



CASCADIAN WEEKLY

November 26, 2021

Week 89

A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Cascade Christian Church,

This is that wonderful weekend where we celebrate Thanksgiving and the beginning of the season of Advent. I hope your Thanksgiving dinner and times with friends and family are full of joy as you thank God for all of your blessings. We have so many reasons to feel grateful, and then to express our thanks. May the love of God shine through you as you thank the people in your life for all of the ways they make your life better!

This Sunday, November 28, we begin our season of Advent, that time in the church year where we prepare our hearts and minds for the birth of our Savior. Our focus this Advent season will be "Wait Upon the Lord" – a phrase with two meanings, we wait for the return of Jesus as we celebrate His first advent in Bethlehem, and we wait upon the Lord, meaning we serve Him as He is our Lord, Savior, Brother, and King.

As we prepare for these special times of worship, I join the Church Board leadership in strongly urging that you wear a mask when you are in close proximity to others in the pews. We recognize that not all are able to do this for medical reasons. The rates of COVID infections are so high, and the news we continue to get from Spectrum Health indicates that things are especially challenging right now. Please protect yourself and one another, as each one of you is precious to this church family. Your understanding is so greatly appreciated.

We begin the Advent season on November 28 as we look to God's long-time planned arrival of Jesus. Scripture shows us repeatedly that we are to wait with FAITH – and faith means not always seeing, not always understanding, but trusting God's sovereignty and love as we wait. Waiting for Jesus is worth the wait, and may we grow in faith as we wait together. God's blessings to you and keep the faith, Jill

UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

Upcoming Worship Services with worship at 9:30 and 11:00 unless otherwise noted:

Sunday, November 28: The first Sunday of Advent focused on Waiting for the Lord with Faith, with the lighting of the Advent candle and the Operation Santa Claus video

Sunday, December 5: JUBAL BRASS SUNDAY with one service in the sanctuary at 10:30. This is the second Sunday of Advent focused on Waiting for the Lord with Hope, with the lighting of the Advent candle and singing carols with Jubal Brass.

Sunday, December 12: This is the third Sunday of Advent focused on Waiting for the Lord with Joy, with the lighting of the Advent candle and the Children's Sunday School Program at the 9:30 service.

Sunday, December 19: This is the fourth Sunday of Advent focused on Waiting for the Lord with Gratitude, with the lighting of the Advent candle and special music.

Friday, December 24:

- 3:00PM worship service in the sanctuary, singing the carols, a time of great joy
- 5:00PM worship service in the chapel – singing the carols and a time of great joy
- 11:00PM worship service in the sanctuary, candlelight, a time of great reverence

Sunday, December 26: We will have one worship service at 10:30 to celebrate God's goodness in 2021 and with a focus on our college students and the awarding of college scholarships.

WEEKLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>Sunday</u> _(11/28).	1st Sunday of Advent Sunday School - 9:30 AM Crib Room - 9:30 AM Worship - 9:30 AM, 11:00 AM
<u>Monday</u> _(11/29).	Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Tuesday</u> _(11/30).	Men's Group - 6:30 AM (Coffee House) Women's Bible Study - 9:00 AM (Coffee House) Young Adult Small Group 7:00 PM
<u>Wednesday</u> _(12/1).	Overeaters Anonymous - 3:30 PM (Coffee House) Wednesday Night Classes 6:30 PM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Bible Study on Advent • Wednesday Jubilee - Elementary School • Youth Group - Middle & High School Scouts - 7:00 PM (Centennial Hall) Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Thursday</u> _(12/2).	Be Bold (5th-7th grade) - 4:15 PM Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Friday</u> _(12/3).	Church Office Closed Open Talk Group - 7:30 AM (Coffee House)
<u>Saturday</u> _(12/4).	

Financial giving for
the week ending in
11/21/2021:
Budgeted: \$10,652
Given: \$13,773

DECEMBER 5TH: JUBAL BRASS, BRUNCH, AND CHRISTMAS WORKSHOP SUNDAY!

