



Christ • Communion • Community

# CASCADIAN WEEKLY

July 22, 2022

Week 123

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Cascade Christian Church,

Proverbs 22:6 in the New International Version says: **Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.**

I thank God that this church has always obeyed the Lord in this verse. Thank you for caring about children and teenagers. You show that caring in so many ways in your support of our Child Development Center, in your work at Vacation Bible School, in your care for our Sunday School and youth programs.

We have two dynamic leaders in our Christian education programs. Michael Dirksen and Adam Carlson have been so busy this summer leading a lock in, field trips, counseling at Elementary Camp, leading at Middle and High school camp, and hosting the July 4 fund raiser. The week ahead will involve the children of our church and community in Vacation Bible School. Mission projects and a trip to Mackinac Island are also ahead for our youth and children this summer. These programs are not only involving our own Cascade Christian families, but many children and teenagers who do not have a church home and might not know Jesus. Adam and Michael are expanding the Kingdom Net that Jesus speaks of in Matthew 13:47-50. They are bringing in children and youth, and they are helping them to know Jesus. Sometimes that means our buildings are full of loud and busy children and youth - and praise be to God! That is why we are here, to let the next generation know God is good, that we are all made in the image of God, and that God loves all people. As Proverbs 22:6 indicates, our work as a church is to help children and youth get a start, and the seeds planted through Christian Education can grow and blossom for a lifetime into eternity.

We are also so blessed by Director Jane Klein and our Child Development Center as they meet five days a week, providing childcare for working parents. Jane and her teachers work with toddlers through those preparing for Kindergarten. The life lessons taught by our Child Development Center are also lifelong - as early childhood education puts children on the right path for lifelong success.

As we look at expanding God's Kingdom and widening the net, thanks be to God for those who work with children and youth. I am including in this newsletter a piece written by Reverend Raymond Gaylord, our longtime former Pastor, who wrote this piece in the late 1990's (Page 2).

Church, welcome every child and teenager, and keep the faith,  
Jill

## **SAVE OUR KIDS...**

**Recent tragic happenings in our area and throughout this great country of ours are most alarming, to say the least. The death of virtual "babes in arms" shocking! Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, unrestricted firearm use, gangs, sexual promiscuity, wreckless driving take their toll each day. So often juvenile delinquency is parental delinquency!**

**Let the church lead out in a nation-wide program to "save our kids". Take—don't send your little ones to Sunday School! Be supportive of church camps and conferences, youth activities, Vacation Bible School, confirmation classes, youth projects. Encourage table graces; read Bible stories; hear bed-time prayers.**

**Be supportive of our great public schools. Uphold our teachers. Old-timers will tell you how a spanking at school meant a second one at home. Listen to school administrators and school boards. Help children/youth with their lessons or provide tutors, if needed. Vote for operating funds and millage. Remember that extra-curricular activities, sports, music, arts, drama, academic citations—are all so important. Keep those kids busy with constructive activities.**

**And then, those wonderful character-building groups; such as, Scouts, 4-H, the Y, Campfire Boys and Girls, Little League football and baseball—the list goes on and on—all need our backing. Be a Scout leader; coach a team; chaperone a roller skating party. Money is always needed, as well as your time and efforts.**

**DON'T CALL THE COPS—that's a "copout". Befriend the child next door. Let the church, especially, welcome troubled youth. Spare no expense in reaching out. Modernize church facilities. Involve youth in the offices and committees of the congregation. Finally, or first of all, PRAY for on-coming generations by individual names. Let's go all out in "saving our kids". After all, it was our Lord that said: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me".**

**---Raymond Gaylord**

## WEEKLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>Sunday (7/24).</u>	Pre K-5th grade Sunday School and Crib Room- 9:30 AM 6th-12th grade Sunday School - 11:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous - 7:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Monday (7/25).</u>	VBS 9-11:30 AM Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Tuesday (7/26).</u>	VBS 9-11:30 AM Senior Exercise Class - 1:00 PM
<u>Wednesday (7/27).</u>	VBS 9-11:30 AM Men's Bible Study - 6:30 AM (Coffee House) Youth group - 3 Mile Project Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Thursday (7/28).</u>	VBS 9-11:30 AM Senior Exercise Class - 1:00 PM Al-Anon - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Friday (7/29).</u>	VBS 9-11:30 AM Church Office Closed Open Talk Group - 7:30 AM Parent's Night Out 6-8 PM
<u>Saturday (7/30).</u>	

Financial giving for  
the week ending in  
7/17/2022:  
Budgeted: \$10,652  
Given: \$9,073

## MEL TROTTER BOX

The mission committee at Cascade Christian Church is excited to announce a partnership with Mel Trotter Ministries in the "Corners of your field" program. This program places donation bins in various locations throughout West Michigan for donations of new or gently-used clothing and household items. The process is simple! Just bring your donated items to the bin (located in the parking lot nearest to the playground at Cascade Christian Church) and place your items inside.

