



January 2022

CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

3950 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546 • 616.949.5690

www.crosswaygr.com

January restart

Pastor Bob Manuel will be resuming our study of Isaiah in his sermons beginning with chapters 34 & 35. And after worship on Sundays (except Jan. 16), he will be inaugurating a new all-church Sunday School series of discussions on a book by Dane Ortlund (see page 2 of this edition).

Back from sabbatical and fresh off Christmas, Pastor Manuel is ready for the new year. Are you?

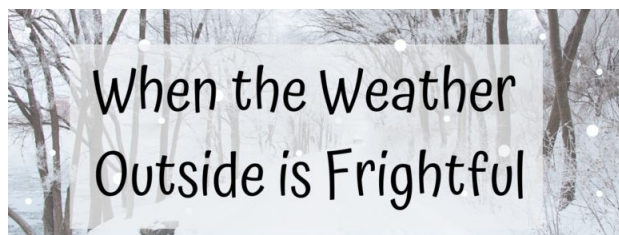
Come to the rescue

Carl Sandburg once said "A baby is God's opinion that life should go on." It's a saying that brings a smile to our lips but also has profound meaning.

For some newly expectant moms, though, the coming of a new baby is a challenge, and the folks at Pregnancy Resource Center of Grand Rapids stand ready to help and guide those who may be panicking.

It has long been a CrossWay tradition that we stand behind the PRC with an annual fundraising drive through their "baby bottle" campaign.

During this month, you will find in the narthex a supply of baby bottles meant to serve as banks to collect change (or other cash or check donations) Take one home, fill it up, bring it back . . . save a baby!



We're pretty hardy at CrossWay, but if winter storms ever do make calling off Sunday worship a necessity, we will post the cancellation by 8 a.m. on a given Sunday on WOOD-TV (www.woodtv.com/weather/closings) and on WCSG Radio, 91.3 FM (secure.wcsg.org/closings).



No breakfast fellowships!

New Year's Day falling on a Saturday puts a crimp in our style! No ladies' or men's breakfasts this month! Expect to resume Feb. 5 with 9 a.m. fellowship at IHOP and Bob Evans, respectively.

Can you help?

Though our official service commitment to our refugee family has ended, we continue to need someone to step forward to bless them with assistance in learning English, meeting with them preferably on Saturdays, either at church or at their home just off Burton west of Calvin. Our denomination offers online help to English-as-a-second-language volunteer tutors beginning this month. Can you help fill this need? Contact Pam Reed; her info is in our fellowship directory.

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

Wed., Jan. 5 • 6^{PM} • Elders meeting

Thurs., Jan. 6 & 20 • 7^{PM} • Small group @ Amanda Le's

home, Grand Rapids

Fri., Jan. 14 • 8-9:30^{PM} • Men's discipleship planning meeting

Sun., Jan. 16 • 11:30^{AM} • Semi-annual congregation meeting

Wed., Jan. 19 • Online training begins for ESL tutors

Following Jesus, walking His way

Sometimes the way forward is to first go back to one's roots.

You see, before there were Christians, there were Disciples (Acts 11:26). And, one of the last things Jesus said before He returned to the Father was, "*Go and make disciples . . .*" (Matt.28:19). Discipleship is a call back to our roots.

Notice He didn't say go and make church attenders, church members, converts or even "Christians." How are we doing with His command?

Pastor Bob invites you to a soft launch (Jan.14 at 8 p.m.) of our new men's discipleship ministry. At the very least, we will begin to answer some of the questions posed here, and he would like your input. You are cordially and enthusiastically invited back to our roots as followers of Jesus. We hope you come!

December at CrossWay



Worshipping together



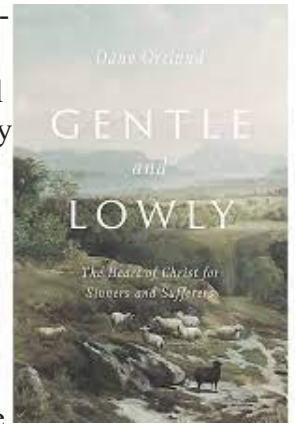
Sharing a meal
with friends

Sharing love abroad
by sending cards



New to the CrossWay library . . . & offered free for everyone

Pastor Manuel is making available to all who attend CrossWay a book by Dane Ortlund, the basis for the Sunday School class he will lead for 10 weeks beginning Jan. 2 (with the exception of Jan. 16). Copies are on a table in the narthex, and one will be deposited in the church library as well.



Here is the publisher's summary: "Christians can easily feel that Jesus is perpetually disappointed and frustrated, maybe even close to giving up on them. They know what Christ has done for them — but who is He? How does He feel about His people amid all their sins and failures?"

"In Matthew 11, Jesus describes Himself as 'gentle and lowly in heart,' longing for His people to find rest in Him. This book reflects on His words, diving deep into Bible passages that speak of Christ's affections for sinners and encouraging believers as they journey, weary and faltering, toward heaven."

Diving in

Our Ladies Bible Study will take up Dr. David Jeremiah's book on *The Gospel of John* beginning January 4. We meet at 1 p.m. at CrossWay each Tuesday except when the weather makes meeting together hazardous. Ladies of all ages are welcome to join this informal study group. (A spin-off benefit: we pray together for each other.) Check it out!

