



Christ • Communion • Community

CASCADIAN WEEKLY

August 6, 2021

Week 72

A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Cascade Christian Church,

As we continue our study of Joseph in Genesis, I am constantly amazed at the relevance and timeliness of his story. Joseph lived in a time of a global disaster, a time of division, a time of distrust, a time of dysfunction. Yet Joseph constantly looked to God, whether he was in the pit, the prison, or the palace. As a prince of Egypt, Joseph could have turned his back on God and worshipped one or all of the numerous gods of Egypt, but he didn't. He stayed true to who he was and remained faithful to the God of his fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Joseph knew that God had saved him and brought him to Egypt to preserve and protect God's people.

In the uncertain times, we live in, we would be wise to remember this amazing, faithful man who lived 3600 years ago. God is still present; God is still faithful. God continues to provide for us in the pandemic. God has not left us, and God never will.

I know that many of you are living with challenges right now - the loss of a loved one, separation from families, financial challenges, the difficulties of finding employees or employment, and the struggles of health issues. Joseph reminds us again and again, that whatever we are going through, God will get us through this. I encourage you to memorize Max Lucados' wonderful affirmation of hope and confidence in our Lord and God: **With God's help, I'll get through this. It won't be painless. It won't be quick. But God will use this mess for good. In the meantime, I won't be foolish or naïve. But I won't despair either. With God's help, I will get through this.**

And as an encouragement, please join us this Sunday for a showing of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat" - our own production from 2004, this Sunday, in the sanctuary at 1:00 PM.

God bless you and keep the faith,

Jill

LOCKING & UNLOCKING DOORS AT CASCADE

We have a new key system! There are a few things that you need to know about the new key system so we can be sure we are all safe and the buildings are secure:

- The traditional keys are no longer going to work for entering buildings.
- Make sure the door is shut tightly behind you. (important for the sanctuary!)
- Please **DO NOT** open buildings with traditional keys because if the doors are not relocked with those keys, the doors will remain open and not secure.
- Please **DO NOT** keep doors from locking by using special keys on the interior handles.
- If you need to schedule doors to be locked and unlocked, please contact the church office, and speak with Mark Langenbach, our Business Manager.

WEEKLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<u>Sunday</u> _(8/8).	Sunday School - 9:30 AM Crib Room - 9:30 AM Worship - 9:30 AM, 11:00 AM Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat -- 1:00 PM (Sanctuary)
<u>Monday</u> _(8/9).	Soul Warmers - 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House) Worship Committee Meeting - 5:30 PM (Zoom)
<u>Tuesday</u> _(8/10).	Men's Group - 6:30 AM (Coffee House) Funeral for Guy Chandler in the Chapel Lunch for Guy Chandler Social Action Mission Outreach Committee - 6:30 PM (Zoom)
<u>Wednesday</u> _(8/11).	Scouts - 7:00 PM (Centennial Hall) Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Thursday</u> _(8/12).	Administration Committee Meeting - 9:30 AM (Zoom) Alcoholics Anonymous - 8:00 PM (Coffee House)
<u>Friday</u> _(8/13).	Men's Group - 6:30 AM (Coffee House) Church Office Closed
<u>Saturday</u> _(8/14).	

Financial giving for
the week ending in
8/1/2021:

Budgeted: \$10,652

Given: \$12,942.36

JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAM COAT

On August 8 Pastor Jill will be concluding the sermon series on Joseph. We will be having a special showing of our church production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat" from the year 2004! We will show this in the sanctuary at 1:00 PM - and invite everyone to this celebration.

If you know any of the people who were in the production, please invite them! The cast included: Elise Witt, Dan Hazlett, Aaron Lawrence, Gabby Grady, Felicia Hekman, Jami Schaefer, Kat Maile, Tim Reusch, Camille Page, Quentin Calmet, Allie Hartley, Katelyn Talsma, Tom Sahajdack, Alex Belding, Mike Scott, Ana Rodriguez, Chelsea Oberlin, Chloe Page, Jordan Murray, Doug Eck, Michael Dirksen, Emily Mowers, Jen Groot, Stephanie Jones, Abby Wills, Kelly Gormley, Kat Wirth, and Audrey Belding, as well as our children's choir.

CHILDRENS MINISTRIES

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. Call the church office by Wednesday to make your reservation.



SUNDAY SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

WE ARE RETURNING TO OUR REGULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM. That means we need Sunday School teachers. Over the summer we are going to continue to do a combined class, but in the fall we will once again continue differentiated learning. Whether you have a kid in Sunday School or not, we need your help! Contact the church office for more details.

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!



VOLUNTEERING WITH YOUTH

As we begin to look at ministry here after COVID, distinct middle school and high school youth groups, and differentiated learning at Sunday School in the fall. In order to do all of that, we are in **need** of some parent volunteers to help us out. If this is an area where you may have an interest in helping, please send an email to Michael Dirksen at mdirksen@cascadechristian.com. No need to have kids in the program! All volunteers need to be screened before they are able to help.

ADULT MINISTRIES

FUNERAL FOR GUY CHANDER

The congregation is invited to the memorial service of Guy Chandler on Tuesday, August 10th at 11:00AM. The service will be in the chapel, and will be followed by lunch in Centennial Hall. Guy Chandler was a long time member at Cascade Christian before moving to Traverse City. Our sympathy to Guy's wife Katie, and to their children Greg and Jill and their families.

FAMILY POOL PARTY

We have a family pool party on Sunday, August 15th at 1:00 PM at the Duchon's house. Please come and enjoy the last bits of summer before the kids go back to school and enjoy the pool, patio, and large backyard space before summer ends.

COLLEGE BOX MINISTRY

For those of you who have participated in the College Mail ministry in the past, expect a letter from Marsha Steensma here shortly seeing if you would like to participate once again this year! For those of you who are new and would like to sponsor a child, grandchild, relative or friend who is in college, please contact the Church office or Marsha Steensma to get your name added to the list. This ministry will start up once again in September. Thanks for all your support!

RETREATS AT CAMP CRYSTAL



WOMEN'S RETREAT

Join the women of the Michigan Region in a three day retreat called "I Have Called You By Name" based on Isaiah 43:1. Keynote speakers are the Reverends Brenda Etheridge and Shirley Martinson. Opportunities for sightseeing, golf, or shopping will be part of the fun. Please contact Jill at the church office for more information or if you would like to go to this retreat.

MEN'S RETREAT

Join the men of the Michigan Region for three days of camp with keynote speaker Alex Ruth on "Beyond Brotherhood: Developing Life-giving Relationships with Men." Opportunities for fishing, golf, and a camp work project are also part of the weekend. Call the church office for more information.

8.1.2021 SERMON: THE PRINCE IS OUR BROTHER

This summer we've been looking at the story of Joseph in the Old Testament. This story is 3600 years old, but it remains relevant and fresh because of the human struggles that we see in the family of Jacob. More importantly, God shows us how this dysfunctional family comes together, and how God makes them into a great nation that will eventually lead to Jesus Christ Himself. If you've been here the last few weeks, you'll recall Jacob had 12 sons by 4 different women, and Jacob favored his 11th son Joseph, the firstborn of his favorite wife, Rachel. Naturally, this led to jealousy, and when the opportunity came Joseph's 10 older brothers sold him into slavery and told their father Jacob that Joseph had died in an animal attack, bringing back Joseph's robes stained with goat blood as proof. Jacob was heartbroken, and the brothers lived with that lie for 20 years. Joseph was enslaved in Egypt but always knew God was with him. God gave him the ability to interpret Pharaoh's dream, which meant that 7 good years of harvest and 7 years of famine were coming. Pharaoh appointed Joseph to manage the preparations for the famine, making him second only to Pharaoh and lived well. Joseph went from slavery to being a respected ruler, a man of wealth and power, a Prince of Egypt. He put his former life behind him, choosing to forget about his family back in Canaan.

The famine came, and his brothers traveled to Egypt to buy food. In several dramatic encounters, Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not know who he was. He tested them - repeatedly to see if their hearts had changed, and the brother who treated him the worst was the brother who would give his life for another. Joseph saw that his brothers had changed - and Joseph wept. He cried so loudly that his sobs were heard throughout the palace, and then Joseph choked out the words- "I am Joseph. Is my father still living?" His brothers were terrified - the prince is their brother. But Joseph assured them he meant them no harm, they were to go back to Canaan, get Father Jacob and their families, and come and live in Egypt. And they did- that is where we left them last week, going home to get Jacob, but going home well cared for - with abundant food, money, livestock, new clothing, and carts to use on the move to Egypt. Joseph's parting words to them were - Don't quarrel along the way. Hurry back, bring Dad, let the family reunion happen soon.

Reunions are important. The chance for people to meet again after their absence is a blessing and a joy. We have had so many months apart - it is wonderful to be able to be together - to worship together, to sing together, to have VBS, to have the potluck, to be a church family again. I hope you're experiencing some reunions as well. John and Annie Glenn are great examples of how important reunions are. John Glenn's a famous, brave, talented man, beloved by our nation as a young astronaut, respected as he served for several decades in the Senate, and then inspiring us yet again taking a flight on the space shuttle when he was 77 years young. But for all of his courage, there was something John could never do - and that was say the word "goodbye" to his wife Annie. They knew each other all of their lives, saying they met in a playpen as their families were friends. John grew to be class valedictorian and a three-sport athlete. Things were not easy for Annie; she had a stutter that made it so 85% of what she tried to say could not be spoken. They married in 1943 and John went on to serve as a pilot in WW2 and Korea. Goodbye was a word that neither of them could or would say - so John would tell Annie he was going to the store to get a pack of gum, and she would reply - don't be long - that was their way of saying goodbye - whether John was headed into a conflict or into outer space.

Eventually, speech therapy helped Annie overcome her stutter. Her famous husband was often called a hero, but he would always reply that he was married to one. Even on John's last flight - he would not say goodbye as he entered the shuttle, he used his line again - he was going to the store to buy a pack of gum, and this time he gave her a pack of gum, and she kept it close until he safely returned.

Annie and John Glenn know what we all know - it's hard to say goodbye. We were not created to say goodbye. God created us to be eternal beings in a garden of paradise, but our first parents chose to disobey God, sin entered the world, and we have had to make too many goodbyes in our lifetimes. The teary goodbye of a little girl as her daddy dropped her off at VBS, needing the reassurance that daddy would come back. The tears in a mother's eyes as she drops her son off at college. The tears shed at a funeral home, a hospital bed, the tears as a daughter or son, husband or wife deploys to serve our nation - goodbyes are hard. We don't like to be parted from those we love.

But with God's help, we get through those partings, those goodbyes. I invite you once again to read aloud with me Max Lucado's affirmation of hope and confidence that God gets us through the hard parts of life, including goodbyes: **With God's help, I'll get through this. It won't be painless. It won't be quick. But God will use this mess for good. In the meantime, I won't be foolish or naïve. But I won't despair either. With God's help, I will get through this.**

8.1.2021 SERMON: THE PRINCE IS OUR BROTHER

In Joseph's story, there never was the opportunity to say goodbye. And that might be the hardest kind of parting to get through. Jacob thought Joseph was dead – Joseph had cried out to his brothers as he was sold off into slavery, but there was no goodbye. They ignored him as they counted their silver coins. There was no goodbye in the long 20 years that this family was apart. They were fractured, there was no healing, until those most incredible words of reconciliation – “I am Joseph, Is my father still living?”

We pick up our story here – the 11 sons of Jacob are hurrying home to Dad, to confess their lie, to tell him Joseph lives. Genesis 45:25-28

25 So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. 26 They told him, “Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is the ruler of all Egypt.” Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. 27 But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. 28 And Israel said, “I’m convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”

Imagine this scene – the 11 sons headed back with all of the food, all of the donkeys, with carts full of the treasures of Egypt – they are dressed in finery – they are hardly recognizable. Imagine Jacob, waiting – waiting for his sons to return. Judah had promised to protect Benjamin, the other son of his beloved Rachel. Where were all of his boys? They were grown men now, husbands, and fathers, even grandfathers – their families were watching hungrily for their return. I can imagine a sharp-eyed child on a hilltop, out helping with the sheep, seeing the dust raised by the brothers' carts and donkeys – the child running to warn Grandfather Jacob, a large caravan is coming. I can imagine Jacob wondering who would come this way in a famine – and gathering his strong grandsons, daughters-in-law, and granddaughters to defend what little they have left. They all wait – eyes straining – trying to see through the dust – who was this? Then someone shouted out – I see Reuben, wait I see Judah, there's Gad and Dan, hold on – Benjamin is there too! Jacob's heart had to soar – his sons have returned! And with so much! Where had all of this come from? Had his boys become thieves in Egypt?

Then I can imagine Reuben or Judah saying – “Father, have a seat, we have something to tell you – Joseph lives. The prince of Egypt is our brother. Joseph is alive. Joseph is the ruler of Egypt.” You might know that feeling that Jacob had. He was stunned, his heart just about stopped – he couldn't believe it. Joseph? Joseph? What are you saying – he lives? And then the 10 sons having to confess how they had lied about Joseph's death, and told of Joseph's kindness and mercy to them. Jacob began to believe as Benjamin handed over the 300 shekels and showed Jacob his new clothes. They had a family reunion, a feast – and they shared their joy. The one Jacob thought was dead was alive, the son he had lost had been found. Jacob decided to go to Egypt and see his son before he died. Genesis 46:1-7: **So Israel set out with all that was his, and when he reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. 2 And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, “Jacob! Jacob!” “Here I am,” he replied. 3 “I am God, the God of your father,” he said. “Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. 4 I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes.” 5 Then Jacob left Beersheba, and Israel's sons took their father Jacob and their children and their wives in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to transport him. 6 So Jacob and all his offspring went to Egypt, taking with them their livestock and the possessions they had acquired in Canaan. 7 Jacob brought with him to Egypt his sons and grandsons and his daughters and granddaughters—all his offspring.**

So Jacob, now called Israel, set out with his family, and not a single family member was left behind. This was going to be a grand reunion, with the Prince of Egypt, with Joseph. And God came to Jacob in a vision, as God had done before – and gave Jacob a look at the future of his family. God explained that this was God's will, God's plan, God sent Joseph on before, God made this happen – and in Egypt, Jacob's family would grow to be a mighty nation, the nation of Israel. Did you know the word Israel means “God perseveres”? God would be with Israel and his family would persevere in Egypt, and Jacob thanked God.

Try to picture this rag-tag bunch of shepherds journeying to the sophistication of Egypt. The contrast between these two nations is vast – Canaan is rural, pastoral, they are hardworking shepherders. Egyptians are urbane, educated, great architects, builders of cities and monuments. Imagine going there for the first time, Jacob and his family had to be awestruck. I remember my first trip to NYC- with my youth group from this church – being in the canyons of skyscrapers, not moving at the pace of the New Yorkers – one of my friends walking into a street sign because they were looking up, not watching where they went. It was like that for the family of Jacob. And even though he was 130 years old, Jacob trusted God and persevered, and journeyed towards this family reunion. Genesis 46:26-30

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26 All those who went to Egypt with Jacob—those who were his direct descendants, not counting his sons' wives—numbered sixty-six persons. 27 With the two sons who had been born to Joseph in Egypt, the members of Jacob's family, which went to Egypt, were seventy in all. 28 Now Jacob sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to get directions to Goshen. When they arrived in the region of Goshen, 29 Joseph had his chariot made ready and went to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as Joseph appeared before him, he threw his arms around his father and wept for a long time. 30 Israel said to Joseph, "Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive."

Imagine now being one of the Egyptians with Joseph. Seeing the Prince of Egypt getting so excited- ordering his chariot ready, wearing his finest clothes, sending out watchmen. When would his brothers return with Father Jacob? What was taking so long? And then there's the word, they are coming. Joseph set out with a troop of his soldiers and dignitaries, and then he raced ahead- looking, looking, where was Jacob - what cart is he in? Then spotting him, long silver hair, long silver beard, but still after 20 years apart, still Dad. And Jacob, eyesight not what it used to be, squinting in the sun, seeing the center chariot pull ahead of the others, a young prince leaped from the chariot. He is dressed like an Egyptian, but had a face that reminded his father of his beloved wife Rachel, and imagines Jacob saying, "My boy, that's my son!" And they embrace, and Joseph wept, being held in the arms of his father, he wept for a long time. After so long apart, they are together now, with no more goodbyes. This is the best possible reunion, they both wept for the lost years, they both weep with joy for all that is yet to come.

To whom are you waiting to be reunited? A loved one you haven't seen due to COVID? A friend who lives far away? A spouse, parent, or child who has died? A sibling or friend you quarreled with? Part of living is that there are partings. We might have said death is a part of living, that hurt, and pain are a part of living, but the word of God tells me that is not God's plan. His plan is to live with us in paradise forever. So if death and parting make you angry, if it just seems wrong, you're right. Our God is a God of hellos, no goodbyes, our God is a God of life, not death. It took Jesus' own death to end eternal death, and we now have eternity before us, full of life, and light, and love, and reunions.

Can you imagine what is ahead? No more partings, no more death. No more weeping, no more sorrow, no more goodbyes. Revelation 21:4 tells us God Himself will wipe every tear from our eyes. Put your hand on your cheek, imagine the hand of God brushing your tears away. Imagine that union with your God, imagine that reunion with the people you love who have gone on before you. Imagine them, as the Apostle Paul writes, imagine that you are running the race of life, and they, those who love you and are already with the Lord, imagine them cheering you on, like spectators at the Olympics. Imagine the applause of heaven when you cross the finish line and see Jesus your Lord. (Hebrews 12:1) You see, the Prince of Peace is your Brother. Whatever loss you face now, whatever your "this" is that you have to get through - whatever wounds you carry, you have a Prince looking out for you. The aching hole in your heart - He can fill it. In the death of your loved one - He weeps with you, and lets you know you do not grieve as those who have no hope, your hope is in Him. As Second Corinthians 5:8 tells us - to be absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord. That is our hope!

What is your "this" - the death of someone you love, the death of a dream, a marriage, the parting from a job or opportunity? COVID has certainly complicated all of this - with even more partings and unforeseen changes. But the Prince of Heaven is your Brother. He is your guide; he is your way maker. He knows your "this" - and He has made it so you can have your grand reunion. And it won't just be with the people we love; the Grandest Reunion will be with Him. The New Testament speaks of our reunion with Jesus over 300 times, which averages out to be about once every 13 verses of scripture. The Grand Reunion is the message of God's love for us in the New Testament - we get to go home, back to God, because the Prince of Peace is our Brother.

Someday you'll get to go home, to your real home, and fall into the arms of the Prince of Heaven. You might, like Jacob and Joseph, have a good cry together. You might want to be held in Jesus' embrace for a long, long time, releasing the hurts and troubles of the world. But eventually, you'll raise your head, and He will help you get steady on your feet. He will wipe the tears from your eyes, and you'll look around and see paradise, you'll see those you love cheering you on, welcoming you in, and you'll hear your Lord and God, the Prince of Heaven say, "Join the reunion. Welcome home, my beloved child. Welcome home" Amen and amen.

OUR PRAYER LIST FOR THIS WEEK INCLUDES:

Sympathy

- Our sympathy to the family of our beloved **Dorothy Koessel**. Dorothy died on Tuesday, July 27 and has been lovingly cared for by her family as she battled cancer. Her funeral was in the sanctuary on Monday, August 2. Please keep Dorothy's sons Jim and Doug and their families in your prayers.
- Our sympathy to the family of Phyllis Hendricks - her memorial service was in the chapel on Friday, August 6

Prayer Concerns:

- Pray **Chuck Bacle** as he continues his cancer treatments
- Prayers for **Sharon Sleeman** as she has just had recent outpatient surgery
- **Laura**, a former lifeguard at Camp Crystal - had surgery on Monday, August 2
- Prayers for **Phil**, a friend of Rob Beahan's who is dealing with Parkinson's disease, a stroke, and pneumonia
- Prayers for the family of **Clifford Benson**, a 15 year old who died last month in a car accident. Please keep his parents, Brian and Lynne, and Grandparents - Irv and Carol, in your prayers.
- And prayers for the state of unrest in Haiti and for our missionary friend Nora Leon.
- Please keep the western United States in prayer in this fire season, and we pray with Europe as the flooding there has claimed so many lives.
- Continued prayer for **Vicki Gaviglio** as she recovers from brain surgery and prepares for further treatment. Prayers as well for her parents Fred and Bea VanderPloeg, Vicki's husband Jim, and their daughters Jamie and Dana and their families.
- Continued prayers for **Reid Klein** as he works to regain health and strength after his construction accident last year.
- Prayers for our own **Child Development Center** as they work to hire staff members in this challenging time.
- **Joanne Crawford** is back at Mission Point of Forest Hills and would love to hear from you: #48 1095 Medical Park Dr., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546.
- **Barb Coger** is doing well and appreciates your visits. She is at Porter Hills, 3600 Fulton St., Harmony House, Room 251, Grand Rapids, MI 49546.
- **Joyce Kingsland** has been ill with dehydration, and fluid in her lungs. If you would like to send her a card it can be sent to 1225 Spaulding Ave SE, Grand Rapids 49546.
- **Dr. Brian Lane**, a Spectrum doctor, and friend of Scott Robertson, has terminal cancer. Please pray for Dr. Lane and his family for peace and comfort.
- **Marvin Potter**, Doris Burgess's dad - please pray for healing of his various health issues.
- **Those battling cancer: Chuck Bacle, John Goodrich, Bill Richardson, Linsey and Leslie (friends of Marsha and John Steensma), and Mike Forton.**
- **Virgil Westdale and Lila Venneman** and all others who are in health care facilities.
- Please keep **Bev Ferwerda** in your prayers as she is in hospice care at home.

Prayer Joys

- And a prayer of joy for Karl and Tennille Wyble who were married in the chapel on July 31 - Congratulations to this wonderful couple!

Current military and National Guard members in your prayers: Rachel Carlson, Andy Sullivan, Connor Schwinkendorf, Jason Tiedemann, and Steven M. King.

If you are in need of prayer and would like to be added to our prayer list, please email office@cascadechristian.com, or call our church office at 949-1360.