

September 12, 2021 + 10:30 A.M.
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

We Join in Worship

PRELUDE “God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens”

Dale Wood

***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. If able, please stand where you are, look around, and make signs of Christ's peace to each other. If you are at home, give somebody a call after the service to share Christ's peace!

*** CALL TO WORSHIP** (Adapted from *Psalm* 116)

Leader: We love the LORD who has heard our voices and our supplications. The LORD inclined an ear to us, so we will call on the LORD as long as we live.

ALL: Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; our God is merciful.

Leader: For you have delivered our souls from death, our eyes from tears, our feet from stumbling. We walk before the LORD in the land of the living. What shall we return to the LORD?

ALL: We will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD, we will pay our vows to the LORD in the presence of all the people.

Leader: O LORD, we are your servants, your children. You have loosed our bonds. We will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the LORD.

ALL: We will pay our vows to the LORD in the presence of all the people, in the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Let us praise the LORD!

***OPENING HYMN (Gentle singing)** “I’ve Got Peace Like a River” (368)

INVITATION TO CONFESSION:

Leader: James warns us against basing our respect for others on wealth and power, saying, “If you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.” Together let us confess how we have committed the transgression of partiality.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

O God, we join our hearts and voices in repentance. Help us to repair what we have broken with our transgressions and so to reconcile with each other and with you. We confess that we judge people by the clothes they wear, the cars they drive, and the things they buy. We measure others' worth and our own worth by money and popularity. We listen to people with power and ignore the voices of the poor. So, we accept the fake standards of society instead of respecting people based on true character. Forgive us. Help us to be better followers of Jesus, who welcomed everyone but actively chose to seek out the poor and the outcast. It is in his name that 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: Hear the good news! Jesus has shown us the way of Love, and Jesus loves us so much that he forgives us when we mess up.

ALL: **Through 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.

We Hear God's Word

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: (Unison)

Gracious God, we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from your mouth. Make us hungry for this heavenly food, that it may nourish us today in the ways of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, the bread of heaven. Amen.

HEBREW BIBLE LESSON: *Esther 2:7-11, 16-18*

EPISTLE LESSON: *James 2:1-10*

GOSPEL LESSON: *John 6:1-14*

SERMON: The Movers and Shakers

MUSICAL MEDITATION "Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone?" Dorothy Wells

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.**

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

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

OFFERING INVITATION:

Leader: Today we have learned of the legacies of young people who are heroines and heroes of our faith. Let us give our tithes and offerings so that we can continue to inspire and be inspired. If you did not do so as you entered, please place your offering in the plate as you leave. If you are worshiping from home, please mail in your checks or use our online giving option on the website.

OFFERTORY: "Be Thou My Vision"

Dale Wood

*** 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)

Gracious God, we dedicate these gifts to you and to the work of your Kingdom. Guide us to use these resources in ways that serve others and inspire faith. Help us always to be good stewards of your abundance. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

We Go Into the World

*** CLOSING HYMN (Gentle Singing):** “For the Bread Which You Have Broken” (508)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE “Lift High the Cross”

Larry Shackley

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Life of the Church

Announcements

- **ADULT CONNECTIONS CLASS MEETS ON SUNDAYS AT 9AM.** This is a weekly class on Sunday mornings before worship. Join us to dig deeper into God’s word and explore how it relates to the world today and to our lives.
- **BRING YOUR OWN BIBLE** Our weekly virtual Bible study is 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!
- **PRAYGROUND** If you need extra space for a wheelchair or walker or if you have young children with you, please feel free to make use of the extra space we have across the aisle from the sound booth!
- **SUMMER BOOK CLUB WITH THE PRESBYTERY** It isn’t too late to join the presbytery’s study of *The Person You Mean to Be* by Dolly Chugh. Get your book and jump into our conversation on implicit bias and the *Matthew 25* call to dismantle structural racism. Here is the link to join the Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/301921588142803>. Our Zoom conversation on the book as a whole will be the evening of September 28. Ask Pastor Tyler if you have any questions!

