



February 2023

# CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

3950 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546 • 616.949.5690

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## Good news for our congregation

CrossWay is in good shape financially, and we welcomed seven folks into membership — those were the principal take-aways from our semi-annual congregation meeting on Jan. 22.

Even our building fund is carrying a modest balance, reports elder Bob Johnston, and the benevolent fund has monies available for congregants in need.

Encouraging reports were offered by Missions Coordinator Pam Reed and Underhill Club leader Brendan Marchione, as well as an education report by our church chairman Michael Stevens and a pastoral report by Bob Manuel.

Alvin Alves and Brendan Marchione were chosen for the audit committee, and Nate Kelp and Penny Pullen were elected to the elder-nominating committee, to report at the annual business meeting in May.



Our pastor & elders count the ballots welcoming 7 new members to CrossWay.

## Welcome new members!

We hope you've already met them, and now they have made fellowship with us official by formally joining the membership of CrossWay, voted in at our congregation meeting on Jan. 21:

Debbie & Wendell Gafford

Stephanie Krefl

Annie & Jeff Lash

Beth & Mike Ward

## Planning for Lent

CrossWay elders will be taking turns leading an exploration of the fruits of the Spirit on Wednesday evenings in Lent throughout the month of March, outlined in Paul's letter to the Galatians.

A soup-and-bread meal will be offered to all who attend, convening at 6 p.m. Sign up to bring a soup pot to share. Food for the soul on Wednesday evenings in March at CrossWay.

## Coming Up at CrossWay Community

Sundays • 9:30<sup>AM</sup> • Prayer, south wing classroom  
Sundays • 10<sup>AM</sup> • Gather for worship together  
Sundays • 11:30<sup>AM</sup> • Sunday School for all ages  
Tuesdays • 1<sup>PM</sup> • Ladies Bible Study  
Tuesdays • 7 - 9<sup>PM</sup> • Small group @ Hinkles' home  
Wednesdays • 7<sup>PM</sup> • Underhill Club @ Marchiones' home  
Wed., Feb. 1 • 7<sup>PM</sup> • Elder meeting  
Thurs., Feb. 2 & 16 • 7<sup>PM</sup> • Veurink/Le small group  
Fri., Feb. 3 • 6<sup>PM</sup> • Men's discipleship program: What & Why  
Sat., Feb. 4 • 9<sup>AM</sup> • Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans  
Sat., Feb. 4 • 9<sup>AM</sup> • Women's breakfast @ Bob Evans  
Sat., Feb. 11 • 9<sup>AM</sup> • Camelot Pastors Conversation @  
Oakdale CRC, Grand Rapids  
Sun., Feb. 12 • Baby-bottle banks to be returned for PRC  
Wed., Mar. 1 • 6<sup>PM</sup> • Lent Lite begins



## Wintry weather advisory

Winter seems to have arrived. So keep this info handy: cancellation to be posted by 8 a.m. on a given Sunday on WOOD-TV ([www.woodtv.com/weather/closings](http://www.woodtv.com/weather/closings)). We cancel with reluctance, but your safety is important to us!

## Book review: *Spiritual Depression – its causes & cure*

by Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)  
reviewed by Ann Hackney, frequent attendee

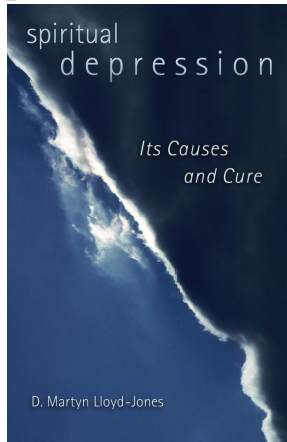
**A 21-sermon collection, each delivered  
at Westminster Chapel, London**

Christians can often appear to be unhappy and joyless and in bondage. When I began this book, it was difficult to follow his writing. But the more I read, I found myself in a lot of areas that he spoke of.

Some areas that he touches on: One true foundation; “that sin” that seems to get us down; the fear of the future; feelings and faith.

One sermon I read was on “spirit of bondage.” (Rom. 8:15-17) We see being a Christian as a task. He leads us into how we are given the Holy Spirit Who dwells within us to help us live, not in fear but in relationship with Him.

I also like his sermon on contentment. (Phil. 4:10-12) I can learn to live (through Christ), no matter my circumstances.

