



Christ • Communion • Community

CASCADIAN WEEKLY

August 19, 2022

Week 127

A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Cascade Christian Church,

This summer I have been talking with you about being anchored in Jesus, and how we are to embrace the promises of God. One of the ways we act as followers of Jesus is to share the good news of Jesus with others, through large or small acts of kindness, by helping a family in need, by welcoming a stranger, by acts of generosity. All of these things could be described as fishing, or spreading the Kingdom net by bringing others in to meet Jesus. We then let Jesus sort things out as a fisherman or fisherwoman sorts out their catch.

Probably the biggest fish story found in the Bible is the story of Jonah. Jonah was a Hebrew prophet of the Old Testament who was told by God to go to an enemy nation, the Ninevites, and to tell them to repent. This was the last thing Jonah wanted to do, and he ran. Jonah found a ship going in the opposite direction from Nineveh, and made his escape. When the seas got rough and a storm threatened the ship and sailors, Jonah knew it was his punishment for trying to outrun God. He was cast overboard to save the ship and crew, and he was swallowed up by a big fish. While in the fish, Jonah repented, was cast on shore, told the Ninevites to repent, and was shocked when they did. It was as if he wanted God to punish them, and actually got angry with God when God spared their lives. God rebuked Jonah, saying God cared for the people of this great city, and God would do what God would do.

Do you ever feel like Jonah? Ready to give up, or run away? My guess is we all get that feeling sometimes when life is overwhelming, when responsibilities become too heavy, and when the pressure of life is too great. Some of you are carrying huge burdens, many of you are caregivers, some of you have many people depending on you – and it can be hard to manage. My encouragement to you is to trust God, look to God, have the perspective of God, and you will get through this.

When you feel like running, I would also encourage you to look to the honesty and brokenness of the Apostle Peter. In John 6:66-67, we read that many of the disciples or followers of Jesus were turning away, they no longer would follow Jesus as they found His teaching to be too hard to accept. Jesus turned to Peter and the other eleven disciples in John 6:67 and asked, “You do not want to leave too, do you?”

Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.” John 6:68-69

How about you? Who do you turn to in tough times? Can you trust God and turn to Jesus to be the anchor for your soul? For Jonah to understand this, he had to spend three days and nights in the belly of a great fish. But Peter knew, who else could he trust? Where else could he turn?

The story of Jonah is a great fish story, but the story of Peter’s reliance on Jesus is a great life story. My prayer for you is that you rely on God, turn to Him, and keep the faith.

God’s blessings to you, Jill

WEEKLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>Sunday (8/21).</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 (8/22).</u>	Soul Warmers - 2-4:00 PM Meet and Greet with Regional Minister 6-8:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Tuesday (8/23).</u>	Senior Exercise Class - 1:00 PM
<u>Wednesday (8/24).</u>	Men's Bible Study - 6:30 AM (Coffee House) Overeaters Anonymous 3:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Thursday (8/25).</u>	Senior Exercise Class - 1:00 PM Al-Anon - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Friday (8/26).</u>	Church Office Closed Open Talk Group - 7:30 AM Parents Night Out 6-8:00 PM Game Night - 7-9:00 PM Middle School Madness 7-9:00 PM
<u>Saturday (8/27).</u>	

**Financial giving for
the week ending in
8/14/2022:
Budgeted: \$10,652
Given: \$13,312**

GENERAL NEWS

GRIEF SHARE SUPPORT GROUP TO RESUME ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

10:00-11:30AM in the Church Coffee House

Anyone who has experienced a loss is welcomed to come to Grief Share. A Grief Share session includes coffee and introductions, watching a 40 minute video on an aspects of grief and grieving, and then a time of discussion. Grief Share is a 13-session class, the workbooks are an excellent resource, and all of the class materials are free of charge. For more information or to sign up, call the church office.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY BEGINS AGAIN ON SEPTEMBER 21 AT 6:30PM

All adults are invited to our Wednesday Night Bible study. We will have a six session class for the fall quarter, reading and discussing Max Lucado's book "You Are Never Alone". This book, the accompanying video, and the study guide are based on the Gospel of John, and will help us to trust in the miracle of God's Presence and power.

The cost for the book and study guide is \$25 per person. The class will meet on September 21 and 28, and October 5, 12, 19, and 26 from 6:30-8:00 in the adult classroom on the second floor of the education building. If you're new to Bible study, Max Lucado studies are a great starting place. To sign up call the church office.

WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We want to use your gifts and skills in worship! If you play an instrument or sing and would be interested in doing so as a part of our worship team, contact Liisa Erskine. We also have a great need for volunteers for our tech team. If you like to serve behind the scenes and have a good attention to detail, this would be a great place to serve. No experience or specific skills required, we can train you! Contact Liisa Erskine (lerskine@cascadechristian.com / 989-225-3697) to get plugged in.

