

# We Gather Here to Worship

IRONWOOD, 10 10 8 8 14 10

Vicki Klima and Michael Joncas

Michael Joncas

**INTRO** *Strong march rhythm* ( $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 50$ )

Organ *mf*

4

**VERSE 1: All**

8 *mf*

1. We gath - er here to hip you, O God. We

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

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Full score and parts for Horn in F, 2 Trumpets in B $\flat$ , 2 Trombones and Timpani are available from the publisher, edition 20613-Z4. Please visit [ocp.org](http://ocp.org).

13

1. gath - er here to give you thanks and praise. \_\_\_\_\_ You call us from our

This system contains measures 13 through 17. It features a vocal line in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower two staves. The music is in a key with two flats and a 4/4 time signature. A large, bold, black watermark 'WORLD' is superimposed over the piano accompaniment.

18

1. scat - tered lives To u - ni - fy wh we di - vide. You crown with grace, you

This system contains measures 18 through 21. It features a vocal line in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower two staves. A large, bold, black watermark 'WORLD' is superimposed over the piano accompaniment.

22

1. crown with grace our hum - ble deeds and days. We gath - er here to wor - ship you, O

This system contains measures 22 through 25. It features a vocal line in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower two staves. A large, bold, black watermark 'WORLD' is superimposed over the piano accompaniment.

27

1. God. \_\_\_\_\_

*mf* *mf* *mf*

VERSE 2

*mf* (Assembly, women only *ad lib.*)

32

Alto

gath - er here to feed - up - on your

*mp* *mp*

37

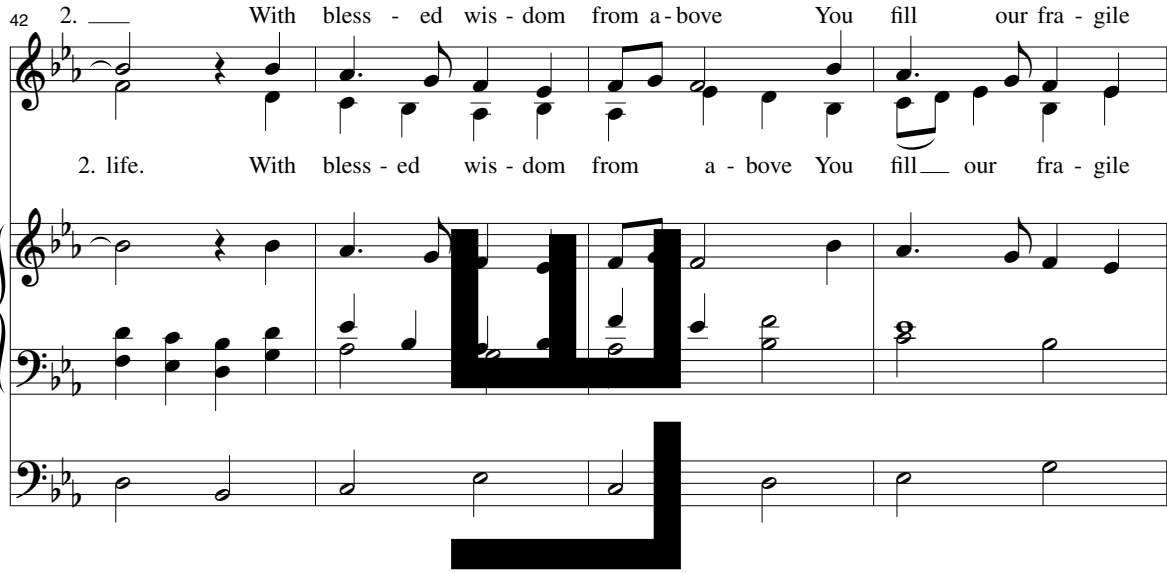
2. We gather here to learn your way of life. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Word. \_\_\_\_\_ We gather here to learn your way, your way of

*mf*

42 2. — With bless - ed wis - dom from a - bove You fill our fra - gile

2. life. With bless - ed wis - dom from a - bove You fill — our fra - gile



46 2. hearts with love. You

2. hearts — with love. You guid — ide our path through strug - gle and through



50 2. strife. We gath - er here feed up - your Word.



