

♪ Alleluia amen ♪ ♪ Alleluia amen ♪ ♪ Let all with heart and voice ♪ ♪ Before His throne rejoice ♪ ♪ Praise in His gracious choice ♪ ♪ Alleluia amen ♪ (church organ playing) (church organ drowning singers) (church organ continues drowning singers)

- Beloved, the reason we are able to sing, in Christ, there is no east or west, is that the scriptures tell us, truly, God hath made of one blood, all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth. That is one of the scriptures on which we base this service today of worldwide communion. There are others. "I am the living bread," said Jesus, "Which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread which I showed give is for the life of the world. And it is my flesh." Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God. And he who loves is born of God and knows God. In this, the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only son into the world so that we might live through him. Christ our paschal lamb, is offered up for us, once for all. When He bore our sins on His body, upon the cross, for He is the very lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Wherefore, let us keep a joyful and holy feast with the Lord. Let us now sing a joyful and holy hymn of adoration. (soft church organ music) (singing indistinctly) (singing indistinctly) The vision of who and what our heavenly father is. The vision of who by contrast, we are, makes us aware of our sins and makes us uncomfortable in our sin. We therefore realize our need of confessing them before God. Let us join our hearts and our voices together in our general prayer of confession, let us pray. Almighty God, father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all men. We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we from time to time, most grievously have committed, by thought word and deed against thy divine majesty. We do earnestly repent and our heartily sorry for these are misdoings. The remembrance of them is grievous unto us. Have mercy upon us. Have mercy upon us most merciful father for thy son our Lord, Jesus Christ sake. Forgive us all that is past. And grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life to the honor and glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. In the first epistle of John, there are words which form a response to our prayer of confession. We ask the question, what happens when we confess our sins to God and ask His forgiveness? Here is the answer. If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. And he is the expiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. This is what we mean by the word, gospel, because that means good news. The choir is going to sing about that good news. (soft music) ♪ I got a crown up in a that kingdom ain't that good news ♪ ♪ Aint that good news ♪ ♪ I got a crown up in-a that kingdom ain't that good news ♪ ♪ Aint that good news ♪ ♪ I'm-a gonna lay down this world ♪ ♪ Gonna shoulder up-a my cross ♪ ♪ Gonna take it home-a to my Jesus ain't that good news ♪ ♪ I got a robe up in-a that kingdom ain't that good news ♪ ♪ Aint that good news ♪ ♪ I got a robe up in-a that kingdom ain't-a that good news ♪ ♪ I'm-a gonna lay down this world ♪ ♪ Gonna shoulder up-a my cross ♪ ♪ Gonna take it home-a to my Jesus ain't-a that good news ♪ ♪ Aint that good news ♪ ♪ I got a Savior in-a that kingdom ain't that good news ♪ ♪ Aint that good news ♪ ♪ I got a Savior in-a that kingdom ain't that good news ♪ ♪ Aint that good news ♪ ♪ I'm-a gonna lay down this world ♪ ♪ Gonna shoulder up-a my cross ♪ ♪ Gonna take it home-a to my Jesus ain't-a that good news ♪ ♪ Good news, good news ♪ ♪ Good news, good news ♪ ♪ Aint that good news, good news, good news ♪ ♪ Good news ♪ Let us again, hear the

