

October 2024



CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

3950 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546 • 616.949.5690

AED-equipped, wheelchair accessible • www.crosswaygr.com • crossway.communitygr@gmail.com

Now is the time

Hurricane Helene made landfall in Florida on September 26 as a Category 4 storm. As the storm moved slowly across the region, it left a path of destruction across the southeast United States.

ReachGlobal Crisis Response is mobilizing to support EFCA churches as they share the love of Christ in



affected communities. While washed out roads, power outages and disrupted cell service have slowed the ability to assess the situation and connect with churches, Crisis Response staff are currently visiting sites in Florida and North Carolina.

How will we respond, CrossWay?

Pray

Pray for wisdom and discernment as Crisis Response partners with local churches in the areas affected by Hurricane Helene

Pray that God would provide the staff, teams, housing and resources for this response

Pray for churches as they engage and care for their communities in the massive mission field created by Hurricane Helene

Pray for God to open doors for Gospel ministry as a result of the storm

Serve

A long-term response to Hurricane Helene requires additional ReachGlobal Crisis Response staff, whether new staff are mobilized to serve in this area or existing staff relocate from other sites and their positions are backfilled. **Crisis Response is recruiting volunteers and full-time staff for all of its current responses.** Email crisisresponse@efca.org for more information.

Give

Crisis Response needs funding to support the on-going responses across the region. Your gifts will help sustain a ministry presence to come alongside churches and homeowners as they recover.

You can be a part of the response by giving online or mailing a check designated Hurricane Helene Response — 21709-3989 to:

EFCA
901 East 78th Street
Minneapolis MN 55420

Goal: \$250,000

An Evening at Bethlehem needs YOU!

Sign-up sheets are posted in the narthex behind the Sanctuary. This outreach takes all of us!



Coming Up at CrossWay Community

- Sundays • 9:30^{AM} • Prayer, lobby classroom
- Sundays • 10^{AM} • Gather for worship together
- Tuesdays • 1^{PM} • Ladies Bible Study/Philippians
- Tuesdays • 1^{PM} - 3^{PM} • Neighborhood prayer walk
- Wednesdays • 6:30^{PM} • Underhill Club
- Wed., Oct. 2 • 6^{PM} • Elder meeting
- Thurs., Oct. 3, 17, 31 • 6:30^{PM} • Small group @ Le's
- Sat., Oct. 5 • 9^{AM} • Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans
- Sat., Oct. 5 • 9^{AM} • Women's breakfast @ Russ's
- Sun., Oct. 6 • 11:30^{AM} • Church prayer meeting
- Sun., Oct. 13, 20, 27 • 11:30^{AM} • Sunday School



Our Empathetic Savior

Recently, (just today!) Jesus has comforted me. Yesterday He comforted me, and the day before and the day before. I bet you need His comfort, too.

I may have more to share with you later, but because some previous visits to my cardiologist raised some concerns, I underwent a scheduled MRI for my heart during the last week of September. Without going into great detail, I got a call only a few hours after the test. The nurse said (a bit too cheerfully!), “We have your test results, but unfortunately. . . .”

The word “unfortunately” got my attention! The news wasn’t at all what I was hoping for. So, some follow-up is needed, beginning with an appointment during the second week of October to the HCM (Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy) clinic to come up with a plan of treatment.

I guess the good news is, contrary to what some might believe, I do have a heart! So, as you can imagine, it took a bit for some of the news to sink in. I know many of you have “been there/done that” with far more distressing news than what I received, and you, too, found our Lord Jesus to be a comforting Savior.

As I was reading earlier this morning, I was reminded “*I can hold firmly to the faith I profess, for I do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with my weakness, but I have one who has been tempted in every way, just as I am — yet he did not sin. I can therefore approach God’s throne of grace with confidence so that I may receive mercy and find grace to help in my time of need.*” (Heb.4:14-16)

I’d like to close this article with a bit of reflection, with the hope that it will encourage you to go to God, through Jesus, to His throne of grace in your time of need.

First, when is your time of need? Frankly, it’s every day. There’s a saying, “God is good all the time, all the time God is good.” Similarly, we are in need all the

time. All the time, we are in need. And, we have a good God more than ready and capable to meet us in our time of need.