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

- **BLESSING BOX** Our Blessing Box has gained even more importance in this pandemic. Economic impacts are dire, 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.

- **GOT SNEAKERS FUNDRAISER** We are collecting pairs of gently worn, used and new sneakers to help earn money for our projects and programs here at FPCH and help the environment at the same time! Can we count on you? Blue bins for the shoes will be located in the sanctuary narthex, inside door D by the office, and outside the church building by door D. Please note that we can only use sneakers/tennis shoes!

Prayer List

Anthony	Jessica
Ellen	Mildred
Avery	Jill Muller
Barbara Nelson	Jeanne Nestor
Brady Vanes	U. Chong
Sonny Buono	Rodney
Family of Ina Chappell	Calvin Scott
Danielle	Jay Smith
Dave	Bonita Sutton
George Griner	Steve & Melinda
Guy	Gary Studer
Gracie Helmer	Tarsha
Bill Holmes	Richard Terpstra
Daniel Litwicki	Mattie Welch
Frank	Laura Buono Domsic
David Markley	Susan Hanley
Tony Martinez	Kevin Windstrup
David Kingen	Ruth Dekker
Garry Sknerski	Rick Parker
Carmelo	Barbara Morton
Diana Mendoza	Cale
John Mullen	Cookie C
Jamie Orem and Janet Orem	Jim and Katie Lively
Glenda Munger	Linda

Esther 2:7-11, 16-18

⁷ Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is Esther, his cousin, for she had neither father nor mother; the girl was fair and beautiful, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai adopted her as his own daughter. ⁸ So when the king's order and his edict were proclaimed, and when many young women were gathered in the citadel of Susa in custody of Hegai, Esther also was taken into the king's palace and put in custody of Hegai, who had charge of the women. ⁹ The girl pleased him and won his favor, and he quickly provided her with her cosmetic treatments and her portion of food, and with seven chosen maids from the king's palace, and advanced her and her maids to the best place in the harem. ¹⁰ Esther did not reveal her people or kindred, for Mordecai had charged her not to tell. ¹¹ Every day Mordecai would walk around in front of the court of the harem, to learn how Esther was and how she fared. ¹⁶ When Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus in his royal palace in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign, ¹⁷ the king loved Esther more than all the other women; of all the virgins she won his favor and devotion, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. ¹⁸ Then the king gave a great banquet to all his officials and ministers—"Esther's banquet." He also granted a holiday to the provinces, and gave gifts with royal liberality.

James 2:1-10

2 My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? ² For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, ³ and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," ⁴ have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵ Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? ⁷ Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you? ⁸ You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ⁹ But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

John 6:1-14

6 After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ² A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³ Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵ When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷ Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." ⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹ "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" ¹⁰ Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹ Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." ¹³ So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴ When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."

The Movers and Shakers

Esther 2:7-11, 16-18; Psalm 116; James 2:1-10; John 6:1-14

Throughout the summer we have been diving deep into the stories of David and Solomon. We have heard of their mighty deeds, their mighty mistakes, and their mighty reputations. What we have not paid so much attention to, though, is the remarkable truth of how young they were when they started moving and shaking the world. David was thought to have been fifteen years old when the prophet Samuel first anointed him king. Think back on the lineup of Jesse's sons coming before the prophet, with the boy David having to be called away from the sheep as an afterthought. He was then still in his teens when he faced down and defeated the giant Philistine warrior Goliath. His son Solomon was in his late teens or early twenties when he succeeded David on the throne and became known as the wisest ruler on the planet.

