



November 2019

CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

3950 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546 • 616.949.5690

www.crosswaygr.com

Any day now . . .

The long-awaited addition to CrossWay is so close to being ready. We praise God for all the progress and wait on His plan for the completion of the facility . . . as the building completion is just the beginning of what the Lord has planned for CrossWay to undertake for His glory and the advancement of His Gospel.

“Deadlines” have come and gone, but any progress gives us a peek into what is to be. And we are eager for completion of the work and then the clearance of the City of Grand Rapids for us to “move in.” What an exciting candle for the top of the Christmas tree!

Though the congregation has had a hand in the project from time to time — planting gardens, touring the site — our principal jobs are two: to pray fervently and give generously toward completion of the multi-purpose addition.

Whatever you can do to pray and give toward completion, the time is here and the need is now.

Outstanding Building Finance Needs

Coffee service equipment*	\$1,500
Volleyball equipment	\$ 2,940
Athlete-safe flooring	\$25,000 (est'd)
Lobby furnishings balance	\$2,500 (est'd)
Kitchen pass-thru “doors”	\$5,045
Classroom table/chairs	\$1,500 (est'd)

** most urgent!*

Christmas card writing party

By now it's a CrossWay tradition. The date for our annual Christmas Card Writing Party is Sunday, Nov. 10, right after worship. The blessing is for persecuted Christians around the world. Please bring sacred-style cards, if you can, and a gift for postage. Plan now to spend this time together reaching out to those in prison for the Gospel.

Coming Up at CrossWay Community

Every Sun. 10 a.m.	Worship together
Every Sun. 11:30 a.m.	Sunday School (all ages)
Every Sun. 6 p.m.	Book Club
Every Tues. 1 p.m.	Ladies Bible study (conf. rm.)
Every Wed. 7 p.m.	Hinkle small group
Every Thurs. 2 - 4 p.m.	Learn Biblical Hebrew (here)
Nov. 2 9 a.m.	Ladies' breakfast @ IHOP
Nov. 2 9 a.m.	Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans
Nov. 3 & 17 6 p.m.	Alves small group @ Doerrs'
Nov. 7, 14, 21 6:30 p.m.	Wholyfit exercise (church hosting)
Nov. 10 11:30 a.m.	Card writing to persecuted
Nov. 12 & 26 6:30 p.m.	Veurink small group @ A. Le's
Nov. 13 2:30 - 5:30 p.m.	Pregnancy Ctr. counseling (here)
Nov. 17	Christmas Shoeboxes due!
Nov. 24 6 p.m.	All-church prayer meeting



Pick up a ‘shoebox’ and go shopping for a child! Purchase and pack items for a boy or girl, bring the box to church by Nov. 17 ... & Samaritan's Purse will tuck in a Gospel for each child we bless.

Who's coming to dinner?

CrossWay's Missions Outreach Steering Committee invites YOU to host a Calvin student for Thanksgiving dinner at your home.

Many students are from overseas and won't be traveling home this special time of year when the campus empties and becomes a lonely place. And if you can't invite them for Thanksgiving, sign up to host a student for Sunday dinner during Advent, or for Christmas Eve or even Christmas Day.

This project gives us a great opportunity to reach out in love. Look for the sign-up sheet just outside the sanctuary. Questions? Contact Stella Michael, Paul Samuelson or Annette Doerr, all of whom you'll find listed in the CrossWay Fellowship Directory.



Something new coming to CrossWay ... Intrigued? Contact Women's Ministry Team Leader Brett Kelp; she's listed in the Fellowship Directory!

Opening our doors to those in need

The Pregnancy Resource Center of Grand Rapids has linked arms again with CrossWay Community Church to serve young moms in need in our area.

