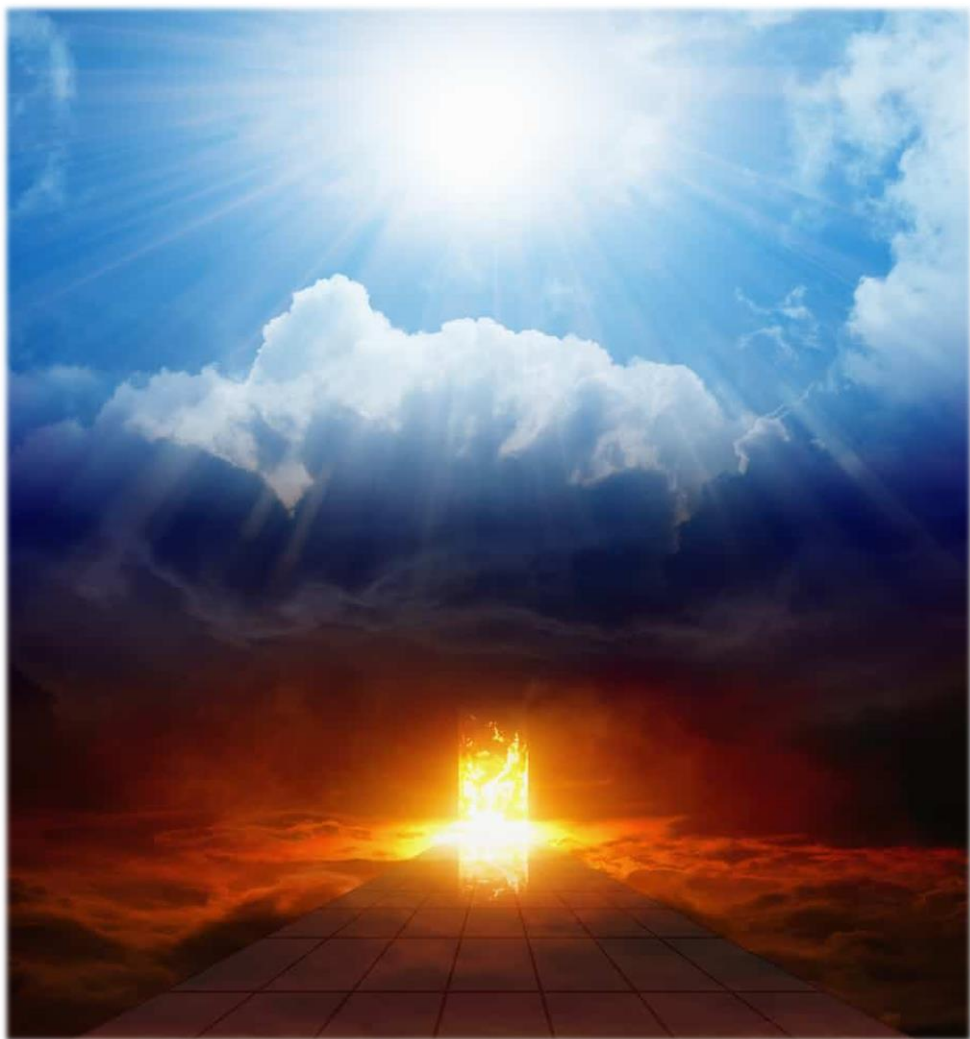


Sunday, July 21st, 2024 - 10:00 AM

Welcome to Our Service!



The Rev. Caleb McGregor, *Pastor*



WIFI password:
peumc411
(PEUMC.Guest)

Bob Berg, *Lay Leader*
Judy Miller, *Accompanist*
Colby Grunden, *Media Technician*
Kathy McGrath, *Liturgist*
Maribeth Salo & Jeanne Bruener, *Greeters*
Skip Mazurek, *Usher*
Julie Berg, *Pew Ambassador*

THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY:

“Whenever we manage to love without expectation, calculations, or negotiations, we are indeed in heaven; whenever we fight or hate, we are in hell.” -*Shams Tabrizi (Persian poet – 1185-1248)*

“*Inuit*: ‘If I did not know about God & sin, would I go to hell?’ *Priest*: ‘No, not if you did not know.’ *Inuit*: ‘Then why did you tell me?’” -*Inuit Proverb*
“Forgive one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” -*Ephesians 4:32*

[Please silence your mobile devices. Thank you!]