55

*mf*

**VERSE 3**  
(Assembly, men only *ad lib.*)

60 Tenor *mf*

Bass (Melody)

3. We gath - er here to \_\_\_\_\_ for those\_\_ in need. \_\_\_\_\_ We

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

3. place them, place them \_\_\_\_\_ your care: The hun - gry seek - ing

65

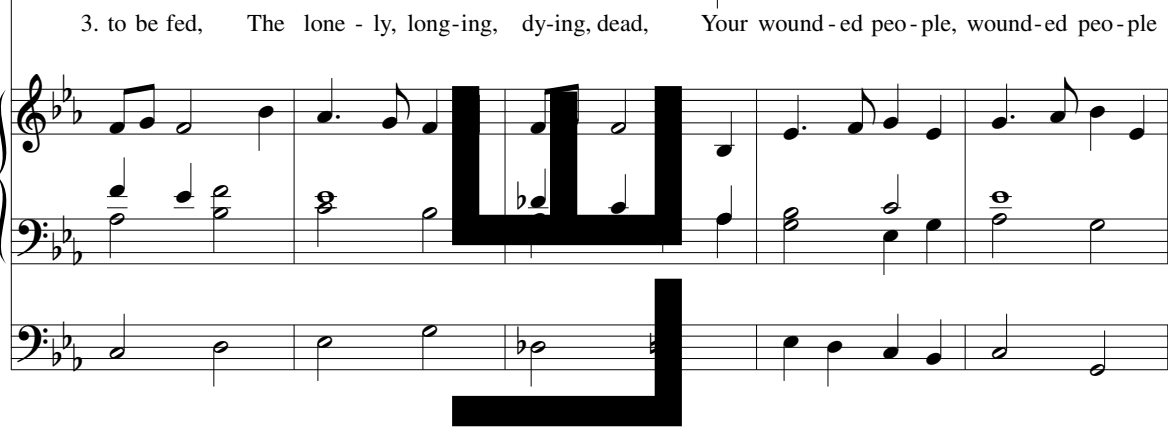
3. gath - er here to place them in your care: \_\_\_\_\_ The hun - gry seek - ing

*mp*

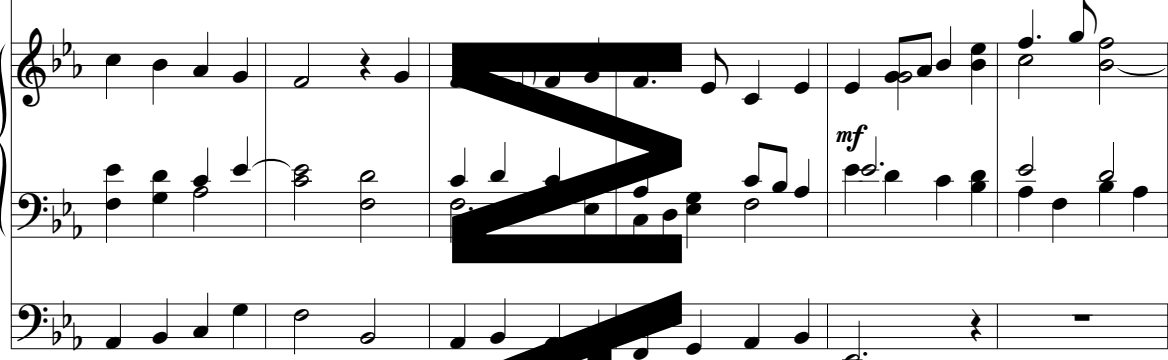
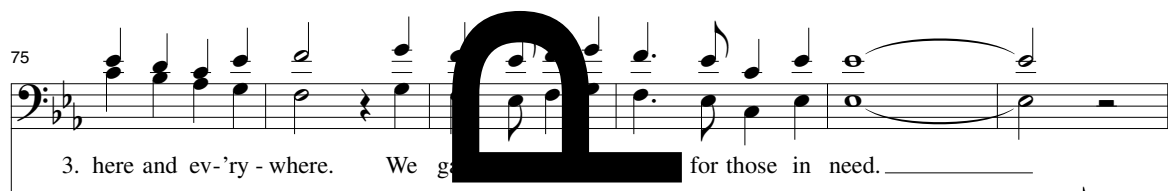
70 3. to be fed, The lone - ly, long-ing, dy - ing, dead, Your



