

Easter

April 28, 2024 † The Fifth Sunday of Easter



This Sunday's image of how the risen Christ shares his life with us is the image of the vine. Christ the vine and we the branches are alive in each other, in the mystery of mutual abiding described in the gospel and the first letter of John. Baptism makes us a part of Christ's living and life-giving self and makes us alive with Christ's life. As the vine brings food to the branches, Christ feeds us at his table.

We are sent out to bear fruit for the life of the world.

Masks are welcomed, especially for those who have not been boosted, cannot be vaccinated, are at higher risk, or simply prefer to do so.



Ebenezer is a *Reconciling in Christ* Congregation. **You are welcome here.**

Welcome to long-time Lutherans, Christians from every tradition, and people new to this faith. **Welcome** to friends new and old. **Welcome** to people of every age and size, color and culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression; every socioeconomic and marital status, political conviction, ability and challenge.

Welcome to believers and questioners, and questioning believers.

Welcome.



This worship booklet is available in **LARGE PRINT** and may be **recycled** (in the baskets near the Welcome Center) or taken home. It is also online at ebenezerchurch.org.



Please **silence** phones and other devices during the liturgy.



A **platform lift** is available to access the Sanctuary, Education Center, and Restrooms. Please see an usher for assistance.



Restrooms are located up the stairs under the model ship, or down the stairs on the west side of the narthex entry area.



Postures are a way in which we engage the body in worship. These movements (sitting, standing, making the sign of the cross) are optional; please engage in them only as you are comfortable or able.



Children are always welcome in worship at Ebenezer. A nursery is available (the attendant is vaccinated). A quiet play area is located in the narthex entry area.



Holy Communion, or the Eucharist, is offered to all who seek the presence of Christ. This is a welcome table.

Acknowledgments: Liturgical Material reprinted from *SundaysandSeasons.com*. *NRSV Bible*, ©1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. oneline.net A-704767; CCLI 1875300; Augsburg Fortress 13045.

Cover artwork: *Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch*. Herbert Boeckl, Austria, 20th cent.

**All are invited for a time of refreshments and fellowship
downstairs following the liturgy.**

Adult Education follows; the nursery attendant remains available throughout.

Gathering

Words of Welcome

Prelude

Silence follows; then, the ringing of bells. Rise in body or spirit.

Confession and Forgiveness

In the names of the Creator, † Christ, and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Since we have such a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus Christ our Lord, let us with confidence draw near to God, that we may receive mercy and find grace in time of need.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Have mercy on us, O God, **according to your lovingkindness. In your great mercy, wash away our sins and heal us in our brokenness. Create in us clean hearts, O God, and renew a right spirit within us. Do not remove us from your presence; do not take your Spirit away. Restore to us the joy of your salvation, and sustain us with your Spirit. Amen.**

God is merciful and gracious, granting forgiveness through Jesus Christ to all who confess their sin. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by Christ's authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sin, in the name of the † Triune God. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn

Take Me to the Water

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Take Me to the Water". It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "Take me to the wa - ter, take me to the wa - ter take me to the wa - ter to be bap - tized." The music is written in a simple, hymn-like style with clear lyrics under the notes.

Greeting

Alleluia! Christ is risen. **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

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.**

Prayer of the Day

O God, you give us your Son as the vine apart from whom we cannot live. Nourish our life in his resurrection, that we may bear the fruit of love and know the fullness of your joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

Word

The First Reading Acts 8:26-40

An angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth."

The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Refrain:

From you comes my praise in the ¹ great assembly;

I will perform my vows in the sight of those who ¹ fear the Lord.

The poor shall eat ¹ and be satisfied,

Let those who seek the Lord give praise! May your hearts ¹ live forever!

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn ¹ to the Lord;

all the families of nations shall bow ¹ before God.

For dominion belongs ¹ to the Lord,

who rules o- ¹ ver the nations. *Refrain*

Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow ¹ down in worship;

all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel be- ¹ fore the Lord.

Their descendants shall ¹ serve the Lord,

whom they shall proclaim to genera- ¹ tions to come.

