



December 2022

CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

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wheelchair accessible • www.crosswaygr.com

Celebrating together the Advent of our King

All you have to do is glance at the calendar (at right, below), and you'll know: December is a time of festive celebration at CrossWay.

Each Sunday till the 25th, we will be celebrating Advent, the season of anticipation of the Coming of King Jesus, and on Christmas Day (which is a Sunday), we will worship together and commemorate His incarnation as One of us, a tiny human baby. In each Sunday's worship service, one of the families of CrossWay will lead in the lighting of the Advent candles.

On Sunday, Dec. 4, we'll convene in the South wing after worship for our annual Christmas Cardwriting Party for Persecuted Christians, each of us addressing and signing several sacred-style greeting cards to 13 brothers in the Lord, each of whom is in prison for his faith, and tucking a heart-language scripture verse into each card. This year, we'll be sending cards also to a Christian brother who is evangelizing in Bangladesh under constant risk of persecution. Pam Reed is coordinating this project and can supply packets to those who cannot be present but wish they could!



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).



On the next Sunday, Dec. 11, we'll gather again in the south wing after worship, to celebrate Advent together with a potluck lunch. Each family is encouraged to bring a dish to share.

Behold My Servant, Whom I uphold,
My Chosen, in Whom My soul delights;
I have put My Spirit upon Him,
He will bring forth justice to the nations. Isaiah 42:1

Coming Up at CrossWay Community

Sundays • 9:30 AM • Prayer, south wing classroom
Sundays • 10 AM • Gather for worship together
Sundays • 11:30 AM • Sunday School for all ages
Tuesdays • 7 - 9 PM • Small group @ Hinkles' home
Wednesdays • 7 PM • Underhill Club @ Marchiones' home
Wed., Dec. 7 • 7 PM • Elder meeting
Thurs., Dec. 1 & 15 • 7 PM • Veurink/Le small group
Fri., Dec. 2 • 6 PM • Men's discipleship program: What & Why
Sat., Dec. 3 • 9 AM • Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans
Sat., Dec. 3 • 9 AM • Women's breakfast @ Bob Evans
Sun., Dec. 4 • 11:30 AM • Christmas cardwriting party
for persecuted Christians
Sun., Dec. 4 • 6 PM • Monthly church prayer hour
Tues., Dec. 6 & 13 • 1 PM • Ladies Bible Study
Fri., Dec. 9 • 6 PM • Men's discipleship program: How
Sun., Dec. 11 • 11:30 AM • CrossWay Christmas potluck
Tues., Dec. 13 • 6:30 PM • Ladies' Christmas tea/gift
exchange @ Audrey Johnston's
Sat., Dec. 24 • 6 PM • Simply Christmas (Eve) worship
service
Sun., Dec. 25 • 10 AM • Celebrating together in worship



Along with Samantha & Scott and all the Montgomery family, we welcome Sophia Grace, born November 25, a healthy baby girl.

Thank you for giving to Operation Christmas Child

Again this year, CrossWay folks participated in Operation Christmas Child—the shoeboxes-for-children campaign of Samaritan's Purse.

CrossWay is a collection point each year for the distinctive gift boxes for needy boys and girls, offering school supplies, small toys, notepads and crayons or pens & pencils.



Delivery of the shoeboxes opens a path for discipleship of youngsters and their families who need to discover the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Thank you, CrossWay family!

For your consideration

December accounts for one-fifth to one-third of charitable giving annually. After all, with Thanksgiving in the rearview mirror and the blessing of Christmas square in our sights, many of us are inspired to go the extra mile this month.

Indeed, in recent years the non-profit industry kicks off the season at the end of November with something called “Giving Tuesday.” Cute, right?

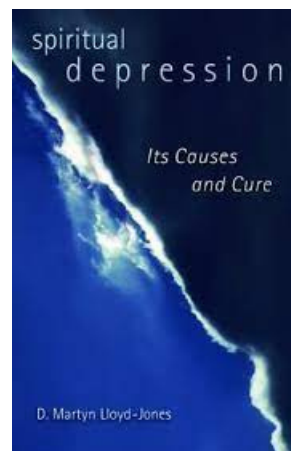
We at CrossWay have a special opportunity for giving this year. Diane and Denis have invited us to assist them in translating *The Chosen* into Urdu for transmission into Pakistan. They write, “**Imagine** the impact of this biblically accurate and emotionally engaging portrayal of Jesus on the people of Pakistan — those whose impressions of Jesus have been skewed by centuries of misleading teaching.”

Our frontline workers at Life TV Pakistan have chosen *The Chosen* as their Giving Tuesday project, with a projected cost of just \$18,000. They have undertaken this project on faith, without the necessary funds in their budget. But when the opportunity presented itself, they just couldn't pass it up.

With your help they can bring this moving portrayal to the smartphones and satellite dishes of Pakistan's more than 230 million people. Your option, as the Lord leads.