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.



Starting & Finishing

This month I want to briefly remind us all that it is our Lord who started His salvation work in us, and it is God Himself who will finish it. Yes, Lord willing, we cooperate with the outworking of His salvation in our lives, but being saved from start to finish is the work of God in and through us.

My father-in-law, whenever he sent a birthday card over the years, would write at the bottom Philippians 1:6: *“Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”* And later in Philippians we read, *“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose.”* (Phil. 2:12-13) These two passages in Philippians remind us of at least four things: 1) God started this work of salvation in us, 2) God will finish this work of salvation in us, 3) our will and desire to work out our salvation comes from God, and 4) the energy to engage with Him in our salvation comes from Him!

When I read these passages, I am brought back to the truth of Jesus’s words regarding the bearing of fruit to His glory: *“Apart from me, you can do nothing.”* (John 15:5)

So what does all this mean for us today as we begin 2022? Well, if you’re a bit like me, while the New Year holds so much promise and a sense of opportunity, we are also still “recovering” from the holidays. Energy and desire can be in short supply. (Left on our own!) Yet God, unlike our current world scene, never has a “supply chain” shortage of the resources we need. There are days when I just don’t seem to have as much zeal as I’d like to have, to “help” fulfill God’s purposes. Good thing He doesn’t need my help! He welcomes our participating. He even calls us to

engage in His salvation work, but we must always remember, He started the work. He will finish the work. And when I lack either the will or energy to engage, it is an opportunity for me to throw myself back onto the One Who will bear much fruit through me as I, in utter dependence, keep abiding in Him.

I am convinced that, much of the time, we appreciate very little just how much we need God in order for us to do anything of eternal value. That is, if God is the Starter and Finisher of our salvation (Phil.1:6), if He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the A-Z, then He is also all the “letters” in-between. (Rev.1:8; 22:13) Practically, this means again, apart from Him we can do nothing that will produce lasting fruit that glorifies Him. (John 15:7-8)

We need Him. O, how we need a God who is zealous, to accomplish His work in us, because our zeal can fluctuate so wildly. May we find great encouragement and rest, great will and energy for Him and from Him, as we let these truths sink deeply into our hearts.

As we embark into this new year, *“May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The One who calls you is faithful, and He will do it.”* (I Thess. 5:23-24)



Organized for ministry



When Tom and Dora Becker moved back stateside after 16 years in eastern Europe as EFCA/ReachGlobal missionaries, they couldn't have imagined the ministry Tom has developed, networking with other Christians in the U.S. and abroad to bring the Good News of great joy to marginalized people.



Through their network the Beckers have plans to establish new projects to serve Roma and other marginalized people. They've also announced a Pathways to Partnership with the Roma conference, scheduled for mid-October in Lakeville, Minnesota.

Please pray for:



Tom's partner Slovodan as he establishes a carpentry shop in Croatia to disciple new believers and hire unemployed Roma;



Tom's partner Valerie as she opens the House of Hope, a transitional home for abused women.

Opportunities abound in 2022

When natural disaster strikes, our denomination is quick to respond, supporting the local churches with dollars and manpower.



So, when the tornado system ripped through five midwestern states, our Crisis Response ministry sprang into action, establishing partnerships with nearby churches and assessing the immediate needs.

Though it's too early to organize teams of volunteers, Crisis Response has announced a fundraising goal of \$50,000 to get the work underway.

They're also raising response funds for an overseas crisis that appeared in mid-December, when a typhoon ravaged the Philippines. The goal for that project is \$100,000.

Address your check(s) to EFCA Donor Services, 901 E. 78th Street, Minneapolis MN 55420.



Perspectives™

Are you curious? What role has God planned for you in bringing His message to the world?

Perspectives is a course that pops up periodically in Grand Rapids, inviting the average Christian to contemplate such a challenge on a personal level.

We've all been issued a Great Commission: "*Go ... and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*" (Matt. 28: 19-20a)

How will you answer the call in 2022 and beyond?

Are you a pray-er, a sender, a mobilizer, a receiver, or even a go-er? God has a role for you in His campaign to reach the world with the Best News Ever.

Check out Perspectives, Thursdays from January 13 through May 10 just up the road at Calvary Church. The first session is free and allows you to explore whether this series is right for you.

More info is available at perspectives.org/grandrapids.

They hit the ground running on December 14 to begin cleanup in

our nation's midwest region after the devastating tornado systems tore through five states on December 10.



Samaritan's Purse®

INTERNATIONAL RELIEF

Assisting people whose lives have been devastated by death and destruction, Samaritan's Purse didn't hesitate. Opportunities to assist include monetary donations (giving a gift of life, perhaps in a loved one's honor or just from your own heart — samaritanspurse.org/donate) as well as setting aside time in your schedule to go to the region and help. Many of the tasks involve no particular skills, especially in the early days. This cleanup and rebuilding will take not days or weeks or even months but years.

Imagine if CrossWay could send a team for a week to pray with our struggling countrymen, to cook for the volunteers, to assist in searching through the rubble for precious memories, or even, down the road, to bring construction skills to the rebuilding.

This one came pretty close to home. Will you help?