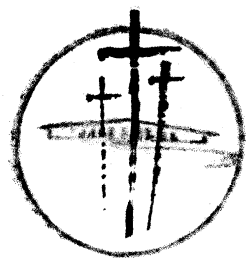

FIRST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

NAMPA, IDAHO



Half-Link



Nampa First United Presbyterian Church Purpose Statement

To bring people together to love and magnify God through worship, to minister to the needs of all His children, to fellowship in God's family, to spread the Good News, and to develop people to Christ-like maturity for their mission in the world.

Office Hours

Sunday

9:00am - 12:00pm

Tuesday - Friday

9:00am - 1:00pm

Office email:

firstpresnampa@gmail.com

Website:

www.firstpresnampa.org

Phone: (208) 466-7061

Fax: (208) 466-7176

Pastor Aaron Berkowitz

Email: alb733@gmail.com

Phone: 909-953-1011

Pastor's Office Hours

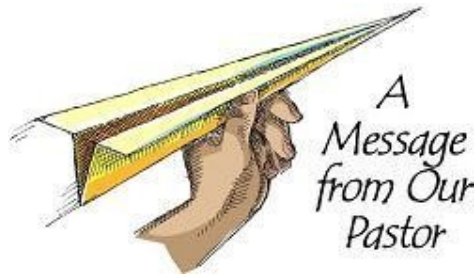
Mondays & Thursdays

10:30am - 1:00pm

MID-APRIL 2018

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It is an intensely personal question: who goes to Hell?

As we finish our series on the afterlife, we come to the subject of Hell. It is a personal subject for me. Some of the preachers who lead me into Christian faith also taught that everyone who does not profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are doomed to Hell.

One of the reasons that belief provokes my scorn today is because my father is Jewish, and does not profess belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. I think my Dad is mistaken, but not damned. We Presbyterians talk so little about Hell that there may be many of us who carry the assumption that all non-Christians are damned. Others may not think of Hell at all, and regard it as an ancient superstition.

The first thing to know is that the Biblical figure who talks about Hell the most is Jesus. This leads me to believe that Hell is not just a superstition to be dismissed. The second thing to mention is that when Jesus talks about Hell, He is describing the fate of the unrighteous, the wicked, those who, in Matthew 25, refuse to help those in need. That is right, Jesus describes Hell as the place for the greedy, the selfish, the unkind, not the un-Christian, not those who chose the wrong religion.

Still, just because Hell is real, doesn't mean we can't ask questions about its purpose or its nature. First I have to say that the majority opinion, if we can think of the Church like the US Supreme Court, is that Hell is a place of never-ending conscious torment. An example comes from theologian Peter Leithart who writes of Hell, "Why is it there at all if no one is in it? Why would God keep a fire burning if those who were put there simply ceased to be?" Essentially, Leithart's argument is: "what's the point of having an eternally burning lake of fire if you aren't going to roast people in it?" Needless to say, I won't try to hide my contempt for that argument. But even Leithart acknowledges something mysterious about the nature of Hell, he says, "Revelation 14 adds another important dimension to the picture. The fire and brimstone are "in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the

Lamb." The lake of fire is, in one sense, an expulsion from God's presence. At the same time, the lake of fire is *in* the presence of God. Everyone, not merely the penitent who are saved, will spend eternity in the presence of God. Some will find his presence a delight. Some will find it a torment." (Peter Leithart, "Hell Yes" First Things, April 6, 2018)

Hell is not geographically distant from Heaven, it is a different orientation of the human to God's presence. Heaven and Hell, in other words, are the same thing: the presence of the love of God. Those said to be "in Hell" have rejected it, and so find it painful. Those said to be "in Heaven" have accepted it, and find it blissful. But one last question remains. Do those who reject the presence, and therefore experience it as Hell, have to remain in rejection forever? Can a human being remain eternally in defiance of perfect love and bliss? If it were possible, it would make us acknowledge the possibility of an eternal rejection of God, an ultimately successful rebellion, an eternal flouting of God's will, which is that all be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). This almost forces to humbly consider that Hell might have a function other than suffering, that Hell is for the purposes of God's ultimate victory over evil, not just vengeance. George Macdonald says it beautifully, "I believe that no man is ever condemned for any sin except one--that he will not leave his sins and come out of them, and be the child of him who is his father. "I believe that justice and mercy are simply one and the same thing; without justice to the full there can be no mercy, and without mercy to the full there can be no justice; that such is the mercy of God that he will hold his children in the consuming fire of his distance until they pay the uttermost farthing, until they drop the purse of selfishness with all the dross that is in it, and rush home to the Father and the Son, and the many brethren--rush inside the centre of the life-giving fire whose outer circles burn. I believe that no hell will be lacking which would help the just mercy of God to

(Continued on page 3)

Family Camp at Camp Sawtooth



Family Camp will be August 2 - 5, 2018. Camp Sawtooth is located just outside of Ketchum, Idaho. Everyone of all ages are welcome to attend family camp! Come for the whole time, or just for a day or two, however it will fit in your schedule. Watch for more details in the next few months.

