



Christ • Communion • Community

CASCADIAN WEEKLY

September 23, 2022

Week 132

A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Cascade Christian Church,

In Matthew 5:4 Jesus says in His Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." If you've experienced the death of a loved one you know how much that comfort can mean, how it feels to have someone offer solace, understanding, and hospitality. In the last six weeks the Bereavement Team of Cascade Christian Church has offered comfort to many as they have hosted funeral lunches for six grieving families. Our Bereavement Team is organized by these four incredible women: Pam Bertran, Ann Early, Susan Mozley, and Margaret Sharp. They have a wonderful menu that they share with families, and then prepare meals and receptions for up to 120 people. These four amazing volunteers are assisted by numerous others who come in to prepare food, set tables, serve the guests, and clean up afterwards. The warmth and caring that is shared in the serving of these receptions has been a comfort to the bereft families. The Bereavement Team ministry is at the heart of why we are here.

From our very early days as a congregation in the 1860's there has been a sense of community service among the people of Cascade Christian Church. The community is welcomed here, for weddings, baby showers and dedications, parties and celebrations, concerts and speakers, and funerals. I am so grateful that this is how we serve Jesus Christ. We welcome people in, especially when they are hurting, and share with them the grace of God.

Another way the church is open to those who are hurting is to offer Grief Share, a support group for those experiencing loss. We meet Thursday from 10:00-11:30AM in the church coffee house for a video on one of the aspects of grief, and then discussion and conversation. This is our fifth year of offering this support group, and many have benefitted from being with others who understand what they are going through. If you or someone you know is hurting, please come and give this group a try.

Thank you, church, for all of the ways you care for others. It is a privilege to serve among you.

Keep the faith,

Jill

THANK YOU

The MacInness family thanks Jill Forton, and with appreciation for leading the memorial of our brother Brian. It brought us peace and serenity. And thanks to Ann Early and the kitchen staff for providing a very nice lunch reception.

THANK YOU CAITLIN OKE

Our Office Manager, Caitlin Oke, has taken a full-time position with Kentwood Public Schools. Caitlin has been a joy to work with in the year she has been here, and we wish her well in her new career. Thursday, September 29 will be her last day with us. If you would like to donate to a love-offering in her honor, please send your gift to the church by October 1 and we will make sure it gets to Caitlin. Godspeed and best wishes to Caitlin!

WEEKLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>Sunday_(9/25).</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_(9/26).</u>	Soul Warmers - 2-4 PM Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Tuesday_(9/27).</u>	Women's Bible Study 9:00 AM Senior Exercise Class - 1:00 PM
<u>Wednesday_(9/28).</u>	Men's Bible Study - 6:30 AM (Coffee House) Overeaters Anonymous 3:30 PM Wednesday night classes - 6:00 PM Boy Scouts - 7 PM (Centennial Hall) Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Thursday_(9/29).</u>	Grief Share 10:00 AM Senior Exercise Class - 1:00 PM Al-Anon - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Friday_(9/30).</u>	Church Office Closed Open Talk Group - 7:30 AM Crystal Clean-up (Through Saturday)
<u>Saturday_(10/1).</u>	

Financial giving for
the week ending in
9/11/2022:
Budgeted: \$10,652
Given: \$10,219

GENERAL NEWS

THE IMPACT OF CHURCH CAMP AT CRYSTAL CONFERENCE CENTER.

This message was shared at the Unity Service on Sunday, September 11 by Lucy Powers.

Good morning my name is Lucy Powers. This summer I learned about how we can see God in our everyday lives through the things he made during creation. I learned to appreciate the simple things that I had not thought of as something to truly value. To illustrate, one of the first things God created was light. Before high school camp, light was just something I used to navigate through my dark house to get a snack at night or something that was used in a cheesy, but surprisingly inspirational quote I found in my grandma's house. Now I see light as so much more. Throughout camp, I found a new admiration for light. I see it as the warmth that wakes me up in the morning, gives me life, and cuts through the darkness to bring us happiness.

