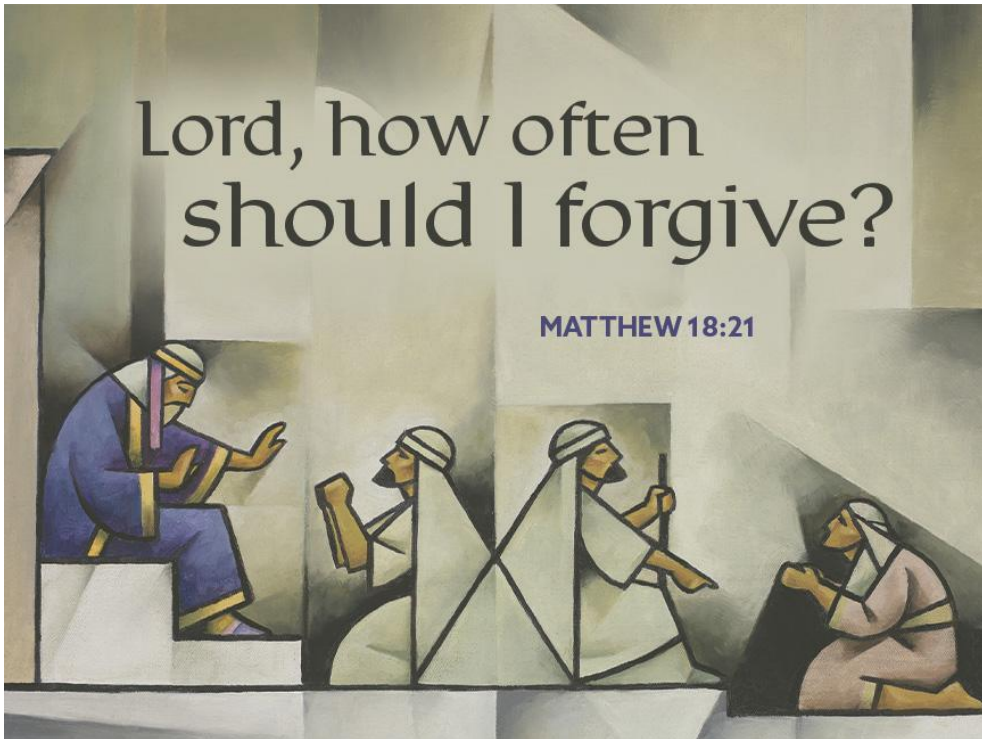


Order of Worship
16th Sunday after Pentecost
September 13, 2026



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
745 S. Ingraham Avenue
Lakeland, FL 33801
863-686-5585

The Rev. Dr. Olga-Maria Cruz, Pastor
Email: pastor@gracelakeland.com
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INTRODUCTION In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

***=ALL STAND** for this part of worship

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Luther's Morning Prayer

Martin Luther / Carl Schalk

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,
who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth.
Amen.

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God,
**we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness
in the world and in our own hearts.
Creation groans from overuse.
Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships.
Indifference keeps us from seeking justice.
Divisions disrupt your call
to show genuine love to others.
Turn our hearts back to you.
Restore our world and reconcile us to one another.
Renew us to live as your holy people,
following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Hear the good news:

We have peace with God through ✠ Jesus Christ,
in whom there is no condemnation,
but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.
Receive freely this healing gift of grace. **Amen.**

***GATHERING HYMN**

All Creatures, Worship God Most High!

ELW 835



- 1 All crea-tures, wor-ship God most high! Sound ev-'ry voice in earth and
- 2 Sing, broth-er wind; with clouds and rain you grow the gifts of fruit and
- 3 Sing, broth-er fire, so mirth-ful, strong; drive far the shad-ows, join the
- 4 All who for love of God for-give, all who in pain or sor-row



sky: Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Sing, broth-er sun, in splen-dor
grain: Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Dear sis-ter wa-ter, use-ful,
throng: Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Dear moth-er earth, so rich in
grieve: Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Christ bears your bur-dens and your



bright; sing, sis-ter moon and stars of night:
clear, make mu-sic for your Lord to hear: Al-le - lu - ia, al-le -
care, praise God in col-ors bright and rare:
fears; still make your song a-mid the tears:



lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia!

***APOSTOLIC GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

*** HYMN OF PRAISE**

Refrain

Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace

to God's peo-ple on earth. Glo-ry to God in the

high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

1 Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al - mighty God and Fa-ther,

we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.