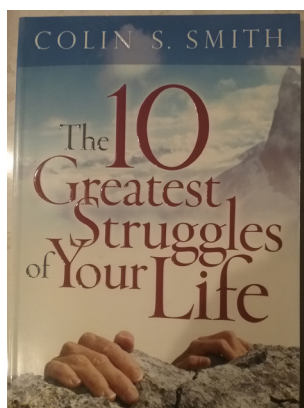
On the third Wednesday of each of the next four months, our doors will be open to PRC staff and clients for counseling sessions and to equip the young mothers with gifts of diapers and other baby needs.

We give thanks to our Women's Ministry Team for recruiting CrossWay volunteers needed as hostesses for this important work in Jesus' name.

And we ask our congregation to join us in prayer for this outreach.

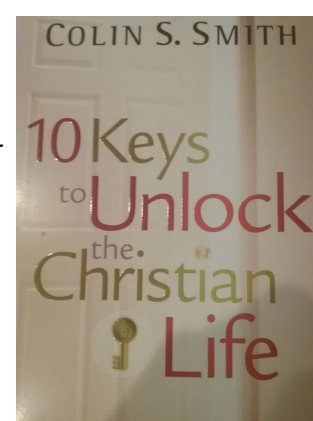


Struggling to put your faith into action?



CrossWay's library now sports two paperbacks by E-Free Church Pastor Colin Smith, author of *Ten Keys to Unlocking the Bible*. The books are based on sermon series prepared for his growing congregation in Chicago's northwest suburban area. *Unlock the Christian Life* offers a fresh look at the book of I Peter. *Greatest Struggles* leads you to a fuller understanding of the Ten Commandments.

Check out one or both of these books, or others, by signing the pad near the library door, just off the little kitchen near the Burton Street entrance.



Fall sermon series

The Life & Work of Jesus Christ—12 BIG Words for Today's World

September sermons centered on His Life: Incarnation (John 1:14), Humiliation (Phil. 2:7-8), Crucifixion (Phil. 2:8), Resurrection (John 11:25-26); October on Ascension (Acts 1:11); Exaltation (Phil. 2:9-11); and on His Work: Salvation (Oct. 20), Propitiation (Oct. 27), continuing into November:

His Work

Nov. 3	Reconciliation (Col. 1:19-20)
Nov. 10	Mediation (1 Tim. 2:5)
Nov. 17	Intercession (Rom. 8:34, Heb. 7:25)
Nov. 24	Glorification (Rev. 5:13)
Dec. 1	Advent 1

'Small group' invitation

CrossWay members and attenders are welcome to participate in a "small group" for fellowship and spiritual development. This fall, four small groups are meeting. Choose one you'd like to visit (if you're not already connected), and let the host know you're planning to attend. (If you don't have a Fellowship Directory, you can discuss it with the host on Sunday or check with the church office for the host's phone number and address.) Dates and times are listed in our "Coming Up" calendar, on page 1.

Sarah & Cody Hinkle open their home each Wednesday. Every other week, Becky & Alvin Alves lead a small group at the home of Annette & Alan Doerr, and Amanda Le hosts a Bible-study small group, led by Marie & Dennis Veurink.

Brenda Weilnau is leading a book-club small group at the church weekly, focusing currently on C.S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*.

This message
from Pastor Bob Funk

Not even sermons are safe any more



The above title is taken from an article by David Closson of the Family Research Council. It chronicles the story of The Crossing Church of Columbia, Missouri. The church had gained some national attention for raising more than \$430,000 to help its members pay off unpaid medical bills.

Then, the church found itself once again in the news, because the pastor preached a sermon on October 13th titled “Male and Female. Ancient Text. Modern Debate.” He preached on God’s design for sexuality versus transgenderism, discussing a Biblical perspective from Genesis 1 and Matthew 19.

While speaking lovingly and with compassion, he also explained “how men and women are created in God’s image and how the transgender movement does not align with the Bible’s teaching on sex and gender complementarity.” Despite the pastor’s attempt to model kindness and avoid any political partisanship, the local LGBT activists launched a petition demanding that local businesses cut ties with the church.

