



CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

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

Getting to know us . . .

Whether you are interested in exploring becoming a CrossWay member, just interested in knowing more about our church or looking for a refresher in the doctrine and structure of the Evangelical Free Church of America, we are offering a “Getting to Know Us” class on Sundays, March 9, 16 & 23, to be led by Pastor Manuel, after our worship service.

Registration for the class is not required but we would appreciate your letting us know your interest by indicating your intent to participate in the class on a sheet in the narthex behind the sanctuary.

Dedicated to the Lord



On Sun., Feb. 23, the families of two young babies brought their children forth for dedication to the Lord. Blessings to the extended family of Jason (Jake) and Julie Stevens — and baby Elliott — and to Robby and Christine Emmert and their children, including little Ruth. These children were presented to God for His protection and His sanctifying grace.



We're pretty hardy at CrossWay, but if winter storms ever do make calling off Sunday worship a necessity, we will post the cancellation by 8 a.m. on a given Sunday on WOOD-TV (www.woodtv.com/weather/closings) and on WCSG Radio, 91.3 FM (secure.wcsg.org/closings).

Talent welcome

Want to share your musical, art or writing talent? Contact Annie Lash for our coffeehouse March 14. Find her in the fellowship directory.



Heads up, March 8/9

Turn your clocks ahead when you go to bed on Sat., Mar. 8, to join us for worship on time the next day!

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
- Wednesdays • 6:30^{PM} • Underhill Club
- Sat., Mar. 1 • 9^{AM} • Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans
- Sat., Mar. 1 • 9^{AM} • Women's breakfast @ Russ's
- Sun., Mar. 2 • 11:30^{AM} • All church prayer meeting
- Wed., Mar. 5 • 6^{PM} • Elder meeting
- Thurs., Mar. 6 & 20 • 6:30^{PM} • Small group @ Le's
- Sun., Mar. 9 • 2^{AM} • Daylight Savings Time begins
- Sun., Mar. 9, 16, 23, 30 • 11:30^{AM} • Lent Light
- Sun., Mar. 9, 16, 23 • 11:30^{AM} • Getting to Know Us
- Fri., Mar. 14 • 7^{PM} • CrossWay Coffeehouse

Be prepared

Thanks to Marcy Greenhoe for organizing another opportunity in February for CrossWayers to learn skills in administering CPR and using the church's AED equipment. It's comforting to know that there are several people among us prepared to take action in the event of a health emergency. ❤️



The blessings of Lent



Lent has long been a time of personal reflection for believers in Christ. This year at CrossWay, we will once again commemorate the month leading up to Easter with a fellowship meal of soup and bread, followed by a special series of teachings. Plan to enjoy “lunch” together in the South Wing immediately following our worship time, and then focus on the lives and teachings of prominent figures in the early Christian church, encouraging us with approaches to teaching God’s truth in difficult cultural contexts.

Caring for orphans in Uganda



During February, Gina Ruark journeyed to Uganda, where she encouraged the staff of Hands of

Grace, an orphan-care program that partners with the local Impact Church. Gina herself is on staff with Compassion International here in Grand Rapids, the well-known worldwide orphan sponsorship program. Hands of Grace is a program of Compassion.

We look forward to Gina’s report to CrossWay about this short-term missions trip as one of our speakers in this year’s Summer Missions at CrossWay series, during the “Sunday School” hour. Plan to attend and get to know Gina and the service she offers the Lord in the area of orphan care.



Every first Saturday at 9 a.m., CrossWay ladies gather at Russ’s on 28th, near Woodlawn, for breakfast and fellowship.

The gentlemen meet – same time – at Bob Evans just down the street, west of Kraft.

All are welcome!



Don't Waste Your Hardships

Years ago, I read a small book(let) that Pastor John Piper wrote, titled, "Don't Waste Your Cancer." After receiving treatment for his cancer, at around 2016 Piper had reached the five-year mark of being cancer free. It was then that he shared his experience in this book. I'm going to borrow a bit from him and share some statements he has made that have helped me in my ongoing reflections over my recent heart surgery.

I am a bit uncomfortable talking about my recent experience too much, as I don't want all this to be about me. At best, I want my recent experience to be about Christ in us at CrossWay. What have I/we been learning about Jesus and His body, the church? What have I/we been learning about what it means to be loved by God and His community?

