



# CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

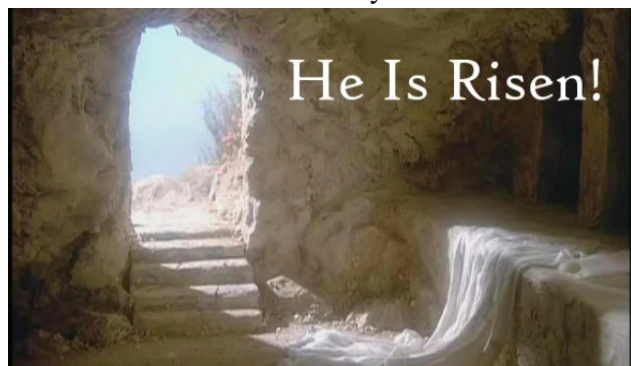
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## Holy weekend

April can wait! We're publishing early to bring you news of some wonderful opportunities to share with friends and family at this holiest time of year.

Right up the road, Cornerstone University's Christ Chapel is the venue for Arise Collective Theatre to bring its adaptation of John Bunyan's classic *Pilgrim's Progress*. Their Christian musical "The Pilgrim" offers drama and dance, with the curtain rising at 8 p.m. nightly Thursday through Sunday (March 28 through 31). Admission is free; donations welcome.

And let's not neglect this glorious occasion for gathering together as a church family. Friday at 7 p.m., we'll meet in the sanctuary for a time of remembering the suffering of our Savior as we commemorate Jesus's sacrifice on the cross, completing the work His Father had given Him and bearing the sins of the world for our sake. Then comes the glorious morning we call Easter, when we celebrate the greatest miracle of all time, the Resurrection of our Lord. We'll gather first in the South Wing at 9 a.m. to share breakfast and engage in good fellowship. Then we'll process to the sanctuary for a joyful time of worship, complete with a choir anthem and a solo by Pastor Bob Manuel. Be sure you invite friends and neighbors to come meet the Lord on Easter!



## All hands on deck!

Whether as a donor, a hands-on helper, a buyer or a prayer warrior, you can make a difference in CrossWay's sending of a short-term missionary to Budapest to aid our missions team later this month.

CrossWay's South Wing will be the site of a rummage sale on Saturday, April 6, starting at 9 a.m., to raise funds for Matthew's trip.

Rummage sale chairman Samantha Montgomery needs your items, your sorting and sales help and your participation as a buyer. Let her know you're in! (She's in the fellowship directory.)

And you can share a special link online through Sunday, March 31, for a one-hour dramatic video of Stephen Baldwin's one-man interpretation of "Heaven: How I Got Here," the story of the thief on the cross. This imaginative drama was written by Pastor Colin Smith and can be found at

[openthebible.org/watch-heaven](http://openthebible.org/watch-heaven). (Scroll down a bit.)



## Adult classes resume

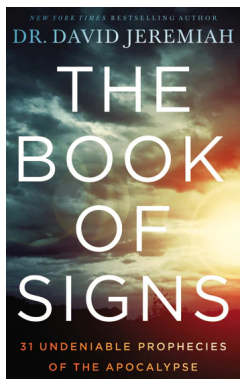
Picking up where we left off when we turned our focus on spiritual disciples during Lent, we'll be meeting in the sanctuary following worship during April to resume our discussion of our denomination's recent stands on the shifting sands of our culture.