## THANK YOU

Thank you to the team of women who cleaned out the worship décor room, and thank you to all who bought worship décor and Christmas decorations that the church no longer is using. This project was a win-win!



# GENERAL NEWS

## GAME NIGHT

The next game night is Friday, July 22 at 7pm in the chapel basement. You should bring your own drink and a snack to share, if you so choose. If you have any games you want to bring, you are welcome to bring them. If you have any questions email Debbie Jones at [debbiejones1018@gmail.com](mailto:debbiejones1018@gmail.com)

## MEET AND GREET WITH REGIONAL MINISTER TERESA DULYEA-PARKER

Join us on Monday, August 22, for an open house/meet and greet with our new Regional Minister, Teresa Dulyea- Parker. Teresa is a native of Muskegon and is now the Regional Minister of Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan. The West Michigan Disciples of Christ Churches are all invited to Cascade Christian for a reception for Teresa in Centennial Hall from 6:00-8:00PM. We hope you'll come meet Teresa and join in fellowship with our sister churches.

## RETREATS AT CRYSTAL CONFERENCE CENTER

Sign up online at [www.crystalconferencecenter.org](http://www.crystalconferencecenter.org). Call the church office for more information and to sign up to carpool.

### WOMEN'S RETREAT

**AUGUST 19-21, 2022**

Registration: \$155

Commuting (includes meals): \$85

**Registration Deadline: August 5**

Join with others from the Michigan Region as we unite in fellowship and friendship and learn to develop as Women of Faith. Enjoy bonfires, vespers, spiritual sessions, worship, and free time. Bring a friend or family member! Our new Regional Minister, Rev. Dr. Teresa Dulyea-Parker will be the keynote speaker.

The theme is "Where I'm From" - Psalm 139.

### MEN'S RETREAT

**SEPTEMBER 16-18, 2022**

Registration: \$155.00 on campus

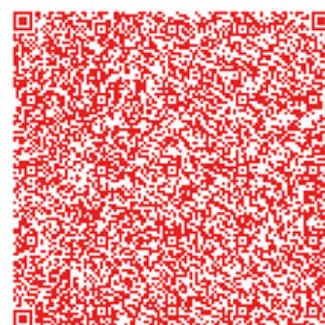
Commuting (includes meals): \$85.00

**Registration Deadline: September 2**

A weekend retreat for men across the state to be engaged in worship, reflection, and leisure with other men. The weekend retreat will provide time for work projects (optional) at Crystal, bonfires, vespers, spiritual sessions, and worship; plus individual reflection and free time. Retreat Facilitators are Bob Cornwall, recently retired pastor of Central Christian Church, Troy; and Ron Allan, retired professor at Christian Theological Seminary. The focus will be on helping participants understand better New Testament theme of the second coming of Jesus and life after death.

## REVIEW CASCADE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

This QR code when scanned will take you to our Cascade Christian Church Google page where you will see a button that says "Reviews". Click on that to enter and sign in with your google account. At that point you can write a review of CCC. The goal of this exercise is to bring our favorite church up in the google world where we think it deserves to be! Thanks in advance for your help!



## 7.17.2022 SERMON: THE KINGDOM NET

I have enjoyed talking with you about how Jesus is our anchor and our hope in troubled times, and that we can have confidence and be reassured because God keeps His promises to us. We have had four sermons looking at Hebrews 6:19

- **We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast**, and we have seen in scripture that;

- We are anchored in our hope in Jesus
- That Jesus is the only thing worth holding on to
- That storms will come, so hold fast to Jesus
- And that we are to remain in His love - in other words, keep the faith.

Last week we focused on the word REMAIN, today think about the words HOOK and CATCH. And sorry, because I know some of you are wondering, this is NOT a sermon about pirates or baseball. It's about fishing, nets, and the wide open sea; this is about getting hooked on Jesus and making a good catch. We'll do this by looking at the parables Jesus told, stories that helped people understand the promises of God, and one of the parables today is about getting caught or hooked in a great big fishing net. Part of the fun of fishing is wondering what you'll catch or hook on your line. Many of us enjoy the thrill of the hunt and wonder what we might catch, hook, or find.

Think of some of the stories you've heard of people who've made a good catch or found a great find, something valuable at Goodwill or garage sales.

