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Letters to My Church

There's an old theologian who once quipped, "God created humanity in God's image, and humanity promptly returned the favor." The theologian was talking about our nearly boundless capacity to project our own interests and biases onto God. It allows us to find moral justification for our own behavior. God isn't the only one we treat this way.



Jakob Topper
Senior Pastor

Sociologists have long observed that most efforts to better the world are simply one group of people's attempt to remake the world into their own image. With the campaigns we vote for, the causes we support, and the beliefs we promote, we all want to better the world, but what one group views as betterment, another group views as destruction. Here lies the root of much of our current political polarization. We can hardly believe our political opponents are genuinely trying to better the world, and they can't see it in us either.

Why?

Because whether we recognize it or not, our unique image of a better world is always a projection of our own experiences, interests, biases, fears, and unfulfilled longings. Until we let Christ transform us on the inside, we are not capable of creating lasting change on the outside, in the world around us. It has little to do with amassing more Bible knowledge and more to do with opening ourselves up to the Spirit.

As Protestant Christians, we've had very little training on how to let ourselves be transformed. Historically, we've



NorthHaven: An inclusive family of Christ followers, inspiring, challenging and equipping each other to participate in God's great story.

emphasized knowledge and information far above experience and transformation. Knowledge is important, of course. But it's only when we've let Christ transform us that we can be trusting to use this knowledge to begin working for the transformation of the world.



That's why during the season of Lent, a time of introspection, repentance and transformation, our theme is going to be *Looking Inward to Move Outward*. We're going to follow the lectionary passages, allowing God to illuminate what's going on within us. When we see ourselves honestly and relearn to let Christ transform us, then we are more capable and qualified to do good in the world around us. Christ's transformation of the world always begins with Christ's transformation of me.

Jakob Topper

It's Almost Time for.... NHC Team Sign up

What are NHC Teams?

Members and non-members of NorthHaven Church seeking to be involved in congregational life will work with staff members and congregational team leaders in a particular field of interest. There are many ministries to choose from. Sign up will end 3/24/19. Please prayerfully consider where you might be led to serve.

Here are the teams to consider:

- Bereavement Team
- College Ministry Team
- Congregational Fellowship Team
- Greeter Team
- Ordinances Team (Baptism & Communion)
- Public Address Team
- Reflections Drama Team
- Senior Adult Ministry Team
- Shower Ministry Team (Baby & Wedding)
- Transportation Team
- Usher Team



- March 1: Jamison Benenati
- March 2: Joanie Abbott
- March 3: Paul Gattis
- March 3: Gala Van Eaton
- March 4: Pierce Pratt

- March 4: Rita Ryan
- March 7: Leslie Bumgarner
- March 7: Judd Divelbiss
- March 8: Zach Dorman
- March 9: Judy Bray
- March 10: Brian Krause
- March 11: Kimberly Jensen
- March 11: Kate Jordan
- March 14: Porter Divelbiss
- March 14: Liam McCutcheon
- March 14: Paula Smalling

- March 15: Thad Williams
- March 16: Patricia Garner
- March 19: Wendy Foreman
- March 19: Mason Partridge
- March 22: Levin Lockett
- March 23: Sloane Partridge
- March 24: Dee Gattis
- March 26: Kevin Hargus
- March 27: Cheryl Tarter
- March 28: Canaan Carman
- March 29: Cash Divelbiss

Article by Don Schooler

RAPHAEL'S MASTERPIECE



I bet most of you know who these guys are, right? If not, you could probably ask your kids or grandkids and they'd know, but since it's just you and me right now I'll go ahead and tell you – they're the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles! TMNT! ("Turtles on the half-shell - TURTLE POWER!")

You gotta love superhero, ninja, turtles, right? I mean, check 'em out, they're standing there with their arms crossed all cool like, wearing different colored masks made from neckties so you can tell 'em apart, and looking like they're either itching for a fight or to eat pizza! RAD! But as cool as they all are (and they are!), I really just want to focus on the little guy on the far right, the one holding the awesome Ninja forks. (I know they're called sais, I'm just trying to be cute, don't email me.)



So, the turtle with the fancy hors d'oeuvres skewers in his three fingered hands, striking the amazing action-pose kick, is "Raphael" and he, just like the other three turtles (Michelangelo, Leonardo, and Donatello), are all named after Renaissance artists. Why, you ask, well because the TMNT comic book creators Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird thought it'd be fun and a little funny. And it is.

Okay, now as much as I would enjoy continuing to get my geek on over the TMNT, I guess I should try to keep it a little higher-browed, so let's talk about this guy instead. This is the O.G. Renaissance artist extraordinaire, Raffaello Sanzio, after whom Raphael is named. I mentioned the TMNT solely as a way to get to Raphael, and Raphael solely as a way to get to Raffaello, and Raffaello solely as a way to get to mention this extraordinary painting. (I know, it was a long run for a short slide, but that's what I do.)

This painting is called "The School of Athens" and is recognized by most art critics as Raphael's masterpiece, which is fitting because it's FANTASTIC! I mean, just look at it! The large fresco is considered a religious painting for two reasons. First, the building is in the shape of a Greek Cross, combining ancient philosophy with Christian theology. Second, the statue on the left is Apollo, god of light, archery and music, and Athena, goddess of wisdom, is on the right. Throw in the philosopher Plato in the middle of the painting (modeled on Leonardo with his signature finger in the air) talking to Plato, and then add Heraclitus (modeled on Michelangelo) looking bored in the foreground, with his cheek resting on his fist, and you've really got something. Then add in as Appelles (modeled on Raffaello himself) on the far right peeking around the archway, and then another TWENTY-TWO (22) Greek philosophers and you've got a MASTERPIECE. Not to mention the beautifully rendered architecture with all of its perspective. WOW!