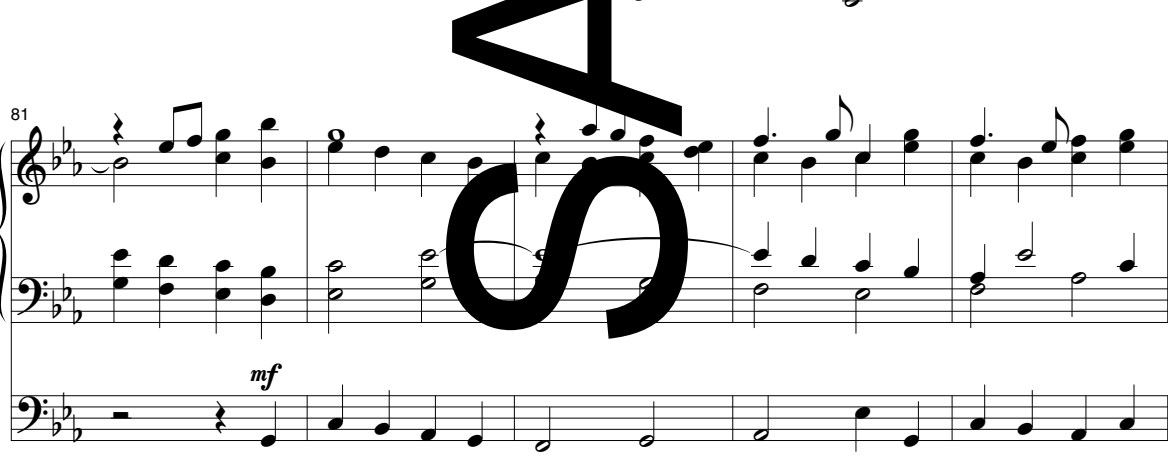
3. to be fed, The lone - ly, long-ing, dy-ing, dead, Your wound - ed peo - ple, wound - ed peo - ple



75 3. here and ev-'ry - where. We g for those in need.



81



VERSE 4: Choir alone, *ad lib.*

86 Descant *mp*  
4. We gath - er here to cel - e-brate, cel - e-brate. We

S/A (Melody) *mf*  
4. We gath - er here to cel - e-brate your feast. We

T *mp*  
B  
4. We gath - er here cel - e-brate, cel - e-brate. We

91  
4. gath - er at the ta - ble you have spread. As once, so

4. gath - er at the ta - ble you have spread. As once he did in

4. gath - er at the ta - ble you have spread. As once, so

96

4. now in mys - ter - y, Christ gives him -

4. his-to - ry, So now in do - ly mys - y, Christ gives him - self, Christ

100

4. self in sa - cred and bread. We gath - er here to

4. gives him - self in sa - cred ad. We gath - er here to

104

4. cel - e - brate your feast.

4. cel - e - brate your feast.

4. cel - e - brate your feast.

109

114

VERSE 5: All

S *f*

A

5. We gath-er here to wor - ship you, O

T/B (Melody) *f*

5. We gath - er here to O God. We

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

W  
E  
R  
S  
A  
S

119

5. God. We gath-er here to wor-ship and a - dore The

5. gath - er here to wor - ship and a - dore The Source of all in

124

5. Source, the Son, the The Spir - it

5. time and space, The Son who joins the hu - man race, The Spir - it with them

128

5. with them both for - ev - er - more. We gath - er here to

5. both for - ev - er - more, for ev - er - more We gath - er here to

132

5. wor - ship, wor - ship you, O God. We

5. wor - ship you, O God. *div.*

135

5. gath - er here to wor - ship you, O God.

