



Christ • Communion • Community

CASCADIAN WEEKLY

September 3, 2021

Week 77

A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Cascade Christian Church,

Summer is coming to an end, school has begun, and on Monday we observe Labor Day. We read in Ecclesiastes 3:13: **"And the people should eat and drink and enjoy the fruit of their labors, for these are gifts from God."** While there is much pain and sorrow in the world, we also have so many reasons to give thanks to God. Labor Day became a federal holiday in 1894, a day to celebrate the contributions of the laborers and to give them a day of rest, and there is something deeply scriptural in this idea. In creating the world, God labored, God worked for six days and then rested. Our God is a working God, God did not create the world and then leave this planet to its own devices, no, God has continually been at work in the lives of people. God invites us to work or labor with Him – and each one of us, whatever our age or stage of life, each one of us is a laborer in God's Kingdom.

Have you thought about how your work matters to God? You don't have to work at a church to have your work be part of Kingdom building. The work you do helps sustain God's creation and brings about God's peace. Through your work someone might come to know Jesus as Lord. Think about everything your work does:

- Through your work God meets the needs of people who are of eternal value to Him
- Through your work God meets your own needs and the needs of your family
- Through your work God can provide for the needs of others when you share the fruit of your labor or when you give generously from your abundance
- Through your work you can love God and love your neighbors
- And through your work, you can explore and use the many God given talents you possess.

This Labor Day I give thanks to God for those who are my fellow laborers. The church has always had terrific people working here, and the current staff carries on the mission of Cascade Christian Church with faithfulness and excellence. It is truly a privilege to work with our Minister of Maintenance, Mel Behm, Business Manager Mark Langenbach, High School and Young Adult Ministries Director Michael Dirksen, Children and Middle School Ministries Director Adam Carlson, Office Administrator Caitlin Oke, Worship Leader Jacob Relph, Child Development Center Director Jane Klein, organists Nancy Gaskell and Carol Rienstra, and our crib room and Child Care staffs. It is also an honor and blessing to work with so many volunteers, too numerous to list – but everyone of them a laborer in God's fields.

May you eat and drink and enjoy the fruit of your labors over the holiday weekend, and also remember to give thanks to our Working God who labors on our behalf with grace and goodness.

We will have ONE worship service this Sunday, September 5 and again on September 12 – see you in the sanctuary at 10:30 as we worship as one people.

Keep the faith and God bless you,

Jill

WEEKLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>Sunday (9/5).</u>	Sunday School - 10:30 AM Crib Room - 10:30 AM Worship - 10:30 AM
<u>Monday (9/6).</u>	Labor Day - Office Closed Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Tuesday (9/7).</u>	Men's Group - 6:30 AM (Coffee House)
<u>Wednesday (9/8).</u>	Scouts - 7:00 PM (Centennial Hall) Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Thursday (9/9).</u>	 Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Friday (9/10).</u>	Men's Group - 6:30 AM (Coffee House) Church Office Closed
<u>Saturday (9/11).</u>	Regional Assembly Zoom 10-1:30

Financial giving for
the week ending in
8/29/2021:
Budgeted: \$10,652
Given: \$4,512.91

A MESSAGE ABOUT THE CASCADIAN

If you have any announcements or events that need to be added to the Cascadian, please email them to the church office manager Caitlin Oke, at office@cascadechristian.com, by Tuesday at 9AM of the week that you need them added.

THANK YOU KAREN OOSTEMA

The church joins the Cascade Christian Child Development Center Staff and Board in congratulating Karen Oostema on 20 years of service in the Toddler Room. Karen has been a faithful and loving caregiver and teacher, and has been a joy to the children in her care, to their parents, and to her co-workers. Thank you, Karen, for all of these years of serving and God's blessings to you!



CHILDRENS MINISTRIES

Parents and Families,

Fall programs are almost here! As your Christian Education staff members, Michael and I have been working hard to design some great opportunities for kids of every age to learn about God. Spaces where they'll be met where they're at by Jesus Christ and a caring community of believers. We ask that you join us in faithful prayer for the work God will do in our programs this Fall.

