

# CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

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[www.crosswaygr.com](http://www.crosswaygr.com)

## Joy in the journey

Pastor Bob Manuel began his year-long sermon series on the prophetic Old Testament book of Isaiah on February 14 with a introduction to the first five chapters.

Pastor Bob has simplified our congregational study by dividing it into four sections:

- I. Chapters 1 - 5 form an introductory unit.
- II. Chapters 6 - 37 begin with Isaiah's call to be a prophet. As time goes on, he serves four kings of Judah. Against the background of the apostate King Ahaz, Isaiah prophesies of the light of the coming perfect King shines out and the universal empire over which He would rule. Here, we see Messiah as **King**.
- III. Chapters 38 - 55 offer us Isaiah's prophecies of Jerusalem's deliverance from the Assyrian threat, offering historical proof of God's sovereignty in ordering earthly history. Here, we see Messiah as **Servant**, offering salvation.
- IV. Chapters 56 - 66 record Isaiah's prophecy concerning the future of the Lord's people, free of worldly influence and oppression. Here, we see Messiah as **Conqueror**.



The book has often been cited as the Gospel of the Old Testament. There are so many passages in Isaiah that point to our Jesus. Let's watch for them as we take this journey with Isaiah as our guide.

## Time to spring ahead!

Remember when you retire for the night on Sat., March 13: Reset your clocks. Spring is coming ... or so they say!



## Coming Up at CrossWay Community

Sundays • 10<sup>AM</sup> • Gather for worship together  
Sundays • 11:15<sup>AM</sup> • Sunday School for all ages  
Tuesdays • 1<sup>PM</sup> • Ladies Bible Study, south wing  
Wednesdays • 7<sup>PM</sup> • Hinkle small group  
Sat., Feb. 27 • 2 - 5<sup>PM</sup> • Moody Men's Conference online  
Sat., Mar. 6 • 9<sup>AM</sup> • Ladies' breakfast, south wing  
Sat., Mar. 6 • 9<sup>AM</sup> • Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans  
Sun., Mar. 14 • 2<sup>AM</sup> • Daylight Savings Time begins  
Sun., Mar. 14 & 28 • 6<sup>PM</sup> • School of Revival  
Sun., Mar. 28 • Palm Sunday



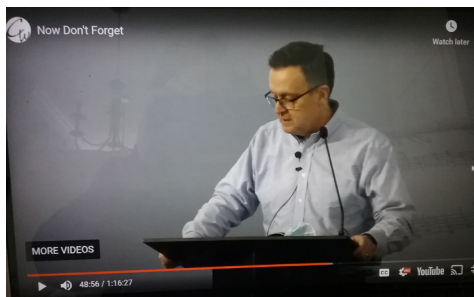
## Just in case . . .

We're pretty hardy at CrossWay, but if winter storms ever do make calling off Sunday worship a necessity, we will post the cancellation by 8 a.m. on a given Sunday on WOOD-TV ([www.woodtv.com/weather/closings](http://www.woodtv.com/weather/closings)) and on WCSG Radio, 91.3 FM ([secure.wcsg.org/closings](http://secure.wcsg.org/closings)).

## Sundays at 10 a.m.

If you can't make it to CrossWay for worship, you can participate in worship by catching our new "live stream" on the internet by sending your browser to:

"[www.crosswaygr.com/livestream](http://www.crosswaygr.com/livestream)". That should take you there! Join us for the music and the message. And we hope to see you soon, live and in person!



## Inasmuch as you have done it ...

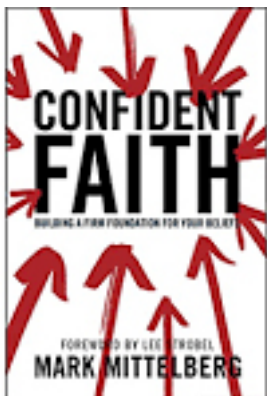


CrossWay families stepped up during 'Sanctity of Human Life' month in January and into February to fill baby bottles with change and cash and checks in an annual fundraising drive for the Pregnancy Resource Center of Grand Rapids.

Among the blessings we experienced in this philanthropic effort was the involvement

by several of our children, who were only too happy to do their own part to fill the bottles for the benefit of moms and their babies.