Second, when we come to God in our time of need, there are no “proper” or “righter” (than wrong) ways to do it. What I mean is, in times of distress, we might be a bit reluctant to come to God because of certain feelings we might have. Maybe we are angry, confused, questioning, fearful when we receive certain news. And we are not sure how to out-loud verbally, to God (!), process these feelings. We might think, “I’ll wait till these emotions are a bit more under control and I have a better understanding of why I am feeling the way I am. Then I’ll come to God over all this.” I would discourage such thinking.

The best time to go to the hospital is in your time of need. You see, we are urged to find mercy and grace in our time of need, not when we are “better.” And again, our time of need, I would suggest, is every moment of every day. Sometimes we are just more acutely aware of our needs, but we are a perpetually needy people! And, we have a perpetually faithful loving Savior who loves to meet our needs. Go to Him all the time, especially when you are messy and confused.

So, I will be going to the HCM clinic soon. I highly doubt I will receive a call from them that would go something like the following: “Mr. Manuel, now before you come, we want your heart to be in better working order. That is a requirement in order to come to the clinic.” I will not receive such instruction because I will come and have been invited to come precisely because of the brokenness of my heart. Jesus, likewise, of course says to each one of us, “*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*” (Matt.11:28-30). I am so glad for such a Good and Great Savior! I hope you are, too. Come to Him, again, today. He’ll be glad you came.

Has America Received the ‘Sentence of Death’?

an excerpted commentary by Sarah Holliday, published by *The Washington Stand*, Sept. 29, 2024

“We were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death.” (II Corinthians 1:8b-9a)

That is what the Apostle Paul wrote in relation to the affliction he and his comrades endured in Asia. Whatever it was, we know it was intense and great. From their perspective, their very lives were on the line. For all they knew, death was around the corner. And in many circumstances, that would cause a lot of people to throw in the towel.

When reading of Paul’s affliction and how it made him feel, I couldn’t help but think of the current political climate. ...Maybe you’re completely frazzled over the upcoming election. In less than 40 days, someone will be elected as the next president of the United States, and the options don’t feel particularly great. ...

I have no doubt, under the present circumstances, there are countless Americans — Christian and non-Christian alike — that feel America has received “the sentence of death.” Like Paul and his fellow affliction-bearers, perhaps it feels like this is the end, and it’s time to throw in the towel. “God help us,” many have sighed as they shut off the TV and retreat from the public square.

But what if that sigh of retreat is exactly the answer we need to calm our troubled souls? At least, that’s the message Paul articulated further into this chapter in Corinthians. Yes, they suffered greatly in Asia, but God helped them. Here was his response to those circumstances, *“Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.”* (2 Corinthians 1:9-10)

So what if it feels like America has received the sentence of death? We serve a God who raises the dead! In the midst of “deadly peril,” Paul raised His eyes to the life-giving, promise-keeping God. He turned to Him for deliverance, trusting that His power was stronger than the circumstances Paul found himself in. He turned to God, because “on Him” he had set his hope. “I know my God will come through,” the apostle declared. “And I know He will do it again and again.” ...

What if the political pandemonium around us was “to make us rely not on ourselves but on God?” What if, regardless of who is elected in November, we actually believed that God can and will deliver us, even from deadly peril? What if, rather than on politics, our hope was set on Christ? Well, perhaps then we would find the peace we crave, and the assurance we’re looking for that things will be alright.

Dear reader, the princes of the air may be hard at work deceiving and destroying, but Christ is the King of the universe and has established His throne forever. The spirits of darkness may run amok, but Jesus is the light of the world. Evil may be rampant, but God uses evil for good (Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28). Rulers and authorities may abuse their power, but they are still subject to God’s ultimate authority.

So long as Christ lives, it is indisputably impossible that any evil, darkness, or threat of any kind could ever lead us to ruin. Revelation 20:10 reminds us of the future we can be sure of: *“And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”* This is not a pipedream. This is the victory Christ secured on the cross. His Kingdom knows no end, and not even the gates of hell shall prevail. (Luke 1:33; Matthew 16:18)

And alongside these truths, in which we find peace, hope, and assurance, we must acknowledge that faith is not merely our anchor in the storm but also a call to action. In final thoughts over his affliction and God’s deliverance, Paul concludes in verse 11, *“You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.”*

Church, we need to be praying fervently.

When tempted to fear about which policies will pass or who will be elected, pray. When worried about the future of this country, pray. When you think you can’t vote, pray, and vote anyway. Vote for the person you know better reflects God’s truth. Ultimately, for those who are believers of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are never called to despair. We are always called to hope, trust, believe, and pray. ...