

53rd Year
2023-2024



BACH

Cantata Vespers

**Grace Lutheran Church
River Forest, Illinois**

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Welcome to the 53rd season of Bach Cantata Vespers at Grace Lutheran Church.

It was exactly 300 years ago that Johann Sebastian Bach took up the post of Thomaskantor in Leipzig. Beginning with the first Sunday after Trinity in 1723, Bach presented a new cantata—approximately 60 of them—for nearly every Sunday and major festival in the church year. To celebrate this anniversary, most of this season's cantatas are drawn from that cycle.

It is no small thing that Bach's music from 1723–24 continues to speak to people today, proclaiming the never-ending story of God's grace and mercy poured out for us in Jesus Christ. As we listen to choruses and arias describing doubt and sorrow as well as joy and faith, we hear the good news of God's love and, in the meditative setting of Vespers, join in prayer and praise.

In this brochure you will learn more about this season's series, including a cantata for Christmas morning and a tour to Germany, delayed twice in 2020 and 2022 due to the pandemic. Please support this ministry of Grace Church by sending a gift in the enclosed envelope or by making a gift online. All gifts are tax-deductible.

We hope that you will join us in person and add your voice to the church's song at Bach Cantata Vespers worship. Should distance or illness keep you away, however, know that we will continue to livestream the services on the Bach Cantata Vespers YouTube channel. Links to upcoming services are always available at www.bachvespers.org. If you do not already receive our monthly e-mails, please go to the contact page on our website and provide your information.

Thank you for your ongoing support and attendance at these services. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Soli Deo Gloria!

The Rev. Michael D. Costello, Grace Cantor

Year at a glance...

September 24 BWV 148

Bringet dem Herrn Ehre seines Namens

Stephen Bouman, homilist

Poulenc: Organ Concerto in G minor; Nicole Keller, organist

October 29 BWV 109

Ich glaube, lieber Herr, hilf meinem Unglauben!

Roger Ferlo, homilist

Mendelssohn-Bartholdy: String Symphony No. 7 in D minor

November 19 BWV 70

Wachet! Betet! Betet! Wachet!

Jill Peláez Baumgaertner, homilist

Michael D. Costello, organist

December 25 BWV 63

Christen, ätzt diesen Tag

Performed as part of Grace's 10:00 a.m. Christmas Day service

David R. Lyle, homilist

January 28 BWV 81

Jesus schläft, was soll ich hoffen?

Karoline M. Lewis, homilist

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

February 25 BWV 144

Nimm, was dein ist, und gehe hin

Ole Schenk, homilist

Price: Andante Moderato for Strings; Fung: Pizzicato for String
Orchestra; Hillert: Prelude to Evening Prayer

March 24 BWV 182

Himmelskönig, sei willkommen

Jerome Burce, homilist

Steven Wente, organist

April 21 BWV 12

Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen

Michael D. Costello, homilist

Haydn: Symphony No. 30 in C Major ("Alleluia")

Kapelle of Concordia University Chicago, guest choir

Charles P. Brown, conductor

May 19 BWV 37

Wer da gläubet und getauft wird

Amy Gillespie, homilist

Stephen Buzard, organist



September 24 *BWV 148*

Bringet dem Herrn Ehre seines Namens

Bring to the Lord the honor due his name

The joyful opening chorus of the cantata invites worshipers “to praise God in the beauty of holiness,” a brilliant beginning to our 53rd season of Bach Cantata Vespers. The arias that follow describe the joy of Sabbath worship and the peace that comes from God dwelling in our hearts. The cantata, composed for the 17th Sunday after Trinity, was first performed on September 19 in 1723, or perhaps a few years later —just one of several questions associated with a score that comes down to us through a copy made after Bach’s death. It is glorious music—we hope you’ll join us. A reception follows the service.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

Mark Peters, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights

3:45 p.m. Orchestral/Organ Prelude

Francis Poulenc: Organ Concerto in G minor
Nicole Keller, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor,
Michigan, organist

4:00 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Stephen Bouman, St. Luke’s Lutheran Church,
Park Ridge, Illinois, homilist

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy: *Wie der Hirsh schreit*
(first chorus)

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

Sarah Ponder, mezzo soprano
Ace Gangoso, tenor

5:30 p.m. Post-Service Reception



Photo: Stephen Kennedy

Nicole Keller



Stephen Bouman



Roger Ferlo



Ace Gangoso



Sarah Ponder

October 29 BWV 109

Ich glaube, lieber Herr, hilf meinem Unglauben!

