



Christ • Communion • Community

CASCADIAN WEEKLY

April 30, 2021

Week 60

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JILL

Dear Cascade Christian Church,

It has been wonderful so see more and more people in church and to be able to get out and visit with some of you again. Without a doubt the last 14 months have been a challenge, and it has been hard to not see one another and gather as a church family. When you feel comfortable to return to in-person worship, know that we are holding fast to every way that we know of to keep one another safe. When you come back you will be asked to:

- Go through a quick health screening and have your temperature taken.
- Wear a mask and socially distance, no hugs or handshakes just yet.
- Sing in your heart, but not out loud, for a little while longer.

We have installed additional air filtration units in the sanctuary and chapel, and we look forward to resuming chapel services at 11:00AM in late May. Many thanks to the property, administration, and worship committees for their work in keeping the congregation safe as we gather to worship our Lord and God.

Had we known in March of 2020 what was ahead of us I'm not sure we could have believed it. But every step of the way, God has seen us through. "Through" is a wonderful word. Think of the 23rd Psalm, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, you are with me." God walks with us through all the troubles in our lives, and that is a comfort and assurance that we can count on.

In his book "You'll Get Through This" Max Lucado has a wonderful statement:

You'll get through this. It won't be painless. It won't be quick. But God will use this mess for good. In the meantime don't be foolish or naïve. But don't despair either. With God's help you will get through this.

Friends, you will get through "this", whatever your "this" may be. As the lovely month of May begins, we will be looking at the story of Joseph in Genesis - it is a story of hardship, false accusation, family hatred, and abandonment, but it is also a story of great hope. Joseph went through so much, but through it all God was with him, and Joseph never forgot that. God got Joseph through, and the evil that had been done against Joseph God used for good. God has not changed. Our God is a Way Making God, and God will see you through and bring good to your life.

I hope you can join us for our May worship services listed below:

May 2: Adam Carlson preaches on Humility and the Holy Spirit

May 9: We celebrate Mother's Day and begin our "You'll Get Through This" sermon series with "Do What Pleases God" Genesis 37:2-24

May 16: "Trust in God's Training" Genesis 39:1-23

May 23: Graduation Sunday - Congratulations to the Class of 2021 - Michael Dirksen preaching

May 30: Memorial Day Sunday, one service at 10:30 - sermon "Watch While God Works"

Hope to see you in church, keep the faith! Jill

WEEKLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>Sunday</u> _(5/2).	Sunday School - 9:30 AM Worship - 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM Craigs Cruisers (MS/HS) - 12:00PM - 3:00PM
<u>Monday</u> _(5/3).	Soul Warmers - 2:00 PM (Narthex) Worship Committee Meeting - 5:30 PM (Zoom)
<u>Tuesday</u> _(5/4).	Women's Bible Study "You'll Get Through This" (Centennial Hall) - 9:00 AM SAMO Committee Meeting - 6:30 PM Conference room
<u>Wednesday</u> _(5/5).	Anti-Racism Group Meeting - 11:30 AM (Zoom) Middle/High School Wednesday Night (High School Room) - 6:30 PM Adult Bible Study "You'll Get Through This" (Zoom) - 6:30 PM Troop 334 Boy Scouts (Centennial Hall) - 7:00 PM
<u>Thursday</u> _(5/6).	Grietshare (Zoom) - 10:30 AM
<u>Friday</u> _(5/7).	Church Office Closed Jonette Cavanaugh Vistiation - 1:00 PM Jonette Cavanaugh Funeral for Family and close friends - 2:00 PM
<u>Saturday</u> _(5/8).	

Financial giving
for the week
ending in
4/25/2021:
Budgeted:\$8,432
Given: \$5,257.03

Total Given to
Weeks of
Compassion:
\$8,811.39!!

Thank you all so
much for all of
your contributions!

