



55th Year

2025–2026

BACH

Cantata Vespers



**Grace Lutheran Church
River Forest, Illinois**

**Sunday afternoons
Lecture at 3:00 p.m.
Prelude at 3:45 p.m.**

September 28, 2025

Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren
Praise to the Lord, the almighty King of creation

Welcome to Grace Lutheran Church

We are glad that you have joined us for this afternoon's Bach Cantata Vespers.

Today's service is also available on the [Bach Cantata Vespers YouTube Channel](#).

For those who have trouble hearing, sound enhancement units are available in the back of the church and may be obtained from an usher.

Please silence all cell phones and pagers.

Recording or photography of any kind during the service is strictly forbidden.

We ask that you kindly refrain from applause during this service of worship.

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 28, 2025

EVENING PRAYER



Background notes for the prelude are on pages 20–21 in this worship folder.

PRELUDE

Toccata Festiva, Op. 36

Samuel Barber (1910–1981)

Version for chamber orchestra by Mark Buller (b. 1986)

Chelsea Chen, organist

We stand, facing the candle as we sing.

SERVICE OF LIGHT



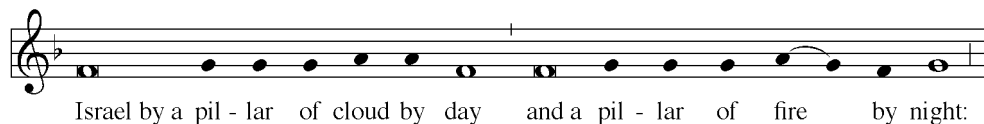
☐ Jesus Christ is the Light of the world, ☐ the light no darkness can over- come.



☐ Stay with us, Lord, for it is eve- ning, ☐ and the day is almost o- ver.



☐ Let your light scat- ter the dark- ness, ☐ and illumine your Church.



Enlighten our darkness by the light of your Christ; may his Word be a lamp
to our feet and a light to our path; for you are mer - ci - ful,
and you love your whole cre - a - tion, and we, your crea - tures, glo - ri - fy you,
Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Spir - it. **A - men**

✠ PSALMODY ✠

We sit.

PSALM 141

*Women sing parts marked **I**. Men sing parts marked **II**. All sing parts marked **☐**.*

☐ Let my prayer rise be - fore you as in - cense;
the lift - ing up of my hands as the eve - ning sac - ri - fice.
I O Lord, I call to you; come to me quick - ly; hear my voice when I cry to you.
II Let my prayer rise be - fore you as in - cense;
the lift - ing up of my hands as the eve - ning sac - ri - fice.

I Set a watch be-fore my mouth, O Lord, and guard the door of my lips.

II Let not my heart in-cline to an-y e-vil thing; let me not be oc-cu-

pied in wick-ed-ness with e-vil-do-ers. I But my eyes are

turned to you, Lord God; in you I take ref-uge. Strip me not of my life.

II Glo-ry to the Fa-ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho-ly Spir-it;

I as it was in the be-gin-ning, is now, and will be for-ev-er. A-men.

C Let my prayer rise be-fore you as in-cense;

the lift-ing up of my hands as the eve-ning sac-ri-fice.

Silence for meditation is observed, then:

PSALM PRAYER

- L** Let the incense of our repentant prayer ascend before you, O Lord,
and let your lovingkindness descend upon us, that with purified minds
we may sing your praises with the Church on earth and the whole heavenly host,
and may glorify you forever and ever.
- C** Amen.

Alleluia.

Alleluia.

Louez le Dieu, caché dans ses saints tabernacles,

Praise the God hidden in his holy tabernacles,

Louez le Dieu qui règne en son immensité.

praise the God who reigns in his immensity.

Louez-le dans sa force et ses puissants miracles.

Praise him in his strength and his mighty miracles.

Louez-le dans sa gloire et dans sa majesté.

Praise him in his glory and in his majesty.

Louez-le par la voix des bruyantes trompettes.

Praise him with the voice of loud trumpets.

Que pour lui le nébel se marie au kinnor.

Praise him with the lute and harp!

Louez-le dans vos fêtes au son du tambourin,

Praise him in your feasts with the sound of the tambourine,

sur l'orgue et sur le luth, chantez, chantez encor.

or on the organ and on the lute, sing, sing again.

Que pour lui dans vos mains résonne la cymbale aux accords éclatants et joyeux.