During elementary camp, I found a new appreciation for light in a much more physical sense. Light helped me guide my campers to the nurse in the dark, and it forced me to wake up after a restless night. Even though the light could be harsh in the morning, it was relaxing at night. The sunsets telling me my cabin should already be asleep. I want to end my testimony with a bible verse to think of every time you see a sunrise or sunset. John 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

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 28 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 28, October 5, 12, 19, and 26, and November 2 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.

CAMP CRYSTAL WORK WEEKEND

All are welcomed to spend the weekend of September 30-October 2 at Crystal Conference Center as we prepare the camp for winter. Some of the buildings will need cleaning and closing, leaves need to be raked, the beach closed up, and other tasks to secure the camp for the off-season. Please call the church office to sign up and we'll make sure Eric Strommer, the camp manager, will know you're coming.

RIPPLING HOPE WORKDAY: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8 FROM 8:00AM-8:00PM

All are invited to join Michael Dirksen and Adam Carlson as they bring our youth to Rippling Hope in Detroit. Rippling Hope is one of the missions we support, and we need work crews for office work, outdoor yard work, and people who can do skilled labor/home repairs. Please call the church office or email Michael at mdirksen@cascadechristian.com or Adam at acarslon@cascadechristian.com

REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Rev. De. Bruce Reyes-Chow

Keynote speaker

Regional Assembly Schedule

- Friday October 14 6-7:30 pm - Worship Rev. Dr. Bruce Reyes-Chow live stream
- Saturday, October 15th
 - 10:00 AM- Business Session, Fellowship, and Mission Projects
 - 1:00 PM - Workshops

Go to www.michigandisciples.org/event/cciw-ccmr-regional-assembly for more information or to register

ESTHER'S HOPE 2022

FUNDRAISING OPEN HOUSE

Join us for Fun, Friends, Food, Music, and Shopping

Date: Monday, October 3, 2022

Time: 6pm - 8:30pm (Doors open at 5:30pm)

Venue: Clearwater Place

1430 Monroe Ave NW

Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Tickets: \$25 per person or \$40 per couple

Please RSVP by September 24, 2022

To Register: Visit estershopenministries.net or call: 616-635-7993



Registration

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Elementary Sunday School is returning to the Sanctuary! Every week, starting on September 11, kids PreK through 5th grade will start in the Sanctuary and participate in opening worship in the 9:30 service. They will be dismissed from there to go up with Adam Carlson and his merry band of volunteers to the Elementary room, where they will have Sunday School. Pickup will be in the Elementary room at the end of the service. As a side note, if you would like to join Adam's merry band of volunteers, please let him know! You can find his contact information on the church website. This week, we are kicking off the Fall with a new Curriculum, *LifeWay's Gospel Project*. It is a journey through the Bible, where we hear about how God has worked with humanity to keep us in step with Him. Every week, the story connects back to Jesus, so we can always remember what He has done and is doing to keep us in step with God.



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. Our crib room is available from 9:15 through 12 noon.

WEDNESDAY JUBILEE

Our midweek program Wednesday Jubilee will start up again on September 21, from 6:30-8:00PM! We will be working in concert with our Sunday School curriculum, strengthening the lesson we learned on Sunday, and having great fun in the process. Everyone Kindergarten through 5th grade is welcome to join us for a night of engaging Bible study and fun.



PARENTS' NIGHT OUT

We provide a night of free childcare for parents once every month! For a few hours on a Friday night, parents can have some time to themselves. Go on a date, run errands, or just nap in the car! And don't worry, dinner is provided. **The next Parents' Night Out is scheduled for September 23, from 6:00-8:00PM.** If you would like your children to attend, please go to: tinyurl.com/CascadePNO

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 6:30-8:00PM 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

The next Middle School Madness will be September 23 from 7:00-9:00PM. Join us for a night of fellowship, food, and fun!

