

# God Is Love

Based on 1 John 4:16b and *Ubi Caritas*

Michael Joncas

**INTRO** *At a walking pace* (♩ = ca. 100)

Organ *mp legato*

**REFRAIN: All**

<sup>5</sup> *mf*

God is love, and all who live in love a - bide in God, and

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\*Cue notes optional for soprano and tenor voices.

An accompaniment for piano, compatible with these choral parts, is available online (ed. #79441-Z1) at [ocp.org](http://ocp.org).

11

God a - bides in them. God is love, and all who live in

16

love a - bide in God, and God a - bides in them.

21

*p*

(no Ped.)

## VERSE 1

25 *mp*  
Soprano  
Alto

1. The love of Christ \_\_\_\_\_ has gath - ered us as one: In

29

1. him let us re - joice; (re-joyce;) in him let us be glad.

33

1. Let us re - vere \_\_\_\_\_ and love the liv - ing God. With

37

now let us love sin - cere - ly.

1. heart and mind and soul now let us love sin - cere - ly, love sin - cere - ly.

## REFRAIN: All

41 *mf*  
*unis.*

God is love, and all who live in love a - bide in God, and  
God is love, and all who live, who live in love a - bide, a - bide in God, and

Tenor

Bass *unis.*  
*mf*

*mf*

(Ped.)

47

God a - bides in them. God is love, and all who live in  
God a - bides in them. God is love, and all who live, who

52

love a - bide in God, and God a - bides in them.  
live in love a - bide, a - bide in God, and God a - bides in them.

57

*p*  
(no Ped.)

**VERSE 2**

61

*mp*  
Tenor  
2. There-fore, as now we gath - er in - to one, let

*mp*  
Bass  
2. There-fore, as now we gath - er in - to one, let

*mp*

65

2. dis - cord find no place, nor ha - tred rule our hearts. —

2. dis - cord find no place, nor ha - tred rule our hearts.

69

2. Let e - vil deeds and bit - ter words now cease, that

2. Let e - vil deeds and bit - ter words now cease, that

73

2. Christ stay in our midst and dwell with us for - ev - er.

2. Christ stay in our midst and dwell with us for - ev - er.

## REFRAIN

77 S *mf*  
 God is love, and all who live in love a - bide in God, and

A *mf*  
 God is love, and all who live in love a - bide, a - bide in God, and  
 God is love, and all who live in love a - bide in God, and

T *mf*  
 B  
 God is love, and all who live in love a - bide in God, a - bide, and

*mf*  
 (Ped.)

83  
 God a - bides in them. God is love, and all who live in

God a - bides, a - bides in them. God is love, and all who  
 God a - bides in them.

God a - bides in them. God is love, and all who live in

88

love a - bide in God, and God a - bides in them.

live in love a - bide in God, a - bide, and God a - bides in them.  
God, and God a - bides in them.

love a - bide in God, a - bide, and God a - bides in them.

93

*p*

(no Ped.)



VERSE 3: *a cappella*

97 <sup>S</sup> *mf*

3. Then with the saints let us be - hold your

(Melody) <sup>A</sup> *mf*

3. Then with the saints let us be - hold your face, a -

<sup>T</sup> *mf*

3. Then with the saints let us be - hold, be - hold your

<sup>B</sup> *mf*

3. Then with the — saints let us be - hold your

101

3. face, O Christ, a - light with glo - ry, glo - ry, broth - er and our

3. light with glo - ry, Christ, our broth - er and our God.

3. face, O Christ, a - light with glo - ry, glo - ry, broth - er and our

3. face, O Christ, a - light with glo - ry, glo - ry, broth - er and our

\*Accompaniment in cue notes is optional; *a cappella* preferred until the final two measures of this verse.

105

3. God. And may this joy, un - bound - ed and im -

3. And may this joy, un - bound - ed and im - mense, ful -

3. God. And may this joy, this joy, un - bound - ed and im -

3. God. And may this — joy, un - bound - ed and im -

109

3. mense, ful - fill de - sire through a - ges with - out end - ing.

3. fill our hearts' de - sire through a - ges with - out end - ing.

3. mense, ful - fill de - sire through a - ges with - out end - ing.

3. mense, ful - fill de - sire through a - ges with - out end - ing.

*mf*

## FINAL REFRAIN

113 S *f* God, God is love,  
 A God is love, and all who live, who live in love a -  
 T God is love, and all who live in love a -

B *f* (Melody) *unis.*

*f*

(Ped.)

117 bide, a - bide in God, and God a - bides in them.  
 bide in God, and God a - bides in them.

121

God is love, and all who live, who live in love a -  
God is love, and all who live in love a -

125

bide, a - bide in God, and God a - bides in them.  
bide in God, and God a - bides in them.

129

*p*

## Composer's Notes

*Circumstances of Composition:* The initial years of Benedict XVI's pontificate have been marked by two extraordinary documents: "Deus Caritas Est," his first encyclical letter issued 25 December 2005, and "Sacramentum Caritatis," an apostolic exhortation on the sacrament of the Eucharist in the life and mission of the Church issued 22 February 2007. These texts highlight the centrality of charity (agape) in Christian life and find a privileged source and impetus of charity in the celebration of the Eucharist. Inspired by Benedict's writings on the topic, I wanted to craft a Communion Processional that would have an extended but easily memorizable Refrain that community members could sing as they moved to receive holy communion but that also had substantial verses that would highlight the gift and challenge of the mystery of the eucharist for Christian believers. "God Is Love" was written 5-7 May 2007, as I was completing my semester's teaching at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.

