



CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

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Let's get together

CrossWay's annual congregational business meeting is scheduled for Sunday, May 31, after our worship service. All are welcome. Only members can vote on business items, but others can attend to learn more about the inner workings of our church.

We will be receiving ministry reports and detailed financial reports, welcoming questions, and electing those who will serve the next year on our elder board.

All hands on deck!



Plans are afoot for re-storing the set, freeing the South Wing for multiple purposes through the summer and fall, until it's time, once again, to rebuild the Bethlehem marketplace at CrossWay.

You can help make it happen! Please show up ready to work on Sat., May 9, at 10 a.m. The more folks that participate, the quicker we can get 'er done.

Walk with a purpose

Now that the weather has turned fair (most of the time), we've resumed our neighborhood prayer walks. It's an outreach project that happens each Tuesday, weather permitting. Join the prayer walkers at 1 p.m. at CrossWay, and invest some time in this traditional outreach activity that shows our church neighbors who we are and that we care about them.



Family Nights:
Eating together,
Learning together,
Playing together!

May is a transitional month, starting with the customary pizza and breaking into our learning pods, with adults enjoying a bit of a program mix:

May 6 — Kris Palosaari of Unknown Nations, spreading the Gospel to dark corners

May 13 — David Tongue, on Alexander Solzhenitsyn

May 20 — Michael Stevens, review & preview

For summer, we'll be grilling our meal and continuing to play together.

By the Book

The Sunday sermon series continues, book by book, as we search the whole Bible this year for the presence of the Messiah. Here's the plan for this month:

May 7	Job
May 10	Psalms
May 17	Proverbs
May 24	Ecclesiastes
May 31	Song of Solomon

Don't miss this comprehensive fly-over!

Camping, together

Pentwater, here we come! Please contact Amanda Halash (in the fellowship directory) for information. She's reserved a block of campsites so we can enjoy a few days together at the Lake Michigan Family Campground. That's coming up August 23 - 26.



LAKE MICHIGAN
family campground

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
Tuesdays • 1^{PM} • Neighborhood prayer walks
Wednesdays • 6^{PM} • CrossWay Family Nights
Sat., May 2 • 9^{AM} • Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans
Sat., May 2 • 9^{AM} • Women's breakfast @ Russ's
Sun., May 3 • 11:30^{AM} • Sunday School for all ages
Thurs., May 7 & 21 • 6^{PM} • Veurink/Le small group
Sat., May 9 • 10^{AM} • Moving the Bethlehem set
Mon., May 12 • 6^{PM} • Elder meeting
Sun., May 17 • Leadership annual reports due
Sun., May 31 • 11:30^{AM} • Annual congregation meeting

Oh, the joy!



Young John Emmert wanted to take that extra step of baptism to show the world that he loves Jesus and has asked Him to fill his life. Dad Robby had the pleasure in mid-April here at CrossWay.

Kingdom Investment

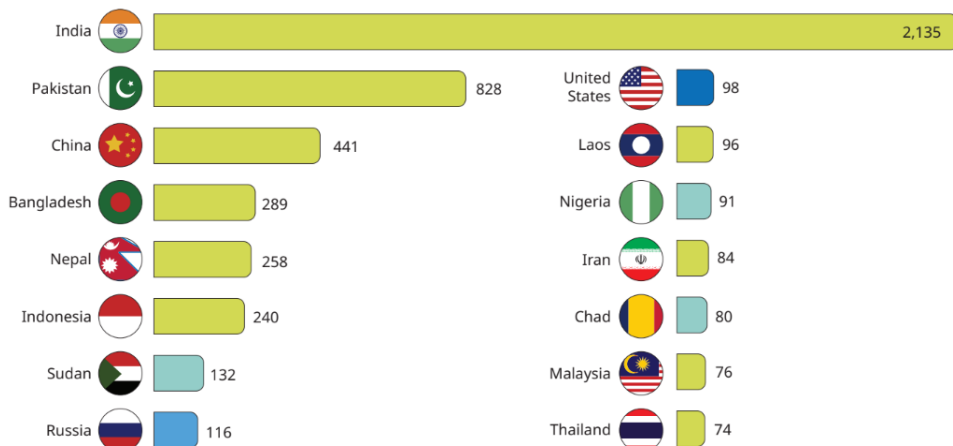
During the month of March, which turned out to be a matching grant period, CrossWay sent a \$2,120 check to Mission India for their ministry of indigenous church planting in an area of the world where it's very difficult for the Gospel to be shared with thirsty people. This marks our first entry into this strategy of the global missions movement. Westerners engaged in this movement work with local Christians to build the church, and Mission India engages specifically in offering children's Bible clubs, adult literacy programs, and mentoring assistance to people who are dedicating their lives to the risky task of establishing new churches.

In response, we received this note, with a chart that shows the Kingdom need for this ministry:

Hello. We've received the gift from CrossWay for Mission India, and I cannot express how thankful I am for this church's willingness to invest in the neediest place on earth.

(Bangladesh).

