

51st Year
2021-2022

BACH

Cantata Vespers

**Grace Lutheran Church
River Forest, Illinois**

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Cantata Vespers



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Welcome to the 51st season of Bach Cantata Vespers at Grace Lutheran Church.

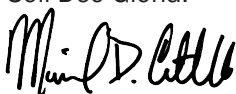
Thanks to the incredible support of people like you, we are entering into the sixth decade of this ministry, presenting the sacred cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach within the context of a Service of Evening Prayer. Your financial support and your presence with us via livestream kept us going during the 2020–21 season, even though we were not able to welcome worshipers to Grace Church in person. Thank you!

Planning the new season still involves some uncertainty about when we will be able to again fill the church with worshipers. Thankfully, we learned a lot last year about streaming, and we will continue to offer cantata services online regardless of whether or not we are also gathering in person.

The new season begins with several cantatas that have been performed frequently over the past 50 years. On September 26 we hear Cantata #29 with its incredible sinfonia for organ and familiar opening chorus. In October we'll hear Bach's cantata on *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, and in November, anticipating Advent, *Savior of the Nations, Come*. As we journey through the church year we mark the days of the liturgical calendar with Bach's music accompanying us all the way to Pentecost in May.

I hope you will consider supporting Grace's Bach Cantata Vespers with a donation. You may give online at www.BachVespers.org or use the enclosed envelope. Your gifts make this ministry possible. I look forward to seeing you during the year ahead.

Soli Deo Gloria!



The Rev. Michael D. Costello, Grace Cantor

Year at a glance...

September 26

Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir, BWV 29

Rebekah Weant Costello, homilist

Thomas Schmidt, guest organist

October 31

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott, BWV 80

James L. Brooks, homilist

Prelude: Barbara Harbach's *Suite Luther*

November 21

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, BWV 61

Esther Menn, homilist

Chad Fothergill, guest organist

January 30

Liebster Immanuel, Herzog der Frommen, BWV 123

Troy E. Medlin, homilist

Kontras Quartet: Eleanor Bartsch, François Henkins,
Ben Weber, and Jean Hatmaker

February 27

Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn, BWV 23

Peter A. Pettit, homilist

Prelude: Bach's *Orchestral Suite No. 1 in C Major*, BWV 1066

March 27

Wo Gott der Herr nicht bei uns hält, BWV 178

Myron F. McCoy, homilist

Prelude: Vivaldi's *Concerto for 4 violins in B minor*, RV 580
Hillert's *Prelude to Evening Prayer*

April 24

Halt im Gedächtnis Jesum Christ, BWV 67

E. Jon Benson, homilist

Steven Wente, guest organist

Concordia University Chicago's *Kapelle*, guest choir

Charles P. Brown, guest conductor

May 22

Erschallet ihr Lieder, erklinget ihr Saiten! BWV 172

Ingrid Schalk, homilist

Prelude: Molter's *Sonata Grossa in D Major*

September 26

Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir

BWV 29

We thank you, God, we thank you

Wir danken dir is one of Bach's *Ratswechsel* (change of council) cantatas, composed for the annual inauguration of the new town council in August and celebrated with a festival service in Leipzig's Nikolaikirche. It was an opportunity for Bach to display his musical virtuosity to visiting dignitaries as well as his own employers. The cantata begins with a magnificent sinfonia for organ and orchestra, followed by a glorious opening chorus, later recast as the *Dona nobis pacem* of the *Mass in B Minor*. With thanksgiving for the blessings of the past and reliance on God for protection in the future, BWV 29 opens the 51st season of Bach Cantata Vespers with joyful praise and prayer.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

Mark Peters, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights

3:45 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Thomas Schmidt, Chicago, Illinois, guest organist

Paul D. Weber: Psalm 150

Rebekah Weant Costello, Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Schaumburg, Illinois, homilist

Maura Janton Cock, soprano

Karen Brunssen, mezzo soprano

Ace Gangoso, tenor

Douglas Anderson, baritone

Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus and Orchestra

Grace Cantor Michael D. Costello, conducting





October 31

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott

BWV 80

A mighty fortress is our God

Christians of nearly every denomination sing Luther's chorale as a hymn of strength and assurance that God's promises are true and remain forever. This cantata for the festival of the Reformation was first performed in 1739. Bach reworked material from his Weimar years (1708–17) in order to use all four stanzas of the chorale: in counterpoint in the opening chorus, and then in an aria, a *concertante* setting for chorus and orchestra, and a concluding four-part chorale. Bach's son Wilhelm Friedemann added parts for trumpets and timpani in the version most often performed today.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

Mark P. Bangert, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

3:45 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Barbara Harbach: *Suite Luther*

Mendelssohn: Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich

James L. Brooks, Harmony Community Church, Lawndale, Chicago, homilist

Susan Nelson, soprano

Amanda Koopman, mezzo soprano

Ryan Townsend Strand, tenor

Douglas Anderson, baritone

Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus and Orchestra
Grace Cantor Michael D. Costello, conducting

November 21

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland

BWV 61

Now come, Savior of the nations

Bach's cantata for the first Sunday in Advent, composed in Weimar in 1714, was performed again in his first Advent season in Leipzig in 1723. The opening movement sets the medieval melody of Luther's traditional Advent chorale against the rhythms of a French overture, a royal welcome for the world's Redeemer. The movements that follow pray that Jesus would come to the church and ultimately, knock at the door of the human heart. The closing chorale exclaims, "Amen! Come, you fair crown of joy!"

