



CASCADIAN WEEKLY

September 24, 2021

Week 80

A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Cascade Christian Church,

On Saturday, September 25, Cascade Township is celebrating Heritage Day, a time for our community to safely gather and enjoy this wonderful area where we live and worship. Cascade Christian Church's chapel and the Cascade Historical Museum will both be open from 10:00AM-2:00PM to highlight the long history of Cascade village. There will also be a 5K race, a cornhole tournament, and an evening food and beverage tent with live music. It should be a fun day, and I hope many of you can come and take part.

Cascade Christian has been at the heart of Cascade since 1865. Our history as a congregation is lengthy and noteworthy. Back in 1859, Alfred Stow (an ancestor of Gail Snow) came north to Michigan from Stow, Ohio, to inspect some newly purchased land, and found a small village of about a dozen homes, a general store, a post office, and a small hotel. He loved what he saw, and returned to Ohio and began to dream of establishing a Christian Church in this beautiful area. He returned in 1861 with his entire family, bringing other Ohio settlers with him, and together they invited evangelist Alanson Wilcox to preach and begin "church planting". In 1865 Cascade Christian Church was established, initially meeting in Shuman School, the current location of Bagger Dave's restaurant on 28th Street. The church began to grow, and an ancestor of Fay Johnson's donated land for a church to be built, and in 1880 the chapel we have lovingly preserved was completed on Orange Street (named for the Osage orange trees that grew nearby). Shortly afterwards Elder Elias Sias became the first pastor. From then until now, 24 pastors have served Cascade Christian, some for a year, others for fifty years or more, each one bringing their gifts and hopes as they have worked with the congregation to build the Kingdom of God here in Cascade Village.

I encourage you to visit our Memory Room in the chapel to read more of our history and to see the photos of long ago. In one corner is a small souvenir folder of the dedication of the chapel basement. That was a huge event as the basement was dug in 1916 (under the 36 year old chapel) to be a place for apple bobbing, taffy pulls, chicken dinners, and community events. That same desire to stay open to the community was seen in our centennial adoption of our motto "Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Minds", and is seen currently in the Diversity and Inclusion branch of the Social Action and Mission Outreach Committee. Cascade has certainly grown from the small village of a few homes and businesses, but the mission of the church has not changed. We are part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), but we have always been a community church serving Jesus Christ at the heart of Cascade.

I hope you can join us to celebrate our history this weekend. The Lord has been good to us - this church has survived the Civil War and every war since, we survived the pandemic of 1918-1919, and we will get through the present challenges as we keep the faith serving Christ, Communion and Community with open doors, open hearts, and open minds.

God's blessings to you, Jill



WEEKLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>Sunday</u> _(9/26).	Sunday School - 9:30 AM Crib Room - 9:30 AM Worship - 9:30, 11:00 AM
<u>Monday</u> _(9/27).	Book Club Advocates - 11:30 (Coffee House) Soul Warmers - 12:00 PM (Rm 112) Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Tuesday</u> _(9/28).	Men's Group - 6:30 AM (Coffee House) Women's Bible Study - 9:00 AM (Centennial Hall)
<u>Wednesday</u> _(9/29).	Wednesday Night Classes 6:30 PM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Bible Study "The Chosen" • 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> _(9/30).	Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Friday</u> _(10/1).	Church Office Closed Men's Group - 6:30 AM (Coffee House)
<u>Saturday</u> _(10/2).	Rippling Hope Workday

Financial giving for
the week ending in
9/19/2021:
Budgeted: \$10,652
Given: \$11,890

MASKING AT CHURCH

At the September 16 Board meeting, the Church Board voted to change our policy from requiring masks for our indoor gatherings to highly recommending that everyone wear a mask.

Thank you for your patience as we continue to follow the CDC recommendations to keep the church family safe.