Let the cymbal resound for him in your hands with its bright and joyful strains.

Que tout souffle vivant, tout soupir qui s'exhale dise:

Let everything that has breath, every sigh that is exhaled, say:

louange à lui, louange au Roi des cieux.

Praise to him, praise to the King of heaven.

Louez-le dans vos fêtes, chantez, chantez toujours.

Praise him in your feasts, sing, sing always.

Alleluia.

Alleluia!

Silence for meditation is observed, then:

COLLECT

- ☐ Lord God, unite our voices with the praise of all creation,
that we may worthily magnify your excellent greatness;
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

☑ **Amen.**

The offering is gathered.

OFFERING/VOLUNTARY: Allegretto (from Sonata No. 4) Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy
(1809–1847)

The offering assists in defraying costs of the Bach Cantata Vespers ministry.

Please make checks payable to Grace Lutheran Church.

You may also contribute online at www.bachvespers.org.

Your generosity is appreciated.

At the conclusion of the introduction, we stand.

HYMN: Oh, That I Had a Thousand Voices

Concertato by Michael D. Costello
(b. 1979)



1 Oh, that I had a thou - sand voic - es to praise my
2 O all you pow'rs that he im - plant - ed, a - rise, keep
Choir 3 You for - est leaves so green and ten - der that dance for
4 All crea - tures that have breath and mo - tion, that throng the
5 Cre - a - tor, hum - bly I im - plore you to lis - ten



God with thou - sand tongues! My heart, which in the Lord re -
si - lence now no more; put forth the strength that God has
joy in sum - mer air, you mead - ow grass - es, bright and
earth, the sea, the sky, come, share with me my heart's de -
to my earth - ly song un - til that day when I a -



joic - es, would then pro - claim in grate - ful songs to all, wher -
grant - ed! Your no - blest work is to a - dore! O soul and
slen - der, you flow'rs so fra - grant and so fair, you live to
vo - tion, help me to sing God's prais - es high! My ut - most
dore you, when I have joined the an - gel throng and learned with



ev - er I might be, what great things God has done for me!
bod - y, join to raise with heart - felt joy our mak - er's praise!
show God's praise a - lone. Join me to make his glo - ry known!
pow'rs can nev - er quite de - clare the won - ders of his might!
choirs of heav'n to sing e - ter - nal an - thems to my king!

✠ WORD ✠

We sit.

READING: 2 Corinthians 3:4–11

[St. Paul writes:] ⁴Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. ⁵Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, ⁶who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

⁷Now if the ministry of death, chiseled in letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses' face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside, ⁸how much more will the ministry of the Spirit come in glory? ⁹For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, much more does the ministry of justification abound in glory! ¹⁰Indeed, what once had glory has lost its glory because of the greater glory; ¹¹for if what was set aside came through glory, much more has the permanent come in glory!

📖 The Word of the Lord.

🙏 Thanks be to God.

MOTET: He Hath Done All Things Well

Jan Bender
(1909–1994)

He hath done all things well;
he maketh both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak. Amen.

Mark 7:37

READING: Mark 7:31–37

³¹Then [Jesus] returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. ³²They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. ³³He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. ³⁴Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” ³⁵And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. ³⁶Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. ³⁷They were astounded beyond measure, saying, “He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

📖 The Word of the Lord.

🙏 Thanks be to God.

HOMILY

Pastor David Heim

CANTATA: *Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren*, BWV 137
Praise to the Lord, the mighty king of honor

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

*Translation of the German text and notes corresponding to each movement are below.
Background notes for the cantata are on page 20 in this worship folder.*

1. Chorus

Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren,
Praise to the Lord, the almighty king of honor,
Meine geliebete Seele, das ist mein Begehren.
My beloved soul, this is my desire.
Kommet zu Hauf,
Come together,
Psalter und Harfen, wacht auf!
Psalter and harps, awake!
Lasset die Musicam hören.
Let the music be heard.

The first movement begins with a brief, but impressive *sinfonia* for all instruments. Its musical motives are based on the intervals and style of the chorale but not on the tune itself, a characteristic it shares with the other movements of the cantata.

The original chorale melody itself is in the familiar *barform*, in which the opening phrase (the *Stollen*) is immediately repeated, only to be followed by a contrasting phrase called the *Abgesang*. Since the entire cantata is based on the chorale it is interesting to see how Bach treats the barform in each movement.

