



CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

3950 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546 • 616.949.5690

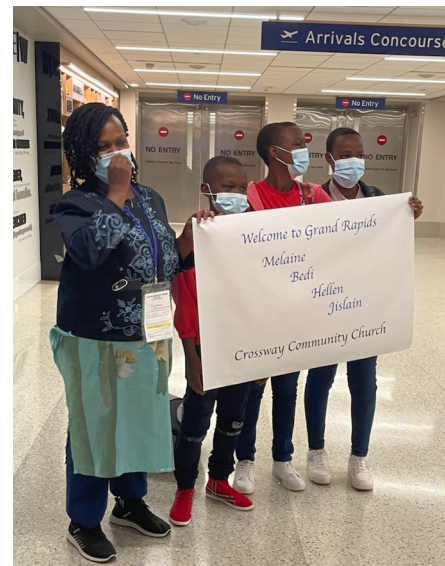
www.crosswaygr.com

They're here!

We've waited for months...they've waited for years! Melaine Uwamaria arrived in Grand Rapids from a refugee camp in Uganda, where she and her family have spent 10 years, having fled war in their native Congo.

Several CrossWay folks met them at the Ford Int'l Airport late Tuesday evening, May 25, along with Melaine's brother Joseph, who has lived in this area for five years with his own family. Her children are Jislain, 11; Bedi, 16; and Hellen, 13.

Bethany Christian Services was still seeking an apartment for them somewhere on the southeast side at this writing. In the meantime, they are staying in temporary lodgings at The Castle in Grandville, beginning their residency in quarantine. We look forward to moving furniture and household items our congregation has generously donated over the past several months but await the nod from our partners at Bethany. It'll be so good to be able to greet this family face to face and love them through service as time goes on.



Want to take a hike . . . for Life?

The Pregnancy Center of Grand Rapids annually raises funds through a "Walk for Life," this year on Saturday, June 19.

Credit for distances walked can be "earned" by walking "where you are" and keeping track of your mileage on the honor system or by walking in one of two organized hikes, both starting at 9 a.m.: downtown, registering at 8 a.m. at 415 Cherry St. SE, Grand Rapids; or in Middleville, registering at 8:30 a.m. at 100 E. Main St. to walk the Paul Henry Trail.

If you're an encourager and a donor — but not a walker — you can participate by pledging an amount of your choice to donate to the Pregnancy Center, either tied to a friend's walking prowess or just in a lump sum. See prcforlife.org for more details.

Help wanted!

Our friends at the Pregnancy Resource Center of Grand Rapids have sent out an urgent appeal for volunteers to serve as crossing guards for their downtown Walk for Life on Saturday, June 19. Time commitment: 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Contact Becky Peterson, 616.259.1522 or via e-mail at becky.peterson@prcgr.org.

Ladies! Come to lunch!

Our annual summer ladies luncheon is scheduled for Saturday, June 26, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the south wing. A sign-up sheet is on the sanctuary narthex table for pledging food to share. Ladies of all ages welcome.

Food, fun, fellowship and surprises are promised by the Ladies Ministry Team, with the theme: Honoring & Celebrating our Women of Wisdom.

*If My people, who are called by My name
humble themselves and pray and seek My face
and turn from their wicked ways,
then will I hear from heaven
and will forgive their sins and will heal their land.*

11 Chronicles 7:14

Coming Up at CrossWay Community

Sundays • 10^{AM} • Gather for worship together
Tuesdays • 1^{PM} • Ladies Bible Study, south wing
Sat., June 5 • 9^{AM} • Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans
Sat., June 5 • 9^{AM} • Ladies' BYOBreakfast, south wing
Sun., June 6 • 11:15^{AM} • GlobalFingerprints presentation
Sun., June 13 • 11:15^{AM} • Farewell party for Will Bell
Sat., June 19 • 9^{AM} • Preg. Ctr. Walk for Life downtown
Sat., June 26 • 11^{AM} • Ladies Summer Luncheon, south wing
Sun., June 27 • 11:15^{AM} • Mike Greenhoe update (tentative)

Happy birthday, Pastor Bob!



Pastor Bob Manuel surprised by birthday cake with CrossWay friends in the south wing.