CARD MINISTRY

We have collected quite a few cards over the years and we would like to see them put to good use! If you would like to be a part of this ministry of sending cards to encourage those who may be sick, or in need of encouragement and a reminder that they are loved, please contact Caitlin Oke at the church office 616-949-1360 or office@cascadechristian.com. You can take a stack of cards home to fill out or set up a time to come in to the church office with some friends to write cards.

CHILDRENS MINISTRIES

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our 9:30 Sunday School (Pre-K - 5th Grade) is moving to a Children's Worship Service model. Starting on October 3rd, kids will start up in the Elementary Room at 9:30. They are no longer coming into the sanctuary with their family. We'll have music and an offering in addition to our lessons, games, and crafts. Parents are asked to pick their kids up from the classroom when the worship service is over.



MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

FALL SUNDAY SCHOOL

We are splitting up Sunday School in the fall! Starting on **September 19th** come and worship with everyone at 9:30 and then join us for Sunday School at 11:00 AM (come right to the youth room!) We will be going through the whole bible this year in Sunday School. We hope to see you there!

YOUNG ADULT

GAYLORD COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

The application is online and available in the church office. Applications are due November 1st, and the scholarship is open to all active church members

GENERAL NEWS

CASCADE HERITAGE DAY

Join Cascade Township for a fun filled day on Saturday, September 25. Many events will be held near the Township Library. Cascade Christian will host an aid station at the 5K race and will have a chapel open house from 10:00AM-2:00PM. To sign up to volunteer, please call the church office.

CRYSTAL CAMP WORKDAYS

All are invited to help close the camp for the winter season at these workdays and times.

- Friday, Saturday, Sunday, September 24-26. Lodging and meals are included for this long weekend. Come for a day, an overnight, or all three days. Volunteers are needed for all levels of work. Contact Camp Manager Eric Strommer at estrommer@uccr.org or Tim Murtaugh at timothydmurtaugh@gmail.com so they can prepare enough food.

RIPPLING HOPE

We would like to include Middle and High school students, parents, and other adult volunteers to represent Cascade Christian in this outreach event. Volunteers will help with yard clean-up, small painting tasks, and other jobs for residents of Detroit. There are also indoor tasks like organization at Rippling Hope's warehouse in the office and storage areas.

October 2nd, Leave from church in early at 7:30 AM, work from about 9:30-4:00, then return home by 6:30-7:00.

Bring; water bottle, bag lunch, and work gloves. If working outside wear closed toe shoes and dress for the weather. Tools will be supplied however you can bring your own yard tools if you prefer.

Contact: Diane Phelps at dianephelps2010@gmail.com, Michael Dirksen at mdirksen@cascadechristian.com, or the church office if you have questions and to RSVP.

DIVERSITY/ ANTI-RACISM GROUP

One of the priorities of the Christian Church Michigan Region is to work together to end racism. The Diversity and Inclusion group of Cascade Christian Church invites everyone to meet on Saturday, October 9 at 9AM in the high school classroom to discuss issues of racism and steps we can take as a church and as individuals to work towards being inclusive. Please contact group leader John Duchon for more information.

FAMILY PROMISE DRIVE BY SAMO

The Social Action and Outreach committee is holding a Family Promise Donation drive October 10-31.

The following items were selected as most needed

- Pam Cooking Spray
- Peanut Butter
- Pasta Sauce
- Popcorn
- Pillows

Collection boxes will be in the church narthex and the church office. Contact Diane Phelps with questions.

DAYS FOR GIRLS WORKSHOP

Assembling, ironing, cutting, and stitching sustainable menstrual kits for young women.

October 16, 1-4

November 20, 1-4

Centennial Hall.

All skill levels, sewers and non-sewers alike. Contact Diane Phelps email dianephelps2010@gmail.com, or call the church office.

OPERATION SANTA CLAUS

Plans are again underway to help families in the coming holiday months as it has for the last 60 years. Last year, we made a plan to safely care for the families in need with gifts of toys and clothes in the pandemic. It worked so well! We are still fighting this virus battle, so we want to continue the processes we tried last year with a few additions.

