

PRIDE FEST
SATURDAY, MAY 4TH, 11:00AM - 6:30PM

Sign up for
a shift
and/or
the parade.



Provide
bottled
water.

PRIDE PARADE
SUNDAY, MAY 5TH @ 5:30PM

Contact Information:

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Letters to My Church



Jakob Topper
Senior Pastor

Why We Don't Make a Big Deal Out of Mother's (or Father's) Day

There was a time in the life of the American church when Mother's Day was the third highest attended Sunday of the year behind Easter and Christmas Eve. Partly because mothers are promised to get their way on this one special day. Want breakfast in bed?

Sure. Want to go to church? Absolutely. It's curious that church attendance on Father's Day was never as popular.

This testifies to a truth in many of our lives. Disproportionately, we've been introduced to church through the witness of our mothers, grandmothers, and other important women in our lives. The Apostle Paul tells us that this is also true of his mentee, Timothy: "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you."

"Mother's Day started in the church, as a day to remember one mother: Ann Marie Reeves Jarvis. Ann was a blessed peacemaker, during and after the Civil War. Both her daughter Anna and Julia Ward Howe (author of the 'Battle Hymn of the Republic') were moved by Ann's witness for peace."

There are a lot of good reasons to lift mothers up, and to honor the faithfulness of women in our congregation. There are also good reasons not to make a big deal of Mother's (or Father's) Day in worship.

First of all, every single year that I've been your pastor people reach out and ask me if we're going to celebrate Mother's Day in worship before deciding whether or not they will attend that Sunday. Some of the people have lost their mothers, and they don't want to get caught grieving in an environment where celebrating is expected. But for most of the people who reach out, "Mother's Day was, and is, a cruel reminder of a person the world and the church told children they should love, but couldn't, because they weren't being shown love by their mothers. Instead, they were being abused, or neglected, or forgotten. Mother's Day, for these children, isn't something to celebrate: it is a day to run out the clock; to avoid if at all possible."

Next, there are those in the church who are trying to become mothers, but are struggling. Alyssa and I spent five years finding our way through infertility before doing IVF to have Hadley. About 10% of couples spend more than two years trying to conceive. Some are never able. It is an invisible grief, and even those who are comfortable sharing it may not know how. For some who long to be mothers, not being able to conceive can feel like a failure as a woman and a human being, even though nothing is further from the truth.

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



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There are also those women who chose never to have children. While some find great meaning and fulfillment in motherhood, many don't, and many Mother's Day celebrations in worship succeed in reinforcing gender stereotypes rather than being inclusive expressions of love and gratitude.

Finally, Mother's Day isn't a Christian holiday. For a time, the Church found good ways to bring it into congregations, but now we're finding good reasons to let it remain a secular holiday. I hope you all have reason and opportunity to celebrate your mothers in ways that are special to you on this important holiday. I also hope you understand why we don't make a big deal out of it during worship.

Jesus says a lot of harsh things toward the nuclear family that aren't easy to understand. More than once he says only those who hate their father and mother are worthy of following him. I don't think he's calling

on us to literally hate our parents, but I do think he means that the community of faith, the Church Christ is building, is a family who transcends and even supersedes the nuclear family at times. When Jesus' own mother came to him to bring him home, instead of quoting "honor thy father and mother," Jesus turned to the crowd of followers listening to him speak, pointed at them, and said, "Here is my mother. Anyone who does the will of God is my mother..."

The Church in general, and NorthHaven in particular, is called to be an inclusive family of Christ followers for those who've been rejected and abused by their biological families. Some need NorthHaven Church to be exactly this kind of faith family on Mother's (or Father's) Day more than any other day of the year.

¹ <https://www.watervilleucc.org/single-post/2017/05/10/why-we-dont-do-mothers-day-in-the-church-so-much-anymore>



Ladies Night Out
Monday, May 6 @ 6pm



Please sign up by May 1
so we can make a reservation.

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|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| May 5: Edith Duncan | May 15: Grayson Lawrence | May 26: Chad Duncan |
| May 7: Ella Crenshaw | May 16: Jeffery Knapp | May 27: Kian Cox |
| May 10: Casey Mayo | May 18: Emily Miller | May 30: Randy Ridenour |
| May 11: Aby Mayo | May 19: Keeli Morris | May 31: Trace Topper |



NOT YOUR MAMA'S VBS

COME AND ENJOY A DAY OF SUMMER CAMP FOR ALL AGES! JOIN US, ON SATURDAY, JUNE 15TH FOR A FUN-FILLED FAMILY-STYLE VBS. THERE WILL BE FUN, GAMES, A CAMPFIRE, SINGING, AND HIKING!

BINGO NIGHT

WE HAD A FABULOUS BINGO NIGHT LAST MONTH!

THE NEXT INTERGENERATIONAL EVENT WILL BE THE END-OF-SCHOOL BASH, ON MAY 22ND AT LIONS PARK! HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

