

TAPIOLA APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH

SEPTEMBER – 2026

SCHEDULE

Sunday School & Sunday Bible Study resume on:

September 13: 9:45 a.m.

Sunday Service: 11: a.m.

Wed. Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.

SPEAKERS

September 6: Ivan Niemela,
Holy Communion

September 13: Ivan Niemela

September 20: Ivan Niemela

September 27: Charles Korhonen, Potluck meal following the service

CONTACTS

Website:
www.tapiolachurch.org

Mailing: P.O. Box 531
Houghton, MI 49931

Location:
17602 N. Lake Ave.
Tapiola, MI 49916
(906) 334-2766

Contact:
Pastor Ivan Niemela
(906) 231-0945

The Way of Cain, Balaam, and Korah

“...they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core”—Jude 11.

Jude writes to believers—those whose sins have been washed away in Christ—who do not yet realize that their church is undergoing significant spiritual drift. Little by little—almost imperceptibly—it has begun to adopt worldly customs and move away from the message of the forgiveness of sins taught by Jesus. This shift began when false prophets “*crept in unawares*” (Jude 4). Their teachings did not openly contradict the truth; instead, they subtly reshaped it, adjusting the message just enough to sound familiar while gradually corrupting it. This pattern is not new. It first appeared in the Garden of Eden when Satan asked, “*Hath God said?*” (Gen 3:1). Jude urges the believers to remember how they first came to faith—through the preaching of the Apostles—and to stand firm in the same faith that was “*once delivered unto the saints*” (Jude 3), so that they can continue sharing the true way of salvation with others. To help them recognize the danger within, he points to three examples—Cain, Balaam, and Korah—each illustrating a different way Satan has long influenced the human heart.

Cain is the first example that Jude presents—a man who worshipped God but rejected His revealed way of salvation. Cain offered “*the fruit of the ground,*” while Abel brought “*the firstlings of his flock*” (Genesis 4:3-4). The Lord accepted Abel and his offering, but not Cain and his offering. This shows that God looks first at the heart before evaluating the sacrifice (1 Sam 16:7). The rejection of Cain’s offering exposed a sin he had been trying to hide, which is why “*Cain was very wrath, and his countenance fell*” (Gen 4:5). God confronted him, offering forgiveness if he would repent. But Cain refused God’s mercy and instead killed his brother. He began as someone who understood the way of salvation, but later drifted from God’s revealed path and relied on his own understanding.

Balaam serves as the second example in Jude’s warning, illustrating a form of evil that entices believers to drift from the truth through persuasive and appealing words. Unlike Cain, who represents a self-willed worship, Balaam symbolizes a self-serving ministry. Balak, the king of Moab, offered Balaam money to curse Israel, yet Balaam could only bless Israel on three separate occasions. Unable to curse them, he instead advised Balak on how to morally and spiritually corrupt Israel (Num 25:1-2; 31:16). Though Balaam appeared to be a prophet of God, Jude highlights a type of ministry in which the leader seeks approval by telling people what they want to hear. In this way, God’s Word is manipulated to support a personal agenda. Balaam used his position for personal gain, ultimately harming those who followed him.

Korah represents Satan’s attempts to stir up rebellion among God’s people—rebellion that often appears spiritually justified. Korah was a Levite with significant spiritual influence in Israel. Together with two leaders from the tribe of Reuben, he gathered 250 respected men to challenge Moses and Aaron’s God-given leadership. Their accusation sounded noble: “*Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the*

congregation are holy... wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" (Numbers 16:3). On the surface, their proposal seemed fair, as though they were seeking to share the workload and broaden spiritual participation. But beneath that language was Korah's ambition for power and his resentment toward Moses. They ignored the fact that God Himself had appointed Moses long before Israel left Egypt. Jude warns that false teachers, like Korah, rarely act alone. They gather followers, appeal to the discontented, and seek positions of influence without being called by God. Their motives are rooted in pride and ambition rather than in bringing glory to God.

Jude wrote his letter to all who have been forgiven through the name and blood of Jesus (Rev 1:5) and who are willing to pay attention—including us today. His call to *"earnestly contend for the faith"* echoes John's instruction: *"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world"* (1 John 4:1). Paul gave the same warning to the elders of the church at Ephesus: *"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them"* (Acts 20:29-30). False prophets do not only come from outside the church; they can arise from within. More importantly, they can infiltrate our own hearts if we become complacent in our faith. This is where Satan works the hardest, knowing that his time is short before the Day of the Lord arrives: *"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump..."* (1 Corinthians 15:51–52).

Wherever you are, and whoever you are, embrace the victory Jesus has prepared for you through His blood shed on the cross of Golgotha. Confess your faults one to another (James 5:16), and walk in the same faith that was once delivered unto the saints.

God's Peace,
Charles Korhonen