Our "callers" will again be asked to call the families, gather gift wishes as well as shop, and then deliver the gifts. (We can arrange to have the gifts wrapped if preferred.) Last year, this allowed our callers to 'connect' more with the families and purchase gifts for them, knowing exactly what the parent/guardian shared with them. It was safe as well! We will need many callers, so please consider 'calling' on a family for us. If interested, please contact Peggy Boelkins at 616.889.4431 or email her at pjboelkins@gmail.com

We will be offering wrapping service to all of our callers this year and will be providing a food box for each family. If you would like to wrap on December 10, let Peggy know as well.

ADULT MINISTRIES

ADULT CLASSES

- **Grief Share:**

The Grief Share support group will resume on Thursday, October 7 from 10:00-11:30AM. The support group will meet in person in the Coffee House for 13 sessions, covering all aspects of grieving, using the excellent materials provided by Grief Share. To register contact Jill at jforton@cascadechristian.com or call the church office for more information.

- **Wednesday Night Adult Class: "The Chosen": Begins September 22 at 6:30PM**

Join us for an 8 week session watching the acclaimed series "The Chosen". This amazing series has grasped people's hearts and attention as they see Jesus through the eyes of those who met Him. This series covers the early life of Jesus, his first miracles, and the recruitment of the twelve disciples. This is a fresh look at how Jesus embarks to change the world.

Join us in the adult classroom on the second floor of the Education Building from 6:30-8:00PM. Bring a Bible as we will look at the book of Luke each night to read and study the passages from the movie. Infant and toddler care are available upon request, and children and youth programs are provided.

- **Book Club:**

Our fall book club will be doing a short study of the book "Advocates" by Pastor Dhati Lewis. The book is available at Baker Bookhouse, and the study will be four weeks long. Plan to meet in person, in the coffee house from 11:30AM-12:30PM on Mondays, including September 20, and 27, and October 11 and 18. All are welcomed to join in, and bring your lunch if you're on your noon hour.

9.19.2021 SERMON: COURAGE - LET GOD USE YOU AS YOU ARE

So last week we started a sermon series on Courage and the story of Daniel. These are days that call for courage and for bravery. Bravery is a quick reaction to do something – and I can't help but think of the bravery of our Cascade Fire Chief Adam Magers as he pulled a woman out of a burning house in Ada this week, not geared up, driving his own car, the fire crews already dealing with other emergencies. His bravery and quick action of going in the house saved a life.

Bravery is instinctive, courage is a choice when you face something that is frighteningly difficult, impossible seeming, and you do it anyway. You face your fear, find your courage, and choose to act. I see courage when some of you have gotten a difficult diagnosis and faced the challenge, I see courage in the face and hands of one of our recently widowed women as she comforted her dying husband, I see courage as some of you have returned to classrooms for the first time in months. These are days when we need courage, and courage comes from the heart, it is a choice to act out of love for another. The Old Testament prophet Daniel was a man of courage, and we will spend the next few weeks looking at his challenges and ours, and how God can use us just as we are as we trust God for courage.

Daniel chapter two is about dreams. But a quick bit of background if you missed chapter 1 last week. Daniel and three of his friends have been taken captive from their homeland of Judah and were brought to Babylon to serve as wise men to the king who had conquered their nation of Israel. They knew who they were, and they remained faithful in a completely foreign culture, with different languages, names, gods, food, and customs. Daniel and his friends had the courage to let God use them as they were, even under pressure to conform to what they knew was not right. Daniel's courage and integrity were noted by the King, Nebuchadnezzar, and the king also noted how God had given these young men from Judah exceptional knowledge and understanding, God had even given Daniel the ability to interpret visions and dreams.

