



September 2023

CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

3950 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546 • 616.949.5690
wheelchair accessible • www.crosswaygr.com • crossway.communitygr@gmail.com

Launch time!

Come September, churches all over America are revving up to provide their congregation with Christian education for all ages, and CrossWay is no different.

Sunday School will begin at 11:30 a.m. for children every week in the classroom area north of the sanctuary.



For adults, our church-wide prayer meeting will begin at 11:30 on the first Sunday, with Sunday School starting after our worship service on the other Sundays in September.

Honoring God and going deeper, together.

Membership class available

If you've been attending CrossWay but have not become a formal member of our congregation, you now have an opportunity to consider membership after a four-hour membership class.

On Saturday, Sept. 30, Pastor Manuel will outline our denomination's statement of faith, discuss the value of church membership and present a bit of the history of the church at Burton & East Paris. He will also give attendees an opportunity to express their faith commitment.

For young folks who've grown up in our church, for anyone who's been attending a while, for those who seek to explore a greater commitment, this is an opportunity to consider taking your discipleship into formal membership — no commitment required in order to participate in the class. It's up to you.

CrossWay meets Camelot



Our first outreach event for the season in the nearby Camelot community is scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 24, beginning at 1 p.m. We'll be setting up some games and passing out the popsicles, right there in the neighborhood's park as a follow-through on Mike Ward's evangelism training during our adult Sunday School earlier this year. It's an opportunity to reach out and make new friends for CrossWay and, more importantly, for Jesus. Plan now to be part of the crowd. Please contact Mike Ward for further information. He's in the directory.

Calling Gen Z...



The Send is coming to Grand Rapids Saturday, Sept. 2, from Noon to 10 p.m. at VanAndel Arena — an opportunity for the Gen Z in our midst.

The leaders of *The Send* state that they have been called by God to "reach every high school, university, nation and community around the world with the Gospel." They are working to fulfill that mission by equipping local Gen Zs to "live on mission through adoption and reaching neighborhoods, communities and the nations for God."

They've been called to Grand Rapids to present speakers, lead worship and offer opportunities to respond. Tickets at \$10 are available at TheSend.org, where more information can be found about this ministry.

Coming Up at CrossWay Community

Sundays • 9:30^{AM} • Prayer, south wing classroom
Sundays • 10^{AM} • Gather for worship together
Tuesdays • 1^{PM} • Ladies weekly Bible study
Tuesdays • 2^{PM} • Bless Every Home prayer walk —
meet @ CrossWay
Tuesdays • 7 - 9^{PM} • Small group @ Hinkles' home
Wednesdays • 6^{AM} • Men's Discipleship @ church
Wednesdays • 6:30^{PM} • Underhill Club @ Marchionis'
Sat., Sept. 2 • 9^{AM} • Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans
Sat., Sept. 2 • 9^{AM} • Women's breakfast @ Russ's
Sat., Sept. 2 • 12N • The Send mobilization for GenZ
@ Van Andel Arena
Sun., Sept. 3 • 11:30^{AM} • All-church prayer meeting
Wed., Sept. 6 • 7^{PM} • Elder meeting
Thurs., Sept. 7 & 21 • 6:30^{PM} • Veurink small group @ Le's
Sun., Sept. 10, 17, 24 • 11:30^{AM} • Adult Sunday School
Sun., Sept. 24 • 1^{PM} • Outreach at Camelot Park

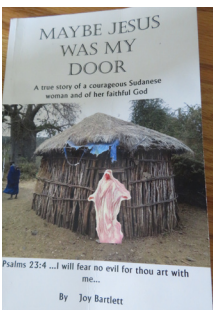
Ladies open the Book



CrossWay's ladies' Bible study has resumed meeting on Tuesdays at 1 p.m. with conversation about Spiritual gifts. Mid-month, they'll be diving into a study of Romans published by Dr. David Jeremiah of Shadow Mountain Community church and broad-

caster. All of our ladies are welcome. Enter at the north door.

New to the CrossWay library



During Joy Bartlett's service to refugees, she recognized one woman had a story that must be told. She has self-published *Maybe Jesus Was My Door* to recount the courage of a Sudanese mother and the faithfulness of our God. This 65-page book can be read in 30 - 45 minutes and will stir your heart with gratitude for the mercy God bestows on His children. The title refers to a seemingly miraculous protection she received and quotes her response. It's on the library table in the foyer. Grab it and read it from the lobby book table ... for a blessing!

