



March 2023

CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

3950 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546 • 616.949.5690

wheelchair accessible • www.crosswaygr.com

Feeling blessed? Be a blessing!

We at CrossWay have been blessed with the opportunity to step up our game this season. Our Elder Board has embraced a new tool, brought to our congregation by Mike Ward, that can help us bring the Gospel to our neighbors, at home and around our church.

“Bless Every Home” is a tech app that uses openly available sources to give us the names of people who live around us. Adding their names to our prayer list is just the first step in organizing our efforts and making them efficient and effective. There’s so much more! So, come to Sunday School during this season, and get equipped to dip your toe in the water and discover that you, too, can be a blessing to those around you.



Need a little motivation? Remember the destiny of souls who miss the blessing of living for Jesus. And remember His parting words to His disciples: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore 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. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.”* It’s a command with a promise, from our King of kings.

Lent Light underway

The Fruit of the Spirit will be the focus for our observance together of the Lenten season.

Each Wednesday evening of March, Cross-Way elders will lead an uplifting study time together, taken from Paul’s letter to the Galatians.

Bring a friend or neighbor who needs Good News.

We will gather at 6 p.m. for a light soup-and-bread meal. (Sign up to bring an offering from your kitchen.)



Directory updates

Your volunteer publishers of our fellowship directory are working on updates and refreshes. If you have new info or would like your picture to be updated, please contact us at plpreed47@gmail.com. Workin’ on it!

Wintry weather advisory

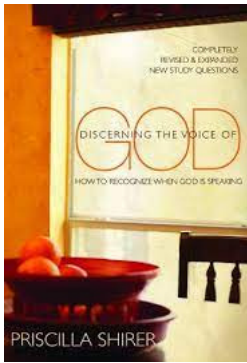
Just in case: cancellation to be posted by 8 a.m. on a given Sunday on WOOD-TV (www.woodtv.com/weather/closings). We cancel with reluctance, but your safety is important to us!



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 • 1^{PM} • Ladies Bible Study
Tuesdays • 7 - 9^{PM} • Small group @ Hinkles’ home
Wednesdays • 7^{PM} • Underhill Club @ CrossWay
Wednesdays • 6^{PM} • Lent Light (supper, then 6:45 teaching)
Wed., Mar. 1 • 7:15^{PM} • Elder meeting
Thurs., Mar. 2 & 16 • 6:30^{PM} • Veurink/Le small group
Fri., Mar. 3 • 6^{PM} • Men’s discipleship program: What & Why
Sat., Mar. 4 • 9^{AM} • Men’s breakfast @ Bob Evans
Sat., Mar. 4 • 9^{AM} • Women’s breakfast @ Russ’s on 28th
Fri., Mar. 10 • 6^{PM} • Men’s discipleship program: How
Fri., Mar. 17 • 7 - 8:30^{PM} • CrossWay Coffee House

New to the CrossWay library . . .



Longing to hear the voice of God and discern His will for your life? Priscilla Shirer has taken His call seriously and discovered her Kingdom role. Her ministry includes passing along what she has learned over the years in her Christian walk.

You'll find her writing easily accessible and her heart sincere as she leads the reader into a deeper relationship with our Lord. No scolding for your failure to begin your day with a "quiet time," but she will encourage you to get serious about your faith.

Look for it on the library table near the coffee bar.

Learning together

Adults and youth are joining together in the sanctuary after the worship service for lessons that enrich our lives.

Currently, Mike Ward is stimulating us to good works of praying, caring and sharing with our neighbors. He's introducing the new Bless Every Home tech app as a tool in launching a new project for the CrossWay congregation, recently adopted by our Board of Elders. Mike's series on "Strategies for Local Outreach" takes us up to Easter Sunday.

Following Easter, Brendan Marchione returns to the platform to continue his series of Sunday Schools on "How We Got our Bible." Brendan's series completes our Christian Education spring, with no Sunday School scheduled for Mother's Day on May 14 and the Annual Congregational Meeting slotted for May 21.

See you in Sunday School! 11:30 in the sanctuary.