Part of my Fall prep has been engrossing myself in the tradition of prayer throughout the history of the Church (via Michael Counsell's "2000 Years of Prayer"). I find it so uplifting to see the concerns some truly great Church leaders laid before God; they look so much like some of my own. I'm particularly encouraged by leaders who allowed simple things to hold great meaning - such as the desert father Macarius of Egypt (300-391), who, when he was asked, "How should we pray?" responded:

There is no need to speak much in prayer; often stretch out your hands and say, "Lord, as you will and as you know, have mercy on me." But if there is war in your soul, add, "Help me!" and because He knows what we need, he shows mercy on us.

Our younger groups are embracing simplicity this Fall. Our Wednesday night classes are resuming for our Elementary kids, and to celebrate, we've decided to rename that class 'Wednesday Jubilee'. We'll be diving into the simple truth of God's love for us and for the world He created, and we'll have fun doing it.

Some important notes concerning Fall Programs:

- Middle/High Sunday School is being moved to the 11:00 service to allow students to sit in the 9:30 service.
- The crib room will be open every Sunday. On Wednesdays, it will be open as requested.
- Even if your child has attended our programs in the past, we are asking everyone to register so we know we have up-to-date information.

Last but not least: There is so much to be excited for this Fall, but we cannot do it without volunteers.

We strongly urge parents and other adults to get involved with Sunday School, Youth Group, or Wednesday Jubilee. There will be a registration table up in the Narthex a few weeks before our programming begins so parents can sign their family up to participate.

Grace and Peace,

Adam Carlson

Children and Middle School Christian Education
Director

Elementary Programs (Pre-K - 5th)	
Sunday School	Wednesday Jubilee
Sundays 9:30 AM	Wednesdays 6:30 PM
Middle/High Programs (6th - 12th)	
Sunday School	Youth Group
Sundays 11:00 AM	Wednesdays 6:30 PM

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP



MISSION TRIP 2022

We are going to have a meeting about Mission Trip 2022 on **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH** in High School Room immediately following the Unity Service. Bring your questions, comments, and get excited for a lifechanging trip!

WEDNESDAY NIGHT YOUTH GROUP

Wednesday Night Youth Group will be starting up once again on September 15th. Come ready to learn more about God, play some wacky games, and have a good time with all the people here in 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!

WORLD NEWS

CARIBBEAN CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION - NORA LEON

The news out of Haiti has been heart breaking as the area that Nora serves, Les Cayes, has been hit by an earthquake, a tropical storm, and then the aftershocks of the earthquake. On Sunday, August 29 Nora gave us an up to date account of the devastation in Les Cayes and Ile a Vache, and how great the need is for water, food, and shelter. A free will offering was taken, and the church gave \$2345.54. Our Social Action and Mission Outreach Committee urges everyone to dig deep and give to Caribbean Children's Foundation as they seek to help the children and families where the earthquake hit. You can give online and/or send a check to the church. Thank you for your generosity.

TOWNSHIP NEWS

CASCADE HERITAGE DAY

Cascade Heritage Day is a daylong event on September 25th, celebrating Cascade Township. There will be a 5K race in the morning, a corn hole tournament in the afternoon, and evening food trucks and a beer tent near Cascade Township Library.

Cascade Christian is hosting an open house in the chapel from 10:00AM-2:00PM with refreshments, and displays of Cascade Christian's early history. We are also hosting an aid station at the end of the race. If you would like to help at either event, please call the church office.

ADULT MINISTRIES

REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Annual Regional Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Michigan Region is scheduled as a Zoom meeting on Saturday, September 11. Cascade Christian Church will be well represented by the following delegates and participants:

Pastor Armand Aronson, Pastor Kathy Bird DeYoung, Adam Carlson, Michael Dirksen, Steve Dirksen, John Duchon, Barb Dykhuizen, Chuck Dykhuizen, Pam Dykhuizen, Amber Elliott, Pastor Jill Forton, Diane Phelps, and Board Chair Jeff VanStrien.

The business agenda will include two major votes – to be regional partners with the Christian Church of Illinois and Wisconsin, and to call Reverend Teresa Dulyea Parker to be our new Regional Minister when Reverend Eugene James retires in December.

For more information on this event please go to michigandisciples.org or come to the church office to see a paper copy of the business docket. Registration is open until September 9, and please call the church office if you would like to be registered for this Zoom meeting.

