



November 2021

CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

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What a way to kick off the month!

He's back!

A heartfelt "Welcome back!" to Pastor Bob Manuel on Nov. 1 to his pastoral duties. He is scheduled to preach on Nov. 7 and will resume his Isaiah sermons on Nov. 14th.

Time to set your clock back 1 hour Sat./ Sun. Nov. 6-7 ... be on time for worship!



CrossWay's clothing drive to serve Grand Rapids' needy refugee families continues through Sun., Nov. 7, with set-up and distribution in the South Wing gym rounding out that week.

Please bring your clean, gently used donations to the Flex Room near the South Wing. To help with set-up and/or distribution, please contact Pam Reed, Paul Samuelson or Annette Doerr, all listed in the Cross-Way fellowship directory.

Bless the prisoners

On Sunday, Nov. 7, at 11:30 a.m., we will be gathering in the South Wing to write Christmas cards to Christian believers imprisoned for their faith in countries overseas. This event marks our 6th year of sending these encouraging greetings, with heart-language Scripture verses enclosed, using information from The Voice of the Martyrs website prisoneralert.com.



Bring your own boxed Christmas cards (sacred style) to share, if you can. We'll have a supply available. We'll also request donations to cover international postage, this year priced at \$1.30 per envelope.

And even before November ...



Come to the South Wing Sunday, Oct. 31, after worshipping to share a meal together. It's CrossWay's Fall Potluck! Bring something yummy to share, a good appetite and your best smile.



Sunday, Nov. 7, is the deadline for bringing in your "Christmas Child" shoebox[es] – filled with small, practical gifts and spiritual greetings for needy children. The annual drive is spearheaded by Samaritan's Purse ministry and, at CrossWay, is organized by Linda Stevens. Bring your box(es) to the narthex by Sunday, Nov. 7. A helpful hints leaflet is offered in the narthex along with a limited supply of fillable boxes, which can alternatively be purchased at Hobby Lobby or via www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child.

Coming Up at CrossWay Community

- Sundays • 10^{AM} • Gather for worship together
- Sunday School • 11:30^{AM}
- Tuesdays • 1^{PM} • Women's Bible Study at church
- Tuesdays • 7 - 9^{PM} • Small group @ Hinkles' home, Lowell
- Sun., Oct. 31 • 11:15^{AM} • Fall potluck; all welcome!
- Thurs., Nov. 4 & 18 • 7^{PM} • Small group @ Amanda Le's home, Grand Rapids
- Sat., Nov. 6 • 9^{AM} • Ladies breakfast @ IHOP, Men @ Bob Evans
- Sun., Nov. 7 • 11:30^{AM} • Christmas cardwriting party for persecuted Christians
- Sat., Nov. 13 • 1 - 4^{PM} • Clothing distrib. for refugees, South wing



Getting Alone with God

As I anticipate getting back into the vocational ministry saddle, I want to sincerely and deeply thank the Board and this congregation for allowing me this time away. As some of you know, this is the third sabbatical you have granted me over the years. While the overall impact of a sabbatical is positive and restoring, entering this extended rest and faithfully responding to God while in it, is challenging. Let me briefly explain the key reason why I say this and then try to make a few applications at the end of this article.

In 1654, French scientist and philosopher Blaise Pascal wrote: “All of humanity’s problems stem from man’s inability to sit quietly in a room alone.” An overstatement? Perhaps. I’ll let you decide. But try it sometime. Try sitting in a room all alone, quietly. No screens of any kind. No radio or TV. No books or any other stimulant. And let’s be brief. Try it for, let’s say, only two hours. Could you do it without getting anxious or distracted?

I think, among other things, Pascal is making the point that silence and solitude are not easy for us. Sabbatical, at least good portions of it, “forces” one into silence and solitude. I deliberately tried to craft some time when I would be in a position to listen to God. Alone. I wanted this. Yet, I did not want this! Why? I’ll spare you all the reasons, but some of them are related to the previous few *Current* articles I shared with you.

Meeting God today by not “living” in the past or the future is something that is wonderfully and fearfully facilitated in large part by our “down” times, our vacations — and our sabbaticals. Sabbatical has once again wonderfully and fearfully facilitated listening to God.