GENERAL NEWS

WOMEN'S TRIP TO SAUGATUCK - RESCHEDULED

The women's night out trip to Saugatuck is rescheduled to Tuesday, August 23. The cost is \$30 for the boat cruise, and please bring money for dining out as well. Call the church office to sign up.

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. The registration has closed for this event - but all are invited.

RETREATS AT CRYSTAL CONFERENCE CENTER

Sign up online at www.crystalconferencecenter.org. Call the church office for more information and to sign up to carpool.

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.

CASCADE HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Saturday, September 10, 2022, from 5:00-9:00PM

Join the larger Cascade community as we open our church lawns to the second annual Cascade Heritage festival, sponsored by Cascade Township. This will be a family friendly afternoon of games and activities for the kids, food trucks, a music and beverage tent, and a corn hole tournament. Cascade Historical Society will have Cascade Museum opened, and our Chapel will be open as well for tours. We hope the church will come and enjoy this time of fun and fellowship as we welcome all kinds of people to our campus. Please call the church office if you would like to volunteer;

- Host the open house at our 1880's chapel from 5:00-7:00PM
- Help with hosting the event - from 5:00-7:00
- Help with clean-up from 9:00-10:00PM

There will be a dedication of the corner park in memory and honor of Virgil Westdale at 5:00 PM.

UNITY SERVICE AND CHURCH PICNIC

Sunday, September 11, 2022

Our annual Unity service will be on September 11 at 10:30AM, followed by a church picnic. Cascade Fire Department will stop by, and there will be food and fun for all ages. We need a lot of volunteers to make this happen, so watch for ways to sign up to help. We are grateful to Cascade Township for the use of the tent, tables, and chairs from the Heritage Festival. Please call the church office to sign up to help with set up, clean up, and food serving

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School for Elementary Students (Pre-K - 5th Grade) continues at our 9:30 service. Join us in learning about God's love for His People.

CRIB ROOM

The Crib Room is open for kids who aren't yet old enough to join the fun in the Elementary Sunday School. Children will be well-cared for in a safe environment with our amazing staff.



MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School meets regularly during the 11:00am Service in the High School Youth Room. We will be starting a new series in the fall, but until then we will be mirroring the lessons done in the 9:30 Sunday School Class. We would love for everyone to join us!



WEDNESDAY NIGHT YOUTH GROUP

Wednesday night youth group will be returning on September 14th. Youth Group goes from 6:30pm-8:00pm and is open to everyone 6th grade and beyond. Please mark your calendars and we hope to see you there this fall!

MIDDLE SCHOOL MADNESS

Middle School Madness is returning on August 26th from 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM. (high schoolers are welcome to help!) Join us for games, food, and a fun Friday evening!

8.7.2022 SERMON: GOD PROMISES WISDOM

Hello and welcome to the continuing sermon series on anchoring ourselves in the promises of God. We know Jesus is our anchor in troubled waters, and with Jesus, we know all shall be well. Our summer Bible verse is so short, and I hope you're memorizing it - This hope we have as an anchor for the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast. Hebrews 6:19. In that hope we look to the promises of God and last week we saw that God promises us wisdom. We've also seen that God promises to be with us always, to the ends of the earth that we are to remain or abide in God's love, and that we are to share God's promise of love and life with others. We see the truth of God's promises in scripture and in the life of Jesus, we can also see God's promises lived out through the history of God's people and in the church, and I hope you have experienced the promises of God in your own faith journey.

It is an honor when people come in to talk over their faith journey, and I have heard from some of you over the years that you wonder what your purpose is, why things are as they are, you've asked what you are supposed to do with your life. Sometimes these conversations have been with students who are trying to figure out what to do with school, what college or major to choose. Sometimes this conversation has been with those of you who've been unemployed or underemployed - what are you supposed to do with your life, now? And sometimes these conversations come after a loss of a loved one - without that person in your life, what is your purpose what is your meaning? People have been asking these questions since the Garden of Eden - who am I, why am I here? Today I want to encourage you that you matter, your life has purpose, there are things on this earth that only you can do. God promises you - that your life, this life you are living, has meaning and purpose.

To help you think about this I remind you that we are coming up on that wonderful season of the year known as football. Soon we can go back into a football stadium, hear the roar of the crowd, watch our teams work for victory. In football there are 11 players on the field, but there is a term the 12th man, the 12th player. That twelfth player is the crowd, the fans, those sitting in the stadium cheering on the team, but the twelfth player isn't actually in the game. The reason I bring this up is, you are not the 12th man. Your purpose as a follower of Christ, is to be on the field, in the game, not on the sidelines. You're not to sit back in the cheap seats, you need to get off the couch and play, be in the game, be an active participant in living out God's promises and increasing God's Kingdom. I've reminded you God thinks you are a great catch, but you are so much more than that. God has intentionally made you to be you, and your life has a purpose.