Dear CrossWay family,

I want to thank all of you for your prayers, love, care and support through my unexpected fall, surgery and unfortunate blood clots. I will be eternally grateful to God for protecting my life and for your prayers that, I am sure, had a huge part in that protection. Thanks also for all of you who have brought or will be bringing meals. That has been a huge blessing to us both!

I know I have a way to go for full mobility, but each day I see improvements and increased strength. The doctors tell me to be patient, because healing the broken bones can take time. Please pray for me to have that patience and continued healing.

Bob has been an amazing caregiver. I could never have gone through this without his love and support and all the prayers from family and friends.

We hope to visit CrossWay in the near future when I am walking better so I can thank you all in person.

God bless you all for your prayers and love. It means more than you know.

Love to you all,

Florence Funk and Pastor Bob

Farewell to Hannah

The CrossWay family gathered on May 30 to send off Hannah Samuelson, daughter of elder Paul Samuelson and his wife Elma, to a new venture serving our country in the US Army.

Hannah goes with the prayers and thanks of her church, who will miss her music ministry and her faithful participation in our fellowship.



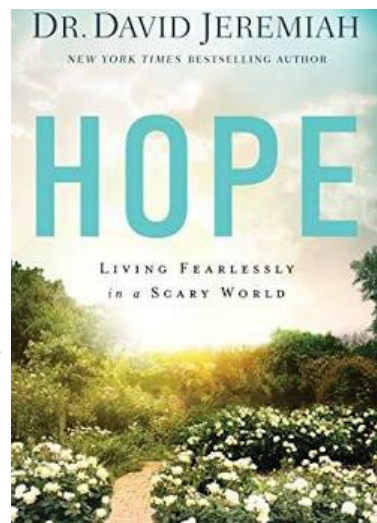
Hannah with dad Paul Samuelson and Pastor Bob Manuel

Faith in a time of fear

New to the CrossWay library this month is the current offering from Dr. David Jeremiah. *Hope: Living Fearlessly in a Scary World* is a faith-strengthening reminder of our Rock.

“At some point in our lives,” reads the cover introduction, “all of us will find ourselves at the end of our rope, facing the storms of life: utter failure, financial collapse, debilitating illness or heartbreaking loss. *Hope* explores each one of these life-shattering scenarios and shows how a simple and profound trust in God can be the steady anchor for our souls. There is hope,” Dr. Jeremiah assures us, “and it is within reach.”

You can find it on the book table near the coffee bar in the lobby. Check it out!





The Time of our Lives

I'm writing this toward the end of May, thinking of the upcoming months and the sabbatical from pastoral work you have so graciously granted me. I will be out of the saddle, so to speak, from August to the end of October. So, as I write, I am putting together some articles for the next four months. The articles will have at least two things in common. First, to some extent they will be influenced by songwriter/Bible teacher **Michael Card**, and, second, they will relate to the subject of **time**. Here is a very rough outline of the subjects of your upcoming *Current* articles written by yours truly: **July** – Time Past. **August** – Time Future. **September** – Time Present. **October** – Time Now/ Present, Part 2. My intent is to *encourage* you to have the time of your lives.

In 1988, Card released a song titled, “**Know you in the Now.**” That song and one he wrote in 1989 titled “**In the Beginning**” have lines that have been quite formative in my thinking in how I am meeting (or not meeting) God in my life.

In this month's article, I hope to merely whet your appetite and stir your imagination/longing in how you are living out your life in this thing we call time.

Here are the formative lines I mentioned above:

First, from “**Know You in the Now,**” Card writes:

Lord, I long to see Your presence in reality
But I don't know how.
Let me know You in the now.
We should confess we lose You in our busyness.
We've made You in our image
so our faith's idolatry.
Lord, deliver me.
Break my heart so I can see
All the ways You dwell in us —
that You're alive in me.

I've always appreciated Card's honesty and vulnerability as a songwriter. I too have often found it hard to experience the reality of God's presence in my day-to-day life. Sometimes God doesn't even seem real to me. Fortunately, those times when God seems more like a **concept** or an **ideal** rather than a **Person** are episodic or seasonal. These times don't last. The Spirit of God breaks in with an awareness of Jesus right when we need it. But those times of not knowing “how to know God in the now” can be quite lonely and frightening.

