



# First Presbyterian Church of Athens

*In response to God's grace, the mission of First Presbyterian Church is to create a community where people seek the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, rejoice in worship, and go forth sharing the love of Christ with Athens and the world!*

November 22, 2020  
10:00 a.m. Livestream  
Commitment Sunday

## GATHERING IN THE NAME OF GOD

*Welcome to all who are worshipping with us. As we enter a holy space this morning, please silence your cell phone. Consult an usher if you need a personal hearing device, large-print bulletin or large-print hymnal.*

### Greeting

Psalm 118:24

This is the day the Lord has made; **let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

### Prelude

*Improvisation on ST. GEORGE'S WINDSOR* John Coble

### Moment for Mission

*Thornwell* Leslie Trier

### Words of Welcome and Concerns of the Church

### Song of Gathering

OLD HUNDREDTH

**All people that on earth do dwell,  
sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;  
him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell,  
come ye before him and rejoice.**

### Call to Worship

We gather on this holy day,  
**for we have seen Love crucified and raised.**  
We gather around a font and a table,  
**for we have known Joy through water and bread.**  
We gather around an ancient story,  
**for we have heard Truth in the words of the Scriptures.**  
We gather around the Holy Spirit,  
**who enlivens our hearts for the worship of God!**

**\*Hymn 551** *Come, Ye Thankful People, Come* ST. GEORGE'S WINDSOR

### \*Call to Confession

### \*Prayer of Confession

**God of wonder and might, forgive us when we put our faith in earthly power instead of in your promises. You call us to work for your reign in this world, "on earth as it is in heaven." Forgive us when we take those words as a platitude instead of a pledge. Forgive us, O Lord. Move us and challenge us to be servants of peace and justice.**

### \*Silent Prayer

Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

### \*Assurance of Pardon

*\*Those who are able may stand.*

**A special word of welcome:** thank you for being with us for worship this morning. We are delighted and hope that you will join us again next Sunday.

Despite its familiar Thanksgiving associations, the real concern of *Come, Ye Thankful People, Come* is to recall the harvest imagery Jesus used to describe the fulfillment of God's sovereignty. The tune name commemorates the royal chapel where the composer was organist for forty-seven years.

The solo is Psalm 65:9,12 (from the *Book of Common Prayer*), set to music by English Baroque composer Maurice Greene. It is excerpted from a larger verse anthem, *Thou, O God, Art Praised in Sion*.

First published among songs celebrating the end of Spanish control of the Netherlands, the text's blend of patriotism and piety that has made *We Gather Together* popular at (often ecumenical) Thanksgiving Day services. The tune is named for the Viennese arranger whose male chorus popularized it.

Next to the Nicene Creed, The Apostles' Creed is the most universally accepted doctrinal statement in Christendom. Although not written by apostles, it reflects the theological formulations of the first century church. Arising from an early baptismal creed, it underwent development, attaining its present form in the eighth century.

*You may mail your check, set up an automatic payment of your pledge through your bank, or donate online at [firstpresathens.org/home/giving](http://firstpresathens.org/home/giving). Thank you for your generosity.*

*Please make sure to mail your Commitment card to the church office or pledge online at [firstpresathens.org/home/giving](http://firstpresathens.org/home/giving). Contact Roger Burbage at [rburbage@firstpresathens.org](mailto:rburbage@firstpresathens.org) if you have any questions.*

### \*Congregational Response

Hymn 579

**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.**

### \*The Peace

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another. The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.  
**And also with you.**

## HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

### Prayer for Illumination

#### First Lesson

Luke 22:19-20

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

#### Solo

*Thou Visitest the Earth*

Maurice Greene

Thou visitest the earth, and blest it; and crownest the year with thy goodness.

