolutely true of our singing when we gather in worship. For the Bible says that in the church Jesus is singing hymns to the Father (Heb.2:12) and that, in fact, He is our worship leader (Heb. 8:2, literally, 'Liturgist'). It is important for us to sing so we can hear that 'fifth voice.'" (Kidd: *With one Voice*, pp.20-21)

I can personally attest to Kidd's reference to barbershop singing. I sang barbershop music for four years during high school. We traveled to many states and even had a chance to sing for President Jimmy Carter at a national educational conference in Atlanta, Georgia. We often, especially at the end of a phrase, would hear this "overtone," this ringing, this "fifth voice," and, I assure you, it was no illusion.

*This message  
from Pastor Bob Manuel*

## Our Singing Savior

Today, when I worship in church or when I led worship in the past and when I preach today, I often listen for this "fifth voice" — the voice of Jesus. I think every good Pastor and worship leader does this. I think we would also all agree, while it's good to hear our worship leaders and our Pastor, Who we really need to hear from the most is Jesus Himself. Pastors and worship leaders long for you to *hear* the voice of our Good Shepherd singing among us, leading us to the green pastures of worship. In fact, if you hear only the Pastor or the worship leader, something is missing! Today if you hear His voice . . . (Hebrews 3:7).

But I digress! What's this have to do with Christmas? Hallelujah — just about everything! The Incarnation, His birthday, Christmas Day, makes all of this so very possible. Kidd goes on to say in his book that we sing not only to connect us to Jesus but, just as important, our singing connects Him to us as well. I'd encourage you to go back and read Hebrews 2:12 and 8:2. The word "assembly" (NIV) in 2:12 is a Greek word that is very often translated "church." Jesus sings and leads our worship in His church. Do you hear Him? Are you singing along with Him?

Finally, Kidd reminds us,

"When Paul tells his churches to "let the word of Christ dwell . . . richly" among them by means of "psalms, hymns and spiritual song" (Col. 3:16 NIV), he's inviting them to do more than use music as a "warm up" to the sermon. The song is not ornamentation; it is participation in the very redemption of all creation." (Kidd, p.21).

Jesus, thank you for continuing the song of Your Father, Who with delight, sings over His broken people (Zeph. 3:17). Thank you that we don't have to be good singers or have great voices to sing along with You. Thank You for being our Good Shepherd Whose voice we willingly follow and listen to, and makes it possible to encourage one another, "Brother and sister, let us join right in there!"



## Trouble in Paradise

We've all seen the news coverage of the "Camp" fire in northern California, which has finally been conquered by heroic efforts of countless firefighters. The devastation was shocking to us all.

By now we know that 90% of the homes in the town of Paradise have burned to the ground. Few public buildings remain, as well.

"I can't express what I'm seeing," shared Pastor Art, senior pastor of the Paradise Evangelical Free Church. "The magnitude and scope are beyond belief." Yet by some miracle, the flames bypassed the church building.

Eighty homes of EFCA congregants were destroyed by the fire, leaving just two families from Paradise EFC with homes to which to return. Still, by the grace of God, all the congregants' lives were spared.

EFCA's Crisis Response Team has arrived and, along with the physical restoration efforts, is focusing on trauma care, providing support and counseling to those who experienced this disaster firsthand.

As part of the Body of Christ, we can help. Our denomination's Internet web page has a mechanism for donation. Go to [www.efca.org/wildfire-response-paradise-california](http://www.efca.org/wildfire-response-paradise-california) or you may write a check, including on the memo line "Paradise CA Fire Response 21709-39286" and mailing it to:

EFCA  
901 E. 78th St.  
Minneapolis MN 55420

Even as we are building our addition, let's bless our now-homeless Paradise brothers and sisters and keep them in our prayers.

### Concerned about Inclement Weather?

On rare occasions, we need to call off or postpone activities – even (though infrequently!) a Sunday service. If you are wondering, tune in to WOOD-TV (ch. 8), WZZM (ch. 13) or WCSG Radio (91.3 FM). We'll notify them if we need to cancel.

## Keep praying: Asia Bibi



In June 2009 farming coworkers in Pakistan refused to drink from the same cup as Asia Bibi, mother of five and unashamed Christian. They considered the cup unclean.

The dispute that followed ended with Asia's arrest under Pakistan's harsh blasphemy law and led to her imprisonment the following year, where she has remained on death row.

At the end of October, her conviction was overturned by the Pakistan Supreme Court, leading to her release...into protective custody. Currently, she and her family are in constant danger while the free world argues over which country will take the risk of offering them asylum.

The Supreme Court's decision unleashed rioting and threats to the minority Christians in this Muslim-majority country.

Let us pray for Asia Bibi, for Pakistan's Christians, and for the struggling governments of the world.

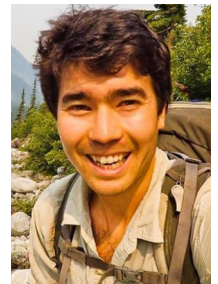
## RIP, John Allen Chau

On November 17, John Allen Chau, a graduate of Oral Roberts University, completed his journey on earth, martyred by the Sentinelese tribal people on the Indian island of North Sentinel.

"When I heard the news of John's death, I couldn't believe it. I was numb. John loved people, and he loved Jesus. He was willing to give his life to share Jesus with the people on North Sentinel island," said Mat Staver, founder and chairman of Covenant Journey, a training ministry in which Chau participated.

"Ever since high school, John wanted to go to North Sentinel to share Jesus with this indigenous people," said Staver. "John loved his parents and his family. ... While we grieve, John is celebrating eternal life with Jesus, whom he loved dearly."

News reports of John Chau's death have been inconsistent as to his motives for attempting to contact this unreachable and seemingly unreachable tribe. But we have here the story from one who knew him. Let's praise God for his sacrifice and pray for his family.







The sun has risen on CrossWay!

The work is underway!



Reaching up . . .

. . . Reaching out!