good news as it is recorded first in the Acts of the Apostles 17:22, the beginning of Paul's sermon in Athens. "So Paul standing in the middle of the Areopagus said, 'Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way, you are very religious. But as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, to an unknown god, whom there for you worship as unknown, this, I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth does not live in shrines made by man, nor is he served by human hands as though he needed anything. Since he himself gives to all men, life and breath and everything. And he made of one blood, every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, that they should seek God in the hope that they might feel after him and find him. Yet, he's not far from each one of us. For in him, we live and move and have our being as even some of your own poets have said, "For we are indeed, his offspring."'" And then in Paul's letter to the Galatians 3 verses 27 and 28. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus." Amen and may God bless onto us the reading of his word. On the first Sunday of October, that is today, more Christians celebrate the Lord's supper than on any other Sunday in the year. Why? Because the first Sunday of October has been recognized and observed since 1938, as worldwide communion Sunday. It is acknowledged by Christians of all races, colors, and sex, in remembrance of Jesus, the Christ, the Lord of the church. The church Catholic ecumenical universal one. Let us examine this theoretical though unrealized harmony, by looking together at the word, blood. One of the two central symbols of the Lord's supper. In one important manuscript, Greek manuscript of the Acts verse 26 of chapter 17 reads, "And God hath made of one blood, all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth." That's one sentence from the sermon preached in Athens by Saint Paul. It was one of his toughest assignments because he had been asked to explain the unusual story of Jesus, of Nazareth, to a group of Epicurean and stoic philosophers, the intellectuals of his day. He took as his starting point an altar dedicated to an unknown god. He had seen it on an Athenian street and early in that sermon, he stated that all men share common blood. Now for a Jew, blood was life. The seat of life, the very stuff of life, sacred to God. When a covenant was ratified between the Israelites and their God, blood was the visible instrument in sealing the compact. God and the Israelites were, if you like kin by blood. I asked the hematologist at Duke, if there were any truth to a statement like Paul's and he guardedly said, "Yes, if it be accepted poetically." He knew that there were different blood types. Yet he granted that the idea of all men being of one blood was more true than false. But we all know that this interpretation of creation is unacceptable to many people. They don't want to be brothers to anyone of a different skin pigment. Maybe Paul recognized that for he made another approach to the matter of human oneness. He mentioned it in a letter to the Galatian church. "There's neither Jew nor Greek. There's neither slave nor free. There's neither male nor female. For you're all one in Christ Jesus." There's no differentiation because of nationality. There's no discrimination because of economic or civic status. There's no distinction because of sex. You all must think that Paul belonged to an elderly female liberation society. He couldn't quite live up to it though. That just proves he was a man, that's all. But notice the important words in the verse. The last three words, "In Christ Jesus," that is in the church. In the church. In the world, there were still differences because of race, past, sex, but in the church, there was equality of status before God, it was confirmed in baptism. It was confirmed in the Lord's supper, when a loaf of bread and a shared cup, recall the broken body and the spilled blood of the Lord. A celebration of the Lord's supper became for them almost a blood transfusion. Their common blood through creation was enriched by their remembrance and acceptance of the sacrificial blood of Jesus, the head of the church. And folk like us, who celebrate the