Wow! And they're not even the exceptions when it comes to the history of our faith! Joseph with the coat of many colors was just a child when he was sold into slavery and a teenager as he rose to prominence in Egypt. According to rabbinical literature, Miriam was seven years old when she made sure that her brother Moses made it to Pharaoh's daughter and then made sure that their mother would get to continue raising him as his wet nurse. Jeremiah was in his teens when he was called by God to become a prophet and even had this famous interaction with YHWH the LORD about his age:

Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,

*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations."*

Then I said, "Ah, LORD God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." But the LORD said to me,

*"Do not say, 'I am only a boy';
for you shall go to all to whom I send you,
and you shall speak whatever I command you.
Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you,
says the LORD." —Jeremiah 1:4-8*

And then, of course, there was Hadassah, also known as Esther. Orphaned as a child, her cousin Mordecai adopted her. She would have been a young teenager when she was pulled into the king of Persia's palace for the contest of replacing Queen Vashti. And so she would have been a teenager when she became the queen of the most powerful empire in the world at the time. As a teenager, she would go on to use her unlikely position and uncanny cleverness to save her people from genocide at the hands of Haman.

And they are but a few of the many in our Hebrew scriptures who moved and shook the world in the very early years of their lives. We have a tendency to try to write off their young ages as simply being a product of their time and context. We say that life was shorter, so it makes sense for them to have gotten started young. We say that life was harder, so their bodies would have aged faster. We say that life was different, so children were treated as adults. Perhaps these life phenomena were all true, AND still they were children and teenagers. Physically, psychologically, developmentally, they were children and teenagers. I'm not one hundred percent sure why we try to *adultify* them, if you'll allow me to make that word up and use it! Maybe it is because we see their incredible accomplishments and assume they must have been older than they really were. Maybe it is because we tend to view heroes and heroines in our own image and so just imagine them to have been whatever age we are. Maybe it is due to what I'll call the Olympics effect. I don't know about you, but every time the Olympics roll around, as so recently happened in Tokyo, I see the people performing jaw-dropping feats of athleticism and then think to myself, "Hmm, my time just hasn't come yet." As if I am somehow *younger* than these teenagers and twenty-somethings who are rocking the world! Perhaps it is a similar phenomenon with these young Biblical heroes and heroines. Because of their accomplishments, we want to be like them. And because of our linear mindsets, we want to *grow up* to be like them even if we are way beyond them in years. And so, we think of them as older.

Whatever our implicit or explicit reasons for doing so, when we try to *adultify* the young heroes and heroines of our faith, we do them, ourselves, and the world a great disservice. Specifically, we ignore the truth that it is something about their youth itself that makes it possible for them to be so smart, so creative, so resilient, so powerful, so effective. We ignore the truth that God specifically chose, equipped, and called these young people to roles that transformed the world. And, most significantly, by *adultifying* the young people in our scriptures, by extension we ignore the truth the God continues to choose, equip, and call young people to the

work of world transformation today. God does so *because* of the particularities of development in youth, not *in spite* of.

Given how the Hebrew scriptures overflow with the moving and shaking of young people, it should come as no surprise that the drama of salvation as told in the New Testament is dependent upon the particular perspectives and perceptiveness of youth. Mary was a young teenager when she became pregnant with Jesus. Because of her openness to possibility, because of her fierce sense of justice, because of the nimbleness of her mind, she prophesied that the world would be moved and shaken to its very foundations and transformed in a way that would lift up the poor. She then raised a child who would shock the most educated teachers at the temple as a pre-teen with his Wisdom and understanding, a child who would go on to inspire a massive following, enact miracles, teach lessons that had never been taught before, fulfill the law and prophets, challenge the greatest empire the world had ever known, suffer, die, rise again, and save us all even to this day—all by the time he was in his early thirties...younger than I myself am today, and I would venture to guess that many think of me as a *young* pastor!