Get ready for spring!



Pretty soon, it'll be time for CrossWayers to put their muscles to the grindstone! It's not too early to express your willingness to join with brothers (and sisters!) in our gutter installation project, as well as tearing down an old chimney. Are you one who grooves on "demo day?" Let your heart be known even now to Bob Johnston. It'll be such an encouragement to know you're willing to work!

CrossWay Coffee House

On Friday, March 17, 7 to 8:30 p.m., we'll be rockin' the South Wing for Jesus. Plan on an evening of music, poetry and other creative expressions being put together by Sandy and Brad Williams. We'll even be serving up the coffee! (And we still have a few CrossWay mugs available for your donation to the building fund.) Y'all come!



Come for the music...
enjoy the coffee!

Thank you, CrossWay!



your gifts will make.

It's easy to count the baby bottles turned in by CrossWay families for the Pregnancy Resource Center's Jan-Feb fundraising drive. About 30 this year — nice job!

It is less easy to quantify the impact

The Pregnancy Resource Center of Grand Rapids is a Christ-centered ministry offering aid and comfort and real information to mothers who discover a pregnancy they did not plan. And also counseling for the unexpected dads and other family members.

This ministry brings the heart of Jesus to developing babies and their moms at the very time that news of the baby may disrupt the status quo in an unlooked-for way.

Pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, counseling, comfort and hands-on help are touches offered troubled moms and their families. And at PRC of Grand Rapids, Bible studies are offered as well as baby clothing and care supplies for moms who cannot foot these sudden new bills on their own.

All of this ministry costs real money and brings real rewards. With our baby bottle banks, we add our prayers, especially for such a time as this.

Jesus declared: "*Let the children come to Me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.*" ~ Mark 10:14 ESV



As the Deer . . .

"I want to know Christ — yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings."

Philippians 3: 10

A small Christian liberal arts university in Wilmore, Kentucky, has been gathering much attention in the news lately. Asbury up to this point in time was perhaps best known for a movement of God on their campus, known as the "Asbury Revival" of 1970.

The current revival began on **February 8** as a normal chapel service. According to Asbury students and leaders, a gospel choir sang at the end of the service, and some students stuck around afterward. A quiet humble sense of God's palpable presence has ensued since then, with students, staff, faculty, visitors and friends not wanting to leave. As I write this (February 21), it's been going on for almost two weeks.

I'm sharing this for at least two reasons and ask you to prayerfully and humbly consider your heart's response. First, I would ask you to pray we will all profit spiritually and have a teachable spirit for whatever has been happening at Asbury. I mention this because, as you might imagine, there has been more "heat" than "light" being shared over all that has taken place. If you are a student of revival, as I have been for nearly 30 years now, you know revivals are always met with some level of skepticism and critique. While some of this skepticism is needed and helpful, much of it is not.

One of America's greatest theologians, Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) offers wise counsel in this regard. In response to a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit during America's First Great Awakening, Edwards wrote a pastoral tome titled, *Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*. **His aim was to help the believers in the New England area know how to discern a true work of God vs. counterfeits.** In his opening paragraphs he wrote: "In the apostolic age, there was the greatest outpouring of the Spirit of God that ever was; both as to His extraordinary influences and gifts, and His ordinary operations, in convincing, converting, enlightening and sanctifying the souls of men. But as the influences of the true Spirit abounded, so counterfeits did also abound: the devil was abundant in mimicking both the ordinary and extraordinary influences of the Spirit of God, as is manifest by innumerable passages of the apostles' writings. This made it very necessary that the church of Christ should be furnished with some certain rules, distinguishing and clear marks, by which she might proceed safely in judging of the true from the false without danger of being imposed upon."

That'll whet your appetite! I encourage you to read the book. It's quite slim and really pretty accessible as far as Edwards goes.

I would contend in order for us to profit *spiritually* from such outpourings of the Holy Spirit, we must have a *teachable spirit* over such movements of the Holy Spirit. You see, whenever God does something unusual (yes, I am assuming a work of God here), the critics come out of the woodwork. In Edwards's day, the greatest critics of the Great Revival were not unbelievers but Christians, and especially the clergy.

