

God and Man At Table Are Sat Down

Old Orchard Church

November 18, 2012

10:15—11:50 a.m.

See print copy for music and words.

**I no longer call you servants,
because a servant does not
know his master's business.**

**Instead,
I have called you friends,
for everything that I learned
from my Father
I have made known to you.**

—John 15:15—

Celebrating What Christ Has Made Us: Friends of God

Friends of God, we who were slaves?
Friends of God, we who were enemies?
Friends of God, we who still sin?
Friends of God, we who struggle to believe?

Yes, friends of God, we who are in Christ!

Praise God who has loved us.
Praise God who has confided in us.
Praise God who has forgiven us.
Praise God who has made us his children.
Praise God who has called us his friends.



Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson

Genesis 18: 1-5;16-19; 2 Chron. 20: 5-7

New Testament Lesson

John 5: 13-15

Sermon

“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

John 15: 9-15

Mark Robertson, associate pastor elect, preaching

To Be Counted A Friend

I know a few well-known, well-connected, “important” people. Sometimes I am about to refer to one of them as “my friend”—and then I catch myself. Am I really close enough to the person to claim him or her as a friend? Or do I just want to be thought of as one who is intimate with the great? Of course, if a well-known person counts me his friend, that’s a different story.

But that’s just what we’re celebrating this morning: God, the most important Person in the universe, in rank, wealth, honor, power, and influence, counts me his friend through Jesus Christ.

Every disciple of Jesus Christ is counted the friend of God, according to Jesus’ own assuring words,

Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. (John 15:13-14)

Once, God referred to Israel as

...you descendants of Abraham, my friend. (Isaiah 41:8)

Are you God’s friend this morning? That depends on whether, like Abraham, you believe his promises and commit yourself to obeying him.

Ponder these words of John Calvin (1509-1564), one of our fathers in the faith:

It was an extraordinary honor which the Lord bestowed on Abraham, when he called him his *friend*. To be called “the servant of God” is high and honorable; for if it be reckoned a distinguished favor to be admitted into the family of a king or a prince, how much more highly should we esteem it, when God accounts us as his servants and members of his family? But, not satisfied with that, he bestows on him even a higher honor, and adorns him with the name of “friend.” What is here said about Abraham relates to all believers...Having therefore obtained from God so great an honor, we ought to remember our duty, that the more abundantly he has testified his kindness towards us, we may the more earnestly and with deeper reverence worship him continually.

—Ron Lutjens

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.**