

Peace Prayer

Old Orchard Church

August 9, 2009 – 10:15 to 11:45 a.m.

See print copy for song.

In Christ God was
reconciling the world to himself,
not counting their trespasses
against them, and entrusting to us
the message of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:19

Celebrating Jesus Christ,

The Great Reconciler

And the Baptism of Wyatt Anderson Woodard

And Christian Jeffrey Fogas

The wrath of God hangs over the world,
and the world is at odds with itself:

rich against poor,
Arab against Jew,
young against old,
men against women,
terrorist against America,
white against black,
liberal against conservative.

“In the world you have trouble.”



But thanks be to God!

The Great Reconciler has come, even Jesus the Christ.
At Calvary's cross he purchased our peace with God,
And from it flows the reconciliation of the world.

Vindicated by his resurrection,
He now breaks down the dividing wall of hostility,
and recreates us one new humanity,
one church throughout the earth.

Worship the Lord in confidence and delight—
but dare to come to him only through Jesus.

Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson: Leviticus 1:1-9

Epistle Lesson: Colossians 1:9-25

Sermon

“Reason for Our Children to Worship: Christ for a Torn Up World”

Psalm 22:25-31

Ron Lutjens, senior pastor, preaching

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.**

The Tear in the Soul of the World

We praise Christ today as the Great Reconciler. Human life, ever since our fall from innocence in Eden, has been marked by huge pocks of alienation. Eve and Adam thumb their nose at God, and immediately they are alienated from him: they hide when he comes looking for them because they fear his just displeasure. And they are alienated from each other: Adam pushes away his wife in blame, and they feel shame in their nakedness before each other. Just a myth? So some would claim. But intriguing isn't it, that while Genesis was written a couple of thousand years ago, the husband/wife dynamic it describes is the same one we know? In a 1940's essay on marriage, *The Necessary Enemy*, Katherine Anne Porter, the American novelist, writes:

This very contemporary young woman finds herself facing the oldest and ugliest dilemma of marriage. She is dismayed, horrified, full of guilt and foreboding because she is finding out little by little that she is capable of hating her husband whom she loves faithfully.

A neighbor will not talk to a neighbor for months on end because of some slight suffered; a mother lashes out in anger at a rambunctious toddler in a store, and you can virtually watch the alienation expand between them. A disturbed man, alienated from all women because of repeated rejections, walks into a workout gym near Pittsburgh last Tuesday night and opens fire on a random aerobics class of women.

How desperately we *need* reconciliation—because it mends what alienation rips up: the fragile fabric of love and respect in the relationships we were created for. And how wonderfully we *have* reconciliation, because Christ came, and his coming has made a difference in the alienation that tears our world apart. He reconciled us to God, but he also made possible a peace between people who rage against each other. I saw a book last week, *Once An Arafat Man*. Here's the publisher's reason to read it—and it's a good one:

*Tass Saada was a PLO sniper and Yasser Arafat's chauffeur, a Muslim immersed in anti-Israeli activity. As a young man he came to America where he started a family, changed his faith, and began reconciliation with the Jews. Later on he returned to Qatar to face his family and former boss, Arafat, with stories from his new life in Christ. The encounters are astounding.... You'll be encouraged by his changed life and the story of hope in reconciliation through Jesus.... The author is the founder of **Hope for Ishmael**, an organization whose mission is to reconcile Arabs and Jews.*

Christ is at work in the world! What a fitting day to be baptizing two baby boys into the covenant promises and power of God—Resurrection Morning, when we're celebrating the vindication of our Lord Christ for the work he did on a Roman cross to melt the hostility between us and God and to reknit the tender tissue of trust that holds people together.

—Ron Lutjens