"God doesn't work like this, like that. This is getting out of hand. And the seven last words of a dying church are often heard: 'We've never done it like this before.'"

I am not encouraging you to turn your brain off. I am also not saying we accept everything that comes our way under the banner of "revival." I *am* saying, be teachable so we can profit spiritually.

Are you *longing* for God? I have read many things the last few weeks from good people saying all sorts of things that are happening at Asbury. Lots of it is negative. "Revival, true revival, they say, isn't just an extended worship service in a chapel. Revival happens in the streets, etc." Yes, I suppose I can agree with some of that. YET. YET. I am more thankful for those who write, analyzing the Asbury experience and, while not "baptizing" the whole kit and kaboodle, encourage us to see God at work here. For me, as I have prayerfully pondered the Asbury Revival of 2023, I boil it down to what I see as its essence: *Longing*. "*As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?*" (Ps.42: 1-2)

These young people at Asbury are thirsting. They are longing. Oh, the skeptic might say, "They are only longing for an uplifting experience, not God Himself." My quote from Jonathan Edwards addressed this. Personally, I would say, "so what?" What if that is true? At least they are not complacent and are dissatisfied with their present experience of God. At least they long and pant. And many of them are not leaving the chapel until they have met with God.

In closing, may I ask: "Do you and I long for God in a similar way?" Read the rest of Psalm 42 and note within it the longing for God and the willingness to weep until He shows up again. My prayer is that, at the very least, we as brothers and sisters at CrossWay will not first be quick to critique a movement of the Spirit but rather honest and humble enough to long for God as the Psalmist does, as these young people at Asbury and beyond do.

May we not stop praying for revival until we begin to experience Him anew ourselves.

Life is good ... at Black Forest Academy

After three years of disruption, the Black Forest Academy (BFA) has returned to in-classroom instruction, and Mike has been reflecting lately on the peace that the Prince of Peace has brought to his heart.

As BFA's chemistry teacher, Mike teaches children of missionaries about "God's creation and the small things and mysterious order He has made that form bonds that build the rest of the universe." He's enjoying watching their amazement as he opens this created, orderly world to them. Mike also leads four other teachers as head of BFA's science dept.

His family is settling back to normal as well, with seven-year-old Grant attending all-day first grade as an eager learner at a bilingual Christian school where he receives spiritual and academic training.



Five-year-old Clark continues at a German kindergarten and loves the time with friends there. At home, he's an all-American boy, building with Legos and playing with toy trains.

Gracia turned two last summer and hangs out with mom Kari, running errands, doing chores, and toddling around. The two "ladies" attend a weekly bilingual Bible study with a childcare program and enjoy a weekly moms-and-kids group at a German church. And of course, she loves playing with her brothers.

With travel restrictions lifted, Mike has just been involved once again in the long weekend junior trip to Normandy and Paris to see the landing beaches and study the history of the area, as well as to build class unity. He reports: "The junior trip was even better this time since we found a hostel, and the hostel did have real beds and cooked the food for us. In years past, we camped about 100 meters off Utah Beach in tents and a large group room with sleeping bags, and we cooked the meals for the 70 students all weekend. So this year, it was much easier, and we could just focus on the history and the sites."

So great to hear him sound happy, after the past few years of strain and personal loss, with Kari's mom having gone home to the Lord last year. We hope to see this family this summer when they get to the States for a couple of weeks but expect their main focus to be on family here and in New York State.

Please pray for:



opportunities to engage students academically and spiritually at BFA during the rest of the school year;



health and safety of both staff and families as well as the students' families;;



Mike and Kari rearing their children in Germany, that they would have wisdom, patience and energy in parenting well;



Mike and Kari's walks with God, putting Him first in all things;



their plans for summer to visit family in the U.S., for a refreshing time full of memories.

