

April 2021



CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

3950 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546 • 616.949.5690

www.crosswaygr.com

He is risen! Our Redeemer lives!

Spring has arrived, and we are preparing to celebrate the joy of Resurrection Sunday.

We'll gather on Good Friday evening to worship our Lord and commemorate His sacrifice for each of us to live as children of the Living God. Our 7 p.m. service on April 2 will include observance together of the Lord's Supper.

More progress in our building



Have you had occasion lately to visit the north end of our church building? Remember the "old" kitchen, just off the hallway, on the way into the library?

It's now the new kitchenette and a remodeled room designed as the worship space for our children. Still on order for this space is a new door between the two rooms and a set of new cabinets to be installed under the windows. A more modern and useful space, paid for from the building fund and welcoming the burgeoning of young families at CrossWay.

Also planned for this northeast corner of our building is a new outside door leading to a planned playground, the latter to be surrounded by an attractive fence.

As time goes on, we'll be putting finishing touches on the south end addition as well.

And our aesthetics committee is in the planning phase for mounting some wall decor and purchasing other furnishings for various spaces.

Watch for "spring blooms" — inside and out!

Then on Sunday, April 4, we'll gather together for breakfast at 9 a.m. in the south wing before offering praise to our Lord together in worship at 10 in the sanctuary.

Come, let us worship the Lord together!

Welcome our new members!



In a special business meeting on March 21, we welcomed Tracey Denney and Bob Pettit into membership. We look forward to their fellowship with us at CrossWay.

Willing to help out?

Bob Johnston is seeking a one-time "work crew" of volunteers to help tie up loose ends around our church property on a Saturday in mid-April. Please let him know you're willing to lend a hand. And fill out the volunteer sign-up on page 2 for all kinds of needs at CrossWay; pop it into one of the offering boxes.

Coming Up at CrossWay Community

Sundays • 10^{AM} • Gather for worship together
Sundays • 11:15^{AM} • Sunday School for all ages
Tuesdays • 1^{PM} • Ladies Bible Study, south wing
Wednesdays • 7^{PM} • Hinkle small group
Fri., April 2 • 7^{PM} • Good Friday Communion service
Sat., April 3 • 9^{AM} • Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans
Sat., April 3 • 9:30^{AM} • Ladies' crepe breakfast, south wing
Sun., April 4 • 9^{AM} • Easter Sunday breakfast, south wing
Sun., April 11 & 25 • 6^{PM} • School of Revival, south wing

Who's who for the refugee project

Ready to welcome our refugee family?
Please check your fellowship directory
for contact info for:

Annette Doerr, inventory specialist

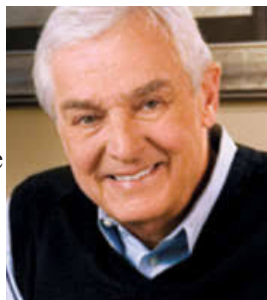
Paul Samuelson, team manager

Pam Reed, missions coordinator

Get in touch with any of these folks to
offer your time and friendship!

Ladies to study Gospel of John

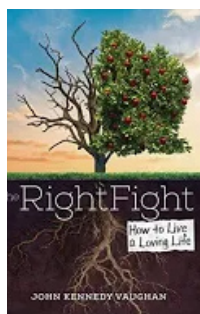
So rich in truth and the glory of
Christ: The Gospel of John will be
meat for the soul of the ladies of
CrossWay, meeting on Tuesdays
at 1p.m. in the south wing.



Guide for the study is Dr. David Jeremiah, through
his 140-page *John: The Divinity of Christ*, from the
Jeremiah Bible Study Series.

All CrossWay ladies are welcome to participate, and
what better time to start, with a new series on tap!

'How to live a loving life'



The Right Fight is a book of
inspiration and guidance, based on
scripture and on the life experiences of
a world-class athlete, husband, father of
three and, as the jacket describes him,
“a servant of Jesus Christ.”

Author John Kennedy (“Kenny”)

Vaughan is founder of Shields of

Strength, which distributes inspirational scripture-
engraved military-style dog tags and other jewelry.
He has furnished thousands of scripture dog tags to
military chaplains, as well as to law enforcement per-
sonnel, students, Olympic athletes and others who find
encouragement in scripture reminders.

His focus in this book: a life of pure, unselfish love
for others. Just 156 pages, packed with inspiration. An
addition to the CrossWay library for your spring reading.

