



Turn back your clock on Oct. 31!

November 2020

# CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

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## Getting ready for next steps

Elder chairman Bob Johnston is reminding us, we're not done yet with upgrading our facilities!

Good news: We don't owe any more money to the general contractor for the major expansion project we've been pursuing these past two years.



Next up: installing an enclosure around the dumpster just off the parking lot; the parts have been ordered and the crews are being assembled; cost, expected to hit \$7,800 at most. Once this project is completed, the city permit process should be complete.

The congregation's Aesthetics Committee and Kitchen Committee have been prioritizing finishing touches for the west lobby, south wing and kitchen. These volunteers have been working with Elder Bob to develop an overall plan and assign budget estimates to the improvements.

## Let them know you care



Thousands of Christians around the world are suffering for their faith. Each year, we at CrossWay join hands with them by sending our Christmas greetings behind prison walls.

November 1, during the Sunday school hour, we will meet together in the south wing to address our cards to a handful of brothers in Iran, Pakistan, and China. We'll enclose heart-language Scripture verses and say a prayer for the cards' safe delivery and for the continued strength of the recipients.

Please bring sacred cards that will be meaningful in foreign cultures, and consider making a donation to cover the postage expense (\$21.60 for a complete set). Our thanks to The Voice of the Martyrs for prisoner profiles and addresses.

Some designated donations have already come in to purchase a high-top table and chairs for the lobby as well as new flooring and an "island" for the kitchen.

Next focus will be conversion of the old kitchen into Christian Education space and a break room. Remember that plan? It's approaching, now that so much has been accomplished in the new wing.



It's time for "Operation Christmas Child." We'll be collecting "shoeboxes" for needy children — through Samaritan's Purse — by Sun., Nov. 15. Fill boxes for boys or girls aged 2-4, 5-9 or 10-14 — your choice.

Along with a quality "wow" toy like a doll, soccer ball with pump or stuffed animal, tuck in hygiene items, school supplies and other, smaller toys. Include a personal note, even a photo, if you like. A \$9 donation helps the ministry deliver the box. And pray for the child Jesus is blessing through your generosity and care. A grand autumn tradition at CrossWay!

## Coming Up at CrossWay Community

Sundays • 10<sup>AM</sup> • Gather for worship together  
Sundays • 11:30<sup>AM</sup> • Sunday School for all ages  
Tuesdays • 1:15<sup>PM</sup> • Ladies' Bible Study, south wing  
Wednesdays • 7<sup>PM</sup> • Hinkle small group  
Sat., Oct. 31 • Bedtime • Set your clock back 1 hour!  
Sun., Nov. 1 • 11:15<sup>AM</sup> • Christmas Card-writing party for persecuted Christians  
Sat., Nov. 7 • 9<sup>AM</sup> • Women's breakfast, south wing  
Sat., Nov. 7 • 9<sup>AM</sup> • Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans  
Sun., Nov. 8 • 6<sup>PM</sup> • All-church School of Revival  
Sun., Nov. 15 • Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes due  
Sun., Nov. 22 • 6<sup>PM</sup> • All-church School of Revival  
Sat., Nov. 28 • 10<sup>AM</sup> • Christmas decorating party at CWCC

## Family fun on a very special occasion

As Tom Wriedt's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday approached, his dear wife Shirley knew just whom to invite to help celebrate — the CrossWay family who have so long benefited from Tom's leadership of our ushers team and the couple's many other contributions to our Lord and our worship together.

Happy birthday, Tom! And many more!



2<sup>AM</sup> becomes  
1<sup>AM</sup> on Sunday,  
November 1 •  
Don't forget!



## 'Faith over fear' worship fest

What better way to celebrate October's end?

The Williams family invites all of CrossWay to a worship festival — with music and prayer and the spoken Word — at Jubilee Mills Farm, 7336 Usborne Road in Freeport — 3 to 6 p.m.

Bring a blanket or lawn chair and enjoy hot beverages and inspiration at this free event featuring Arrows Rising Band and Arise Collective Theatre.



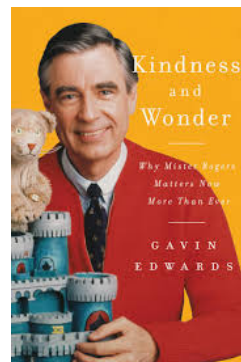
"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with **thanksgiving**, present your requests to God.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6-7



## New to the CrossWay library



*10 Ways to Live  
More Like Mister Rogers Today*

Be deep & simple.  
Be kind to strangers.  
Make a joyful noise.  
Tell the truth.

Connect with other people  
every way you can.  
Find the light in the darkness.  
Always see the very best in other people.  
Accept the changing seasons.  
Share what you've learned. (All your life.)

So much more than another biography, *Kindness and Wonder* is a warm hug for those who grew up with Mister Rogers and have missed his presence, with simple yet indelible lessons. It's a feel-good, behind-the-scenes look the man and at the public TV series that provided friendship to young children for decades. Make it a beautiful day in your neighborhood by checking it out from the CrossWay library this month!

## Calling all willing hands!

CrossWay always looks charming as Christmas season approaches throughout Advent. But it doesn't happen via some fairy visitation!

Willing hands are needed to help deck the halls on Saturday, Nov. 28 — Thanksgiving weekend.

Young and old, spry and not-so, come on over to church at 10 a.m. and spend the morning dressing us up for joy!



## *'I Want to See You'*



The Advent season begins this year on Sunday, Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>. Advent is a time to prepare ourselves to celebrate both the first coming of Jesus and to anticipate His second coming. Fleming Rutledge, in her book *Advent* says, “The disappointment, brokenness, suffering and pain that characterize life in this present world is held in dynamic tension with the promise of future glory that is yet to come. In that Advent tension, the church lives its life.”

