



CASCADIAN WEEKLY

April 23, 2021

Week 59

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JILL

Dear Cascade Christian Church,

I read an article recently that described peace as "faith resting." It is hard to find inner peace right now, and as I visit with many of you, I know that hurt, worry, anxiety, and uncertainty fill your days and keep you up at night. So, how do we find peace in a world that is divided, in a pandemic that is well in to a second year, in a time of such loss?

We find peace when we recognize that God never leaves us. God did not cause or unleash the problems and sorrows around us, and He will not leave us in the messes of this world on our own. God is always there, just a prayer away, and gave us His Spirit to guide us through whatever the world throws at us.

We find peace when we have faith in God, knowing God does not make mistakes. God is Creator, Maker of all things, all powerful, and all knowing. Our God who has the whole world and the rest of the universe in His hands, is in control. Yes, hurt and pain may be coming at you, but God is coming after you with a perfect plan, plans made just for you. As Peter learned from Jesus at the breakfast on the beach in John 21 – just follow Jesus, and that plan will be laid at your feet.

We find peace when we trust God. This is easy to say, and sometimes hard to do. Can you release your worries to God? Think about how wonderful it would be to worry less, to laugh at the dark days, to walk in the light, dance in the rain, and embrace the love of God all around you. Worry is a choice, but so is trust. God will carry our worries when we give them to Him and trust Him for the outcome. The prophet Isaiah wrote: "Surely the Lord is my salvation; I will trust and I will not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song: He has become my salvation." (Isaiah 12:2) Jesus is our salvation. Salvation means deliverance from sin and its consequences, and it also means deliverance from harm, ruin, or loss. Another way to say this is that Jesus is our lifeline.

Jesus never promised an easy life for His followers, in fact He tells us to pick up our cross and follow Him. Peter learned at the beach breakfast that Jesus had work for him to do. Peter had a full life, did incredible miracles in the name of Jesus, wrote part of the Bible, and yet, even Peter, who was the Rock that the church was built on, had to pick up his cross. Peter, the other Apostles, and Paul all had trials to face and they knew pain and sorrow, but they put their worry with God. They followed and served, and then let Jesus carry what they could not. What could have crushed them, was lifted off their shoulders by our Savior who carries all of our crosses.

My prayer for each of you in your trials is that you find peace, and that you can rest in faith. God is getting us through. God always has, and God always will. May the peace of God be with you always.

Keep the faith and love your neighbor, Jill

WEEKLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>Sunday</u> (4/25).	Sunday School - 9:30 AM Worship - 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM
<u>Monday</u> (4/26).	Soul Warmers - 8:00 PM (Narthex)
<u>Tuesday</u> (4/27).	Women's Bible Study "You'll Get Through This" (Centennial Hall) - 9:00 AM
<u>Wednesday</u> (4/28).	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> (4/29).	Griefshare (Zoom) - 10:30 AM
<u>Friday</u> (4/30).	Church Office Closed
<u>Saturday</u> (5/1).	Yard Work Day - 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Financial giving
for the week
ending in
4/18/2021:
Budgeted: \$8,432
Given: \$11,119.20

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 -- contact Adam or Michael in the church office or via email at office@cascadecatholic.com.



MULCHING & YARD WORK DAY

Please join us on May 1 from 9:00 AM-12:00PM for a mulching and yard work day! Things to bring include; Work gloves, shovel, rake, tarps, leaf blowers, if you have them. Not to worry if you don't, we will have extra. All ages are welcome!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED MONDAY MORNINGS

Do you like counting, paying attention to detail, and Cascade Christian Church? If you answered yes to this question, then have we got the volunteer opportunity for you! We are in need of some volunteers to help us count up the offering money Monday mornings. Please contact the church office and ask for Lois if you are able to help!

CAMP CRYSTAL

June 20-25 Elementary Camp
July 6-9 Day Camp
July 11-17 Middle School Camp
July 11-17 High School Camp
July 18-24 Family Camp

All registrations will be online this year.
Check the website for details



CAMP SUNDAY & OPEN REGISTRATION - APRIL 25TH

Sunday April 25th will be Camp Sunday. We will be highlighting all the programming that we have going on up at Camp this summer and reminding you to register.. There will be a registration table in the back to help you register and apply for scholarships. If you need help registering, come on the 25th or stop in and see Michael in the church office on Wednesday's from 1pm-5pm.