<https://lifetvpakistan.com/donate/giving-tuesday22-1>

New to our library



Spiritual Depression: Its Causes & Cures is a 300-page collection of 21 sermons by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, each originally delivered at Westminster Chapel in London, as described by the cover-page memo, which notes the collection “carefully and compassionately analyzes an undeniable feature of contemporary society from which Christians have not escaped — spiritual depression. ...

“Believing that Christian joy was one of the most potent factors in the spread of Christianity in the early centuries, Lloyd-Jones not only lays bare the causes that have robbed many Christians of spiritual vitality but also points the way to the cure that is found through the mind and spirit of Christ.”

Browse its pages from the library table in the lobby and borrow it for a deep, joyful reading experience.

Time for a show!

CrossWay's own Caleb Ward is playing Tiny Tim in a stage adaptation of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* at Orchard View Church of God, 2777 Leffingwell Ave. NE, Grand Rapids. The show runs Friday, Dec. 9, at 7 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 10, at 2 and 7 p.m. Tickets: <https://koinoniahomeschool.seatyourself.biz>. Donations welcome.

And then . . .



It's Christmas Again is a musical film released on the big screen in the Grand Rapids area at the end of November. The story line follows Jake, a young boy who experiences a life-changing effect when he “transports” back to Bethlehem on the night of Jesus's birth following a skateboarding accident right before Christmas. Look for it at Celebration Cinema/Rivertown and CC North/IMAX, as well as Phoenix Theaters at Woodland Mall.



“You are the One”

You are the one.

Sure, I know how this sounds right off the bat. It sounds self-centered and feeds the ever-present mentality of: It’s all about me ... I deserve a break today ... Have it your way ... You are so special, etc.

Yes, there is an element of truth to some of these ideas, but most of the time this “gospel of self-esteem” and its relations feed against biblical injunctions such as the ones we find in Romans 12:3 *“Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought”* and Philippians 2:3: *“... in humility value others above yourselves.”*

Thank God that the very impulse of Christmas and Jesus in His sacrificial love goes against this “me” mentality. But I am getting ahead of myself!

Yes. You are the one. And so am I.

As we celebrate Jesus’s first coming and anticipate His Second Coming during this Christmas season, you must know you are the one.

Until this truth sinks deeply into each of our hearts (yours, mine), Advent or Christmas will mean very little to us. “You are the one,” properly understood and responded to, instead of adding to our me-first culture, will redound to God’s glory, showing what a beautifully kind God we have. You are the one.

You surely remember the parable Jesus gave saying, *“Suppose one of you had a hundred sheep and lost one. Wouldn’t you leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the lost one until you found it? When found, you can be sure you would put it across your shoulders, rejoicing, and when you got home call in your friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Celebrate with me! I’ve found my lost sheep!’ Count on it—there’s more joy in heaven over one sinner’s rescued life than over ninety-nine good people in no need of rescue.”* (Luke:15:4-7, The Message)

Of this passage, the Prince of Preachers, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, had this to say: “Remember, you have given Jesus great joy in His saving you. He was forever with the Father, eternally happy, infinitely glorious, as God over all. Yet out of boundless love, He came, took upon Himself our nature, and suffered in our stead to bring us back to holiness and to God. He lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. That day the shepherd knew but one joy. He had found his sheep, and the very pressure of it upon his shoulders made his heart light, for he knew by that sign that the object of his care was safe beyond all question. Now he goes home with it, and his joy was so great that it filled his soul to overflowing. The parable speaks nothing of his joy in getting home again, nor a word concerning the joy of being greeted by his friends and neighbors. No, the joy of having found his sheep eclipsed all other gladness of heart and dimmed the light of home and friendship. He turns to friends and neighbors and begs them to help him bear the weight of his happiness. He cries, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ When one sinner repents all heaven must celebrate.” – Charles H. Spurgeon, “The Parable of the Lost Sheep,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 30 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1884), 526.

Just think about it! Among other things this passage teaches is that in some way, we “increase” the Father’s joy when we turn to Him in repentance. At Christmas time, we often experience joy in the receiving of gifts. Yet, as we are found by the Father, we add joy to His heart. As we enjoy lives of repentance and return, I hope you and I can be “found” repeatedly by Him this Christmas season.

The great Apostle Paul talks often about God’s love for the elect. (Eph. 1:3-6) Yet in Galatians 2:20, he exults in God’s love for the one — for himself! Paul never got over the Good Shepherd’s love for him and that he was that one lost sheep. I hope you and I never get over His love as well, always remembering we are the one. Take these words to heart, and you will forever be changed: *“I am crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”* – Galatians 2:20

Thankful for family & fellowship at CrossWay
... and so many blessings



Can you start a new tradition the first time you try something? We hope so!
Thanksgiving potluck at CrossWay brought new friends and old ...



Even Tom & Shirley Wriedt were able to partake of our impromptu 'family' feast.