



CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

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Looking good!



Here at CrossWay, we can walk and chew gum at the same time!

Last month's *Current* featured pictures of our newly remodeled staff kitchen/youth education rooms. This month, our betterment crew moved outdoors to spruce up the gardens around our new entrance at the west-side lobby area.

And there's plenty of activity yet planned. From gutter installation to garden planning, planting and tending, opportunities abound to help CrossWay enhance the grounds as a way to celebrate the beauty of God's creation and invite visitors to find blessings both inside and outside our church.

Church chairman Bob Johnston is in charge of the projects and has set the next work day for Sat., May 8, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Invite a friend to join you and enjoy the fellowship that develops as we work together as a team.

Proposed to serve

The nominating committee elected at CrossWay's semi-annual congregation meeting in January is proposing Frank Burt as nominee to the elder board; he has been interviewed and has agreed to serve if elected.

Frank and his wife Bernie are long-time members of CrossWay and already serve in many ways. Frank assists our church treasurer, and Bernie coordinates women's ministry.



Leaving the board will be elder Michael Stevens, who has reached his term limit of three consecutive two-year terms. We thank Michael for the time, wisdom and dedication he has applied in helping lead CrossWay these six years and look forward to his continued fellowship and service with us all.

Y'all come!

Church chairman Bob Johnston invites all regular attenders to come to the annual congregation meeting after worship on Sun., May 16, celebrating another year of ministry together and looking to the next. Members will be voting; other congregants may observe.



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
- Sat., May 1 • 9^{AM} • Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans
- Sat., May 1 • 9^{AM} • Ladies' BYO Breakfast, south wing
- Sat., May 8 • 10^{AM} - 2^{PM} • Outdoor work day (see above)
- Sun., May 16 • 11:15^{AM} • Annual congregational meeting
- Sun., May 23 • 11:15^{AM} • Missionary visit (see p. 4)
- Sat., May 29 • 9:30^{AM} • Bridal shower for Julie & Alison
- Sun., May 30 • 6^{PM} • School of Revival, south wing

A helping hand to those who minister to vulnerable moms

We have received a note of gratitude from the Pregnancy Resource Center; that gratitude goes out to you, the CrossWay family, for the way you stepped up and filled those baby-bottle banks with \$847.88 to aid the work of offering free pregnancy testing and ultrasound exams, counseling and friendship for moms in need, sharing the Gospel with them and encouraging them to go forward in their motherhood.

The Pregnancy Resource Center is now moving toward its next major fundraising campaign, its Walk for Life, scheduled for June 19. Whether walking for dollars or pledging your own, you can participate in this annual event. Put it on your calendar now!

Another way you can help: Bring to the collection box in our lobby any of the following “urgent needs”:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Baby bottles | Baby food - esp. stage 2 |
| Baby wash, shampoo, lotion | fruits & veggies (excluding those with veggie roots, e.g. carrots, potato or sweet potato) |
| Diaper rash cream | Hooded towels |
| Baby wipes & wash cloths | Pacifiers & toys (esp. rattles) |
| Diapers, newborn or 1,5 or 6 | |
| Formula, Enfamil or generic (yellow can) | |



Ladies of CrossWay (and daughters) are invited to brunch and games celebrating the recent wedding of Julie (nee Schwab) Stevens and the upcoming wedding of Alison Kane. We will be gathering in the South Wing on Saturday, May 29, from 9:30 to 11 a.m. (Childcare will not be provided, but young ladies are welcome!)

If you are willing to bring a food item for the brunch table, please sign up on a sheet in the narthex. RSVP your attendance intent to Linda Stevens at 616/451-2978 or via e-mail at lestevensmi@gmail.com.

Alison’s registry: www.theknot.com/alison-austin; password: a2-2021.

Julie will welcome Lowe’s gift cards in any amount.

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 (____) _____



What Do April Showers Bring?

I'm sure most of you can answer the question that is the title of this month's article. April showers bring May flowers.

For purposes of this article, I am going to liken the April showers to trials, hardships, etc. The "flowers" then, as you might guess, would be the good things God grows as a result of the hardships we've been through. As I write, let me just briefly say, if you are going through some tough times, in no way do I want to trivialize your struggle, heartaches and suffering. Your pain, anxiety and uncertainties are real. Yet, let me remind you this month, your hardships — as real and at times as debilitating as they might be — will never have the last word among God's people. And God will often bring beauty out of your ashes.

