

Celtic Alleluia

Old Orchard Church

February 27, 2011

10:15-11:50 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.**

Credits. Cover art: 300-year old West African carved wood crucifix, in possession of the Baptist Missionary Society, London. **Song:** "Celtic Alleluia" © 1985. Fintan O'Carroll & Christopher Walker. OCP Publications. All rights reserved. Reproduced with permission under license #L13103. LicenSingOnline.

Then Jesus came to his disciples
and said, "All authority in heaven
and on earth has been given to me."

—Matthew 28:18

Celebrating Jesus, Incarnate Son of God: Lord of All History

The history of the world does not unfold according to unbending laws of economic necessity, as Marxists think;

It does not evolve randomly and unpredictably under the autonomy of human beings, as Humanists think.

The world lies under the sovereign control and direction Of one incarnate, crucified, resurrected and ruling Man,

Jesus Christ,

He is the radiance of the glory of the one living and true God;

He is the exact imprint of God's nature,

And he holds the universe together by the word of his power.

He raises up nations and empires—and he brings them down;

He directs decisions of leaders and power brokers.

He knows every star by name,

And yet comes in mercy to anyone who turns to him.

Jesus Christ, who entered the ambiguities and the turmoil of human history,

Is now its Lord!

In mysterious and strange ways

He is bringing all things to a great and glorious End;

Even now he is ruling the world,

Making every created thing serve his purposes of love and justice.

Praise him, with the Father and the Holy Spirit,

Now and forever. Alleluia!



— Scripture Readings —

A String of Pearls: Christ's Hand on History

New Testament Reading: Acts 17:22-31

— Sermon Series on Ruth —

“Men and Women in the Economy of God:

The Book of Ruth in the Apostle Paul” Part 2

Ruth 1-4; I Corinthians 7 & 11; Ephesians 5

Ron Lutjens, pastor, preaching

Who's In Charge?

God not only preserves our souls. He not only grants us faith and peace of heart and the joy of security. He is not only our rod and staff in the valley of the shadow and our Comforter when our conscience torments us. *God is also the Lord of the world*; he causes his eternal ordinances to prevail over all our mutual destructiveness and all the powers of overthrow. He directs this feverish, threatened world straight to the goal, which it itself knows not: his throne.

We men may do what we will, Nebuchadnezzar may come and Genghis Khan and Mao Tse-tung; none of them can break God's plans, but rather must fulfill them—against their will! Even though what we hear now is the dark minor tone, what is being played is still God's symphony, and it will be played out to the end. The individual tones may think they are who knows what; they may want to assert themselves and swing out on their own. And yet they have all been composed into a score of which God alone is in command and in which everything, when it is heard from heaven's vantage point, has its place in God's succession of tones that end in his final chord. “The rich of this world are in process of going, but the kingdom of God is in process of coming,” Blurnhardt once said.

Therefore, even in the pressure zone of mass means of destruction and growing tyranny, we must have the long view and the confident calmness of those who know they have a secure place in the score of God's eternal symphony. For above the battle of the powers—the outcome of which we do not know—above all the crises and threats in our personal life there sounds, like a peaceful, comforting bell, the promise of God: **“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”** Every time the world goes to its autumn rest and every day as the peace of evening descends anew upon the earth we are to receive this message, like a blinking signal from the Eternal God: *“I calmly pursue my course through all the convulsions and derangements of your life. And just as I direct the rhythm of days and seasons, so I encompass the islands and the continents, the men of faith and the atheists, the constitutional states and the tyrannies. Don't ever think that anybody will ever be able to break away from serving me, though he renounce me ten times over! Even in the extreme perversion of authority, as in the tyranny of a totalitarian state, men are compelled despite themselves to preserve a remnant of my order and they can never succeed in consistently devilizing and ruining my world. And I, who have power of the whole world of space, should I not be able to encompass your little life, hear your questions and your groans, and unravel the tangled line of your need?”*

From *Outlines of a New World Order* by Helmut Thielicke (1960)

