

A Great Thanksgiving
by Marcia McFee (www.marciamcfee.com)
"Come to the Table of Grace" © 2008 by Barbara Hamm
Worship & Song #3168

Note: the congregation does not have any paper in their hands, their parts are prompted by the Liturgist as written.

[sung in a swing style]
**Come to the table of grace,
Come to the table of grace.
This is God's table, it's not yours or mine.
Come to the table of grace.**
(maybe 2X until table is set and people are gathered)

Presider: Friends, God is ever present with you!

Liturgist: And the people say, "And also with you!"

People: "And also with you!"

Presider: Turn to the people around you and tell them this news: "The peace of Christ is always with you!"

People: "The peace of Christ is always with you!" *[pass the Peace]*

**Come to the table of peace,
Come to the table of peace.
This is God's table, it's not yours or mine.
Come to the table of peace.**

Liturgist: Listen! *(pause)* The body breathes in together... and out. As close as breath, the Holy is present with us. *(pause)* So we lift up our hearts. And the family says, "We lift them up to God."

People: "We lift them up to God!"

Presider: Let us give thanks to the Holy Living One because it is the right thing to do, not only now, but always, for "always" is when God is with us.

Liturgist: I invite you to open both palms upward in the sign language for "give."

Presider: *(as the motion is done)* ... We thank you, Creator God, that you formed us in your image.

Liturgist: Now place your hands together in the sign meaning "to be with."

Presider: *(as the motion is done)*... We thank you, Sustainer God, that you are here with us.

Liturgist: Bring your hands close to your face, in the sign for “prayer.” Close your eyes and become aware of your breath on your hands... *(pause)*

Presider: *(as the motion is done)*... We thank you God for breathing into us the breath of life. Even when we have turned away, you have remained with us, close as breath. When we have been frightened, hesitant, still you are patient. You have time and again reached out your hand to free us, for your promise is steadfast.

Liturgist:

And so, we open our eyes, our hands and our hearts to your will for us as told to us through your prophets. We join our voices together praising you along with all who do, have ever done so and ever will do so, repeating:

Holy, Holy, Holy God! (the people repeat)
Everywhere we see your Glory! (repeat)
Hosanna in the highest! (repeat)
... and the widest... (repeat)
... and the deepest... (repeat)
... core of our being. (repeat, pause)

Presider:

[piano begins to underscore softly, slowly]

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God. Blessed is your Son who came to preach the good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people.

Liturgist:

Listen people! *(pause)*

The Lord is with you.

He healed the sick, fed the hungry...

and sat down at the table and ate with especially those others considered

“unworthy” *(pause)*.

Let us remind ourselves by saying "The Lord is present with every one of us."

People: "The Lord is present with every one of us."

[sung more meditatively]

Come to the table of love,

Come to the table of love.

This is God's table, it's not yours or mine.

Come to the table of love.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:
“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Drink from this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.”

**Come to the table of love,
Come to the table of love.
This is God’s table, it’s not yours or mine.
Come to the table of love.**

Liturgist:

Let us be a community of messengers, proclaiming and reminding each other and creation that: **"Christ has died (repeat), Christ is risen (repeat), Christ will come again (repeat)."** I invite you to raise your hands in the ancient Christian posture of prayer.

Presider:

[piano underscores]

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Let them be for us the body and blood of Christ so that we may be for the world the body of Christ, liberated by his witness, passion and life. Be with us, Holy Spirit, fill us so you can move through us.

Liturgist:

I invite you to make a point of connection with those around you by laying a hand on a shoulder, holding hands, whatever is most comfortable for you.

[piano builds, getting ready for last verse...]

Presider:

By your spirit we are one with Christ, the host of this table,
and one with each other. Let this joy be seen in us outside of this place. It is with
great thanks that all God's people say, "**Amen!**"

[sung with joy, swing style]

**Come to the table of joy,
Come to the table of joy.
This is God's table, it's not yours or mine.
Come to the table of joy.**