

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

⁵ *mf*

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

mf

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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.

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-joices) in him let us be glad.

33

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

37

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.)

W
L
R

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

N
A
S

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

Tenor *mp*

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

Bass *mp*

2. There-fore, as now 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.

This system contains measures 65 through 68. It features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. A large, stylized watermark 'WORLDWIDE' is overlaid on the score.

69

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

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

This system contains measures 69 through 72. It features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. A large, stylized watermark 'WORLDWIDE' is overlaid on the score.

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.

This system contains measures 73 through 76. It features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. A large, stylized watermark 'WORLDWIDE' is overlaid on the score.

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

SAMPLES

VERSE 3: *a cappella*

97 **S** *mf*
 3. Then with the saints let us be - hold your

(Melody) **A** *mf*
 3. Then with the saints let us be - hold your face, a -

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

B *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, O Christ, a - light with glo - ry, glo - ry, 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 un - bound - ed and im -

109

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

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

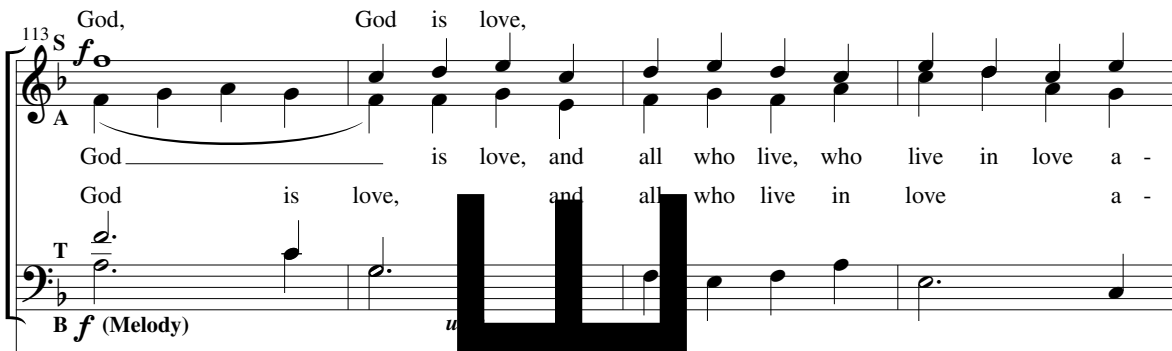
3. mense, ful - fill de - sire gh with - out end - ing.

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

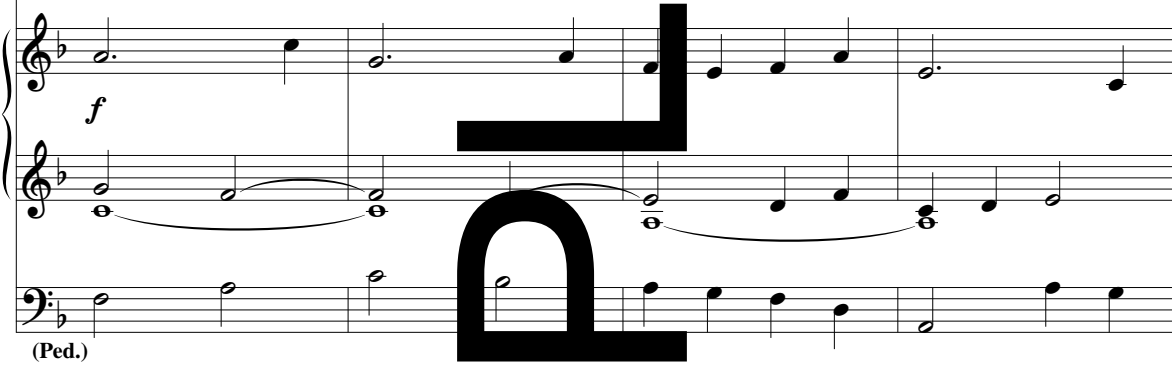
mf

FINAL REFRAIN

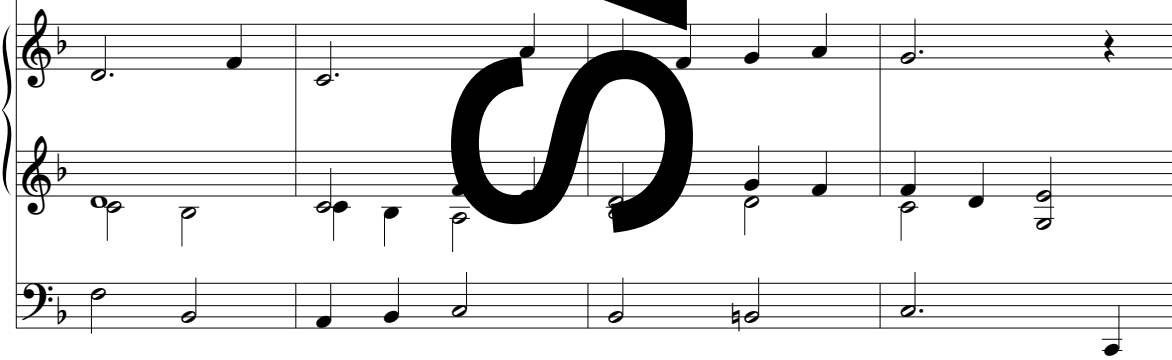
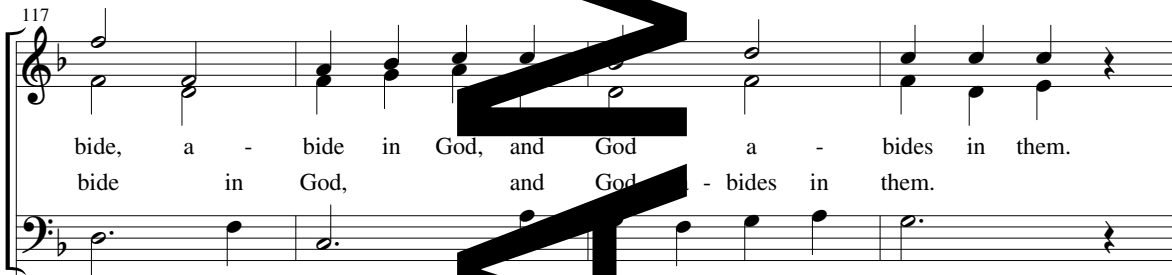
113 S *f* God, God is love,
A God is love, and all who live, who live in love a -
T God is love, and all who live in love a -
B *f* (Melody) *u*



f
(Ped.)



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

W

125

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

N

129

p

W
N
A
S

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 Benedict'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 words 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, let us beware.

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♭ 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 abide in God, and
 God abides in them. God abides in them.

Verses

1. The love of God has gathered us as one: In
 2. Therefore, as now we gather into one, let
 3. Then with the saints let us behold your face, a -

1. him let us rejoice; in him let us be glad.
 2. discord find no place, for his hatred rule our hearts.
 3. light with glory, for he is light and our God.

1. Let us reverence and love the living God. With
 2. Let evil deeds and bitter words now cease, that
 3. And may this joy, unbounded and immense, ful -

to Refrain

1. heart and mind and strength give us love sincerely.
 2. Christ stay in our midst and dwell with us forever.
 3. fill our hearts' desire through ages without ending.

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