Closson writes, “From the halls of Congress to state legislatures, town halls to school board meetings, many are unified in opposing Biblical truth on the issue of human sexuality. May all Bible-believing Christians unite to defend the truth in the public square — before it is too late.”

Recently, a candidate for President of the United States declared that, if elected, he would take away the non-profit tax exemption from any organization that does not affirm his view of marriage equality and the LGBTQ view of sexual relationships.

You may also have read very recently the story about the Texas father, Jeffrey Younger, whose ex-wife planned to begin gender transition treatments for their 7-year-old son. Instead of “James,” the ex-wife called the boy “Luna,” dressed him as a girl and sought to force Younger to affirm the boy as transgender and to pay for his visits to a transgender-affirming therapist and for the transgender medical alterations, including “chemical castration” when he turns 8. Younger claims that his son chooses to dress as a boy

and identify as a boy when he is at his (the dad’s) home. James also told his father that his mother told him he was a girl when he was only 3 years old.

A jury ruled 11-1 against the father, and as a result, awarded the mother the authority to start James on puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones, also requiring Younger to affirm James as a girl and to take a class on transgenderism. Texas legal authorities are looking further into this case, and protestors are demanding legislation to prevent such abuses.

While it may be true that “not even our sermons are safe any more,” that is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the secular groups who want to force their agenda on all Americans. The truth is, not even our children are safe any more.

It used to be that the church was the moral conscience of the nation. And the government respected the “separation of church and state.” Now the government increasingly is taking over the management of a secular religion and demands compliance from the church. Political candidates and powerful groups are demanding the silencing of Christian views and even punishment of those who do not agree. They are using the courts, certain judges and the media to go after Christians. They seek to punish their opposition with monetary fines, lost employment and business, and public ridicule and shaming.

The church can no longer afford to hide away inside its walls on Sunday mornings. If Christians do not work together to protect their freedoms, they will be lost.

Franklin Graham recently quoted the prophet Isaiah regarding these matters. As God’s Word in Isaiah says, “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness ...” (Is. 5:20)

Remember David Closson’s words: “May all Bible-believing Christians unite to defend the truth in the public square — before it is too late.”

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.



This message
from Pastor Bob Manuel

Pause for His cause

There is an organization providing assistance dogs that you might be aware of. It's called "Paws with a Cause."

Well, this month, I'd like to encourage you to *pause* for a much more far-reaching, life-embracing cause. While it might be a bit unrealistic, seeing we are coming into a very busy time of year, this is the very reason to encourage such pauses. As we look to the very busy time of Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, there is so much to do. So little time.

Pause. That's what I want to encourage you to do this season. Pause. Lots. of. little. pauses. throughout the day. Consistently planned, life-giving pauses. Perhaps every hour on the hour. I don't know; I'll leave that up to you.

But here's what's on my mind/heart as I write: I don't want you to miss Him, His love, kindness and attention to you this holy-day season. Let me suggest a few differences some well-planned pauses might make, so your holiday season might become less crazy and more holy . . .

- You'll become more aware of His "speech" to you throughout the day. One older hymn, *This Is My Father's World*, mentions "in the rustling grass, I hear Him pass. He speaks to me everywhere." David writes in the Psalms: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." (Ps. 19:1-4) Pause and listen. What is He saying to you? What might He want to

say to you this holiday season? You might never find out unless you pause to hear.

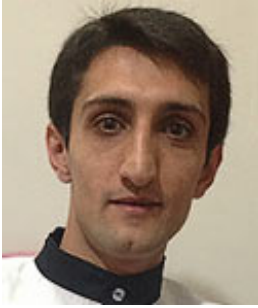
- Your life becomes bigger and richer. I'm thinking along the lines of Ephesians 1:20 and Colossians 1:20, where we are told our salvation is not just a "personal" thing for us, but as we are included in Christ, we are part of a cosmic reconciliation. God is bringing "*all* things together in heaven and on earth under Christ." Football fans get excited to go to the "Big House" (if you're a Michigan fan!) or a Super-bowl even. Part of the awe is, you become aware that you are part of something HUGE and you are a part of it! Caught up in it. Likewise, as Christians, we are part of a "winning team" called the Body of Christ, His church. Take time to pause and consider. Your life will become bigger and richer.