The musical score consists of five staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The second staff is a vocal line in bass clef. The third and fourth staves are piano accompaniment, with the third staff in treble clef and the fourth in bass clef. The fifth staff is a bass line in bass clef. The lyrics are placed below the vocal staves. The word 'SAMPLE' is written vertically in large, bold, black letters across the center of the page, overlapping the piano accompaniment staves.

\*Cue notes are Assembly melody.

**SAMPLE**

## Composer Notes

**Circumstances of Composition:** In March 2007 I asked my friend Vicki Klima to craft a general processional hymn text for use as part of the Introductory Rites at Mass. (Vicki and I had collaborated in the 1980s on some hymn texts for the Liturgy of the Hours, but our responsibilities in other areas – she, directing the Office of Worship for the Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis, MN, and I, concluding graduate school and beginning full-time university teaching – kept us from further sharing in generating liturgical music.) Her initial drafts triggered both a structure and a tune in my mind and we spent about three weeks passing ideas and proposals back and forth until we settled on the version published here. We believe that the text we crafted together is better than what either one of us could have done on our own.

**Textual Issues:** Since “We Gather Here to Worship” is a general processional hymn intended for use at Mass, there is a clear progress of thought in the verses, none of which can be omitted to preserve the integrity of the piece. In fact, Vicki and I hope that it could also serve catechetical and mystagogical purposes, outlining the place of the Eucharist in the deep structure of the Christian community’s eucharist. Notice that although the text highlights the community’s service, it does so in the context of direct address to God. The hymn is intended as a communal act of prayer.

Verse One explores the purpose of the Eucharistic Introductory Rites. Although Christians may gather for a variety of reasons, including love of fellowship, obedience to Christ’s command, desire for instruction, delight in beauty, etc., the fundamental reason we gather at Eucharist is to worship the living God. Indeed the dialogue that begins the Eucharistic Prayer reminds us that “it is right to give God thanks and praise” (a truth that remains even though the translation of the underlying text may change). As the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* states, the purpose of the Introductory Rites is “to ensure that the faithful who come together as one establish communion and dispose themselves to listen properly to God’s word and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily” (art. 46). Finally Verse One alludes to the teaching of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that the entire sacramental order arises from the blessings bestowed by God upon creation.

Verse Two focuses on the Liturgy of the Word, where God addresses the Christian assembly through the words of sacred scripture and the people and the community in turn responds to God’s Word in acclamation and prayer. The idea of feeding upon God’s Word not only evokes biblical imagery (John 6), but GIRM teaches that the faithful are “nourished” by this portion of the Eucharistic liturgy (art. 55) at the “table of God’s Word” (art. 57). Whether hearing God’s good news for the first time (evangelization), learning its implications for Christian conduct and belief (catechesis) or plumbing the depths of experiencing God’s Being and Will (mystagogy), members of the assembly apprentice themselves to Holy Wisdom (Hokmah, Sophia) who will teach them God’s sure paths in contrast to the circuitous wandering that may lead them into dead ends.

Verse Three highlights the response of the Christian assembly to God’s Word proclaimed and preached. “Exercising the office of their baptismal priesthood” (GIRM art. 69), Christians pray for the salvation of all, commending to God’s provident care the earthly well-being and eternal happiness of every human being. The very structure of the Prayer of the Faithful, calling for prayer “for the needs of the Church; for public authorities and for the salvation of the whole world, [and] for those burdened by any kind of difficulty” before prayers are offered for the local community (GIRM art. 70), encourages an expansive understanding of the role of the Church vis-à-vis the world.