The "PRC" offers counseling and limited medical services for moms whose pregnancies are unplanned or otherwise challenging, with a spiritual component that welcomes the love of Jesus into these precious lives. We are honored to do our part.



A couple of years ago, Mark Mittelberg came to Grand Rapids for an evening of training in evangelism. Members of many churches, including CrossWay, attended and picked up pointers on building relationships that could lead to sharing your faith.

This pair of books first build confidence and then provide tools to make the process easier. They're both now available through the CrossWay library, currently on display in the lobby (near the coffee bar). Choose one or check out both for some stimulating reading.

## Sharing your beliefs

## Inspiring stories

Does this gentleman look familiar? It's Pastor Andrew Brunson, an American jailed in Turkey and featured several times — for prayer — in our *Current*.



Now that he's a free man, he's one of three men telling their stories for The Voice of the Martyrs. This year's "conference" is once again being held in a virtual format on March 5 at 7:30 p.m. You can "attend" by registering before that date at <https://www.persecution.com/event>.

Joining Pastor Brunson are Petr Jasek, imprisoned in Sudan, and Dan Baumann, jailed by the government of Iran. Todd Nettleton will moderate the event, with worship music provided by Natalie Grant.

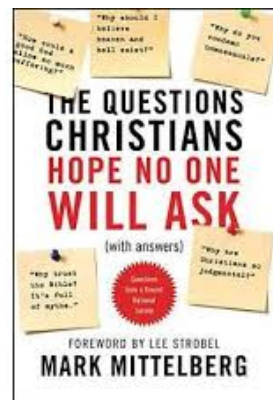
Arrested. Interrogated. Imprisoned. But God remained faithful. You're invited to hear their testimonies and pray for the many Christians who suffer for the sake of our Lord.

## Online conference for men

Join Dr. Mark Jobe and Pastor Kevin James to learn more about how to walk worthily in your calling at the Moody Bible Institute's annual men's conference.



This year, you can attend by streaming it live on your computer. Your registration fee includes admission to the conference and a special promo code from Moody Publishers for a discount on Dr. Jobe's new book, *What Now?* Simply register in advance at [www.moodyconferences.com/walk-worthy/cleveland/](http://www.moodyconferences.com/walk-worthy/cleveland/)





## Preparing to welcome refugees to Grand Rapids

Thank you, CrossWay family, for embracing our Project Welcome to Grand Rapids. We're packing up the household donations and sorting through the furniture, anticipating that Bethany Christian Service's moving truck will be arriving at CrossWay any day now.

As we wait for the right family to come our way, we can support Bethany's work with its new wave of families, arriving the first week in March, by **praying for the staff and for the families**.

Two families are coming from Congo, both with four family members. One is a single mom coming March 2 with her adult daughter and two younger children. They'll likely be housed in Wyoming, as that is where a friend of hers lives. The other is expected March 5 and is also a single mom with three children. She is the long-awaited sister of a Bethany staff member and will be living near him on the south edge of Kentwood.

The third arrival, coming also March 2, is a young man with medical issues who will be sharing an apartment with a friend who has already settled here. They'll be living near Alpine.

With more families coming later in the month, we anticipate that we'll be meeting "our family" soon.



CrossWay's moving crew Dick Ritsema and Paul Samuelson say "Thanks, everybody" for your generosity in providing so much furniture for "our family."

If you're on a team (or would like to join one), be prepared for a message coming your way to attend an orientation and be among the first to discover just who it is that the Lord's been planning to put into our care!

Project  
Welcome to  
Grand Rapids

## China report



Mandarin Chinese is the majority language in most of mainland China, though there are many ethnic minority groups. Explosive growth has characterized the church for at least the past 30 years. About 100 million Christians live in China, but only 30 million are affiliated with the government-authorized Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), the state church controlled by the Communist government. The remaining 70 million worship in unapproved house churches. Despite continual pressure and oppression from the Communist government, house church leaders refuse to compromise the Gospel and join government-approved churches. About 60% of believers in China live in rural areas. Few house church leaders have formal theological training or access to Bible study materials. The main persecutor is the government.

