



Christ • Communion • Community

# CASCADIAN WEEKLY

October 15, 2021

Week 83

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Cascade Christian Church,

Mike and I want to thank you for the flowers and generous gift on Pastor Appreciation Day. It means a lot to both of us, and it is an honor to be able to serve at Cascade Christian Church. The kind words from Elder Dana Froumis and the tribute from Worship Chair Audrey Partak truly moved my heart. Thank you.

Audrey shared Hebrews 13:17 which says: *Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

It has been such a privilege to work among you as we work together to build God's kingdom. I have been at the church for a long time, have had the joy of watching several generations of children grow to adulthood, have worked with wonderful fellow staff members, and have served with remarkable Church Boards and volunteers. As I think about Pastor Appreciation Month, I can't help but think of the pastors who influenced me, who watched over my soul, who were a joy to work with, and who mentored me along the way.

I think first of Reverend Raymond Gaylord who taught all of us the value of hard work, of giving God your best, of the importance of Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Minds. I think of Pastor Corky Klingenfus, his gentleness, his love for Christ and for "keeping the main thing the main thing". I am grateful to Pastor Michael Spitters, such a man of vision, and how he empowered many of us to be who God created us to be. I am grateful to Reverend Ben Herring who was such a great Bible teacher, Reverend George Davis who reminded us to praise our God, and Pastor Tim Murtaugh for lessons on doing what is best for the whole church. Each of these pastors were a blessing to this congregation, and it is humbling to try and fill their shoes. I am very thankful to have had these pastors, mentors, and friends.

And I also want to thank each one of you during this Pastor Appreciation Month, because we are in this together. As 1 Peter 2:9 reminds us: *9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.* You might be the only pastor someone ever knows, you might be the doorway for someone to the church, you might be the only Bible they will ever read. You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, and may the Lord bless you and inspire you as you continue to minister and build the Kingdom of God in this time and place.

It is a joy to work with you! Keep the faith,

Jill

## WEEKLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>Sunday</u> _(10/17).	Sunday School - 9:30 AM Crib Room - 9:30 AM Worship - 9:30, 11:00 AM
<u>Monday</u> _(10/18).	Book Club Advocates - 11:30 AM(Coffee House)  Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Tuesday</u> _(10/19).	Men's Group - 6:30 AM (Coffee House) Women's Bible Study - 9:00 AM (Centennial Hall)  Young Adult Small Group 7:00 PM
<u>Wednesday</u> _(10/20).	Wednesday Night Classes 6:30 PM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Bible Study "The Chosen"</li> <li>• Wednesday Jubilee - Elementary School</li> <li>• Youth Group - Middle &amp; High School</li> </ul> Scouts - 7:00 PM (Centennial Hall) Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Thursday</u> _(10/21).	Grief Share - 10:00AM (Coffee House) Soup Lunch - 12:00 PM (Centennial Hall) Women's Afternoon Out 1:15 PM Board meeting 7:00 PM (Zoom) Be Bold - 5th-7th grade class 4:00 - 5:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Friday</u> _(10/22).	Church Office Closed  Open Talk Group - 7:30 AM (Coffee House)
<u>Saturday</u> _(10/23).	

Financial giving for  
the week ending in  
10/10/2021:  
Budgeted: \$10,652  
Given: \$9,875

## MEALS MINISTRY

All who would like to help with meals for the Zeeryp family, please contact the church office or call Darcy Hartley. Scott is back home, being cared for Melissa, and meals are to be dropped off in a cooler on the porch of the Zeeryp home, or we can arrange for them to be delivered.

Casseroles, lasagna, and anything chocolate are appreciated.

Thank you for caring for this beloved family.

# MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

## ROBINETTES

On October 31st after Sunday School we will be going to Robinettes apple orchard. We will be doing the corn maze, eating doughnuts, and having a fun filled fall day. Meet at the church at 12:00pm and we will be back at church by 3:00pm. Bring some spending money for snacks or other things you may want at Robinettes.

## EVENT SIGN UP

We are so excited to get youth group underway. We will be going to Spring Hill for a winter retreat, Mackinac Island, on a mission trip, and doing some fundraisers to help pay for these events as well. If you'd like to help out or you know that your child would like to participate, please fill out the form. Let Michael know if you have any questions.



