



Christ • Communion • Community

CASCADIAN WEEKLY

April 9, 2021

Week 57

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JILL

Dear Cascade Christian Church,

I write this to you on April 5, Easter Monday. I can only imagine the exhilaration and exhaustion the followers of Jesus felt on the day after they had encountered the Risen Savior at the empty tomb, the upper room, and the road to Emmaus. The best news possible had come to them, Jesus lives again, and He came to them with grace, forgiveness, love, and compassion.

These are wonderful gifts we can share in this post-Easter time period. Through Lent we walked with Jesus, and now we share the blessings we have been given. Pray this week, and see if God doesn't nudge you to forgive someone or to let go of an old hurt. This week ask God to help you show grace, to be gracious to someone, and to show compassion and love. This hurting world could use some after-Easter kindness, and you have shown yourself time and again to be a caring church.

Thank you for the many acts of caring that have happened this Lenten season:

- Thank you for the many gifts to Family Promise to help and support people as they realize the joy of having a home after experiencing homelessness.
- Thank you to all who gave to Week of Compassion. You've helped alleviate suffering world-wide through food and clean water relief, clean up after natural disasters, and help to the poor.
- Thank you to our tech team for making worship services happen so wherever we are, we can be part of the church and worship the Lord together. The abilities of this team to resolve issues on the fly, live stream our services, offer pre-recorded services like the Good Friday Ecumenical worship service, run the screen, work the sound board, and use multiple cameras is amazing. Thank you to Tim Hartley, Steve Dirksen, Joe and Polly Boughton, Jan Schichtel, Chris Noordyke, Bill Sleeman, Terry Blake, Dana Froumis, Roxy Partak Boone and worship leader Jacob Relph for their many efforts.
- Thank you to our elders for their messages of hope and words of wisdom, and to our worship committee under the leadership of Audrey Partak as they keep us moving forward.
- Thank you to our musicians. Music is such a big part of worship, and while we are not yet singing at the church, their ministry of music brings us before God. A big shout out of appreciation to Nancy Gaskell, Carol Rienstra, Ryley Olson, John Duchon, Stu Christoff, Debbie Jones, Polly Boughton, Diane Phelps, Grace Powers, Adam Carlson, and Jacob Relph for the music of Lent and Easter.
- Thank you for those who create beauty in the church, and for the wonderful work of Holly Froumis and Marsha Steensma as they and their team made Lent, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter so lovely.
- Thank you to our health screeners, greeters, and all who keep the sanctuary clean and to those who are working to reopen the chapel so we can live-stream.

While many of the things we have done in the past could not happen the same way this Lent and Easter, so much that was good and God honoring did happen. Thanks to all for keeping one another safe, giving generously, for being a church that can adapt, and for being a caring church. Christ the Lord is Risen - He is Risen Indeed! Hallelujah and have a wonderful week. Keep the faith, Jill

WEEKLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>Sunday</u> (4/11).	Sunday School - 9:30 AM Worship - 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM
<u>Monday</u> (4/12).	Worship Committee Meeting (Zoom) 5:30 PM
<u>Tuesday</u> (4/13).	Women's Bible Study (Centennial Hall) - 9:00 AM
<u>Wednesday</u> (4/14).	Middle/High School Wednesday Night (High School Room) - 6:30 PM Adult Bible Study "You'll Get Through This" (Zoom) - 6:30 PM Troop 334 Boy Scouts (Centennial Hall) - 7:00 PM
<u>Thursday</u> (4/15).	Griefshare (Zoom) - 10:30 AM Admin Committee (Zoom) - 4:30 PM
<u>Friday</u> (4/16).	Church Office Closed
<u>Saturday</u> (4/17).	Anti-Racism Training (Centennial Hall) - 8:30 AM

Financial giving
for the week
ending in
4/4/2021:
Budgeted: \$8,432
Given: \$12,135

CHURCH BOARD UPDATE

Greetings Cascade friends

The church board met on Monday to discuss the rising case rates in West Michigan. We take these issues seriously, and we strongly considered closing the church or moving back to a more stringent attendance policy. However, based on increasing vaccination rates and hope for the future, we voted unanimously to continue to follow the state and federal guidelines while keeping the church open. We will continue to take temperatures, track attendance, wear masks and keep a 6 foot distance between households.