9.18.2022 SERMON: BRIDGE BUILDERS REACH OUT

Thank you for a wonderful Unity Sunday - the service of worship was beautiful as we gathered as one family before God, and the picnic was a delight, even in the rain. Unity is our focus this month because God calls us to be one. Ephesians 4:1-6 speaks to us of the oneness we have in Christ: **As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.**

Unity is more than being together - unity is being with Jesus, and actively working to expand His Kingdom. Unity requires humility, gentleness, patience, and it takes effort. Unity is the Oneness of God that we see with the Father, Son, and Spirit. We thank God for Jesus, He is the bridge between us, and the bridge we have to God.

To be people of unity we build bridges across the things that divide us. As Christians we reach out to connect with others to bring about the unity that God calls us to. Last week we talked about our glorious Mackinac Bridge. It united the upper and lower peninsulas - making Michigan one state. Good blueprints were needed to build a bridge like the Mighty Mac, and as disciples of Christ our blueprint is the example of Jesus as He reached out and built bridges that cross all kinds of divisions in his time. Jesus continues to be the Bridge Builder in what He did on the cross, his sacrificial death covered our sin. In the Lord's Prayer we call our sins a debt. Jesus paid that debt; you could say he paid the toll for us so we can cross the divide between us and God. The cross is the bridge Jesus gives us to be as one with Him and with our Creator. And as Jesus reached out across the divides of His day - we can do the same. Today we'll look at how to span the chasms in our families, friendships, workplaces, neighborhoods, and in the larger world.

After last week's message on building bridges, several of you told me your family Mackinac Bridge stories. Sisters Phyllis Vandenberg and Pat Galloway told me their father worked on the Mackinac bridge as it was being built. Their father would leave for the week, going up to Mackinac City to work on the bridge and the would be home for the weekend. Ron Hurd told me about he was working on an oar boat back then, and remembered the oar boat going beneath the bridge as it was being built, looking up to see this amazing construction. Denise Pray brought in a piece of the original bridge. You might recall that as repairs have been needed, parts of the bridge were for sale - and her sister brought a steel bar and made these Christmas ornaments for her family. Denise, thanks for bringing this in.

Building a bridge takes many hands, and as you look at this photo really look. Look at the height these men are at, look at the distance from where they are to the next support tower. Some of you have worked construction, or have built radio towers and electric power lines. Great things are created when people work together, many minds, hands, and skill sets are needed in big construction. The same is true in building bridges in human relationships. But unlike the Mighty Mac, human relationships are easily destroyed. Think of the old wooden covered bridges - burning a wooden bridge takes a single match and the bridge is a blaze, and it can collapse. It is like that with people, one word can be the fuel that sets the relationship on fire and turns it into ashes. Building bridges between people takes time and effort, care, and maintenance. It takes humility to be the first one to reach out and be the bridge, but it is worth it. Here's a true story that illustrates this:



Bridge building takes many hands

During the American Revolution, a man in civilian clothes rode past a group of soldiers repairing a small defensive barrier. Their leader was shouting instructions, but making no attempt to help them. When the rider asked the leader why he wasn't assisting his men, the leader retorted with great dignity, "Sir, I am a corporal." The stranger apologized, dismounted, and proceeded to help the exhausted soldiers. When the job was done, he turned to the corporal and said,

9.18.2022 SERMON: BRIDGE BUILDERS REACH OUT

"Corporal, next time you have a job like this and not enough men to do it, go to your commander-in-chief, and I will come and help you again."

It was none other than George Washington. There was a clear barrier between the Commander-In-Chief and these soldiers, but George Washington broke that barrier and bridged the gap to support his fellow soldiers in their struggle. We appreciate servant leaders, don't we, leaders who get their hands dirty, leaders who are at one with their people, and they inspire to do likewise. Jesus is the Suffering Servant, the ultimate Servant leader. Jesus always noticed people, He saw their hurt, He looked past their pride and saw the fear they were masking. He didn't look away, He stopped to serve, to be as one among His people, among us.

