

# MY LORD IS LEADING ME ON

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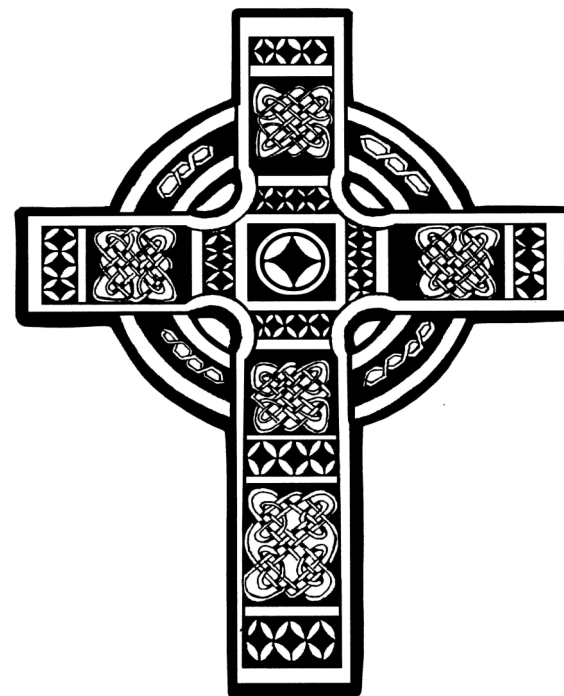


We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

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  
FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT  
FEBRUARY 26, 2012 -- 10:15–11:50 A.M.



WHEN JESUS SPOKE AGAIN TO THE PEOPLE,  
HE SAID,

"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

WHOEVER FOLLOWS ME

WILL NEVER WALK IN DARKNESS,

BUT WILL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE."

~ JOHN 8:12 ~

## DESCENT TO THE CROSS: I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

God the Son came into the world,  
The Light who alone can enlighten us.  
So cries the psalmist,

**“In your Light, we see light!”**  
But we prefer darkness to the light that heals,  
Lest the light of God expose  
The wound of our selfishness.

As he descends to the Cross,  
Christ moves closer to the heart of darkness,  
closer and closer to the supreme degradation,  
Closer and closer to the chilling abyss of evil.

But in all his humiliation, his pain,  
In all his loneliness and rejection,  
He remained the Light of the world,  
And our darkness could not extinguish it.

Praise be to our Lord Jesus,  
Who has turned the gruesome cross into a symbol of hope;  
Worship him, our high God  
And the Light of our shadowed world!



### SCRIPTURE READINGS

**Old Testament Lesson:** Isaiah 59:9-25

**Gospel Reading:** John 8:12-20

### SERMON

“The Joyful Seriousness of a Kingdom-Focused Life” (Part II)  
Acts 20:17-38

*Ron Lutjens, pastor, preaching*

## LETTING THE LIGHT INTO OUR SHADOWS

Today is the first Sunday in Lent, the 40 day period in the Christian Year that precedes and prepares us for a fresh celebration of Jesus’ victory at the Cross that opened out onto Easter morning. Lent, traditionally, has been a time for quiet, soul-searching reflection on why Christ came into the world to die: our disobedience, our preference for walking by our own light rather than God’s.

God calls us sinners, but what does that mean? It means that he calls our light, darkness, and our wisdom he calls folly. He calls our life, death, and our freedom, a form of bondage. But he comes accusing not to condemn; he comes accusing that the world through his Son might be saved. He comes to expose our darkness, that seeing that which is light indeed we might run to Christ and have him shine on us—that is, change us, from the inside out, in every dimension of our little but passionate lives.

The Good News—the “gospel”—of the Kingdom is that Christ wants to shine his light, the light of Pure Goodness, into the darkness of our gone-wrong desires, fears and passions. What does change look like in that dimension of your living? It should look something like the experience of Saint Augustine around 386 AD and written about in his autobiographical Confessions. It’s an experience of beginning to see clearly just how dark some of your desires are, and bringing them to Christ sincerely and contritely for forgiving. And then it’s an experience of trusting that his goodness will flow into you and deflate the energy of those passions that seem so compelling. Augustine, who had lived with a woman outside of marriage for years, wrote:

The very toys of toys and vanities of vanities still held me; they plucked at the garment of my flesh and whispered softly, “Will you cast us off for ever? And from that moment shall we no longer be with you for ever?” and I hesitated, for a strong habit said to me, “Do you think you can live without them?”

But chastity said to me, “Why do you rely on yourself and so waver? Cast yourself upon him, fear not, he will not withdraw himself and let you fall; he will receive you and heal you.”

So I rose and, throwing myself down under a certain fig tree, wept bitterly in contrition of heart. Suddenly I heard from a neighbouring house the voice of a child, singing over and over again, “Take up and read, take up and read.”

Checking my weeping I got up and went back to where I had been sitting, and had laid down the volume of the apostle, and read the first passage which met my eyes: **“Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.”** (Romans 13:13-14)

I needed to read no further, for suddenly, as it were by a light infused into my heart, all darkness vanished away.

—Ron Lutjens