

I wanted to tell you a neat little story showing the value of plans. A story that would have you on the edge of your seats. A story that would have you eager to plan. My story-telling memory failed me. Google failed me. AI failed me. Good thing we have this [Bible]. Some people like to use this as a planning book. Others toss it - "it's too long; it doesn't give me the answers I'm looking for." Well, the Bible really isn't a planning book telling us how to plan. Instead, it's a plan book - God's plan to save you. It's thick because it tells us the length God is willing to go to save you. It doesn't tell us everything because God is willing, no, God is wanting to include you as a planner with him. Some people love that thought - "God includes us in his plan, and we get to include God in our plans!"

Some people aren't so big on planning - "I don't need no stinking plan. I don't have time for plans. Just do it; wing it. If it doesn't work, so what? If they don't like it, that's their problem. Forget the plans; let's just see what happens." For some things, that might be the right answer. But is "So what? That's their problem" really the right answer, the loving answer, for "When I die, who will take care of my children, my family, my estate?" Or when the family bills are bigger than the money coming in, is "Let's just see what happens" really the right answer for the family? Or when a church's ministry, when a church's opportunities are so bigger than what's getting done, is "I don't have time" really the right answer? Some things are too important to blow off planning and "just see." Some things in life are too precious to trust to "So what? That's their problem."

My parents were planners. I remember when I was young, before school would start, Mom and Dad would take me and my three younger brothers shopping for school clothes. We went to the discount store and got shoes from the bottom shelf where they had cut off the labels. We got the jeans made out of polyester. So when Dad brought home that new Impala station wagon, I looked at it: "How in the world?" Dad must have seen my look; he said: "Mom's been saving money each month so we'd be ready when we needed this." Later in life, years before he died, Dad planned ahead and made sure to set Mom up in a good place with good neighbors so she wouldn't be alone when he died. Mom and Dad planned ahead. They planned ahead for each other; they planned ahead for their family; and they planned ahead for Jesus.

You may remember me saying this. I don't remember how old I was; it was years and years ago. I was visiting home, and out of the blue, Mom dropped their

estate plan on me. “We’ve always prayed, ‘Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.’ We’ve always thought of Jesus as part of the family, and so that is what we’re doing with our will. We’re dividing things up six ways; five parts for our five children, and one part for Jesus.” I thought: “That’s really neat.” I’ve been telling you about it for years. You can imagine my consternation when I read their will last year and found it didn’t happen according to plan. “What?” Well, what did I find out? They didn’t want to wait that long; they decided to start their estate giving for Jesus before they died. Mom and Dad were planners, but not just planners for later - they were doers for now.

Where did they get it from? I could say they got it from being smart, but being smart isn’t what drove them. So why were they planners? They got it from God - the way God loves them with a plan, the way God loves us with a plan. God’s love, God’s plan - that’s what drove them to have a plan and then follow through on that plan.

We see God’s plan in our lessons. From before all time - that’s right, God didn’t wait until the last minute; he didn’t wing it; it wasn’t just some flash idea. From before all time, God chose you. He chose you to be his. He chose you to know his love. He chose you to be holy and special like him, holy and special with him. And he didn’t just leave it as an idea. He made it his plan. He turned it into his promise. And then God worked his plan and shared his promise - in Jesus.

In Jesus - God promised a Champion to fight for us and crush Satan’s head. In Jesus - God promised to bless the world through Abraham. In Jesus, God promised a forever King in the line of David. In Jesus, God promised “the virgin would conceive and give birth to a son.” God didn’t just have an idea; he didn’t just wing it. He had a plan and he worked his plan and Jesus was born.

It wasn’t always smooth or easy. Satan was always trying to disrupt God’s plan, to distract God’s people, to tempt us and turn us off God’s plan. Satan tried the same with Jesus - to distract Jesus, to bully Jesus, to get rid of Jesus. But from before time, from the Garden of Eden to Christmas, from Christmas to the cross, and from the cross to Easter, God worked his plan in Jesus.

What does God’s plan mean for us? Just as he planned, just as he promised - you are forgiven in Jesus! All our good intentions that never made it anywhere - forgiven! All those good plans and promises we planned and promised and then plopped - forgiven! All those times we should have planned, but took the easy way out ... even all those times we left God’s people hurting because we took the easy way out - forgiven! But not just forgiven. In Jesus, in your baptism, baptized into

Jesus, God sees you with Jesus, covered with Jesus. God sees you like Jesus - working God's plan, living God's promise.

Yes, God sees you with Jesus. Not by chance, not by accident, and not by some good idea or plan of our own. God sees you with Jesus today, because God saw you with Jesus long before time began, long before you were born. Because God saw you with Jesus long before time began ... from long before you were born, God has been working his plan for you - here in this world, in your family tree, in good times and not so good times. From before you were born, God has been working your history to bring you into his history - right here, right now, right with Jesus.