**Zhang Shaojie** still has five years left in his 12-year prison sentence. In January 2021, he was transferred to a different prison, where he is spending two months in "concentrated education" at the Zhengzhou City prison. After the initial two-month period, prisoners are allowed one family visit per month. His crime? "gathering a crowd to disrupt the public order" and a fabricated fraud charge. Pastor Zhang was initially detained on Nov. 16, 2013, when authorities asked to meet with him at his church. Instead, authorities bound Zhang, who served as the local head of the China Christian Council and Three-Self Patriotic Movement, and took him into custody.

In the week around Zhang's detention, authorities detain more than 20 church members, related to a land dispute between the church and the Nanle county government. Zhang's daughter, her husband and their baby fled the area to avoid arrest, and she later told China Aid that she'd received more than 10 threatening phone calls. Callers threatened to "wipe out her entire family" if she continued to speak out about the church.

Please pray for this pastor and his family, who are suffering for our Lord Jesus Christ.



# Being snake smart

February 2021

By Dr. Michael D. Sprague  
Louisiana State Chaplain  
Capitol Commission

I was apprehended by a little piece of advice in Jesus's marching orders to His little platoon, "I am sending you like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves." (Matthew 10:16)

I know we all get the dove part; that makes Sunday School sense. Very spiritual. But Shrewd as Snakes?? Yup! That is Jesus too.

It is a dangerous world. Jesus knew how vicious the wolves were and how fickle the crowds could be. He even went on to outline the opposition His disciples would encounter: Religious Persecution (10:17), Governmental Persecution (10:18-20) and Cultural Persecution (10:21-31). Do not forget—these were the days of the coliseums and crosses and wolves in sheep's clothing.

We too have dangers to navigate today. Is it any wonder Jesus commends being Snake Smart? Meaning: Shrewd. Not gullible. Not naïve. Not taken in by every conspiracy theory. Not having our head in the sand. Street smart. Wise. Even cunning in the good sense of the word. It might not sound very Christian but "shrewd as snakes" is in our training manual. Do not opt for shrewd or innocent. Choose both.



## How to Pray for Political Leaders

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone, for kings and all those in authority..." (1 Tim. 2:1-2a)

1. Salvation of those who have not yet put their faith in Jesus Christ: Political leaders, like all people, need the forgiveness of sins and the new life that comes through putting one's faith in Jesus Christ. "God our Savior ... wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:3b-4) Praying for the salvation of political leaders should be a top priority in a Christian's life. (Acts 4:10-12; Romans 10:9)

2. Divine Wisdom: Political leaders are regularly called upon to make very difficult decisions that affect many people. Divine wisdom is available for those who ask God for it. (James 1:5)

3. Discernment: Sometimes there is a fine line between a right or a wrong decision. Every day a political leader is called upon to vote on an issue that may or may not be good for the people they represent. It is in these times they need Godly discernment. (1 Kings 3:9)

4. Courage: Political expediency often trumps a political leader's conscience. It is only with courage that a leader will trust that God is the protector and defender of all right decisions. (2 Samuel 10:12)

5. Perseverance: When political leaders act courageously and make right decisions, they must be able to persevere through the pressure, tests and trials that will surely come their way. Even when their careers may be at stake, they must persevere and do the right thing. (James 1:12; 2 Timothy 4:7)

6. Humility: Political leaders have great power, deal with immense sums of money and are often treated like royalty. This can quickly go to their heads and lead to arrogance and pride. Pray that God will keep them on their knees and heed His instruction; so that being led by Him they may rightly lead those they represent. (1 Peter 5:5; Isaiah 66:2)

7. Teachability: When a political leader is wise and resists the temptation of pride, a teachable spirit will be evident. (Proverbs 9:9; Ecclesiastes 4:13) We never know so much that God has nothing new to teach us.

8. Moral Integrity: Political leaders regularly encounter strong temptations that include greed, deceitfulness, sexual immorality, and alcohol and drug abuse. They are often away from their families for many days at a time with little to no accountability. Pray for them to have the strength to resist these temptations that can destroy their lives, families, as well as their effectiveness as leaders. (Psalm 25:21; Isaiah 33:15-16)

*Capitol Commission is committed to making disciples of Jesus Christ in the Capitol communities of the world as well as following the Biblical mandate of praying for our elected officials nationwide.*