The Church responds

The Evangelical Free Church's disaster response arm, Crisis Response, has achieved its goal of \$100,000 toward relief for the residents of Maui in the wake of the devastating wildfires. Thank you to those who answered the call.

Tribulation happens

In John 16: 33 Jesus said, "*In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.*" In the 20 centuries since our Lord spoke these haunting yet hopeful words, they've proven true. In fact, in terms of absolute numbers, we live in the worst period of persecution against Christians in history. More Christians died for their faith in the 20th century than the previous 19 combined, and the 21st century is shaping up to be at least as deadly, but likely more.

According to Open Doors International's latest World Watch List, 312 million Christians face "extreme" or "very high" levels of persecution — 1 in 5 in Africa; 2 in 5 in Asia. Last year was the worst year

Time to plug in

The fall season is the perfect time to check out one of CrossWay's home groups.

The Veurinks are leading a group that meets every other Thursday, studying and discussing a book by Alisa Childers titled *Another Gospel: A Life-long Christian Seeks Truth in Response to Progressive Christianity*. They meet at the Le home.



The Marchiones host the Underhill club for younger adults each Wednesday for fellowship and discussion.

And the Hinkles offer a Bible study and fellowship at their home on Tuesday evenings.

Put 'em all together, and you have a nice set of mid-week opportunities to get better acquainted with fellow CrossWayers and the faith that binds us all together.

Check your directory or call the office for more details.

Attention, golfers

The Pregnancy Resource Center's annual golf outing is scheduled for Friday, Sept. 8. Visit prcforlife.org/events for information.



— from *Breakpoint*, July 24 by John Stonestreet & Shane Morris on record for persecution, with 5,500 Christians killed for reasons related to their faith, more than 2,000 churches attacked, and over 4,500 Christians detained or imprisoned. For the most part, each year of the past decade has been worse than the previous year.

Writing of the persecutions that plagued God's people in the early days of Christianity, Tertullian claimed that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Though particularly intense persecution has, at times, led to a decrease in overall Church numbers, the Church has grown far beyond the wildest imagination of Jesus's first followers... .



Doing Battle by Nourishing our Minds

Last month I shared with you about the “battle-field” of the mind. What I mean by that phrase is that the primary place where we experience “spiritual warfare” as disciples of Jesus is in our minds. (2 Cor. 10:4-5) A disciple is literally a “learner.” Our discipleship is birthed and shaped in the realm of our minds and the ideas we entertain and then express. Christian or not, all people nurture thoughts long before they act on them and are shaped by them. As we look forward to our Fall ministries kicking off, in this month’s article, I’d like to continue sharing along these lines of learning and the importance of nourishing our minds.

A significant part of our growth as disciples/learners in any given church is formed around the hearing and teaching of God’s Word. To encourage our growth in His Word this Fall, let me give a warning and then an encouragement.

First, the warning. Do you remember the parable of the sower Jesus told His disciples? (Mark 4:1-9) The “soils” represent different responses people have to God’s Word. (Mark 4:15-20) We read that Satan (vs.15), along with trouble and persecution (v.18), can thwart the growth of God’s Word in our lives.

But I believe what we read in verse 19 shows the most common way God’s Word fails to take root and bear fruit in our lives. We read: *“But the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.”* (Mark 4:19) I don’t think we need to look for some demonic onslaught or secular anti-Christian culture to choke out God’s Word in our lives.

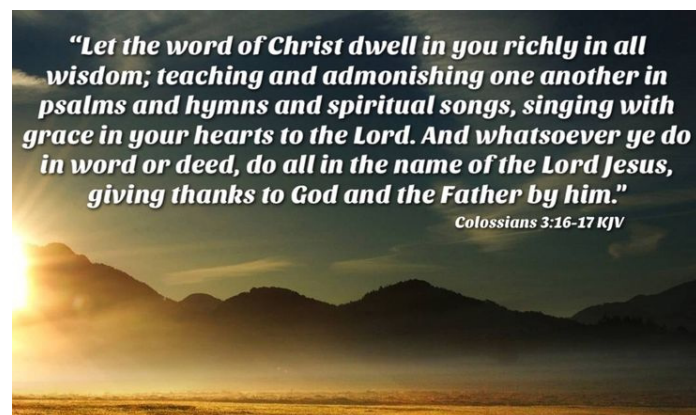
Sadly, we often do this to ourselves. We entertain the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and our desires for other things. How much do you and I let the worries of this life distract us from a quiet and steady trust of our Heavenly Father? Worry can be so insidious because it often feels so “responsible,” because our needs are real, the threats we face in life are real and the need to pay attention to these things are real. Sadly, the subtle, often undetected, slide into lack of trust in our Father is also real. Brother/sister, refuse to worry about this life and watch God’s Word grow in you! Refuse to trust whatever resources/wealth God has given you. It can be gone in a moment.

