

**May 2, 2021 + 10:30 A.M.**  
**Fifth Sunday of Easter**

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| <b>We Join in Worship</b> |
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**PRELUDE** “Praise God, You Servants of the Lord”

Broadbury/Grotenhuis

**THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

Christ's peace is with us always, no matter where we may be. And so, Christ's peace is with each and every one of us in this moment. Let us take it in. Let us really feel it. When we are done with worship today, call somebody from the church and greet them with Christ's peace.

**CALL TO WORSHIP** (Adapted from *Psalms* 22)

Leader: We will tell of your name to our siblings; in the midst of the congregation we will praise you.

**ALL: We who fear the LORD, let us praise God! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify the LORD; stand in awe of God, all you offspring of Israel!**

Leader: For the LORD did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; the LORD's face was not hidden from us, but we were heard when we cried out.

**ALL: From you comes our praise in the great congregation; our vows we will pay before those who fear the LORD. The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek shall praise the LORD. May our hearts live forever!**

Leader: All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; and all the families of the nations shall worship before the LORD. For dominion belongs to the LORD, and the LORD rules over the nations.

**ALL: To the LORD, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before the LORD shall bow all who go down to the dust, and we shall live for the LORD. Let us worship the LORD!**

**\*OPENING HYMN (Gentle Singing):** “Now to Your Table Spread” (515)

**INVITATION TO CONFESSION:**

Leader: The first letter of John says, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.”  
Let us boldly confess our sins without fear, full of the assurance of God's love.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION** (unison)

**God of abundance, God who is love, we confess to you with the assurance of your abundant love. We confess that we do not always embody your love, especially at the table. As your Church, we have a history of blocking and excluding our siblings because of our assumptions, biases, suspicions, and judgements. We have kept people away because of the beautiful identities you gave them. We have traumatized your children by making them feel unwelcome simply for being who you made them to be. In doing so, we have denied your image. We have denied your love. Forgive us for turning the table of grace into a table of judgment. Forgive us for turning the table of radical welcome into a table of exclusion. Forgive us for turning the table of equity into a table of hierarchy. Help us to embody your love once more! In the name of Jesus Christ, the true vine, we pray. Amen.**

**KYRIE (Gentle Singing):**

**Lord, have mercy upon us.  
Christ, have mercy upon us.  
Lord, have mercy upon us.**

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**Leader:** Friends, hear the good news. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

**ALL:** **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!**

**GLORIA PATRI (Gentle Singing):**

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.**

**STATEMENT OF FAITH: (*The Apostles' Creed*)**

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

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| <b>We Hear God's Word</b> |
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**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: (Unison)**

**Almighty God, through your only Son you overcame death and opened to us the light of eternity. Enlighten our minds and kindle our hearts with the presence of your Spirit, that we may hear your words of comfort and challenge in the reading of the scriptures, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**HEBREW BIBLE LESSON:** *Joel 2:21-27*

**EPISTLE LESSON:** *1 John 4:7-21*

**GOSPEL LESSON:** *John 15:1-8*

**SERMON:** With Us at the Table

**MUSICAL MEDITATION** "Make Me a Captive, Lord"

Howard/Evans

## **We Respond in Faith**

### **THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

#### **INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE**

#### **GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**ALL: And also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

**ALL: We lift them to the Lord.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**ALL: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

...And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

...And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as we proclaim the mystery of faith. **Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. **Amen.**

#### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

#### **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

Our Lord Jesus, on the night of his arrest, took bread, and after giving thanks to God, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way he took the cup, saying: This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me. Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the saving death of the risen Lord, until he comes.

#### **BREAKING THE BREAD AND POURING THE CUP**

Leader: The bread of heaven. The cup of the new covenant. The gifts of God for the people of God.

**ALL: Let us keep the feast!**

#### **COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE**

**MUSIC DURING COMMUNION** "The King of Love"

Wilson/Healy Willan

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

## OFFERING INVITATION:

Leader: Jesus is the true vine, and we are the branches. As the branches, we are called to reach out with God's love. We are called to make sure that all are invited, all are made to feel welcome, and all are given a seat at the table. Let us give our pledges, tithes, and offerings so that we can fulfill this holiest of callings. If you did not do so as you entered, please place your offering in the plate as you leave. If you are worshipping from home, please mail in your checks or use our online giving option on the website.