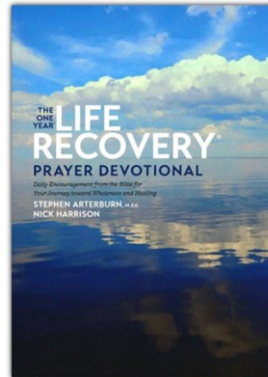


## Deadline is upon us!

Donations to the Pregnancy Resource Center of Grand Rapids are welcome any time, but if you want the convenience of bringing your PRC gift to church, the deadline is Sunday, Feb. 5. That is the date for our collection of banks in the shape of baby bottles, which CrossWay families have been filling with change or folding cash or checks, all to aid our sisters and brothers in the faith in their ministry to expectant moms and their families to help them welcome little ones, particularly those developing babies whose lives were planned by God but not by their parents. Pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, counseling, even provision of baby clothes for needy families — what a ministry to those for whom a new life might appear burdensome. Glory to God. Thank you, CrossWay family, for your generosity, needed now more than ever.



## And new to the CrossWay library . . .



A prayer devotional by Stephen Arterburn and Nick Harrison, this *One-Year Life Recovery Prayer Devotional* is scripture-based and dedicated specifically “For the many who fight the war against addiction.” And the authors hasten to add: “May the victory be yours.”

“Daily hope and inspiration from the Bible for recovery from addictions, compulsions and persistent hang-ups,” according to the back-of-the-book description. Does this appeal to you or to someone you care about? A quality paperback ... check it out!

## Planning an event?

Wanting to reserve a space at CrossWay for an event? Please address your request and its specifics to the three ladies overseeing our revised Facilities Use Policy: Becky Alves, Marcy Greenhoe, and Jane Tucker. Or you can check with our administrative assistant Cindy in the office. (Office hours: Tues. - Fri., 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.)

## Improvements continue

Thanks to your continued donations to the building fund, our elders have planned some projects to better care for the wonderful



facility the Lord has given to us. Soon, as weather and deliveries permit — and as volunteers can be assembled — some of us will be involved in tearing down an old chimney, thereby clearing some storage space in the older part of our building. We'll also be installing gutter/downspout systems along the roof of our lobby and gym areas and upgrading the water heater in our north end to a tankless system, for efficiency and additional storage space.

Plan to respond to the call for volunteers in the early spring so we can complete these worthy projects.





I can't think of a greater privilege/calling than to be allowed to study the Scriptures week-by-week with the aim of teaching a community of believers what it means, what it looks like to follow Jesus. I hope and pray, and expect by His grace, that someday, along with the Apostle Paul, Jesus will say of me that I was *"trustworthy as He appointed me to His service."* (I Tim. 1:12)

Although we all follow Him imperfectly, I believe that every true believer has a heartfelt desire to please their new Abba, to obey Him by abiding in His Son, empowered by the Spirit. New Covenant believers in Jesus truly WANT to obey God.

In a recent sermon, I tried to encourage you with a concluding paragraph, saying: "Heartfelt obedience to the law comes not from focusing on the law (this just stirs up trouble — Rom. 7:8) but by keeping in step with the Spirit (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:26-27; Gal. 5:16-26) Who empowers (Rom. 8:1-17) us to abide in Jesus, the love of our lives." This was from my sermon on I Tim. 1:8-11 as I tried to explain how God's law and the Gospel work together.

An example of how the early church tried to figure out this relationship between law and Gospel can be seen in Acts 15 as the mostly Jewish-comprised new church tried to figure out what to do with all the Gentiles who were coming to faith.

Before we go there, go back and read I Tim. 1: 5-16 as Paul describes to Timothy the character of the false teachers who were enamored with teaching the law. He said, among other things, they had departed from a **"pure heart"** rather than advancing God's work, which is by **faith**. Now, go to Acts 15 and back to the question, "What do we do; how do we instruct these Gentiles on how to live in this new Way?

Well, *"some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, 'The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.'"* (v. 5) This was after we had read in verse 1 that *"Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: 'Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.'"* Peter, after much discussion of these questions, said the following:

## Living Out of Our New Hearts

— or —

### In Praise of Our Grace-giving God

*"God, who knows the **heart**, showed that he accepted them by giving the **Holy Spirit** to them, just as he did to us. He did not discriminate between us and them, for he **purified their hearts by faith**. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."* (Acts 15:8-10 – emphasis mine)

You see, as followers of Jesus, we have had our hearts purified by the Holy Spirit Who has given us new hearts (remember the New Covenant prophecies above in Jeremiah and Ezekiel!), a new "operating system" that at its core delights to obey our Father. To all of this we might say, "But I don't always obey; sometimes I'm not even sure I want to obey." If that is true, it is because our minds have wandered (see Rom. 8:5-9). And, to keep with the software analogy of a new operating system, we have been infected with the nasty malware of the flesh whenever we are struggling with obedience to our kind Father.