You aren't here by accident; you aren't here by chance; you aren't here because you had a good idea or a good plan. If it were up to you and your plans, if it were up to me and my ideas, we would all be damned, damned as people who did not do what we should have done. But we are here, you are here because God has been working history, his story and your story, to connect your story to his story - so you can live in his Jesus promise - **“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”** Eternal life - back before time began, when God saw you with Jesus, he didn't just see you with Jesus here in this life. God saw you with Jesus in heaven living and enjoying life the way it's supposed to be. That's the plan God is working; that's the promise God is keeping.

God has been working that plan from before the creation of the world. He's been keeping his promise for nearly as long. Keeping his Jesus promise to Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Moses, David and Bathsheba, and countless more. At the same time, working his Jesus promise through Adam and Eve, through Abraham and Sarah, through Moses, through David and Bathsheba, and countless more. And now? Now God is keeping his promise, his Jesus promise to you and me. And he is working his Jesus promise through you and me.

That's right. God isn't just working his Jesus promise for us, God is working his Jesus promise through us. Through you to the family he gives you. Through you to the friends and neighbors he brings into your life. Through you, God is working to connect and reconnect people with Jesus. Through you, God is working to keep people connected with Jesus. Through you - God is including you in working his plan and keeping his promise so people you know and people you don't yet know - so you can see them like he sees them - alive with Jesus in heaven.

God's not winging it; he's not making it up as he goes along; he's not leaving it for someone else to deal with. He's not thinking: "Too much time, too much work to figure this out." He sees you as worth it; he sees keeping his promise to you as worth it; he sees working with you as worth it - worth his planning and worth his working.

That's why we plan and work our plan with Jesus. It's why we plan our weeks to be here with Jesus. It's why we plan our finances to work here with Jesus. It's why we plan our days to have time to listen and talk with Jesus. It's why we take the time to think, really think, about what we want to do with Jesus. Sure, some of our ideas will poof and be gone. And some of our plans will smash and crash. And some of our promises will break. But that doesn't stop us, because it's not stopping God. It's not stopping God from keeping his promise to us; it's not stopping God from working his promise through us. Why? He's a planner, and he's got a plan for you with Jesus! Amen.

THE SERVICE – SETTING 3

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... do we plan with God? Or around God? Or over God?

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we see how our God has planned for us since before the beginning of time. In view of his plans for us, how will we plan with him?

OPENING HYMN

“Christ is Our Cornerstone”

Hymn 914



1 Christ is our cor - ner - stone, on him a - lone we
2 Here may we gain from heav'n the grace which we im -
3 Oh, then, with hymns of praise these hal - lowed courts shall



build; with his true saints a - lone the courts of
plore, and may that grace, once giv'n, be with us
ring; our voic - es we will raise the Three in



heav'n are filled. On his great love our hopes we
ev - er - more un - til that day when all the
One to sing and thus pro - claim in joy - ful



place of pres - ent grace and joys a - bove.
blest to end - less rest are called a - way.
song, both loud and long, that glo - rious name.

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

CW 189

Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Blessed are they whose sin the Lord does not count against them.

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Almighty and merciful Father,

we have strayed from your ways like lost sheep.

We have followed what we have devised and desired in our hearts.

We have offended you and sinned against your holy law.

We have done those things that we should not have done,

and we have not done those things that we should have done.

Have mercy on us, Lord!

Spare us, forgive us, and restore us,

according to your promises in Christ Jesus.

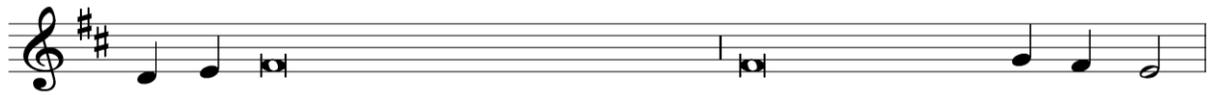
God, our merciful Father, has forgiven all our sins. He sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Redeemer and Savior. Jesus paid the penalty for our guilt by his death on the cross and freed us from death by his resurrection from the grave. We have peace with God now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD, HAVE MERCY

CW 190



In peace let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



For the peace from above and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the un - it - y of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their wor-ship and
 praise, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer-cy.**
 Help, save, comfort, and de-fend us, gra-cious Lord.
A - men. A - men.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

CW 191

Glo-ry to God in the high-est, glo-ry to
 God, and peace to his peo-ple on earth,
 and peace to his peo-ple on earth.
 Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al-might-y God and
 Fa-ther, we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we

praise you for your glo - ry. 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. For

