



August 2021

CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

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Big shoes to fill



This month begins a three-month sabbatical for Pastor Bob Manuel. We wish CrossWay's shepherd well during this break time! The church board has laid out a preaching schedule for Sundays through October, and we all look forward to learning from and interacting with a series of outstanding "subs" in the pulpit. The Elder Board has also divided up responsibilities for being "on call" for CrossWay folks who need counseling or other "pastoral" help, in our pastor's absence.

We thank our board for giving our pastor this time of refreshment and for taking so much care with planning a close look through The First Letter of John, while we all take a break from our year-long study of The Book of Isaiah.

We encourage readers to save this page — particularly the "Elder on Call" chart, in case a need arises.

Preaching Schedule

Aug. 1	I John 1: 1-4	• Michael Stevens
Aug. 8	I John 1: 5-10	• Michael Stevens
Aug. 15	I John 2: 1-8	• Keith Anderson
Aug. 22	I John 2: 9-17	• Paul Samuelson
Aug. 29	I John 2: 18-29	• Paul Samuelson
Sept. 5	I John 3: 1-10	• Cody Hinkle
Sept. 12	I John 3: 11-15	• Cody Hinkle
Sept. 19	I John 3: 16-24	• Cody Hinkle
Sept. 26	I John 4: 1-6	• Scott Montgomery
Oct. 3	I John 4: 7-12	• Scott Montgomery
Oct. 10	I John 4: 13-21	• Scott Montgomery
Oct. 17	I John 5: 1-5	• Dr. Bob Funk
Oct. 24	I John 5: 6-12	• Dr. Bob Funk
Oct. 31	I John 5: 13-21	• Sam Moffett

"Elder On Call"

Aug. 1-14	<> Bob Johnston
Aug. 15-28	<> Mike Bryant
Aug. 29-Sept. 11	<> Bob Greenhoe
Sept. 12-Sept. 25	<> Dennis Veurink
Sept. 25-Oct. 9	<> Paul Samuelson
Oct. 10-23	<> Frank Burt
Oct. 24-31	<> Bob Johnston

Backpacks delivered

You go, CrossWay! When you were asked to furnish 400 notebooks for Camelot neighborhood children, you came up with 465! And when you were asked to donate 200 boxes of crayons for back-to-school backpacks, you brought 259 boxes to the narthex of the church. You can participate in the handing off of these gifts to the youngsters by coming to the block party on August 7 at Camelot Park, 2230 Rowland.



Coming Up at CrossWay Community

Sundays • 10^{AM} • Gather for worship together
 Tuesdays • 7 - 9^{PM} • Small group at Hinkles' home
 Sat., Aug. 7 • 9^{AM} • Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans
 Sat., Aug. 7 • 9^{AM} • Ladies' breakfast @ CW South Wing
 Sat., Aug. 7 • 11^{AM} • 1:30^{PM} • Camelot Community block party @ Camelot Park, 2230 Rowland
 Sat., Aug. 14 • 11^{AM} - 2^{PM} • Ladies' picnic @ Palmer Park in Wyoming
 Sun., Aug. 15 • 11:30^{AM} • Summer Missions/Keith & Judy Anderson of EFCA/ProMETA
 TBA • mid-month • Moving the Tuboanes to their new home off Burton — watch for a quick email action call!



For those who like Christian fiction

Chris Fabry is a Moody Radio Network host and an author of popular faith-laced fiction.

His latest — *A Piece of the Moon* — is featured this month as a new offering in the CrossWay lending library. You can browse through it, if you like, from the book table by the lobby window just west of the coffee bar, and then check it out for your reading pleasure.

Like many of his charming novels, *A Piece of the Moon* is set in Mr. Fabry's native West Virginia, offering down-home-style characters in an entertaining, faith-building story of under 400 pages.

Testimonies of faith

Three Christian workers who were imprisoned for their faith are appearing in an on-line event offered now — free of charge — by The Voice of the Martyrs.

Petr Jasek, Andrew Brunson and Dan Baumann offer their stories of arrest, interrogation and imprisonment in three different countries, giving first-hand testimonies of God's faithfulness and love amid desperate circumstances.



Their stories are augmented by a panel discussion moderated by VOM Radio host Todd Nettleton and by worship music performed by Natalie Grant.

Access to the event is through the Internet portal https://www.persecution.com/event/?_source_code=WHPB20G.

You are invited!

Pam Reed & Penny Pullen are inviting CrossWay folks to their home for twice-monthly fellowship and a study of "Momentum: Pursuing God's blessings through the Beatitudes," led by prominent Evangelical Free Church pastor Colin Smith via DVD and discussion guide. (No prep needed.)