UNITY SERVICE AND ALL CHURCH PICNIC

The church will have one worship service on Sunday, September 12 at 10:30 for our annual Unity Service. This will be followed by a boxed lunch, catered by Capriotti's. If you would like to volunteer for this wonderful picnic, please contact Gail Duchon or call the church office.

MEN'S RETREAT AT CAMP CRYSTAL

Men can still register for the September 17-19 Men's retreat at Crystal. Please go to campcrystal.org to register, and church has scholarships for those who would like to attend. The deadline to sign up is September 12.

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 in the morning, work from about 9:30-4:00, then return home by 6:30-7.

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.

DAYS FOR GIRLS WORKSHOP

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

September 18, 1-4

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.

8.22.2021 SERMON: SURVIVOR STORIES: JOB

This summer we have been spending time in the Old Testament, looking at some of the stories of the Bible that maybe you haven't thought about much since you were a Sunday School kid. All of the people of the Old Testament share a common denominator in their stories- they all point ahead to Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Joseph's story spoke to us of forgiveness and grace, Noah's story is one of obedience, and Abraham's story is of faithfulness and trust. None of these men were perfect, their sins and flaws are right there in scripture, yet each one of them got through incredibly difficult times, and by the grace and guidance of God, so shall we.

Does it feel like every week this summer has brought more and more challenges? The photos here are from the last week - the flooding in Tennessee that killed so many people, the situation at the Kabul airport, the loss of 13 of our service members and the death and wounding of so many in Afghanistan, the aftermath of the hurricane and earthquake in Haiti, the other hurricanes and tropical storms hitting the south and the Atlantic coast, the increase of covid and the delta variant. I should have added the continuing wildfires throughout the west, and even on Isle Royal in Lake Superior. If you are feeling anxious or are experiencing defeat, you are not alone. Today we are going to look at another Old Testament story of someone who got through the most difficult of times, the story of Job, one that you probably heard little of back in Sunday School. It isn't an easy story at all, but Job's story encourages us to persevere, to get through, and to realize that God is there in the pain, uncertainty, and chaos.

Job was able to persevere through his trials not because of his own strength or resolve, but rather because of what he knew about God, and that is that God is 100% in control, God is 100% good, and God never makes a mistake. Most of you are probably at least somewhat familiar with the story of Job's journey, but let's go ahead review it together and see what we can learn along the way.

Job was blameless, an upright kind of guy who feared God and shunned evil. He was a wealthy man, with a big family, called the greatest man among all of the people of the east. In chapter one read of a conversation God has with Satan. Satan claims that Job is only religious because God has blessed him. So God, knowing from the beginning that Job is going to pass the test, gives Satan permission to attack Job. But God puts clear limits on exactly what Satan is allowed to do. This reaffirms that God is 100% in control. Satan can only do what God permits him to do and no more.

So it begins, and this is harsh - Satan kills Job's children and destroys all his wealth, thinking that would make Job curse God. But Job doesn't - here is how Job responds in his devastation: Job 1:20-22 **20 At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship 21 and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised." 22 In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.**

So Satan returns to God again and this time gets permission to afflict Job with sores from head to foot. Job's wife encouraged Job to curse God and die. But again, Job refuses to charge God with wrong. At that point, Job's three friends hear of his predicament and they came together to comfort Job. And for seven days they just sit with Job without uttering a word. And that was the best thing they did - sometimes we need to simply practice the ministry of presence, just to be with another person, not trying to fix things or explain stuff away, but to just be there.

8.22.2021 SERMON: SURVIVOR STORIES: JOB

Job finally speaks and laments the day of his birth. And then for the next 28 chapters, we read the conversation that occurs between Job and his three friends. Their attitudes mirror how some people cope with the tragedies we live in, let me summarize the approach that each of his three friends takes here:

The first friend to speak is Eliphaz who claims to speak absolute truth and offers the idea of retribution – that God punishes the sinner and rewards the righteous. Eliphaz sees Job as a pious man gone astray. His basic message to Job is this: if you repent, then this illness will go away and God's blessings will return. Maybe we've been an Eliphaz. It can be hard, even awkward to see another person in their suffering, we don't know what to do or say, especially when they are hurting, so we sometimes use spiritual language at them and hope it will help. Maybe this has happened to you- someone has told that if you just clean up your life or have enough faith, then God will take away the pain and restore His blessings. But that approach brought absolutely no comfort to Job, and it may not comfort people today either.