- Like the woman who bought a small dish for \$3 at a garage sale in New York and it turns out to be from the Ming dynasty. It would sell at Sotheby's a few years later for 2.2 million.
- Or the English businessman on holiday in Las Vegas who purchases a badly framed original Gertrude Stein drawing for \$5, from the estate of the former babysitter for Andy Warhol. The frame would contain a signed sketch of Andy's in the back of the frame worth over two million.
- Or a man in Fresno, California who bought two boxes of photo negatives at a garage sale for \$45. As it turns out, the negatives are from Ansel Adams and experts believe the collection is worth \$200 Million. Don't you love a good find, a great catch!

But finding Jesus is the greatest catch of all time. Jesus thinks you are a great find of priceless value, Jesus thinks people like you and me are an incredible catch. In the book of Matthew Jesus shared parables to emphasize our value to God and what we should value in this life. Many people heard His stories and didn't understand, others heard and were amazed, and still others heard the words of Jesus and changed their lives to reflect this new understanding. We are going to look at three amazing parables that Jesus called "The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." This kind of mystery is a spiritual truth understood only by divine revelation, sacred secrets known only to those who listen, learn, and obey. So let me begin by sharing two short stories from Matthew 13:44-46 **The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.**

Hearing these, you might get stuck on the fact the man who found the treasure on someone else's land, and hid it before he bought the land, or that the merchant might have swindled the seller of the pearl. To our American sensibilities that might sound unfair. But Jewish scholars believed a person couldn't be wronged if they were willing participants in a sale. If both parties agreed on a fair price, if no one was manipulated, no wrong took place. There is more to these stories than first appears, both parables promise us that the Kingdom of God is more precious than anything - and the field signifies the family of Abraham, the nation of Israel, while the pearl is symbolic of the first five books of the Old Testament -

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the word and law of God. In these two short parables, Jesus is teaching his listeners that the family of Abraham matters to God, and that the word or the law of scripture, matters to God. And they ought to matter to us – our greatest values and greatest joys is being part of the family of God, and we are to treasure the Bible.

And this is where fishing comes in – if everyone is valuable to God, if everyone is a great catch, everyone should have the opportunity to know God's love and grace. We are invited to be part of the crew that goes fishing.

Because God's blessings are not just for us. God promised Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3 **"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."**

God has blessed you and me to be a blessing to other people. That means we share what we have, what we know, with whoever God puts in our path. In other words, God invites us to go fishing, or in other words, to be Kingdom builders.

In Jesus' time fishing was a very common and important activity, it was an integral piece of New Testament life. Learning to become fishers of people was an integral piece of New Testament discipleship. Many of the original disciples were fishermen, many of Jesus' parables involve fishing, and Jesus did the majority of His earthly ministry around the sea of Galilee. We call ourselves disciples, and that means we inherit this legacy to go and fish.

So fishing. How many of you like to fish? Unless you've never been fishing before or never seen a televised Bass fishing tournament, you know that fishing requires patience, skill, mental and physical strength, a willingness to get your hands dirty, and the right tools.

Fishing sounds a lot like ministry to me, and maybe that's why Jesus made this connection in the gospels. Maybe that's why the metaphors and parables He told still hold so much value for us today, even though we're thousands of miles and hundreds of years apart from the original disciples and their communities.

So what's so special about fishing? And why would we spend the Sabbath talking about nets, fishermen, and the sea? The short answer is because Jesus did. Before we get too far ahead of ourselves, we need to talk about the kind of fishing Jesus was referring to in the gospels. When you think of fishing it is probably with a rod and reel, with bait or a specially tied fly, but Jesus is speaking in His parable about net fishing as opposed to line fishing. Net fishing is the practice of throwing a large net into the water either from the shore or from a boat and scooping up as many fish as possible in the net as you pull it up.

This is the practice referred to in our main passage for the day, the next parable from Matthew 13:47-48; **Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away.**

Jesus says, "The kingdom of heaven is like a net." And when He says this, He's referring to the type of net I just described. But to be even more specific, in this passage he uses the word, *sagene*, which describes a large drag net. This type of net was "dragged" over the bottom of the sea with the ends of the net drawn in together, trapping everything inside. Instead of using a singular line or spear to catch fish, which would be more precise, the net was simply thrown or lowered into the water. Obviously, there was some amount of precision in the practice. The fisherman knew where the "good spots" were and they endeavored to throw their nets in these directions, but the idea is that the net would engulf anything in its path. That's an important part of this parable, everything is caught.

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The lake represents humanity. You know the saying, "there plenty of fish in the sea" meaning you have options and alternatives, this saying applies to this parable. The body of water is representative of all the people in the world and this too is important.