Ephesians 2:10 tells us: For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. You are a masterpiece, created to be you, to be your best self, to be who God made you to be. God has plans for you- plans that you do good things, and this has been God's plan from the beginning. You have a purpose - and I urge you to look to God for why you are here, because God made you a masterpiece. Most of us would say - not me! We know ourselves, our sins, brokenness, failures, and flaws. But God knows all of that about you, too. None of that is hidden from God, and yet He calls you a work of art, a stunning success, a tour de force.

And lest we go too far the other way and begin thinking we are a greater master work than the people around us, God also lets us know what God expects of us. In Micah 6:8 we are reminded: **And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.** So here is a purpose for living: to be a people of justice who choose to do the right thing, people who are merciful as God has been merciful to us. We are to remain humble as we walk with God. When we walk with God, we remember God is God, and we are not. That walk helps you see your place, you are a child of the most high, you have a place in His house, and He has a purpose for your life.

So how about you? How do you find your path to purpose? It is not a light question. People have sought their purpose through many paths and avenues. Many think wealth is the path to purpose, for others it is leisure and pleasure, still for others it is stoicism and self-sacrifice. People try to find purpose in addictive things - drugs, alcohol, social media, the news, others try to find purpose in another person, or by being part of a group or alliance. But none of those things satisfies or fulfills us, maybe they do for a time, but we'll still wind up feeling empty.

8.7.2022 SERMON: GOD PROMISES WISDOM

God tells us we are masterpieces, and that we are to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. If those are first steps in finding meaning, what do we do next? Ephesians 4:17-32 gives us instructions for how to live a purpose filled life: Paul wrote to the people of the city of Ephesus and to us: **So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.**

That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

To find purpose, put off your old self and be made new in your attitude by asking God for wisdom to see as God sees, to have God's perspective. As Rick Warren would tell you in a Purpose Driven Life, it all starts with God, everything got started in God, and everything finds its purpose in God. What the apostle Paul is describing in Ephesians 4:17-24 is that it is not about you, that we stop the self-centered questions of what our purpose is, what to do, or who we want to be, what should I do with my life. Paul tells you to shrug off that old life, that old way of thinking, and let God reveal to you God's purpose for you. To do that, the apostle Paul gives us some steps towards our purpose in **Ephesians 4: 25-32**, steps in seeking God's will for you: **Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**

You find yourself when you realize you are part of the body of Christ, and when you change self-centered behaviors. As disciples of Christ, we are to treat each other as brothers and sisters - and steer clear of gossip, lies, and anger, and instead aim for kindness and compassion. When we live by this wisdom, we grow in our relationship with Christ. God has a plan for you - and it has been in place longer than you can possibly imagine - and God didn't need your input for His perfect plans. No, God's purpose for you is far greater than what you can dream, you are part of a larger, spiritual, cosmic, grand eternal plan, and if you're unsure what your purpose is right now - look to scripture, pray, and ask God for the answer.

We are talking about God's promises. And if we are going to take God at God's word and believe His promises, we would be wise to remember **Proverbs 3:6: Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and he will make your path straight.**

Do you want to know your purpose, where your life is headed? Look to God, trust God, He has a path, a promise just for you. Stop your human pride and thinking you know best or that you can figure this out on your own. Trust God, don't lean on your own understanding, but lean on the One who knows you better than you know yourself. Is your life taking some twists and turns, or do you feel like you're on a detour or at a dead end? Trust and acknowledge God, and he will clear your path and will lay it out straight before you. Step out, trust Him, believe Him.

Friends, God's plans for you are bright and your ultimate destination is beyond glorious, beyond human hope and comprehension. I have a dear friend who often speaks to our camp counselors at Crystal about Viktor Frankl and the search

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for meaning. Frankl was an Austrian neurologist and survived being imprisoned in four Nazi concentration camps. His famous book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, tells the story of how he survived the Holocaust by finding personal meaning in the experience. His search for purpose gave him the will to live. In order to survive the concentration camps he said one had to be able - even in the most degrading of circumstances - to find meaning in life. Frankl stressed the importance of one's attitude and that speaks to the need to find your purpose. Whatever conditions you find yourself in, find the positive and find a way to say yes to life even in difficult circumstances. I can't help but think now of Marcia Heffner and Ardith Schroeder. They both had great lives, but not without the pain and tragedy that comes with living. Marcia was widowed suddenly, and too young, Ardith experienced the loss of a beloved daughter to a long cancer battle. Both of them could have let the darkness swallow them, but instead they chose the light, and served God and people, and made life a joy for the people around them. I think of the words of Jesus in **John 10:10 - I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.** Your purpose is full life, real life, abundant life. Will you choose the full, purposeful life God offers? Can you say yes to life even in the difficulties?

