

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Santa Clarita

The Fifteenth Sunday of Pentecost — Proper 18

10:30 AM — September 6, 2026

*The Altar flowers are given to the glory of God by Mary Roberti
in memory of Lewis W. Mondy and Mary M. Dale.*

Before the service begins, we encourage you to use the following for meditation.

Jesus began his public ministry declaring he would fulfill Isaiah's prophecy "to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners". We take Jesus at his word, that he has come to heal us and to set us free: all of us, in every way, in this life and in the life to come. — Br. Curtis Almquist

-Generally, we stand to give praise, sit to listen (to scripture and sermon), and stand or kneel to pray. These postures help us stay focused on the worship, but there are no strict rules and you should take whatever posture is appropriate to your needs.-

Prelude

How Great Thou Art

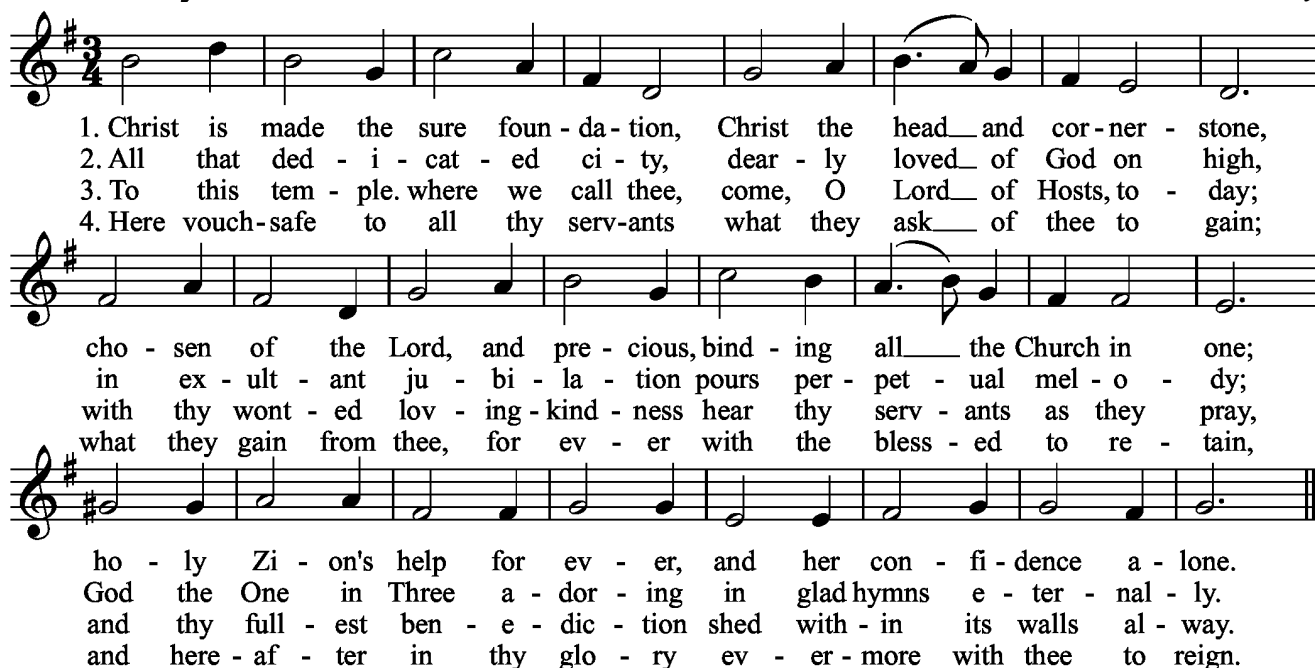
Stuart K. Hine

-Processions have long been an important part of liturgical worship. At the beginning of the service they signify an intention to move toward the altar and into direct relationship to worship God. Those who wish to may bow in reverence as the cross passes to acknowledge Christ's sacrifice upon it.-

Entrance Hymn #518

"Christ is made the sure foundation"

Westminster Abbey



1. Christ is made the sure foun - da - tion, Christ the head and cor - ner - stone,
2. All that ded - i - cat - ed ci - ty, dear - ly loved of God on high,
3. To this tem - ple. where we call thee, come, O Lord of Hosts, to - day;
4. Here vouch - safe to all thy serv - ants what they ask of thee to gain;
cho - sen of the Lord, and pre - cious, bind - ing all the Church in one;
in ex - ult - ant ju - bi - la - tion pours per - pet - ual mel - o - dy;
with thy wont - ed lov - ing - kind - ness hear thy serv - ants as they pray,
what they gain from thee, for ev - er with the bless - ed to re - tain,
ho - ly Zi - on's help for ev - er, and her con - fi - dence a - lone.
God the One in Three a - dor - ing in glad hymns e - ter - nal - ly.
and thy full - est ben - e - dic - tion shed with - in its walls al - way.
and here - af - ter in thy glo - ry ev - er - more with thee to reign.

