

WHAT IS CROSS PATHS, AND WHY AM I RECEIVING IT?

Those are excellent questions! This is the very first issue of *Cross Paths*, and frankly, we figured people would wonder what this is all about. So recently we had a conversation with Pastor George McCarty of the First Christian Church here in Peru, just to answer some of those questions.

Q Pastor McCarty, what exactly is Cross Paths?

A *Cross Paths* is an attempt by First Christian Church to reach out to our local community. Recently some of the leaders of our church were brainstorming about how we could make people aware of some of the exciting things going on in our church and community, and we thought that doing a newsletter might be a good way to do it.

Q Why is the church doing this?

A Actually, there are three main reasons. First, we really are excited about some of the programs and activities going on in our church, and we wanted to find a way to make people aware of them. Along with that, if there is something that we're doing that would meet someone's need, we certainly want people to feel welcome to check us out. Second, we want our church to be a "good citizen" in the community, and part of that is being *involved* in the community. And third, we wanted to do something to be a positive influence.

It always seems like it's the bad news that grabs the majority of the headlines, and we thought we'd like to spotlight some of the positive things that are happening in our church and local area.

In our first issue we decided to feature our local hospital's chaplaincy program, a wonderful community resource.

Q What is the significance of the name *Cross Paths*?

A It's two-fold. First, as a Christian church, the "path of the cross" holds great meaning for us. Second, as mentioned earlier, we are serious about being involved in this community, and hope, at some point, to "cross paths" with many of our neighbors.

Q Earlier you mentioned being excited about some of the things going on at First Christian Church. Can you give us an example?

A I sure can! Next month we're going to start a program called a "40 Day Journey." This is part of a movement arising from the book *The Purpose Driven Life*, which is taking the nation, and even the world, by storm. The book seeks to help people answer the question "What On Earth Am I Here For?" We think this is an essential question for every individual, and we are going to be spending a lot of time and effort to help people answer that question for themselves. This program will be open to anyone who'd like to join us. If you'd like to know more, there is more information in this issue of *Cross Paths* about the 40 Day Journey.

Q *Cross Paths* is put out by First Christian Church. What if I attend another church?

A We think that's great! We're here to promote the Kingdom, not just First Christian Church. We feel that people should be involved in a faith community that is most meaningful to them. However if there's something we're doing that someone feels would be helpful to them, (like the 40 Day Journey), they're certainly welcome to join us for a time. Also, we hope people find some things in *Cross Paths* that may be helpful or beneficial to them.

Q What about those who are not particularly interested in any church?

A As we read the Bible, some of Jesus' favorite people were those who would not necessarily be described as "religious." We would encourage those individuals to at least look through *Cross Paths* to see if there is anything that is of interest or benefit to them. And if at some point we can be of help to those who do not currently have a church home, we would be glad to do so.

Q How often will *Cross Paths* be coming out?

A We honestly don't know yet. This venture is brand new, very much of an experiment. If it turns out to be meeting a need for people, we will set up a schedule and publish it regularly. If not, we'll try something else. If people could let us know what they think of our newsletter, this would really be very helpful to us. We welcome their feedback!





Have you had any “Shining Moments” lately?

Every year after the conclusion of the college national basketball championship, I always look forward to “One Shining Moment,” CBS’s tribute to the newly-crowned champions. A beautifully done musical and video salute, the piece follows the path of the winning team through the progressive stages of the NCAA tournament, and culminates with the team’s ascending the pinnacle of college basketball. I find it thrilling to witness the end result of years of focused hard work and sacrifice, resulting in such an emotional, tangible, and visible recognition of the team’s supreme success. The segment is so inspiring that I typically find myself getting goose bumps.

I must confess that at times I find myself getting a bit envious. Having never had the opportunity to climb the ladder and “cut down the nets,” (other than from the goal on my dad’s barn when I was a kid), I catch myself wondering “Why couldn’t I have had just one ‘shining moment’ like that? Why couldn’t I, just one time, have scored the game-winning basket, or be interviewed by Billy Packer on national TV, or get hugged by Coach K, or hoist the championship trophy with my teammates? Is that too much to ask?” In comparison, my life seems pretty ordinary.

Then I catch myself. According to the Bible, envy is not a recommended activity, and really doesn’t do much to increase one’s happiness. And I also remind myself, I have had a few “shining moments,” just not that public or that spectacular. For those I am thankful.

Recently I had a further thought. For the believer in Christ, our best shining moment is yet to come. In fact, we not only have a shining moment, we have a shining *eternity*, too glorious to even imagine:

*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for
those who love Him. (I Cor. 2:9.)*

As our church prepares to enter a 40-day journey in which we study the book *The Purpose Driven Life*, we will find that a significant part of achieving a life with more meaning is maintaining an eternal perspective. Indeed, chapter 6 of the book says it well: “*Life on earth is a temporary assignment.*”

In light of that fact, the shining moments of this world may be nice, but for the faithful believer in Christ, there are better things ahead.

Prayer: Lord, When we get to feeling pretty ordinary, help us not to envy others’ success. Instead, let us remember to be thankful for those good memories that warm and encourage us. Most of all, help us also to remember that we’re just here temporarily, and focus on the things that really count. Amen.

1
WORSHIP
You were planned
for God’s pleasure

2
FELLOWSHIP
You were formed
for God’s family

3
DISCIPLESHIP
You were created to
become like Christ

4
MINISTRY
You were shaped
for serving God

5
EVANGELISM
You were made
for a mission