November 2026 AD

CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church
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The election starts here

CrossWay's south wing is a polling place in the Nov. 3 election. Our neighbors will be streaming in to make a difference in our civil government.

Can we, as Christian citizens, do any less?

Voting is from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Psalm 33:12 states, "*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord*." Let's put Him first when we exercise our privilege in this One Nation Under God.





It's that time again! Though Congress toyed with eliminating the time change, we are still on the daylight savings/ standard regime. Turn your clocks back one hour on Saturday night, Oct. 31, so you can join us for worship on Sunday.

By the Book

Pastor Bob Manuel's 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, continuing our look at the New Testament:

November 1 Acts
November 8 Romans
November 15 I Corinthians
November 22 II Corinthians
November 29 Advent begins



Education wing

Sunday School rocks on at 11:30 a.m., with children gathering in Fellowship Hall, youth in the north-end Library, and adults in the Sanctuary.

Adults will be led by Cody Hinkle for the concluding two weeks on "The Use of the OT Scriptures." Then comes four weeks with Jed Ostoich and Jeff Lash exploring "Same and Different: The Distinctives of the Four New Testament Gospels."



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

Adult Ed topics for Wednesday Family Nights on the theme "Key Turning Points of Church History," based on a book by Mark Noll: *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity* (Baker Academic)

Nov. 4	Conversion of the Wesleys	Wendell Gafford
Nov. 11	French Revolution	Jed Ostoich
Nov. 18	Music of Handel	Nick Sparks

Coming Up at CrossWay Community

Sundays • 9:30^{AM} • Prayer, lobby classroom
Sundays • 10^{AM} • Gather for worship together
Sundays • 11:30^{AM} • Adult Sunday School
Sundays • 6^{PM} • Prayer meeting
Tuesdays • 12:30^{PM} • Ladies Bible Study
Wednesdays • 6^{PM} • Family Night
Fri., Oct. 30 • 4:30^{PM} - 10:30^{PM}• Potluck/Game Night
Sat.. Oct. 31 • Turn your clocks back!
Sun., Nov. 1 • Int'l Day of Prayer for Persecuted Christians
Mon., Nov. 2 • 6^{PM} • Elder meeting
Tues., Nov. 3 • Election Day
Sat., Nov. 7 • 9^{AM} • Ladies breakfast at Russ's
Sat., Nov. 7 • 9^{AM} • Men's breakfast at Bob Evans
Thurs., Nov. 12 • 6^{PM} • Le/Veurink small group
Sun., Nov. 15 • Deadline for OCC Shoeboxes
Sat., Nov. 21 • 9^{AM} • Move Bethlehem set from storage
Sat., Nov. 28 • 9^{AM} • Christmas decorating
Sun., Nov. 29 • Decorate Bethlehem set (Advent begins)

Our time to shine



An Evening in Bethlehem is our best foot forward in shining the Light of Christ to our neighbors. It's a full-church effort each year to tell the Old, Old Story in a semi-dramatic format.And we need everybody to get involved.

Cody Hinkle is the point person for this project; his contact information can be found in the fellowship directory. Volunteer needs:

- Transport set from storage Nov. 21, 9 a.m.
- Assemble set Nov. 28, 9 a.m.
- Decorate set Nov. 29, 11:30 a.m.
- Donate foods and crafts for the marketplace
- Canvass neighorhoods with invitations
- Perform a role (30 needed) Dec. 11, 6-8 p.m.
  Dec. 12, 2-4 p.m. & Dec. 12, 6-8 p.m.
- Bring and tend manger animals
- Manage parking lot traffic
- Organize visitors into groups for tours
- Pack up the set for storage, Dec. 13, 11:30 a.m.

Find your role
and sign up to be a blessing!



A great way to close out October

You're invited to bring your family – and a potluck dish and your favorite game – to CrossWay on Friday, Oct. 30. Come and go between 4:30 and 10:30 p.m. If you have questions, contact Samantha or Elizabeth Montgomery; you can find them in the CrossWay fellowship directory.

Bringing joy 'n' Jesus to needy children

November each year brings an opportunity for CrossWay folks to reach out and bless youngsters across the world, through the ministry of Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child. Find in the narthex behind the sanctuary a supply of colorful boxes for you to take and fill with small toys and school supplies and craft items you know a girl or boy will love.



Label the box (boy or girl) and bring it back by Sunday, Nov. 15. Be a blessing.

Deck the halls @ CrossWay

Mark it on your calendar now!

All are invited to help decorate the halls, the sanctuary, the nooks & crannies of CrossWay for the Christmas celebration season.

Saturday, Nov. 28, starting at 9 a.m. We'll furnish the decor; you are welcome to bring snacks to share.



Bonus activity: Construct the set for Bethlehem! In addition to decking out our worship space, we'll be setting up the Bethlehem village scene for our Evening in Bethlehem outreach activity.

Lots to do Nov. 28! Let's get at it!



The Ethics of Beauty

As I think of the upcoming holiday season, when we celebrate the Word that became flesh, I wonder, at times, has Jesus really changed me? Do you ever wonder if Jesus is actually at work in you, truly changing you at your heart level?

I'd like to suggest it is not unusual to have times and perhaps seasons when we wonder whether all this "Christian" stuff is real and whether He is up to anything at all in our lives.

When I go through times of doubt, I don't always have a strategy to help me snap out of things. Yes, I try to cling to some spiritual disciplines like prayer, solitude, journaling and walking; these things don't necessarily take the blues away. Sometimes nothing seems to help, at least help much. YET.

Yet, what I find does help — not so much as a strategy to make my doubts go away or my sadness lessen — is what I would call the "ethics of beauty." During the holidays especially, I find the ethics of beauty to be a powerful and helpful rehab my soul might need.