Verse Four examines the Liturgy of the Lord's Table. Recognizing that it is God who, in Christ and through the power of his Spirit, acts as host of this paschal banquet, the Christian assembly experiences the deep connections between what was done at the Last Supper ("history") and what is done in the liturgy ("mystery"). Rather than positing a division between Eucharist as sacrifice and Eucharist as banquet, here the community discovers the Real Presence of the Crucified-and-Risen-One in a sacrificial meal, in bread and wine taken up, consecrated, broken and poured out, and shared.

Finally Verse Five comes full circle explicitly declaring that the God we come to worship is Triune. Note that God the Father is lauded as creator and sustainer of all contingent beings, God the Son praised for "joining the human race", both in the mystery of the Incarnation taking on our human nature and in the sense in which he acts at the unification of humanity, and God the Holy Spirit is blessed as the divine gift by which the Father's blessings and the Son's redemptive work are appropriated by believers.

**Musical Issues:** "We Gather Here to Worship" employs a straightforward and vigorous hymn tune that we have named IRONWOOD. Note that the assembly may sing all five verses in unison, but for variety of sonority the entire assembly might sing verses one and five, the women might sing verse two, the men verse three, and the choir alone verse four. Note as well that though the text of the hymn might be represented metrically as 10.8.8.10.10., the hymn tune is 10.10.8.8.14 [= 8 + 6].10. Certain elements of the fifth line are repeated when this hymn tune is applied to it, but given the grammatical difference in the verse the amount and place of the repetition changes from verse to verse.

**Performance Issues:** As noted above "We Gather Here to Worship" is explicitly intended as a general processional hymn for the beginning of the Introductory Rites at Mass and would be inappropriate at other times in the liturgy or indeed for use at other liturgies (such as Baptism of Infants outside of Mass or the Liturgy of the Hours). It could, however, be used when other liturgies are placed in the context of Mass (e.g., Baptism of Infants during Mass, Confirmation, Ordinations, Matrimony). It could also be used during catechetical sessions to explore the deep structure and purposes of the various elements of the Mass.

—Michael Joncas

W  
E  
G  
A  
T  
H  
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W  
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P

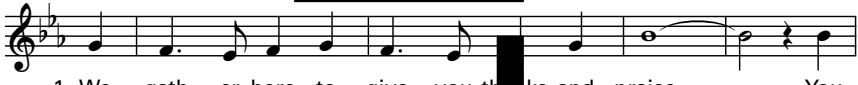
# Assembly Edition

**WE GATHER HERE TO WORSHIP**

Michael Joncas



1. We gath - er here to wor - ship you, O God.
2. We gath - er here to feed up on your Word.
3. We gath - er here to pray for those in need.
4. We gath - er here to cel - ebrate your feast.
5. We gath - er here to wor - ship you, O God.



1. We gath - er here to give you thanks and praise. You
2. We gath - er here to learn your way of life. With
3. We gath - er here to place them in your care: The
4. We gath - er at the table you have spread. As
5. We gath - er here to wor - ship and a - dore The



1. call us from our scattered lives To u - ni - fy what we di - vide.
2. bless - ed wis - dom from a - bove You fill our fra - gile hearts with love.
3. hun - gry seek - ing to be fed The lone - ly, long - ing, dy - ing, dead,
4. once he did in heav - en in ho - ly mys - ter - y,
5. Source of all in time and space, The Son who joins the hu - man race,



1. You crown with grace, you crown with grace our hum - ble deeds and
2. You guide our path, you guide our path through strug - gle and through
3. Your wound - ed peo - ple, wound - ed peo - ple here and ev - 'ry -
4. Christ gives him - self, Christ gives him - self in sac - red wine and
5. The Spir - it with the Son for - ev - er - more, for - ev - er -



1. days. We gath - er here to wor - ship you, O God.
2. strife. We gath - er here to feed up on your Word.
3. where. We gath - er here to pray for those in need.
4. bread. We gath - er here to cel - ebrate your feast.
5. more. We gath - er here to wor - ship you, O God.

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