We thank God that he has given us the opportunity to worship together. Thank you for your support.

Chris Hinsch, Board Chair

ANTI-RACISM TRAINING SESSION

On April 17th from 8:30-3:30, the Anti-Racism Action Group will be holding a day-long anti-racism training session led by Reverend Kathy Bird DeYoung. To sign up contact the church office.

MULCHING & YARD WORK DAY

Please join us on May 1 from 9:00 AM-12:00PM for a mulching and yard work day! Things to bring include; Work gloves, shovel, rake, tarps, leaf blowers, if you have them. Not to worry if you don't, we will have extra. All ages are welcome!

CAMP CRYSTAL

June 20-25 Elementary Camp
July 6-9 Day Camp
July 11-17 Middle School Camp
July 11-17 High School Camp
July 18-24 Family Camp

All registrations will be online this year.
Check the website for details



REGISTRATION

Registration for Camp Crystal is LIVE! Go to www.CampCrystal.org/registration then scroll down to Online Registrations. Please help us spread the word about Jesus through our awesome summer camp on the beautiful shores of Crystal Lake. We have many different options available for you this summer -- including a day camp, with an overnight option! If you would like to learn more about any of these opportunities or have issues registering, please email Michael at mdirksen@cascadechristian.com. We want to make sure every kid that wants to go to camp, gets to go up to camp this summer!

CAMP CRYSTAL SCHOLARSHIPS

We have scholarships available for anyone who needs them through Cascade Christian Church. The scholarship form is available online here: <https://forms.gle/A2gvybPcbs5sB2h1EA> or hard copies may be picked up in the church office. Participants must be registered for camp to receive the scholarship. If you are in need of further monetary assistance paying for camp, please still apply for the scholarship and also contact Jill in the Church office.

INTERESTED IN BEING A COUNSELOR?

Are you or someone you know interested in being a counselor or counselor in training for Camp Crystal this summer? We are looking for counselors! If you are interested in counseling for Elementary Camp please email Jill at jforton@cascadechristian.com. If you are interested in counseling for Middle School or High School camp, please email Michael mdirksen@cascadechristian.com.

COME ON UP TO DAY CAMP

Do you want to experience a week (or just a day or two?) up at Camp Crystal with your child or grandchild? Come on up to Day Camp! If your child or grandchild is entering 6th grade or younger, you're invited to come up to Camp Crystal with them, enjoy our day camp programming during the day and then have your own fun during the afternoon and evening. Day camp is July 6th-9th and the programming starts at 10 AM and ends at 2:30 PM. Scholarships are available for families who want to participate!

CAMP NURSE NEEDED!

We need a camp nurse for Elementary Camp. If you are able to serve as the nurse for a week, please contact Jill at jforton@cascadechristian.com. The dates are June 20th-25th. Lodging and food are provided.



TIME TO REGISTER FOR CAMP! INVITE A FRIEND TOO!

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

SUNDAY SCHOOL IN-PERSON

Every week at the **9:30 service** we have in-person Sunday School for children ages 4 and up. The children begin the morning in the sanctuary with their families and then are dismissed to go to class. Students will be brought back down to church after the service.

CRIB ROOM REOPENED

Our crib room has reopened for infants and toddlers through age 3 at the 9:30 service. Parents must make a reservation for this kind of childcare. Drop-ins will not be permitted. Reservations are appreciated by the Wednesday before the Sunday you plan to attend. Call the church office to make your reservation.



EASTER SUNDAY SUCCESS

Thank you to everyone who helped make our modified Sunshine Store a huge success. If you participated in at home Sunday School and have not yet picked up your prizes from the Sunshine Store we have everything available in the Middle School room. Please contact Michael, Jill, or the church office for more details.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AT HOME

If you are not getting the children's weekly mailing at your house, call Keely at the church office.

ADULT MINISTRIES

GRIEF SHARE

A new session of Griefshare began on April 8 through Zoom. Join us each Thursday at 10:30 AM for this support group by emailing Pastor Jill.