**OFFERTORY** "The Head that Once Was Crowned with Thorns"

## DOXOLOGY (Gentle Singing):

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God, above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

## PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (Unison)

**God of abundance, God who is love, we dedicate these gifts to you and to the mission of your table. As we do so, we commit to inviting all, welcoming all, sharing with all, and loving all. In the name of Jesus Christ, the true vine, we pray. Amen.**

## We Go Into the World

**\* CLOSING HYMN (Gentle Singing):** "For the Fruit of All Creation" (553)

## BENEDICTION

**POSTLUDE** "Fear Not, Rejoice And Be Glad"

P. Wright

## Life of the Church

### Announcements

- **OUTDOOR FELLOWSHIP** As weather permits, we will be trying out fellowship outside after the worship service. Join us for light snacks, drinks, and conversation!
- **YOUTH CONNECTIONS** will be meeting on Saturday, May 8, at 1:00 PM to help cook for the shelter dinner. Reach out to Heather Casiano if you have any questions.
- **ADULT CONNECTIONS** Our Sunday morning class has started meeting again in person! We will be meeting in the session room upstairs and using the Spring edition of The Present Word curriculum to guide discussion. This class will meet each Sunday through May 23. All books will be provided, though you are encouraged to bring your own Bible if you'd like. Please wear a mask inside the church building. If you have any further questions about the class, contact Bonnie Perryman or John Toren.
- **BRING YOUR OWN BIBLE** Our weekly virtual study is back! Join us on Wednesdays from 7:00-8:00 PM on Zoom. Watch your email for a link. All are welcome! We start with a new passage each week, so there is no way to fall behind!
- **PASTOR TYLER'S OFFICE HOURS** are Monday through Thursday evenings from 6-9 PM. Kristen is still in the office in the mornings.

### Opportunities to serve as the HEART, HANDS, and FEET of Jesus Christ:

- **BLESSING BOX** Our Blessing Box has gained even more importance in this season of pandemic. Economic impacts are on the rise, and the most vulnerable in our midst are the most harmed. Please continue to place items in the Blessing Box and take items if you are a person in need! Items most commonly donated: Canned goods with pull tabs, socks, toilet paper, non-perishable foods, small snacks, toiletries, baby wipes and diapers. Please check expiration dates on food items before donating them.

## PRAYER LIST

Anthony  
Alaina  
Family of Marge Ashton  
Avery  
Bapst Family  
Barbara Nelson  
Brady Vanes  
Sonny Buono  
Ina Chappell  
Danielle  
Dave  
George Griner  
Guy  
Gracie Helmer  
Bill Holmes  
Daniel Litwicki  
Frank  
David Markley  
Tony Martinez  
Yvonne Suroviak and family  
Krissy LaFlech  
Garry Sknerski  
Carmelo

Jessica  
Mildred  
Jill Muller  
Jeanne Nestor  
U. Chong  
Rodney  
Calvin Scott  
Jay Smith  
Bonita Sutton  
Steve & Melinda  
Gary Studer  
Tarsha  
Richard Terpstra  
Mattie Welch  
Laura Buono Domsic  
Susan Hanley  
Friends and family of Rhonda Penman  
Kevin Windstrup  
The family of Don Dekker  
Ruth Dekker  
The family of Mary Catania  
Jimmy Leyva

### **Joel 2:21-27**

<sup>21</sup> Do not fear, O soil;  
    be glad and rejoice,  
    for the Lord has done great things!  
<sup>22</sup> Do not fear, you animals of the field,  
    for the pastures of the wilderness are green;  
the tree bears its fruit,  
    the fig tree and vine give their full yield.  
<sup>23</sup> O children of Zion, be glad  
    and rejoice in the Lord your God;  
for he has given the early rain for your vindication,  
    he has poured down for you abundant rain,  
    the early and the later rain, as before.  
<sup>24</sup> The threshing floors shall be full of grain,  
    the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.  
<sup>25</sup> I will repay you for the years  
    that the swarming locust has eaten,  
the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,  
    my great army, which I sent against you.

<sup>26</sup> You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,  
and praise the name of the Lord your God,  
who has dealt wondrously with you.  
And my people shall never again be put to shame.  
<sup>27</sup> You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,  
and that I, the Lord, am your God and there is no other.  
And my people shall never again be put to shame.