What a God! The Son of God as the servant, the King who washed feet and healed the sick. The Lord who took time with widows, children, and outsiders. That is our Jesus. Like Washington getting off his horse and working with soldiers, Jesus left the glories of heaven to stoop low, to bridge the gap between us and God. Servant leaders don't stay on their high horse, they get in the trench, and they serve. Here's what Jesus has to say about this:

The Parable of the Good Samaritan Luke 10:25-37

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

During this deliberation between Jesus and the lawyer, I want to draw your attention to the first question asked by the lawyer, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The lawyer was an expert in the law, he already knew the answer to his question, so he is testing Jesus. He asked a good question, but his motives weren't pure, because not only is this a test, but the lawyer thinks he can earn his way into heaven. Even this expert in the law was mistaken about what it takes to have eternal life.

Jesus challenged the lawyer's knowledge saying, "What does the law state?" knowing the lawyer knows what the law says. As the lawyer responds correctly, that we are to love God and love our neighbors. I love how Jesus replies with "Do this and you will live." Jesus gives the lawyer a choice.

Like the story of George Washington and this opening portion of our reading, as Christians we too have a choice to make. We can be like the corporal, and watch as others struggle, or we can act, love our neighbors, and make a difference. So Jesus continues to school the lawyer:

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.

When the lawyer heard about the priest and Levite, he probably expected Jesus to say that the next person who came along the road was a common Jewish man. But Jesus shocked the man by saying that the enemy, a Samaritan, was actually the hero. You'll recall that Jews and Samaritans despised each other both racially and religiously. The way these two groups treated each other gave the Samaritan plenty of reasons to hate the Jewish man and pass right by him. But instead of avoiding his enemy, the Samaritan showed grace to the Jewish man, he didn't wait to be asked, he went to him. The Samaritan gave freely both his time and resources. He acted when those who should have helped hurried away. The parable continues:

9.18.2022 SERMON: BRIDGE BUILDERS REACH OUT

Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

In the story of the Good Samaritan, neither the priest nor the Levite had the time to stop what they were doing and assess the situation. They both had an amazing opportunity to extend help to another human and instead they walked right past. But, even if they had stopped, would they have gone to the lengths the Samaritan did? The Samaritan patched up the beaten man's wounds, helped him onto his own donkey, walked with the man to an inn, and stayed there with him, stayed through the night, caring for this man. He not only paid for the overnight's lodging, but put down money on the injured man's account so he would be looked after until he was well. Two denarii was worth two days wages - it was the amount of money that could feed 25 people in those days- it was a generous gift. Would you give up two days wages to your worst enemy? And if the innkeeper needed to further care for the wounded man, the Samaritan would pay the difference when he returned.

The Samaritan gave his time, his money, his attention, and his promise to further assist this half dead traveler who was his enemy. The proper religious people walked by this opportunity, but the Samaritan saw this as a bridge. It makes me wonder if there are opportunities you and I are missing out on - and what holds us back from building bridges? Is it a matter of time? Finances? Ability? Our fears, pride, or prejudices? Something else?

Time and money are blessings from God and sometimes we use them well, other times we use them poorly. Last week we discussed the blueprints necessary for bridging divides, and that includes putting up with each other, forgiving, and loving. When the blueprints are ready, builders then take action by gathering the right tools together and starting the work. Having the right tools can make or break the project, and God has given us time and money to help others, and He also gives divine tools to help us be a good neighbor.

Think about having good instructions and the right tools for a project. I wonder if this has happened to you - have you ever been to Ikea, and then came home to assemble the furniture or fixture you bought? The plans have no words, just pictures. If you're not observant enough, if the pictures aren't followed exactly, you may have to take the thing apart and start all over. It can test your patience, and it has been said that assembling something from Ikea can be a good test of a relationship.

