

We Fall Down

By Chris Tomlin

Words for song are in the printed copies.

Are not
all angels ministering
spirits sent to serve
those who will inherit
salvation?
(Hebrews 1:14)

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

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Old Orchard Church
June 24, 2012 — 10:15-11:50 a.m.

Celebrating Jesus Christ, Lord of Ministering Angels

Of the eternal and incarnate Son
The Father says,

“Let all the angels of God worship him.”

For he has inherited a Name higher than theirs;
By the depth of his love,
Shown in the bitterness of his suffering,
Christ has been exalted above every angelic spirit
in the universe.

Now they serve him, now they submit to him,
Rendering their help as bodiless spirits
Sent from the unseen world to serve God’s elect children
in the seen world.

Thanks be to God, Lord of all creatures!

Thanks be to Christ,
Who bore up our human nature
To the Central Heights of glory in the world invisible,
Past even angels,
That we might be near to God forever.
Alleluia!



Scripture Readings

Jesus’ Teaching on Angels: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-42; 18:10-14

New Testament Reading: Revelation 5:11-14

Sermon

“Recognizing Jesus”
Luke 24:13-35

James Schaefer, seminary intern, preaching

What Is An Angel?

Perhaps the strongest witness of the Bible to the nature of angels is that all their activity is *relational*, to God and the human race. In this they are congenial to our Christian understanding of God, and to living Christianity which is concerned with relationship. The Trinity is itself a relationship within the unity of the One God, revealed to us in the sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit, with whom we are each invited to personal relationship. The Church is a communion: every Christian is committed to mutual love, help and intercession, in relationships which are not broken by death. Within this web the angels operate, according to the Bible; its stories tell of angels helping and guiding, bringing revelations of God's relationship with his people. They never display a life of their own, and only rarely are they described as communicating with each other. They are either turned towards God in worship and praise, or towards the recipients of God's power, light and providence. They appear as essentially connective, mediating between God and humankind.

Christ is the one true mediator (see I Timothy 2:5). In the simplest terms, his mediation is perfect, since he does not move between God and man; he *is* God and man. The mediating function of angels can be seen as made possible within the overall power of his mediation, manifested in the Incarnation. A mediator is one who is brought in between two parties to effect some kind of agreement or union between them. Christians believe that God created the human race to be united with him, and in order to bring this perfect union about he came himself to earth, uniting his divine nature with a human nature, Jesus Christ. The Incarnation was the focus, at one point in time, of the whole history of salvation, of bringing humanity to God. The processes of salvation history radiate from the life of Christ on earth, and include all the works of God throughout time. In the Bible we read about angels mediating between God and people; the stories explain how the ways of God can be perceived by us, then and now, and how through angels we may be helped to perceive the presence of divine power in the world. These angels, being in direct touch with God, bring, in their very essence, revelations of the will and operations of God. Their obedience can further divine providence to the benefit of all creation.

When, in the book of Genesis, Jacob sees the angels of God ascending and descending on a ladder set up between heaven and earth he is seeing the ever present reality of angelic activity symbolically represented; the angels are bringing together earth and heaven, they are seen as a connection between God and humankind.

—Judith Lang in *The Angels of God*