"YOU'LL GET THROUGH THIS" BIBLE STUDY

Join us beginning April 14th for a 6-week Zoom Bible study of the life of Joseph/Genesis. Class begins at 6:30 PM. Contact Pastor Jill for the link.

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP



BE SURE TO SIGN UP FOR CAMP, MISSION TRIP, AND MACKINAC BEFORE APRIL 30TH TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT!!

WEEKLY EVENTS

We are back to a regular weekly schedule of events that include Sunday School during the 9:30 service. Wednesday Night Youth Group from 6:30-8:00. Then, typically, the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month we will do a special event! We hope you join us!

OUTDOOR SURPRISE EVENT

On April 18th we will be having an outdoor event with all the Middle and High Schoolers. We will be having a surprise contest that WILL involve Easter candy (that's the only clue you're getting!). We will also have games and snacks! We will be meeting from 12pm-3pm. Hope to see you there!

VOLUNTEERING

We are in **need** of some parent volunteers to help us run Sunday School at the 9:30 Service as well as come on Wednesday Nights. If this is an area where you may have an interest in helping, please send an email to Michael Dirksen at midirksen@cascadechristian.com. No need to have kids in the program! All volunteers need to be screened before they are able to help.

MISSION TRIP & MACKINAC



CAMP SCHOLARSHIP



VOLUNTEER SIGN UP



4.4.2021 SERMON

Early April is an active time of year - we have spring break travel, that itch to get out and have an adventure or two. There is spring cleaning inside our homes, and we clear the gardens and rake the grass free of winter debris. We begin taking longer walks in the nice weather, and we feel our energy rise as the days grow longer. We are on the move in April after semi-hibernating through another Michigan winter, we feel hope returning, and it is good to be on the move.

All through the Lenten season we have been on the move with Jesus as He has walked unwavering to Jerusalem, we've traveled with him through Jericho, Bethany, Bethphage, the Mt of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane. Our God is on the move and today I would like to look with you at Easter on the run. Think the next 15 minutes or so about what you run from, and what you run towards. Your life, your joy, your future depends on how and where you choose to run. Let's begin with the Good News of Easter from Matthew's Gospel:

28 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

No matter how often we hear it - these are the words we want to hear today, the words we need to hear. We remember that very early on Sunday, the first day of the week Mary Magdalene and her friends went to the tomb of Jesus. It was so early that the sun had not come over the horizon, the women walked in the dark. I have often wondered what their conversation might have been as they headed to the tomb. Had they made plans the night before, in the quiet of Holy Saturday?

There comes a time when quiet is a blessing. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had been on the run, it had been a busy week, helping Jesus by caring for His needs in Jerusalem. The week had started well, but it had been a week of great highs, then devastating lows. The chaos of the last few days had to have drained the Mary and her friends and the eleven remaining disciples. There may have been tears of joy as they saw Jesus greeted by the crowds on Palm Sunday, hearts full of gratitude as the disciples celebrated the Passover with Jesus - recalling God's plan of freedom for His people from slavery in Egypt. There may have been a hush of reverence as they sang the Passover Psalms of God's goodness and provision as they went to the Mt of Olives. Then came the Garden, the disciples slept, Judas approached with the guards for the arrest, the kiss of betrayal on his lips, then came the fight or flight response of the other disciples. Peter tussled with one of the guards, his sword thrust sliced off the man's ear. Jesus healed the guard on the spot. You would have thought that would make everyone pause a moment and reflect on this miracle, but no.

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The hour of darkness had come, and John's Gospel tells us Jesus was bound and taken away by the crowd with their swords, their torch lights casting shadows in the night. The guards took Jesus to first Annas the former high priest, then to Caiaphas, the current high priest. Peter denied Jesus - saying finally that may he be forever condemned if he knew Jesus. Then deep remorse, Peter wept bitterly after Jesus looked right at him as the rooster crowed.