-The liturgy is God's community gathered to actively share the Word and the Eucharist. We invite and encourage your participation in this community. Please join in the spoken responses and hymns shown in the service bulletin.-

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

-The opening acclamation is the greeting of the people by the presider and their response, which begins the service. Its purpose is to bring the congregation corporately into dialogue with the presider and set a tone for the celebration.-

Priest: Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.
People: Glory to God for ever and ever.

Collect for Purity

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Priest and People:

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. **Amen.**

-A Collect is a short prayer with a specific structure. Its purpose is to gather into one the individual prayers of the People. The Collect of the Day is a specific prayer that reflects upon the lectionary readings for the given day of the liturgical year:-

The Collect of the Day

Priest: God be with you.
People: And also with you.
Priest: Let us pray.

Grant us, O God, to trust in you with all our hearts; for, as you always resist the proud who confide in their own strength, so you never forsake those who make their boast of your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

THE LESSONS

The First Reading Ezekiel 33:7-11

Reader: Fred Chavez

A Reading from the Book of Ezekiel.

You, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, "O wicked ones, you shall surely die," and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but

their blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life. Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel, Thus you have said: "Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?" Say to them, As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

-The Book of Common Prayer has always placed great importance on the Psalms in worship. They are sung or said in every service of the church, and their words make up the petitions and language of our liturgy. —

Psalm 119:33-40

Reader: Marianne Zinkewicz

- 33 Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes, *
and I shall keep it to the end.
- 34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep your law; *
I shall keep it with all my heart.
- 35 Make me go in the path of your commandments, *
for that is my desire.
- 36 Incline my heart to your decrees *
and not to unjust gain.
- 37 Turn my eyes from watching what is worthless; *
give me life in your ways.
- 38 Fulfill your promise to your servant, *
which you make to those who fear you.
- 39 Turn away the reproach which I dread, *
because your judgments are good.
- 40 Behold, I long for your commandments; *
in your righteousness preserve my life.

The Second Reading Romans 13:8-14

Reader: Marianne Zinkewicz

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans.

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

-The Gospel procession moves into the congregation as a liturgical reminder that Jesus walked among us.-

Please stand as you are able.

Gradual WLP #798

"Lord Jesus, think on me"

Barnfield

1. Lord Je - sus, think on me, and purge a - way my sin; from
2. Lord Je - sus, think on me, with care and woe op - pressed; let
3. Lord Je - sus, think on me, nor let me go a - stray; through
4. Lord Je - sus, think on me, that, when the flood is past, I

earth-born pas - sions set me free, and make me pure with - in.
me thy lov - ing ser - vant be, and taste thy prom - ised rest.
dark - ness and per - plex - i - ty point thou the heav' - nly way.
may the e - ter - nal bright-ness see, and share thy joy at last.

-The Gospel is comprised primarily of the words Christ himself spoke, and so we stand out of reverence for the good news that has been brought for us and all people.

Those who wish, make the sign of the cross with the right-thumb on the forehead, the lips, and the heart when the Gospel is announced, praying silently, God be in my head and in my thinking. God be in my lips and in my speaking. God be in my heart and my departing.-

The Gospel Reading Matthew 18:15--20

Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People: Glory to you, O Christ.

Jesus said, "If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender

refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Priest: The Gospel of the Savior.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

-The Sermon or Homily helps us apply the words of the early prophets and Christ in our lives.-

The Sermon

The Rev. Dr. Cynthia Jew

A period of silent reflection follows the sermon.

-The Nicene Creed is the statement of what we believe. It is one of the most ancient and corporate confession of our faith, having been adopted by the first ecumenical council in the year 325. When we recite this creed we are joining a great heritage of the holy universal Church through the centuries.

Some people may choose to bow their heads at the verse, For us and for our salvation...and was made man. This gesture marks the mystery of the Incarnation as the central Christian message of God's love for the world.-

Please stand as you are able.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,

the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,

the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;

he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

-Prayer is offered for the Universal Church, the Nation and all in authority, the welfare of the world, concerns of the local community, for those who suffer or who are in any trouble, and for the departed.-

The Prayers of the People

Reader: Shari Schlaman

We have been promised that, when we gather in Jesus' name, he will be here among us. Let us pray saying, "We are gathered in your name; accept our prayers."

