

Texts for 2021 Tune Contest

(contestants set one of these six texts)

We Gather Here in Christ Set Free

We gather here in Christ set free
to worship with one heart.
Come, have no fear, for you will see
you're welcome as you are.

Refrain

We gather here through love divine
that welcomes one and all.
We go to live by God's design
and follow Jesus' call.

Here in this place each child is free
to move and sing and shout.
We offer space to laugh and grieve,
to question and to doubt.

Refrain

Here there is grace for every need,
for God is all around.
Diverse in race, in life, in creed,
our gifts of love abound.

Refrain

We do not cease our work of praise
when time has come to leave.
We seek the Spirit all our days
to live what we believe.

Refrain

Words: Ruth Duck

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Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit

"Blessed are the poor in spirit:
heaven shall be yours," Christ said,
"Blessed are the ones who sorrow;
you will soon be comforted.
Blessed are the meek and humble;
you will soon possess the earth.
Blest are those who thirst and hunger
after truth and righteousness.

"Blessed are the ones whose mercy
helps the poor, those in distress;
one day they'll be brimming over
with the love that they confess,"
Jesus spoke again and told them,
"Blessed are the pure in heart;
my word fills the soul and cleans it;
it will stay and not depart."

Jesus blessed the brave peacemakers,
who have labored long for peace:
"They will all be called God's children,
for their struggles never cease."
Jesus blessed those persecuted
for the sake of righteousness:
"Theirs will be the joy of heaven,
though they suffer great distress."

In his words they heard the heavens
high above be opened wide,
as he blessed the poor and needy
sit-ting on the mountainside.
Je-sus' words will last forever—
this he proved upon the cross,
when he beat the pow'r of evil,
bringing blessings down on us.

Words: Gracia Grindal

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Creation, Like a Prism Shines

Commissioned by the AGO Chapter of Nashville

Creation, like a prism, shines
its source, Eternal Light.
Each color, every shimm'ring ray
reflects a glory bright.

Each age and gender, race and creed,
each nation large or small,
reveals the radiant Holy One,
the God who made us all.

How can we offer fitting thanks
for life received, unearned?
By shining forth and passing on
the love that we have learned.

Let beams from glorious sun be joined,
a symphony of rays.
Let children born of Light unite
in rainbow-splendid praise.

Optional 5th stanza:

We, children all of Abraham,
are Muslim, Christian, Jew.
Shalom, salaam, with you be peace,
and also, friend, with you. *

**Singers may repeat the last two lines while turning
to a neighbor to exchange a handshake of peace.*

Words: Delores Dufner, OSB
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So Often, Spurred by Guilt or Shame

So often, spurred by guilt or shame,
but captive to our point of view,
we say, "The poor will rob you blind.
It's who they are. It's what they do."

In life there are two kinds of theft;
the first results from poverty,
when someone takes a can of corn
to lighten hunger's misery.

The second kind debilitates.
It is no petty larceny,
for it denies a human's worth.
it is the theft of dignity.

What makes us judge the way we do,
intent on sorting "us" from "them,"
convinced that they are broken glass
and we the flawless sparkling gem?

O God, rebuke the arid pride
that makes us shun your loving cup.
Remind us of the timeless truth:
what we push down you will raise up.

Words: John Thornburg
Words © 2011 John Thornburg

With Open Arms Christ Welcomes You

With open arms Christ welcomes you,
rejoicing you are here.
Compassion moves his heart to view
and count each person dear.
When all of us together share
Christ's presence, love and grace
through bread and wine and song and prayer
we're held in his embrace.

Drawn close by you, O Lord, we find
our hearts are not content
until your love has realigned
our lives with your intent.
Equip us then to use the gifts
your gift of love has freed.
Help us embody hope that lifts
the weight of human need.

As your apostles send us out
with joyful faith that sings:
God's grace will break through fear and doubt
to do astounding things!

Empower us with wind and fire
to fill the hopes you've stirred,
and if our strength and courage tire,
renew us with your Word.

Embraced by Christ, equipped to care,
empowered by the blaze
your Spirit sets aflame with prayer,
our lives will give you praise.
We'll beckon others to your light
by what we say and do,
and pray to wake in them the sight
that opens hearts to you.

Words: Thomas H. Troeger
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You Value Each Of Us The Same

You value each of us the same,
so to this broken world you came
to change a heart, to change a name,
to bring your love.
You walked as one of us to save,
you wept with friends beside the grave,
you felt the lash, yet you forgave
to show your love.

So many killed by hate and fear,
call from the ground to help us hear
the raging witness that may clear
the path to love.
In you the nameless dead are found,
to you our angry voices sound.
Speak from the sky, speak from the ground,
move us to love.

You value each of us the same,
so you endured the cross of shame
to give to all your holy name,
the name of love.
O God of love, dear Christ of pain,
and Spirit, breath, let us again

begin to build on earth your reign,
your reign of love.

Words: Daniel Charles Damon

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