### **1 John 4:7-21**

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. <sup>9</sup> God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

<sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. <sup>16</sup> So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. <sup>17</sup> Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. <sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup> Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. <sup>21</sup> The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

### **John 15:1-8**

<sup>15</sup> "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. <sup>2</sup> He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup> You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and



burned. <sup>7</sup> If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

### **With Us at the Table**

*Joel 2:21-27; Psalm 22; 1 John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8*

Jesus Christ is risen! **He is risen indeed!** Hallelujah! **Hallelujah!**

When Jesus appears with his beloved ones after the Resurrection, there is a dynamic, living theme that starts to grow. He appears with Mary Magdalene in the garden, where the vines would have been planted and cultivated, where the grapes would have been harvested. He appears with the two on the road to Emmaus on their journey through the countryside and ends up being welcomed into their home, where Cleopas and his friend share their food and wine with him. He appears with the disciples in the upper room, the very room where he had shared a life-transforming meal with them right before his Passion, where he had made the profound claim that the bread was his body and the wine his blood. And he appears with the fisher-followers on the beach by the Sea of Galilee, preparing the meal himself, sharing of the bread and fish and wine that he has prepared for them.

That which was planted in the garden outside of the tomb grew and grew. Branches branched out from the vine and bore sweet fruits. The sweet fruits were harvested and taken on the journey of transformation into rich wine. The rich wine was poured and shared in fellowship, in family, in community, in communion. The blood which was poured out was now living again, coursing through the veins...or may I say vines?...branching out through the capillaries of the risen Lord! Just as he had been throughout his life and ministry, Jesus was with them at the table in the resurrected flesh—from a garden of vines and fruits outside an empty tomb to a personal home as a stranger turned invited guest, to an upper room that held so much memory, to a seaside picnic table, he was there! And he is here with *us* at the table! Can you feel him? In your homes, in this sanctuary, he is with us!

Back before those miraculous communions of food and wine after the resurrection, back before his blood would be poured out by the imperial executioners, Jesus was with his beloved disciples in that same upper room that would come to be a headquarters of memories and a movement. He sat with them at the table, he washed their feet, he broke bread with them, and he poured wine for them—all as we observed with such grave remembrance on Maundy Thursday. That night of fellowship and family, that night of community and communion was also the night of Jesus' farewell address, his magnum opus of Wisdom teachings for those who would carry the Kingdom forward. He foretold for them what was about to happen to him. He taught them how to be servant leaders. He promised to them the coming of the Holy Spirit. He spoke to them the world-changing words: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." He passed them the peace that surpasses all understanding. He revealed to them the reality of the coming Resurrection. And he defined for them the true nature of their relationship, the truth of who they really were to him and to each other and to God.

And of all the images he could have painted in their imaginations for the relationship they shared together, he chose the image of the true vine, the heart of the plant that bore the fruit that formed the drink that forged the communion that they shared at the table. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower...Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit." God the Creator is the vinegrower, the farmer, the cultivator. Jesus the Son is the vine, the heart of the plant that grows from the root in the fertile soil and climbs and winds its way ever upward. Nourished by the Holy Spirit, we are the branches, rooted in the vine and reaching outward toward the light of the sun to produce the fruit. Together we are a single ecosystem. Together we are a single organism.

Wow! The nutrients of the soil and water course through the core of the vine, spreading out to the branches. The vine forms the foundation, the solid structure on which the branches can thrive. The vine is strong. The vine is flexible. The vine is dynamic. The branches bear the blooms, the flowers, and the leaves. The branches soak in the sun and catalyze the miracle of photosynthesis that in turn strengthens the vine. The branches produce the fruit. We are the branches. We are entrusted with such great responsibility! We are empowered as co-creators, as producers of fruit! But disconnected from the vine, we no longer have our life source. Disconnected from the vine we wither and can no longer create.

The image of the vine, branches, and fruit is the image of living, thriving oneness in multiple-ness. It is the image of interdependence, of different parts working together contributing their role to the whole. It is the image of a shared core, a shared heart. In short, in so many ways it is the quintessential image of *communion*. “Com” is the prefix meaning “with.” It implies the togetherness of more than one. “Union” is the root word, meaning “one” or “becoming one.” *Communion* is thus the action, the coming together to become one. *Community* is the result. “I am the vine, you are the branches.” In speaking those words during the Holy Supper when he was at his most vulnerable with the weight of the world upon his shoulders, Jesus created community at the table. In having communion with his beloved followers after his death and resurrection when his joy was complete and he shone with the light of new life, he made it clear that they would still be a community no matter what—through life, through death, and through new life. The wine would be the manifestation of the vine—the fruit of the fruit—the evidence of the creative power of the farmer and the vine and branches working together as one. But the communion would be more than just the food and the drink. The communion would be the sharing, the warmth, the pleasure, the joy, the connection—humanity with humanity, humanity with divinity, humanity *in* divinity, divinity *in* humanity.