Ladies: Breakfast is served

Ladies! You are invited to enjoy a crepe breakfast
served by Becky Alves on Saturday, April 3, in the
south wing at church. Our monthly breakfast begins
this Easter weekend at 9:30, a bit later than usual.



clip here & deposit in “offering box”

Reaching Up, Reaching In, Reaching Out ... Serving Christ
Together 2021 • 2nd Quarter

As a frequent attender of CrossWay Community, I am willing to serve the Lord by
helping the church in service needs I have checked below. Please contact me about
how I can apply my skills, interests and gifts.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aid in the nursery during service | <input type="checkbox"/> Join Bob Johnston's work crew |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aid in children's worship/Sunday School | <input type="checkbox"/> Set out refreshments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Man sound & computer booth during service | <input type="checkbox"/> Inspect grounds for repair/maintenance needs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worship team/music | <input type="checkbox"/> Help lead women's ministry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greet worshippers on Sundays | <input type="checkbox"/> Join a missionary support team |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take photos at church events | <input type="checkbox"/> Help welcome our refugee family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aid in the kitchen | <input type="checkbox"/> Host a small group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide light carpentry/indoor maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> Tend the flower beds |



Signed _____ Printed name _____

E-mail _____ Phone (____) _____



Isaiah and our mental health

What shall we do?" Elisha answered him, "Don't be afraid. . . . Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see."

Of course, we are to always "fix our eyes on Jesus," (Heb.12:2) who endured to the end because He had His "eyes" (my paraphrase) fixed on the "joy set before Him." When we "consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, we will not grow weary and lose heart." (Heb. 12:3)

On a related note: May I give you "permission" to struggle? If you read the context of Hebrews 12 or any of the rest of Scripture that calls us to endure, not worry, not lose heart, not fear, etc., the obvious reason is because we are in a battle, and battles are fearful things. Pretending that everything is always "okay" sooner or later will not serve you or the Lord well. So, in short, if you are one of the few who have not felt a bit more anxious than usual during these days, thank God for the discipline He has given you to see and hear Him. But, if you are feeling more anxious/irritable than usual, I pray you will see Him and come to Him who can empathize with your weaknesses and to know: He is not ashamed of you. (Heb. 2:11, 17-18; 4:14-16)

Bible teacher Steve Brown says it this way: "The Incarnation means that God knows what it's like to be human. When life hurts, that helps. Jesus can sympathize with our weaknesses, because he's been through it all. When you say sometimes I'm afraid and lonely, He says, I know, I've been there. When you're tired, He understands, because He was tired, too. When your friends have abandoned you, He's experienced that. When you look at death and it scares the spit out of you, He knows what that's like. You see, Jesus didn't come to keep you from being afraid and lonely and hurt. He came to be afraid, lonely and hurt, just like you. He didn't die just to keep you from dying, but to die as you must die."

And so I close with a question from what I suggested might serve well as Isaiah's theme song. From Isaiah 1:1, he begins his prophecy by asking us all: "Do you see what I see?"

By God's grace, we will be better off if we do.

It seems every day we hear about how anxious, stressed out and/or depressed so many folks, including Christians, are nowadays. Much of it has been connected to the pandemic. In this article I don't have the space, desire or intent to try to parse out all the reasons why we have seen an increase in the strain on our mental health, but of course I do think that our Lord, through Isaiah and the rest of Scripture, has some encouragement for us in this regard.

Remember how Isaiah opens? "The **vision** ... Isaiah **saw**" Isaiah **saw** things that God wanted Him to share with the rest of the nation, including, of course, the glory of God! (6:1, 5) What He saw sustained him through nearly 60 years of difficult ministry which, tradition tells us, ended with Isaiah being sawn in two by his adversaries. (Heb.11:37) I'm sure, like us, Isaiah must have had some anxious moments along the way.

I was listening to an interview the other day with the topic being the dramatic rise in the amount of anxiety people are carrying around. The doctor being interviewed mentioned there is a direct correlation between the amount/intensity of anxiety we carry and our exposure to social media and the news. Neither she nor I advocate sticking our heads in the sand and throwing our "smart" phones away, but deliberately limiting their use and even scheduling when you are exposed to the news/phones would most likely see a drop in our anxiety and an increase of joy and peace. Let me ask you, what are you seeing? How much time is practically spent (not invested!) in your life each day glued to a screen?

Isaiah wants us to see God at work in this world. When we do, we will be able to reengage in our world and look at it in much healthier ways. Remember the illustration I shared with you in March 14th's sermon? (Of course you do!) In 2 Kings 6:15-17, we see Elisha's servant understandably stressed because all he could see was the army of the Arameans surrounding the Israelite city of Dothan. He said, "Oh no, my lord!

Let's pray for the Greenhoses



Our friends Mike and Kari Greenhoe (plus Grant and Clark and baby Gracia) have been locked down in Germany for the past year. Mike heads the chemistry department at Black Forest Academy, teaching children of missionaries who are serving around the world. They've been on the field for more than 10 years and remain members of CrossWay.

Currently, BFA is apparently the only school operating in the country. With case numbers climbing in Germany, administrators have recently decided to send dorm supervisors home, assigning teachers to take on extra duties. Blessedly, with small children at home, Mike is exempt from this assignment but works under stressful conditions.