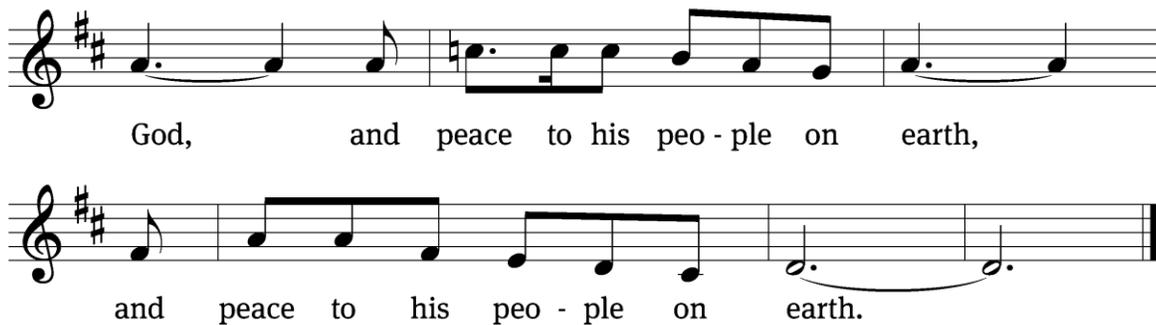
you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the

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. A - men.

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, glo - ry to



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty and everlasting God, before time, you chose us to be with you in time and for eternity. Before time, you planned how you would work your love for us, and then in time you fulfilled your plans. Work in us both the dedication to plan our time and the commitment to fulfill those plans - as you will - for your glory and the good of your people; through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING

Ephesians 1:3–14

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a

deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 111A



1 LORD, I must praise you when I stand in won-der at your
2 Noth-ing but good you give to those who fear you; ev-er
3 You sent your peo-ple long-de-sired sal-va-tion, mak-ing



might-y works and splen-dor. There is no oth-er God, no
near those who re-vere you. To you the hun-gry come for
us a bless-ed na-tion. You are the rock: on you our



one a-bove you, yet so close to those who love you.
dai-ly feed-ing, and the poor for jus-tice plead-ing.
hopes are found-ed; safe we dwell, by love sur-round-ed.



O Lord, have mer-cy! All your works de-clare your maj-es-ty
O Lord, have mer-cy! All your deeds are hon-est and sin-cere;
O Lord, have mer-cy! Make us wise to fol-low in your ways,



in an end-less grand dox-ol-o-gy; e-ven more would I praise
all your vows as true as they ap-pear. Per-fect love, rar-est kind,
and re-ceive our sac-ri-fice of praise. We are yours, yours to use



your com-pas-sion, love, and grace. O Lord, have mer-cy!
all I need in you I find. O Lord, have mer-cy!
for your dream as you may choose. O Lord, have mer-cy!

SECOND READING*James 4:13–17*

Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION*Proverbs 16:9*

Alleluia! In their hearts humans plan their course,
but the LORD establishes their steps. Alleluia!

GOSPEL*Mark 1:29–39*

As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”

Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

HYMN OF THE DAY

"What God Ordains is Always Good"

Hymn 844



1 What God or-dains is al - ways good: his will is just and
2 What God or-dains is al - ways good: he nev - er will de -
3 What God or-dains is al - ways good: though I the cup am
4 What God or-dains is al - ways good: this truth re - mains un -



ho - ly. As he di - rects my life for me, I fol - low
ceive me; he leads me in his right - eous way and nev - er
drink - ing which sa - vors now of bit - ter-ness, I take it
shak - en. Though sor - row, need, or death be mine, I shall not



meek and low - ly. My God in - deed in ev - 'ry need knows
will he leave me. I take con - tent what he has sent; his
with - out shrink - ing. For af - ter grief God grants re - lief, my
be for - sak - en. I fear no harm, for with his arm he



well how he will shield me; to him, then, I will yield me.
hand that sends me sad - ness will turn my tears to glad - ness.
heart with com - fort fill - ing and all my sor - row still - ing.
will em - brace and shield me; so to my God I yield me.

SERMON

Ephesians 1:3–14

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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became truly human.
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,
who in unity with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy Christian 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.

OFFERING PRAYER

"Take My Life and Let It Be"
Hymn 695 (vs. 1, 4 & 5)

Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days,
let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my silver and my gold,
not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect and use
ev'ry pow'r as thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it thine,
it shall be no longer mine;

take my heart, it is thine own,
it shall be thy royal throne.

Amen.

OFFERING

If you prefer to give online, the code at the right will take you to our Online Giving page. We invite our online givers to join in our offering with an "I Give Online" card in the pew racks.



PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M May this be a time, O Lord, for confession and repentance. Forgive us for the apathy that harms our faith and hinders our works. Forgive us for boasting of our past achievements and for blaming others for our present problems. Rid us of indifference to public worship and Bible study. Destroy the distrust that plagues us, and shatter every thought and word that harms the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

C **Create in us pure hearts, O God, and renew steadfast spirits within us.**

M Let this be a time, O Lord, when you renew us again by Word and sacrament, when you reform our hearts and minds, and when you restore to us the joy of fellowship and service. Grant to us in this age and in this place the courage of the apostles, the steadfastness of the reformers, and the dedication of those who have gone before us.

C **Create in us pure hearts, O God, and renew steadfast spirits within us.**

M Let this be a time, O Lord, when we recommit and reconsecrate ourselves to the ministry of the gospel. Let us find joy in our unity, zeal for our work, and success in our labor.

C **Create in us pure hearts, O God, and renew steadfast spirits within us.**

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Gluten-free wafers are available; ask Pastor.)



The Lord be with you.



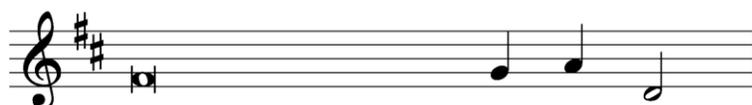
And al - so with you.



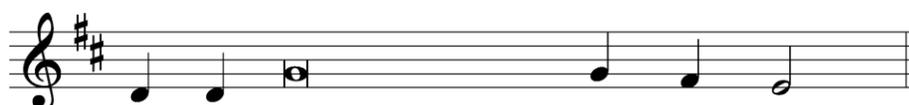
Lift up your hearts.



We lift them up to the Lord.



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

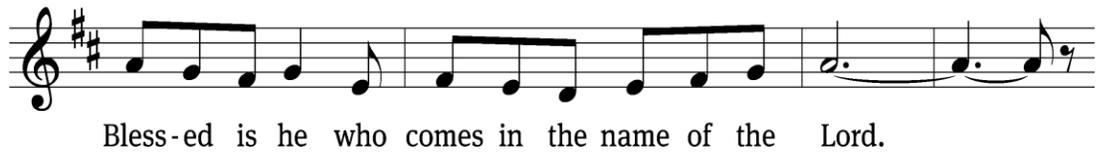


It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lived among us as a human being and revealed his glory as your only Son, full of grace and truth. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Holy, Holy, Holy

CW 200



WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **Amen.**

Lamb of God

CW 202



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, grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"I Leave all Things to God's Direction"

Hymn 799



1 I leave all things to God's di - rec - tion; he loves me
2 God knows what must be done to save me; his love for
3 God gives me help in all temp - ta - tion, his lov - ing
4 My God has all things in his keep - ing; he is my



both in joy and woe. His will is good, sure his af -
me will nev - er cease. Up - on his hands he did en -
goal my soul to save. Calm in the face of life's frus -
ev - er - faith - ful friend. He gives me laugh - ter af - ter

fec - tion; his ten - der love is true, I know. My for - tress
 grave me with pur - est gold of lov - ing grace. His will su -
 tra - tion, all earth - ly trou - ble I will brave. His will be
 weep - ing, and all his ways in bless - ings end. His love en -

and my rock is he: what pleas - es God, that pleas - es me.
 preme must ev - er be: what pleas - es God, that pleas - es me.
 done e - ter - nal - ly: what pleas - es God, that pleas - es me.
 dures e - ter - nal - ly: what pleas - es God, that pleas - es me.

CLOSING PRAYER

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

O God the Father, source of all goodness, in your loving-kindness you sent your Son to share our humanity. We thank you that through him you have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament. We also pray that you will not forsake us but will rule our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit so that we willingly serve you day after day; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

"Sent Forth by God's Blessing"

Hymn 932

1 Sent forth by God's bless - ing, our true faith con - fess - ing,
 2 With praise and thanks - giv - ing to God ev - er - liv - ing,

the peo - ple of God from his dwell - ing take leave.
the tasks of our ev - 'ry - day life we will face.

The sup - per is end - ed; O be now ex - tend - ed
Our faith ev - er shar - ing, in love ev - er car - ing,

the fruits of this ser - vice in all who be - lieve.
em - brac - ing his chil - dren of each tribe and race.

The seed of his teach - ing, re - cep - tive souls reach - ing,
One bread that has fed us, one light that has led us

shall blos - som in ac - tion for God and for all.
u - nite us as one in his life that we share.

His grace did in - vite us; his love shall u - nite us
Then may all the liv - ing with praise and thanks - giv - ing

to work for God's king - dom and an - swer his call.
give hon - or to Christ and his name that we bear.

Acknowledgments

Setting Three from Christian Worship

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