If we go back to the beginning of the gospel of *John*, we witness Jesus’ very first miracle at a wedding celebration in the village of Cana. At the brilliant urging of his blessed mother, he turned water into wine—and not just any wine, the very best wine. His first miracle was thus the miracle of communion, the act of community. He brought people together and celebrated with them. He went on to share wine and food and fellowship, the experience of family, throughout his life and ministry—in the intimate settings of people’s homes and in crowds of thousands. This is how he created community. This is how he created the Kingdom. With communion. As the true vine he spread out across the countryside and stretched across the plains, with branches growing, with branches being grafted on. As the true vine he climbed mountains, with his branches joining him in reaching toward the sun. As the true vine, he was raised upon an accursed piece of dead wood as his branches splintered and broke away and watched in fear and horror. But while the wood of the cross would be dead forever, the true vine would live again. The blood that flowed out would flow through living veins once again. The true vine would gather his branches together again and breathe life and nourishment back into them.

Jesus sat at the table in the upper room before his death and resurrection, and after presenting the image of the true vine, he told his beloved ones exactly how they could enact communion, how they could create community, how they could create the Kingdom: “

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”

No hierarchies of power. No masters and servants. No classification of strangers. Only welcome. Only blessed friendship. Only love.



Beloved, this has been a hard week in a hard season in a hard year. Another good and faithful child of God and mother of this family, a branch so deeply rooted to the true vine, a branch who bore fruits beyond any of us can imagine, has joined the Resurrection. It seems like we can't catch a breath in the world right now with loss after loss and heartbreak after heartbreak. That's just it, though! That's what the true vine was teaching us by showing up and sharing wine after he had died and risen again. Our community is not limited to those in our midst physically. The love that calls us to the table, the love demanded of us at the table, is not limited to those whom we can see and touch. Our communion is with the true vine that persisted in life even when experiencing death, and so our communion is with all the branches everywhere in this blessed, beautiful, broken world, and our communion is with all of the branches that have ever lived. As he was in the garden, as he was in a house in Emmaus, as he was in the upper room, as he was on the beach, the risen Lord is with us at the table—calling us to love with the courage to lay our lives down for our friends. Calling us to open ourselves up to *being* loved with that same courage. Calling us to sharing in each other's pain and sorrow. Calling us to share in each other's joy. And so calling us to abide in him. And so calling us to bear fruit that will last. Cheers! Amen.