THE CHURCH OFFICE

You may have noticed last week and now this week the Cascadian is coming from a new email - that's because Keely is officially on maternity leave! Michael Dirksen and Adam Carlson will be filling in for her while she is on maternity leave, so if you have anything you want added to the newsletter, prayer requests, or general info regarding programming here at Cascade Christian Church -- **email your submission** to the church office (office@cascadechristian.com) no later than **Tuesday at 12:00 PM**.

CHAPEL UPDATE

As many of you know, the 11:00 service that is normally held in the Chapel is currently being held in the Sanctuary. The equipment to get the chapel ready for live streaming is on its way and we are ready to install it. Our hope is to have this finished and ready to go by the end of May. Once this is all installed we should be able to commence worship in our Chapel once a again! Thank you for your patience and looking forward to getting our people back to our wonderful Chapel.

CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES

COME ON UP TO DAY CAMP

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

INTERESTED IN BEING A COUNSELOR?

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

SUNDAY SCHOOL VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

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

Students will be brought back down to church after the service. For elementary school, we are also offering a virtual Sunday School, which is mailed out with the Cascadian each week. If you would like your child added to this list, please call Adam or Michael in the church office.

CRIB ROOM REOPENED

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

NOW HIRING - CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The Child Development Center is looking for applications for new staff members! If you know of anyone who needs a job or who might be interested in working at the Child Development Center, please let them know we are looking! They can apply by contacting the Church office or the Child Development Center directly!

GRADUATION SUNDAY

If you know a senior who would want to participate in our Graduation Sunday Service, please reach out to Michael at mdirksen@cascadechristian.com. We are getting ready and need to start planning for that service. Thank you!



MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

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

MISSION TRIP & MACKINAC



CAMP SCHOLARSHIP



VOLUNTEER SIGN UP



WEEKLY EVENTS

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

VOLUNTEERING

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



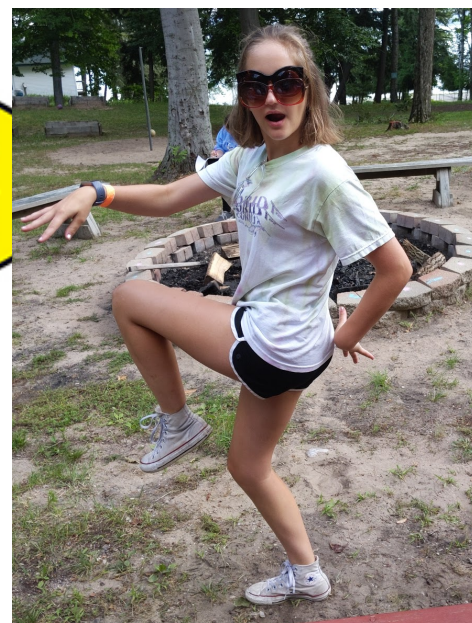
MAY 2ND - CRAIGS CRUISERS

Want to go go-carting, play games, and eat as much pizza as possible? Meet us at Craig's Cruisers in Grand Rapids (5730 Clyde Park SW, Wyoming, MI 49509) for a day of fun, food, and games! Invite whatever friends also enjoy fun! The cost is \$30. If money is an issue, please let Michael know and we will make sure you are covered!

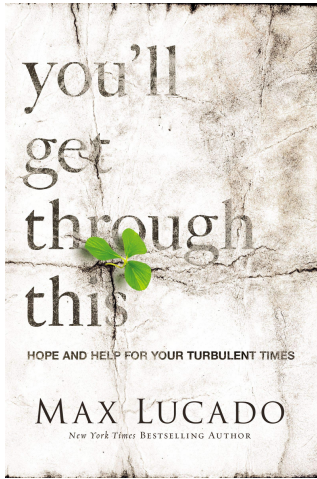


FUNDRAISING

We have a few fundraising opportunities which will involve some yard work. If you are interested in helping with some yard work and helping pay for some summer events, please let Michael know.