Refrain

Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace

to God's peo-ple on earth. Glo-ry to God in the

high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

(Continued on next pages)

2 Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God,

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world:

have mer - cy on us; you are seat - ed at the right

hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.

Refrain

Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace

to God's peo-ple on earth. Glo-ry to God in the

high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

(Continued on next page)

3 For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord, you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther.

Final refrain

Glo - ry to God in the high - est.

A - men, a - men.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray together:

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the eternal fountain of forgiveness.

Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING:

Genesis 50:15-21

After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.

¹⁵ Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" ¹⁶ So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction

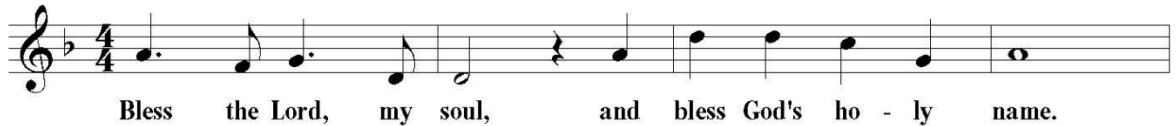
before he died, ¹⁷ ‘Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.’ Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, “We are here as your slaves.” ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹ So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.” In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 103:1-13 (*We will sing the Psalm responsively by whole verse.*)

PSALM REFRAIN



PSALM TONE



¹ Bless the Lord, | O my soul,
and all that is within me, bless God's | holy name.

² **Bless the Lord, | O my soul,
and forget not | all God's benefits—**

³ who forgives | all your sins
and heals all | your diseases;

⁴ **who redeems your life | from the grave
and crowns you with steadfast | love and mercy; R**

⁵ who satisfies your desires | with good things
so that your youth is renewed | like an eagle's.

**⁶ O Lord, you provide | vindication
and justice for all who | are oppressed.**

⁷ You made known your | ways to Moses
and your works to the chil- | dren of Israel.

**⁸ Lord, you are full of compas- | sion and mercy,
slow to anger and abounding in | steadfast love; R**

⁹ you will not al- | ways accuse us,
nor will you keep your an- | ger forever.

**¹⁰ You have not dealt with us according | to our sins,
nor repaid us according to | our iniquities.**

¹¹ For as the heavens are high a- | bove the earth,
so great is your steadfast love for | those who fear you.

**¹² As far as the east is | from the west,
so far have you removed our transgres- | sions from us.**

¹³ As a father has compassion | for his children,
so you have compassion for those who fear | you, O Lord. **R**

SECOND READING:

Romans 14:1-12

¹ Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³ Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat, for God has welcomed them. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on slaves of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵ Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶ Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord. Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷ For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸ If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you

despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

¹² So then, each one of us will be held accountable.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Please stand as you are able for the reading of the Gospel.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

***GOSPEL:**

Matthew 18:21-35

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 18th chapter:

Glory to you, O Lord.

²¹ Peter came and said to [Jesus,] “Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³ “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed

him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

The Rev. Dr. Olga-Maria Cruz

Silence is kept for reflection.

***HYMN OF THE DAY**

Forgive Our Sins As We Forgive

ELW 605



1 “For - give our sins as we for - give,” you taught us, Lord, to pray;
 2 How can your par - don reach and bless the un - for - giv - ing heart
 3 In blaz - ing light your cross re - veals the truth we dim - ly knew;
 4 Lord, cleanse the depths with - in our souls and bid re - sent - ment cease;



but you a - lone can grant us grace to live the words we say.
 that broods on wrongs and will not let old bit - ter - ness de - part?
 how tri - fling oth - ers’ debts to us; how great our debt to you!
 then, by your mer - cy rec - on - ciled, our lives will spread your peace.

***APOSTLE’S CREED**

We now profess the faith we share using the words of the Apostles’ Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living 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.**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

A brief silence.