I believe, dear Lord, help my unbelief!

Faith grapples with doubt in this cantata first performed on October 17, 1723, for the 21st Sunday after Trinity. The hauntingly beautiful chorus takes its text from Mark 9:24: "I believe, dear Lord, help my unbelief," the cry of a man seeking healing for his son. An emotional dialogue between fear and hope follows, as the tenor sings of a trembling and anxious heart, while the graceful, dance-like alto aria reassures us that Jesus stands at our side even when it is hard to be hopeful.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

Mark Peters, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights

3:45 p.m. Orchestral Prelude

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy: String Symphony No. 7 in D minor

4:00 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Roger Ferlo, St. Paul & the Redeemer Episcopal Church, Chicago, Illinois, homilist

Heinrich Schütz: Das ist je gewisslich wahr

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

Sarah Ponder, mezzo soprano

Ace Gangoso, tenor

5:30 p.m. Post-Service Conversation with Michael Marissen

Michael Marissen, Swarthmore College,
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

Bach Scholar Michael Marissen joins us to discuss topics from his book *Bach Against Modernity* (Oxford University Press, 2023), moderated by Dr. Mark Peters of Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights.





Douglas Anderson



Jill Peláez Baumgaertner



Michael D. Costello



Susan Nelson

November 19 BWV 70

Wachet! Betet! Betet! Wachet!

Watch! Pray! Pray! Watch!

For 23 of the 60 cantatas performed during his first year in Leipzig, Bach reached into his briefcase and revised earlier works. BWV 70 was composed in Weimar in 1716 for the 2nd Sunday of Advent. In Leipzig, however, concerted (orchestrated) music was not allowed during the penitential season of Advent, so Bach performed this cantata on the 26th Sunday after Trinity, November 21, 1723. Bach added two dramatic recitatives to the newer version. You cannot miss the message of Final Judgment as the trumpet sounds!

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

Mark Peters, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights

3:45 p.m. Organ Prelude

Michael D. Costello, Grace Lutheran Church,
River Forest, Illinois

4:00 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Jill Peláez Baumgaertner, Wheaton College,
Wheaton, Illinois, homilist

J. S. Bach: Nun lob, mein Seel, den Herren
(from BWV 28)

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

Susan Nelson, soprano
Sarah Ponder, mezzo soprano
Ace Gangoso, tenor
Douglas Anderson, baritone



December 25 BWV 63

Christen, ätzt diesen Tag

Christians, engrave this day

Bach's cantata for Christmas Day is, appropriately, one of his most festive. The orchestra is as large as they come for cantatas, with four trumpets, timpani, three oboes, bassoon, plus strings and organ. The opening chorus urges Christians everywhere to "etch this day in metal and marble" and "hasten ... to the crib." But instead of the cradle songs and Glorias one might expect on Christmas Day, the music rejoices in God's grace and favor. Bach revised and performed this cantata several times, including a performance in Leipzig in 1723. It will be part of Grace's service of Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m. on Christmas morning.

*Performed as part of Grace's 10:00 a.m.
Christmas Day service of Holy Communion*

David R. Lyle, Grace Lutheran Church and School,
River Forest, Illinois, homilist

Constantin Christian Dedekind: Das Wort ward Fleisch

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

Marybeth Kurnat, soprano
Amanda Koopman, mezzo soprano
Ryan Townsend Strand, tenor
Peter Wesoloski, baritone



Amanda Koopman



Marybeth Kurnat



Ryan Townsend Strand



Peter Wesoloski



Mark Peters on Bach

Join us at 3:00 for lectures or read our blog.