On Sunday, December 5th we welcome Jubal Brass back to Cascade Christian Church. We will have one worship service at 10:30 in the sanctuary, focused on our hope in God as He sent Jesus to redeem the world. Jubal Brass is a 19 member brass choir that has been at Cascade Christian for over 50 years, helping us to celebrate the advent of Christ the Lord.

On December 5th we highly recommend that all who come to worship wear a mask to protect yourself and those around you.

After the worship service our high school youth will be hosting a brunch as a fund raiser for their summer mission trip. All are invited and COVID protocols for food handling and serving will be followed.

At 1:30 there will be a meeting in the coffee house for all of our elders, led by Elder Chair Gail Duchon.

Our annual Christmas Workshop of making crafts and ornaments and decorating cookies will be held in Centennial Hall from 2:00-4:00PM. Masking is highly recommended for all who attend. We will also have some Christmas Around the World activities. If you would like to make a poster about a country that interests you, the Christmas crafts, foods, and customs of that country, please be in touch with the church office and we'll get you signed up.

Looking forward to this special Sunday with our church and community!

GENERAL NEWS

NEW WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

The Wednesday Night Bible study group is beginning a new study on December 1st from 6:30-8:00PM. This will be a three week study, focused on our Advent theme of "Wait Upon the Lord". This is an easy study, perfect for beginners, and great for anyone who needs to refocus their attention from the busyness of this season back to the birth of the Savior. Join us or call Jill at the church office for more information.

THANK YOU JANE WOOD

On Sunday, November 21, the church recognized Jane Wood for all of her work in Second Mile House ministry. Since 1976, Jane has been part of the distribution of clothing, dry goods, household and kitchen equipment, and food to those in need. Social Action and Mission Outreach Chairperson Diane Phelps recognized Jane with a power point of Jane's work, flowers, and a gift card. Second Mile House has been a blessing to so many people, and Jane is to be commended for her work in making this possible.

Currently Second Mile House is NOT accepting clothing or donations, and those looking for an alternative drop off site might consider Goodwill or Flat River Outreach Ministries in Lowell.

The Church Board is looking at alternative uses for the Second Mile House building, and will keep the church informed.



IKEA TRIP AND WOMEN'S NIGHT OUT

Many thanks to Diane VanLeeuwen and Barb Dykhuizen for arranging the women's day out at IKEA. We had SO much fun, and appreciate driver Michael Dirksen for putting up with all of the merriment as he drove the church van.

Our December women's event will be dinner out at Cascade Roadhouse. The day and time will be announced, and all women are encouraged to come and have fun with their sisters in Christ.



CHILDRENS MINISTRIES

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

Our Wednesday Night Youth Group for elementary kids is up and running again. We are doing our own unique lesson, playing some fun games, doing crafts, and having a great snack each week. Come learn more about God, and hang out with some of your friends from Elementary Camp! **Note: We will not be having Wednesday Night Youth Group the week of Thanksgiving.**

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Our Children are beginning work on the Christmas program this Sunday during the 9:30 service! If you would like your child to participate, please make sure they attend Sunday School as often as possible from now until the program on December 12. We will be assigning roles this Sunday (November 21), and parents will receive an email with more information next week.

CHRISTMAS WORKSHOP & CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

Our annual Christmas Workshop of making crafts and ornaments and decorating cookies will be held in Centennial Hall from 2:00-4:00PM Dec. 5th. Masking is highly recommended for all who attend. We will also have some Christmas Around the World activities. If you would like to make a poster about a country that interests you, the Christmas crafts, foods, and customs of that country, please be in touch with the church office and we'll get you signed up.

BE BOLD

We are holding a class for 5th-7th graders on Thursday afternoons from 4:15 - 5:45. Each week we'll be wrestling with questions about the faith. If your child needs a ride from school, please contact the church office.