ADULT MINISTRIES



GRIEF SHARE

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

"YOU'LL GET THROUGH THIS" BIBLE STUDY

Join us for a 6-week Zoom Bible study of the life of Joseph/Genesis. The class is offered in person in Centennial Hall on Tuesday mornings beginning at 9:00 AM and also virtually on Wednesday nights beginning at 6:30 PM. Contact Pastor Jill for the link.

FAMILY AND INDIVIDUAL DAY OF SERVICE

If you would like to help someone out locally, but don't know how to do that, this opportunity is for you! We are looking for families and individuals to do some service projects on Saturday, May 15 from 9am-noon. We will be working with Volunteers In Service, who will connect us with people in the greater Grand Rapids area in need of yard work, painting/staining a deck, and possibly helping out a local service agency. What we do and how much we do will depend on the number of people who are available to help. To get signed up or if you have questions, please contact **Debbie Jones** by **May 11** at dbjones@visgr.org or by phone at 616-299-7154.

NEW DIRECTORIES

New Directories are available in the Narthex or the church office! Please pick one up after church on Sunday or, if you would rather pick one up during the week, please contact the church office and figure out the best time to stop by and pick one up. Huge shoutout to Darcy Hartley and Denise Pray for helping assemble all 250+ directories!

MEMORIAL DAY WORSHIP SERVICE

On Sunday, May 30 we will have one worship service at 10:30AM. It has been our long standing tradition to honor those who have passed from this life to God's nearer Presence with a reading of names and by lighting a candle in their memory.

We also honor our veterans, both living and those who have passed. We would like to project a photo of every veteran, and need your help. If you or someone in your family is or was a veteran, please get their name and picture to us no later than Monday, May 24. All photos will be safely returned. You can scan and send photos to jforton@cascadechristian.com or drop of a paper copy. Thank you.



4.25.2021 SERMON: THE ASCENSION - LIFE ELEVATED

This week I had the joy of visiting Barb Coger, one of our long-time church members. She is in a care facility, and it was so wonderful to be able to visit her again. Barb grew up in Ada over ninety years ago, she's a farmer's daughter, and some of you probably live in houses that were built on her family's property. When I visit Barb we tend to talk about her childhood on the farm and about what the farmers are planting in the fields around my house. During this visit I was able to take Barb for a walk outside, into the fresh air of the lovely day we had on Friday. For Barb to get out in the sunlight, to see the blue sky, to feel the warm breeze, was glorious. I could see her spirits rise, her heart was lifted as she looked at the clouds and listened to the birds. Sometimes the simplest things are the best gifts of God, and can lead us to life elevated.

And I know that not all days are like that. We all have cloudy days - those days where nothing goes right, where you have a fight with your family, then the car makes weird noises while you drive to work, you spill coffee or your breakfast smoothie on your shirt, your boss or your teacher piles on an extra assignment, you forgot to bring your lunch, and when you get home the dog has found your favorite sweatshirt and shredded it. Yeah, there are those days, but those things are small and survivable. How about the really cloudy days - when a dream dies or a possibility ends, when something you hoped for evaporates, when grief and sorrow consume your days and nights, when the problems add up and grow so heavy that you don't know how you can shoulder one more thing. It is hard when you see a bright future fade away. I know that you have those days because many of you share your story with me. I admire your honesty as you don't pretend life is all sunshine and rainbows, when we can pray together about how to face life's storms.

What do you do when your life is cloudy, and you hit bottom and run out of ideas and energy? If you haven't had a day or season like this - keep living, the challenging days come, and followers of Jesus Christ are not exempt from troubles. But as followers of Jesus Christ, we do have a path out of the dark days, and can live an elevated life. Today I would like to remind you to stay the course and look up, because you are not alone, God is still God, and the Lord Jesus not only rose for you, but ascended for you.

Whatever you are facing right now - you'll get through this - whatever your "this" is. A number of us are studying the life of Joseph in the book of Genesis, seeing how God helped him get through his "this". Max Lucado's book "You'll Get Through This" has been a real help to many of us as we weary of the pandemic and all the challenges it has brought. **You'll get through this, Max reminds us. It won't be painless. It won't be quick. But God will use this mess for good. In the meantime don't be foolish or naïve. But don't despair either. With God's help you will get through this.** We have been walking with Jesus throughout the season of Lent and Easter, seeing how Jesus gets us through. We'll delve deep into Joseph's story next month, but now let's complete our walk with Jesus, our Way Maker, our God who gets us through.