So, that's it. I don't have anything profound or thought provoking or controversial to add. I just wanted to share with you my appreciation for this beautiful painting. And for the TMNT! TURTLE POWER!



March 6 - Ash Wednesday

Looking Inward to Move Outward: In Failure | Psalm 51:1-17

March 10 - First Sunday in Lent

Looking Inward to Move Outward: In the Wilderness | Luke 4:1-13

March 17 - Second Sunday in Lent

Looking Inward to Move Outward: In Struggles | Psalm 27

March 24 - Third Sunday in Lent

Guest Preacher: Jillian Mitchell

March 31 - Fourth Sunday in Lent

Looking Inward to Move Outward: In Simplicity | Joshua 5:9-12

April 7 - Fifth Sunday in Lent

Looking Inward to Move Outward: In Success | Philippians 3:4b-14

April 14 - Palm Sunday

Looking Inward to Move Outward: In Triumph | Luke 19:28-40

Wednesday Schedule

5:00 p.m. - Dinner in the Compass Café

6:00 p.m. - Childcare / Kids Club / Bible Study /

NorthHaven Student Ministry

7:00 p.m. - Choir

Kid's Haven



Lent can be a difficult concept for children to grasp. As adults, we often think of Lent as a time to give something up. With the idea, of course, being that each time we crave our favorite comfort food or splurge item we will be reminded of all that has been given for us. While kids are certainly not candidates for fasting and cannot be expected to spend forty days in repentance and spiritual preparation, they can still gain meaningful Jesus following lessons during this time. This can be a time where adults teach the children in their lives to have awareness for the blessings in which they have received and recognition that others need our help. Here are some suggestions of things families can do during Lent to help children prepare for Easter:

- Read a child friendly Bible or children's book that tells the Easter story (there are some available in my office if you need to borrow them).
- Pray out loud in the car as you pass a fire station, thanking God for the firefighters that protect us.
- Donate food to a food bank.
- Send a card to a homebound church member (Sheri has a list of those folks in the office).
- Make a blessings jar/box and fill it with notes about all that you are grateful for.
- Be intentional about manners. Encourage children to hold a door for another or say "please" and "thank you" consistently.

The possibilities reach far beyond this list, but you get the idea. I suggest sitting down with your kiddos and making a calendar of service activities, things to be praying about, notes to be written, or whatever is meaningful to your family. Each day or once a week set an attainable goal, choosing something that reminds your children to be thoughtful about the Lenten season.

Gratefully,
Kim

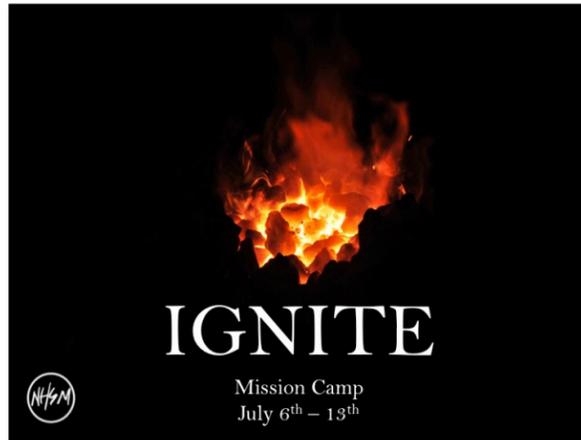


NorthHaven Student Ministry

UPCOMING EVENTS



Be in prayer for our students participating in Connection Weekend! Pray that it will be a time of fellowship and growth and that these students will take the things they learn to impact their community for Christ.



Pray for our students who will be going to Kansas City, Missouri to serve on mission this summer! Pray that our work will be fruitful and that the community we serve will see the love and light of Christ in and through us.

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES



"What's In a Name?"

What's in a name? Many parents give much thought to the names they give their children. A name might have ties to a family member or someone highly thought of. Some seek a name that has a special meaning; others seek a name that is unique. My mother told me that my middle name, Rae, had a dual influence. My mother had deep respect for a woman with that name and my dad's name was Raymond, so the 'y' was changed to 'e' and I had a middle name! I can appreciate the thought and care given to assigning names to children. Not everyone knows why they have the name they do, but God knows our name and how we came to be.

Isaiah 43:1 says, "But now this is what the Lord says - He who created you, Jacob, He who formed you, Israel: 'Do not fear for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.'" In a recent story, I read about a woman visiting a stable that boarded horses, observing owners coming to ride and calling the names of their respective mounts. However, there was a brown and white pinto in the far corner that didn't move at all as other horses ran past it. This horse's owner rarely came to see him and he somehow understood that he would not be called. The woman visitor learned his name, Scout, and began calling it. Scout turned his head with a look of complete shock. His demeanor changed and he began to trot toward her. The woman took him to the stall and began combing his matted mane and tail, then cleaning his hooves. Scout wrapped his head around her arm in a show of gratitude. Every creature wants to hear their name called.

God knows our name and calls to us. Are we listening?

The choir recently sang "Call You By Name" by Heather Sorenson which references Isaiah 43:1 and Psalm 139:13. The song says, "I called you by name long before you knew Me. Long before you heard Me, I had claimed you as Mine. You

are My beloved child of grace. And I call you Mine. You call Me by name, 'Father can You hear me? Jesus, can You see me stumbling in the dark?' And I reply, 'Dear child, I have never left you. I am right beside you and I'm whispering in your heart, and I call you Mine.'

The song goes on to remind that God is with us and calls us His beloved children of grace. As we enter the Lenten season of contemplation, let us remember we are created, called, and loved by God. My prayer is to be sensitive to God's presence and open to Him as He speaks. And I am pretty sure He speaks in unique ways! I just hope I have ears to hear.

As I am loved and called, so are you!
Cheryl