Advent Schedule -- Wednesday Nights

November 24th - No Wednesday Night Events

December 1st - Regular Schedule

December 8th - Regular Schedule

December 15th - Regular Schedule

December 22nd - 6:30-9:00 PM MS/HS Holiday Party
(Bring a White Elephant Gift!)

December 29th - MS/HS Ski Trip (No other events)

January 5th - Regular Schedule

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

SUNDAY SCHOOL

This year we are working our way through the whole Bible. Come right up to the youth room at 11:00 AM (we will not be dismissing from Church). We hope to see you there!

EVENT SIGN UP -- IMPORTANT!!

We are so excited to get youth group underway. We will be going to Spring Hill for a winter retreat, Mackinac Island, on a mission trip, and doing some fundraisers to help pay for these events as well. If you'd like to help out or you know that your child would like to participate, please fill out the form. Let Michael know if you have any questions.



WEDNESDAY NIGHT YOUTH GROUP

Our Wednesday Night Youth Group is up and running again. We are following the lessons in Sunday School and learning more about what we learned that week in Sunday School. We hope to see you here each week! **Note: We will not be having Wednesday Night Youth Group the week of Thanksgiving.**

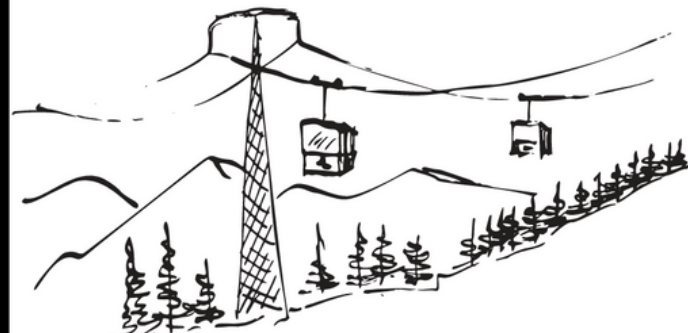
JUBAL BRASS BRUNCH

On December 5th the Middle School and High School Youth Groups will be hosting the Jubal Brass Brunch to help raise money for our Winter and Summer activities! Please let Michael Dirksen know if you are able to help volunteer for a time to help work the brunch.



caberfae ski trip

DECEMBER 29TH
MEET AT THE CHURCH AT 8AM
RETURN BY 8PM



11.21.2021 SERMON: GRATITUDE AND THANKSGIVING

Have you ever thought that there is a difference between gratitude and thanksgiving? While close cousins, I see gratitude as a feeling and thanksgiving as an action. If someone does something for me, I feel grateful. My offering of thanks to that person is an action. One can feel gratitude without thanksgiving, but one cannot be thankful without feeling grateful. Thanksgiving is gratitude in action.

As we approach our national holiday of Thanksgiving, this is a time and a season to feel grateful, and then to make and take the action to offer thanks.

I realize that for some of you, you might not feel as grateful as you have other years. It has been a long and difficult year, there might not be as many people around the table this Thanksgiving, many of us have experienced the death of someone we love. It's still not easy to get people together, travel has become more challenging, the pandemic still looms over our gatherings. And while it might be difficult, we will be so blessed if we take time this season to feel grateful, and express our thanksgiving to God.

Here's a little story to illustrate this: One Thanksgiving season a family was seated around their table, looking at the annual holiday bird. It was their tradition to say some words of admiration for the roasted turkey. When they came to the 5-year-old in the family, he began by looking at the turkey and told the turkey thank-you, saying although he had not tasted it, he knew it would be good. He didn't stop there, he began to give credit to those who provided the turkey. The little boy thanked his parents for buying and cooking the turkey, he said thank you for the checker at the grocery store who checked out the turkey, for the grocery store people who put it in the freezer, for the farmer who made the turkey so fat, for the people who made the turkey feed, and for the trucker who brought the turkey to the store. He traced the turkey all the way from its origin to his plate. And then at the end of his discourse, he solemnly asked "Did I leave anybody out?" His 7-year-old sister, embarrassed by all those proceedings, said, "God." Solemnly and without being flustered at all, the 5-year-old said, "I was about to get around to Him."