4.25.2021 SERMON: THE ASCENSION – LIFE ELEVATED

Ten days before the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost, and forty days after Easter, the disciples of Jesus took their last walk with their friend and Savior. Jesus let His followers know **they would** get through what was ahead, and so shall we. Here is how the Gospel writer Luke recorded this in Acts 1:1-11:

Acts 1:1-11 In my former book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. **3** After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Jesus shows us how to live an elevated life, how to ascend above what has been pulling us down. The first thing is to obey the instructions of Jesus give to us through the Holy Spirit. That seems so obvious, but do you? Do you do what Jesus says? It took a while for the Apostles to get it, but they were chosen, and so are you. You are a son, a daughter of God, and are part of the family of believers in all times and places. When you claim Christ as Lord, you have God's Spirit within you – teaching you, leading you, guiding you, protecting you – even when you are unaware that the Spirit is on the move. You are not alone; God's Spirit is with you.

You might wonder how to listen to the Spirit. Make some quiet time in this crazy busy world, maybe get outside and gaze at the clouds, or hang out with an elder like Barb. God speaks in limitless ways, and may you have ears to hear with a heart wide open. Please slow down – read the Bible for yourself, find out what Jesus says, listen to music that speaks God's goodness, pray – find out Jesus' instructions for your life, and listen to God.

To get through and have a higher life you also need to believe Jesus is who He says He is. Even after three years of being with Jesus, seeing miracles, hearing parables, observing healings, seeing Christ's power over nature – the disciples still needed convincing, they still needed proof. How about you? Do you need to see Jesus to believe? I don't think you do. You believe in plenty of things you cannot see – and truly, the more you look for Jesus, the more you'll see Him and find Him in all the grace around you. But Jesus knew how hard this would be on His followers – they were still looking for an earthly king, not the King of Kings. Luke continues:

On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

4.25.2021 SERMON: THE ASCENSION – LIFE ELEVATED

If you've been with us for the last few weeks, we have noted how often Jesus ate with His disciples and followers after rising from death. In this passage – Jesus does this again – He eats and teaches. I can hardly wait until we can eat together again, with our extended families, to go to restaurants, and for the day when many of you will return to God's house to celebrate the Lord's supper, the center of our worship service. Jesus so often teaches at a table, over a meal, and we would be wise to listen. Here He tells His followers that they need to say put, stay in Jerusalem, and wait. Does this sound familiar? Stay put, don't leave, wait, and wait, and wait.

We have had a full year of not leaving and waiting. What has God taught you in this time? Many of you are beginning to see the gifts God has shared with you over this challenging year – maybe you have a closer relationship with your family, you've found out who your true friends are, or you've appreciated your good health, maybe like never before. God promises to never leave us, and the disciples found that promise to be true. They waited for the Holy Spirit, this gift promised to them by God. They had been baptized by water, and soon would be baptized by the Spirit in wind and fire. The Spirit stirred them up, to move ahead, to bring Christ to the world, and they did. The Spirit was worth the wait. The blessings they received were worth the wait. Friends, whatever you are dealing with, wait on the Lord, on the Spirit, you'll be blessed if you do.

And the disciples respond to all of this by asking if Jesus will restore Israel. Their thinking is still so small, so local, so inward, and I think we can probably see ourselves in them. Jesus clears up their confusion:

7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Friends, many of you have wondered if these are the end-times. If all the troubles we are living through are pointing to the return of Christ. We can conjecture, we can wonder, but God alone knows when Jesus will return and claim His own, our job is to be ready. What we have now is power, power from God, to be used to further God's Kingdom. Power to point people to Jesus. Power to have people ask what makes our life different? To make people wonder what is it in us that helps us get through this? Evangelism is a word many Christians like to avoid – it feels awkward to share faith, to preach, to testify. So don't – be a witness instead. Being a witness involves prayer and dependence on the Spirit, so as you share, pray for those you are sharing with and for your words to be guided by the Holy Spirit. Ask God to work through your words, but also your actions, your attitude, your outlook. Let God direct you; God will keep you real and genuine in your witness, and then let God do His work in the hearts of those around you.