#### Second Lesson

Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

#### Sermon

*God Promises a New Covenant*

Dr. Ryan Baer

## RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

### \*Hymn 559

*We Gather Together*

KREMSER

### \*Affirmation 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 Ghost; the holy catholic church;  
the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;  
the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### Prayers of the People and 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.**

### Presentation of Our Tithes, Offerings, and Commitment Cards

#### Offertory

*Now Thank We All Our God*

Georg Friedrich Kaufmann

### \*Doxology

Hymn 592

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

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

**SENDING IN THE NAME OF GOD**

**\*Hymn 555**      *Now Thank We All Our God*  
NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT

**\*Charge and Benediction**

**\*Congregational Response**      RANDOLPH  
**God be with you till we meet again;  
loving counsels guide, uphold you,  
with a shepherd's care enfold you:  
God be with you till we meet again.**

**\*Postlude**      *Sinfonia from Cantata 29*      Johann Sebastian Bach

Although *Now Thank We All Our God* is often used on large and festive occasions, its first two stanzas had much humbler beginnings: they originated as a family table prayer during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). The words have been associated with this tune since the mid-17th century.

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**NOTES ON THE SERVICE**

**WORSHIP LEADERS**

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor*  
Dr. Carol Strickland, *Associate Pastor*  
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist*  
Kendall Marie Kookogey, *Soloist*

**USHERS**

Jimbo Laboon, Beverly Phares, John Simpson

**SUNDAY MORNING MANAGER**

Rebecca Carlton

**AUDIOVISUAL TECHNICIANS**

Bryan Owens, Jack Palmer

**FLOWERS**

The flowers in the Sanctuary are given to the glory of God and in memory of Mary Gannon Gunn, Meg Gunn Dure and Robert Russell Gunn, II by Page Pate.

**CONGREGATIONAL CARE**

**Prayer requests** can be submitted to the church office, 706-543-4338, or by the Prayer Request link on our church website ([firstpresathens.org](http://firstpresathens.org)).

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**Commitment Sunday  
Today**

During worship we will dedicate our financial commitments for 2021. Thank you for prayerfully considering your pledge as we share our stories of generosity with Athens and the world!

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**Thornwell Special Offering  
Today**

Your gift will help prevent child abuse and neglect, build up and reunite families, and support healthy communities in the name of Jesus Christ. Begun as an orphanage in Clinton, SC, Thornwell now has multi-faceted programs to help children including foster care, residential care, family services, and child development services. Please send a check to the office with "Thornwell" noted on the bottom, or go to [firstpresathens.org/home/giving/](http://firstpresathens.org/home/giving/) (please select "Thornwell" under "Select a Fund").

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**Interfaith Thanksgiving Worship,  
Today, 4:00 p.m. via Zoom**

All are invited to join our Athens friends and neighbors via Zoom (*ID: 943 5058 3240, Passcode: Unity*) for this worship experience for all faith groups (Christians, Jews, Muslims, et al.). The sponsor, Interfaith Clergy Partnership of Greater Athens, includes representatives of more than 50 congregations in the Athens area. In a time when there is so much division, let's unite in thanksgiving.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LIMITED IN-PERSON WORSHIP

If you would like to join us next Sunday for a limited in-person worship, please click on the Eventbrite link on the church website beginning tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. Alternatively, you can contact the church office at (706) 543-4338 and we will add you to the list.

Please make sure to read the additional instructions that are posted on the website. If you are over 65 or have underlying health conditions, we encourage you to stay home and join us via Facebook or YouTube.

### HOLIDAYS@FIRST 2020

For more information about FPC Holiday Programs, please go to [firstpresathens.org](http://firstpresathens.org) and look for the Holidays@First brochure on the home page.

### SENIOR ADULT CHRISTMAS TEA: 2020 VERSION

The pandemic has forced us to adapt many traditions, including our lovely Christmas Tea. We'll miss the December tea party with the festive table decorations, beautiful singing by the Mellows, and inspiring holiday devotional. Mostly, we'll miss the fellowship! Since we can't have folks come to church, the Congregational Care Commission is making arrangements to deliver Christmas goodies to our senior homebound members.

### "SUNDAY CONVERSATIONS"

**Sundays at 11:30 a.m.**

Join Dr. Ryan Baer for "Sunday Conversations" as we reflect on the morning worship service and take a deeper dive into the Bible texts read and proclaimed from the pulpit.