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.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

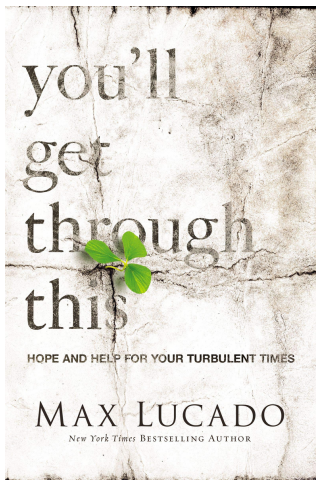
SUNDAY SCHOOL VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

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.



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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 chapel is currently not equipped for live streaming.. Dick Byerly, Jacob Relph, Tim Hartley, Mel Behm, and Mark Langenbach have all been working to change this! The equipment is on its way and we are ready to install it. Our hope is to have this finished and ready to go mid-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 looks forward to getting our people back to our wonderful Chapel.

GRADUATION SUNDAY

If you know a senior who would want to participate in our Graduation Sunday Service, please reach out to Michael at mdirksen@cascadecatholic.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.



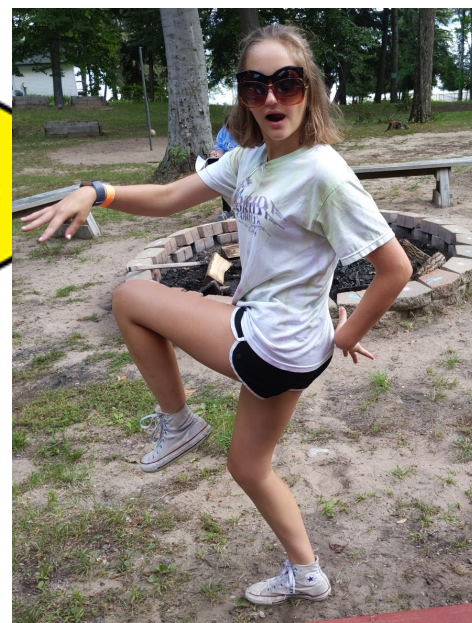
MAY 2ND - CRAIGS CRUISERS

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.



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!

4.18.2021 SERMON: LORD, WHAT ABOUT HIM?

The Book of John describes the Lord's breakfast. We just celebrated the Lord's Supper, and communion is at the center of our worship. But this other meal, the last breakfast of Jesus is important as well. How many of you think breakfast is the best meal of the day? Nutritionists tell us how important breakfast is- but we often eat this meal alone, it is our least social of meals. But great things can happen over breakfast, and it is beloved by many. At the time of Jesus, people ate two meals a day, so I can imagine the disciples enjoyed breakfast with their Lord as they had been working all night and had to be hungry. This meal happens after Jesus has risen and appeared to His disciples twice, and this was over a week since Easter, over a week after Easter. Listen to what John wrote concerning this morning meal in John 21: 1-25.

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you."

So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.



Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?"

"No," they answered.

He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

4.18.2021 LORD, WHAT ABOUT HIM?

Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

This last breakfast was nothing elaborate, but imagine if you will, the smells, the air, the taste. It is early morning, the smoke of the woodfire is pleasantly fragrant. The smell of the fish cooking in the coals is mouthwatering, the bread looks crispy and warm.

To be able to join your friends around this campfire and eat out in the fresh air after a long night's work would be a pure delight. Food had already been part of the resurrection appearances of Jesus: Jesus broke the bread at Emmaus and asked for a piece of broiled fish in his Easter day greeting to the disciples in the upper room. Now Jesus eats again with His people, and the Lord Himself is both the chef and the host of this simple feast.

This is such a wonderful picture of Jesus. He just helped his disciples catch 153 large fish with no torn nets, and, even though He is Lord of all creation, he stoops to cook breakfast for His friends. The Lord's supper had been prepared by others, but the Lord's last breakfast is prepared by Jesus Himself. Wrap your heart around this – the King of Kings guts fish, kneads dough, makes a fire, fries up breakfast for a sleepy bunch of grimy fishermen.