L – Liturgist / M – Minister / P – **People** / † - words are on the TVs / * – stand in body or spirit
UMH – *The United Methodist Hymnal* TFWS – *The Faith We Sing*

(1) *The Body of Christ gathers to worship God!*

WORDS OF WELCOME

FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENTS

†*CALL TO WORSHIP

screen

†*HYMN OF PRAISE:

Over My Head

TFWS 2148

(2) *We listen to what God is saying to us!*

OPENING PRAYER (ADORATION & ILLUMINATION)

YOUNG-AT-HEART

†*SCRIPTURE READINGS (*page #:* 107 – *New Testament*): **Luke 16:19-29**

***🎵 Give glory to God, O mighty ones;
ascribe to the Lord: glory and strength;
ascribe to the Lord, the glory that’s deserved!
Worship our God, in the beauty of all holiness!
Come and sing praises—to the Rock of all ages!
Come and sing praises to Jesus, our Lord!
Come and adore Him, bow down before Him!
Come and sing praises to Jesus, our Lord! 🎵**

(THIS SERMON LASTS) FOR ALL ETERNITY

IS THERE A HEAVEN & HELL? WHAT HAPPENS TO NON-CHRISTIANS?

SERIES: **WRESTLING WITH DOUBT, A QUESTIONING HEART, Part III of IV**

(3) We respond to what God is saying to us!

†*HYMN: *Sing with All the Saints in Glory* UMH 702

SHARING OF CONCERNS

Prayers of the People

M: Whom do we have in heaven but You?

P: With You, we lack nothing on earth!

(Psalm 73:25, adapted)

(4) We prepare to leave and be doers of God's Word!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SHARING OF JOYS & GOD-SIGHTINGS

(UMH 156)

*🎵 **I love to tell the Story, t'will be my theme in glory:
to tell the old, old Story of Jesus and His love!** 🎵

(You are invited to place any offerings in the **Offering Box** as you leave the sanctuary;
you may also give online at peumc.org/donate or use the **QR Code** below.)

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*The Lord's Prayer

*CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP



†*HYMN OF MISSION: *Shine Jesus Shine* TFWS 2173

*A BLESSING AND GOING FORTH

M: Until we meet again, may CHRIST be with you all!

P: And also with you! AMEN!

Sunday Services – 10:00 AM

Today - July 21st

Series #2: **WRESTLING W/ DOUBT:**

A QUESTIONING HEART (Part III of IV:

Is There a Heaven & Hell?)

August 4th

Series #2: **HOPE FOR HARD TIMES:**

AT THE END OF OUR ROPE

Communion Sunday

July 28th

CHRISTMAS IN JULY

Series #2: **WRESTLING W/ DOUBT:**

A QUESTIONING HEART

(Part IV of IV: Why is there Suffering?

What is the Point of Prayer?)

August 11th

Series #2: **HOPE FOR HARD TIMES:**

AT THE END OF OUR ROPE

2nd Sunday Coffee

Events & Meetings

Wednesday, July 24^h

Summer Reading Group

at El Café 11:00

Wednesday, July 31st

Hymn-Sing Service (Port Edwards

& Rapids UMCs + refreshments)

July / August Bimonthly Mission Project:

Collect **Money** for:



The Place Where Horses Help Kids

Collect **Items** for:



AND

supplies for teachers (Port Edwards)

-hand sanitizer / boxes of tissues

-dry erase markers / dry erasers

We are praying over these households throughout July:

(randomly chosen by slips of paper on 6/20)

Jerry Klahn; Joann Lester;

Midge & Jim Herschleb household;

Sara Tyne; Mike & Lori Hintz household.

Part I: Heaven

(As part of Adam Hamilton's chapter on heaven in his 2023 book 'Doubt', he asked members of his congregation if any had near death experiences. The following are some of the responses.

These responses were never intended to be included in today's sermon, but Pastor Caleb hopes you will appreciate reading about them here)

Gretchen wrote: “At some point, one of the team said, ‘She’s dropping fast!’ I closed my eyes. In the next moment, I stood at an entrance. My grandmothers were there. They reached out to me. My father-in-law was there. And then a hand touched my back, and I knew that hand! Just like you’d know the feel of your parents’ hands, I *knew* that hand. The words I heard were ‘It’s not your time,’ and I was back in the interventional radiology procedure room.”

JoAnn described getting into trouble while swimming off the coast when she was 12 years old and was drawn into a rip tide: “The next thing I remember is that I am pulled under the water, then I found myself in the sky above looking at a bright tunnel of light. All my senses were more than 100%. I felt more alive than I ever had. At the same time, I saw my life (all twelve years) evaluated in a flash. Then, I remember looking down at the ocean and seeing my body floating, my friend’s body floating. At that moment I knew I had more to do here on earth. Then, I was back in the ocean. A man appeared who took my hand and took the hand of my friend. He pulled us back to shore.”

Barbara described what happened as she gave birth to her triplets 28 years ago: “I experienced a moment of transcendence—a radiant light with a tunnel ascending upward. I was surrounded by a divine and loving presence—the lightness and love I experienced defy description and are with me to this day. While drifting up, I looked down upon myself and the chaos of the operating room as more than a dozen health care professionals worked to save the lives of my children. My trip back to the operating table was abrupt, with several people speaking loudly at me to come back into consciousness. It was then that I had the clear understanding that I was sent back to attend to the unfinished business of raising my children.”