How about us? Are we going to get around to God this Thanksgiving? We have much to be grateful for, we have all gotten through and continue to get through challenging times. And while not a church holy day, Thanksgiving has become a significant time of gratitude, of thanking God for all His blessings. In the prep for the food, football, black Friday sales, let's be sure we get around to God. We know the origins of Thanksgiving: We recall that the Pilgrims were grateful. These refugees from England had crossed the ocean, seeking religious freedom, and it was difficult, many of them died during that first winter. Native Americans helped the Pilgrims learn how to survive, and by autumn, things had greatly improved. The Pilgrims, being grateful for how God had seen them through, and grateful for the help they received from their Native American allies, celebrated by giving thanks to God for His provision. Today, Thanksgiving might be the only time that some people get around to giving God thanks. How much better our lives, communities, nation, and world would be if we remembered to feel grateful for what we have and offer our thanks to God daily! It is one of the best things we can do- and it is scriptural:

11.21.2021 SERMON: GRATITUDE AND THANKSGIVING

In the Old Testament we read of sacrifices and festivals where the people gave thanks to God, of celebrations for God's deliverance, of praise for provision when all had seemed lost. The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 100: **Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.**

In all generations, at all times, the people of God were to look at their lives and circumstances, and see the goodness and fullness of God, to feel grateful, and express their thanks. This has not changed, experiencing gratitude, feeling grateful, expressing thanks, does us good – it fills our souls. Finding the reasons to be grateful, saying thank you, living a life of gratitude will make you live longer, feel better, and get your heart and mind right with God and the people around you. That might be hard in 2021.

Think for a moment. Is our thanksgiving rooted in an overwhelming praise unto God for His goodness, for our salvation in Jesus Christ? Or are we crushed by what no longer is, by what we do not have, by what we think we should be? So often we put our hope in earthly things and in other people, forgetting that God is the giver of all good things. If the worst thing we could possibly imagine were to become true for us today, could we say **"Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs."**

Thanksgiving can be a simple time of gratitude, good food, family and friends around a table, storytelling, laughter, probably eating a little too much, and then sharing the leftovers. We need to understand that Thanksgiving is not just a day, but a faith-style. It is the life that we are called to live in Jesus Christ. If our thankfulness is rooted only in God's gifts, in what God has given us, but not in God Himself, then our thanksgiving is shallow and superficial. True gratitude becomes the act of thanksgiving when you **"Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture."** Our thanksgiving must be rooted in God Himself.

A little church joke here: Two men were walking through a field one day when they spotted an enraged bull. Instantly they darted toward the nearest fence. The storming bull followed in hot pursuit, and it was soon apparent they wouldn't make it. Terrified, the one shouted to the other, "Put up a prayer, John. We're in for it!" John answered, "I can't. I've never made a public prayer in my life." "But you must!" implored his companion. "The bull is catching up to us." "All right," panted John, "I'll say the only prayer I know, the one my father used to repeat at the table: 'O Lord, for what we are about to receive, make us truly thankful.'"

What motivates you to feel grateful and express your thanks? The prophet Habakkuk provides us with an example of someone who understood giving thanks without putting any conditions on God. This Old Testament prophet's words have deep relevance for Thanksgiving 2021 in gratitude and give thanks to God, even in the most difficult of times.

11.21.2021 SERMON: GRATITUDE AND THANKSGIVING

Listen to Habakkuk 3:17-19

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.

This is one of the greatest confessions of faith found anywhere in the Scripture. God people at the time of Habakkuk faced the invasion of Judah by Babylon. The prophet knew that many of the people, like young Daniel whom we studied this fall, would go into exile, never to come home, and many would be slain. The land would be ruined, and Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed. Yet, Habakkuk tells God that he would trust God no matter what happens! If Habakkuk had depended on his feelings, he couldn't have made this great confession of faith. When Habakkuk looked ahead, he saw his nation headed for destruction and when he looked around, he saw everything in the economy about to fall apart. But when he looked up by faith, he saw God, and all his fears were replaced with strength and trust.