What do you do when those times come? Then, as Card suggests, we get busy. Boy, do we get busy. Sabbatical will be a time to intentionally reflect upon what I do with this gift called time. Please pray I will use the time well.

Then, in his song “**In the Beginning,**” Card writes:

. . . He hands us each new moment,
saying “My child, begin again.”
My child begin again.
You're free to start again.
This very moment is filled with His power
that we might start anew
To break us away from the past and the future,
He does what He must do.

So often we “live” in either the past with our regrets, failures and successes, or we “live” in the future with our fears and anxieties of what might happen. MUCH could be said about this, but I will leave future questions and applications for my other articles. I will close here with one simple and, I hope, helpful question:

What is God doing in your life right now to break you away from the past and the future? Will you trust Him enough with the terrifying and yet liberating possibility of meeting Him this very day? If we do, He promises us the time of our lives — in the best possible sense!

Missions Summer at CrossWay

Our summer missions programs began Sunday, May 23, with a visit from **Steve and Merrilee Torgerson**, now living in Minnesota after going to Asia for the Lord in 1983.

As co-founder and CEO of Systematic Asian Leadership Training (SALT), Steve has been quietly training leaders in Asian countries where it's difficult to preach the Gospel, even behind closed doors.

This month, on June 6, **Greg Norwine** will make his first official visit to CrossWay to present the EFCA/Reach-Global child sponsorship program, as we prepare to “adopt” a child overseas through **GlobalFingerprints**.



Later in June, on the 27th, we hope to hear from **Mike Greenhoe** while he is home from the Black Forest Academy, where he serves missionary families as the school's head chemistry teacher. Mike and Kari will be splitting their stateside time between Ada and the town in upstate New York where Kari's parents live. Her mom's cancer is a matter of great concern and may limit their time in Michigan.

Condolences to **Luke and Nancy Cutherell**, who were unable to be stateside before the homegoing of Nancy's mom in late May. They have written a beautiful note to their supporters full of thanksgiving for her sacrifice in releasing them to the mission field of Pakistan in 1988. May they continue to be comforted by the Lord.

Eritrea report



Located on the Red Sea, Eritrea is governed by a totalitarian regime that seeks to control every aspect of life. Some have compared Eritrea to the “hermit kingdom” of North Korea, as it is one of the most secretive and isolated countries in the world. In 2002, the government outlawed every religion except Islam, Orthodox Christianity, Roman Catholicism and the Lutheran Church. All other religious groups are illegal, and the government heavily controls approved churches, including their messages. Despite these hardships, the underground church in Eritrea continues to grow due to the faithfulness of church leaders both inside and outside the country. The population is evenly divided between Christians and Muslims. The authoritarian government arrests, imprisons and harasses Christians.

Pastor Meron Gebreselasie was arrested on June 3, 2004. Meron, also known as Million, was the pastor of Massawa Rhema Evangelical Church in Massawa, a Red Sea port city. He was also an anesthetist at Massawa Hospital. Meron was arrested shortly after Pastor Tesfatsion Hagos of Asmara, who was arrested on May 27, 2004, while visiting Meron. On his way to return Tesfatsion's belongings to his home in Asmara, Meron was detained at a checkpoint. He has been in prison ever since.

He was held for two months at Asmara's 2nd Police Station before being moved to the maximum-security Wengel Mermera Central Criminal Investigation Interrogation Center, where many of Eritrea's prominent Christian leaders arrested after the 2002 religious crackdown are believed to be held. None has been charged, tried or sentenced.

The pastor was not married. No photo is available for him.



Challenge of being Christian in the West

Quoting the Bible can't land you in American prison (yet), but in Helsinki, it's a different story. In a case that's stunned the West, Finland's former Interior Minister and leader of the Christian Democrats has been criminally charged for posting a picture of the Bible, opened to Romans 1: 24-27. She was disturbed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church joining a gay pride event and decided to remind them what God says about homosexuality. Now, after a two-year investigation, the "tweet" could put her behind bars.

The saga, which has involved three police interrogations since 2019, rose to a fever pitch last month when the former MP was officially charged with "hate speech." Finland's prosecutor, according to reports, called the actions derogatory and discriminatory. Päivi Räsänen fired back, insisting, "I do not see I would have in any way defamed homosexuals whose human dignity and human rights I have constantly said to respect and defend." As a former government minister, she says she's "shocked" the situation has elevated the way it has.

