

Lovefeast and *Singstunde*

The lovefeast (sometimes, love feast) and *Singstunde* are Moravian practices in which congregational hymnsinging is a major constituent.

The lovefeast is a meal in the spirit of the *agape* described in the New Testament. Nicholas Ludwig, Count von Zinzendorf, who provided refuge to the Moravians (*Unitas Fratrum*) on his estate in Saxony, began the practice in the community called Herrnhut of this sharing of hymnsinging, prayer, food, and drink in 1727. The meal is not consecrated and is not a sacrament, eucharist, or memorial but a celebration of Christian community. It welcomes, rather than divides, those who gather. Its main element is congregational singing, and the foods shared are simple and easily distributed by servers to participants as they remain seated—often as singing continues.

The *Singstunde* (singing hour or singing lesson) consists almost entirely of congregational song. A leader selects stanzas from many hymns, ordering them around a common theme, which may be the Moravian Daily Text (Scripture and hymn assigned to the day). Following the leader, an organist provides musical support and continuity. Community members oriented to this practice join the singing from memory, while others may be aided by a printed card and hymnal.