COUNTRIES WITH MOST UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS



So, thank you for investing in our ministry and in India! Thanks.

Representative, Mission India

Get ready for it

Time to sort through your closets, basements, and storage lockers for items you'd like to let go of and simplify your life! Samantha Montgomery is planning a church rummage sale to support our youth for an upcoming field trip, and to help with expenses for our August family camp. Of course, she'll need



some volunteers, too. Watch the bulletin and next month's *Current* for details.



Summer Sabbatical

For a few months now, the Elders and I have been in conversation regarding a “mini” sabbatical I will be taking this summer. I say “mini” because in the past, the sabbaticals you have so generously given me have lasted up to 3 months. For the record, this summer’s sabbatical will be 7 weeks (July 19th-August 30th).

I can’t even begin to tell you how beneficial these times away have been to me and my family. The emotional, spiritual, and physical toll vocational ministry can have on a pastor and his family can be heavy and hard to convey. This is true, even in the best of churches and relationships between a pastor and the church he serves.

With my second heart surgery in 7 years, combined with the fact I’m not getting any younger(!), I have been feeling the need for a break. I am thoroughly convinced one major factor in my having the privilege of being with you for almost 30 years has been the sabbaticals you have given me. So, I thank you for this last one that will begin soon.

I plan on taking a literal hike, visit and take care of my Mom in Illinois for a few days, and generally just lie low and try to get some projects done around the house. (I could use some help with this last one. See me if you’re curious or interested!)

For your perusal, I have included the sabbatical policy that the Great Lakes District (GLD) supplies for EFCA churches to use. It is my hope and prayer that, whoever succeeds me as your next pastor, you would include as part of his call, regularly scheduled sabbaticals.

As for the final stretch of vocational ministry here at CrossWay, as for “me and my house,”(!) I hope to serve as pastor until June of 2027 at the least, and, if you will have me, perhaps even up till the following June of 2028. That would let me “retire” at age 67. That’s just a suggested timeline. You may want me, or, I may want/need to retire before then. But, as I shared in a recent sermon, “If you want to hear God laugh, tell Him your plans.” These are my “Lord-willing” (James 4:15) “plans,” subject to change at God’s direction. I hope you find it beneficial to read the GLD sabbatical policy below:

The Church and Pastoral Care (Sabbatical Policy for Pastors)

Scripture teaches us that we are to give honor to those who labor among us in the Word, (I Timothy 5:17) In almost every case, when a pastor is called to a congregation, there is a commitment made by the members to pray for, encourage, and support the man of God’s choosing. This commitment of the congregation along with the faithful service of the pastor can lead to a long and fruitful ministry together. There is a strong sense of responsibility within the Evangelical Free Church for the care of pastors and staff members. Congregations that take proactive steps to provide encouragement and support for their pastoral staff often develop a better working relationship. Those who study stress in the ministry tell us that careful attention should be given to ideas that address physical, emotional, and spiritual fatigue.

While pastors should be responsible for their own rest and refreshment, the nature of ministry, as well as the make up of many pastors, combine to the effect that pastors often do not invest sufficient time and energy in developing themselves personally. Sometimes pastors do not take needed personal time, feeling responsible for ministry 24-hours-a-day, rarely finding two consecutive days of rest and holidays full of extra activity. One way to encourage pastoral renewal and growth is for every congregation to develop a policy of regularly-scheduled sabbaticals for each of its full-time pastoral staff. A sabbatical can be a reminder that it is “God’s church” and that the pastor needs refreshment and renewal just as much as the other members. These proven benefits are worthy of consideration:

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The Church and Pastoral Care (Sabbatical Policy for Pastors)...continued

A grateful pastor who returns to God's calling with renewed vigor, insight, appreciation, humility and understanding. A probably even MORE grateful pastor's wife. Pastor's children who may be thoroughly delighted at the change that has come over their father. A pastor better prepared for service in and to the local church, whose gifts are also enhanced for serving the entire kingdom of Christ. A witness to the community of the love and trust with which a Free Church congregation esteems their pastor. Sabbaticals also allow churches to draw on other resources, perhaps formerly unexpressed when the pastor was present.

A sabbatical policy carries some potential dangers. Pastors should obviously not use sabbaticals for candidating or preparation for departure from their churches. Therefore, a pastor should not apply for a sabbatical unless he feels an ongoing commitment to the church. Without careful preparation and understanding by the congregation, the sabbatical may engender negative feelings toward the pastoral staff.

Preparing a Sabbatical Policy

Churches may include sabbatical policies in church bylaws, call letters, separate documents or policy manuals or all the above. They may further be negotiated as part of a pastor's call or ongoing compensation arrangements.

In formulating sabbatical policies, churches should specify:

Who is eligible? What activities are permitted? When is one eligible? What activities are not permitted? Length of sabbatical. What plans and reports will be required? Basis of accruing sabbatical time.