**Zoom ID: 706-543-4338 (PW: 185185)**

*Led by Dr. Ryan Baer ([ryan@firstpresathens.org](mailto:ryan@firstpresathens.org))*

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## Holiday Meals on Wheels Delivery

For many years First Presbyterian members and friends have delivered meals on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years. It makes such a difference to our neighbors--and to those who deliver! The protocols have changed to keep the volunteers and recipients safe. **All must wear masks.**

To volunteer to be a back-up driver, please contact Kitty Donnan at [kittydavedonnan@gmail.com](mailto:kittydavedonnan@gmail.com) or call the church office 706-543-4338. If you would like to make a donation (FPC pays for the meals, with the cost generally around \$1,000), please send a check to the office with "Meals on Wheels Holiday Donation" noted on the bottom, or go to [firstpresathens.org/home/giving/](http://firstpresathens.org/home/giving/) (please select "Meals on Wheels" under "Select a Fund").

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## Live Nativity

**December 8, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.**

Join Weekday School families and friends for our 9th Annual Live Nativity from 6:00-8:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, December 8!** This year it will be a **drive-by** on the front church steps to promote social distancing. Come enjoy the babe, the camel, donkey, other animals, and of course Mary and Joseph, wisemen and shepherds. We will have live music from Dr. Coble and the Handbell Choir. Anyone interested in participating as a character (no lines) or in set up or cleanup, please contact Elaine Johnson at (706) 206-8180.

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## Casa de Amistad Christmas Boxes

Rather than buying food for our Hispanic neighbors in bulk and sorting it into boxes for distribution, we will be providing families a Christmas card with a \$40 gift certificate, allowing them to select what they need. Our goal is to raise at least \$4,000 by **December 13**. To contribute by check, please identify your gift as being for "Casa Food Boxes." noted on the bottom, or go to [firstpresathens.org/home/giving/](http://firstpresathens.org/home/giving/) (please select "Hispanic Ministry (CASA)" under "Select a Fund").

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## Salvation Army Angel Tree

To provide Christmas gifts for a child (or children) from birth to age 14 from the online Angel Tree, please follow the link and directions on our home page, [firstpresathens.org](http://firstpresathens.org). This link takes you to the children (angels) which have been set aside for First Presbyterian Church. Drop off unwrapped gifts to FPC or Salvation Army by **December 15**. Questions? Contact Eunice or Pat Tritt at 706-543-0801.

## THIS WEEK

### **Sunday, November 22 - Commitment Sunday, Thornwell Special Offering**

- 9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School (*please check firstpresathens.org for more information*)
- 9:00 a.m. Godly Play on YouTube (*please e-mail Natalie Bishop at natalie@firstpresathens.org for link*)
- 10:00 a.m. Service Livestream on Facebook and YouTube, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching  
Limited in-person worship
- 11:30 a.m. "Sunday Conversations" with Dr. Ryan Baer (*Zoom ID: 706-543-4338, PW:185185*)
- 4:00 p.m. Interfaith Thanksgiving Worship (*Zoom ID: 943 5058 3240, PW: Unity*)

### **Monday, November 23**

- 2:00 p.m. Lay Callers Meeting via Zoom

### **Tuesday, November 24**

- 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting via Zoom

### **Wednesday, November 25**

- 12:00 p.m. Church office closes for Thanksgiving

### **Thursday, November 26 - Church Office Closed for Thanksgiving**

Thanksgiving Meals on Wheels Food Delivery

### **Friday, November 27 - Church Office Closed for Thanksgiving**

### **Sunday, November 29 - First Sunday of Advent**

- 9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School (*please check firstpresathens.org for more information*)
- 9:00 a.m. Godly Play on YouTube (*please e-mail Natalie Bishop at natalie@firstpresathens.org for link*)
- 10:00 a.m. Service Livestream on Facebook and YouTube, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching  
Limited in-person worship (*please go to firstpresathens.org to register*)
- 3:00 p.m. Children's Ministry Advent Goodie Bag and Youth Advent Box Pickup

