



Christ • Communion • Community

CASCADIAN WEEKLY

August 26, 2022

Week 128

A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Cascade Christian Church,

As summer ends, I want to thank you for spending Sunday mornings thinking about fishing with Jesus. Hebrews 6:19 – our summer verse – reminds us: **This hope we have as an anchor for the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast.**

After spending the summer learning of the promises of God and how we are to spread the kingdom net to introduce people to Jesus, we now enter one of the best times of the church year – the beginning of the school year. The church has some wonderful events coming up that would be great for you to invite a friend or family to, and they include:

- Cascade Heritage Festival, Saturday, September 10 from 5:00-9:00. This event will be on our church grounds and is sponsored by Cascade Township. There will be food trucks, live music, a beverage tent, activities and crafts for children, and open houses at Cascade Township Museum and in our 1880 chapel.
- Also on Saturday, September 10 there will be a ceremony dedicating the park at the corner of Thornapple River Dr and Cascade Road in memory and honor of Virgil Westdale. Virgil was a beloved member of our church, died at 104 years young, and was a decorated military pilot. The dedication will kick off the Heritage Festival and will begin at 5:00PM
- Our annual Unity worship Service and Picnic will be on Sunday, September 11 at 10:30 in the sanctuary, followed by our Unity picnic at 12 noon. Cascade Fire Department will be with us, we will have a remembrance of the anniversary of the 9-11 attack on our nation, we will praise and worship God for all of the ways we are one in Christ, and then celebrate with great food, music, and fun out under the tents on the church lawn. We hope you will join us and bring a friend. The picnic will be catered - reservations are appreciated and a free will offering will be taken.
- Adam Carlson and Michael Dirksen have had incredible schedule of summer activities for our children and youth, and are now looking ahead to the fall programs. Look for details of when their programs will resume on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights.
- Women's Bible study and the Wednesday night Bible study will begin again in September, as will Thursday Grief Share support group.

As you begin to think about autumn, consider getting involved in something new at church. We need volunteers for the picnic, for our worship music team, for our worship tech team, for Heritage Day and for our Regional Assembly coming up in October. We would love to have you join a class, or start a class, or hold your own Bible study here on this campus. The Church Board will invite you to be part of a committee when we have our Unity picnic, to find an area of interest and use the talents God has given you to grow God's Kingdom.

Summer will be over soon – but the joy of spreading the nets and fishing with Jesus is year around. I hope you'll join us.

God bless you and keep the faith,

Jill

WEEKLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>Sunday (8/28).</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 (8/29).</u>	Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Tuesday (8/30).</u>	Senior Exercise Class - 1:00 PM
<u>Wednesday (8/31).</u>	Men's Bible Study - 6:30 AM (Coffee House) Overeaters Anonymous 3:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Thursday (9/1).</u>	Senior Exercise Class - 1:00 PM Al-Anon - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Friday (9/2).</u>	Church Office Closed Open Talk Group - 7:30 AM
<u>Saturday (9/3).</u>	

Financial giving for
the week ending in
8/21/2022:
Budgeted: \$10,652
Given: \$7,732

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.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Tuesday morning Women's Bible Study will resume on September 13th at 9:00 in Centennial Hall. We will be studying "Common Ground: Loving Others Despite Our Differences" by Amberly Neese. We will learn how the scriptures hold the key to living at peace despite our differences in the stories of sibling rivalries in the Old and New Testaments. The study focuses on four sets of siblings and includes a video plus lessons to complete for each. New members are always welcome!

GENERAL NEWS

MEN! MEN! AMEN!

MEN'S RETREAT

SEPTEMBER 16-18, 2022

I've listened to announcements for Men's Retreats for forty years and ignored them all until last year. Last year I went. It was great. It's experiential, meaning I had to experience it before I understood that it was a good time and a good thing to meet with other men of the Region. It was spiritually filling and inspiring!