I haven't tried real hard (!) to nail down any "life-lessons" in all this, and there are at least a few reasons I can presently discern for this reluctance to share. First, I feel as if some things have "shifted" in my life, but it's too soon to try to figure out what this means. Also, with my personality, trying to figure what is changing usually amounts to trying to control the experience. I don't want to do that. I just want, right now, to keep receiving from God, the changes He is sending, to be open to what I am experiencing from Him. I'll perhaps put "labels" on my experience later!

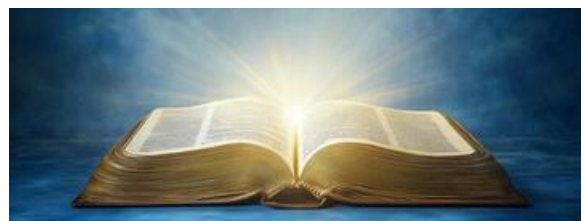
Second, I think there's a bit of danger in trying to find a "lesson" for the trials we go through. Job's friends thought they knew why Job was suffering. And they were profoundly wrong. When I read Scripture, I see hardships and trials not as a direct "lesson" from God – as if He has something specific in mind He wants to teach us – but as an opportunity to lean on Him in deeper trust as we go through things we may never understand. Yet, with all that said, I still feel as if any time any of us goes through challenges, we do learn things about ourselves, our community, and our God.

With that in mind, as I am still processing all this (!), here are some of the chapter titles Piper gave in his book "Don't Waste Your Cancer." Now, you may not be going through cancer, but you most likely are going through some kind of hardship or challenge in your life. May Piper's words, gained through his personal experience from the school of hard knocks, draw you closer to Jesus. Here are his words:

"We waste our cancer if we spend too much time reading about cancer and not enough time reading about God. ... We waste our cancer if we let it drive us into solitude instead of deepen our relationships with manifest affection. (Don't waste your cancer by retreating into yourself.) ... We waste our cancer if we grieve as those who have no hope. ... We waste our cancer if we treat sin as casually as before. (Let the presence of eternity make the sins of time look as futile as they really are.) *'What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?'* Luke 9:25. ... We waste our cancer if we fail to use it as a means of witness to the truth and glory of Christ. (Remember, you are not left alone. You will have the help you need.) *'My God will supply every need of ours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus'* Philippians 4:19."

A closing "poem" of thanks . . .

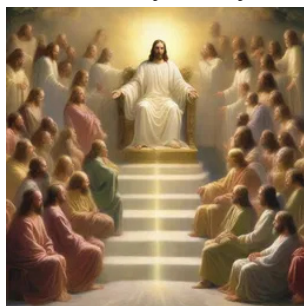
*Thank You God for caring
Carrying us
When we can barely walk
Scarcely even talk
About such things we suffer
Scared and scarred
You know, and
You hold our hands*



Taking our mission personally

“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.” — Revelation 7: 9

The scene in which we will participate includes all believers, not just Grand Rapidsians, nor Michiganders, nor Americans, nor English-speakers. This glorious gathering will be for all believers — such a blessing! For if it were designed for just those who knew Jesus in the flesh some 2100 years ago, where would we be?



Blessedly, each generation has done its part, passing down the faith and spreading it far and wide. We have the privilege of participating in this greatest of all efforts by taking our mission personally and doing our part to spread the Good News of this glorious future to people we don't even know. Let's not keep our faith to ourselves.

Thanks again, CrossWay

Kate K. sent greetings on February 3 from Budapest: Happy Monday! This past Saturday we had another Art Workshop with about 30 Ukrainian women. We continued to use art supplies your church supplied!

I just wanted to share another successful outreach that you have been part of!

Blessings!
Kate, Budapest City Team
EFCA/ReachGlobal



Launching a busy season



If you want to get something done, give it to a busy person! Tom and Dora have taken on some major projects for this month. Let's all pray for their health, stamina, wisdom, and winsome demeanor as they tackle this schedule, at right:

That March 6 event is just two hours south of here, so you're invited!

Come spend the evening with Nina Jankucic

Nina Jankucic has a resume that is a mile long. All of it involves discipling and caring for people personally while networking at the highest levels. We have known her for 10 years and worked together in many ways. She is in the USA looking to raise another \$600/month in regular donations and \$2,400 in one-time gifts. Her ministry spans the world, and she is well known in both academic and professional circles in Europe.