What, though, do I mean by the "ethics of beauty?" Broadly speaking, it refers to gazing at our glorious God before I ever try to seek any kind of change in my life. Sometimes my longing for Him is so faint, but once I detect it, I cling to this desire like nothing else.

Only Beauty can motivate and sustain us in a life of "ethics" or holiness, being set apart by Him and for Him. We don't and can't experience or sustain a changed life by ethics or moralism (do good/try harder). Practically speaking, if I don't find walking with God as something desirable, I will never truly walk with Him.

The phrase "The Ethics of Beauty" comes from a book I've been reading with that title, written by Timothy G. Patitsas, an Orthodox Christian. I'd like to share a few of his thoughts here, to help prepare us for the holiday season. To be ready for the Word that has become flesh, we must be moved by the beauty of our glorious God. Here are a few thoughts from Patitsas's book. In sharing them, my hope is for our hearts to be truly engaged with a childlike wonder as we anticipate the Christmas season.

Speaking of our need of repentance and the practice of fasting, he says the following:

> In terms of beauty, to fast is to leave behind every partial beauty and all partial estimations of what is beautiful, and to love the ultimate beauty. What first drives us to fast is a vision of Christ's Beauty. Yes, many times this vision of His perfection will remind us of our present, and we hope temporary, ugliness. And thus out of mercy Christ proclaims, 'Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.' That is, He does not just show us the Kingdom, leaving us with despair at our own unworthiness, but He also promises us that repentance is possible and that He will help us to repent, since in Christ repentance is not a 'self-improvement program' but *an act of obedience for which He Himself provides the main energy*. (Patitsas, p.156)

In short, I will only enjoy the life-giving fruits of repentance (*i.e.* "ethics) when I see and am aided by a Beautiful God to come back to Him. That's what I want this Christmas season and in all of life. Later, Dr. Patitsas answers the question, "How does willpower differ from a Beauty-driven resolve?" He says:

> 'Willpower' In the sense that it is used outside the church is aimed at goodness or truth. We know an effective way to lose weight would be to eat differently, and so we struggle to be good by dieting. We know that pornography is bad, so we disconnect the Internet. This is fine as far as it goes, but our main focus ought to be outside ourselves, on Christ, or on the joy of healthy foods and exercise, or on the chaste beauty of the church services. (Patitsas, p.169)

My dear friends, my prayer for the unsaintly saints (!) at CrossWay, is that we would desire and then see the Beauty of Jesus Christ during this Christmas season. And, when you or I cannot find the resolve to worship Him or to reform our lives, I fully trust that even when we feel far away from Him, He is ever near. "*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*" (John 1:14)

A day to pray

Each year around this time, we dedicate a day to prayer for our brothers and sisters who are suffering persecution for the Cross of Christ. Jesus implied that it is a privilege when He said, "*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven...*" (Matt. 5:10-12)

Sunday, November 1, has received this honorable designation for this year, but you can certainly engage in this communication, cherished by the Lord, any and every day. There are many who need our prayers, but we at CrossWay can start with those for whom we have pledged our support. Our budget supports local church planting efforts in India and many other locations from the Middle East through Asia, by funding for Mission India and Unknown Nations (both mission organizations based in Grand Rapids). Our Savior invites us to support these dark-corner preachers by regular, sincere prayer. Their needs are endless, but what they most desire is the Lord's blessing on their work as they bring His Word to dark corners and to weary hearts.

And so, on this International Day of Prayer, let us all bow our heads and our hearts before our beautiful Savior and ask for more workers and a ripe harvest for these dedicated servants who suffer for the Name above all names.

Render unto the ballot box

by Tony Perkins, President, Family Research Council The Washington Stand, *Sept. 16, 2026*

As Americans, we have the right to vote. With that right comes the power to choose our leaders and influence the values that guide our government. That right must be protected, but it must also be exercised.

There are roughly 250 million Americans eligible to vote. Yet in the 2022 midterm elections, fewer than half participated. Think about that. In a nation where government derives its authority from the consent of the governed, millions chose not to make their voices heard. And Christians are not exempt from this troubling pattern. Even where churchgoers vote at higher rates than the general population, far too many remain on the sidelines.

As Americans, we have a right to vote. As Christians, we also have a responsibility to be faithful citizens.

Remember Jesus's words, "*Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.*" (Matthew 22:21) In our constitutional republic, citizenship carries responsibilities. Our government was not designed for spectators. It depends on the participation of the people. Jesus also called His followers the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Salt that never touches the food cannot preserve it. Light hidden from view cannot illuminate the darkness. We're called to make a difference, not withdraw from the world around us. Voting is simply one practical way to fulfill that calling.

Our freedoms were not secured so that we could stand aside while others decide how they will be used. but it is one of the clearest opportunities we have to act on our convictions.

In the late 1940s, the Reverend Peter Marshall, chaplain of the United States Senate, preached a sermon entitled "Trial by Fire," drawing from Elijah's challenge in I Kings: "If the Lord is God, follow Him. But if Baal, follow him." Marshall warned against living in a moral fog, refusing to choose between conviction and compromise. Then he declared, "I, for one, am tired of hearing about our rights and privileges as American citizens. The time has come. It is now when we ought to hear about the duties and responsibilities of our citizenship."

Those words are as relevant today as when he spoke them. Because every election is about more than which party wins or who occupies an office. It's about the principles that will shape our laws, protect our freedoms, and influence the lives of our children and grandchildren. When we stay home, we don't stop those decisions from being made. We simply leave them to someone else.

So ask yourself: if people who share your convictions remain silent, whose values will shape America's future? We cannot demand responsible government while neglecting our responsibility as citizens. Exercise your right. Fulfill your responsibility. Study the candidates, weigh the issues against biblical values, and then vote.