After the instrumental introduction, the voices—alto, tenor, and bass—enter one by one singing a slightly syncopated theme that quickly gives way to the sopranos who present the chorale tune in long notes. While Bach evened out the irregular rhythm of most of the old chorale tunes that he used in cantatas, in this movement he kept the original rhythm of the chorale (also preserved in *Lutheran Book of Worship*). For the most part throughout the movement the voices are not doubled by instruments.

The second phrase of the original chorale melody (repetition of the *Stollen*) is treated just as the first: an instrumental section is followed by the entry of the voices one by one before the sopranos again crown the action with the chorale melody.

The *Abgesang* also begins with a section for instruments, but when the chorale melody appears it is sung by all four voices in simple block harmony.



The *Abgesang* concludes just as the movement began: after an instrumental section, the voices enter one by one, followed by sopranos singing the unadorned last chorale phrase over a busy choral and instrumental accompaniment. The movement closes with a repetition of the opening *Sinfonia*. All in all, an impressive statement of praise!

2. Aria (alto)

Lobe den Herren, der alles so herrlich regieret,

Praise to the Lord, who reigns over all so wonderfully,

Der dich auf Adlers Fittichen sicher geführet,

Who bears you on eagle's wings so securely,

Der dich erhält,

Who preserves you

Wie es dir selber gefällt;

As is pleasing to you;

Hast du nicht dieses verspüret?

Have you not perceived this?

The movement is really a duet for violin and voice, with the instrument playing a non-stop, fast-moving filigree of arpeggiated sixteenth notes based in part on an outline of the chorale melody. The vocalist soon enters, singing a simply ornamented but easily recognized version of stanza two of the chorale. Here, the magnificence of the first movement has been exchanged for a light and airy triple-meter setting of the text of praise. Bach liked the movement so much that he later transcribed it for organ as one of the six famous *Schübler Chorales* (BWV 650).

3. Duet (soprano and bass)

Lobe den Herren, der künstlich und fein dich bereitet,
Praise to the Lord, who so well and finely prepares you,
Der dir Gesundheit verliehen, dich freundlich geleitet;
Who grants you good health and kindly leads you;
In wieviel Not
In how much hardship
Hat nicht der gnädige Gott
Has not God in his mercy
Über dir Flügel gebreitet!
Spread his wings over you!

The movement is a kind of double duet that consists of the pairing of two oboes and two voices. Each of the partners plays lines in imitation of the other partner, but independent of the contrasting pair. The vocal lines are highly ornamented versions of the chorale (which at times may be difficult to recognize), while the instrumental lines consist mostly of arpeggios drawn from the chorale melody.

4. Aria and Chorale (tenor)

Lobe den Herren, der deinen Stand sichtbar gesegnet,
Praise to the Lord, who has visibly blessed your place,
Der aus dem Himmel mit Strömen der Liebe geregnet;
Who from heaven has rained down streams of love;
Denke dran,
Think of this,
Was der Allmächtige kann,
What the Almighty can do,
Der dir mit Liebe begegnet.
Who approaches you with love.

The soloist sings the words of the fourth stanza to a typically lyrical Bach aria melody that is set in contrast to a simple statement of the soaring chorale melody by the trumpet. Of special interest is the bustling bass line of the continuo that consists of brief segments of rising (or falling) scale lines separated by descending arpeggios. Depending on how they are measured, there are between twenty and thirty of these fragments at various pitch levels, with various harmonic implications. While the chorale melody is carried wordlessly by the trumpet, certain words are emphasized by long vocal melismas of the tenor. Bach saves his longest for the final statement of *mit Liebe begegnet* (with love bestowed).



5. Chorale

Lobe den Herren, was in mir ist, lobe den Namen!

Praise to the Lord, all that is in me, praise his name!

Alles, was Odem hat, lobe mit Abrahams Samen!

Let everything that has breath praise him with Abraham's offspring!

Er ist dein Licht,

He is your light,

Seele, vergiss es ja nicht;

Soul, never forget this;

Lobende, schließe mit Amen!

In praising, finish with Amen!

All instruments and voices join in a final grand statement of the last stanza of the chorale. While the voices sing the customary simple unadorned block chords of a harmonized chorale, two trumpets sound a glorious double descant above. A fitting conclusion for an inspired creation!

