

## When Hands Reach Out

O WALY WALY LM

When hands reach out and fingers trace  
The beauty of a loved one's face,  
We thank you, God, that love relies  
On gifts of grace not seen with eyes.

When fingers spell and signs express  
Our prayer and praise and thankfulness,  
We thank you, God, that hands can sing;  
You bless the silent songs we bring.

When broken bodies will not mend,  
We thank you, God, for Christ our Friend.  
In him, our healing can begin:  
He welcomes all the wounded in.

And when the ways we learn and grow  
Are not the ways that others know,  
We thank you, God, that we have learned  
Your love's a gift, and never earned.

Your Spirit gives us differing ways  
To serve you well and offer praise.  
When all are joined as one, we'll be  
Your able, strong community.

Tune: English folk melody. . ("Though I May Speak")

Alternate Tune: TALLIS' CANON LM by Thomas Tallis, Adapt. Parker's  
*Whole Psalter*, c. 1561 ("All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night")

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Copied from [Songs of Grace: New Hymns for God and Neighbor](#) by Carolyn  
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complete list of Carolyn's 160+ other hymns: [www.carolynshymns.com](http://www.carolynshymns.com)

## Hymn Note on "When Hands Reach Out"

This hymn was commissioned for a national conference on disabilities hosted by Second Presbyterian Church in Little Rock, Arkansas. Presbyterians for Disability Concerns has posted it on their web site. This hymn was included in the United Church of Canada's hymnal supplement, *More Voices* (2007). Biblical references include John 15:15 and I Corinthians 12.

I am grateful for the ministry of many people who have touched my life over the years. One of them is Jessie Scanlon, a young woman with autism. She was a teenager when we were serving the church she attended with her family. Every Sunday, she and her sister and parents would sit near the front of the sanctuary, on the left hand side. She had her own ministry there. She reminded us that God's "love is a gift, and never earned."

I am grateful for the ministry of two other people I have known over the years. One of them has sight problems and another has hearing difficulties. They have taught me that hands can sing, and that love relies on gifts other than sight and sound.

I am grateful for the ministry of a friend who faced a terminal illness. He lived and died as a person with deep faith in God's abiding love. All of these friends, and many others, have helped me to understand God's care and unconditional love.

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