Well, one day that young man Jesus found that a large crowd had followed him from one side of the Sea of Galilee to the other. He had been trying to get away for some rest and relaxation, but when he looked up from his mountain retreat and saw thousands, his compassionate heart melted. He immediately worried that they might be hungry and set his disciples to figuring out how they could feed so many. The adults around him responded in typical adult fashion: it's not possible, we don't have enough, we couldn't even buy enough with our limited resources—or perhaps I should say limited imaginations! But a young boy came forward with five barley loaves and two fish. He was not jaded by the myth of scarcity. He was perceptive to possibilities—the possibility that lots of people in that crowd might also have some small portion of food that, when collected and combined, would be able to feed everyone *AND* the possibility that this Jesus might indeed be a miracle worker, might indeed have the authority to call upon the God of abundance who created all that was, all that is, and all that ever shall be. With his particular perspective and perceptiveness, this young person gave his bread and fish to Jesus.

Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.” So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.” From the offering of a young person who believed in possibilities that could not even be conceived of by the adults, thousands feasted. They shared in fellowship. They tasted deliciousness. They formed community. Their bodies and spirits were replenished.

This miracle, this act of community made possible by a young person's wisdom and generosity, is one of the best known events in all of history, standing in stark contrast to the wars and acts of power that otherwise fill our history books. *John's* account of this miracle was one of the focus passages for our recent youth mission trip to Decatur, Michigan. We sat around in the only shady place, a tree in the corner of the yard where we were building a shed, eating PB&Js, string cheese, and chips—perhaps today's version of loaves and fish? I think the youth had been useful all morning doing yard work and construction work while one of the pastors, I won't say which one, had been distracting from the labor by trying to get everyone to do the *Jerusalema* dance. Much to the delight of everyone (or chagrin—it's hard to tell sometimes!), that same pastor insisted that there be an afternoon devotion and song during each lunch break, with one of the songs being today's opening hymn, *I've Got Peace Like a River*. After some initial pulling of teeth, the youth started responding to questions about the feeding of the five thousand. They immediately saw the significance of the young boy's offering of his loaves and fish, recognizing that it was not just a supernatural miracle of one miracle worker but a communal miracle of people coming together and sharing.

Throughout our few days and nights together, I saw the youth of First Presbyterian Church of Highland and First Presbyterian Church of Decatur forming community with complete strangers, laboring together to serve community members in need, worshipping God, and of course playing lots of hide and seek. As I spent

time with this newly formed community of young people, I couldn't help but be inspired by the possibilities of transformation for our world. I was reminded to take a look at where and how true transformation is already taking place and to realize that young people are the leaders of the movements to combat climate change, end gun violence, dismantle structural racism, expand understandings of love, redefine inclusion and access, and form community across all barriers through technology that my brain can barely even grasp.

Friends, God chooses, equips, and calls all of us to the work of the Kingdom of Love. And as the scriptures of our holy texts and the scriptures of our daily lives make clear, God particularly chooses, equips, and calls young people to be the movers and shakers of the world, the fomenters and fermenters of transformation. So, if you are a young person, be inspired to use your gifts, your Wisdom, your understanding to speak up and act out. And if you are a person who is somewhere along the continuum of older than young, be inspired to listen, to learn, and to change. May we remember Joseph and Miriam and David and Solomon and Jeremiah and Esther and Mary and Jesus and the boy with five loaves and two fish. And so may we all be inspired to build together a table that is big enough for all of us to sit and share in the fullness of who we are and what we have to offer. Amen.

I've Got Peace Like a River

368

African-American spiritual

7.7.11

African-American spiritual

1. I've got peace like a riv - er, I've got peace like a
 2. I've got joy like a foun-tain, I've got joy like a
 3. I've got love like an o - cean, I've got love like an

1
 riv - er, I've got peace like a riv - er in - a my
 foun-tain, I've got joy like a foun-tain in - a my
 o - cean, I've got love like an o - cean in - a my