Holy One, you take pleasure in your people: May your Church be a community of honesty and humility. Help us to love each other — especially when love is a challenge.

Silence

Intercessor: We are gathered in your name;

People: Accept our prayers.

Holy One, you adorn the poor with victory: be with the hungry and the oppressed. Comfort the grieving. Give peace to all whose lives have been upset by natural disaster, violence and war.

Silence

Intercessor: We are gathered in your name;

People: Accept our prayers.

Holy One, you have caused grapes to grow on the vine and wheat to grow in the fields so that we might celebrate this festive day. Bless the land to grow enough that all people may celebrate its bounty.

The congregation may add their own thanksgivings.

Silence

Intercessor: We are gathered in your name;

People: Accept our prayers.

Holy One, your Law is summarized, "Love your neighbors as yourself." Help us to love our neighbors so that we might do no wrong by anyone.

Silence

Intercessor: We are gathered in your name;

People: Accept our prayers.

Holy One, may all those who now lament see the day when they shall sing to you a new song — a song of joy and praise. May those who weep, dance for joy. May the anxious rest on their beds in peace. And may all know that it was you who did this. We pray for all those on the prayer list, especially Carole, Hal, the Walton Family, Madelyn, Claire, the Burkly Family, and Rosario.

The congregation may add their own petitions.

Silence

Intercessor: We are gathered in your name;

People: Accept our prayers.

Holy One, care for the dead as they await the great day of resurrection. May all who have died rest in your peace, especially Helen Walton and Nancy Burkly.

Silence

Intercessor: We are gathered in your name;

People: Accept our prayers.

A Prayer for Labor Day

Almighty God, you have so linked our lives one with another that all we do affects, for good or ill, all other lives: So guide us in the work we do, that we may do it not for self alone, but for the common good; and, as we seek a proper return for our own labor, make us mindful of the rightful aspirations of other workers, and arouse our concern for those who are out of work; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

Priest:

O Gracious God, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies, look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, the one, holy and undivided Trinity; God, Son & Spirit now and for ever. **Amen.**

Confession

Let us confess our sins to God.

God of all mercy,
we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.
We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love
and serve only your will. Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all our sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

-The Peace is an extension of Christian greeting and teaching to love our neighbor as ourselves. It symbolizes our intent to forgive as we are forgiven, to live in peace with all people. Members are encouraged to greet one another with a sign of God's peace with the clasping of hands, a reverential bow, a hug, or a peace sign.-

The Peace

Priest: The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Members of the congregation who are joining us via livestream are encouraged to post "Peace be with you" in the comments or to use the "like" or "love" reaction button to take part in the virtual exchange of God's peace with the rest of the congregation at this time.

Please be seated.

Welcome and Announcements

We are pleased to celebrate the following birthdays: Peter Cario on Sept. 7th, Julie Ford on Sept. 9th, and Jeremy Johnson on Sept. 12th.

Offertory Prayer

The People remain seated and say together:

Loving God, you alone are the source of every good gift. Everything we have, and all that we are, comes from you. Now, help us to be grateful, accountable, and, with praise and thanksgiving, to give of ourselves generously, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE TABLE

Offertory

Go Down Moses (Let My People Go)
Josh Wentz, baritone

HT Burleigh

-A Sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself. For Anglicans there are two great sacraments: Eucharist and Baptism.

As continuation of thousands of years of spiritual practice, talent, treasure, and oblations are offered before the altar in our response to God's care and nurture.-

Please stand as you are able.

Doxology

Old 100th

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures,
here be - low. Praise God, you hosts in heav'n a -
bove; Praise God the Trin - i - ty of Love. A - men.

-The Sursum Corda (Lift up your hearts) is a form of introduction to prayer handed down over the centuries. This dialogue is an invitation for the people joining in the Eucharistic offering, to raise minds and hearts to "things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."-

Priest: God be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to God.**

Priest: Let us give thanks.

People: **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

-We praise God for the long arc of salvation history. We do not approach with petition but simply with grateful remembrance of all that God has done.-

We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant. From before time you made ready the creation. Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing. You made us in your image, and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away; and yet, as a mother cares

for her children, you would not forget us. Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love.

And so this day we join with Saints and Angels in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we say:

-The holiness of God is a strong theme in the Old Testament, present here in the Sanctus, which echoes the words of the high angels in the prophet Isaiah's vision of the dwelling place of God (Isaiah 6:1-3).