### Coming Up at CrossWay Community

Fri., Mar. 30 • 7<sup>PM</sup> • Tenebrae worship service  
 Sun., Mar. 31 • 9<sup>AM</sup> • Easter breakfast in South Wing  
 Sundays • 9:30<sup>AM</sup> • Prayer, south wing classroom  
 Sundays • 10<sup>AM</sup> • Gather for worship together  
 Tuesdays • 1<sup>PM</sup> • Ladies weekly Bible study  
 Tuesdays • 7 - 9<sup>PM</sup> • Small group @ Hinkles' home  
 Wednesdays • 6:30<sup>PM</sup> • Underhill Club @ Marchioness'  
 Wed., Apr. 3 • 7<sup>PM</sup> • Elder meeting  
 Thurs., Apr. 4 & 18 • 6:30<sup>PM</sup> • Small group @ Le's  
 Thurs., Apr. 4 & Fri., Apr. 5 • 9<sup>AM</sup> - 2<sup>PM</sup> • Rummage setup  
 Sat., Apr. 6 • 8<sup>AM</sup> - 2<sup>PM</sup> • Rummage sale to support mission trip  
 Sun., Apr. 7 • 11:30<sup>AM</sup> • All church prayer time  
 Sat., Apr. 13 • 9<sup>AM</sup> • Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans  
 Sat., Apr. 13 • 9<sup>AM</sup> • Women's breakfast @ Russ's  
 Sun., Apr. 14, 21, 28 • 11:30<sup>AM</sup> • Sunday School for all ages

## New to the CrossWay library



Dr. David Jeremiah has written what his publisher (W Publishing Group per Thomas Nelson) calls “your definitive guide to Biblical prophecy.”

“Join Dr. Jeremiah,” invites the cover page, “as he lays out the signs of the end times and helps you prepare for the days ahead in 31 easy-to-understand chapters. Filled with engaging illustrations and practical application, *The Book of Signs* is a must-have resource for Christians seeking to navigate the uncertainties of the present and embrace God’s promises for the future.”

A quality paperback on the book table near the coffee bar in the lobby, for you and your family to borrow.

Marlan tells it best: “In August, we had the privilege of baptizing three souls in a public confession of faith in Jesus Christ. Alicia, Amanda and Daniel realized that it was time to submerge in the waters, testifying what the Lord has done in their lives since they surrendered their lives to Jesus.”

Atheist Daniel came to faith quite some time ago through his wife’s living testimony and his weekly Scripture reading with Marlan. At the time, he saw no need for baptism and has been faithfully serving the Lord at El Shaddai church in the media ministry. Lately, Marlan has been gently encouraging him toward taking this public step, and he came to the conclusion by reading Scripture that “he was being rebellious to the Lord by not being baptized. Upon that discovery, he repented and could not be baptized soon enough. His parents that are nonbelievers attended the baptism. PTL!”

In the midst of several rounds of local epidemics, the congregation is growing. El Shaddai needs a new location. Please pray for the Lord’s provision to keep this church growing and thriving in a place where evangelicals are rare.



## Nothing stops this couple



*Marlan and Mercedes (center) rejoice in baptizing new believers at El Shaddai.*

Marlan continues: “We met Alicia years ago at her nephew Miguel’s apartment. Miguel is a deacon of El Shaddai. She was in no condition to hear the Gospel at that point in her life. As years went by and upon the insistence of her nephew, she decided to attend the church services, along with her mother and brother. They would show up off and on for a few more years. Then one day she decided to repent and turn her life to Jesus.

“Mercedes gave Bible studies to Amanda over the phone during the pandemic. She lives in another city and has not found a church in her area. She attends El Shaddai whenever she can make the two-hour trip.... Amanda came a day early...to make it to the baptism” 1-1/2 hours beyond El Shaddai. She came with no family support and found a warm welcome among her church family.

## Budapest, here he comes!

Matthew Robles is packing his bags, getting ready to encourage CrossWay missionaries Kate and Matyas and their children this month.



Thanks to the generosity of several CrossWay families and the efforts of Samantha Montgomery and her rummage sale team, Matthew will be traveling from April 17 to 23. He’ll be taking some mail, clothes, and snacks to his hosts on behalf of their stateside family, and he’ll have some extra funds with which he can bless whomever the Lord presents to him, perhaps our evangelistic friends or a displaced Ukrainian family in need ... as the Lord leads. Let’s be sure to cover his trip with our prayers. We’ll be scheduling a time for him to bring us a report soon.