It is interesting that none of them dared ask who He was – they knew, and yet this is still not the Jesus they expect. He mystifies them – there is no big teaching at this meal like there was on the road to Emmaus – Jesus simply says – "Come have breakfast" – come and get it. Why does Jesus do this? The ascension of Jesus is coming soon – so, why this breakfast picnic on the beach? Shouldn't He be in Jerusalem, dazzling and terrifying the people who killed him? There is something profound going on here – Jesus is clearly the Son of God and He is still one of us. The humanity of Jesus survived death as well as his deity. Jesus appreciates the common place in our lives, the simple pleasures, the little joys that make life worthwhile. Jesus understands us, is one of us and is with us. Peter quickly finds that to be true:

4.18.2021 LORD, WHAT ABOUT HIM?

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

Let's step back here a moment and remember when Jesus had been betrayed and arrested. Peter had followed at a distance and had crept into Caiaphas's courtyard where he was recognized - 3 times. First, he denied knowing Jesus, then he denied knowing Jesus with an oath, then he denied knowing Jesus with a curse that he be eternally damned if he knew Jesus. Strong stuff - and Peter was deeply ashamed of what he had done in these three denials.

So here, on the beach, in a post-breakfast conversation, I can imagine Peter and Jesus walking away from the others a bit, sitting on a log or rocks at the water's edge and talking. I wonder if Peter was squirming inside a bit, did he know this conversation was coming? Did he bring it up first - did he apologize?

Earlier, in the first section of this scripture Peter did a couple of things that make me pause and wonder - first, it was Peter's idea to go fishing - he was still being a leader, and looking out for the other guys, he was keeping the group together. Second, Peter was humbled enough to throw the nets in one more time when the stranger on the beach told him to, and humble enough to listen to John when John was the first to recognize Jesus on the shore.

Then Peter did two remarkable things- first he put on his outer garment - his robe, then jumped in the water and swam to shore. Doing this, getting dressed even when he will get soaking wet, is a sign of respect and honor to his Lord. Rather than sulking in the back of the boat or avoiding Jesus in his shame, Peter jumped in to face what must be faced. Second, he got back to the boat that had been drawn up to shore to help haul in the fish. And I love the detail of 153 fish, and not just fish, but large fish, and then the men eat together.

4.18.2021 LORD, WHAT ABOUT HIM?

Afterwards Peter and Jesus talk, just the two of them, maybe they sit together in a bit of silence, maybe with a smile of understanding and friendship. Peter's actions before breakfast reflected his desire to show he is with Jesus, he is trying hard, he is trying to hold it together. Jesus saw all of this, and gave Peter exactly what Peter needed, another chance. In perfect balance with Peter's three denials, Jesus asked three times- Do you love me? Three to three. Three opportunities to say, yes, Lord, I know you, I love you, I will serve you. Jesus knows that there are times when all of us need a chance to truly repent, to not be let off easy, to do that hard work of looking within, seeing our fault and brokenness, asking for forgiveness, then to receive the deepest joy of being forgiven and being allowed to make things right again. Peter is back in, he's reinstated. And Jesus tells him there is a lot of living ahead, that Peter will grow old in the Lord's service, that he will be the rock on whom the church is built, and that even Peter's death will bring God glory.

What a lot for Peter to take in! Jesus has forgiven him, and has amazing work for Peter to do - I can imagine Peter looking around, the sun is up, the fish are drying on the beach, his best friends are nearby, everyone has a full stomach, the breeze is coming off the lake, it is a perfect morning - Christ is before him and all is right in the world. But then... well, Peter sees John...

Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?"

Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"

Peter looked around on this perfect morning - and saw John. John was following them, walking the beach himself, trying to listen in? I don't know. But Peter noticed him. John refers to himself as the disciple Jesus loved. Did that get under Peter's skin? John refers to himself as leaning on Jesus at Last supper - you lean on only your closest friends - Jesus and John were close at the Last supper - was Peter feeling jealous of John? So Peter asks - Lord, what about him?