"I will go to the court with a peaceful and brave mind, trusting that Finland is a constitutional state where the freedoms of speech and religion, both of which are guaranteed in international agreements and in our constitution, are respected," Räsänen has said. "A conviction based on the Christian faith is more than a superficial opinion. The early Christians did not renounce their faith in lions' caves, why should I then renounce my faith in a court room?" As for anything she's said about the Bible's teachings, she insists, "I will not step back from my conviction nor from my writings. I do not apologize for the writings of the Apostle Paul either. I am ready to defend freedom of speech and religion as far as is necessary."

In her blunt response, she also pointed out, "The Apostle Paul's teaching is not only about defending marriage between man and woman, but about how a human being is saved into eternal life. If the teachings of God's word about sin are rejected, also the whole core of Christian faith is made empty — the precious sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for the sake of everyone's sins and the way He opened into eternity."

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven...." Jesus's words recorded in Matthew 5: 11-12a

reprinted from May 3
Washington Update, *Family Research Council*

Päivi Räsänen,
Finland's former
Interior Minister
and leader of the
Christian Democrats



Four thousand miles away, in Washington, D.C., this kind of persecution may sound far-fetched. But Congressman Greg Steube (R-Fla.) knows from personal experience how much closer America is inching to this climate of open hostility. When he stood on the House floor in late February and read from Deuteronomy about the difference between males and females, he was blasted by Democratic colleagues. "What any religious tradition describes as God's will is no concern of this Congress," Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) fired back.

To some people, it was a shock to hear a[n American] say those words out loud. But ... if Americans don't continue to push back and demand respect for our First Freedom, it won't be long until the climate of hostility in Helsinki comes here.

Jesus told us there'd be days...

Over the last few years, CrossWay has developed a heart for persecuted Christians around the world. The Voice of the Martyrs has provided this handy prayer list to help us "know how to pray."

Pray that our persecuted brethren 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

Our business meeting last month . . .



Church treasurer
Bob Greenhoe leads us
through the financials
. . . heralding good news



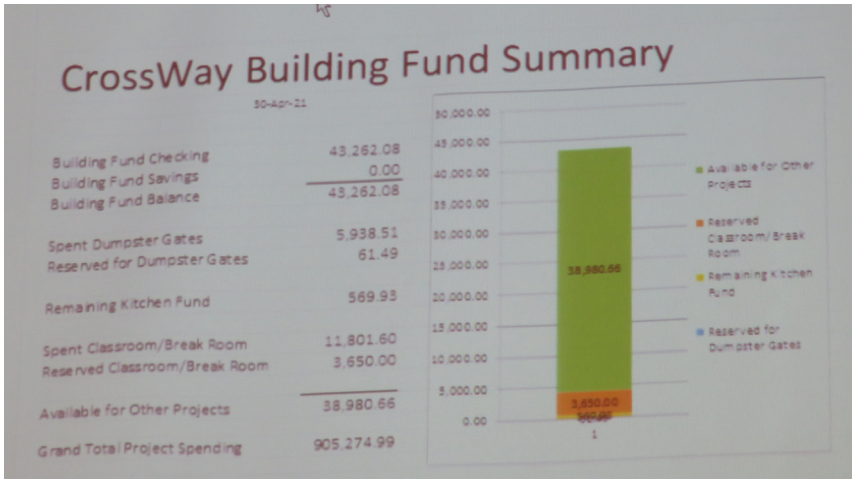
Marcy Greenhoe, reporting on
care for our dear Florence Funk



Pastor Bob Manuel, leading the way . . .



Pam Reed reports on missions
and CrossWay’s outreach to
persecuted Christians.



So many blessings . . . so much yet to do

Celebrating with our brides



Linda Stevens organized a
bridal shower in late May for
CrossWay's two brides . . .

Alison Kane,
who is to marry
in July, & Julie
Schwab Stevens,
married last
January.



Gifts and good
wishes combined
with good food for
a festive event in
our south wing.

*God bless our brides
and all our young families.
Whom God has put together,
let no man put asunder.*