As the Region evolves, we're very fortunate to have Teresa Dulyea-Parker handling the duties of Regional Minister for Michigan in addition to her duties with the Illinois/Wisconsin Region. Camp Crystal however is in an unusual situation because the camp is owned by the Michigan Region.

Camp Crystal is a place where generations of Disciples of Christ have grown in Christ along with others in the Region. The camp contains 100 acres with a quarter mile of shoreline on pristine Crystal Lake which a railroad sold us for one measly dollar a hundred years ago and is now worth millions. There is an issue of Stewardship. And who are the stewards? Look in your mirror. So, here's the thing: how well do we know the camp and the people with whom we are going to face these decisions. Wouldn't it be nice to have some shared experiences on site? Yes! So, please consider enjoying 2 nights, 2 days, 5 meals; taking in some fresh air, the wisdom of a couple of esteemed educators, new learning, and some self-directed time when you can golf, fish, nap, shop, chat, or whatever. **Yes, it would! Be Blessed!**

---- Armand Aronson

September 16-18, 2022

Registration: \$155.00 on campus

Registration Deadline: September 2

More info on all aspects on registration page: www.crystalconferencecenter.org

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

GENERAL NEWS

MEET AND GREET WITH REGIONAL MINISTER TERESA DULYEA-PARKER

Thank you to all who attended the meet and greet with our new Regional Minister, Reverend Teresa Dulyea-Parker. Between 50-60 people met to greet Teresa, to hear her give a brief address, and to fellowship with one another. Our hospitality team of Deb and Jim Wisneski, Jan Schichtel, and Art Lillibridge did an excellent job serving a light supper. Cascade Christian was joined by members of Cowden Lake Christian Church and First Christian Church of Lansing.

Our next Regional event is the Regional Assembly (both in-person and through Zoom) on Friday and Saturday, October 14-15.



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 (lberskine@cascadechristian.com / 989-225-3697) to get plugged in.

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!

8.14.2022 SERMON: : GOD PROMISES MERCY AND GRACE

So friends, summer is drawing to a close, some schools are back in session, the late summer wildflowers are blooming, some of the trees near camp are wearing fall colors, Halloween candy is on the shelves of the stores. Summer is about over. It has been such a joy to talk with you over these last few months about how Christ is our anchor in troubled waters, and that we can take heart and find courage for the facing of these days as we look to the promises of God. God promises to us are wonderful - He promises to never leave us, to be with us to the ends of the earth, God promises wisdom and purpose, God promises hope and joy, and God promises that He is with us as we partner with God to fill the kingdom nets.

Our summer Bible verse has been Hebrews 6:19: **We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast.** Last week we looked God's promise of purpose, and how Jesus asked the apostle Peter if he too would turn away from Jesus as many were doing, and Peter answered - where else can we turn? There is no other hope like Jesus, all other things we put our hope in are not permanent, false hopes will let you down, they will fade, and come to an end. But not Jesus. He is our living hope, He gives our lives purpose, and He is sure, steadfast, eternal, completely reliable, all powerful, all knowing, more loving than we can fathom, and so, so good to us. We have hope - and it does anchor our souls no matter what the world throws our way - and our hope in Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the Living God is our foundation and our stability.

When you have something this good in your life it is natural to want to share it. Sharing Jesus is what I mean when I say we are to fill the Kingdom net. Earlier this summer we looked at the parable of the net in **Matthew 13:47-50** "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. 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. And church, you've been delightful in sharing your fishing pictures with me to project on the screen and include in our weekly mailings. Halibut, salmon, bass, perch, a grouper, trout - you've caught all kinds of fish just like Jesus tells us to bring in all kinds of people. We've had photos of young children fishing on the Thornapple, people in bass boats, fly fishing pictures, photos from fishing on the ocean or in Alaska - today here are a few from Armand Aronson -fishing on session Lake and Crystal Lake - and what a catch! Not only are we to bring in the people as a net brings in the fish, but this parable teaches us to trust God to sort things out. It is not our job to judge, just to go fish, and God thinks you are a keeper, a great catch.