- You'll become more God-centered, worshipful and in awe of Him. As a result, you'll relax more, stress less. I'm thinking in terms of the Revelation. As each of the seven churches are urged, "Whoever has ears, let them *hear* what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). You see, the churches, who at that time were all under threat of present or possible future persecution needed to be reminded of Who the true King was. It was not the Emperor of Rome. The true King's name was Jesus. Kanye West, a musical artist who in 2013 released a track with the title "I Am a god," has just released an album with the title "Jesus is King." We so need to hear the Spirit to remember this, not just cognitively but deep down to our bones. And to hear, we often need to pause.

My prayer and hope for all of us this holiday season is to *pause* for His cause so we can become aware of His speech, that our lives would become bigger and richer, and that we might become more God-centered, worshipful and in awe of Him.

Time to write some special Christmas cards!

If you've attended our card-writing parties in the past, you'll recognize these two gentlemen. Guess what? They've both been released!



Ibrahim Firouzi has been in prison off and on in **Iran** since January 2011. As of October 26, he has been released to spend the next two years in what's called internal exile. While his liberty is still somewhat curtailed, he is healthy and in good spirits.



Voice of the Martyrs workers report **Abraham Ben Moses** received parole on April 26, 2019, after 509 days in prison in **Indonesia**. He is back home with his family, but he must report weekly to the police station.

PRAISE THE LORD!

The Party — Nov. 10

Our work of encouragement is far from complete. Though we cannot reach out to every member of the family of Christ serving Him in chains, we can use the information that The Voice of the Martyrs makes available on its website and send cards to a handful — this year, 13 at this writing. (It was to be 14 before Ibrahim was released this week!)

We'll be meeting in Fellowship Hall for this 4th annual event. Please bring — if you can — Christmas cards of a sacred style, suitable for cross-cultural communication. Bring friends with you.

You'll find guideline and prisoner profile packets, pens and light refreshments waiting for you on Sunday, Nov. 10, after the 10 a.m. worship service.

International postage is \$1.20 per card and will likely be increasing in 2020. Your donations to cover this year's mailing and even prepare for next year will help so much to keep this tradition in place and growing at Cross-Way.

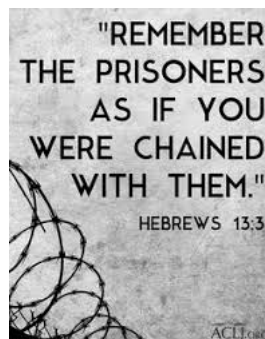
CHINA:
Pastor John Cao
Zhang Shaojie
Alimujiang Yimiti

ERITREA:
Mussie Eyob
Meron Gebreselasie
Twen Theodros
Mussie Ezaz
Dr. Kiflu Gebremeskel
Kidane Weldou
Halie Nayzgi

IRAN:
Naser Navard Gol-Tapeh

PAKISTAN:
Imran Ghafur

TAJIKISTAN:
Bakhrom Kholmatov



Pray that our persecuted family will:

Sense God's presence

Know we are praying for them

Experience God's comfort

See God open doors for evangelism

Boldly share the Gospel

Mature in their faith

Be granted wisdom in covert ministry work

Remain joyful amid suffering

Forgive and love their persecutors

Be rooted in God's Word



A garden will greet us
at our new entrance . . .

. . . and inside:
the basketball
hoop is ready
for action!



A lobby
that just
doesn't
stop!



And our new kitchen . . .
almost ready!

