

The Steadfast Love Of the Lord Never Ceases

By Edith McNeill

See words in print copy

All Heaven Declares

By Noel Richards & Tricia Richards

See words in print copy.

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.**

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Old Orchard Church

June 6, 2010—10:15 to 11:45 a.m.

*The steadfast love of the Lord
never ceases;*

*his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning....*

—Lamentations 3:22-23—

Celebrating Jesus Christ, God of New Beginnings And the Baptism of Yuxia (Lily) Ji and Sol Tucker

Every day has a new beginning,
And it is from Jesus Christ,
The Agent by whom God made the world!
So we sing,

Morning by morning new mercies I see.
The week runs its course and begins again.
Every month has a new beginning,
Every year, every century.
Every birth is a new beginning—
For a child, for a family, for a church.

Every milestone passed,
Every season of life finished,
Opens into something new for us.
Bless Christ for the new beginnings he builds into our life!

Bless him, too, for new beginning0s in Redemption:
For a New Covenant, a new mediator, new sacrifices;
For new promises, commissions, sacraments;
For the New Creation already begun,
And for the promise of what is to come—
The new heavens and the new earth.

For new forgiveness, granted each time we seek it;
New opportunities, given by a Sovereign Will;
New strength, gained when we admit our weakness.

Praise the Lord, he who announces:
“Behold, I am making all things new!”



Today's Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 43:14-26; 44:1-5

New Testament Lesson: 2 Corinthians 5:13-21

The Ministry of the Word

Teaching of the People of God:

A Time for Open Praise

The Glory of the New

There is a glory in what is old: it's familiar, tried, predictable, established—and therefore, reassuring. We need “old” things in our lives.

But that which is new has a glory, and we need those things, too. It's the time of year we honor our graduates who have all finished crucial chapters in their lives and are off to something new; we just finished another new members' class; and so far in 2010 the Lord has blessed our fellowship with **seven new children** (with a couple of more on the way), the last, Oliver Neil Storm, just born on Monday! And by the end of next weekend, there will be **four new married couples** among us. How thankful we are, too, for several brand new Christians in our midst. One of them, Yuxia (Lily) Ji, is being baptized this morning, publicly taking on her new identity as a believer in Jesus Christ. It's a good day to give thanks to the Lord for the many ways he brings new beginnings into our lives!

This will be the year of new beginnings, almost certainly, for us and for Mark and Alice Tucker and their boys as they leave to plant a new church in Midtown St. Louis. That's all a bit scary—especially for them. But it's part of the glory of what's new: it's fresh and uncharted and full of surprises, and therefore, it excites.

Many in our fellowship are at a place of New Beginning right now: some are feeling a deep need for new directions in their lives; 8th graders are about to become 9th graders; a few people, like Carine Barrs, Sean Maney, Emily Roig, and Josh Welker, have gotten new jobs; some are still praying for the job that will mean a new beginning; and all of us are stepping into summer, a new season of a still new millennium.

But not everything new is good; for me, new knowledge this year of something in the past has brought new pain. But for new pain and for new failures in old sins, and for new temptations, the Lord's mercies are also new. That's a promise to be trusted and tested.

We celebrate today that our Lord Jesus Christ, as the God of grace, is the God of new beginnings. It is to him that we owe praise and gratitude for every new thing we experience—from the cool air of a fresh morning to new forgiveness; from a new stage in a toddler's life to new insights Christ gives us into life and into his love as we press on to know him better than we did yesterday. In his redeeming work at the cross and in the empty tomb Christ defeated all that would ruin and make us forever old and decrepit, and guilt-ridden and stuck-in-a-rut and finally dead.

That great scene from the throne room in heaven in Revelation 21:5 is worth pondering over, long and hard:

And he who sits on the throne said, “Behold I am making all things new.”

That's God speaking; and he is making over everything, making it all new, because of his Son. Will you trust him tomorrow for the new mercies you will need then?

—Ron Lutjens