## SUNDAY SCHOOL

This year we are doing Sunday School at 11:00 AM. We are working our way through the whole bible. Come right up to the youth room at 11:00 AM (we will not be dismissing from Church). We hope to see you there!

## WEDNESDAY NIGHT YOUTH GROUP

Our Wednesday Night Youth Group is up and running again. We are following the lessons in Sunday School and learning more about what we learned that week in Sunday School. We hope to see you here each week!

## MIDDLE SCHOOL MADNESS

On Friday, October 15th, we will be having our first monthly Middle School Madness from 7-9:00pm! This event is a chance for Middle School students to bring friends to church for a night of pizza, fun, and fellowship. High Schoolers and parents are encouraged to volunteer at the event. Contact the church office for more information.

# CHILDRENS MINISTRIES

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children are encouraged to bring money for an offering each week. Near Christmastime, we will use the money we've collected to buy toys and books for kids at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital. Talk with your children about tithing and what it means to be generous.

## BE BOLD

We are beginning a new class for 5th-7th graders on Thursday afternoons from 4:00 - 5:30. Each week we'll be wrestling with questions about the faith. If your child needs a ride from school, please contact the church office.

# ADULT MINISTRIES

## **GAYLORD COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP**

The application is online and available in the church office. Applications are due November 1st, and the scholarship is open to all active church members

## **YOUNG ADULT BIBLE STUDY**

The young adult Bible study is meeting on Tuesday nights from 7:00-8:30 at Michael Dirksen's house. If you would like to participate, please contact Michael at 616.283.9744

# GENERAL NEWS

## **MOM'S NIGHT OUT - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17!**

Join the other Moms of the congregation for dinner at JT's Pizza on Old 28th Street at 5:00PM. Please call Elle Holes at 231/357-8401 for more information

## **WOMEN'S AFTERNOON OUT**

Thursday, October 21 at 1:15PM. Join the ladies of the church for an afternoon in Rockford for shopping, ice cream, and a fall color tour. The group will leave after Soup and Sandwich. Call the church office to RSVP.

## **SOUP AND SANDWICH LUNCH**

Thursday, October 21 at 12 noon in Centennial Hall. Join us for a wonderful soup lunch and then a travelogue on Utah by Gail and Chuck Snow. **No reservation is needed.**

## **CELEBRATION OF MINISTRY AT CENTRAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

Sunday, October 17 at 1:00PM. After 46 years on Leonard Street, Central Christian is selling their building and exploring new possibilities. Our thoughts are with our sister church as they go through this time of change, and our prayers are with Pastor John Delger as he leads. Join the Central Christian Church in their sanctuary on the 17th to celebrate their many years of ministry.

## **FAMILY PROMISE DRIVE BY SAMO**

The Social Action and Outreach committee is holding a Family Promise Donation drive October 10-31. The following items were selected as most needed; Pam Cooking Spray, Peanut Butter, Pasta Sauce, Popcorn, and Pillows (new). Collection boxes will be in the church narthex and the church office. Contact Diane Phelps with questions.

## **FALL CLEAN UP DAY**

All are invited for our annual Fall Clean Up Day Saturday, November 13 at 9:00 Bring a rake and gloves

## **DAYS FOR GIRLS WORKSHOP**

Assembling, ironing, cutting, and stitching sustainable menstrual kits for young women, in Centennial Hall.

October 16, 1-4

November 20, 1-4

All skill levels, sewers and non-sewers alike. Contact Diane Phelps (email [dianephelps2010@gmail.com](mailto:dianephelps2010@gmail.com)), or call the church office.

## **A MESSAGE FROM CARIBBEAN CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION**

"PLEASE CONVEY TO THE CONGREGATION OUR THANKS...

We are deeply touched by the special offering for Emergency Relief. The funds will be used for feeding people in the months to come and at some point, for construction, when the rubble has been cleared away and people are able to start rebuilding. Shown below is one of the camps where we are feeding 27 families. They are SO SO grateful, as no one else has come to help them.