I'd like to focus this brief article on just one aspect of Advent, and that is wanting to see, praying to see, longing to see His light, to see Him as the LIGHT of this dark world. Take, for example, a few scenes from the Bible.

First, do you remember the old man Simeon, who had been waiting for Israel's Messiah for most of his life? In Luke 2: 25-35, we read his story. He finally got to hold baby Jesus. The Holy Spirit somehow told him this was the One. Oh, Simeon! As he had the immense privilege to hold baby Jesus in his arms, he said this: “Sovereign Lord, as You have promised, You may now dismiss Your servant in peace. For my eyes have *seen* ... a *light* for revelation ... .” (Luke 2: 29-32) “My eyes have *seen* ... a *light*.” Can I ask you, have your eyes seen the Light Who is Jesus?

Then we have Jesus Himself, years later as He begins His public ministry. He said in His preaching, “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles — the people living in darkness have *seen* a great *light*; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a *light* has dawned ... .” (Matt. 4: 12-16)

Well, we might be tempted to say, “Of course I haven't seen Him. My name is not Simeon, nor have I ever lived in the land of Zebulun or Naphtali.” Well, if that's your response, I get what you're getting at. Yet, let me suggest a few ways you and I can see Jesus as we long for Him, pray for Him, wait for Him in this time of Advent, as we remember His first coming and yearn for His Second.

- Pray (like the Apostle Paul) for the eyes of your heart to be *enlightened*/opened. And then, *keep praying* like this until you sense the answer to this prayer of longing. What, you might ask, does the answer to this prayer look/feel like? It looks/feels like a growing experience of His *hope* and power. (Eph. 1: 18-19)

- Pray for the Gospel to do its enlightening/transforming work in our lives. Because, as we contemplate the Lord's glory, we will be transformed into the likeness of Jesus! (II Cor. 3: 18) This is made possible to us as we believe, trust, meditate upon the Gospel, because it is God Who said, “Let *light* shine out of darkness,” and has made His *light* shine in our hearts to give us the *light* of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.” (II Cor. 4: 6)
- Pray for a pure heart so you can see God. (Matt. 5: 8; Heb. 12: 14)
- Pray for the grace to truly, deeply and sacrificially love one another, for, “no one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us.” (I John 4: 12)

Finally, as we anticipate seeing the Light of the World, Jesus, come to us once again, I've encouraged you to pray.

Now, I encourage you to sing:

“Open the eyes of my heart, Lord.  
Open the eyes of my heart.  
I want to see You. I want to see You.

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord.  
Open the eyes of my heart.  
I want to see You. I want to see You ...

To see You high and lifted up,  
shining in the light of Your glory.  
Pour out Your power and love  
as we sing holy, holy, holy —  
Holy, holy, holy,  
holy, holy, holy,  
holy, holy, holy,  
I want to see You!

By the good grace of our God, let's make this our prayer, our song and our longing during this Advent season.

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord.

# Stretch and GROW

CrossWay's motto: Reach Up, Reach In, Reach Out.

When we “reach up,” we worship together: we sing, we pray, we read the Word of God. And we reach up regularly, at weekly worship times, in our Christian education experiences, in small groups, and occasionally in conversations by which we challenge one another to go deeper and live higher. We're known as a solid local church with faithful Biblical teaching and God-centered worship services. Growing in love for our God.

When we “reach in,” we take care of each other, praying, sharing, bringing meals and groceries to one another as needs arise, making home repairs, raking leaves, sending cards and notes and even emails. We celebrate joys together and put our arms around those among us who struggle and suffer losses. We're pretty good at reaching in. Growing in love for one another.

But, that's not all there is to CrossWay. We also declare our intention to “reach out.” If we're honest about it, reaching out is one area where we are blessed with opportunity to stretch and grow — which is a good thing. Growing in love for others. That's a goal that lines up so well with what we read in the Bible.

No less than God's covenant people the Israelites held as a high priority acceptance of the “stranger,” the sojourner in their land. Their relationship with those who chose to live among them and accept their practices was repeatedly outlined in the Law. It's a time-honored tradition in the roots of our Judeo-Christian faith.

As we emerge from the isolation of the coronavirus lockdown, we have a splendid opportunity to “reach out” to “strangers” in our land. We've discovered a need in our community that fits with our desire to grow in this area as a congregation.

On Sunday, November 8, Deb Hoekwater will visit us during worship and make a presentation to us during the Sunday School hour. Deb represents Bethany Christian Services/Grand Rapids, and there, she serves refugees arriving in our community. Bethany is one of nine major organizations partnering with the U.S. State Dept. as sponsors of new refugees arriving on our shores. Bethany, in turn, seeks churches that are willing to co-sponsor families.

Deb will be with us November 8 to explain this agency-church co-sponsorship program and offer us the opportunity to stretch and grow by committing to take partial responsibility for welcoming a new family to the Grand Rapids area.

Our Global Missions Steering Committee's preliminary meeting with her demystified the process and assured us that any commitment on our part could be limited to some minimal assistance, involving just a few of us. Of course, there would also be opportunity to engage in a more extensive program, should we find that this refugee outreach is a true calling from the Lord. The initial formal co-sponsorship is a six-month commitment, though friendships can grow and continue as the Lord wills.

Has God been tugging on your heart to stretch and grow in your walk with the Lord? Do you long to see our church move out beyond our walls and reach out to our community in the love the Lord has blessed us with? Come and see what the Lord has for us as we look forward to leaving 2020 behind us and venture into fresh opportunities to be a blessing to our neighbors. Check out Deb Hoekwater's presentation on November 8. South Wing, 11:30 a.m.