4.25.2021 SERMON: THE ASCENSION – LIFE ELEVATED

Many others before me have pointed out the meaning of **Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth**. The people close to you – that is your Jerusalem, so share God's love and the grace of Jesus in your family and with your close friends. Judea and Samaria are your wider circle: your school, your office, your neighborhood, the clubs you belong to, sharing God's grace in our city, town, state. The ends of the earth are sharing as far as your reach can go, and might be your support of Nora Leon as she cares for orphaned children in Haiti, or your support of Joanne Cornelison and Esther's Hope as they educate girls in Kenya, or your support of Week of Compassion in providing clean water and disaster relief, and Baraka and Shannon Kasali's libraries in Congo. To get through your "this", elevate, or rise above yourself, and share. Every time you act generously and with kindness – you'll find you are closer to getting through your own troubles. Luke shows us this further in Acts 1:9-11:

9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Wouldn't this have been something to see? Jesus ascends to heaven. He rises into the sky. A cloud conceals Him. I can picture the disciples craning their necks, looking up, trying to see if the clouds will shift to catch a last glimpse of Jesus. No one had ever seen anything like this – and flight, rising above, is still a wonder to us. We have just seen a historic flight of four everyday people to the space station. We have seen a cool little helicopter navigate the air space of Mars. Ascending is amazing, Jesus rises above earth, and goes from being in one place, to being at the side of God the Father, advocating for us, sending His Spirit to guide us, being with us always and in all places.

The disciples must have wondered what now? What's next? So, God sent angels to bring them back to their senses. Angels marked the importance of this event. If you think about it, angels don't appear all that often in the life of Jesus- they sang in the skies of Bethlehem at His birth, they ministered to Him after He spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness, they cared for Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before He died, and an angel rolled away the stone that closed off Jesus tomb and spoke to the women at the resurrection. That is four times, and now angels come at the ascension. Their message is do more than look at an empty sky.

4.25.2021 SERMON: THE ASCENSION - LIFE ELEVATED

Sometimes God wakes us up just like the angels did for the disciples. Why are we standing here, or sitting here? The world is kind of a mess right now, and you don't need me to remind you of all the ways people are hurting. Pretty much everyone you know wonders how they'll get through this. They will get through, and so will you, when we all take God's call seriously. We have good news to share and can't just stare into space. We have been graced and can spread that grace in every aspect of our living and being, we have been forgiven so we can forgive, we have been shown such mercy, and can be merciful, we have been abundantly provided for, and we can be generous. Each of us has our story to tell, our own story, no one else's, of God's mercy and love. No one can tell your story better than you.

Friends, today you choose - to stand frozen in the storm cloud days or to let your heart and soul ascend with Jesus. Every one of us, every day, has this choice: to live like a Christ follower or not. I don't think there is middle ground here - you walk with the Son in the light, or you retreat to the shadows, a dangerous place to be, full of the whispers of the evil one. You either believe Jesus - that He has gone to prepare a place for you and is coming back, or you give up, lose hope, call it quits.

I pray that you choose a higher life, an elevated life. You'll get through this - all you need to do is look up, look above and beyond yourself, your life, your opinions, your troubles, your world. Look up, rise above, find where you are called to be. That is your place. It is where you belong. Raise your head, raise your eyes, look, and see, there is a God who loves you, who stops at nothing to bring you to His side. When you look up, you can then start to look around - and see life, see your purpose. Live, friends, look up, look around, you'll get through this. Let's get through this together - alive, living life elevated, living with our Ascended Savior. Amen and amen.

