

Alleluia, He Is Coming!
By Martha Butler

See print copy for words.

Old Orchard Church
Second Sunday in Advent
December 6, 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.

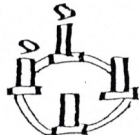
And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

Celebrating Messiah Jesus: Emmanuel

For ages women hoped and prayed Messiah
would be born to a daughter in Israel;
Century after century the Gentile peoples of the world
sat in darkness, waiting for the light of Truth;
Generation upon generation prayed and prayed that
Emmanu-el, God With Us,
would come and ransom captive Israel.

But, according to his patience, when time had ripened,
God acted. The Son came.

We cry now,
“Come to us Jesus, expected so long;
come and release us from our fears and sins;
release us from our sadness;
let us find our rest in you,
that we might live in the joy of God
until you come again, as Lion of Judah.”



Scripture Readings

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 40:1-8

Gospel Reading: John 1:1-14

Sermon

“God’s Comings:
The Grace of Announcement, the Work of Preparation”

Luke 1:8-20

Ron Lutjens, senior pastor, preaching

An Advent Meditation

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it.
Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.
Revelation 20:11

The gospel says that it is the love of God which aches forth in Christ’s humanity. Love from on high, tender sympathy from above, does not tell us much—and so we also read in the Scriptures that “**no one has ever seen God.**” But the Evangelist immediately goes on to say that “**the only begotten Son has made God known....**”

But the time is coming, according to Revelation, when this hidden drama will no longer be hidden. The mystery will shatter...and out of this will come clarity. We shall then confront our deeds and perceive that they belong to a larger context, that they are both good and evil; and the idea of their meaninglessness will thereby be dispelled. This is a gift, for it is a relief to recognize oneself as an evil person if one has come to believe that there is no good or evil and that it makes no difference how one lives....

But human weakness is not the only thing that will be revealed when the curtain opens on this drama. We shall also find love from the depths, and its eyes will not be blindfolded. We shall find it beyond history, beyond the Lord’s Supper which otherwise epitomizes to the very end of time our relationship to Christ. We shall find it even though it is not imbedded in matter, or in anything earthly or human as in Galilee and at the altar. We shall find it in nakedness. The fire which burned in history shall be fire only, the face shorn of its mysterious veil. This is a fearful thought: the truth—and we have no eye-shade; love—a love more violent, more patient, more proud, more humble than everything we on earth commonly call love, a love which wailed for us through a myriad of years and centuries—now we shall find it, and it will no longer be silent, as when it suffered; it will speak. “**From his presence earth and sky fled away....**”

Then will this day too be exposed to the light, and meaninglessness shall be no more. As a sunbeam enters a dark room and transforms the dust into a multitude of stars, so shall it be with our days, the quiet, gray, uneventful, the aching, hopeless, tearstained, the love-filled, hate-filled, sin-filled, prayer-filled, bloodred days—all shall be touched by the light which transforms; they shall be as fire. This very day is included, for it is included in the gospel of love which reaches up to us from below.

--Olov Hartman, in *The Birth of God* (1969)