Twice monthly at 9:30 a.m. on Saturdays beginning in September (check out the CrossWay calendar on page 1 beginning next month) in their Hudsonville home, near the 8th Avenue exit on west M-6.

RSVPs are not required but will be appreciated; contact info for the hosts is in the church fellowship directory.

Ladies! It's time for our annual picnic!

If you came to the CrossWay ladies picnic last summer, you'll recall how lovely is Palmer Park in Wyoming. Those who didn't attend will have the opportunity to discover this little place of God's blessing in nature — and to enjoy fellowship with others of us from CrossWay — on Saturday, Aug. 14, from 11^{AM} to 2^{PM}.



The park is located at 1275 52nd St. in the southwest suburb.

Expect games, conversation, fellowship and good food. Each lady is asked to bring a salad or dessert — think tacos! — and a lawn chair. Moms are welcome to bring their daughters, as well. We do hope we can enjoy the company of CrossWay's young families as well as the fellowship of our "women of wisdom" and all the ladies in between.

"Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together ... but encouraging one another ..."

Hebrews 10: 24-25

R.I.P., Bob Shea

We cannot offer details as early as this newsletter, but we know the CrossWay family will miss Bob Shea and offer our condolences and prayers for his dear wife Joan.



Missing you, Bob.

This gentle giant passed into the arms of Jesus on Tuesday, July 27, after a brief time in hospice.



Evading God by 'Living' in the Future

Last month I shared how we tend to evade God by living in the past. This month I will suggest ways in which we evade God by “living” too much in the future. As you might guess, I place the word “living” in quotation marks because this is truly no way to live. Before I begin, let me make a few caveats to this article.

First, please don't too quickly dismiss anything that is said here by thinking I am against planning. That's not what I am saying. Some of you are very good planners. We need good planners! Second, I am not suggesting people who “look ahead” are necessarily “control freaks,” though, I would contend, we all attempt to control our lives to some degree! (That's a whole other article!) With those two thoughts aside, I do believe if we are not careful, thinking (especially worrying) too much about tomorrow can rob us of the precious time and energy we need to meet God today and to experience Him in truly life-giving ways. As you read, remember Michael Card's words (see previous articles!): “To break us away from the past and the future, He (God) does what He must do.” So, let's ask the same question we did last month but apply it to the future: What might God be doing in our lives right now, to break us away from focusing too much on the future? I will offer one suggestion and then close with a few comments about obsessing too much about the future.

I believe one way God often tries to break us away from the future is, that He gives us just enough of a glimpse of future judgments, that it forces us to seek Him with greater intensity today. He does this a lot in the prophets. Perhaps you've seen that in our current study of Isaiah. God reminds His trusting people that while their future is ultimately bright (Isa. 35:10), in the meantime, it will be a “mean” time, a hard time, an incredibly difficult time (Isa. 30:15-17). Trying to control what might come by trusting other nations (or trust our many machinations of trying to control and abate the painful realities of life), instead of God, will

never be helpful (Isa. 31:1). Instead, God wants us to trust Him today (Isa. 40:28-31). I'm sure you can think of other things God does to break us away from the future, but for now, I will close with a few thoughts about worry.

As I close this article, please prayerfully consider:

- In a very real sense, tomorrow never comes. It doesn't exist. That is, the precise second after our clocks read 11:59 ^{PM} and 59 seconds, “tomorrow” comes, and it is then called today. So why worry about “tomorrow” when it only “exists” for a second at best?! All of God's commands to not worry about tomorrow are His way of encouraging us to compress our anxieties mentally and emotionally to this moment, to meet Him in our troubles today. When we expend too much energy worrying about tomorrow, we are not living in the reality of today but have escaped into an unreal fantasy land.
- Notice how many times the book of Hebrews invites us to meet God today (Heb. 3:7, 13, 15; 4:7). I also find it interesting that in Hebrews 13:8 we read “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*” We do not read “He is the same yesterday and today and tomorrow”!
- Jesus told us not to worry about tomorrow, but instead, encourages us to trust our good Father and to seek Him and His kingdom first. Everything else will fall into place (Matthew 6:25-34) not tomorrow, but each day as we trust Him.



CrossWay's reach into Spain

Though the faith of many at El Shaddai church in Zaragoza, Spain, has been tested this last year, Marlan and Mercedes Olson declare their church members are standing, in spite of sickness, employment strains or discouragement.

Before the worldwide virus restrictions, they were challenged to serve well over 50 people in their cramped sanctuary. While under martial law for more than a year, the Olsons have found new ways of ministering, leading their flock via *Skype*. They have led worship and celebrated Biblical feasts, posting their services on *YouTube* and hearing from “attendees” from England, France, Venezuela, Colombia, USA, Puerto Rico and Israel. All during the long Spanish lockdown, they never canceled a service.