We pray for the church. Bless the missions and ministries of diverse congregations, that they uplift the good news of salvation in ways that can be understood. Please bless presiding Bishop Curry, Bishop Suárez, and our synod staff. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for creation. Send rain to lands experiencing drought and healing to rivers clogged with pollution. Enrich the soil for trees and plants. Protect the crops needed to feed those who hunger. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for all who govern. Encourage those in positions of power to lead with empathy, practice forgiveness, and care for those who struggle.
Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for our neighbors who face illness of any kind. For those strained financially; for all living with chronic pain, mental illness, the disease of addiction, or otherwise afraid or in harm's way. Protect all who cry out for mercy, *especially Mary, Anne, Mabel, June, Willah, Julie, Christen, Carol, Judy, Jeff, Philip, Gloria, Brian, James & Gray, Rich, Wil, Amy, Al, Al, Sharon, Bob & Jane, Scott, Lynda, Ron & Flo, Barbara, Monica, Avery, Michael, Art, John, Abby, Colline, Tim, Arleen & Richard, Betty, Linda, Sue, Natalie, Henry, Glenn, Gary, Connie, Greg, Beverly & Ray, Helen & Ron, and Max.*
Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for this congregation. Open our hearts to practice intentional invitation. Help us to forgive each other, practice patience, and choose welcome over judgement. Move us to care for those in our community seeking refuge and safety.
Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give thanks for the saints who died in faith. Show us how to live faithfully, creatively, and lovingly in your church and world.
Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

You Are My All in All

Dennis Jernigan

***OFFERING SONG**

If We Live

ACS 1025

The musical score is written on three staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are: 'If we live, we live to the Lord. If we die, we die to the Lord. So then, wheth-er we live or wheth-er we die, we are the Lord's.' The score includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are written below the notes. There are three measures of music on each staff. The first staff has a measure rest at the beginning. The second staff has a triplet of eighth notes. The third staff has a triplet of eighth notes.

If we live, we live to the Lord. If we
die, we die to the Lord. So then, wheth-er we live or
wheth-er we die, we are the Lord's.

***OFFERING PRAYER**

God of creation,
you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly.
All blessings are from you;
make us generous with what we have.
Use our gifts and our abilities,
and turn our hearts
to service to you
and love to our neighbors,
today and always.
Amen.

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE

The musical notation for the Dialogue section consists of four staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The notes are simple quarter and half notes, often beamed together. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words aligned under specific notes and others spanning across multiple notes. The lyrics are: "The Lord be with you. And al - so with you. Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise."

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

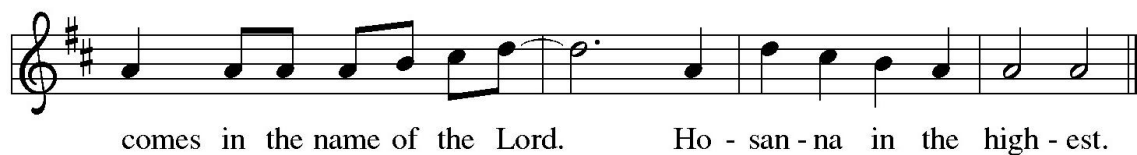
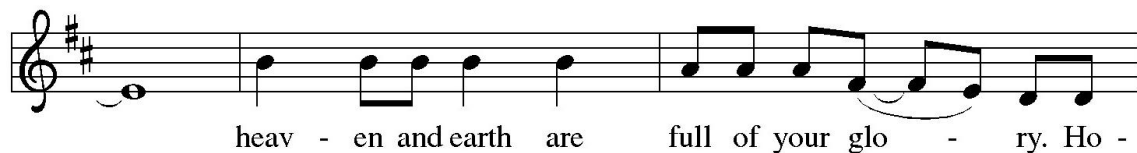
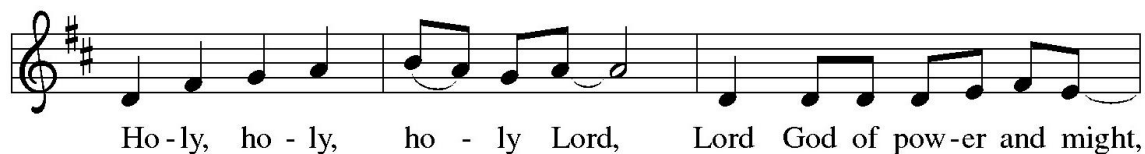
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
who preached good news to the poor,
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was handed over,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

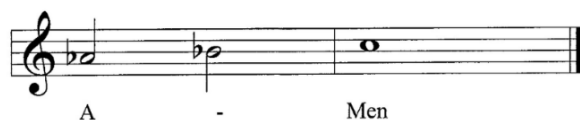
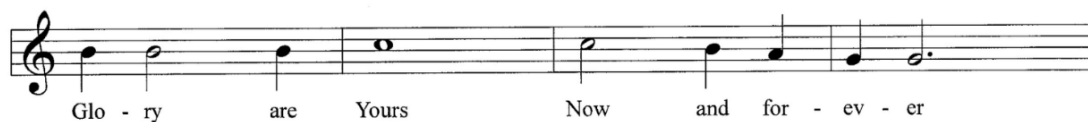
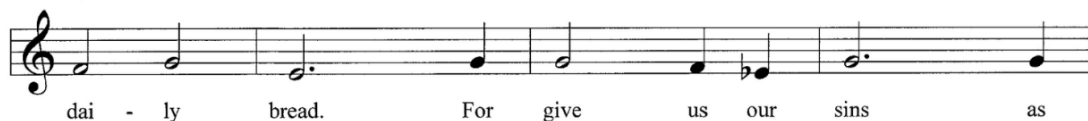
Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, now and forever.