## LOOKING AHEAD

**November 30** - Labyrinth in Fellowship Hall reopens on Mondays and Saturdays

**December 2** - A Very Merry Children's Ministry Zoom (7:00 p.m.)

**December 8** - Live Nativity (Drive-by 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.)

**December 13** - Lessons and Carols, Family Promise Host Week Begins,  
Youth Christmas Movie Watch Party

**December 20** - FPC 200th Birthday Drive-by Party (5:00 - 7:00 p.m.)

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### **Poinsettia Dedication**

If you wish to give a contribution in honor or memory of a loved one, please place your order by **Tuesday, December 15**. Each dedication is \$10. You may fill out the form and pay online (*please click on the link posted in the church website for more instructions*), mail it with a check to the church office, or contact the church at 706-543-4338 or [frontdesk@firstpresathens.org](mailto:frontdesk@firstpresathens.org) with your dedications. Each dedication will be listed in the December 20 worship service bulletin.

**In Memory of**

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**In Honor of**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Given by**

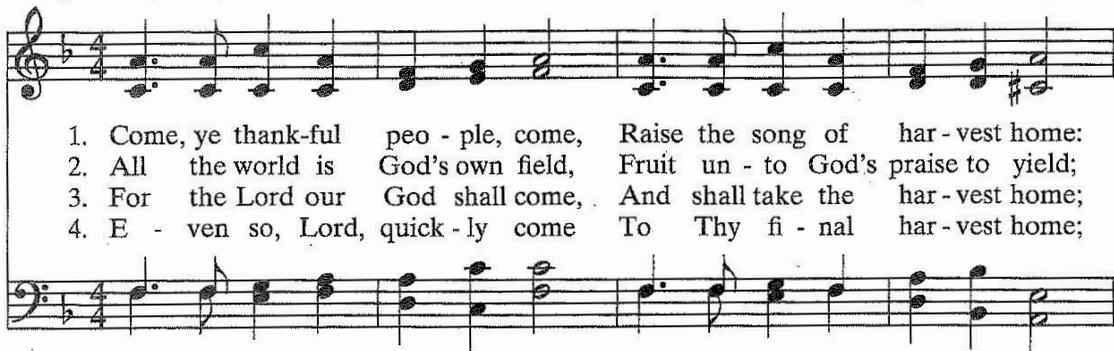
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## 551 Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

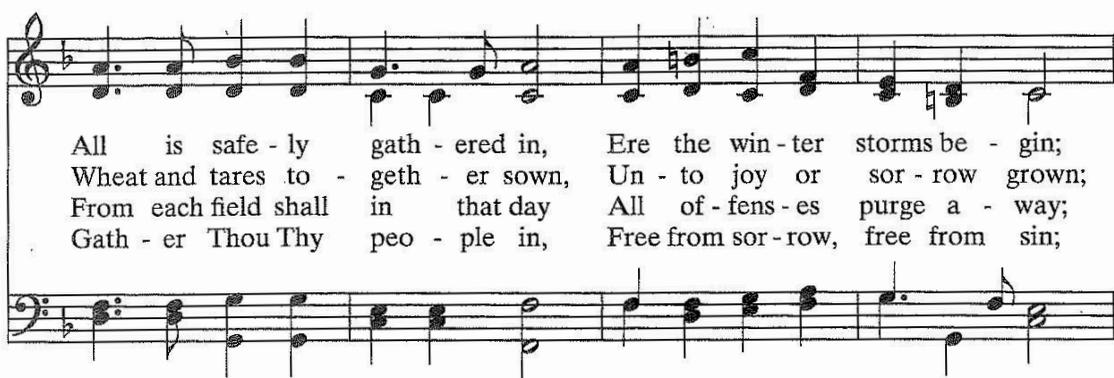
ST. GEORGE'S WINDSOR 7.7.7 D

Henry Alford, 1844; alt.