They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people ¹ yet unborn,

saying to them, "The ¹ Lord has acted!" *Refrain*

The Second Reading First John 4:7-21

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. 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. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. 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. 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. 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. We love because he first loved us. 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. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Rise in body or spirit.

Welcoming the Gospel

Hal-le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal -
 - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le -
 Hal - le - lu - jah.
 lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah.

Music: Caribbean traditional; arr. Mark Sedio, b. 1954
 Arr. © 1995 Augsburg Fortress.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. 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, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

All repeat the Alleluia. Please be seated.

Sermon Pastor Michael Fick

Silence for reflection follows. Rise in body or spirit.

Hymn of the Day O Blessed Spring *The Cantor sings verse one.*



1 O bless - ed spring, where word and sign em - brace us
 2 Through sum - mer heat of youth - ful years, un - cer - tain
 3 When au - tumn cools and youth is cold, when limbs their
 4 As win - ter comes, as win - ters must, we breathe our
 5 Christ, ho - ly Vine, Christ, liv - ing Tree, be praised for



in - to Christ the Vine: here Christ en - joins each one to
 faith, re - bel - lious tears, sus - tained by Christ's in - fus - ing
 heav - y har - vest hold, then through us, warm, the Christ will
 last, re - turn to dust; still held in Christ, our souls take
 this blest mys - ter - y: that word and wa - ter thus re -



be a branch of this life - giv - ing Tree.
 rain, the boughs will shout for joy a - gain.
 move with gifts of beau - ty, wis - dom, love.
 wing and trust the prom - ise of the spring.
 vive and join us to your Tree of Life.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953
 Music: BERGLUND, Robert Buckley Farlee, b. 1950

Creed *The Apostles Creed, the church's most ancient, developed from early baptismal rites. Father is original to this text. Other forms of address may be used.*

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.

Please be seated.

Children's Message

Prayers of Intercession *The response to each intercession is: **Hear our prayer.***

Meal

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

Share a sign of peace with those around you, being mindful about whether touch is welcomed, or a verbal greeting is preferred. Check your neighbor's name tag:

A **yellow square** indicates a distanced elbow or fist bump is preferred.

A **red circle** indicates your neighbor prefers a verbal, distanced greeting only.

For members of the Ebenezer community, an offering is part of our expression of gratitude to God. If you are visiting with us today, your presence is already a great gift.

Please be seated.

Offertory

Lead Me, Lord
David Blackwell

The Ebenezer Choir

Lead me, Lord, lead me in thy righteousness;
make thy way plain before my face.
For it is thou, Lord, thou, Lord, only,
that makest me dwell in safety.

Rise in body or spirit.