Dr. Mark Peters is professor of music and director of the Center for Teaching and the Good Life at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois. He teaches courses on music and the arts in relation to individuals, societies, and cultures, seeking to instill in students the perspective that practices of creating and of engaging human creativity are fundamental aspects of our shared humanity.

Peters is currently writing a weekly blog that will explore the first to cycles of Bach's Leipzig cantatas as they each reach their 300th anniversary of composition or first performance in Leipzig. Together with other writers, Peters will explore some of the texts, chorales, and music of the cantatas in order to shed light on how we listen to these pieces in our modern context. Find our blog at www.bachvespers.org.

Peters has also been one of our lecturers for several years, offering insights into the cantatas being performed at each month's Bach Cantata Vespers service. Join us at 3:00 in the Seminar Room each month to learn more about the cantata you are about to hear in worship.

Peters holds a Ph.D. in historical musicology from the University of Pittsburgh. He is author of *A Woman's Voice in Baroque Music: Mariane von Ziegler and J. S. Bach* (Ashgate, 2008) and co-editor with Reginald L. Sanders of *Compositional Choices and Meaning in the Vocal Music of J. S. Bach* (Lexington, 2018).

January 28 BWV 81

Jesus schläft, was soll ich hoffen?

Jesus sleeps, what can I hope for?

The cantata, composed for the 4th Sunday after Epiphany, January 30, 1724, is based on the gospel reading from Matthew 8. Jesus' disciples, together in a boat with him, are confused by his lack of concern as he sleeps through a storm. As storms rage in the orchestra, the tenor aria asks "Why, Lord, do you stand so far off?" But in a beautiful arioso, the bass soloist as the voice of Christ answers, "You of little faith, why are you so fearful?" Jesus calms the storm with a word, as Bach's music reminds us of God's care and protection.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

Mark Peters, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights

3:45 p.m. Instrumental Prelude

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

4:00 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Karoline M. Lewis, Luther Seminary,
St. Paul, Minnesota, homilist

G. P. Telemann: Ich danke dem Herrn vom ganzen Herzen, TWV 7:14 (opening mvts.)

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

Sarah Ponder, mezzo soprano
Ace Gangoso, tenor
David Govertsen, bass



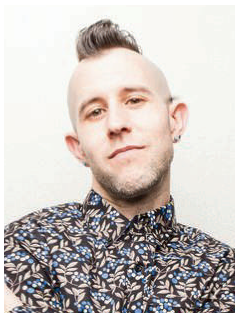
Karoline M. Lewis



David Govertsen



The Kontras Quartet



Thomas Aláan



Carlyne DalMonte



Ole Schenk

February 25 BWV 144

Nimm, was dein ist, und gehe hin

Take what is yours and go away

Bach's cantata for Septuagesima (the 3rd to last Sunday before Lent) on February 6, 1724, was BWV 144. It is a cantata based on the gospel reading from Matthew 20, the parable of laborers in the vineyard. Bach uses a variety of forms in this cantata to elaborate on the simple theme of being content and entrusting our lives to God. There's a fugue with a play on the words *gehe hin* (go your way), then a minuet that gracefully silences the underlying murmurs and complaints in the accompaniment. The cantata includes two familiar chorales about trusting that God's will is indeed best.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

Mark Peters, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights

3:45 p.m. Orchestral Prelude

Florence Price: Andante Moderato for Strings

Vivian Fung: Pizzicato for String Orchestra

Richard Hillert: Prelude to Evening Prayer

4:00 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Ole Schenk, United Lutheran Church,
Oak Park, Illinois, homilist