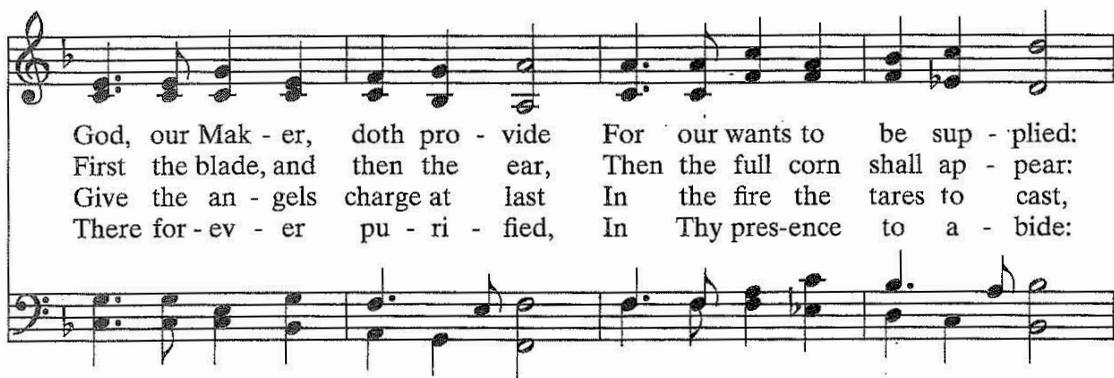
George Job Elvey, 1859



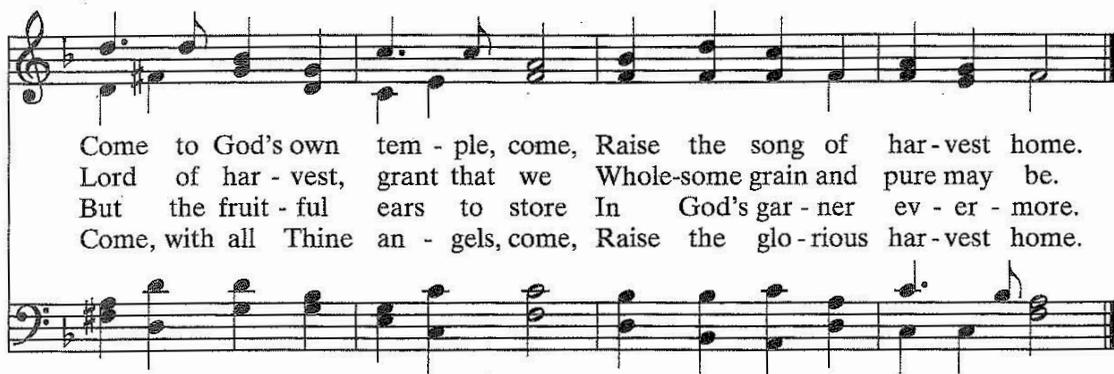
1. Come, ye thank-ful peo - ple, come, Raise the song of har - vest home:  
 2. All the world is God's own field, Fruit un - to God's praise to yield;  
 3. For the Lord our God shall come, And shall take the har - vest home;  
 4. E - ven so, Lord, quick - ly come To Thy fi - nal har - vest home;



All is safe - ly gath - ered in, Ere the win - ter storms be - gin;  
 Wheat and tares to - geth - er sown, Un - to joy or sor - row grown;  
 From each field shall in that day All of - fens - es purge a - way;  
 Gath - er Thou Thy peo - ple in, Free from sor - row, free from sin;



God, our Mak - er, doth pro - vide For our wants to be sup - plied:  
 First the blade, and then the ear, Then the full corn shall ap - pear:  
 Give the an - gels charge at last In the fire the tares to cast,  
 There for - ev - er pu - ri - fied, In Thy pres - ence to a - bide:



Come to God's own tem - ple, come, Raise the song of har - vest home.  
 Lord of har - vest, grant that we Whole - some grain and pure may be.  
 But the fruit - ful ears to store In God's gar - ner ev - er - more.  
 Come, with all Thine an - gels, come, Raise the glo - rious har - vest home.