The people of CCC have been so faithful in supporting the work that we do. We cannot do it without people like you. The prayers being offered sustain through the difficult times. THANK YOU!"



## **TRUNK OR TREAT - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24, FROM 1:00-3:00PM**

Join us for Trunk or Treat in the church parking lot, a long time tradition at Cascade Christian Church. Please sign up at the church office if you can bring your car and hand out candy to the children of our church and community. We appreciate donations of wrapped candy, and cannot accept any homemade baked goods or fruit. Participants can decorate their car and wear a costume if they wish, but keep it child friendly (nothing scary).

Please invite the children in your life to join in the fun, and in addition this year we will have a pumpkin carving contest. You can pick up a pumpkin from the church on Sunday, October 17 and bring it back carved on the 24th. A prize and bragging rights will be awarded to the winner. Plan on joining the church for this afternoon of family fun.

## **CONGREGATIONAL CARE - THANKSGIVING DINNER - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16**

Many thanks to the Congregational Care Committee under the direction of Susan Strobel and John Duchon for the work on the annual Thanksgiving Dinner for Senior Citizens. Due to precautions issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the church will be hosting a drive through- take out dinner again this year. We simply do not have enough space to safely distance and host this as a sit-down dinner. Last year many chose to eat their dinners together with friends off campus, and we encourage all who are comfortable to do the same this year. The invitation for the dinner will be coming out in a few weeks. If you are a senior citizen (over 70 years of age) and are unsure if you are on the invitation list, please call the church office. If you would like to serve on the committee who will prepare for this dinner, please be in touch as well.

## 10.10.2021 SERMON: IT TAKES COURAGE TO READ THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

There are some sayings we all have heard, and we know what they mean, but we might not know where they came from. For instance - giving someone a cold shoulder - it means being unwelcoming, dissing someone. In medieval England, it was customary to give a guest a cold piece of meat from the shoulder of mutton when the host felt it was time for the guest to leave. This was a polite way to communicate, "Go home, now." The phrase "red tape" comes from the days when official documents were bound with red tape. A blue moon is the second full moon in a single calendar month, and it's a rare occurrence, so once in a blue moon means something that doesn't happen very often. Maybe you've been part of a white elephant gift exchange at Christmas. Albino elephants were highly regarded and lavishly cared for in Asia, but very expensive and burdensome to keep. To give someone a white elephant gift means off-loading something you don't want, and putting the burden on them. This is church, so we know the term "potluck". In the past all kinds of food went into a big cooking pot, and as you sat down to eat, you had to take 'pot luck' and could never be quite sure what you would be served. Many of the saying we use have their origins in the Bible, such as turning the other cheek, taking someone one under your wing, setting our teeth on edge, and even eat, drink, and be merry!

We have been studying the Old Testament book of Daniel, and his story of courage are very relevant for today. Daniel and his friends were captives in Babylon, and eventually, due to their faith in God, they became wise men for the various Kings and rulers of the Babylonian empire. We've seen how they remembered who they were, that God could use them as they were, that it took courage to take a stand for God, and from King Nebuchadnezzar we learned that it takes courage to admit you're wrong.

Today we are going to look at how it takes courage to read the handwriting on the wall. When you hear that phrase, what does it make you think? It means that you've noticed signs or indications that something is about to happen, and usually that something is bad. The handwriting on the wall means misfortune is pending. For example: No one told him he was going to be fired, but for months he had seen the handwriting on the wall.

This saying comes from the 5th chapter of Daniel. King Nebuchadnezzar had died, the golden kingdom which he had reigned over had ended, and lesser kingdoms followed. Nebuchadnezzar was quite a character, but also willing to learn, grow, and change as he encountered the Most-High God of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar's sin was his pride, his misguided sense of accomplishment. But he eventually acknowledged his sin and confessed to God. His successor, the new king, is his son or grandson Belshazzar. Belshazzar is guilty of another kind of sin - the sin of defiance. Belshazzar defies God, is contemptuous towards all that is God's, and he pays for it when Daniel reads the handwriting on the wall. Here's what happened:

**5 King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. 2 While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. 3 So they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. 4 As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.**

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The disrespect, the defiance in this act is huge. This is a sacrilege. Imagine how this would make God's people feel, the vessels from the Temple in Jerusalem, are being passed around like beer cups. These items that were sacred, are being profaned. And then still worse, Belshazzar and his nobles, wives, and concubines are toasting to their gods of metal, wood, and stone. It was sickening – this was such defiance and irreverence; it was like spitting in the eye of God. Usually the sacred vessels of a conquered nation were treated with respect. Imagine if our communion dishes were used for a party, if the crosses, Bibles, or our stained glass were mocked. God was being insulted by Belshazzar. These things made for God's honor and for worship are being misused, but the huge sin here is mocking God. Galatians 6:7 in the Amplified Bible says:

**Do not be deceived, God is not mocked [He will not allow Himself to be ridiculed, nor treated with contempt nor allow His precepts to be scornfully set aside]; for whatever a man sows, this and this only is what he will reap.**

God is not mocked or ridiculed, and God acts. We read then in Daniel 5:5 **Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. 6 His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his legs became weak and his knees were knocking. 7 The king summoned the enchanters, astrologers and diviners. Then he said to these wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom."**

**8 Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant.**

A moment ago there had been revelry, drunkenness, wild toasts, now Belshazzar is terrified. A disembodied hand wrote on the wall, leaving Belshazzar pale and shaken. He must have learned something from his father King Nebuchadnezzar, because he sent for wise men and offers a bribe or reward if they can tell him what all of this meant. And as before, the wisemen had no idea. This scared him even more. Daniel 5:10 describes how the Queen Mother – perhaps Nebuchadnezzar's wife, told Belshazzar to ask for Daniel who had given Nebuchadnezzar good counsel. Daniel was filled with the spirit of his holy God. Belshazzar should call for Daniel, Daniel would know what the writing meant. Daniel 5 continues **13 So Daniel was brought before the king, and the king said to him, "Are you Daniel, one of the exiles my father the king brought from Judah? 14 I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you have insight, intelligence and outstanding wisdom. 15 The wise men and enchanters were brought before me to read this writing and tell me what it means, but they could not explain it. 16 Now I have heard that you are able to give interpretations and to solve difficult problems. If you can read this writing and tell me what it means, you will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around your neck, and you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom."**

Belshazzar seems to have regained his composure because his attitude and language towards Daniel are full of scorn. Daniel is an old man now, but he had been respected and trusted by Nebuchadnezzar. Belshazzar treats him with contempt, like a captive boy, making sure to put Daniel in his place as an exile. Nebuchadnezzar had learned to praise and honor the God of Daniel – but his son speaks of Daniel's God as one of the myriads of gods of Babylon. Twice Belshazzar said, "I have heard", and it sounds like mockery, like a test, like he is interrogating Daniel as if he were a prisoner. Daniel answers with dignity, not wanting any reward, as any ability he has to interpret is a gift from God, so he rejects the gifts and distinctions that Belshazzar offers. Daniel 5:17 continues:

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Then Daniel answered the king, "You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means. 18 "Your Majesty, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor. 19 Because of the high position he gave him, all the nations and peoples of every language dreaded and feared him.

Daniel goes on to describe how Nebuchadnezzar was humbled by God, and then restored to even greater glory by God. He then says: 22 "But you, Belshazzar, his son, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. Belshazzar does not measure up to his father Nebuchadnezzar. Instead, Belshazzar had set himself up against the Lord of heaven, dishonoring God by using the Temple dishes for an orgy, praising false gods, not honoring the One True God who holds Belshazzar's life in His hands. So God sent the hand that wrote a message to Belshazzar: v. 25

25 "This is the inscription that was written: mene, mene, tekel, parsin 26 "Here is what these words mean:

**Mene:** God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end.

**27 Tekel:** You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.

**28 Peres:** Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

**Mene, mene** - this word is repeated for emphasis it means **numbered** - God had numbered the days of Belshazzar's kingdom. It was time for reckoning, Belshazzar's evil had been tallied, had been counted, all of the arrogance and defiance had been heard by God, and has been appraised by God. God is the judge - and God would judge.

