



# THE CROSS *and* CROWN

“No Cross, No Crown”

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Two Sundays ago, I had one of those after-church, foyer discussions with a couple of dads from the congregation. We talked about the problem with being fathers of daughters; essentially, that daughters steal your heart – and then break it when, inevitably, they leave. It’s bittersweet, wanting to see them live their best lives, and yet not wanting to let go.

Shortly after that conversation, Candace and I met with a couple from our leadership team who let us know that they were moving on, to begin an internship as part of the process of getting their ministry credentials. It was bittersweet.



As you know, we describe our ministry with four words: Reach, Teach, Mend and Send. We believe that God has called us to equip his flock and send them forth into other areas of ministry. So, while it will be difficult to say good-bye to these friends and co-laborers, with whom we’ve shared fellowship, laughter and tears, we rejoice that they are responding to God’s call and moving deeper in ministry.

“Send” is the hard part. Selfishly, we would like to hold onto everything with which God blesses us – but, as I often say, fruit is not meant to stay with the tree! Fruit that stays with the tree goes rotten. No one gets the benefit of its flavor or its vitamins, and it doesn’t reproduce. How much better it is for a tree to let go of its fruit, so that it can be consumed and have its seeds distributed, and, ultimately, so that new seedlings can spring up!

We are (to carry this metaphor a bit further) a little tree, and producing fruit is hard. We don’t have any to spare – but we trust the Lord of the harvest! Just as there comes a time when he gathers in the harvest, there comes a time when he tends to the tree, nourishing it, strengthening it, and even pruning it, to ensure that it will bear much fruit at the proper time.

When my niece started dating, we asked my sister-in-law whether or not she approved of the young man. She shared her two criteria: someone who loves God and who treats her daughter with respect. We know the pastors under whom our friends will be ministering. They are people of God, and we have no doubt that they will respect and nurture our friends. We’re praising God!

*I am the true vine, and my father is the gardener; . . . you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. . . . This is to my Father’s glory. (John 15:1,5,8)*

# Thanks for Praying!

We heard from several who prayed with us for miracles. Please keep it up! God is answering! Join us in praying for:

- two in our church/school family who need housing,
- God to move in hearts in April's missions convention, and
- our upcoming mini-musical and fundraiser.

## ... and thanks for responding!

This past week, we heard from two of our readers, one offering help with the housing need, and the other offering help with Breakfast with Jesus! They are living out James 2:14–18, showing their faith by what they do (verse 18). It encouraged us and blessed us more than you could imagine.





By the way, if you'd like to help with our fundraiser for the academy's performing arts program, you can send a check to Spring Garden Academy at the PO Box, below, or give on-line at [sga.family/musical](http://sga.family/musical). If you're in the area, we'd love for you to join us! Go to [sga.family/tickets](http://sga.family/tickets) to get your tickets.



## We're praying with you!

If you're on our mailing list\*, you're on our prayer list! If there's anything specific that we can join with you in praying for, please let us know.

We really love hearing from you! Your notes and phone calls make our day!

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\* **Important:** If you'd rather not be on our mailing list, we won't be offended! Just call or write us, and we'll remove you. (We'll still keep you on our prayer list!)

If you'd rather receive this letter via e-mail, please let us know, or sign up at [crossandcrown.online/subscribe](http://crossandcrown.online/subscribe) !

## Did you know?

The book of Psalms was composed over a period of about 1,000 years and touches on all of the major themes of the Bible. It is the book that Jesus quoted the most often.

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out. (Romans 11:33)



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