Offering Song

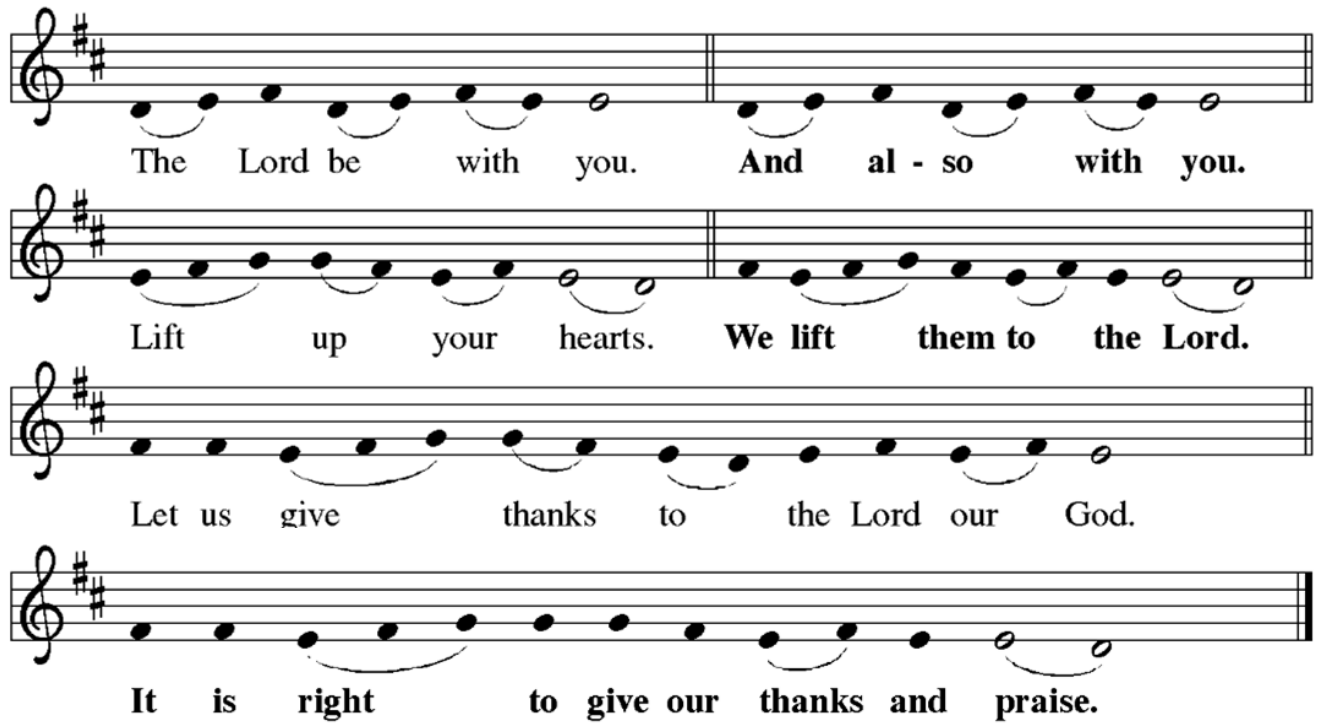
Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and
fill to the brim our cup of bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from
the seeds that were sown, that
we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gath - er the hopes and dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer.
Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence;
give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

The musical score is written on ten staves of music. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Offering Prayer

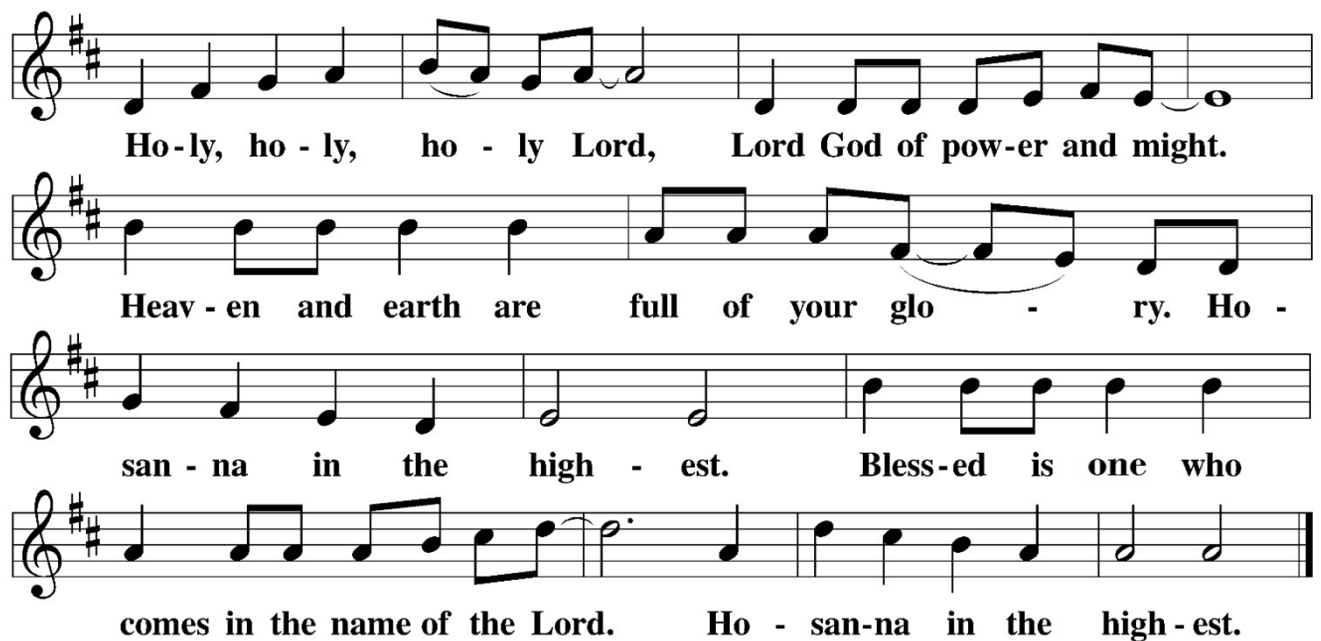
Risen One, you call us to believe and bear fruit. May the gifts that we offer here be signs of your abiding love. Form us to be your witnesses in the world, through Jesus Christ, our true vine. **Amen.**