It would be different if Jesus said something like, "The kingdom of heaven is like a fisherman who cast his line in a stream looking for the perfect rainbow trout." And while on the one hand Jesus was very intentional with individual people all throughout the New Testament, we also know, "God so loved the *WORLD* that He gave His one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) Jesus isn't looking for the perfect trout, walleye, or bluegill. God sent Jesus to redeem the whole world. The whole world - all the people. The Father lowered the gospel net of salvation over the sea and the net is gathering up anything and everything in its path.

Describing the Kingdom of God like a drag-net is amazing. The net doesn't pick or choose, it collects everything. All are brought in. In the sea this means you'd have all kinds of species in your net from fish to crustaceans to sea turtles - anything traveling through the water is brought in. While this practice is dangerous for the oceans when done on an industrial scale, don't let modern misuse of overfishing distract you from Jesus' illustration. This picture gives us incredible insight into how the kingdom, like the net, gathers all kinds of people. All are to be gathered in.

In the book of Revelation, the Apostle John saw a glimpse of what this looks like in the end times, in God's community of believers. He said, "**After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."** Revelation 7:9-10

An uncountable multitude. Every nation, tribe, people, and language. All standing before the throne, ready to worship. This is an absolutely beautiful picture of the kind of multi-ethnic end times community we can expect to be a part of as believers. The kingdom, like a drag-net, is gathering up all kinds of people. The righteous, the unrighteous, and everyone in between... and eventually it all has to get sorted out.

If you've ever watched one of those deep sea fishing shows or the reality series about crab fisherman, you know there's always this scene when they haul in their traps and they have to sort out what they're going to keep from what they're going to throw back. Or maybe fishing is not your thing so instead think of the junk drawer at your house. There comes a time, maybe every few years where you empty out all the contents of the junk drawer and you begin to put things into piles of "keep" or "throw-away." Whether you're into fishing or you have one of these "catch-all" drawers in your house, the lesson Jesus wants us to learn is the same. Simply put - there will come a time in history when the contents of the kingdom net need to be sorted out. Jesus elaborates on this further down in Matthew chapter 13:49-50.

He says: **This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

What Jesus describes is a harsh reality for those who don't believe. But it's also a wakeup call to those of us who do believe; we still have time. As long as we're all in the net together, we still have time to share the gospel with those around us. We still have time to pray and seek salvation in our families, neighbors, co-workers, strangers we meet at the coffee shop. We still have time to pray for our enemies, to love those who hate us, to do good in the name of Jesus Christ. We still have time to turn the other cheek, walk the second mile, give the coat off our back, and dedicate our days to serving in the Kingdom of God.

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Because there will come a time when the final trumpet blasts, and the end of the age comes, when there won't be any time left. When this happens it will be time for sorting, and that job is up to God alone- the Chief fisherman - the divine Judge. Jesus makes it clear, the sorting is in God's hands, not ours. The judgement is in God's hands, not ours. Our job is to go fish, our purpose in life is to fill the net.

At the beginning of our sermon I said that fishing requires patience, skill, mental and physical strength, a willingness to get your hands dirty, and the right tools, and now I want to double down on this statement. In part because now you know we're all in this kingdom net together, for an unknown amount of time. We're all going to need a lot of patience, skill, mental and physical strength, willingness to get our hands dirty, and the right tools to fill the nets. We also need each other. We can't cast the net alone; we can't haul the net to shore without help. We are the church, and together we go and fish. Together we join God in spreading the kingdom net by sharing the good news of Jesus. And it is not our job to offer the kingdom only to people we see as worthy. We are to offer the Kingdom to as many people as possible and let God deal with sorting it all out in the end.

That's His job, and we know that He'll be faithful and do His part. The question today is, *will we do our part?* Church, you do some crazy stuff to fill the Kingdom net - broiling in the sun as we sell hotdogs on the Fourth of July, opening the church to all kinds of groups praying they will find Jesus here, hosting the Cascade Heritage Festival this fall - which you'll hear more about later - is crazy. But all of these things, from camp to VBS to our Child Care Center to AA to going to the Whitecaps to soup and sandwich to the refugee house and through many other efforts - we are fishing, and by the grace of God, the nets are filling.

So this coming week how can you participate in spreading the kingdom net? When God looks out there at people - they are all a good catch, all are made in God's image. Think about how to successfully fish, and apply it to Kingdom Building: exercise patience, grow your skills in sharing with others, ask God to increase your mental and physical ability, humble yourself, and get your hands dirty in serving others, and be equipped - having the right tools means knowing the word of God so you can share the word of God.

Friends, let's have a great week, let's do our part in spreading the kingdom net. Let's pray together: Gracious Father, give us the wisdom and courage to partner with you in spreading the Kingdom Net as far and wide as possible. Help us to become unconcerned with *who* is in the net and deeply concerned with *how many* are gathered. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.