## He's Alive!

I write this article the week of Good Friday, looking forward to Easter Sunday! If things go as planned on Easter Sunday, I will have the privilege of singing for you the song "He's Alive." This song was written by Don Francisco back in 1975/76 and is a very special song to me.

Around 1977, I came to know Jesus at around the age of 16. To say I had a bumpy start in the faith would be a HUGE understatement. Through a long series of circumstances and bad choices, soon after coming to faith, I slowly but surely slid into a lifestyle of destruction and confusion that lasted nearly three years. I came close to losing my life a number of times in either car wrecks (while under the influence) or drug overdoses. My inner life was deeply and darkly overshadowed by guilt and shame. There were several cycles over those years where I tried to "get better" and walk with Jesus the way I was meant to walk, but failure after failure was all I knew. I knew little or nothing of grace and the empowerment of the Spirit. My spiritual life as well as my earthly physical life could have easily ended around the age of 19. How did things turn around? Many things and people played a part, and change was a process, but not a small part of the change included music, including this song and the truths found in it.

On one of my "rebound" cycles at around the age of 17, I heard the song "He's Alive" for the first time. The song tells the story of Jesus's resurrection through the eyes of the Apostle Peter. But instinctively, I knew it told my story as well.

As for Peter, he was the boastful disciple who prior to Jesus's crucifixion claimed, "*Even if all fall away, I will not*" . . . insisting emphatically, "*Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.*" (Mark 14:29, 31) Of course, we know he did deny Jesus, just as predicted. In his Gospel Luke tells us that after this third denial, "*The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. . . and,*" as Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "*Before the rooster crows today you will disown me three times, Peter went outside and wept bitterly.*" (Luke 22:61-62)

Because of my rough start in the faith and my tiresome cycle of sin-regret-repeat, I could very much relate to Peter. I still can. Yet, over the years I have learned much about God's grace as a huge difference-maker in breaking the sin-regret-repeat cycle.

Francisco sings, "As He raised me to my feet and I looked into His eyes, love was shining out from Him like sunlight from the skies. Guilt and my confusion disappeared in sweet release. Every fear I'd ever had just melted into peace." Then the ending of the song: "He's alive, He's alive, He's alive and I'm forgiven; heaven's gates are opened wide."

I have always felt this song and the story of Jesus's resurrection was meant for people who know deeply they need forgiveness.

Let me briefly give you a few words of resurrection-inspired encouragement that this song has reminded me of over the years. First, even if you have an occasional overactive "beat yourself up" mentality, you must not, by God's grace, define yourself by your failures. Even if you fail and sin again and again, you are not your failures. You are not the sum total of all your sins. Jesus paid a dear price on the cross for you and me to "*be reconciled to God, not counting people's sins against them.*" (2 Cor. 5:19) We must learn to feel this truth deeply into our bones. Not just "believe" or quote the verses, but truly own at the emotive level the love, forgiveness, and acceptance Jesus purchased for us. He loves you deeply and gave Himself for you. (Gal. 2:20)

Second, I implore you, see love in the gaze of your Savior. As the song says, Peter looked into the eyes of Jesus, and "love was shining out from Him like sunlight from the skies." So, you failed Him again. And, when He comes to you again, what do you see in His eyes? Disgust? Disappointment? His head down, slowly shaking it, saying, "Not again"? Or will you and I see love and only love? It's the love of our Savior that will change us from being guilt-ridden, gotta-try-harder sinners to grace-filled grateful saints. Yes, saints who still sin more than we'd care to admit, but saints all the same — people through whom the Light shines.

As we take the song's words to heart — "He's alive and I'm forgiven, heaven's gates are opened wide" — we are changed and will continue to grow more into His Image, marked and bought by His Good Friday Sacrifice and embraced forever by Resurrection Sunday. He's Alive!