*Textual Issues:* "God Is Love" yokes 1 John 4:16b as the Refrain with my translation of the Latin hymn "Ubi Caritas" for the verses. The Refrain emphasizes the Johannine literature's theme of agape as distinctively divine love manifested in the person, life and deeds of Jesus the Christ, poured out into those who believe in him equipping them to live and act as he does. One of the truly surprising proclamations in 1 John occurs at 4:11. The verse begins "Beloved, if God so loved us," leading the reader to expect the resolution "we ought so to love God", but in fact the sacred author writes "we ought also to love one another." This insight beautifully resonates in the text of the Latin hymn "Ubi Caritas", appointed to be sung during the Washing of the Feet at the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday in the Roman Rite. Since there is some dispute over the text of its refrain: "Ubi caritas est vera, /et amor, Deus ibi est" (Where love is true, /Where charity and love are, there is God), I decided simply to write a metrical paraphrase of the verses, presented here in Latin with a literal translation for comparison:

Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.

*Christ's love gathers us into one.*

Exultemus, et in ipso iucundemur.

*Let us exult and let us be glad in him.*

Timeamus, et amemus Deum vivum.

*Let us fear and let us love the living God.*

Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.

*And from the heart may we love sincerely.*

Simul ergo cum in unum congregamur:

*Therefore just as when we are gathered into one*

Ne nos mente dividamur, caveamus.

*Let us fear lest we be divided in thought-and-values.*

Cessent iurgia maligna, cessent lites.

*Let evil impulse cease, let controversy cease*

Et in medio nostri sit Christus Deus.

*And may Christ [our] God be in the midst of us.*

Simul quoque cum beatis videamus,  
*Indeed just as with the blessed may we see*  
 Glorianter vultum tuum, Christe Deus:  
*Your countenance gloriously [radiant], O Christ our God:*  
 Gaudium quod est immensum, atque probum,  
*Which is an immense and proper joy*  
 Saecula per infinita saeculorum.  
*Through the infinite ages of the ages.*

*Musical Issues:* I have written “God Is Love” in a variety of arrangements to make it as useful as possible for varied worshipping assemblies. It may be accompanied by either organ or piano. The full/recording score is arranged for flute, oboe, B $\flat$  clarinet, horn in F, string quintet and harp. The piece may be sung in unison with a simple alternation of assembly singing on the refrain and cantor(s) or choir singing on the verses. In musically sophisticated communities, the assembly could also be invited to sing the verses. Musical interest can also be heightened by employing one or more of the vocal versions of the Refrain (SA in unison on the melody + TB in unison with a counter-melody; SATB with melody in the S line; TB in unison singing the melody + SA in harmony singing a quasi-descant) as well as the varied vocal versions of the verses. Note that if the assembly is invited to sing on the verses in more complex arrangements, the first verse should be sung by the women of the assembly, the second by the men, and the third by the entire assembly. Finally, it is possible to sing the entire composition remaining in one key, but I find that raising the key a tone for the final verse heightens musical interest.

*Performance Issues:* Since this setting is intended as a Communion Processional at Mass, it is important that the pace be flowing but not too fast, that the meter remain almost metronomic to support the assembly’s entrances on the refrain, and that the volume never become overwhelming. The piece should begin as the priest receives communion (cf. the General Instruction of the Roman Missal) and continue as long as there is motion associated with the reception of the consecrated elements. Outside of Mass, it might also be sung as a Gathering Song for other liturgical (Penance, Benediction) and para-liturgical (parish meetings) services. It could also be sung during the Washing of the Feet on Holy Thursday.

—Michael Joncas

## Assembly Edition

### GOD IS LOVE

Michael Joncas

**Refrain**




God is love, and all who live in love a-bide in God, and



God a-bides in them.      God a-bides in them.

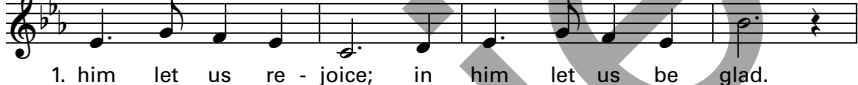
**Verses**



1. The love of Christ has gath - ered us as one: In




2. There - fore, as now we gath - er in - to one, let



3. Then with the saints let us be - hold your face, a -



1. him let us re - jice; in him let us be glad.



2. dis - cord find no place, nor ha - tred rule our hearts.



3. light with glo - ry, Christ, our broth - er and our God.



1. Let us re - vere and love the liv - ing God. With



2. Let e - vil deeds and bit - ter words now cease, that




3. And may this joy, un - bound - ed and im - mense, ful -

to Refrain



1. heart and mind and soul now let us love sin - cere - ly.



2. Christ stay in our midst and dwell with us for - ev - er.



3. fill our hearts' de - sire through a - ges with - out end - ing.

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