Jaqueline wrote: “I was 25 years old at the time (I am 80 years old now), and I had never heard of a “near-death experience.” I began to hemorrhage, and Dr. Tappen told me and my husband that I was losing too much blood. At that time, I floated to the ceiling and looked down at my husband and my doctor. I heard Dr. Tappen say, ‘We’ve lost your baby, and we’re losing your wife.’ I saw tears running down my husband’s face. I was immediately whisked up through a tunnel of white, where I was in the presence of the Creator and unbelievable beauty and love. I could see all kinds of people in the background dressed in a variety of clothing. I looked at the Creator and said, ‘It is so very beautiful here and I would love to stay, but I have a little girl at home.’ The Creator smiled and chuckled a bit and said, ‘Then you will have to go back home, Jackie.’” She awoke to find two surprising news: the girl she thought she’d lost was actually a boy, and he had survived. Maybe that’s why God chuckled.

Peter was at KU MED with a complete hear blockage, He wrote: “I flatlined. What I remember next was my time in heaven. I found myself walking into what looked like my grandmother’s house. I could see the gentle yellow walls and the bricks of the fireplace. I inhaled deeply and was met with the smell of meatloaf. As I exclaimed this out loud and walked around the corner, I saw my grandmother coming out of her kitchen. She was smiling and wiping her hands on the tea-towel apron that graced her neck. She smiled with such warmth at me and simply stated: ‘It’s not done yet and neither are you. You must go back!’”

Nancy told of her husband’s glimpse of heaven before he died: “When he regained consciousness he said, ‘Did you think I was going to die?’ And I said ‘yes.’ He reply was, ‘Well, I came back.’ He told me about seeing the bright light, and then his face just lit up when he told me he had seen his dad and my dad. No one believed that he had really seen them. I asked him if he talked to my dad and he said, ‘Yes, he told me not to be a schmuck.’ I started laughing because that is exactly what my dad would say. My dad told him he should come back and say goodbye to people. And that’s what he did. He lived two more weeks and was able to see friends.”

Those are just a sampling of the many stories I’ve (Hamilton) heard from people connected to the church I serve. How do we explain these experiences? The similarities? Even the differences?

Part II: Hell and Damnation

(The following is an excerpt removed from today's sermon in lieu of time.)

So . . .

what happens to those who don't know to accept Christ's salvation, who have never heard about it,

or to those who were raised in another faith tradition for whom the gospel simply makes no sense to them?

What of those who have been harmed by Christians,

who no longer can see good news of any organized religion?

What happens to those who heard a distorted version of the gospel that raised doubts in their hearts?

There are 2 broad views held by Christians regarding the eternal fate of non-Christians:

A. **Christian Exclusivism.** Christ's atonement is only effective for an individual if they accept it by faith. For those who believe in Christ. After all, "*No one comes to the Father except through Me*" (John 14:6). "*No other name has been given among humans through which we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). No one can be saved apart from repenting of their sin and calling upon Christ to save them.

B. **Christian Inclusivism.** This claims that it is God's *intention* to save all people, so God *will* save all people, in the end. Perhaps some must be subjected to judgment for a time, but, ultimately, all will be reconciled to God. After all, Christ died for all, and God "so loves the world," and God cares about "the nations." Since it is God's plan to save all people, God will surely do just that. The Holy Spirit works in the hearts of all people, even those who don't know God, until, eventually, everyone will experience this salvation even if this happens at, or after, their death.

When we profess, in the Apostles Creed, that 'Christ descended to the dead,' this could mean for us that God continues to reach out to us *even after death*—that not all must be settled *before* the moment of death.

What kind of love would God have, if that love and care stopped just because someone died?

This is the position held by many mainline

Protestant denominations like ourselves,
the Roman Catholic Church,
and even some evangelicals as well.

God can show mercy to children
who were too young to understand the gospel,
persons with cognitive disabilities,
and to those who never heard the gospel
or heard a distorted version of it.

God would not condemn to hell those who had no real abilities
to hear, understand, and respond to the Good News of Jesus,
to accept his saving grace.

After all there are millions of Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists,
and many others whose lives reflect a deeper love
of God and neighbor than some Christians we know.

So many Christians
have faithfully dotted all their i's and crossed all their t's
and accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior,
yet their actions and words are so off-putting
that people around them lose their faith.

What kind of witness is that?

"If that's what it means to be a Christian, I am definitely not interested."

Or as Gandhi famously said:

*"I like your Christ, but I don't like His people.
Your Christians are so unlike your Christ."*

A report came out in 2023 that stated over the previous 50 years,
188 clergy in the Roman Catholic Church
had allegedly abused hundreds of children,
often in the name of God.

***Will God send people to hell who left the church
and lost their faith as a result of such abuse?***

Or will God show particular mercy to them?

And yet, what about those to whom much power was given,
to whom the care of God's people were entrusted,
like church leaders, Sunday school teachers, scout masters,
priests and pastors, or families members
who claimed a deep Christian faith.

"To whom much is given, much is expected."

The harshest words out of Jesus' mouth
were spoken to the religious authorities of His day.