

# Old Orchard Church

January 11, 2009 — 10:15 to 11:45 a.m.



We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**



Be faithful even to the point of death,  
and I will give you the crown of life.

—Revelation 2:10—

# Celebrating Jesus, Incarnate Son of God: Lord of the Martyrs

All do not bend the knee to the Christchild:  
In Herod's slaughter of Bethlehem's "flowerets"  
Are fulfilled the foreboding words of the psalm:  
**"The kings of the earth take their stand,  
And the rulers gather together against the Lord  
And against his Anointed One."**

The first New Covenant martyrs—  
Those who die for the cause of gospel—  
Are the infants of Bethlehem.  
And down the corridor of history,  
From every land and people,  
Follow a long line of witnesses,  
Killed for their loyalty to Jesus Christ.

Being faithful, even unto death,  
And loving God more than life itself,  
They receive the promised crown  
And trust him who says,  
**"Vengeance is mine, I will repay."**

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness:  
Praise the Sovereign who says,  
**"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his godly ones."**  
Alleluia!



## Today's Scripture

Old Testament Lesson: Daniel 3:16-18  
New Testament Lesson: Acts 7:54-60

## Today's Sermon

"Looking for God" (Part 2)  
Hosea 6:1-3

Ron Lutjens, senior pastor, preaching

# The Cloud of Witnesses

The new convert soon learned more of the Christians. After a brief rest he rose and was joined by Honorius, who offered to show him the nature of the place where they lived.

Those whom he had seen at the chapel service formed but a small part of the dwellers in the Catacombs....

He walked far on, accompanied by Honorius....

"Sometimes," continued Honorius, "three are buried in the same grave. In other places, Marcellus, you will see that large numbers are buried; for when persecution rages, it is not always possible to pay to each individual the separate attention that is desired. Yonder is a tablet that marks the burial-place of many martyrs whose names are unknown, but whose memories are blessed." He pointed to a slab bearing the following inscription:

*Marcella and five hundred and fifty martyrs of Christ.*

"Here is a longer one," said Marcellus,

*In Christ, Alexander is not dead, but lives above the stars, and his body rests in this tomb. He ended his life under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, who although he might have foreseen that great benefit would result from his services, rendered unto him hatred instead of favor. For while on his knees, and about to sacrifice unto the true God, he was led away to execution. O sad times! In which even among sacred rites and prayers, not even in caverns could we be safe. What can be more wretched than such a life? And what than such a death? Where they cannot be buried by their friends and relations! At length they sparkle in heaven. He has scarcely lived who has lived in Christian times.*

"This," said Honorius, "is the resting place of a well-loved brother, whose memory is still cherished in all the churches. Around this tomb we shall hold the agape feast upon the anniversary of his birthday. At this feast the barriers of different classes and ranks, of different kindreds and tribes and tongues and peoples are all broken down. We are all brethren in Christ Jesus, for we remember that as Christ loved us, so ought we also to love one another."

from The Martyr of the Catacombs  
(historical novel written sometime before 1876)