Amen.

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

*LORD'S PRAYER



*INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Christ invites you to this table.

All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

Thanks be to God.

All baptized children of God are invited to the Lord's Table, where we receive Jesus' very body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine. We partake at the communion rail; gluten free bread and grape juice are available. If you wish to commune, but cannot come forward, let an usher know and we will come to you. If you do not wish to commune, you are welcome to come forward to receive a blessing. Anyone may remain at the rail for a time of personal prayer, following which you may return to your pew down the side aisle.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have

mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the

world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -

way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Lord of All Nations, Grant Me Grace



1 Lord of all na - tions, grant me grace to love all
 2 Break down the wall that would di - vide thy chil - dren,
 3 For - give me, Lord, where I have erred by love - less
 4 Give me thy cour - age, Lord, to speak when - ev - er
 5 With thine own love may I be filled and by thy



peo - ple, ev - 'ry race; and in each per - son may I
 Lord, on ev - 'ry side. My neigh - bor's good let me pur -
 act and thought - less word. Make me to see the wrong I
 strong op - press the weak. Should I my - self the vic - tim
 Ho - ly Spir - it willed, that all I touch, wher - e'er I



see my kin - dred, loved, re - deemed by thee.
 sue; let Chris - tian love bind warm and true.
 do will cru - ci - fy my Lord a - new.
 be, help me for - give, re - mem - b'ring thee.
 be, may be di - vine - ly touched by thee.

Come to the Table



Come to the ta - ble of mer - cy, pre - pared with the wine and the bread.



All who are hun - gry and thirst - y, come, and your souls will be fed.



Come at the Lord's in - vi - ta - tion; re - ceive from his nail - scarred hand.



Eat of the bread of sal - va - tion; drink of the blood of the Lamb.

*POST COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood
of our Lord Jesus Christ
strengthen you
and keep you in His grace.
Amen.

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

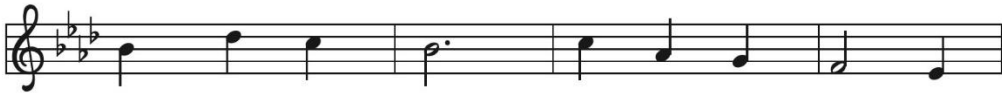
Let us pray.
**Sustaining God, with this bread and cup,
you nourish us with mercy and abundant life.
By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world.
Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love,
following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.**



1 God's work, our hands: work - ing to - geth - er,
 2 God's work, our feet: trav - 'ling to - geth - er,
 3 God's work, our voice: sing - ing to - geth - er,
 4 God is at work in and a - round us:



build - ing a fu - ture, re - pair - ing the world,
 fol - low - ing Je - sus to plac - es un - known,
 prais - ing, pro - claim - ing to all who will hear,
 seed - lings are sprout - ing and bread's on the rise!



rais - ing up homes, plant - ing new gar - dens,
 walk - ing as friends, march - ing for free - dom,
 pray - ing for peace, shout - ing for jus - tice,
 Washed and set free, hum - bled and hon - ored,



feed - ing the hun - gry and shelt - 'ring the cold.
 run - ning the race with God's fu - ture the goal.
 claim - ing God's love for the lost and the least.
 gift - ed by grace, we re - spond in God's love.



Bless, God, our hands as we work in your name,
 Bless, God, our feet as we fol - low your way,
 Bless, God, our voice as we speak in your name,
 Bless, God, our lives as we an - swer your call,



shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
 shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
 shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
 shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.

***BENEDICTION**

The God of love
draw you into full accord and one mind,
in the body of Christ Jesus.

Amen.

The God of hope
grant you strength and joy in all circumstances
through the interceding of the Spirit.

Amen.

The God of grace
✠ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

***DISMISSAL**

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

How Great Is Our God

Tomlin, Reeves, Cash

PERMISSIONS

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