

# Crossroads Church

*a ministry of the Christian Reformed Church*

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*Christians passionately dedicated to impacting our world with God's love, one person at a time.*

This week, in the life of the church, our Scripture Lesson is from Matthew 4:12-16 *"When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali - to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:*

*"Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,*

*the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan,*

*Galilee of the Gentiles—*

*the people living in darkness*

*have seen a great light;*

*on those living in the land of the shadow of death*

*a light has dawned."*

I pass on to you some reflections on this passage from a good friend (with permission). I trust the Spirit will use it to encourage you this week.

*"To Some Family Members and Friends,*

*My Disciplines reading for the last two days is based on two of what I like to call my life-scriptures, from Isaiah [9.1-2] and Matthew [12-16] . . .*

*I have always been encouraged by Jesus' intentionality to begin his ministry by walking to northern Israel to spend time in places where God's people had been living in awful darkness for many years.*

*And when The Light showed up and penetrated their darkness, some of them saw The Light, and they had hope, perhaps even though nothing around them had changed.*

*As a family, we have lived in some dark places, which isn't so unusual, because many people have lived and still live in many kinds of dark places.*

*I don't mean to presume I understand other people's experiences when it comes to living in dark places, including living in personal darkness.*

*However, I know my own experiences of pervasive personal 'darkness' and so does my wife; she has been there with me, many times.*

*In the '90's, part of my challenge toward healing was that the 'darkness' was so inwardly pervasive and quietly heavy that my feelings were muted, including feelings of hope.*

*In fact, for several years, I didn't much feel God's presence, and the stabilizing meds almost obliterated all feelings for a long time.*

*Again, I am aware that people experience the personal 'darkness' we sometimes call depression, very differently.*

*During dark days and months and years . . . I gradually became more mentally (and yet, unemotionally) aware of God's presence in a profound way.*

*Often, sitting in the dark in the evening, I began to realize that I simply was not as alone, as my wife would physically enter my space and be with me, with just a few caring words, and sometimes just her quiet presence.*

*My recall is that she would simply choose to be with me, often just for a few minutes, with a couple of purposes: to ask if she could do anything for me, and tangibly to show her care and love.*

*She became my experience of Emmanuel, God-with-me/us in the darkness, as I gradually realized in a new way, that I was no longer alone.*

*If you experience your own personal 'darkness', I hope that you know The Light of the world, and that he is with you, very present in your 'darkness', just as Jesus was with people as he entered their darkness.*

*(I sometimes think it's a bit like knowing the sun still shines mostly out of sight, but its rays sort of bleed through the clouds of Michigan winter skies.)*

*I simply wanted to share my personal experience with you, in the hope that you will be open to someone simply being with you when it's dark.*

*And perhaps you may choose to be with some other person and simply re-present Emmanuel in their presence.*

*Thank you for allowing me to share these thoughts with you . . .*

*I remain with you, in the gentle grip of God's grace,"*

## This Sunday

Please join us for Worship at 9:30 a.m. This Sunday is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the season of Epiphany – of Jesus appearing to the world - and we are invited to follow Jesus even when the cost is high. Our Scripture lesson is from Matthew 4.12-23.

**Make worship a priority this week – someone is depending on you to share this worship time with them!**

### *Offering for the Month of January: Bethany Christian Services*

Headquartered in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Bethany is a not-for-profit, pro-life, Christian adoption and family services agency. It manifests the love and compassion of Jesus Christ by protecting and enhancing the lives of children and families through quality social services.

and

### *Children's Offering - Child Evangelism Fellowship*

*CEF* works to bring Jesus into the lives of boys and girls and help them find a good church that will help them live for Jesus. *CEF* has many different ministries for children, but the primary ones are the *Good News Club* and the *5-Day Club*.

### **Adult Education Classes**

Con continues leading the study of the book of Isaiah.

Laurie begins a new class entitled “*The Emotionally Healthy Church*” which will follow the book and workbook by Peter Scazzero.

Many passionate Christians still struggle with loneliness, grief and insecurity. She will help us look at six principles to help us grow.

Please contact Laurie with questions.

## This Week

UNASHAMED Youth

***This Wednesday – January 29<sup>th</sup>:***

## ***Sledding and Hot Chocolate***

*For more detailed information and if you have any questions,  
please contact:*

**Pastor Ryan Moorad** by [email:](mailto:crossroadsmadisonyouth@gmail.com)  
[crossroadsmadisonyouth@gmail.com](mailto:crossroadsmadisonyouth@gmail.com) or

**call/text: (608) 335-2785**

**KINGDOM KIDS**

***This Wednesday - January 29<sup>th</sup> :***

## ***Sledding and Hot Chocolate***

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*Women's Bible Study*

*Thursday Morning Coffee Break*

All women are invited to join us on Thursday mornings at 9AM for Coffee Break Bible Study.

This week we will start a new study called "Twelve Women of the Bible". Instead of the typical women's study of Ruth, this Bible study looks at and discusses a variety of women (some unnamed) and the roles they played in God's Story.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact Shirley.

Have a wonderful Weekend! Enjoy the gifts God has given you. Honor Him in all you do, and I look forward to seeing you Sunday!!

May Jesus' love be your strength.

Pastor Doug