Great Thanksgiving Dialogue



The Lord be with you. And also 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 Sanctus Holy, Holy, Holy Lord



Ho-ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow-er and might.
Heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is one who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high - est.

Thanksgiving at the Table

All who seek Christ's presence in the sacrament are invited. This is a welcome table. At the invitation of the usher, you may come forward down the center aisle to receive the bread or a gluten-free wafer. Then, dip the wafer in the cup of **red wine** or **white grape juice**, receiving the elements together.

Ask the server if you prefer to drink from the chalice; one will be made available.

Lord's Prayer

You may pray this prayer in these words; or, in language close to your heart.

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Invitation to the Table

The risen Christ is made known to us in the breaking of the bread.

All are welcome at God's table.

Please be seated.



Agnus Dei

Lamb of God



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



have mer-cy on us, have mer-cy on us.



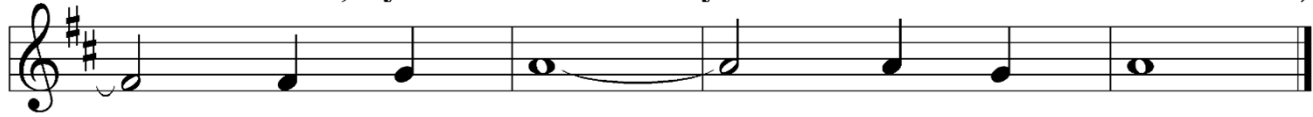
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;



have mer-cy on us, have mer-cy on us.



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



grant us peace, grant us peace.

Hymn

I Am the Vine

I am the vine, you are the branch-es.

Re-main in me, you shall be fruit-ful.

Love for the world, hope for the hope -

less.

1. If you love, then you must
2. If my words a-bide in

root your-self in me;
you, you are made free;

for the branch will fail and die with-out
what you ask is done if you a-bide

the in tree.
in me.

Text & Music: Bob Hurd

Hymn

Sing Choirs of Heaven!

1. Sing choirs of heav'n! Let saints and an - gels sing! A -
 2. Sing choirs of earth! Be - hold your light has come! The
 3. Sing Church of God! Ex - ult with joy out - poured! The

round God's throne ex - ult in har - mon - y.
 glo - ry of the Lord shines ra - daint - ly.
 gos - pel trump - ets tell of vic - t'ry won.

Now Je - sus Christ is ri - sen from the grave. Sa -
 Lift up your hearts, for Christ has con - quered death. The
 Your Sav - ior lives, is with you ev - er - more. Let

lute your King in glo - rious sym - phon y!
 night is past; the day of life is here.
 all God's peo - ple shout the long A - men.

text: based on *Exultet jam Angelica*

music: Richard Shephard

Hymn

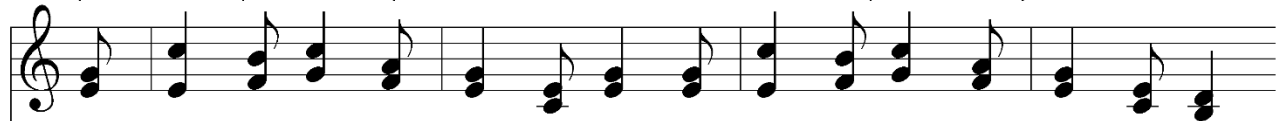
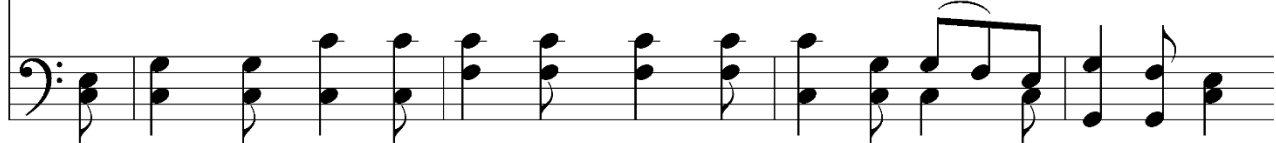
Sweet Hour of Prayer