The chaos continues, the disciples and the women who followed Jesus stayed in the shadows, close enough to hear and see, but far away enough to not be caught. Jesus was brought to Pilate, the Roman Governor, then to King Herod, the Jewish puppet King who stood with Rome, then back to Pilate for further questioning. Pilate found no reason to condemn Jesus and tried to free him. The crowds, however, were whipped up and had been persuaded by the religious authorities to seek the death penalty for Jesus, and they shouted, "crucify him." Pilate gave the people the choice that was given every Passover, to choose a prisoner who would be released as a sign of benevolence from Rome. Pilate offered Barabbas, a murderous zealot, or Jesus, the King of the Jews. The people chose Barabbas, so Pilate ordered that Jesus be flogged, whipped 39 times. The friends who witnessed this must have cried tears of horror, of despair, of disbelief. How could this all be happening? They had just celebrated their Passover freedom the night before. Now Jesus was a tortured prisoner, and the chaos would not let up, even for a moment. Pilate washed his hands of the whole affair, and pronounced the death sentence.

And then, the crucifixion. The nails. In his hands or wrists, through his feet. Jesus bloodied, impaled, gasping for every breath. And it still wasn't enough for the haters, they divided his clothes among them, gambling for the ownership of the rabbi's undergarment. It still wasn't enough; insults were hurled at Jesus - He had saved others- save Himself now! Even the two thieves dying at his side mocked him, until one repented and asked Jesus to remember him when Jesus came into His kingdom. Then, Jesus words from the cross, each spoken with an effort - "Father forgive them, they know not what they do." "Behold your mother, behold your son." "I thirst". "Today you will be with me in paradise." "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me." "It is finished." "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. Then Jesus died. And just to be sure he was dead, a spear was thrust into his side."

Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for Jesus, removed the lifeless body from the cross, and carried Jesus to his own tomb. He wrapped the body of His Lord in clean linen and Nicodemus, another religious leader who believed in Jesus, arrived at the tomb with over 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes, burial spices. The men buried the Messiah, rolled the rock in front of the tomb, sealing it. It **was** finished. The chaos, the confusion, the hope, the future - it looked like it was over. The disciples went into hiding, they could be captured next, and put on trial, things had become too hot for Peter in Caiaphas' courtyard. It was better to wait it out, for things to calm down.

So they waited. Friday night passed; Saturday dawned. What do they do now? Go home? Back to fishing and tax collecting? The exhaustion must have been overwhelming. The horrors of Thursday and Friday had been so terrible, they couldn't have slept well, the scenes of their flight and the abuse heaped on Jesus had to be right before them. Their guilt and shame had to be unbearable. Saturday had to be a very difficult, surreal day.

Then Saturday night came. It was quiet. Candles were lit. Things had to be sinking in. Could they have seen that God's plans, foretold by the prophets, had rushed to fulfillment on Friday? The prophets of old were known

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for their promises of a Messiah, had their words now come true? But then, there was a body, the broken body of Jesus, cold, in a borrowed tomb, weighed down with an overabundance of burial spices. Whatever the prophets had spoken of- there was still a body, and it had to be dealt with properly, and soon. So the women made their preparations for the next day.

In the quiet of Saturday night, as the tears dried, as the women and disciples caught their breath, their grief grew, and their mourning began. In the quiet of Saturday, I would imagine the forces of evil were poised for victory. Ready to claim his win, the evil one must have thought the battle was over, that victory was at hand. But evil did not win. In the quiet of the next morning, so very early, in the cold and dark, the ground shook, a light shown, a tomb opens from within, angels bowed in worship, guards fainted in fear. Jesus who had walked towards Jerusalem, from Bethany, Bethphage, the Mt of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus, who walked from the courtyard to the court room, from the palace to the whipping post, Jesus, who walked through the streets of Jerusalem shouldering His cross, to Golgotha, Jesus, who walked to a barbaric ritualistic form of death, Jesus, who died and was placed in a borrowed tomb, bound in linen and covered in spices, Jesus, breathed again, untangled the linen and set it aside, dusted off the spices, and rose, and lives!! Others placed His dead body in the tomb of death and darkness, but today, by the will of God Jesus rises, fully alive, and walks out gloriously free! The God that the disciples had run away from walked back to them.