Jesus's reply may seem harsh: If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me. Peter is playing one of the evil one's most destructive games - comparison. We know that game. What about him? What about her? What about them? Have any of us not been guilty of comparison? It is a major issue with good Christian people. We think we are just that - good, Christian people, so good things and great things are what we expect because we are good followers. And then someone we wouldn't think is quite as good as us has something we want, or someone gets attention we think we deserve, or someone else gets credit for something we did, it doesn't sit well.

4.18.2021 LORD, WHAT ABOUT HIM?

We compare our worthiness to theirs, and it is hard to admit this – but we think that we are better, and God had better notice. Lord, what about him? Lord, what about her? We march right up to God– thinking God needs our help in judging, that there might be something about that other person that God ought to know. We, friends, have a little bit of Peter in us.

God never asked us to play the comparison game – and certainly doesn't need our help in judging the lives of another. Jesus made it clear to Peter, stay in your own lane – and that if He, Jesus, had other plans for John, that wasn't for Peter to know. On this side of heaven we have a limited revelation of what God plans for us – and that has to be enough – with what we have and know, we walk by faith and not by sight. God doesn't explain everything right now, and thank God that He doesn't. But remember too, that He tells us what we need to know, and then wants us to lean into Him in trust for the rest.

Jesus tells Peter all that Peter needs to know, and to be sure Peter gets it right, Jesus repeats himself. In John 21: 19 Peter hears what he needs to hear. Jesus says, **“Follow me”** and in verse 22 **“You must follow me.”** What will happen to John will happen to John. The command to Peter is to follow, wherever Jesus will lead.

There is a little of Peter in all of us. And his honesty, his willingness to share his brokenness, makes Peter a rock for the church. In this breakfast conversation we can learn from Peter these lessons:

- **Don't ask- what am I missing?** – If you keep walking with Jesus, you won't miss a thing. If someone has more, is doing more, has a life you think you should have, talk to God about this. Seek and search for God's plans for you, and you won't miss out.
- **Don't ask- what's in it for me?** This question only leads to trouble. If it is about you, it will be only about you, and your life is going to get lonely and derailed pretty quickly. Jesus constantly taught and modeled servanthood – and in one of the last acts he does for his disciples, he cooks breakfast. A very humble thing to do. He who is the greatest is the servant of all. There is no room for “what's in it for me?” among servants. We serve out of love, or we might as well not serve at all.
- **And we don't ask – what about him or her?** We still think that, or ask that. If we are so focused on someone else, we will miss out on how much God loves us and them. Don't compare, accept that God has a plan for you, and God's plans are always good. Jesus pretty much told Peter to mind his own business about John, and we would do well to do the same.

John concludes his gospel with these amazing verses:

This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.

4.18.2021 LORD, WHAT ABOUT HIM?

Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

John verifies that he is speaking the truth, and that there is a lot more that could be said and written about Jesus. But for now, we walk by faith, we live our own story, and we encourage the stories of others. Like Peter, we are invited to follow, like Peter and John, Jesus has plans for us, Jesus is on the move, and we can be too if we just follow. I close with this story of following Jesus:

William Borden was the heir to the Borden Dairy fortune, and he graduated from high school in 1904 as a millionaire. For one of his graduation presents, William's parents gave him a 10-month trip around the world. But traveling through Asia, the Middle East, and Europe gave William a heart for the hurting people of the world.

William wrote home and said, "I'm going to give my life to prepare for the mission field." And he wrote two words in the back of his Bible: NO RESERVES. After he graduated from Yale, William turned down some high-paying job offers, and he added two more words in his Bible: NO RETREATS. Then, when he finished seminary at Princeton, William sailed for China to spread the hope of the Gospel, stopping first in Egypt for preparations. There he was stricken with spinal meningitis, and died within a month. William's life may seem like a waste in the eyes of the world. But when his friends leafed through William's Bible, they found two more words he had written in the back: NO REGRETS.

William Borden's devotion to our Lord is inspiring - NO RESERVES. -NO RETREATS. -NO REGRETS. That kind of living doesn't leave much room for, "Lord, what about him?" and instead opens us up wide to the great invitation Jesus gave to Peter and gives to you - "Follow Me!" Amen and amen.