And parents, we know the joys of raising kids, and you also may know of one of the most frustrating aspects of parenthood - putting together a toy for a child. If you know this specific pain then you also know how frustrating it is when a 5 foot by 4 foot box shows up at the house filled with pieces, nuts, bolts, instruction manuals, and only one small tool provided to complete the entire job. If you were only to use the Allen wrench provided, it may take you 6-8 weeks to build the play kitchen that your kids have been waiting for. At some point in the process, you realize you can simply go to the garage and get the power drill, a few bits, and you can knock out the build in a few hours.

You see, the instructions by themselves won't get the job done. And insufficient tools may prolong the project. Sometimes you simply need to grab a different - more precise and powerful tool to finish up. The same is true for bridging broken relationships.

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Galatians 5:22-23 defines the tools we are given by the Holy Spirit to build the perfect bridge. **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.** Christian character is seen best in these nine graces. These “tools” are the foundation of how we share Christ with others, and if we want to bridge the gap and eliminate the chasm between others, what could be more powerful than these gifts given to us by the Spirit of God? Through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit we all have access to an amazing array of tools to bridge the gaps and fix the broken roads in our relationships. So whether it's reconciliation, evangelism, discipleship, or missions, Jesus gives us His example as our blueprint, and the Spirit hands us this toolbox.

But the thing is with plans and tools, they're no good if we don't use them. We have to study the blueprint, pick up the tools God has given us, and then actually use them to bridge the gaps. The opportunities are all around us to start building. We can begin to bridge the gaps between cultures, friends, family, we can even begin to learn to love our enemies through the empowerment and enablement of the Holy Spirit.

So, where do we begin? I would suggest that you begin in your own home, in your own circle of influence and relationships. Start where you have proximity to others on a regular basis. With the barista in your local coffee shop, with the UPS driver who always stops at your house, with the family member who you haven't really talked to much this year because of that thing that happened last Christmas. Be bold in prayer and intentional in action and let the gifts of the Spirit help you build relationships. Perhaps more than ever, this is a time and season to bridge the gap.

As we reflect Jesus to others around us, it won't be easy. In fact, just like we saw in our story, it may even cost us. Time, money, energy, physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual investment are the cost of going the extra mile. It takes spiritual strength to be the bridge and to act on behalf of others. But we are equipped, we can do this, and I pray we are motivated to do so. Our relationships with others, the ability to know and be known, to be in community with others, this thing we call unity adds deep meaning to our lives.

And unfortunately, the world around us is less and less a place that fosters healthy relationships. As I mentioned last week, it's all too easy to move on from relationships that are difficult or challenging, to unfriend someone, to cancel somebody. Or we can choose to work, to make the effort, to stay engaged, to reach out and build the bridge. In fact, this is a core message of the New Testament as seen by the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross. With Christ as our servant leader, along with the gifts of the Spirit we can build and rebuild, and be a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.

So we've been given divine blueprints and the power of forgiveness to bridge divides, to build unity, and reconcile with others. Through the Spirit, we have access to a powerful and divine toolset for every kingdom project that comes our way. This week, take some time to consider what it means to have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in your toolbox.

Consider how these tools could be a benefit to you as you begin building bridges around you. Friends, we are all under construction, God is not finished with us. Reach up and ask God to help you identify your own blind spots and shortcomings. Ask Him to empower you, to change you, to use you, and to give you a heart for the people around you, even your enemies. And lastly, strive to be more like George Washington or the Good Samaritan. Be a person of action, willing and able to step into situations as they are presented to you. Move beyond cultural taboos and barriers, move beyond societal hierarchies, move beyond your own bias. I pray we can be more like Jesus and reach out, and reach up. He's there, and will bless us as we join His bridge building team.

Reach out your hand this week, even to an enemy. Let's be people who build bridges and fix the broken roads. Amen and amen.