Other areas for consideration could include:

Relationship of sabbatical to other forms of compensation (*e.g.*, vacation, severance pay/time). Commitment by the pastor for future service. Resources or funding available for supporting sabbatical activities. Plan for coverage during the sabbatical. Qualification of other types of ministry as sabbatical activities: *e.g.*, professor-in-residence, chaplaincy training, special projects or missions.

Sabbatical Policy Considerations

1. A pastor may receive two months of sabbatical leave for every five years of service to the local church he currently serves.
2. Sabbatical not to be taken prior to five years of consecutive service at that local church.
3. Churches, at their discretion, can give credit for the pastor's years of service at a prior church, especially if no sabbatical time was given.
4. Pastors must submit a sabbatical proposal to the Board, outlining in general terms how sabbatical time would be invested. In a multiple staff church, the proposal should first be cleared by the Senior Pastor. Sabbatical proposals should reflect a balance of physical rest, personal recreation, intellectual stimulation and spiritual renewal. Sufficient time for family should be included.
5. Sabbatical time is separate from the pastor's yearly vacation time.
6. The pastor should report to the Board after the completion of the sabbatical, to indicate how the time was invested and what benefits were realized.
7. The pastor's full wages and benefits should continue for the duration of the sabbatical. Compensation should be given for unused sabbatical time.
8. The church should give appropriate recognition to both the commencement and conclusion of the sabbatical period.
9. The understanding of a sabbatical is that the pastor is relieved from all routine and emergency duties during the time granted. The local church leaders will handle routine and emergency matters.

Thinking like Christians about the weird stuff

Source: Breakpoint, 4/20/26,
by John Stonestreet and Andrew Carico

Recently, Vice President J.D. Vance admitted that he is “obsessed” with UFOs and extraterrestrial visitors. He then suggested that what are often identified as aliens could be masquerading demons. As Vance put it, “I think one of the devil’s great tricks is to convince people he never existed.”

Vice Pres. Vance is in a growing company of those, including many Christians, who are fascinated with aliens. And especially for Christians, right thinking about ET begins with getting our worldview right on the existence of the natural and supernatural.

In fact, the rise of vague spiritualities not firmly rooted in Christian doctrine has fostered many modern beliefs about aliens. Decades ago, C.S. Lewis rightly stated why we often prefer vague spirituality over encountering the real God:

“An ‘impersonal God’ — well and good. A subjective God of beauty, truth and goodness, inside our own heads — better still. A formless life-force surging through us, a vast power which we can tap — best of all. But God Himself, alive, pulling at the other end of the cord, perhaps approaching at an infinite speed, the hunter, king, husband — that is quite another matter.”

Recently, *CBN News* produced a documentary that explored aliens in terms of the supernatural. In an interview, well-known astrophysicist Dr. Hugh Ross claimed that the strongest evidence for demons is asserted encounters with UFOs and that, statistically, there is a high correlation between those who claim encounters with UFOs and those who have dabbled in the occult or who have had close relatives tied to the occult. It is not surprising, then, that scholars such as Diana Pasulka have identified what some call “UFOology” as a kind of religion, filling a void that Christians know can only be filled by God alone.

It’s also not a coincidence that the rising interest in aliens and UFOs is happening at the same time as an increasing concern over AI. After all, some claim that trans-dimensional, non-human intelligences can use technology to communicate with humans. Between AI and alien life, conversations about demonic activity are more mainstream than they were just 100 years ago.

In a couple of his books, the late historian Rodney Stark observed that early Christians condemned a fear of supernatural beings. Rather, they believed that

Satan’s defeat by Christ was definitive, and that Christ’s resurrection had enthroned Him above any and all other powers throughout the entire universe. That is, of course, what Scripture proclaims, which makes it an important starting point for Christians thinking about things like UFOs, aliens and AI demons. In short, Christians are to be people of hope.

Another factor in making sense of the contemporary fascination with aliens is that a naturalistic worldview, even secular humanism in which man is considered the measure of all things, has brought the world to the ironic place of devaluing humanity. There must be other beings in the universe, or else we are the best there is? This drives, at least to some degree, the incessant search for other life forms.

While there is much we do not know about aliens, UFOs and unknown life “out there,” much of the unexplained activity could be explicable by other, simple means: drones, weather balloons and government operations.

And we must not rule out the very demonic activity described clearly in Holy Scripture, such as in Ephesians. (Eph. 6:12 ESV: “*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*”)

Scripture is plain, that there is a God, that humans are made in His image and that demons (who do exist) are jealous of that.

Ephesians also teaches that we do not just wrestle against flesh and blood but against the spiritual forces of evil and their use of cosmic powers. Scripture also makes plain that through His work on the Cross, Christ disarmed all such authorities, put them to shame and triumphed over them.

In his book *Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be: a Breviary of Sin*, philosopher Neal Plantinga explained that Christians must talk about evil as if it is a real foe, because it is. We also, he said, should talk about evil as if it is a defeated foe, because Christ is risen. Thus, we should see even the unexplainable with this certainty: that the Christ Who has risen is the Lord, Who is eternally triumphant over all that is seen and unseen.