

Using Music and Visual Arts

Through Holy Communion, Christ is present in words, but also in the fullness of the event. Even though recent research states that only 32 percent of UCC congregations may sing a portion of the communion liturgy, while 57 percent never do, music has been used by many churches since ancient times to enliven celebrations of communion.

Consider using the following resources from the *Sing Prayer, Sing Praise!* songbook and CD enclosed with this resource during communion:

- ♦ “We Lift Up Our Hearts”: Have your congregation or choir sing the piece before beginning the communion liturgy. It may replace the opening dialogue between pastor and people as described above in the section on “A Traditional and Ecumenical Approach to Holy Communion.” It may also be used as a Call to Worship on communion Sundays.
- ♦ “Holy, Holy, Holy!”: This fresh version of the ancient chorus based on Isaiah 6 joins the song of the people with that of the heavenly host as a part of our praise of God for the mighty acts of salvation history.
- ♦ “Yours is the Wheat”: This song may be sung by the entire congregation or just by the choir. It may be used before beginning communion or during the sharing of the bread and cup. It may also function as a sung prayer of consecration.
- ♦ “As the Grain Was Scattered”: This song is based on the ancient communion prescribed in the *Didache* of the second century. It would be especially meaningful during the bringing forward or the distribution of the elements.
- ♦ “Bread Is Broken”: This song round to be sung is based on the familiar account of Jesus breaking bread at Emmaus (Luke 24:30–32). It may be used throughout the liturgy, but may be especially meaningful during the sharing of the bread and the cup.
- ♦ An additional idea is to draw upon music from your hymnal. For example, use the Native American Dakota hymn “Great Spirit God” (page 341 of *The New Century Hymnal*) with drumming as a portion of the communion prayer for thanksgiving of God’s mighty acts and Jesus’ words of institution.

Similar to music, visual images may be used throughout Holy Communion, not only as an enhancement, but as liturgy itself. Refer to the last portion of the resource to see how visual images might be used in worship and about visual images found on *Words and Images for Worship* CD-ROM. The following visual images might be especially helpful in celebrating Holy Communion: “One” by Jerry Holsopple and Kristen Kennedy, “Surrender” by Nancy Yaki, and “The Risen Lord” by He Qi.