This is Easter! What a day! From the Garden of Eden onward humanity had been on a downward trek in a sad fall away from God, a death spiral of our own making. Then the astonishing news of this day - life can begin again! This news is so astounding that people could not stand still.

All this Lenten season we have walked with Jesus to the places of his passion the places he suffered for us. Our Lord is a God on the move, not content to let us waste ourselves in sin, Jesus is always walking with us, towards us, after us. He will not stop, Jesus is persistent, and His love for us is boundless and more powerful than death. As we celebrated Maundy Thursday, we admitted that the night shadows beckon us - that we, who have been guests at the Lord's Table, have walked away from our Gracious Host and Savior. We ran away, preferring flight to fight, and we chose to hurry away from Jesus. The result of that flight, the consequences of our shadowed, sinful lives, made Good Friday a necessity. Jesus, the God we walked away from, ran away from, walked to the cross and lays down his entire being to pay the price of our sins. He dies, and lives, and comes back to us!

So, **today, as Matthew's Gospel tells us, the women** went early to the tomb, maybe to avoid being seen, maybe unable to sleep, maybe concerned to do their task of cleaning and rewrapping the body of their Lord before the heat of the day made a difficult task more difficult. They must have wondered how they would get to Jesus. How could they roll away the stone? Mark's Gospel tells us the stone was very large. Sealed on Friday, and with Roman guards not letting anyone in, their task looked impossible. Against all hope, still they went, Mary and her friends were on the move.

When they arrived at the tomb, there was an earthquake, the second of the weekend, the first being during the crucifixion. And the women were not alone, an angel of the Lord descended and rolled back the stone, and sat on it. The guards that were present fainted away like dead men. Mark's Gospel tells us the women entered the tomb and encountered an angel; Luke tells us of two angels. The angel speaks telling the women "Do not be

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afraid: for I know you seek Jesus who was crucified. Why do you look for the living among the dead, he is not here, see the place where they laid him? He has risen as He said, go and tell the eleven that He will meet them in Galilee." Do not be afraid, there is nothing to fear here, except for the holy fear of awe and wonderment as the women then meet Jesus Himself, and fell at His feet in worship. Jesus said not to be afraid, instead to go and tell his disciples to go to Galilee, that is where they will see him.

This is Easter on the run! Mark's Gospel tells us the women fled from the tomb, astonished and trembling. Matthew tells us the women departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to tell the disciples. John describes even more running: John 20:3-13

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Easter on the run. Easter when, beyond all hope, Jesus walks back to us! Death couldn't hold him, the evil one's schemes are dashed once and for all. Since the announcement that Christ is Risen, He is Risen Indeed has been made - death has been on the run, sin has been on the run, sadness and depression find they can turn around towards the light, selfishness has been tripped up in its race to be first, those think they are number one discovers they come in last. This is Easter, the day when the world turned upside down. Easter, a time for all of God's people of all generations, times, places, ages, races, genders, economic classes, all people, long time Christians who've heard the story hundreds of times and fresh seekers who are discovering there is something about Jesus and that they just need to know more- all of God's people, today, rise up, stand in the light, as the glory of Jesus condemns evil to the shadows, and Satan to hell. Jesus rises in divine power, and darkness is no more.

This is Easter, death is on the run, and we get to change course. This is Easter, the day to race and find life! Peter and John ran to the tomb, they saw it was true. Mary and the other women ran, and then ran shared the good news. Today is the day for you to think about, what will you run towards? Today sin has been destroyed, and that includes all of yours and mine, past, present, and future. Today God empowers his people to work together in love, and discover the strength in their lives that transcends the hardships they face. Today, by the grace of God in Jesus Christ, we can believe, even in the face of death, that the best is yet to be. Will you run towards this?

Your life no longer has to be marking time, marching in place, plodding through, getting by. Today can be the beginning of the countdown to the greatest experience you will ever have, your reunion with God. Today we celebrate - Jesus lives, Jesus wins, and so do we. His victory is your victory! We no longer have to run away, from our lives, ourselves, or our God.

Your race begins this moment, happy Easter, and join me in racing towards the Living Lord. Ready? Let's go! Christ the Lord is risen - He is risen indeed! Amen and amen.