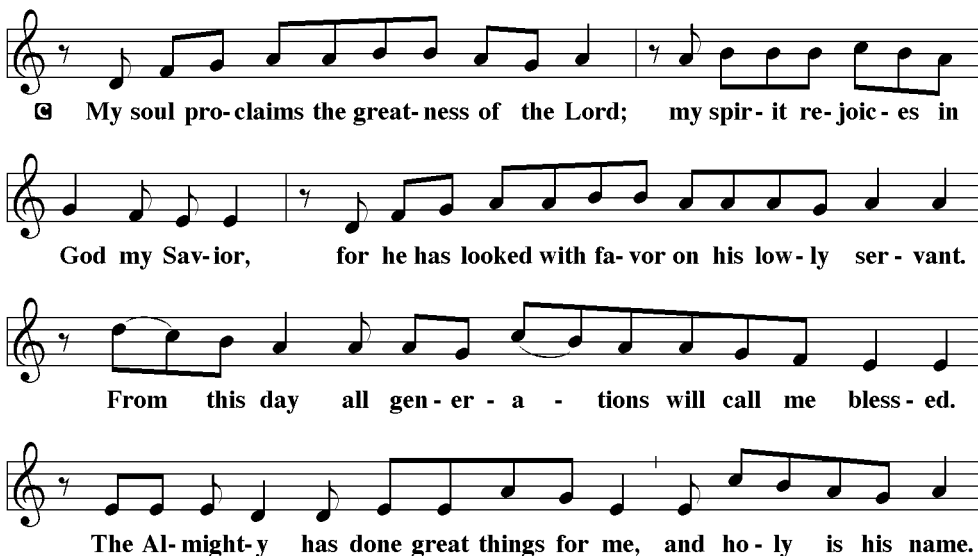
Silence is observed, then:

☐ In many and various ways God spoke to his people of old by the prophets.

☑ But now in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.

We stand.

MAGNIFICAT



☑ My soul pro-claims the great-ness of the Lord; my spir- it re-joic- es in

God my Sav-ior, for he has looked with fa- vor on his low- ly ser- vant.

From this day all gen- er - a - tions will call me bless- ed.

The Al- might-y has done great things for me, and ho- ly is his name.

He has mer-cy on those who fear him in ev-'ry gen-er-a-tion.

He has shown the strength of his arm; he has scat-tered the

proud in their con-ceil. He has cast down the might-y from their thrones,

and has lift-ed up the low-ly. He has filled the

hun-gry with good things, and the rich he has sent a-way emp-ty.

He has come to the help of his ser-vant Is-ra-el,

for he has re-mem-bered his prom-ise of mer-cy, the prom-ise he

made to our fa-thers, to A-bra-ham and his chil-dren for-ev-er.

Glo-ry to the Fa-ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho-ly Spir-it;

as it was in the be-gin-ning, is now, and will be for-ev-er. A-men

✠ PRAYERS ✠

LITANY



After each petition:

L ...let us pray to the Lord.



The litany continues:

L For the faithful who have gone before us and are at rest, let us give thanks to the Lord.



The litany concludes:

L Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Silence is kept, then:

L Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ, our Lord.



L O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works:
 Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give,
 that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments;
 and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies,
 may live in peace and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God forever.

G Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

L Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come,

thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

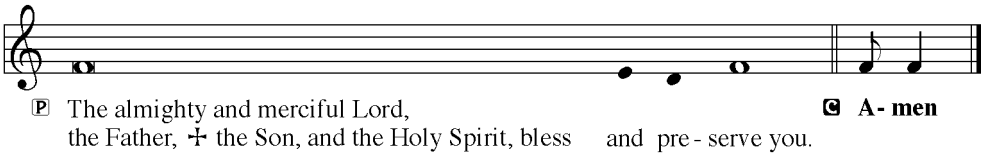
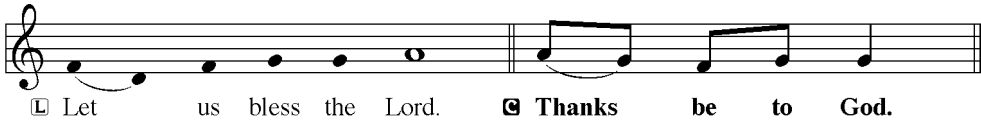
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen.