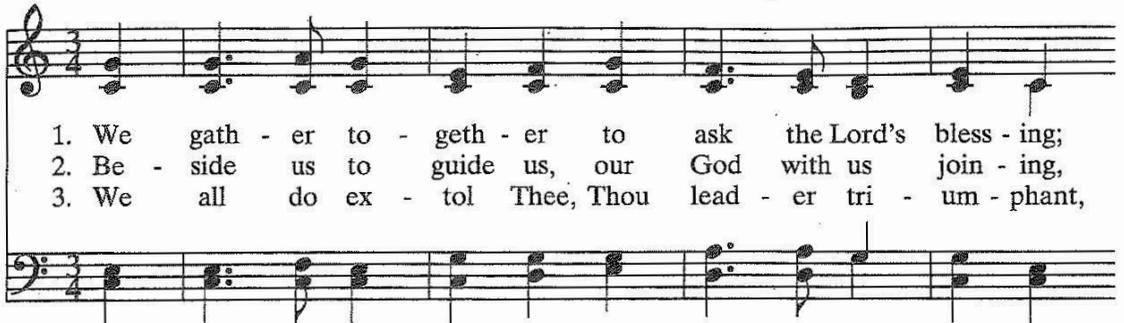
## We Gather Together

559

KREMSER 12.11.12.11

Netherlands folk hymn, 1625  
Trans. Theodore Baker, 1894

*Nederlandsch Gedenckclanck*, 1626  
Harm. Eduard Kremser, 1877



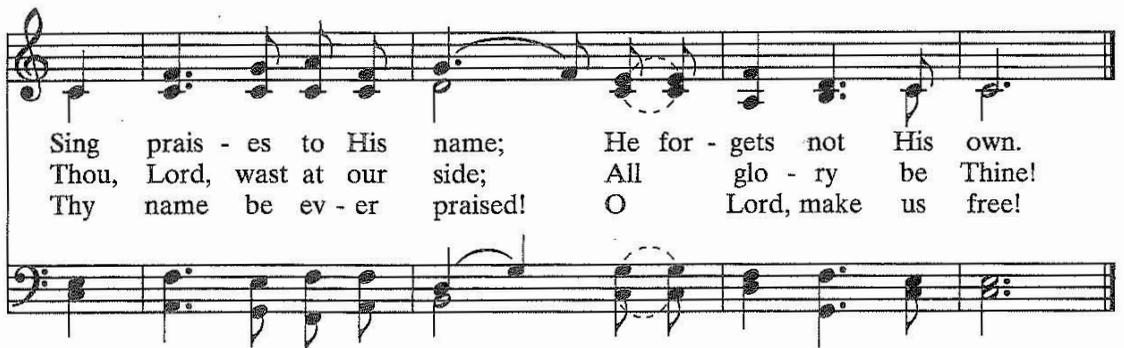
1. We gath - er to - geth - er to ask the Lord's bless - ing;  
2. Be - side us to guide us, our God with us join - ing,  
3. We all do ex - tol Thee, Thou lead - er tri - um - phant,



He chas - tens and has - tens His will to make known;  
Or - dain - ing, main - tain - ing His king - dom di - vine;  
And pray that Thou still our de - fend - er wilt be.



The wick - ed op - press - ing now cease from dis - tress - ing,  
So from the be - gin - ning the fight we were win - ning;  
Let Thy con - gre - ga - tion es - cape trib - u - la - tion;



Sing prais - es to His name; He for - gets not His own.  
Thou, Lord, wast at our side; All glo - ry be Thine!  
Thy name be ev - er praised! O Lord, make us free!

555

## Now Thank We All Our God

NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT 6.7.6.7.6.6.6.6

Martin Rinkart, c. 1636

Trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1858; alt.

Stanza 3, *Rejoice in the Lord*, 1985

Johann Crüger, 1648

Harm. adapt. *Lobegesang*, Felix Mendelssohn, 1840

1. Now thank we all our God With heart and hands and voic - es,  
 2. O may this boun - teous God Through all our life be near us,  
 3. All praise and thanks to God, Who reigns in high - est heav - en,

Who won-drous things hath done, In whom this world re - joic - es;  
 With ev - er joy - ful hearts And bless - ed peace to cheer us;  
 To Fa - ther and to Son And Spir - it now be giv - en.

Who, from our moth - ers' arms, Hath blessed us on our way  
 And keep us in God's grace, And guide us when per - plexed,  
 The one e - ter - nal God, Whom heaven and earth a - dore,

With count-less gifts of love, And still is ours to - day.  
 And free us from all ills In this world and the next.  
 The God who was, and is, And shall be ev - er - more.