



CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

3950 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546 • 616.949.5690

wheelchair accessible • www.crosswaygr.com

'Bless Every Home'

Mike Ward has brought to CrossWay a modern tool for evangelism: Bless Every Home. BEH is an "app" for your phone that provides you publicly available lists of people in your neighborhood (and our church's neighborhood), along with boxes to check to mark your progress from prayer to personal contact to service to sharing your own testimony to inviting your new friend to receive the Gift of eternal life: Jesus.



grabbed the app and have begun to use this system to assist them in reaching out through prayer and conversation, participating directly in the Great Commission to bring the Gospel to the world.

One student boldly asked a shopclerk one day about what he thought about Jesus Christ. His heart was ready, and he shared deep struggles with her. The contact wasn't BEH, but her participation in the class has activated her approach in everyday contacts.

Around 25 CrossWay folks attended Mike's Sunday school sessions for several weeks, and many of them

For more success stories ... just ask Mike or share your own with him!

Adult/youth ed hour this month

May brings our Sunday School program for adults and youth to a close for this season. On May 7, Brendan Marchione will conclude his series on how our Bible was put together for the transmission of God's Word over the centuries. Then, on May 21, following a hiatus for Mothers' Day, our congregation will receive the annual budget prepared by our Elder Board at our Annual Congregational Meeting. Please plan to attend these important events.

Spring Cleanup at CrossWay

Many hands are needed Sat., May 13, beginning at 10 a.m. to spruce up our garden beds and tend the grounds of our church building.



Bob Johnston and Leigh Basler will head the crew and can answer any questions you might have. The more participants, the faster it'll go.

Getting down to business



All CrossWay attendees are welcome to stay after our worship service

on Sunday, May 21, to receive reports from several ministries of our church and get the inside scoop of aspirations and directions for future service of and to our congregation, our neighbors and the world.

Included will be presentation of the Elder Board's budget proposal, on which the members will be asked to vote their approval, as well as an election for two positions on the Board.

Meeting attendees may plan on a light snack in the lobby after worship.

Please bring your tools!

Coming Up at CrossWay Community

Sundays • 9:30^{AM} • Prayer, south wing classroom
 Sundays • 10^{AM} • Gather for worship together
 Tuesdays • 1^{PM} • Ladies Bible Study
 Tuesdays • 7 - 9^{PM} • Small group @ Hinkles' home
 Wednesdays • 6:30^{PM} • Underhill Club @ Marchiones'
 Wed., May 3 • 7^{PM} • Elder meeting
 Thurs., May 4 & 18 • 6:30^{PM} • Veurink/Le small group
 Fri., May 5 • 7:30^{PM} • Inaugural Midwest Prayer Breakfast @Meijer Gardens
 Fri., May 5 • 6^{PM} • Men's discipleship program, for all men
 Sat., May 6 • 9^{AM} • Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans
 Sat., May 6 • 9^{AM} • Women's breakfast @ Russ's
 Sun. May 7 & 14 • 11:30^{AM} • Sunday School for all ages
 Sun., May 7 • 6^{PM} • All-church prayer meeting
 Fri., May 12 • 6^{PM} • Men's discipleship movie night
 Sat., May 13 • 10^{AM} • Spring cleanup at CrossWay
 Sun., May 21 • 11:30^{AM} • Annual congregational meeting

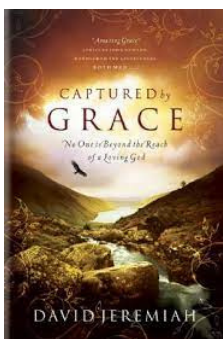
Welcome to CrossWay



Vivienne takes a peek as Jocelyn opens their gifts.

On Sat., April 22, CrossWay families gathered to bless the Ostoich family with a fresh supply of items to help Jocelyn and Jed in the days ahead. They're expecting a baby to arrive any day now, into a loving family. Praise the Lord!

New to the CrossWay Library



Captured by Grace by Dr. David Jeremiah will be available for borrowing at the lobby book table.