The choice is yours - Frankl also wrote: "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing, the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." You see, during his time in the Nazi camps, Frankl found that those around him who did not lose their sense of purpose and meaning in life were able to survive much longer than those who had given up. They survived because they knew their life mattered, that circumstances would change, and they didn't let what was happening around them make them lose their way.

It seems to me that a lot of the world has lost the way right now - people have lost their meaning, their purpose. God promises us purpose, and one of our purposes is to share the joy we have, to let people know the foundation and stability of our lives - and that is in Christ. And I know it isn't easy to do that. You might be really frustrated with others, with life, with yourself, but in his letter to the people of Rome, Paul guides us in sharing God's promise of purposeful life: **Romans 15:1-9 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."** For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written: "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing the praises of your name."

The promises God made to the patriarchs of the Old Testament are still true for us. God gives us hope, endurance, encouragement, a like-mindedness, so we have one voice, one mind - to glorify God and accept each other as God accepts us. Part of your life purpose is to share your joy, to build others up, to accept them. You can endure tough times, and can do this by having a Christ like attitude, having the wisdom to see things from God's perspective.

I know that sometimes life feels purposeless, we feel like we aren't getting anywhere. Another way of saying this is the fish just aren't biting. It's just not working out for this adorable photo is of Tim and Darcy Hartley's grandsons Micah and Wesl. Looks to me like the fish aren't biting - and I hope that at some point they made catch. When the fish aren't biting, when your good works and efforts in life seem wasted, it is discouraging, and you might begin to question what's the point? But look at those faces! There is determination, there is resolve, and the fish better watch out because Micah and Wesley are on the job.

But what do we do when the fish aren't biting?



8.7.2022 SERMON: GOD PROMISES WISDOM

I would encourage you to remain steadfast and firm like these little boys, and to hold on to the anchor of your soul, to let God bring about God's results in God's good time. This photo is of Elle Holes and her sister Emilee. Emilee has the fish, and Elle wrote that Emilee has always been the over achiever. But look at those faces from 25 years ago!! These girls waited, and they caught the fish, and the two of them continue to fish for people in God's Kingdom. We all can fish, and in fishing we can find our purpose. We all can, because we are all invited to fill the Kingdom nets. Your purpose friends, is to glorify God , to enjoy this amazing life God has given you, and to share your joy with others.

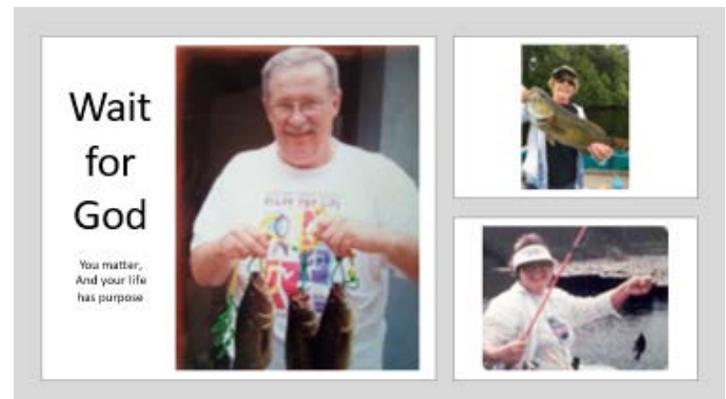
Wait upon
the Lord –
let God do what
God will do in
God's perfect time



In **Galatians 3:26-29** we read: **So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.** We are all one in Christ, and inheritors of God's promises, and there are others who don't know this - they need to know they are children of God. People need to hear the truth - that there is life and there is hope! There is our purpose- to love God and to love people, to share the love we have with others, with people like us and not like us as we are all one people in Jesus Christ.

Friends - whatever age or stage of life you are in, you can catch fish. You matter and your life has purpose. Your attitude, your servant heartedness can change the life of another. Whether you're Jim Wisneski catching small mouth bass, Debbie Wisneski catching her first crappie, or Karen Clapp with a ten pound bass, keep fishing, keep fishing for people, and let them know that in Christ, they will find hope, joy, love, adventure, purpose, and meaning. Let your actions and your attitude reflect the promises of your God and Creator. God promises us a purposeful life. We would be wise to listen and follow God's lead, live out our purpose, and enjoy this relationship with our incredible Creator. Blessings to you in this amazing, joyful, meaningful journey with God.

Amen and amen.





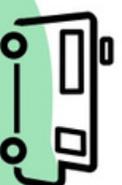
Join us!

September 10, 2022

5-9 p.m. at Cascade Christian Church
2829 Thornapple Dr. SE



BEER TENT



FOOD TRUCKS



CORN HOLE

Cascade Museum open to the public

from 5-7 p.m.