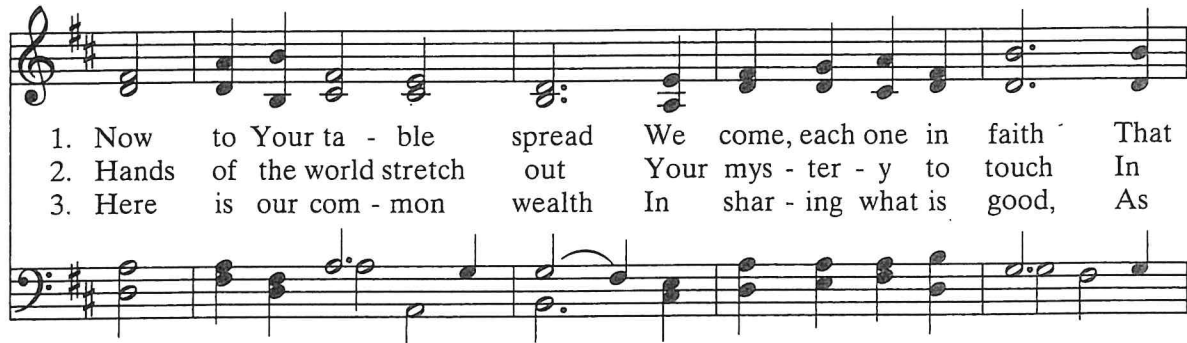
# Now to Your Table Spread

515

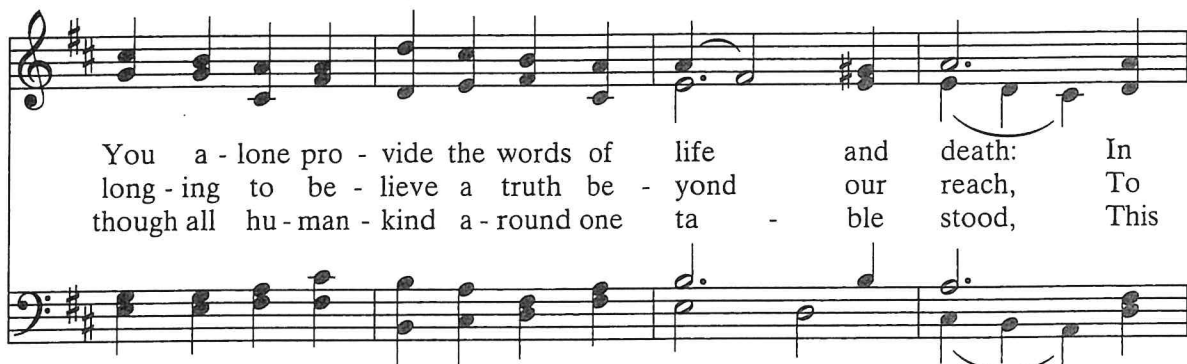
Shirley Erena Murray, 1987

LOVE UNKNOWN 6.6.12.4.4.8

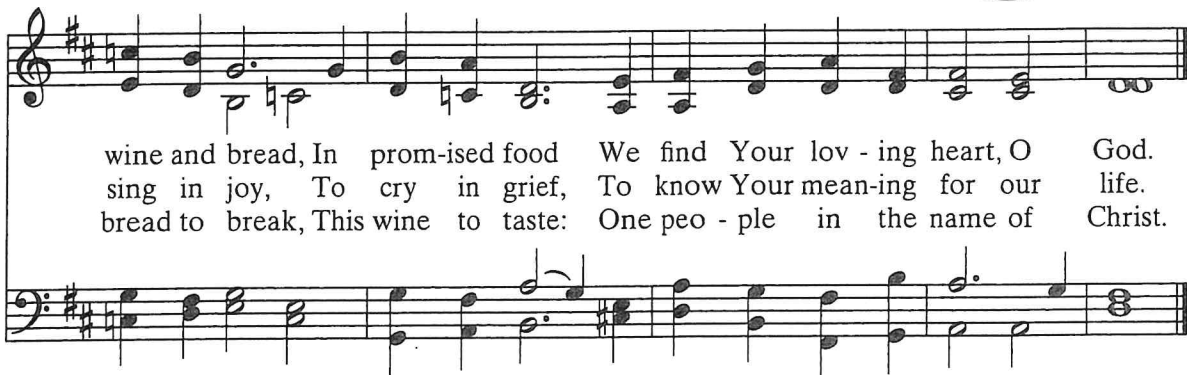
John Ireland, 1918



1. Now to Your ta - ble spread We come, each one in faith That  
2. Hands of the world stretch out Your mys - ter - y to touch In  
3. Here is our com - mon wealth In shar - ing what is good, As



You a - lone pro - vide the words of life and death: In  
long - ing to be - lieve a truth be - yond our reach, To  
though all hu - man - kind a - round one ta - ble stood, This



wine and bread, In prom-ised food We find Your lov - ing heart, O God.  
sing in joy, To cry in grief, To know Your mean-ing for our life.  
bread to break, This wine to taste: One peo - ple in the name of Christ.

## For the Fruit of All Creation

EAST ACKLAM 8.4.8.4.8.8.4

Fred Pratt Green, 1970

Francis Jackson, 1957

1. For the fruit of all cre - a - tion, Thanks be to God.  
2. In the just re - ward of la - bor, God's will be done.  
3. For the har-vests of the Spir - it, Thanks be to God.

For the gifts to ev - ery na - tion, Thanks be to God.  
In the help we give our neigh-bor, God's will be done.  
For the good we all in - her - it, Thanks be to God.

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*Music:* Copyright 1960 Francis Jackson. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

For the plow - ing, sow - ing, reap-ing, Si - lent growth while we are sleep-ing,  
In our world-wide task of car - ing For the hun - gry and de - spair-ing,  
For the won - ders that as-tound us, For the truths that still con-found us,

Fu - ture needs in earth's safe-keep-ing, Thanks be to God.  
In the har-vests we are shar-ing, God's will be done.  
Most of all that love has found us, Thanks be to God.