We see that so clearly in the promises of God - this Sunday let's look at how God promises mercy and grace. These are churchy words that we use a lot - mercy and grace - and it is good to look at how they change our lives. God's promise of mercy and grace is incredible - it is life giving, life affirming. Mercy and grace give you freedom, they unburden you from what you carry from the past, and they point you to a bright future. God's promise of mercy and grace guide your steps, they show you the path to be on, they are promises to cling to, they bring you the fulfillment of your purpose and God's plans for your life.

When we seek purpose - look to Micah 6:8 - What does God require of you? God requires that you act justly, you love mercy, and you walk humbly. That is wisdom, and wisdom can be seen as looking from God's perspective. God treats us justly, God grants us mercy, so in our walk with the Lord and in light of God's mercy, we are humbled. Think about this - a holy God cannot tolerate sin - God is all that is good, all that is pure, all that is light and love. God does not lower His standard, but He allowed His Son to be lowered to earth to pay our debts, to be our way, truth, and life that leads us to God. This is God's mercy and God's grace, where we receive forgiveness, wholeness, peace, and the joy of living.

So grace and mercy - what do they mean? These explanations have been around a long time, and you probably have heard that grace means God gives us things we do not deserve, and mercy is when God does not give us what we do deserve. God offers grace and mercy freely, but they come to us at the expense of Jesus. Grace and mercy are given to you from the foot of

8.14.2022 SERMON: : GOD PROMISES MERCY AND GRACE

the cross. God promises believers grace, He gives us what we cannot get on our own, eternity with Him in heaven, and joy, forgiveness, peace, light and love here on earth. And God, in God's great mercy, doesn't give us what we deserve, what is our due - which is darkness, being apart from God's love and light, being in whatever hell is here on earth and after death. Without mercy, there is only nothingness, emptiness, and pain. How wise we would be if we accepted God's mercy and grace, it would change the world

So grace, it can also be described as God's riches at Christ's expense, which is a pretty great definition. Grace is undeserved merit, undeserved love, undeserved salvation, grace is forgiveness. You can't talk about forgiveness without grace and mercy, they are woven together by God for the saving of humanity. Grace is a relationship with God - to be blessed by His power, to receive His abundant blessings. Grace shows us a God who gives rather than takes, a God who gives His own child to bring people like you and me back to His Kingdom. God promises us these blessings of grace and mercy not just to us, but to everyone else, including your enemies.

In Ephesians 2:1-10 the Apostle Paul writes of these promises, and how we need the grace and mercy of God: **As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.** Because of God's great love for us, God sees us as His masterpieces, and we receive mercy. We escape what we should get, our debt is paid, our death is died by Jesus. This is grace. This is grace: God's mercy at Christ's expense. And mercy leads to grace. Who have you been merciful towards? If you are a parent or a pet owner, you have many opportunities to show mercy. When your child disobeys, when your dog runs away when you call it, do you punish, or do you show mercy? You have the power to do either. So does God. God chooses to show each one who comes to Him mercy, we don't get what we deserve.

From mercy comes grace - you love your child even when they disobey, and when the dog comes back, you let the dog in. You do that out of love, you give your child what they need to grow and thrive out of love, you feed and care for pets out of love. Have they done anything to deserve it? Have they earned it? Those of you buying school supplies, paying college tuition bills, and helping your son or daughter pay off student loans, did they do anything to warrant this from you? No - you are generous in giving out of your love. God does the same - we do nothing to earn or receive the blessings, but grace comes to us anyway, freely given, but at such a cost.

Our response to God's goodness has to be that we too are merciful. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount said- blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Who do you need to show mercy to? Another way of asking this is who do you need to forgive, even if they don't apologize, even if they have no idea that they hurt you. Who do you carry in your thoughts - and thinking of them makes you uncomfortable, maybe it is someone you avoid, or would like to forget. Can you show them mercy? If they apologize or try to make things right, can you show them grace? God gives us mercy and grace, and God knows that when we share mercy and grace our lives are whole, we are no longer broken by pain, guilt, anger.