Lord's supper together, become blood brothers. We are kin in Christ Jesus. There should be nothing in the world, divisive enough to separate us from one another. Can we realize the fact about being at one with Christians all over the world, in Ireland and in Germany, in Palestine and in South Africa in India and in Vietnam, in Korea and in New Zealand. In Ghana and in Bolivia. Some bow down in Gothic structures like this, others worship in mission halls. Some are being (indistinct) from marble alters or wooden tables. Still others are receiving the bread and the wine from the back of a tank or the hood of a Jeep, some are in prison camps or in refugee camps, in military hospitals or on lonely outposts. And they, and we, are 20th century disciples of Jesus. Knowing that, believing that, committed to that, let us come to the table, spread for our benefit. Those who serve us in his name are of different races and places and even sex. But in this place, we are all of one blood, of his blood. Let us pray. Oh God, who in the common things of daily life, givest to us thy very self. Making of bread and wine the sacrament of thy sustaining presence, strengthen and refresh us that we may remember thee faithfully seek thee eagerly, find thee surely and serve thee joyfully. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (soft music) ♪ There is a balm in Gilead ♪ ♪ To make the wounded whole ♪ ♪ There is a balm in Gilead ♪ ♪ To heal the sin-sick soul ♪ ♪ There is a balm in Gilead ♪ ♪ To make the wounded whole ♪ ♪ There is a balm in Gilead ♪ ♪ To heal the sin-sick soul ♪ ♪ Sometimes I feel discouraged ♪ ♪ And think my work's in vain ♪ ♪ But then the Holy Spirit ♪ ♪ Revives my soul again ♪ ♪ There is a balm in Gilead ♪ ♪ To make the wounded whole ♪ ♪ There is a balm in Gilead ♪ ♪ To heal the sin-sick soul ♪ ♪ If you cannot sing like angels ♪ ♪ If you cannot preach like Paul ♪ ♪ You can tell the love of Jesus ♪ ♪ And say, He died for all ♪ ♪ There is a balm in Gilead ♪ ♪ To make the wounded whole ♪ ♪ There is a balm in Gilead ♪ ♪ To heal the sin-sick soul ♪ ♪ There is a balm in Gilead ♪ ♪ To make the wounded whole ♪ ♪ There is a balm in Gilead ♪ ♪ To heal the sin-sick soul ♪ (church organ playing) ♪ Praise God, from whom all blessings flow ♪ ♪ Praise Him, all creatures here below ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host ♪ ♪ Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ Almighty God, we all focus our attention here upon this altar, the symbol of thy presence here in this service and in our hearts, for the purpose of dedicating this money, which the congregation has given, for the purpose of dedicating these communion elements, which the congregation has prepared. And yet, oh God, the dedication of these things would be meaningless without the dedication of ourselves. And so we pray for the grace of thy Holy Spirit to make our own dedication meaningful along with the dedication of these elements and this money for thy glory and the good of Jesus Christ. Amen. Lift up your hearts.

- We lift them up unto the Lord.

- Let us give thanks unto the Lord.

- It is indeed right that we do. (church organ playing) (church organ drowning singers) Ye that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins and are in love and charity with your neighbors and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking from henceforth in his holy ways, draw near with faith and take this holy sacrament unto your comfort, meekly kneeling upon your knees. (soft music) (singers singing low) (singers indistinctly singing) (singers singing low) (singers continue singing low) (singers humming) The body of the Lord, Jesus Christ was broken for thee. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and be thankful. The blood of the Lord, Jesus Christ was shed for thee. Drink this in remembrance that Christ died for thee and be thankful in thy heart. (soft music) (soft music continues) (soft

music continues) (soft music continues) (soft music continues) (soft music continues) ♪ Let us praise God together on our knees ♪ ♪ On our knees ♪ ♪ Let us praise God together on our knees ♪ ♪ On our knees ♪ ♪ When I fall on my knees ♪ ♪ With my face to the rising sun ♪ ♪ O Lord ♪ ♪ Have mercy on me ♪ In spite of our sins and wickedness of the past, our Lord Jesus Christ has forgiven us and invited us to come to his table, which we have now done. And having feasted on the spiritual food of our Lord Jesus Christ in fellowship with one another. In a fellowship, which is of the blood and knows no race or nation. We do have very much to be thankful for, don't we? So may we unite our hearts and voices in our unison prayer of thanksgiving and dedication. Let us pray. Almighty and ever living God. We most heartedly thank thee that thou dost vouch (indistinct) to feed us who have duly received these holy mysteries with this fresh spiritual food, the most precious body of blood, thy son our savior, Jesus Christ. And dost assure us thereby of thy favor and goodness toward us. And that we are very members in corporate of the mystical body of thy son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people and are also heirs through hope of thy everlasting kingdom by the merits of his precious death and passion. And we humbly beseech thee oh, heavenly father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship. And here we offer and present unto thee oh Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice unto thee. Humbly beseeching thee that all we who are partakers of this holy communion may be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction through Jesus Christ, our Lord, by whom and with whom in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory be unto thee, O father almighty, world, without end. Amen. Let us stand and receive the benediction. Now may the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep our hearts and minds and the knowledge and love of God and his son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord. ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (bell ringing) (upbeat music) (footstep thuds)