I’m not really good at it — listening to Him, that is — but I want to be. And listening, truly listening to Him requires trust. Often, I’m also not good at trusting

Him. But I want to be. And, while I could fill pages upon pages of what I have been learning from this listening, let me simply say, the key take-away I have been experiencing in this time of listening in sabbatical is that He loves me. Messy, fearful and sometimes sinning me. He loves me. I know. That’s pretty elementary. Christianity 101. But in my experience, it’s easy to say, even easy to preach, but a truth that is far more difficult to receive and revel in.

So, how about you? While you might not have a “sabbatical” awaiting you, God still invites you to silence and solitude. Or, if you were to take some time each day to just listen to Him, what would He say to you? Would you be able to be in that room, all by yourself, quietly present to God, with your mind not looking back in regret for past sins or racing ahead, thinking about all the things that must be done? Could you sit there and let Him love you now?

Well, you really can’t “let” God love you. He already does. He doesn’t need your permission to love you. But . . . to receive His love and to enjoy Him? This takes trust on our part. Love not trusted, to a large degree, is love not received. For God so loved . . . He gave. Yet, so many of us do not receive or enjoy what/Who He has given.

Thank you for allowing me this time to get my heart more unraveled and to receive, in a deeper way, the love of God.

Will you receive His love for you today? No, you don’t “deserve” His love. That’s what makes Him and His overtures to us so amazing. We are the ever-wandering Gomers, loved by Hosea. (Read the Book!)

And, as we anticipate ADVENT season when we celebrate the coming of the LIGHT Who is Jesus, I close by sharing the lyrics to the amazing song “Greater” by the band Mercy Me. It describes so beautifully, many of the dynamics I experienced during sabbatical, and, Lord-willing, will continue to experience as the days go by:

See the next page!

Lyrics “Greater” by MERCY ME

Bring your tired
And bring your shame
Bring your guilt
And bring your pain
Don't you know that's not your name
You will always be much more to me

Every day I wrestle with the voices
That keep telling me I'm not right
But that's all right

Chorus:

'Cause I hear a voice and He calls me redeemed
When others say I'll never be enough
And greater is the One living inside of me
Than he who is living in the world. . .

Bring your doubts
And bring your fears
Bring your hurt
And bring your tears
There'll be no condemnation here
You are holy, righteous and redeemed

Every time I fall There'll be those who will call
me
A mistake Well that's okay

Chorus:

'Cause I hear a voice and He calls me redeemed
When others say I'll never be enough
And greater is the One living inside of me
Than he who is living in the world

There'll be days I lose the battle
Grace says that it doesn't matter
'Cause the cross already won the war
He's Greater, He's Greater

I am learning to run freely
Understanding just how He sees me
And it makes me love Him more and more
He's Greater, He's Greater

Chorus:

'Cause I hear a voice and He calls me redeemed
When others say I'll never be enough
And greater is the One living inside of me
Than he who is living in the world

New to the CrossWay library

This new addition to our library was published in 2010 but is even more pertinent for today. It's a thin paperback that can be read in a day but will give you something to think about for a lot longer, and perhaps those thoughts will lead you to some kind of action.



Grand Rapids' own Randy Hekman was running for Congress at the time of this book's writing, and though that fact is barely mentioned, the thoughts he expresses here reveal the burden on his heart that caused him to make that sacrifice. His present-day leadership in the Grand Awakening ministry is your guarantee of the spirit in which he wrote these pages. Pick it up and bring it back, so many can gain from Randy's insights!

Can you help?

The need continues for replenishing our building fund in order to cover such projects as our anticipated healing/prayer garden between the sanctuary and the south wing, future room build-outs for our growing Sunday School and the replacement of our HVAC system in the north wing.



Will you join in helping to defray costs of these needed projects? Mark an envelope “building fund” with your special gift or indicate it on your check memo. Thank you! ❤️

Call for volunteers

CrossWay has a continuing need for the Lord's servants to step forward to aid in our church nursery on occasional Sundays during the worship service. Please contact Becky Alves to inquire about this opportunity to welcome the growing number of little ones to our fellowship.

We also have a continuing need for sound-booth stewardship during worship services – no experience required. Contact Jane Schultze for a bit of training.

Find either of these ladies in our pictorial fellowship directory for contact information, or approach them on Sunday morning.