Adding to the Greenhoses' stress is Kari's frustration at not being allowed to fly "home" to New York State to introduce baby Gracia to Kari's parents and spend time with her mom, who continues to undergo cancer treatment. Please pray with them that Kari and Gracia will be able to join their family in upstate New York at the end of May and that Mike and the boys will be able to come home to Grand Rapids shortly thereafter for a home visit. And please pray for Kari's mother.

Opportunities abound

One means of blessing refugee families newly arrived in Grand Rapids is to get equipped for "Building Bridges with English." That's the name of an online course offered by our denomination — the Evangelical Free Church of America.

The online training course is designed to equip individuals and teams to teach English in a ministry context. This free offering of training and resources extends just four weeks and provides an orientation during the preceding week. It's your chance to sit in on the training offered at various times during the year to ReachGlobal staff (the church's missionary arm) as well as to EFCA church members.

It's coming up again April 7 to May 9. Space is limited, but you can register or inquire for more information by emailing ESL@efca.org.

Or you can serve by...

Ready to roll up your sleeves? You may recall that the Evangelical Free Church of Paradise, California, was one of the few buildings spared in the wildfire that swept the area in 2018. Unfortunately, more than 80 homes of members were destroyed. The area is now cleared and ready for rebuilding. So, ReachGlobal Crisis Response has put out a call for volunteers to pack their bags and head to Paradise — California — for a

Or closer to home

The Midland, Michigan, area experienced the failure of two dams in May 2020.

The Midland E-Free church and Our Redeemer E-Free are trying to help people put their homes back together. The gutting and mucking are done, but they need volunteers from Free churches in Michigan to drive over for the day — any day but Sunday — and help during the next few months. They can't house people overnight but need individuals and teams with the following skills:

- ✓ Carpentry to rebuild subfloors and walls
- ✓ Drywall, taping and floating
- ✓ Electric wiring and circuits

To help, please contact Gib Gilbin at 969/859-6137 or ggiblin@mefchurch.org.



week of sharing the love of Christ with those who are still recovering. No construction background is needed. There's plenty to do, perhaps even cooking for the building team! And there will be plenty of need for praying with the Paradisians who have lost so much.

Released!

Last fall, we heard news of a large prisoner release by the government of Eritrea, long known to be among the harshest in its treatment of Christian prisoners. We contacted The Voice of the Martyrs to check the status of those Eritreans to whom we have addressed Christmas cards annually since 2016 and were told that the organization was not aware of any change for those listed on their prisoneralert.com website.

VOM has just recently posted new information about two of our Eritrean family members: Twen Theodros and Mussie Eyob, both known for their tender care of fellow prisoners, were released in September 2020 to serve the Lord in fresh ways. Let's praise the Lord and ask for His continued healing of these servants as they mentally process their experiences and yield to His plan for the next phase of their Kingdom experience.

Twen
Theodros



Mussie
Eyob

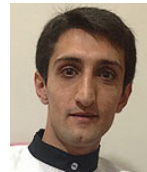


Imran Ghafur completed his 10-year prison sentence and was released in Pakistan on Christmas Day. Sadly, this dedicated servant has been forced into hiding by the hostility of his neighbors, who apparently object to any sentence short of death for this Christian brother. Please pray for his safety and peace.

Imran
Ghafur

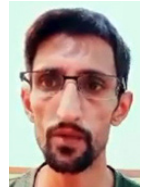


Imprisoned again



before
prison

In Iran, **Ebrahim Firouze**, who had been “released” to house arrest and is known for his bold witness for Christ, is back in prison once again. He has told The Voice of the Martyrs that he wishes prayer, not



after
prison

for his release, but for God to be glorified in his imprisonment. Please pray for much fruit from his testimony as he comes into contact with the lost sheep to whom the Lord has once again sent him.

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.

In 2007, Chinese government officials closed **Alimujiang Yimiti's** business and accused him of using it as a cover-up for “preaching Christianity among people of Uyghur ethnicity.” He was later arrested and accused of “subversion of the national government and endangering national security,” a crime punishable by death. The charges morphed as he awaited his trial. In August 2009, the Kashi District Intermediate Court secretly sentenced Alimujiang to 15 years imprisonment on the charge of “illegally providing state secrets to foreign nationals.” In March 2010, the Higher People's Court of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region tried the case in private, refusing to let the defense lawyer to appear in court. They upheld the ruling from the Kashi District Intermediate Court, sentencing Alimujiang to 15 years of imprisonment and depriving him of political rights for five years. In February 2011, the Higher People's Court of Xinjiang notified Alimujiang, who is serving his sentence, that they upheld the original sentence of 15 years of imprisonment following appeal.

Alimujiang's wife and her two children are allowed to visit Alimujiang for only 15 minutes every three months. She told VOM that her husband has lost a lot of weight and looks pale, but he is doing well spiritually. She said he needs prayer for prison life, since he encounters many who are antagonistic. She requested prayer for her children, who have suffered during her husband's long imprisonment. She said her 8-year-old is always dreaming about when his dad gets out. Her oldest son has lost hope and is sad and discouraged.

