

**plead for the widow.”** I discovered that God was more than prepared to use his people as his instruments of truth and justice. He was prepared to work miracles through our modest offerings of compassion and obedience.

—from *Good News About Injustice*

Gary Haughen (1999)

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## **The Strife Is O’er, the Battle Done**

Latin hymn translated by Francis Pott (1861); Giovanni P. Da Palestrina, arr.(1591)

See printed copy for music.

# **He who was seated on the throne said,**

# **"I am making everything new!"**

Revelation 21:5

See printed copy for art work.

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.**

## **Old Orchard Church**

April 14, 2013—10:15 - 11:50 a.m.

## Celebrating Jesus Christ as the Resurrection Community of Mercy & Justice

Christ the Son comes into the world to die,  
That divine justice might be satisfied  
In the punishment of sinners at the cross;  
And he rises again  
To destroy the oppressive power of Death that tyrannizes us.  
He comes to start a new race,  
To restore the shattered image of God  
In the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve.  
But he comes too, to restore to the wide world  
Its lost peace and love and beauty and justice.

Blessed is the Lamb on his throne,  
The One who even now is making all things new!  
Bless him in the highest heaven;  
Bless him you sons and daughters of the New Creation;  
He who was dead lives again!  
He is in and among us,  
And calls us together:  
To bear witness to his tenderness and power;  
To pray to his sovereign Father and ours;  
To practice justice by defending the God-given rights  
Of the widow, the orphan, the immigrant, the child, the disabled.

Sing the praise of the living Lord of the everlasting Kingdom!



### Today's Scripture

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 1:2-3; 11-18  
New Testament Lesson: Luke 24:36-48

### Today's Sermon

"The Bipolar Christ"  
Ephesians 4 (emphasis on verses 8-12)

*Greg Roig, ruling elder & music director, preaching*

## Justice as Good News of the Kingdom

As people committed to the historic faith of Christianity, we have *forgotten* how to be a witness of Christ's love, power and justice in the world. In generations past the great leaders of Christian revival in North America and Great Britain were consumed by a passion to declare the gospel and to manifest Christ's compassion and justice. But somewhere during the twentieth century some of us have simply stopped *believing* that God actually can use us to answer the prayers of children, women and families who suffer under the hand of abusive power or authority in their communities. We sit in the same paralysis of despair as those who don't even claim to know a Savior—and in some cases, we manifest even *less* hope.

...It need not be this way. We can recover a witness of Christian courage in a world of injustice. We can rediscover our Maker's passions for the world and for justice—passions that may have grown unfamiliar to us. We can come to know the compassion of Jesus like never before as we go with him to look into the eyes of those who are in need of rescue. Moreover, we can be restored to the conviction that God is prepared to use *us* to **"seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow"** (Isaiah 1:17 NRSV).

...To be honest, few people could have grown up farther from the realities of injustice and oppression in our world than I did. I was raised in a wonderfully happy home. My loving family lived in an affluent suburb in a civil society—for which I am, frankly, enormously grateful. The realities of terror, oppression, abuse and injustice were kept far from my door. Not surprisingly, I came to understand God in ways that fit my experience. God seemed intensely interested in my life of personal piety and seemed most needed as a Savior from the only negative eventuality which I could not control—death. This is an oversimplification, of course, because I had the entire biblical revelation to draw on, but it serves to illustrate how relatively little I knew about a holy God who spent his days weeping beside children in brothels, prisoners in pain or orphans in trauma—a God whose core hatred of injustice was rivaled only by his hatred of idolatry.

I knew little about the needs of the world or how God regarded such suffering. I knew even less about what those needs had to do with me or how I could make a difference. But eventually I left home. I lived in places where there was no escaping the raw realities of a world in rebellion against its Maker—apartheid in South Africa, guerilla war in the Philippines, genocide in Rwanda, to name a few. In these contexts I met followers of Jesus Christ who knew God more deeply, knew the Bible more thoroughly and lived life more courageously than I ever had. They didn't judge me or dismiss me for my limitations; they simply loved me and shared what they had learned, frequently the hard way, about the God of hope and power and joy. In time I found that I had developed some skills as an investigator and a lawyer that could actually be used to **"seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan,**