Come hear her speak about the Roma people and her many stories about ministry.

March 6 at 6 p.m.
Duneland Community Church
1552 Pioneer Trail
Chesterton, Indiana

You're welcome to add to CrossWay's support for Tom & Dora.
Write tax-deductible checks to
EFCA - ReachGlobal / attn: Donor Services
901 East 78th Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55420
(with "gift designation gift designation #1063" on the memo line)

Feb. 27 - Mar. 2: Tom in Olympia, Washington, for his last Bible Pathways training module

Mar. 3-13: The couple hosts their partner Nina Jankucic and her fundraising efforts in the USA

Mar. 6: An evening with Nina at Duneland Community Church/Chesterton IN

Mar. 7-9: The couple and Nina at Mission Weekend at Green Valley EFC in Arizona

Mar. 11-13: The couple at Noroton Presby. Church in Connecticut

Mar. 14-16: Tom at Noroton's men's conference

Mar. 17-25: Tom in Asia, training workers in three different locations

Who's to blame for bad weather?

Creation and the uselessness of man

In the days and weeks after two massive hurricanes hit the United States in two weeks' time, extremes from both ends of the ideological spectrum proclaimed the events as unnatural disasters.

Many political, media, and activist voices reported these storms as unprecedented and as undeniable evidence of human-caused climate change. In truth, these storms were not "unprecedented." As Governor Ron DeSantis noted, many hurricanes in the last two centuries have slammed into Florida with equal or greater force. In fact, a majority of the southeast's worst hurricanes happened in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Not to be outdone by these climate activists, Majorie Taylor Green joined a few others to blame Helene and Milton on nefarious forces within the Deep State. The claim that these storms were manufactured and aimed at Republican voters in Appalachia and Florida is not worthy of a direct response. Still, the claim reveals that conspiracies, even from those on opposite ends of the political spectrum, have at least one thing in common.

Most conspiracy theories are often based on an exaggerated idea of humanity's power. In this case, it is the power to control and direct nature. The illusion of control is a feature of modernism and a reason that so many conspiracy theories proliferate today.

In his remarkable book, now decades old, *The Way of the Modern World*, Craig Gay of Regent College in Vancouver described how secularization envisions humanity as being more in control than it really is. After all, if the world is a creation, and a good one at that, it's likely that the Creator did not make it, nor has He left it, teetering on the verge of disaster. However, in the twentieth century, influential secular thinkers like Stephen Jay Gould and Richard Dawkins concluded just the opposite. From a naturalistic, neo-Darwinian point of view, the odds that humans would ever come into existence are ridiculously slim. Even the slightest divergence of factors along the way would have led to our extinction. Therefore, the slightest change we

Breakpoint, November 19, 2024
John Stonestreet & Dr. Timothy Padgett

cause in the climate may end the whole accidental, meaningless situation humans currently enjoy.

This is the opposite side of the utopian coin, which concedes to humans the power to perfect the world. Neither is true. At the same time, humans do have incredible ability for acts of good and evil, and it's understandable why we give ourselves too much credit. When Elon Musk is catching rockets with gigantic mechanical arms and introducing the world to driverless buses, it's tempting to think maybe we do control the weather. Or, at least, perhaps we can.

But that's not the way the world works, even if it does alleviate our collective sense of vulnerability. We are not ultimately in control of this world we did not create. In fact, as Job learned when he asked why all of the bad things had happened to him ... a good person ..., his questions were answered with other questions. They were harder questions asked by God that revealed Job's ignorance about how things really worked in God's world.

That may be frustrating, but it is also comforting. In this moment, between the Fall and Christ's return, bad things will happen. Many of them will be, like much of life, beyond our control. To accept that we are not God, that we are not fully in control of much of our own lives much less massive storms, is part of accepting who we truly are. It allows us to rid ourselves of delusion and hubris.

Yes, humans caused the Fall, but we don't control the weather. Yes, humans broke the world, but the God who made it still oversees it. And if a sparrow cannot fall without His notice and care, we need not think that we've somehow moved the world beyond His protection and salvation. Thank God, we aren't that powerful.