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

Mark Peters, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights

3:45 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Chad Fothergill, guest organist

Brahms: O Heiland reiss die Himmel auf

Esther Menn, Lutheran School of Theology
at Chicago, homilist

Maura Janton Cock, soprano

Ryan Townsend Strand, tenor

Douglas Anderson, baritone

Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus and Orchestra
Grace Cantor Michael D. Costello, conducting

Photo: Gary Payne





Kontras Quartet

January 30

Liebster Immanuel, Herzog der Frommen BWV 123

Dearest Immanuel, ruler of the righteous

The Christmas season concludes on January 6 with the feast of the Epiphany, but there are no wise men or gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh in this cantata, composed for Epiphany in 1725. Instead, the chorale-based cantata evokes a portrait of Jesus remaining with the believer through the hard journey of this life. The unusual combination of flutes and oboes da amore with strings adds to the quiet intimacy of the music.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

Mark P. Bangert, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

3:45 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Kontras Quartet: Eleanor Bartsch, François Henkins, Ben Weber, and Jean Hatmaker

Mendelssohn: There Shall a Star from Jacob Come Forth (from *Christus*)

Troy E. Medlin, Grace Lutheran Church and School, River Forest, Illinois, homilist

Karen Brunssen, mezzo soprano
Ryan Townsend Strand, tenor
Douglas Anderson, baritone

Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus and Orchestra
Grace Cantor Michael D. Costello, conducting

February 27

Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn

BWV 23

You true God and David's son

Bach's 1723 audition for the position of Thomaskantor in Leipzig included a performance of *Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn*, composed a few years earlier while he served as Kapellmeister at the court of Cöthen. His superb artistry is on display here in an expressive opening duet, a graceful four-part chorus, and the closing setting of the chorale "O Christ, Thou Lamb of God." He got the job, and performed the cantata again a year later on the same Sunday of the church year, Quinquagesima, the last Sunday before Lent.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

Mark Peters, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights

3:45 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Bach: Orchestral Suite No. 1 in C Major, BWV 1066

Paul Bouman: Kyrie, God Father

Peter A. Pettit, St. Paul Lutheran Church,
Davenport, Iowa, homilist

Maura Janton Cock, soprano

Thomas Aláan, countertenor

Matthew Dean, tenor

Douglas Anderson, baritone

Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus and Orchestra
Grace Cantor Michael D. Costello, conducting





March 27

Wo Gott der Herr nicht bei uns hält

BWV 178

Where the Lord God does not abide with us

This dramatic chorale cantata was written for the Eighth Sunday after Trinity, July 30, 1724, part of the second annual cycle of Bach's cantatas. The Bach Vespers performance of the cantata in May 2020 was presented in a virtual format, with vocal soloists and orchestra members recording their parts individually at home. We bring it to life in 2022 as we had intended it two years ago, with choir and orchestra in a live service. Members of Grace's Choir will travel to Leipzig in 2022 to perform this cantata on Sunday, June 12, as part of a worship service during the Leipzig Bachfest.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

Mark P. Bangert, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

3:45 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Vivaldi: Concerto for 4 violins in B minor, RV 580
Hillert: Prelude to Evening Prayer

Schütz: *Ich hasse die Flattergeister*
(from *Der Schwanengesang*), SWV 489

Myron F. McCoy, First United Methodist Church
at the Chicago Temple, homilist

Sarah Ponder, mezzo soprano
Klaus Georg, tenor
Douglas Anderson, baritone

Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus and Orchestra
Grace Cantor Michael D. Costello, conducting

April 24

Halt im Gedächtnis Jesum Christ

BWV 67

Hold in remembrance Jesus Christ

This cantata from Bach's first Easter season in Leipzig (1724) proclaims Christ's resurrection while dramatizing the struggles of the believer, who, like the disciple Thomas, still experiences doubt and fear. In the penultimate movement the bass soloist appears as the *Vox Christi*, the voice of Christ, with the reassuring words "Peace be to you." Bach scholar Alfred Dürr calls this one of Bach's "greatest and most original cantatas."

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

Mark Peters, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights

3:45 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Steven Wenthe, Concordia University Chicago,
guest organist

di Lasso: Surrexit Pastor Bonus

E. Jon Benson, Saint John Lutheran Church,
Council Bluffs, Iowa, homilist

Amy Anderson de Jong, mezzo soprano

Ryan Townsend Strand, tenor

Douglas Anderson, baritone

Bach Cantata Vespers Orchestra

Kapelle, Concordia University Chicago, guest choir

Charles P. Brown, guest conductor

Concordia University Chicago's Kapelle





May 22

Erschallet ihr Lieder, erklinget ihr Saiten!

BWV 172

Ring forth, you songs, resound, you strings!

Erschallet, ihr Lieder, the first of Bach's four cantatas for Pentecost, was written in 1714 in Weimar and was first performed at the famous Himmelsburg Chapel. Bach seems to have particularly loved this work; he performed it again in Cöthen and several times in Leipzig, including in 1724 and 1731. The exuberant opening chorus is scored for a full complement of three trumpets, timpani, flute, oboe, strings, continuo, and choir. The bass aria that follows features virtuosic trumpet passages, while a closing duet for soprano and alto depicts a mystical dialogue between the Soul and the Holy Spirit. The cantata provides a celebratory finish to our 51st year of Bach Cantata Vespers at Grace.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

Mark P. Bangert, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

3:45 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Molter: Sonata Grossa in D Major

Paul Bouman: Peace I Leave with You

Ingrid Schalk, Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church, Loudon, Tennessee, homilist

Susan Nelson, soprano

Thomas Aláan, countertenor

Ryan Townsend Strand, tenor

Douglas Anderson, baritone

Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus and Orchestra

Grace Cantor Michael D. Costello, conducting

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