So if you need a bit of encouragement along these lines, two texts immediately come to my mind. The first is a single verse, Genesis 50:20, that summarizes the story of Joseph in the Old Testament. You know the story well. Joseph was sold into slavery, put into prison unjustly and suffered much before God used him in a mighty way.

As Joseph addressed his brothers, who at this point were fearful of Joseph avenging himself, he said to them, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." (Gen. 50:20)

Now we know, perspective such as this comes at a steep price. During those many years, from a human standpoint his story seemed bleak and unjust, precisely because it was bleak and unjust. God never minimizes our struggles. Yet, God was still at work. Much good, much saving of life was done through the trials Joseph was able to endure with the fellowship and help of God.

Neither I nor you necessarily have the foresight of hindsight, but I can say with confidence: God is up to something in your life. There may be many "April

showers" that are drenching you at this point in your life. But something good, something beautiful is being grown during this time. Do not lose heart.

The second text that comes to mind when I think of what April showers bring is Romans 5: 3-5. It specifically spells out some of the "flowers" God will bring to bloom after the "rain" of our sufferings and hardships. We read there: "Not only so but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces **perseverance**; perseverance, **character**; and character, **hope**. And hope does not put us to shame, because **God's love** has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

We see here the "flowers" of perseverance, character, hope and the love of God. In our lives, the showers come, and meantime, we wait for the flowers.

I once heard someone describe this time of waiting not as the meantime but as the "mean time." Sometimes it's hard to wait for the flowers. It can seem like quite a mean time, or we wonder about the goodness and kindness of God. Let me encourage you to take note of the "showers" that are coming down on you. Name them. Pray over them. Then, believe that in some way and in His own good time, God will make "everything beautiful in its time." (Ecc. 3: 11) This Hebrew word translated "beautiful" has the idea of "appropriate." That is, all the showers that may come your way in this life (see some of these "showers" in Ecc. 3: 1-10) are in some way "appropriate" or "fitting" in the light of God's wisdom. In the "meantime" we wait. And as we wait, sometimes things can be hard and heartbreaking. And even if we can't always see things in this light (of eternity), I would still pray we would have the grace to believe the flowers are coming.

This is God's promise to us. So go outside right now and smell a flower (if you can find one!) and admire its beauty. See it as a token of God's many promises to you. And the next time it rains, see it as a reminder of the flowers He is surely growing in your life.

Coming to CrossWay this summer...

CrossWay traditionally suspends Sunday School for the summer, and this year is no exception, with a few exceptions!

We'll be hosting reports from our missionaries following our worship services each month, beginning May 23. Plan on that day to greet our friends Steve and Merrilee Torgerson, servants of the Lord who've spent many years in Hong Kong, quietly training leaders in Asian countries where it's difficult to preach the Gospel, even behind closed doors.

Then on Sunday, June 6, Greg Norwine will make his first official visit to CrossWay to present the EFCA/ReachGlobal orphan sponsorship program, as we prepare to "adopt" a child overseas through GlobalFingerprints.

July and August dates aren't firmed up yet, but we anticipate meeting during the traditional Sunday School hour once during each of those months as well.

CrossWay members Mike and Kari Greenhoe will be "home" for a few weeks this summer, and we'll look forward to welcoming them for a ministry report during July.

Then we hope to conclude our Missions Summer at CrossWay with Keith and Judy Anderson, transitioning from the directorship of EFCA's ProMETA leadership training for Spanish-speaking ministry leaders, principally in Latin America and also around the world.

We hope to see YOU among the participants as we celebrate and pray for the work God is doing through CrossWay's frontline workers.



North Korea report



Due to the Communist government's secretive nature, little is known about the current status of Christians inside North Korea, though in the early 1900s, the capital, Pyongyang, was known as the "Jerusalem of the East" because of its 2,000-plus churches. Under Communism, religious freedom is nonexistent, and the government depends on Juche (the North Korean religion that requires worship of and subservience to the Kim family) to maintain stability and claims all North Koreans follow the Juche religion; Christianity is considered subversive. Anyone discovered to be a Christian (or, in many cases, discovered to have had contact with Christian ideas) is considered an enemy of the state and faces harsh persecution from the government and from members of the community. In general, all North Koreans fear being accused of acting benevolently toward an "enemy of the state." The Gospel is still proclaimed in North Korea through various creative means, including shortwave radio and bold evangelists who risk their lives smuggling materials into the country.

Zhang Wen Shi, also known by his Korean name and title as Deacon Jang, is an ethnically Korean Chinese citizen who lived in Changbai, China, a town on the border between China and North Korea. He worked alongside Korean-Chinese pastor Pastor Han Chung-Ryeol, ministering to the North Koreans who crossed the border into Changbai to purchase goods for reselling in North Korea, to seek medicine or other help and to conduct business, though it is illegal to cross into China without permission.