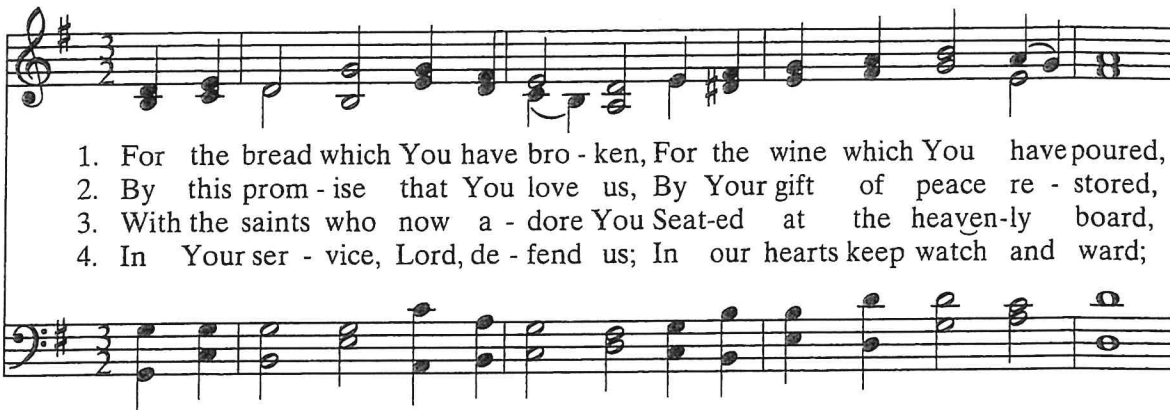
2
 soul. I've got riv - er in - a my soul.
 soul. I've got foun-tain in - a my soul.
 soul. I've got o - cean in - a my soul.

508 For the Bread Which You Have Broken

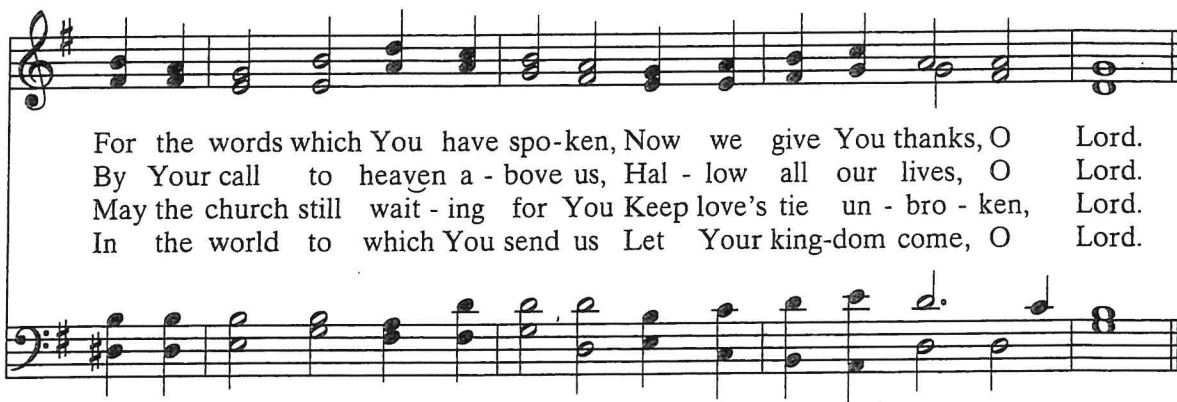
KINGDOM 8.7.8.7

Louis FitzGerald Benson, 1924; alt.

V. Earle Copes, 1959



1. For the bread which You have bro - ken, For the wine which You have poured,
2. By this prom - ise that You love us, By Your gift of peace re - stored,
3. With the saints who now a - dore You Seat-ed at the heaven-ly board,
4. In Your ser - vice, Lord, de - fend us; In our hearts keep watch and ward;



For the words which You have spo-ken, Now we give You thanks, O Lord.
By Your call to heaven a - bove us, Hal - low all our lives, O Lord.
May the church still wait - ing for You Keep love's tie un - bro - ken, Lord.
In the world to which You send us Let Your king-dom come, O Lord.

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