Bildad is the next friend who speaks, and he too has the idea that all suffering is a result of sin. But he adds to Job's suffering by proclaiming that Job's children died because they, too, were guilty of sin and warns Job that unless he repents, he will suffer the same fate. For Bildad, even the fact that Job questions God's actions is evidence of his wickedness. Bildad's approach is not all that different than Eliphaz's, but he is even less compassionate and views Job as inherently evil, rather than a pious man gone astray. Unfortunately, there are still people like that, who think they are called to judge others, and if something is wrong in your life it is your fault- God is punishing you. But often those same people fail to recognize their own sin, and even if they do pause long enough to remove the log from their own eye, they might wave it in judgment at another person. Not surprisingly, they bring little comfort.

The third friend is Zophar. He presumes to speak for God, sees things as black and white, and he tells Job how things really are. He does this without compassion or love, without really seeing Job's suffering. Again, we have a lot of Zophar's in the world today. They claim to know the mind of God in every situation, so they alone can present the solution to one's suffering. But Job is not comforted at all by his three friends.

There is a younger man, listening into this conversation -Elihu – who does not picture God as an angry judge, but rather as a merciful Savior and he goes on to explain that sometimes God uses suffering to reveal sin, even in a righteous person. But the greatest contribution Elihu makes is that he prepares Job to listen to God in the last part of the book.

At the beginning in chapter 38, God has had enough of the friends and their explanations, and God speaks directly to Job, reminding Job that God is infinitely powerful and that His ways and thoughts are higher than Job's. God tells Job to brace himself like a man, that Job has spoken without knowledge – and Job is immediately humbled and silenced in the presence of God. I would encourage you to read Job 38-42 today – God's words here are a powerful reminder of who God is, what God does, what God knows. God speaks of His own wisdom and knowledge over all things, from the angels, to the constellations, to the paths of lightning bolts, to the lives of animals. God's mighty power is on full display – and Job gets it. At the beginning of this book Job had it all, then he lost it all, now he gains more than he ever had. Job's response is this: Job 42:1-3 **Then Job replied to the Lord: 2 "I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted. 3 You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.**

8.22.2021 SERMON: SURVIVOR STORIES: JOB

It is only after hearing from God that Job realizes that he and his friends have been asking the wrong questions all along and Job teaches us this lesson: **When we persevere through trials, what matters is Who we know, not what we know.** Many of you are asking “Why?” in the troubles we are in – are these the end times

– why is God letting all of this happen? If anyone could answer that, they would be co-equal with God. You will not find the answers on tv, or in a newspaper, or from a podcast. What matters is Who you know. If you don’t know God, if you don’t have a foundation in Jesus, there is no hope for you, there won’t be hope in you. You’ll be like Job’s friends – trying to mansplain God.

God’s ways are above us, sometimes beyond our human capacity to comprehend. But that doesn’t mean God is absent, no, God is always on the move for our good, even on our pain and suffering. No purpose of God can be thwarted.

This is a hard book of the Bible, and not one for a children’s bedtime story. But for people who are struggling with the complexities of life- this book has much to say. It speaks to the struggling faith of sufferers, to people who sit close to suffering – and they are all around us: the people who work covid units in hospitals, our police officers and firefighters, hospice chaplains, the men and women who are serving in Afghanistan and the families of the 13 who lost their lives this week, the Nora’s of the world who are on the front lines of the suffering of the poor, the many people in our church family who have buried a loved one this summer, the parents who worries for their estranged child, the school teacher caught in masking or not, when all she or he wants to do is teach, the student who is facing their third year of disrupted school. Sufferers, this book is for you - and Job tells us hope comes when we persevere with Who we know – and that is a God who is 100% good, 100% in control, our God who does not make mistakes. With that God, with a foundation in Christ, we can persevere – and survive, **together**, by God’s grace.

Nora shared the Apostle Paul’s words that ring very true – sufferers – as hard as it can be – be joyful in hope, be patient in affliction, and be faithful in prayer. You are not alone, persevere friends, because God knows you, and you’ll survive these tough times because you know God. Amen and amen.