Max Reger: Dein Wort, Herr, bleibet ewig

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

Carlyne DalMonte, soprano

Thomas Aláan, countertenor

Ryan Townsend Strand, tenor



Jerome Burce



Steven Wenthe

March 24 *BWV 182*

Himmelskönig, sei willkommen

King of Heaven, welcome

Cantata 182 was written in 1714 when Palm Sunday and the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25 (nine months before Christmas), coincided. It was the first church cantata Bach composed after being appointed Concertmaster at the Court of Weimar. Its *da capo* (ABA-form) arias and overall lightness reflect his acquaintance with music from Italy, specifically Vivaldi. Bach also performed the cantata in 1724 in Leipzig on the Feast of the Annunciation, an occasion exempt from the rule about no special music during Lent. The poetry of the text likens Jesus' incarnation and his Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem to Jesus being welcomed into Christians' hearts as they contemplate his Passion.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

Mark Peters, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights

3:45 p.m. Organ Prelude

Steven Wenthe, Concordia University Chicago

4:00 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Jerome Burce, Roaming Shores, Ohio, homilist

Randall Thompson: *Pueri Hebræorum*

Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus and Orchestra

Grace Cantor Michael D. Costello, conducting

Amanda Koopman, mezzo soprano

Ryan Townsend Strand, tenor

Douglas Anderson, baritone



April 21 BWV 12

Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen

Weeping, wailing, fretting, fearing

BWV 12 also has its origins during Bach's early days of composing for the court at Weimar in 1714. It opens with a ravishingly intense symphonia. The second movement, a plaintive, anguished chorus of weeping and wailing, would eventually become the *Crucifixus* of Bach's *Mass in B Minor*. The arias in this Easter season cantata keep Jesus and his redemptive death on the cross at the center of the Christian story, while still anticipating future joy in both text and music. Even as we celebrate Christ's triumph over sin and death on Easter, we also recall Jesus' sacrificial love for us.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

Mark Peters, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights

3:45 p.m. Orchestral Prelude

Joseph Haydn: Symphony No. 30 in C Major ("*Alleluia*")

4:00 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Michael D. Costello, Grace Lutheran Church and School, River Forest, Illinois, homilist

Heinrich Schütz: Ich weiß, daß mein Erlöser lebt

Kapelle, Concordia University Chicago, guest choir
Charles P. Brown, conductor

Sarah Ponder, mezzo soprano

Ryan Townsend Strand, tenor

David Govertsen, bass



Charles P. Brown



Concordia University Chicago's Kapelle



Amy Gillespie



Stephen Buzard

May 19 BWV 37

Wer da gläubet und getauft wird

Whoever believes and is baptized

The cantata with which we have chosen to conclude this year's series is BWV 37, an Ascension cantata that Bach first performed in Leipzig on May 24, 1724. Its focus is Jesus' command to his disciples to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" and the promise that "whoever believes and is baptized will be saved." A moving duet based on the chorale "How Lovely Shines the Morning Star" is sung by soprano and alto soloists, while the tenor and bass arias reflect on the Lutheran theology of justification by faith.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

Mark Peters, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights

3:45 p.m. Organ Prelude

Stephen Buzard, St. James Cathedral, Chicago

4:00 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Amy Gillespie, St. James Lutheran Church,
Lake Forest, Illinois, homilist

J. S. Bach: Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf
BWV 226 (sung by singers of Chicago Choral Artists)

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

Susan Nelson, soprano
Amanda Koopman, mezzo soprano
Ryan Townsend Strand, tenor
David Govertsen, bass



June 2024

Bach Cantata Vespers in Germany

Bachfest Leipzig 2024

The Bach Cantata Vespers Choir will be on tour in Germany in June 2024 and will sing as part of the Leipzig Bach Festival on June 11 in the Thomaskirche. Three cantatas from Bach's second Leipzig cantata cycle will be performed with soloists and the Leipzig Baroque Orchestra under the direction of Grace Cantor Michael D. Costello.

More information about our trip will be available in August. If you are interested in traveling with the group, please contact bachvespers@graceriverforest.org.



Grace's Choir at the Leipzig Thomaskirche in 2014



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River Forest, Illinois 60305

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