BENEDICAMUS DOMINO & BENEDICTION



HYMN: When in Our Music God Is Glorified

Concertato by Michael D. Costello



1 When in our mu - sic God is glo - ri - fied, and ad - o -
 Choir 2 How oft, in mak - ing mu - sic, we have found a new di -
 3 So has the church, in lit - ur - gy and song, in faith and
 Choir 4 And did not Je - sus sing a psalm that night when ut - most
 5 Let ev - 'ry in - stru - ment be tuned for praise; let all re -



ra - tion leaves no room for pride, it is as
 men - sion in the world of sound, as wor - ship
 love, through cen - tu - ries of wrong, borne wit - ness
 e - vil strove a - gainst the light? Then let us
 joice who have a voice to raise; and may God



though the whole cre - a - tion cried:
 moved us to a more pro - found
 to the truth in ev - 'ry tongue: Al - le - lu - ia!
 sing, for whom he won the fight:
 give us faith to sing al - ways:

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000

Music: ENGELBERG, Charles V. Stanford, 1852–1924

Text © 1972 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

DISMISSAL

L Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

Join us for a reception in Fellowship Hall to celebrate the beginning of the 55th year of Bach Cantata Vespers.

Copyright Acknowledgments

Portions of this liturgy reprinted from *Lutheran Book of Worship*, copyright © 1978 by Augsburg Fortress. Graphics reprinted from *Sundaysandseasons.com*. All rights reserved. All of the above used by permission of Augsburg Fortress liturgies license #SAS018423.

Readings come from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Hymns under copyright reprinted and livestreamed by permission of OneLicense.net license #A-704569.

Translation of the cantata by Dr. Karen P. Danford. Used by permission.

Background notes on the cantata by Carlos Messerli. Used by permission.

BACKGROUND OF THE PRELUDE

No major American composer of the twentieth century was a more ardent and eloquent champion of the lyrical, accessible, yet modern idiom than Samuel Barber. His musical style is founded in the romantic traditions of the nineteenth century and built upon and extended the harmonic language and formal structures of that time. Unlike so many of his peers he was not powerfully swayed by the modernism emanating from Europe after World War I, but pursued his own path.

Barber was consistently lyrical throughout his career, and it is telling that his songs constitute about two-thirds of the total number of his compositions. His vocal works etc. His vocal works include two major operas, “Vanessa” (1956), and “Antony and Cleopatra” (1966), the latter composed for the opening of the Metropolitan Opera House. He composed at least one work for almost every musical genre, and unlike most composers, he was a recognized and published composer from his student days. Composed at the age of 21, his “Overture to ‘The School for Scandal’” was an instant success, was forthwith published, and remains in the standard repertoire. Though his choral music and solo vocal music are mainstays of concerts, it is an instrumental work that is his best-known composition—the Adagio for Strings, championed by Toscanini when Barber was only twenty-eight years old. The vocally inspired lyricism of that work is emblematic of all that Barber wrote, even in the most vigorous of works.

But few composers of genius can be forced into stylistic strait jackets; their depth of talent enables them to speak with diverse voices, and Barber’s musical imagination surfaced as easily in dynamic, forceful virtuosity as well as it did in eloquent lyricism. A case in point is his “Toccata Festiva” for organ and orchestra, written in 1960. Barber was one of the most celebrated graduates of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, and it is no surprise that when a magnificent new pipe organ was installed in that city’s Academy of Music (home of the Philadelphia Orchestra) it was he who was commissioned for the dedicatory work at the inaugural concert. The organ was the gift of the esteemed philanthropist Mary Louise Curtis, founder of the Curtis Institute (1924) and an early patroness of Barber. Moreover, in addition to funding the organ, she also saw to it that Barber received the composition’s commission and financial support.

In the later nineteenth century, large pipe organs were *de rigueur* in large concert halls, and composers happily included them in symphonic showpieces for orchestra. Strauss’s “Also sprach Zarathustra” and Saint-Saëns’ “Organ” Symphony are exemplars. By the end of the twentieth-century, public tastes and budget constraints led to their removal or omission in new halls. A case in point is the absence of such an organ in New York’s David Geffen Hall in Lincoln Center. When the hall was completely renovated in 2002 the original, imposing Æolian-Skinner organ was dismantled and sold to a church in California—nothing replaced it. The absence of a large pipe organ in any significant concert venue in New York City is still a point of contention in the arts community. And even the organ that Philadelphia installed in 1960 was sold when the orchestra moved to its impressive new digs at Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in 2001. But an outstanding new organ was installed in the new Verizon Hall therein. The Davies Symphony Hall (1980) in San Francisco has a 147-rank organ, so things are looking up in the symphony hall—pipe organ world.