Spain is now permitting internal movement but is still closed to international travel. As they find themselves a bit freer these days, the Olsons are looking back and praising God for all He has done through their ministry at El Shaddai through this crisis.

Let us pray for:



El Shaddai members Mario and Sandra as they adjust to welcoming their third child (first boy) Esteban into their household;



Miguel, El Shaddai's deacon, whose liver and heart conditions are affecting his eyesight;



the Lord's guidance of the Olsons in their concerns about support, furlough, a different apartment and a bigger church building.

Almost home!

Bethany Christian Services has secured a rental house for the Tuboane family, the refugees from Africa that CrossWay is cosponsoring for six months. We'll be moving the furniture and household items you've donated sometime midway through this month. Exact date to be announced by email. Contact **Paul Samuelson** to volunteer; he's in the photo fellowship directory.

Letting them know they are loved

Our Missionary Support teams are always open for new members. For information or to commit to supporting a frontline worker with prayer and/or communication, please contact Missions Coordinator **Pam Reed** or Steering Committee members **Marcy Greenhoe**, **RaeAnne Hansberry** or **Dennis Veurink**. You'll find them all in the photo fellowship directory.

Iran report



The Islamic Revolution of 1979 led to the establishment of the world's only country governed by an Islamic theocracy and the only nation whose official state religion is Shiite Islam. Disillusionment has opened new doors for the Gospel, which is sweeping across the nation via satellite TV, Internet and growing house church movements. Mature Christian leaders and pastors are often arrested and their families harassed, and some are left with no option other than to flee the country. Christians inside and outside the country are working to strengthen and equip the church against the false teaching that grows with the absence of mature leaders. Christians are persecuted by government authorities, with family, friends and community members sometimes persecuting Christians.

Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani and three of his church members were arrested in 2018 and are serving 10-year sentences on charges of “acting against national security” and “promoting Zionist Christianity.” The men are all members of the Church of Iran. The pastor and his wife were imprisoned previously as well.

There are currently nine more Iranian Christians whose stories can be read and prayed over on The Voice of the Martyrs website prisoneralert.com.



From persecution to U.S. citizenship

by Kathy McCormack — *Associated Press* July 13



A blind Chinese dissident who escaped to the United States in 2012 is now an American citizen.

Chen Guangcheng, speaking through a translator, said in an interview with *The Associated Press* last week he was “very grateful that America, this free country, has welcomed us.”

Chen met with members of his legal team July 8 in Manchester, New Hampshire, to celebrate. He became a U.S. citizen in Baltimore on June 21.

“It’s a long journey from being under house arrest in China to being a U.S. citizen. It took 15 years,” said George Bruno, former U.S. ambassador to Belize

and one of Chen’s lawyers.

An international symbol for human dignity after running afoul of local government officials for exposing forced abortions carried out as part of China’s one-child policy, Chen was subjected to years of persecution and illegal detention for advising villagers on how to counter official abuses.

After serving four years in prison on what supporters called fabricated charges, Chen was kept under house arrest until escaping in 2012, dodging a security cordon around his home in east China’s Shandong province and placing himself under the protection of U.S. diplomats.

Chen’s 2012 flight to the U.S. Embassy in Beijing sparked a six-day diplomatic tussle between the U.S. and China, threatening to derail then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s strategic talks intended to build trust between the world’s superpower and its up-and-coming rival.

Last year, Chen addressed the Republican National Convention, where he called on other countries to support President Donald Trump in leading a coalition to “stop China’s aggression.”

Chen, 49, a visiting fellow at Catholic University of America, said he hopes America “will stand by the Chinese people” against the Communist Party.

“The human rights situation is getting worse and worse,” he said. “As people in China are more aware of their rights as they get more information online, and have more demand for their rights, the Communist Party is becoming more and more worried about losing their control and power, and that results in them using more and more force to suppress the people to protect the control of the power.”

A spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington did not respond to a request for comment.

Chen also said the United States needed to take a harder line with the Communist Party, or the CPC, and “give up on the appeasement policy.”

“If we only negotiate with the CPC, they will not be afraid. The CPC has always been unreasonable and arbitrary.”

Andrew Brunson reports for duty

July 12 — WASHINGTON, D.C. — Family Research Council is pleased to announce that Pastor Andrew Brunson has joined FRC as Special Advisor for Religious Freedom. For 23 years, Andrew and Norine Brunson dedicated their life to the mission of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Turkey by planting churches, starting a house of prayer, training Christian leaders, and providing aid to refugees. In October 2016, Andrew Brunson was falsely accused of terrorism and held for two years in Turkish prisons. Following a worldwide prayer movement and significant political pressure from the U.S. government, he was dramatically released in October 2018. Brunson, who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, joins FRC at a critical time, as the persecution of Christians continues to increase around the world.