So dreams, do you remember your dreams? Dreams can be frustrating, fascinating, memorable, forgettable. But throughout scripture, we see incidents where God uses dreams to speak to His people. I believe God still does. Somehow, we work out things from our day in our sleep, and God can give us insight, directions, even warnings through what our dreams say to us. But dreams are more than what happens at night – dreams can also be our hopes and aspirations, what we work towards becoming. God can use our hopes and dreams to take us as we are and then summon within us all that we can be. God uses dreamers and dreams, and today I want to encourage you to let God use you right now, just as you are.

So King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream – let's see what the second chapter of Daniel has to say: **In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep. 2So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, 3he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means." 4Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it.**

So far, so good. This must be why King Nebuchadnezzar has a team of magicians and enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers. This is their job – to let the king know what his dream meant. I can imagine them settling in – ready to hear the dream and figure out the meaning, hoping to be the smartest one and interpret the dream first. But it wasn't so easy. Not only did they need to interpret the dream, but first they had to tell the king what the dream was. This is impossible. Can you imagine if this was asked this of you? Maybe you'd get a text from a friend – hey I had a bad dream last night – tell me what it was and what it meant! It is laughable – except that a conquering king says you need to do this – or you die.

Here's what happens in Daniel 2:5 and 6, then 10 and 11:

5The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. 6But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

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So there is a lot on the line here – the King isn't subtle – it was do this or die a horrible death. The astrologers try to talk logic to the King, they have to. There is no way they can do what has been asked. **The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. 11What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans."**

This does not sit well with Nebuchadnezzar – he becomes furious and so angry with this answer that he orders the execution of all of the wise men in Babylon, including Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. But Daniel saw the commander of the king's guard who had been ordered to begin the execution, and spoke to him with wisdom and with tact, asking why this harsh decree from the king? The commander explained that this was the king's order, so Daniel courageously went to Nebuchadnezzar. He asked the king for time- time that he, Daniel, might interpret the dream. There is something about Daniel, his courage, his wisdom, his tact, that turns a king from his angry, over the top reaction, to allow some space, some time.

Daniel uses this time well, Daniel 2:17-19 - **Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. 18He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. 19During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven...**

Daniel didn't panic, he didn't consult tea leaves or a crystal ball, he didn't even begin to think of what the king's dream could have been. He simply went home. He explained the situation to his friends, and he asked them to join him in prayer. Together they ask God for mercy. Daniel took his troubles to where the answer was, he took the impossible and laid at the feet of our All Powerful God.

He then does something we all should note. He went to sleep – trusting, secure in the knowledge that this was in the hands of God, and that God would use Daniel and his friends just as they were – and during the night the answer came as a dream, a vision. Daniel knew the king's dream, the mystery of this impossible problem is solved, and Daniel not only knew the dream, but he knew what it meant.

God had given Daniel what he needed, and Daniel thanked and praised God saying in Daniel 2:20-23 - **Praise be to the name of God forever and ever, wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and the light dwells with him. I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made know to me what we asked of you, you made know to us the dream of a king.**

And then Daniel asks the commander who had been ordered to kill him to take him to King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 2:26-36 - **The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?" 27Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, 28but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these: 29"As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. 30As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.**

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Your Majesty looked, and there before you stood a large statue-an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. 32The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, 33its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. 34While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. 35Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth. 36"This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king.

Daniel went on to explain that the golden head of the statue was him - Nebuchadnezzar, that God had given Nebuchadnezzar dominion and power. But after Nebuchadnezzar's reign, weaker kingdoms would come, like lesser metals - silver, bronze, iron, and then the kingdom would divide, some strong as iron, others a brittle as clay. Then the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed - it would end all other kingdoms like the rock in the dream. This is the Kingdom of God, and this Kingdom reigns forever - being the new heaven and the new earth. This is your kingdom, friends, the place where you belong - where you hold citizenship. There is a place built for you in this Kingdom by Jesus Himself, and he has a place for you at the table of the King. Nebuchadnezzar must have been stunned at this discourse from Daniel - this really is what he had dreamed and how had this young Israelite known this? What power was in this man? To know the dream, explain the dream - how could this be? I could imagine Nebuchadnezzar sitting there in uncharacteristic silence, in awe, in wonder as Daniel then said: **"The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."** 46Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. 47The king said to Daniel, **"Surely your God is the God of gods and the LORD of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."**