Jason Wing said - We ought not confuse God's mercy with God's approval. This is an interesting idea. Because God shows us mercy, it is not like the game Monopoly, and we get to take a get out of jail free card. While God sees you as a great catch, and a masterwork, that doesn't mean all you do is pleasing or approved of by God. While God is merciful, you need to be

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responsible for your own behavior and in the choices you make. While God shows mercy, it is to those who repent, those who see their brokenness and bring it to God. I don't think our pride and God's mercy can co-exist. Humility and mercy are best friends. Micah 6:8 reminds us - love mercy and walk humbly.

Mercy doesn't mean sin all you like and then ask to be forgiven, you are to do better than that, that is no way to behave before a Sacrificed Savior and a Merciful God. God's most gentle characteristic is His mercy. In a time and culture where it is always about me and mine, in a time where there is little compassion for others and not much of a desire to try and see the opinion or outlook of someone else, mercy is so needed. Mercy can be a gentleness, a characteristic of God, that can be ours as well. Ephesians reminds us that **All of us also lived among them** (meaning the disobedient, those who do not acknowledge Christ) **at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved.** In God's gentleness, in kindness, we are given grace and mercy, and these promises of God have turned the lives of the worst of people. God's grace saves people, even those who seem so far gone, people like John Newton, the writer of the hymn Amazing Grace.

Amazing Grace was written in 1779 by John Newton. He was one of the most respected preachers in England, but he wasn't always a spiritual leader. He was born in London in 1725, he was the only child of a sea captain and a churchgoing woman. His mother taught him to read the Bible and go to church, but she died when Newton was seven years old. After her death, Newton got into trouble, but he never forgot the lessons his mother taught him. As a young man, Newton fell victim to a press gang who forced him to join the crew of a ship. Discipline was harsh, food was scarce, and Newton's spirit was nearly broken, so he tried to escape, was caught, and the ship's captain had him flogged. Later Newton was transferred to another ship, and he became involved in the brutal slave trade. The work was horrific and cost many human lives. Yet at the time it was legal—and lucrative. Newton became known for his wild behavior and for openly mocking faith. He seemed as far away from God as he could get. But God had other ideas. In 1748, Newton was on board a slaving ship called the Greyhound. The ship was in bad shape. During a violent storm, it began to fall apart, take on water, and a crew member was swept overboard. All night long Newton tried to keep the ship from going under, and it made him think about the state of his life. He knew he'd run from God, hurt other people, and made a wreck out of his own situation. He had even mocked the Gospel.

Newton realized he might die from the storm, and he wondered if God could forgive him, even after he had rejected God. He recalled what his mother had taught him from the Bible: God loves to show mercy even to people who feel they are beyond redemption. Newton asked for God's help for the first time in years. He survived the storm, and was transformed by the grace of God.

It didn't happen overnight, but eventually Newton became a man of faith and gave up his role in the slave trade and stopped sailing for a living and became the curate, or pastor, of a small English church. He also became a writer. His hymn, Amazing Grace, describes his very personal journey out of spiritual blindness into the light of God's mercy and grace. Newton became the pastor of a large church in London and was active in the movement to abolish the British slave trade. When the prime minister began an investigation into the slave trade, Newton was a key witness. He explained the horrors of the industry from the inside out. His compelling testimony helped make the slave trade—and eventually slavery—illegal.

God's grace is amazing - it save wretches like you and me. We once were lost, but now are found, we were blind but now we see. We are no longer slaves to sin, we are children of God, not forsaken, but forgiven. This amazing mercy and grace is freely given, and ought to be freely shared. What a wonderful way to fish, to fill the Kingdom nets, God offers us this gift with no pre-conditions, we have value in God's eyes - and our purpose in living is to have a relationship with Him. Mercy draws us in, grace keeps us there - right there, at Jesus' side. What will you do with this gift? It is meant to be shared. Keep fishing friends - and let's share mercy and grace, even with our enemies. Amen and amen.