Barber entitled his work a toccata, a time-honored genre with roots as far back as the fifteenth century. The toccata's early zenith was in the hands of the early sixteenth-century composer and organist, Girolamo Frescobaldi, who influenced later important composers, leading to J.S. Bach. The word toccata simply means a "touch" piece, wherein the dexterity of the fingers showcases a virtuosic display of the player, composer, and organ. There is no set form, it is a totally free composition designed to dazzle with sizzling scales, cascading arpeggios, impressive sonorities, and the juxtaposition of all of the timbres of the instrument's myriad pipes—with a healthy dose of drama! This Barber supplies amply—showcasing the new Æolian-Skinner's resources, from the many colorful solo stops to the massive full organ.

The orchestra alone opens with a smashing A unison and scale, ending in writhing chromatic arpeggios. After the first entrance of this idea, the trumpets and then horns play an important contrasting motive, followed by first entrance of the organ, employing its reeds. The organ alone continues with dazzling arpeggios that seem to use every note of the chromatic scale. Orchestra and organ quickly play off both of these ideas until lush, quiet strings—in the best Barber tradition—introduce the second main idea, which the organ then takes up. In a gesture to tradition, Barber locates this peaceful theme on (but not in) the dominant key. Little "pin pricks" in the woodwinds—based on a variation of an earlier motive—dance over the smooth legato in the organ. Barber continues to work with these ideas with continual changes of color in both the organ stops and solo instruments in the orchestra—the English horn especially. After this lyrical section is extended, the organ begins a lengthy solo section beginning with typical, appropriate "wandering chromaticism" that snakes hither and thither. Finally a solo French horn and soft strings conclude this first section.

Moving on, the bombastic scales and arpeggios of the beginning are heard again, introducing an extended exploration and development of all the ideas so familiar by now. All kinds of interesting combinations of colors and textures in both the organ and orchestra answer back and forth, especially featuring light dancing woodwinds. But the tempo and volume gradually increase, growing into a mad dash that ends in a Stravinskian array of mixed meters and displaced accents—hammering away. A stentorian combination of the orchestra and full organ that artfully blends the main themes leads to a lengthy cadenza for the soloist. But what a cadenza! It is scored for the pedals alone, and a dazzling display of virtuoso footwork explores just about everything that one could do on that challenging keyboard. Along with a skilled suggestion of two-part voicing, Barber amply varies the colors in the stop choices along the way. The footwork in Bach's great toccata comes to mind, but taken here to a new level. The lengthy cadenza finally ends in a meditative quietude that leads to the re-entry of the orchestra, taking us to a kind of recapitulation of the thundering beginning of the work. A crushing dissonant cluster, of which a pipe organ is supremely the master, resolves at the conclusion to a dramatic—delightfully consonant—massive A-major chord.

"Toccata Festiva" is not only a showpiece for the impressive array of colors of the large pipe organ, but is an apt example of the discipline and integration inherent in Barber's musical style. He simultaneously crafts a virtuosic showpiece for the performer and the instrument, but in the context of a disciplined work informed by his legendary lyricism and an impressive economy of means. No mean feat that.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Among Bach's many cantatas, nearly all include one bit of "popular" music that people had heard before, something they already knew. That was a Lutheran chorale or hymn, which he often placed at the end of the work. The hymn texts he used were an affirmation of the theme of the day set to a melody that the people could leave church singing.

The popularity of Bach's cantata "Praise to the Lord" is not hard to understand, for its five movements form a collection of variations on one of the most enduring hymns of praise to God. Even after nearly three centuries Christians of most denominations in many lands still sing this venerable chorale with enthusiasm. Today we have the opportunity to enjoy hearing the stirring and inventive settings created by Bach for this great tune.

The cantata was first performed at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig on August 19, 1725, the Twelfth Sunday after Trinity in the Christian church year. It was probably written to complete Bach's second cycle of cantatas at St. Thomas, in which most works were based on chorale texts and tunes. The present example is unusual among Bach cantatas in that the chorale text and tune are found in all movements.