The mighty ruler of the great Babylonian empire - knelt before a captive in his court, and gave Daniel honor and respect, because Daniel let God use him as he was. Daniel helped Nebuchadnezzar see God's light and truth, and Nebuchadnezzar confessed that Daniel's God is the God of gods, the Lord of Kings, the revealer of mysteries. The king was humbled, and placed Daniel and his friends in positions of honor and authority - Daniel became a ruler of the entire province of Babylon, and had authority over all of the wise men.

So where do you find yourself in this ancient story? Do you identify with the impatient King who wanted answers right now, with the bumbling wise men who try to fake their way out of this dilemma, do you see yourself as the commander asked to do the king's dirty work, or with Daniel and his friends? This is a story of a regular guy - a young man far from home, but he remembered who he was, and he trusted his God, and placed himself in God's hands to be used just as he was. Daniel didn't fake anything, he didn't make things up, he didn't try to be anything other than a servant, open to do God's will. Daniel had courage and integrity, to be himself and to be used for the glory of God. Do you have that kind of courage - to say - here I am God, use me, broken as I am?

We are a church full of regular people, just a bunch of sinners saved by grace through Jesus. But throughout scripture regular people who seek Jesus are changed and challenged and used by God to do things - to build God's Kingdom. And yet, we hesitate, thinking God wants to use me? Not if God knows who I really am with all of my mistakes, addictions, sins, bitterness. But you are not off the hook. Jesus the Carpenter of Nazareth, the sacrificed Savior, invites you to live deeper, fuller, more joyfully - to live abundantly by being a fellow builder. You have God-given graces and talents unlike anyone else hearing this. You are unique, one of a kind, and Jesus looks at you and says, yes, you - join me, let's build together. It may not be something momentous - Mother Teresa reminds us that "We cannot do great things. We can only do little things with great love."

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Let God use you as you are, **first by being honest about your limitations.** You aren't more than God made you to be – and there are things that will come easy to you and things that just aren't in your wheelhouse. That doesn't give you an excuse to sit back and just do the easy – Daniel's life was on the line, and he acted, he prayed, because he knew his limitations and asked God to intercede. When we know our limitations, we know how much we need a Savior, and then we see how God is strong where we are weak.

Second, let God use you as you are by exercise your faith as Daniel did- he believed in God and he trusted God. That is faith, trusting even when you cannot see, believing even in the face of the impossible. Daniel was able to sleep at night, knowing God would bring the answer – it wasn't up to Daniel, all he had to do was have faith, he believed God was in control.

And that is the third point in letting God use you as you are. God is in control, Daniel and his friends pleaded through prayer, and then they waited on the Lord's answer. If God answered with a no or a wait, Daniel would have to accept that – and it takes courage and faith to trust God like this. In our hurried pace of life, in our frustrations, we can learn from Daniel, talk to God, wait for the answer, because God is in control.

And fourth give praise where praise is due. Daniel praised God for the answers God gave, and gave credit to God for the dream and the meaning. Even pagan Nebuchadnezzar praised the God of Daniel. It takes courage and humility to give praise and credit where it is due – and that kind of praise makes you see your dependence on God, makes you see how much you are loved by God, and that can give you courage when the fearful times come.

Friends, take courage, find courage in your heart to be used by God. God has such plans for you, plans to prosper you, plans not to harm you, but to give you hope and a future. That can be hard to accept right now – but it is the truth. This pandemic won't last forever, a better future is coming. As a follower of Jesus Christ you are a child of the King of Heaven, He knows you and loves you just as you are. Put yourself courageously in the path of God, dream God sized dreams, seek God's vision, and God will reveal His plans for you, and use you just as you are. Let's join Jesus in Kingdom building, and let's see where God will take us. Amen and amen.