**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.**

Concerns of a ministry partner

CrossWay received this message during February from the Pregnancy Resource Center/Grand Rapids,
by PRC CEO Jim Sprague

The New Testament book of Hebrews was written to encourage Jewish Christ-followers facing considerable opposition. To some degree, those defending pre-born life today in Michigan can relate. Respectively, each has had to contend with major political unrest, unparalleled religious polarization and, in some cases, brazen persecution. In response, it may be tempting to give up.

This is why, after making the case for the infinite superiority of Jesus Christ, the writer of this epistle reminds Christians from all generations to, “...hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.” (Hebrews 10:23)

In fact, this has become our theme verse for 2023. We at PRC Grand Rapids are taking it to heart, especially in light of some significant opposition to our mission. Never before have we witnessed such political, religious and legal upheaval. Truly, this is the time for God’s people to “hold unswervingly to the hope we profess....”

Let me explain more about this opposition.

Last year’s efforts to defeat Michigan’s Proposal 3 failed. As a result, abortion is now a constitutionally protected right in our state. Furthermore, the Governor, the Attorney General, the House, the Senate, and the Michigan Supreme Court are all in support of unfettered access to abortion, and they have gone straight to work on defending these reproductive rights in the new year.

On January 12, 2023, House Bill 4006 was introduced. With the current administration in place, it’s only a matter of time before this bill becomes law and erases Michigan’s 1931 law which bans abortion except to save the life of the mother. Though the law is already nullified by Prop 3, the new administration has made their first order of business its permanent eradication.

Oh, but there is much more to come.

In a recent *Detroit Free Press* opinion piece, pro-abortion State Senator Erika Geiss (D-Taylor) not only reveled in the passage of Prop 3, but went on to inform her constituents that, “...there are [still] multiple components of Michigan law impeding the right of a person to make their own health care decisions when it comes to reproductive care. These [impediments] include mandatory 24-hour waiting periods, biased counseling, limited public funding for abortion care, restrictions on private insurance, and consent for a minor to obtain an abortion.”

It seems to be happening just as we feared. This opinion piece validates the concern expressed last fall that many other laws protecting women and children (the ones abortion advocates said we need not worry about in the passage of Prop 3) are in fact going to be struck down.

Senator Geiss has openly presented a sampling of the next “barriers” to abortion she’d like removed:

- The 24-hour waiting period (informed consent),
- Biased counseling (this is code for pregnancy centers; they don’t promote abortion),
- Limited public funding (making way for Medicaid dollars to again pay for abortions),
- Limits on private, insurance-paid abortions, and most egregiously,
- The elimination of parental consent requirements for a minor to obtain an abortion.

The deck really seems to be stacked against us in Michigan. Yet, as we face this extraordinary opposition, Hebrews 10:23 reminds us that God is the One who has promised, and He will be faithful.

Our job is to hold unswervingly to this truth.

I want to thank you, our faithful supporters, for standing with us. More than you know, it is your sacrificial gifts, text messages, notes and prayers of protection that are the spiritual “handholds” that encourage us so much.

The work has never been more important — or more rewarding! In contrast to a year of mounting opposition, I’m excited to report that in our Medical Services department — where the team interacts each day with abortion-seeking, abortion-determined women—they have reported more saved lives last year than any other year!

In 2022, this team witnessed 360 life decisions! That’s incredible, and we praise God for each one of those lives. But not everyone in Michigan is pleased.

It’s partly because of this type of success that there is a concerted effort to significantly hamper, or even completely eliminate, the work of pregnancy centers in this state. So, along with soliciting your generous financial support that keeps us effective and operational, I also want to ask you to pray for us.

PRC Grand Rapids is working with pro-life groups across Michigan to formulate a plan to stand against the pro-abortion wave that wants to wash over our state. We are putting out a statewide call for all pregnancy centers to unite around the common mission of seeing lives transformed in Christ’s name.

I believe that He who promised to be with us in every circumstance is both sovereign and faithful, and His victory is sure.

Thank you for your trust and your generous partnership in changing the future...one life at a time.®

P.S. You can join our Prayer Text Team today by texting **pray4prc** to 616/877-7729. As a prayer team member, you will receive one to two urgent prayer texts each week — so you can pray for real needs in real time!