In this 207-page hardback, Dr. Jeremiah shows how the transforming mercy that captured songwriter John Newton and the Apostle Paul can awaken with you a fresh experience of the God Who loves you fiercely and pursues you with abandon.

“Encountering God’s grace changes lives forever.”

Inaugural Midwest Prayer Breakfast

Midwest Foundation is hosting this special event close by, at Frederick Meijer Gardens, Friday, May 5, at 7:30 a.m. Join with friends and neighbors to pray for our country and for the world, keyed by Maggie Gobran, dubbed 2022 Arab Woman of the year.



Egypt’s “Mother Theresa”
Maggie Gobran of Cairo

Her riches-to-rags story will stir your heart and bless your spirit. Breakfast admission: \$25 at the door.

Directory updates on the way



We’ve seen quite a few changes since the initial publication of CrossWay’s pictorial fellowship directory.

Updates are coming soon. Check your church mailbox in the hallway behind the sanctuary. (Call the church office if you don’t have a mailbox yet!)

Feasting & fellowshiping before the Easter service at CrossWay





As the wind blows ... (May we be ready)

Happy May! Summer officially begins on June 21. We highly anticipate this time of year, especially in the thick of winter; with the advent of spring, we long for summer. Last month my article was titled “Repentance: Our Lifeline and Joy.” Whenever I think of repentance, I always think of renewed life. When we repent, we are turning from the “winter” of our sin and the deadening effects of it, to the Life of God for the renewal we need. In a spiritual sense, repentance brings us into “summertime.” Lately, I have been reminded that if I am to experience renewal/life from God, I desperately need to delight in and depend upon the Holy Spirit. And it’s this delight and dependence upon the Spirit that I want to bring to our attention in this month’s article. I want to help prepare you, if I can, for your own renewal of life.

So much could be said of the Holy Spirit, but let me try to limit our focus by making a few comments on the work of the Spirit as we interact with Him as a Wind/Breath. I think mainly of four different texts: Genesis 1:2; John 3:5-8, Acts 1:5-8 and Acts 2:1-4. Each of these texts speaks of the work of the Spirit in helping to create new life.

Oh, how we need the Spirit for summertime in our souls! In Genesis 1 we see a chaotic and dark world, formless and empty. The Spirit broods/hovers over the surface of the deep, and at the command of Jesus (John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2) helps to create the world, and it was good. In John 3, as Jesus converses with Nicodemus, He tells this teacher of Israel that if he wants to enter the kingdom of God, he will have to be born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5). Then, it is so interesting to note Jesus’s comments about the Spirit in verse 8: *“The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”* Then, finally, we see the Spirit/Wind showing up in Acts 1 & 2. Jesus tells His disciples that they would be His witnesses, but they would have to wait for empowerment from the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:5-8)

So, they waited and prayed. That alone is significant. We will get back to that, but of course in Acts chapter 2 we read, *“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”* (Acts 2:1-4)

What to make of all this? My space in this article is limited, but let me suggest a few things from the Scripture for us all to pray over. As we do, I believe we can also experience the lifeline and joy of repentance, as we walk in step with and dependence upon the Holy Spirit. (Gal. 5:16, 25)

First, we cannot create the life in us we need. Only the Holy Spirit can do that. (Ps. 51:10-12) So I suppose you might think: “There is nothing we can do but wait.” Well, I would say, yes and no. You see, “waiting” in Scripture is not a passive thing. When the disciples waited in the upper room for the coming of the Spirit, we saw them doing a number of things. They constantly prayed. (Acts 1:14) They were studying Scripture, making decisions and planning for future leaders. (1:15ff) So, their waiting took the shape of prayer and the study of Scripture, which led them to replace the empty slot Judas left behind with Matthias. Those two things — prayer and Scripture — are the two main ways we today can earnestly seek for the life-giving work of the Spirit. Besides these positive aspects of waiting for the Spirit, negatively, we must not lie to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3), nor grieve (Eph. 4:30) nor quench His work in our lives. (1 Thess. 5:19) It amazes me that in some small and mysterious way, we can hinder the full work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. May I suggest a prayer for us to pray this summer, as we wait upon the Spirit’s renewing work? Here it is: *“Holy Spirit, come. Come over and upon the darkness of our lives, over that which at times is formless and empty in us, and fill us with Jesus. Help us to want Him, see Him, follow and obey Him — and then experience His resurrection power, that we might be answers to the prayer of, “Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.”*