Movie Night



The next movie night will be **Saturday, May 19th** at 5:30 PM. The movie is "The Post" and is available to rent from Redbox. Watch the movie ahead of time and then bring a potluck dish to share, your own table service and beverage and join in the discussion and fellowship.

It is an intensely personal question: who goes to Hell?

(Continued from page 2)

redeem his children." (Rev. George Macdonald, Presbyterian Pastor, in Unspoken Sermons, "Justice".)

The presence of God is both Hell and Heaven, and the fires of that presence are refining and redemptive. The purpose of Hell may extend beyond the infliction of pain upon the guilty to the purification of their souls. I certainly cannot know for sure if any of this is true. But the Bible, and our tradition, permits me to hope it is true, pray that it is true, and to share that hope with you.

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Crafty Critters

The Crafty Critters meet every Wednesday morning in the church fellowship hall from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM. Bring a sack lunch and stay as long



as you want. Come learn a new skill such as crocheting, knitting, and tatting or bring your own project and work with friends.

2018 Camp Dates

We have money available to help any youth in our church attend Camp Sawtooth. Please contact Pastor Aaron to request financial aid. Registration packets are available in the narthex at the church.

5th & 6th Grade / June 24-29

3rd & 4th Grade / July 1-4

7th & 8th Grade / July 8-13

9th & 10th Grade / July 15-20

11th & 12th Grade / July 22-27

Dates for Youth Activities

Upcoming Activities for Youth Group (YG) and Presby Kids Club (PKC):

5/20/18 – End of year BBQ Potluck & games – Congregation is invited.

6/27/18 - Youth Group Local Mission Retreat.

Starting May 27th, the older Sunday School class will take a break for the summer. The younger class will continue Sunday School through the summer.





IT'S THE "MANE" EVENT!

Join us in Babylon, where we'll explore what life was like for Daniel and his friends, captives in a strange land. You'll craft cool projects in the Marketplace, laugh as you play Bible-times games, visit with Daniel, and eat some great food. Plus, you'll meet lots of new friends!

**Location: FIRST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
400 Lake Lowell Ave, Nampa**

The adventure will last: JUNE 11th – 14th, 2018

The fun begins at: 6:00 PM each night

The city gates close at: 8:00 PM each night

**More information: Church office: 208-466-7061
firstpresnampa@gmail.com**

**Register by May 15th and be entered into a drawing for a special prize!*

VBS Registration Form

(one per family)

Name(s) and age(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

In case of emergency, contact:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Allergies or other medical conditions: _____

How did you hear about VBS? _____

**Register by May 15th and be entered into a drawing for a special prize! Forms can be mailed or dropped off at the church office*

Potluck

On Sunday, May 20th, after the worship service, Christian Ed & Congregational Life will be hosting an end of school year church wide potluck picnic. We will provide burgers & hot



dogs and we ask you to please bring your favorite side dish or dessert to share. Games will be provided as well for anyone who wants to play!

Five Beliefs We Need to Have to Solve the Problem of Evil

Save the Date! Saturday, May 19, 2018. Join Shared Ministry in an inspiring day with Thomas Oord.

Thomas Jay Oord is a theologian philosopher and scholar of multi-disciplinary studies. Oord is an award-winning author, and he has written or edited more than twenty books. A twelve-time Faculty Award winner at Northwest Nazarene University, Oord teaches at institutions around the globe. A gifted speaker, Oord is known for his contributions to research on love, open and relational theology, science and religion, and the implications of freedom and relationships for transformation.

Where: First United Presbyterian Church Nampa

When: 9:00am - 3:00pm (may change slightly)

Cost: \$20 per person

This conference will include lecture and break-out groups. Oord will base his program on the teachings of his book, "The Uncontrolling Love of God", as well as from a new book soon to be published. All who are ready for some deeper thinking are encouraged to attend. Lunch will be served.

For more information and to register, please contact Rona Williams at 208-412-5642 or presbysharedministry@gmail.com.

Surprise!

"Each day holds a surprise," wrote Henri Nouwen. "But only if we expect it can we see, hear, or feel it when it comes to us. Let's not be afraid to receive each day's surprise, whether it comes to us as sorrow or as joy."

Wait — *sorrow* as a surprise? And I'm not to fear it? Aren't surprises supposed to be happy things? What does Nouwen mean?

He continues: "It will open a new place in

our hearts, a place where we can welcome new friends and celebrate more fully our shared humanity." And I remember, too, the psalmist's words: "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted" (Psalm 34:18). Maybe that's the surprise in our sorrow: that when we ache, as when we celebrate, God is there — in new friends, in shared humanity.

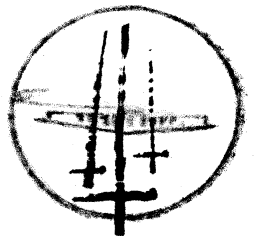


Surprise!

—Heidi Mann



If this publication is no longer needed, please notify the church office.



**FIRST UNITED
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
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Nampa, ID 83686-6617