**Tekel** - This word means **weighed**. Belshazzar was a light weight; he had been weighed on the scales of justice and doesn't measure up. He had chosen this, choosing to be disdainful and arrogant. He didn't take his rule seriously, and now he would pay the price.

**Peres** is a reference to Persia - Belshazzar had his chance, abused it, and now his reign is over, the great empire of Babylon will fall, and will be divided. God's final verdict, his judgment is in one word - Persia, Babylon's enemies will conquer and divide what Belshazzar thought was his forever. **Numbered, weighed, divided**. Belshazzar's reign ended that night - Daniel 5:30: **30 That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, 31 and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two.** There is an interesting little math problem in this handwriting on the wall. The words on the wall also means weights, as in measurements. Belshazzar did not measure up. But if you add the value of these weights together, they equal 62, the same age as Darius, Darius brings fruition to God's warning.

There is a warning for us in this as well, friends. God is serious about sin. So serious He sent Jesus as a sacrifice to clean us up and make it possible for us, His children, to be forever with Him. God hates sin. We were not made for sin, we were made for life, abundant life, and so often we turn from life and light and choose the darkness and the shadows. The evil one tries to convince us that's where we'll find meaning and truth, but all that is there are lies, and despair, and bitterness, and pain. Why would we go there? Why do we turn from God? We all do it. So many people are very angry these days, but how much of that is righteous anger? How many people are seeking God's justice, kindness, and goodness? Why do we choose what is wrong? Why do we try to take the place of God and judge one another so harshly?

The book of Daniel is about courage. But it is also about the power and grotesqueness of human evil. Evil feeds on evil, sin causes more sin. As these kingdoms of the Old Testament turn from God, they devour one another, none of them last long. Babylon falls to Persia and the Medes, Persia falls to Greece, Greece falls to Rome. The source of all of this is the evil one's great weapon - human pride, pride that reaches gigantic proportions, pride that takes down the guilty and hurts the innocent. We'll look further at the warfare of good and evil in two weeks in Daniel's visions, but I don't think that spiritual warfare ended thousands of years ago. It is still right here, there is a battle within each of us.



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So I would suggest that you look at your own wall. What would God write to you? We all know our days are numbered, we all know we are light weights when it comes to resisting evil, we know we do not measure up to be the people God made us to be. We should wonder what our outcome will be. What is the state of our souls - can we be conquered and divided in our love and loyalty to Jesus?

Look to your own wall. What would God write to warn you? What, or who, have you misused? You haven't profaned a goblet from the Temple of Jerusalem, but what have you profaned? God's name? As I said last week, pastors don't preach much about sin these days because no one wants to be reminded that they are a sinner. Well, I can't do that. I know what a sinner I am, I know my days are numbered, that I don't measure up, and that I need a Savior so as to not be conquered or divided. You need the same. We all need to examine our lives, and look at how we dishonor God, not to feel shame, but to admit our guilt, to ask for forgiveness, to receive God's love, to be able to claim life, that life abundance that God offers us in Christ.

That is our courage lesson from Daniel chapter 5 today- to find the courage to look within, to look at what God would write on our wall. God loves us enough to say "enough" - that God wants us forever, so turn from wrongdoing, confess sin, don't be a Belshazzar and think you're above God. If God is serious about sin, He is also serious about love. And God put that in writing. There is something God has already written about you that I would like to close with, something I hope you'll remember. Your name is written on the hand of God. **"I have written your name on the palms of My hands"** God says in **Isaiah 49:16**. Your name, you are written on God's hands, He never forgets you, He never gives up on you, and through Jesus He gives you a hand up to be part of His family, His Kingdom, His joy. Have the courage to look at what God writes on your wall, and heed it. And then remember your name is written on the palm of the hand of God, your life is in God's hands, there is a place for you at God's table, there is a spot for you in God's heart. Find the courage to look at your own wall and see what God writes to you. And then look at the hands of God, see, there it is - there is your name. Hold on to the truth that you are deeply loved and valued by your God. Put that in your heart. Amen and amen.