So, what, can we do? Remind yourself of the Gospel. Remind yourself of where your true life and heart reside. *"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you will also appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore ..."* (Col. 3:1-5)

I know I have kind of thrown a lot at you in this brief article. My goal in reminding you of all this is primarily twofold: 1) to encourage you to walk in and express the new heart/affections you have been given by Christ on the day you believed in Him. To do this, we must believe what He has said He has done in making us His own and then to trust Him to help us live these truths out, and 2) To be led, like the Apostle Paul, to exalt in God's grace over you.

Please read I Tim. 1:12-17. I love this section of Scripture, for as Paul marinated in the grace of God, it's as if he had a premature benediction. He couldn't wait till the end of his letter to add an early amen: *"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."* (I Tim. 1:17) May God give us the courage to live out of His abundant grace. Each day, no (!), multiple times each day, may we give "early benedictions" of praise to a God who has *"considered us trustworthy, appointing us to his service."* (I Tim. 1:12)

## More greetings from our Gospel workers

### A note from Tom & Dora:

Dear CrossWay friends,

Thank you for your faithful prayerful support and encouragement through the years. What a joy to be connected to you! Blessings on 2023 as a whole as you reach Grand Rapids and beyond!

(Tom has just announced a Pathways to Partnership conference at Trinity Church in Lakeville, Minnesota, for April 21-23. See Pam Reed if you'd like to attend to encourage our denomination's leader in ministry to marginalized people groups.

### and from Kate & Matyas (& Abner & Emese):

Hello, CrossWay! Greetings from Budapest! Happy New Year! We pray the Michigan winter is being kind to you, as God uses the season for your good. I hope all is well and each of you has been able to draw closer to Jesus. We are blessed by you. Thankful to our Lord for this partnership to see nations transformed by Jesus alone! Thank you for being like-minded in this! You are a blessing!

### also from Keith & Judy:

We want to thank you for this unexpected blessing [our year-end gift]! Even more so, for the faithful partnership and friendship we have thoroughly enjoyed over the years. Although we have a few churches which communicate with us regularly, not every church has a missions team so committed to staying connected with its missionaries as CrossWay. It is encouraging to us how you not only send the *CrossWay Current*, but also will periodically get in touch with us via other means. We know that the church does pray for us as well, so we sense the strong support from not only the missions team, but also the church.

May 2023 be a wonderfully blessed new year of God-given opportunities to serve Him as His kingdom expands throughout the earth!

**To join a CrossWay  
communications & prayer team,  
or to explore friendship evangelism opportunities  
in our church's neighborhood,  
please contact Pam Reed,  
CrossWay's missions coordinator.**

## We Must Do God's Work at Midnight

*"But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'"*—Matt 25:6

The earth turns on its axis. Midnight is the moment when a part of the earth is the farthest away from the sun. Spiritual midnight is the period of the greatest departure of men from God. We are approaching this midnight.

The children of God do not receive midnight with the same feelings as the world. At midnight, the first-born of the Egyptians died, but the chosen people go their freedom.

The Lord has said, *"Night is coming, when no one can work."* (John 9: 4) But as often as a thing is declared impossible in the Bible, this does not refer to the faithful. About them, Jesus declared, *"All things are possible for one who believes."* (Mark 9: 23)

God's people can work near midnight. It was at midnight that Samson took the gates of the city of Gaza. (Judges 16: 3) At midnight, Ruth received from Boaz the promise, *"I will do for you all that you ask."* (Ruth 3: 8-11) At midnight, Paul and Silas won for the Lord the jailer of Philippi. (Acts 16: 25)

—by Richard Wurmbrand (excerpted from *The Voice of the Martyrs* magazine, January 2023)

At midnight, God's people have achieved great works. Therefore, the psalmist says, *"At midnight I rise to praise you."* (Psalm 119: 62) We are not afraid of the darkness in the world. We work. The Bridegroom comes soon. We cannot meet Him empty-handed. ...

The miraculous story of the Acts of the Apostles continues. We don't care that midnight is approaching. Only ordinary men cannot work during a spiritual night, but *"All things are possible for one who believes."* He can work even when he personally passes through the dark night of the soul, even when he is on his death bed.

It is near midnight. Darkness confuses. We have to meet the Bridegroom. We still have time to work.

*Richard Wurmbrand (1909-2001) was imprisoned in Communist Romania for his faith in Christ. Following his imprisonment, he and his wife, Sabina (1913-2000), sought ways to serve persecuted Christians and in 1967 started a global ministry known today as The Voice of the Martyrs. Richard's story Wurmbrand: Tortured for Christ -- The Complete Story is available at TorturedforChrist.com.*