Also, may our “desires for other things” be taken captive to make these desires obedient to Christ. (2 Cor. 10:4-5) It’s not wrong to desire things, but to “over desire” (the Bible calls this lust) is terribly destructive. While it has become a bit of a cliché verse, *“Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”* (Matt.6:33)

My encouragement? It is simple. *“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.”* (Col. 3:16) So much could be said here! Note, first, the command to let the message of and about Christ (I take this to be the Gospel) dwell among you richly. Notice how this is to be done! It is not just the Pastor or the Elders who are to teach and admonish the church, but it is the church, the people of God who are to instruct one another. And, this is done through *“psalms, hymns, and songs”* That is, while we gather as a church, especially during our worship time spent in singing, we are ALL to sing and we are ALL to listen to the songs being sung. Why? Because this is one significant way how God’s Word, the message of Christ dwells among us richly! We are nourished in the singing. We learn as we hear God’s Word, whether it is preached or sung together as the church gathers.

On a somewhat side note: this is a key reason why we want the songs we sing together to be as biblical as they can be. Singing together gives us nourishment and strength for the battle.

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly. May this be done in your reading, meditating upon, and the singing of the Gospel of Jesus. This is how we battle.



Mike & Kari visited from Germany . . .


For 20 years, CrossWay member Mike has served the Lord's ambassadors by teaching their children at Black Forest Academy in Kandern, Germany, through Teach Beyond. He and his wife Kari summered in the States this year with their children Clark, Grant, and Gracia, and have now returned for the fall semester, where Mike leads the chemistry dept. and inspires students through chemistry lessons glorifying in the creativity of God. Some 50 to 60 nations are represented in the student body of the residential school.


Kari spends her days shuttling her family to its various schools and hanging out with toddler Gracia. She's also doing life with other young moms and enjoying a bilingual Community Bible Study class.




Mike teaches missionaries' children: "We serve here, so they can serve there."

Please pray for:

 Ease for this year's students as they settle into dorm life and make connections on campus

 Mike's upcoming trip, escorting 70 juniors to Normandy's beaches and Paris in October

 Challenges for the family in meeting new friends for this school year and helping others.

. . . and Matyas and Kate visited from Hungary — Summer Missions at CrossWay concludes


Our new friends Matyas and Kate brought their children Emese and Avner to CrossWay as they concluded a month of US travel, seeking additional funding. They serve the Lord in Matyas's native Hungary under the auspices of EFCA/ReachGlobal, the missions arm of our church's denomination.


Hungary claims a statistic of 87% Christian, but in reality, only 3% of the residents live in relationship with Jesus, offering a field ripe for harvest. Matyas and Kate are serving in leadership at an international church and have recently begun connecting with a Hungarian church, as Kate and the children have made strides in learning the language. They have started small prayer groups where they are teaching their new friends to see God moving in their lives.




Kate thanks CrossWay for our partnership for their first year in Hungary.

Please pray for:

 International church members to take an interest in the local culture

 Increased financial support for this family as they serve strategically in Budapest

 Ukrainian guests to hold onto hope as they travel back and forth to visit their soldiers

To support these families financially, please find their promo/prayer cards in the display rack near the lobby coffee bar.

And for an extra treat . . .

A couple from our area who have joined our denomination's Reach-Global team came to visit CrossWay after their trip to Missouri to bring their message to a local church's Vacation Bible School.

This couple usually serves by training Christian leaders in the concept of the sacredness of human life..



Dave and Anne brought their message to children last month.

CrossWay had responded to their request for project funding, defraying some of their expense in making this stateside trip. The experience was challenging for them, but they found their students quite responsive. They easily understood that we are to value one another as creatures made by a loving God . . . in His image.