- 1 Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, that calls me from a world of care,
 2 Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, thy wings shall my pe - ti - tion bear
 3 Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, may I thy con - so - la - tion share,



and bids me at my Fa - ther's throne make all my wants and wish-es known.
 to him whose truth and faith-ful - ness en - gage the wait - ing soul to bless;
 till from Mount Pis - gah's loft - y height I view my home and take my flight.



In sea - sons of dis - tress and grief my soul has of - ten found re - lief.
 and since he bids me seek his face, be - lieve his word and trust his grace,
 With joy I'll has - ten to the place where God my Sav - ior shows his face,



and oft es-caped the tempt - er's snare by thy re - turn, sweet hour of prayer.
 I'll cast on him my ev - 'ry care, and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer.
 and glad - ly take my sta - tion there, thy prom - ise gained, sweet hour of prayer.



Text: William Walford, 1772–1850, alt.

Music: SWEET HOUR, William B. Bradbury, 1816–1868

Rise in body or spirit.

Blessing

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bless and keep us in grace.

Amen.

Prayer

Shepherding God, you have prepared a table before us and nourished us with your love. Send us forth from this banquet to proclaim your goodness and share the abundant mercy of Jesus, our redeemer and friend. **Amen.**



Sending

Benediction

May God bless us and keep us. May God's face shine on us with grace and mercy. May God look upon us with favor, ✚ and give us peace. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

The choir sings verse one.



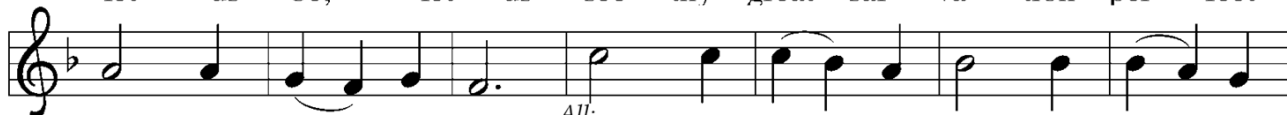
Higher Voices:

1 Love di-vine, all loves ex-cel-ling, Joy of heav'n, to
 2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy lov-ing Spir-it in-to ev-'ry
 3 Come, Al-might-y, to de-liv-er; let us all thy
 4 Fin-ish then thy new cre-a-tion, pure and spot-less



Lower Voices:

earth come down! Fix in us thy hum-ble dwell-ing, all thy
 trou-bled breast; let us all in thee in-her-it; let us
 life re-ceive; sud-den-ly re-turn, and nev-er, nev-er-
 let us be; let us see thy great sal-va-tion per-fect-



All:

faith-ful mer-cies crown. Je-sus, thou art all com-pas-sion,
 find thy prom-ised rest. Take a-way the love of sin-ning;
 more thy tem-ples leave. Thee we would be al-ways bless-ing,
 ly re-stored in thee! Changed from glo-ry in-to glo-ry,



pure, un-bound-ed love thou art; vis-it us with
 Al-pha and O-me-ga be; end of faith, as
 serve thee as thy hosts a-bove, pray, and praise thee
 till in heav'n we take our place, till we cast our



thy sal-va-tion, en-ter ev-'ry trem-bling heart.
 its be-gin-ning, set our hearts at lib-er-ty.
 with-out ceas-ing, glo-ry in thy per-fect love.
 crowns be-fore thee, lost in won-der, love, and praise!

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788

Music: HYFRYDOL, Rowland H. Prichard, 1811–1887

Dismissal

Go in peace. Abide in Christ.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