Habakkuk was thankful to the Lord even though there would be a lack of food, his community would be uprooted, his people decimated. But these verses represent unconditional thanksgiving, not dependent on any external thing, but rooted in God alone, rooted in the experience of the wonder of salvation. Our thanksgiving to God should be unconditional, just as God's love for His people is unconditional. We need to be consistent and faithful in giving thanks to the Lord, because He is consistent and faithful in loving us.

The thanksgiving that Habakkuk spoke of is in God alone. He was proclaiming that his thanksgiving would not be infrequent or shallow. It would not be given only when things were agreeable and comfortable, but always - because his thanksgiving would be rooted in a profound, personal, and real experience of God's salvation and of God's present strength.

Habakkuk knew he was blessed by God as he spoke not only of the loss of everyday comforts, but of the very supports of life. He painted a dark picture, using the language of the agriculture of his day. He said, if the fig tree does not blossom (the fig was a staple food for them); the labor of the olive fail (the olive tree brought oil for cooking); the fields would be barren (the barley, the wheat - no food to be brought to the storage bins); the flocks would be cut off from the fold (sheep, which would give them wool and meat, would not be in existence); the herds would not be found in the stalls (the barns would be empty and the livestock dead and gone). He imagined complete economic ruin and disaster; and circumstances leading to famine, hunger, crying children, and malnutrition, and yet he rejoiced in the Lord.

Perhaps we can relate better to Habakkuk in 2021 better than ever before. He was talking about the collapse of the economy, severe food shortages, desolation. I think we can better understand desolation due to the pandemic. Many of us have had it easy for much of our lives; we have had times of such plenty. Habakkuk's example tells us although my job would be gone; my income would be cut off; my ability to provide food taken away, my health or my loved ones taken; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will have joy in the God of my salvation.

11.21.2021 SERMON: GRATITUDE AND THANKSGIVING

And so we can rejoice with gratitude and thanksgiving. What are you grateful for? What action of thanksgiving will you take to express your gratitude? God is Creator and Provider, and this week we are reminded to be grateful and offer thanks to God who has placed into our hands everything we have. Absolutely everything comes to us from God. Our gratitude, if it is to be true and lasting, must go deeper. Real gratitude leads to thanksgiving, and the action of giving thanks must be in and to the God who has given all. Gratitude must ultimately be a profound thanks to God for His salvation, and for His grace to you and me. So, how should we thank Him?

Habakkuk's thanksgiving had no reservations in it. There is no halfway gratitude in his words. Come what may, we should declare, **yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.** As many of you are deer hunting this November, you get what the feet of the deer are capable of – running, leaping, deer are swift, nimble, agile. With God as our strength, we too can run and leap for joy, we too can be nimble, resilient, agile, adaptable. And then, in the strength of the Lord, whatever our circumstances, we can tread on the heights, we go to the higher places of grace, gratitude, thanksgiving, and humility, before our God. Our spirits can soar in victory, in serenity, in abundant spiritual joy. SO what are you grateful for? What inspires in you the act of Thanksgiving? Habakkuk saw a nation headed for destruction and the economy about to collapse. But when he looked up by faith, he saw God, and his fears vanished. No matter what, he was thankful. On Thanksgiving 2021, may we look to the heights, to the strength of our God, to the love of our Savior, and feel grateful, and give thanks. Amen and amen.

Gratitude
and
Thanksgiving



RECONCILIATION MINISTRY - CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) THANKSGIVING OFFERING

For many years the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has worked for justice and equity for all people. Your gifts to this longstanding program of our denomination will help promote a more just and loving society

Isaiah 56:1 – This is what the LORD says: "Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed."