



# cascade *Current*

Fall 2018

*You will live in joy and peace. The mountains and hills will burst into song,  
and the trees of the field will clap their hands!*

Isaiah 55:12



# Reflection

Every spring we plant a garden. It's not a big garden—eight raised beds in our backyard—but we've done it for a long time and it gives us a lot of pleasure. The kids always help and this year we had big plans—rotating our favorites vegetables and flowers to different beds, deciding what new vegetables to grow, and most of all, anticipating the delicious vegetables fresh from our own garden. So we worked hard on the success of our good plans. We tilled the soil, added fertilizer, and planted seeds and young plants. Over the next few weeks we watered, weeded, and watched for growth, flowers, and the fruits of our labor.

But this year things did not go exactly as we had planned. First, the birds ate our sunflower seeds, leaving us only four plants in the whole bed. Worse yet, one entire bed remained completely empty. We planted a full bed of cosmos and not a single seed sprouted. That has never happened before. Not one single sprout in the entire bed.

Other seeds sprouted, though. And we enjoyed the sight of cucumbers flowering, beans elongating, parsley and basil filling in and out, and tomatoes growing fat. We were days away from tasting our first produce warm from our garden when more trouble came. A woodchuck dug his way under our fence and ate 80% of our garden in one night. Two beds of beans were decimated, the cucumber bare, and the parsley eaten right down to the ground. We were horrified at the ruin of our work and plans. Then the heat hit and the rain stopped. We watered the sad looking plants we had left, but it was hard going for them. We got very few meals out of our garden this year.

The only bed that did well was a bed of zinnias. We've planted them before but never have we gotten such an abundance of flowers. One full bed stuffed with flowers in all colors and sizes—in the middle of the other bare or dying beds.

We had such good plans. And we worked hard. What went wrong? And why? Growing a garden is a good thing—a taste of the original creation—so why did it all go so wrong? We did everything right,

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everything that has always yielded good results in the past. Was our plan bad in some way? Why would God not honor it? We'd planned for beans, peas, and cucumbers, but all we got was flowers.

What was God's plan here? I have no idea. I can mourn the lack of vegetables in seven beds, or I can focus on the abundance of beauty in one bed.

Maybe that was his plan—to remind me that my plans are not the controlling feature of my life. To remind me that life in a world affected by sin can throw my plans into disarray overnight. To remind me that He is the only constant. If He chooses to give me beauty instead of beans, who I am to question?

Not beans. Blooms. Okay.

I'll go get more vases.



## Dear Friends

It's the middle of August as I write this. In two weeks both my son and daughter will be headed off to college, making Andrea and me empty nesters. As I was mowing the lawn thinking about this, a song from *Fiddler on the Roof* started to play in my head:

*Is this the little girl I carried?  
Is this the little boy at play?  
I don't remember growing older.  
When did they?*

Mind you, they're not getting married (the context of the song), but they are both now in a new stage of life, and with that, so are Andrea and I.

With a lot of lawn to mow, my mind kept looking back at all the stages of life I've already gone through, survived, and even thrived as a result of.

Some stages I miss: falling in love with Andrea, dating, engagement, and the first years of marriage were great. The baby, toddler years? Awesome!

There are other stages of life that, while I am thankful for them, I'm even more thankful I don't have to repeat them. Can anyone say Junior High? (And having kids in Junior High?)

The point is, life changes as it is lived. Solomon was right when he wrote:

*There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under the heavens.*

This is true at the individual level, the family level, the cultural and societal level, and...at the congregational level.

For the past several months we have had teams meeting together around six areas of church life: Worship, Discipleship, Outreach, Hospitality & Enfolding, Next Generation, and Structure &

Leadership. They have been looking at what we already do as well as what might need to take place for us to do better. "Better at what?" you might ask. Better at living out our mission and vision as a congregation. Better at *Loving God, loving people, and making disciples wherever we go*. Better at our own ongoing transformation by the Good News of Jesus, and better at helping others know and experience this same Good News.

The Christian life is not one that is static and unmoving. Jesus is alive and He has come to give us life, and that abundantly. To have this, we must obey His command to follow Him. Thankfully, we

can trust Him to lead us. He promises not just to be with us, but to walk with us through every stage of life.

In September we will ask you to help in this process by completing a survey those teams are developing now. We hope by Reformation Day the teams will come back with some great objectives to

challenge and stretch us to rely even more on God's leading. By God's grace we are experiencing a wonderful life as a congregation now. May God lead us into a life even more abundant!

I'm not sure I'm ready to be an empty nester, but, ready or not, I am. May we here at Cascade Fellowship thank God for our past and continue to entrust our future into His hands.

*Sunrise, sunset, Sunrise, sunset.  
Swiftly fly the years.*

*Pastor James*



The logo for Cascade Worship features a stylized 'C' composed of several curved, overlapping bands in shades of grey, blue, and teal. To the right of the 'C', the word 'cascade' is written in a lowercase, sans-serif font, and the word 'WORSHIP' is written in a larger, uppercase, sans-serif font, both in a teal color.

# cascade WORSHIP

As we head into the start of fall programming, my “mom-mind” has thoughts of 25 kids in a room surrounded by a lack of copious amounts of Clorox wipes and hand sanitizer. One word comes to mind...*contagious*. That’s right, germ season is almost upon us! Those pesky things are so contagious! They thrive by being contagious and infecting host after host.

How about us? Are we contagious too? Are we contagious Christians? Are we thriving by being contagious to those around us? Acts 2 gives us a wonderful description of the early church and how those very contagious believers added to their numbers daily! Here at Cascade Fellowship we have committed to *love God, love people and make disciples wherever we go*. A contagious Christian is one who embodies that mission statement.

We were created to worship God. John Piper says, “This is the final end of all existence: the worship of God.” And we read in 1 Peter 2:9, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

Our worship is an outward expression of the awe, thanksgiving, and love we feel for our Creator and Savior. But is our worship contagious? When others witness our worship Sunday mornings, do they feel compelled to worship as well?

We could have plenty of discussions about the style of worship we feel most inspired by or types of worship we feel to be most contagious. Instead of those external motivators though, I would encourage us to think of more internal motivating factors to our worship. I believe it’s much more important to focus on how sincere our worship is. How engaged is our worship? What do we do before worship to

prepare our hearts to come before the Lord?

Every time we worship, we need to be open to allowing the Holy Spirit to awaken our hearts and draw near to Him during worship. Sincere, honest and joyous (despite our circumstances) worship is contagious and has the opportunity to bring others close to God as well. Authentic, heart-felt, corporate worship is contagious!

Another aspect of contagious worship is how we carry our worship from Sunday mornings into the week. What are we doing to be contagious outside of corporate worship? Our co-workers, neighbors, bank tellers, and grocery store cashiers should be able to feel our contagious worship. I pray that those around us are impacted for the gospel by the way we interact with them with love, by how we perform our daily tasks and by how we proclaim God’s faithfulness.

We are a congregation that loves to worship. It brings me great joy to hear your hearts sing God’s praises! We have many opportunities to sing His praises every day of the week. I encourage you to continue to worship with us on Sunday mornings in either venue and twice a month on Wednesday evenings in the Youth Center. I encourage you to worship Him with a contagious spirit in your homes, neighborhoods, schools and places of work throughout the week.

I pray His love continues to fill our hearts until we overflow with the contagious love, grace and faithfulness of our Creator and Savior!

If you have a desire to help lead contagious worship here at Cascade Fellowship, we want to add you to our team!

Please contact me at [lynn@cascadefellowship.org](mailto:lynn@cascadefellowship.org).

Lynn, Worship Director



In July we took a trip to Ely, Minnesota. The trip was a chance for everyone in the group to make new friends, explore the wilderness, test strength, and detach from the regular noise of life,

This trip was hard. But for me, it wasn't the 12 hour drive that was difficult. It wasn't portaging canoes or eating trail food for five days. It really wasn't even paddling three miles straight into 30+mph winds. The hardest part of the trip came on the last day we had together in our small group.

We spent the last evening on an island just a few short miles from the pickup location. It was a regular morning: wake up, pack our belongings, eat breakfast, pack the remaining bags and get ready to leave. Today, though, we had some extra time before we had to leave. Our guide, Riley, scheduled a Bible study and an opportunity to encourage each other in the group. The Bible study went, and then it was affirmation circle time.

I have to admit, I am not the biggest fan of these types of things. I struggle to receive encouragement and end up worrying about saying something original for everyone in the circle. I said a prayer and asked the Holy Spirit for help: Use my words to help each person build a meaningful relationship with Jesus.

Everything went well...until the end. I was the last person to encourage the last student. Over the past three years, this student has become more than another teen walking through the doors. We have shared life's ups and downs, prayed and encouraged each other, slapped high fives, traveled hundreds of miles on trips, and built a faith-filled friendship. Now he was graduating, and in that moment I had to say the right thing. They needed to be words that would change his life going forward because it felt like the "last chance."

God showed me otherwise. Before I could get one word out, I was crying, and quite visibly at that. I

could barely speak but I needed to say something. Come on, God, give me a chance here! When I looked over at him, I found peace in my heart. He was crying too. I wasn't alone in that moment and, in fact, it was another blessing that I will never forget. We had grown so deep in our faith relationship that we were broken together, realizing our paths had to separate. But in that moment, we were reminded of our friendship, our time together, and most importantly, the way our faith had grown over the past three years.

Honestly, I can't remember anything that I said. Maybe he remembers...maybe not. I'm sure the rest of the group thought we were weird, but who cares. The tears of joy, questions about the future, and encouragement that we shared in that moment was enough.

I will never forget watching him play football, walk on homecoming court, visiting his school, sharing countless meals together, meeting his friends and getting to share food with them too, riding to graduation parties and going to his party, serving others on mission trips, and praying for each other.

This is what ministry is all about. I realize that not every student will connect with an adult in this way, but someone investing in the life of another is the piece of the puzzle that makes more impact than any program or fun event. When life-on-life discipleship happens, we see Jesus through friendship and spiritual growth in our lives.

These last three years meant the world to me and have encouraged me in my life and faith. You probably won't ever see this, but "thank you."

*If you want the opportunity to impact a student's life as they journey through their teenage years, connect with Eric today!*

Eric  
Youth Pastor  
[eric@cascadefellowship.org](mailto:eric@cascadefellowship.org)

# Children's Ministry Corner

## Relationships Deepen Faith Formation

God calls us to love, and Children's Ministry leaders LOVE children! We strive to develop relationships with children and their parents to help children grow in their faith, deepening their relationship with Jesus so they can follow Him more closely.

The Bible speaks of the importance of relationships in faith formation. Jesus himself chose a small group of people, his disciples. He developed close, loving relationships by spending time, teaching, and praying with them. We want to make disciples the way Jesus did!

In Fuller Youth Institute's book *Sticky Faith*, the authors suggest that children need help in their faith journey. Children need at least five caring adults who are intentional in building a relationship. Other research suggests that the longer a group leader is with a group of kids, the more likely relationships develop and that leader can be used in a significant way in a child's life.

Jesus wants us to be in a relationship with Him, so why wouldn't He want us to journey together to deepen our faith in Jesus? Within the context of caring relationships, **faith formation can move from head to heart to feet** because children see how faith in action is modeled in others.

Sunday School teachers, GEMS/Cadet counselors, Youth Group leaders and others who lead your children may be one of the five adults in your child's life! Some leaders will have had your children for a couple years in a row, which gives them the opportunity to form deeper relationships. Leaders/teachers develop relationships with their students by connecting with the kids and their parents, communicating what's happening, and praying for families.

### **Ways PARENTS can grow relationships with their child's Teacher/Leader:**

- Get to know your child's teachers/leaders. Meet them at the start of the year. Spend time talking with them and encouraging them.
- Help teachers/leaders get to know your family by sharing what's happening in your family or involve them in your life a bit—have dessert together!
- Reinforce at home what's being taught at church. Find ways to apply what's learned so that head knowledge becomes heart change which becomes action.
- Encourage your child to serve in an area in the church. Serving with other adults on a team builds relationships.
- Consistently send your children to programs (Sunday School, Children's Worship, GEMS/Cadets and/or Youth Group) and arrive on time (9:00am Sunday School).
- Pray for the teachers/leaders

Laura  
Children's Ministry Director

## Children's Ministry Training Events

Anyone involved in ministry from nursery to preteens are welcome to attend these events which provide encouragement as you serve children and their families.

If interested in attending or finding out more information, contact Laura ([laura@cascadefelloeship.org](mailto:laura@cascadefelloeship.org))



Half day of practical children's ministry training that focuses on building courage in children.

**When:** Saturday, October 6<sup>th</sup>; 8:30am - 12:30pm

**Where:** Cascade Fellowship (we are hosting!)

**RSVP:** Laura by Sept 16<sup>th</sup>

**More Info:** [group.com/cultivatingcourage](http://group.com/cultivatingcourage)



### Attend one or both Sessions



**MOMENTUM HAPPENS WHEN EVERYONE IS MOVING TOGETHER IN ONE DIRECTION.**

One full day of Children and Youth Ministry leader's training.

**When:** Tuesday, October 9<sup>th</sup>; 9:00am - 4:00pm

**Where:** Troy, MI

**RSVP:** Laura by Sept 16<sup>th</sup>

**More Info:** [orangetour.org](http://orangetour.org)

**Parents Session** Monday Night, October 8<sup>th</sup>; 7:30pm

**Parent Cue LIVE** is a two-hour experience where parents learn how to become more connected to our church and more intentional at home

REDISCOVER what your kids need most in each phase of life

REPRIORITIZE how to engage with your kids every week

REIMAGINE how to dialogue with your kids about critical issues

RETHINK ways to partner with your church to impact your kid's future





The Media Center is located on the Upper Level, near the Canopy/Office Entrance. It is loaded with books for adults, teens, and children as well as DVDs. Stop by! We recently added over 60 new books! New books are on the cart for easy access, and they are listed in the binder on top of the Media Center counter.

Also NEW Improvements in the adult section:

Spine Labels

- o Fic = Fiction
- o CP = Christian Perspective
- o FL = Family Living
- o Ppl = People
- o Series Labels
- o Shelf Labels

Book hold request – use the clipboard on the counter to request placing a hold on a book that is currently checked out.

**Check out procedure for books/DVD's at the Media Center:**

- Write your first & last name on the check-out card (in book pocket in the front or back of book or DVD)
- Place check-out card in the basket on the check-out counter
- Check-out timeframe is three (3) weeks
- Return materials in the RETURN SLOT on the front of the check-out counter
- Please honor the 3 week check out timeframe.



Cascade Station meals will continue this year but without our master planner and prepper, Sandy Vander Hart. *Thank you, Sandy, for the love and dedication you poured into this!*

If you have even just one Wednesday available to help with planning or prepping, or even clean up, please come help.

Meals will be served from 6-6:30. Those involved in leading programs can use a "fast pass" to jump to the front of the line to ensure they have time to get ready.

Interested? Contact Julie B,  
949-4342 or [julie@cascadefellowship.org](mailto:julie@cascadefellowship.org).

**2018-2019**

September 19	January 9
October 3	January 23
October 17	Cadet Soup & Chili Supper
November 7	February 6
GEMS Italian Dinner	February 20
November 28	March 6
December 12	March 20
	April 10
	April 24

**New meal time: 6-6:30pm**

## DEACONS KIOSK

### TREASURER'S REPORT

Month	Received	Monthly Gain/(Shortfall)	Year-to-Date Gain/(Shortfall)
May			
June			
July			

### SPECIAL OFFERINGS RECEIVED THIS SUMMER

Growing with the Lord Debt Elimination	Faith Promise	Trans World Radio (Youth Offering)	
Christian School Tuition Assistance	Sharing Fund	External Ministries Fund	

## SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

### OFFERINGS

Pending final approval by Council 8/28/18, Cascade Fellowship will begin passing the offering plate just once in the Upper Worship Center. Should you give less? By no means. Should you give only to Cascade Fellowship? Of course not. We will continue to support the other funds\* as our weekly "Featured Ministry."

The reason for the change is multifaceted. An increasing number of people give electronically, thus less money goes in the offering plate. We also desire to be a hospitable church. Guests not used to the two offering system may feel uncomfortable and may even consider it distasteful. It can be awkward when an offering plate is near the back of church and remains practically empty, and this doesn't give a nice impression to guests.

Please designate your gifts if you wish to support a particular ministry. Note: if a check is loose in the plate without a memo, it will be divided between Cascade Ministries and the weekly featured ministry.

Date	Featured Ministry	External Ministries Fund
<b><u>First Sunday</u></b> September 2 October 7	<b><u>Faith Promise Missions Fund</u></b> supports the mission efforts of our church both in support of our missionaries and for short-term mission projects.	Our 2018 <b><u>External Ministries Fund</u></b> supports ministries chosen annually by the Service Deacons. This year funds collected will be divided equally and distributed to the following organizations:  ACCESS of West Michigan Forgotten Man Ministries Manasseh Project Matthew's House Ministries New City Kids Grand Rapids Safe Families of West Michigan West Michigan Friendship Center  Use your weekly giving envelopes (write in EMF) or one of the blue envelopes provided in the seat backs . Give any time throughout the year.
<b><u>Second Sunday</u></b> September 9 October 14	<b><u>The Growing with the Lord Debt Elimination Fund</u></b> works to eliminate the remaining debt after our building project and rebuild our emergency fund.	
<b><u>Third Sunday</u></b> September 16 October 21	<b><u>External Ministries Fund</u></b> see right column	
<b><u>Fourth Sunday</u></b> September 23 October 28	<b><u>Christian School Tuition Assistance Fund</u></b> provides assistance to parents who choose to send their children to Christian day schools.	
<b><u>Fifth Sunday</u></b> September 30	<b><u>Sharing Fund</u></b> provides financial assistance fro benevolent and emergency needs to people in our congregation and community.	