It is also unusual among Bach cantatas in that its text does not appear to be based directly on the assigned Sunday readings. The Epistle, 2 Corinthians 3:4–11, speaks of the ministers of the new covenant, and the Gospel, Mark 7:31–37, tells of the healing of the deaf man. Instead, Bach chooses a chorale text for his libretto, one that is always appropriate for worship and, in this case, one that is suitable for a festive civic event. Although no evidence has been found to support the widely held conjecture that assigns its performance to the Leipzig Council Election Service on August 25, 1725, its text of praise to God and its majestic construction would surely have made it suitable for such an auspicious occasion.

The text of the chorale was written by the Pietistic educator, Joachim Neander (1650–1680), who set his words to a tune of unknown origin that was later slightly revised when the hymn appeared in the modern English translation of Catherine Winkworth. Her translation is found in *Lutheran Book of Worship* (No. 543), where the five original stanzas have been condensed to four. A more literal English translation of the original German sung by the choir appears in the present worship folder.

The cantata has a festive scoring of 3 trumpets and timpani, 2 oboes, strings (2 violins, viola, cello), and *basso continuo* (bass and keyboard).

Carlos Messerli



Leading Worship Today

The Rev. David R. Lyle, leader

The Rev. David Heim, homilist

Grace Parish Choir

The Rev. Michael D. Costello, cantor

Chelsea Chen, organist

Nini Marchese, soprano

Emlynn Shoemaker, soprano

Brian Skoog, tenor

Peter Wesoloski, baritone

Susan Weber, Lois Harb,

Mike Gillespie, ushers

Bill Rohlfing, audio engineer

Tom Swanson, George Hogenson

livestream audio/video

Orchestra

Liz Deitemyer, Anna Jacobson, Johanna Johnson, horns

Charles Roberts, Sarah Heimberg, Wes Skidgel, trumpets

Tim Coffman, Rachel Castellanos, Tom Stark, trombones

Sarah Christiansen, timpani

Tina Laughlin, Jon Johnson, percussion

Leslie Short, flute/piccolo

Cynthia Fudala, flute

Christine Janzow Phillips, oboe

Meg Busse, oboe/English horn

Jennifer Woodrum, Patrick Rehker, clarinet

Dianne Ryan, Lynette Pralle, bassoon

Betty Lewis, Paul Zafer, Caroline Slack,

Kjersti Nostbakken, Sherri Zhang, violin I

François Henkins, Becky Coffman,

Dave Belden, Henry Zheng, violin II

Naomi Hildner, Ben Weber, Karl Davies, viola

Jean Hatmaker, Vicki Mayne, cello

Grace Heintz, Jonathan Cegys, double bass

Timothy Spelbring, continuo organ

Grace Parish Choir

Soprano

Katrina Beck

Sadie Beck

Judy Berghaus

Janel Dennen

Gwen Gotsch

Linda Grisham

Sarah Gruendler-Ladner

Kate Hogenson

Katrina Jurica

Nini Marchese

Ellen Pullin

Liz Rudy

Elyssa Salinas-Lazarski

Ngaire Whiteside-Bull

Alto

Karen Brunssen

Leanne Cribbs

Eunice Eifert

Catherine Hegarty

Cynthia Hill

Martha Houston

Johanna Johnson

Gaye Klopak

Christa Krout

Marilyn Moehlenkamp

Karen Rohde

Emlynn Shoemaker

Irmgard Swanson

Liz Thompson

Tenor

Paul Aanonsen

John Beed

Daniel Krout

Colin Krueger

John Rudy

Brian Skoog

Bass

John Bouman

Mark Bouman

Karl Brunssen

Jeff Cribbs

Glenn Johnson

David Kluge

Bill Pullin

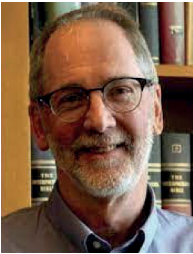
Peter Wesoloski

BIOGRAPHIES



Michael D. Costello, director, has served as Cantor at Grace since 2008 and Artistic Director of Consonance—Chicago Choral Artists since 2014. Prior to moving to Illinois in 2008, Costello served as a church musician at parishes in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and South Carolina, and served as a pastor at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Columbia, South Carolina. Costello graduated with a Bachelor in Sacred Music from Lenoir-Rhyne University in Hickory, North Carolina, and a Master of Divinity from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina. An accomplished organist known best for sensitive service playing,

Costello has published choral and organ works with several publishers, has sung as a baritone with St. Charles Singers and the Grant Park Music Festival Chorus, and performs regularly as a guest musician with other local ensembles.