Memorial tribute to a modern day Christian hero

by Rob Schwarzwald, Senior Lecturer in Regent University's Honors College, lightly edited

The day after the presidential inauguration in 2009, I was feeling pretty low. The congressman I worked for had been defeated for re-election. Barack Obama, rated by *National Journal* as the most liberal member of the U.S. Senate, was the new President. Democrats were in charge of the Executive Branch as well as both houses of Congress. Many of my friends were, like me, out of work.

And then I met George Verwer.

George was one of the most passionate people I have ever known.



I suspect he and the Apostle Paul would have made great teammates. In 1957, George had a dramatic conversion at a Billy Graham crusade and never looked back. Shortly after coming to Christ, he launched Operation Mobilization (OM). In the summer of 1963, OM sent 2,000 workers to blanket Europe with the Gospel. As reported in *Christianity Today*, Operation Mobilization became “one of the largest mission organizations of the 20th century, sending out thousands every year on short- and long-term trips. OM currently has 3,300 adult workers from 134 countries working in 147 countries. An estimated 300 other mission agencies were also started as a result of contact with OM or launched by former OMers.” In total, OM has trained and sent 150,000 men and women to make disciples and bring practical assistance in order to show the love of Christ.

George passed away April 14 after a relatively brief bout with cancer. I received one of his last ministry updates in January, in which he wrote not about what he called his “health downturn” but his desire to spend more time with his beloved wife, Drena. And then, he provided a list of all the ministry needs on his heart: OM’s Bible Fund, its efforts to provide effective prenatal and infant care in the developing world, evangelistic outreaches, including his desire to “have the largest (possible) network of evangelists and literature distribution,” and a ministry to refugees and asylum seekers in Europe and places as far away as Yemen. He concluded with, “There is so much more I would like to share. I soon hope to open another website focused on special projects.” This, from a frail 83-year-old man who was in decline.

So, back to 2009. A friend recommended that I meet with George while he was in D.C. He had come to try to make contacts in the new administration for ministry purposes. He was not what I was expecting: his demeanor was warm but furtive, kind and friendly but also intense, with little time for small talk. He wore a trademark white jacket on which was printed a map of the world. That was fitting, as his heart for a fallen humanity was gigantic.

I was astonished by George’s immediate willingness to share his heart with me. Toward the end of our conversation, he began to cry. He said he wrestled with the way God was working in the world. He told me that he sometimes wondered whether his faith was misplaced but had concluded there was enough evidence of the reality of Christ that he persevered.

In our roughly two hours together, a bond was created that lasted over many years. On one occasion when I did not respond to an e-mail as rapidly as he would have liked, he sent me a follow-up message asking if I had gotten his last one. I shouldn’t have been surprised — George read every e-mail he received.

My last personal correspondence with George was a little over a year ago. He wrote, “Dear Robert ... praying for you. We urgently need funds for African language Bibles for many nations in Africa. I don’t know what your finance situation is but wonder if you could give \$70 for 10 Bibles. No pressure. You like many probably are over-committed in your generous giving. In the battle, George. P.S. [W]e are also in many life and death humanitarian situations ... raising funds is up-hill climb.” The actual message contained numerous grammatical and spelling errors — not because George was a poor writer but because, I suspect, his correspondence was so extensive that he didn’t have time to worry about typos.

I mourn George’s passing. Meeting him on what had been, for me, a grim day has been an enduring reminder that eternity’s values — God, the Gospel, people for whom Christ died — are vastly more important than any political turn of events. Now in the presence of the Savior he loved so much, George is seeing the everlasting fruit of his Pauline-like fervor to bring people of all ages to saving faith in Jesus. I look forward to seeing my brother again.