Our worshipful cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy," is coupled with the acclamation "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

Sanctus

Baity

Ho - ly Lord, Ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might, Ho - ly Lord, Ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might.. Heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry, heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho san-na, ho-san-na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est! Blest is he, blest is he whocomes in the name of the Lord, Blest is he, blest is he whocomes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho san-na, ho-san-na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high est. Ho san-na, ho-san-na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho san-na, ho-san-na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est!

Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God. To deliver us from the power of sin and death and to reveal the riches of your grace, you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive and bear a son, Jesus the holy child of God. Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw all the world to himself yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love. Then, the time came for him to complete upon the cross the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you.

On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again, he gave thanks to you, gave it to them, and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Priest and people say together:

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation, and remembering Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves, a living sacrifice.

-The epiclesis is the point at which the church, through the voice of the Celebrant, asks God to make holy, 'sanctify', 'send', 'pour', 'breathe', both the gift of bread and wine and also the gathered community.-

Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, the Body of Christ given for the world you have made.

In the fullness of time bring us, with Stephen and all your saints, from every tribe and language and people and nation, to feast at the banquet prepared from the foundation of the world.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. **AMEN.**

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

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 for ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

-The fraction (breaking of the bread) is a crucial link between what has come before and what comes after it. Christ has offered his life for us, and the breaking of the bread makes it possible for all to share in that life.-

Priest: Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People: **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

-The outward and visible sign in the sacrament of the Eucharist is the bread and the wine. We eat and drink the sacramental foods. Through the inward and spiritual grace of this sacramental action we are reconstituted as Christ's body, infused with Christ's life, and empowered to be Christ's presence in the world.-

The Gifts of God for the People of God.
Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.
Please be seated.

All are welcome to receive communion. The table we set belongs to God. Wherever you find yourself on your spiritual journey you are welcome to receive the Bread and Wine made holy.

The church teaches that temporal isolation cannot constrain the sacrament's ineffable power. Calling us to "massive, corporate, spiritual communion,"

The Invitation to Holy Communion

A spiritual communion is a personal devotional that anyone can pray at any time to express their desire to receive Holy Communion at that moment, but in which circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.

Priest and People say together:

Grant, O Christ, that as the hem of your garment, touched in faith, healed the woman who could not touch your body, so the soul of your servant may be healed by like faith in you, whom I cannot now sacramentally receive; through your tender mercy and love. Amen.

Please be seated.

Please follow usher instructions for taking communion.

Communion Music

Ave Maria
Josh Wentz

Franz Schubert

-In the post communion prayer we give thanks for the sacramental signs of Christ's presence to us and we ask God to empower and accompany us into the world to witness to God's love.-

Please stand as you are able.

Post Communion Prayer

Let us pray.

Almighty and everliving God,
we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food
of the most precious Body and Blood
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;
and for assuring us in these holy mysteries
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,
and heirs of your eternal kingdom.
And now, Father, send us out

to do the work you have given us to do,
to love and serve you
as faithful witnesses of Christ our Savior.
To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

-The blessing is God's promise to be with us as we leave communal worship and return to the world to serve God and God's people.-

Blessing

*-Processions have long been an important part of liturgical worship. At the conclusion of the service the retiring procession represents the carrying of the Gospel message into the world.
Those who wish to may bow in reverence as the cross passes to acknowledge Christ's sacrifice upon it.-*

Closing Hymn #336

"Come with us, O blessed Jesus"

Werde munter

1. Come with us, O bless - ed Je - sus, with us ev - er more to be;
2. Come with us, O might - y Sa - rior, God from God, and Light from Light;
3. Come with us, O King of glo - ry, by an - gel - ic voic - es praised;
and though leav - ing now thine al - tar, let us nev - er - more leave thee.
thou art God, thy glo - ry veil - ing, so that we may bear the sight.
in our hearts as in thy hea - ven, be en - rap - tured an - thems raised.
Be thou one with us for - ev - er, in our life thy love di - vine
Now we go to seek and serve thee, through our work as through our prayer;
Let the might - y cho - rus ev - er sing its glad ex - ul - tant songs;
our own flesh and blood has ta - ken, and to us thou giv - est thine.
grant us light to see and know thee, in thy peo - ple ev - ery where.
let its hymn be heard for ev - er: peace for which cre - a - tion longs.

-The dismissal asserts the relationship between worship and living. It is a call to mission, a call to live the baptismal and Eucharistic life in the world.-

The Dismissal

Priest: Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.
People: Thanks be to God.