Deacon Jang regularly hosted these visiting North Koreans for days and weeks at a time before they returned to North Korea, giving them warm clothing, feeding them and providing supplies they might need for their return to North Korea. As a believer, he also shared about his faith to those who were willing to listen.

Some of these North Koreans accepted the message and became Christians, returning to Deacon Jang's home repeatedly for more Bible training; Deacon Jang and Pastor Han also taught them how to share their faith with their loved ones. Their goal was always to see North Koreans return home.

In November 2014, Deacon Jang was kidnapped from China and put in a North Korean prison. Fifteen months later, Pastor Han was lured from his home and brutally stabbed to death in Changbai. Deacon Jang was sentenced to 15 years in prison for his ministry to the North Korean people.



Preparing for our future in America

reprinted from February, 2021,
Washington Impact Report, Family Research Council

Looking back, Pastor Andrew Brunson never imagined his life's mission would be advocating for religious freedom in America. "I thought I'd be in Turkey the rest of my life doing church planting," he admitted on Family Research Council's podcast *Washington Watch*. God had other plans. When Andrew was wrongfully charged and sentenced to life behind bars, he admits it broke him. Nothing, he said, equipped him for the kind of persecution he experienced.

Wasting away in a Turkish prison wasn't how Pastor Brunson would have chosen to spend two years of his life — but after watching turmoil unfold in this country, he's more convinced than ever: God was preparing him for this moment. Persecution is coming, he believes. And there is no greater burden on his heart than to make sure Americans are ready for it.

"One thing I want to underline from my experience is that those who persecute [are] going to justify it by saying that we're hate groups, that we have a message of hate." Even though hate is not our message, it will be used to justify the persecution that we will face as believers. Pastor Brunson warns that compromise will be the easy way out.

Jesus tried to prepare His followers against that impulse by reminding them that He was hated. He said, "Look, they hated Me; they rejected My message. So they're going to hate you and reject your message. The servant is not greater than the master." Jesus was preparing them. Pastors, leaders, influencers, parents, and all Christians need to prepare. So what can we do? What practical steps can we take as believers? Pastor Brunson gives us five ways to prepare and stand firm in the face of hostility:

1. Talk about persecution — Be aware that people have suffered, and are suffering, persecution in many countries. Americans have been spared from that fate, but that won't always remain the case. "So let's talk about persecution, be aware of it, and begin to prepare for it by equipping your children and people in your church."

2. Pursue intimacy with God — Cultivate and grow a love for God. In 2007, Andrew remembers that he began to pray the God would draw him closer to His heart, never realizing how badly he would need it. This is what prepared me for the difficult assignment that I had.... God knew that I would go right up to the point of failure — but because I had spent years drawing close

to Him, He also knew that even in my most difficult time, that I would turn to Him. It's this intimacy that fuels perseverance."

3. Develop the right perspective: fear of God, not man — "Jesus said very clearly: 'Don't fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.' That wasn't empty rhetoric," Andrew insists. "He was saying this to His disciples, and most of them were killed for their faithfulness to Jesus. So He was setting it up very clearly. We have a choice. We have to have the right perspective and determine that we are willing to pay a price — because there may well be a price."

4. Determine now to follow Jesus — It's a critical decision we need to make ahead of time as followers of Christ. "Am I willing to pay a price and begin to cultivate the heavenly perspective in order to be faithful?" Or, Andrew wonders, "Are we going to fear the *Twitter* mob? Are we going to fear the consequences of obeying God and persecution? Or are we going to fear more the consequence of not obeying God, which is standing before Him someday?"

5. Stand on the Word of God — "We need to make the decision that we won't compromise the Word of God, even if it costs us," Andrew urges. One of the things lacking most in the Christian community today is biblical literacy. We've got to be in the Word of God every day. It's our daily bread. We wouldn't eat just one day a week, so we shouldn't just study God's Word one day a week. We should be in it constantly.



Sometimes the persecuted are freed, to the glory of God. Pastor Andrew Brunson, imprisoned in Turkey for nearly two years, on a US plane returning home, shown here with his wife Norine and with Family Research Council president Tony Perkins.

Resurrection Day!

A time to celebrate . . .

all the way up to the rafters!



Celebrating with food & fellowship . . . at Saturday's Crepes-by-Becky Ladies brunch



and then on Easter morning,
with breakfast buffet in the South Wing



Christ
is
risen
indeed!