David Heim, homilist, is former editor-in-chief of the *Christian Century*, an ecumenical journal on faith, politics, and culture. He wrote hundreds of signed and unsigned articles for the magazine and co-edited two volumes of its series *How My Mind Has Changed* (Eerdmans, 1991; Cascade, 2012). He has served several ELCA churches in the Chicago area and most recently has been interim pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Oak Park. He is part of a Lutheran-Jewish dialogue group in Chicago and was a member of the Christian Leadership Initiative at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem in 2016–17.



Betty Lewis, principal violinist, is an active violinist and violist in the Chicago area performing with groups as diverse as Broadway in Chicago shows and as an extra with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In the summer, she is on the faculty of the Birch Creek Music Performance Center and is a member of the Peninsula Music Festival, both in Door County, Wisconsin. She is the violin, viola and orchestra teacher at Grace Lutheran School and teaches violin and viola at the Chicago School of Violin Making.



Nini Marchese, soprano, has extensive experience performing concert works of the Baroque with Bach Society Houston, Denton Bach Society, and NOVA Ensemble. She was recently an Apprentice Artist with Opera NEO (San Diego, CA), appearing as Nerea in Nicola Porpora's *Polifemo* and in 2024 joined Painted Sky Opera (Oklahoma City) to perform Margret in Jack Beeson's *Lizzie Borden*. She was a 2023 Confidencen Opera & Music Festival Young Artist, performing Baroque arias in Solna, Sweden, and was in residence with Opera Idaho in 2023/24 as an Emerging Artist, appearing as Barbarina/Susanna cover in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and covering

The Soldier in *The Falling and the Rising*. An Illinois native, Nini attended the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign for her Bachelor of Music degree. She recently earned both a Master of Music degree and a Graduate Artist Certificate from the University of North Texas.





Emlynn Shoemaker, mezzo soprano, sings regularly with Lyric Opera Chicago, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and sang for four seasons with Consonance–Chicago Choral Artists. Emlynn’s upcoming engagements include appearing with Lyric Opera Chicago’s productions of *Medea*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, and *Carmina Burana* as a member of their chorus. Emlynn obtained her Master of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Kansas in 2021, where she studied with renowned mezzo-soprano Joyce Castle and graduated with honors. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Presbyterian College where she studied privately with Dr. Christian Elser.



Brian Skoog, tenor, performs in a wide range of operatic and concert roles. This season, operatic performances include his role debut as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* with Chicago’s Salt Creek Chamber Orchestra, Narraboth in *Salome* with Union Avenue Opera, Ralph Rackstraw in *H.M.S. Pinafore* with Winter Opera Saint Louis, and the title role in the world premiere of *The Higgler* by Margi Griebling-Haigh. In concert, Skoog makes appearances with the Bozeman Symphony (Mozart *Requiem*), Toledo Symphony (Beethoven *Symphony No. 9*, Handel *Messiah*), and West Shore Chorale (Mozart *Mass in C minor*). Skoog also recently appeared as Tempo in *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* and Lurcanio in *Ariodante* with Opera Neo, and as Mozart in Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Mozart and Salieri* with The Cleveland Opera.



Peter Wesoloski, baritone, first appeared with the Bach Cantata Vespers as Petrus/Pilatus in the 2017 performance of the *Johannes-Passion* and has been featured again in recent years, most notably as the bass soloist in last season’s performances of the *Mass in B Minor*. A well established local singer, he has been a long-serving member of the Chicago Symphony Chorus and Grant Park Music Festival Chorus, as well as frequently appearing with Chicago Opera Theater and the Florentine Opera Company in Milwaukee as both chorister and principal artist. His varied operatic credits range from *Don Giovanni* and *Papageno* to *Eugene Onegin* and include several world premieres. In addition to opera and concert work, Peter is dedicated to the art of song and sings regularly at the Liederstube in Chicago with pianist Eugenia Cheng. He has performed in salons and recitals in London, Amsterdam, Tokyo, Auckland and Sydney.



Chelsea Chen, Chelsea Chen’s dynamic playing has taken her to the far corners of the world. Her solo concerts offer a unique mix of traditional organ repertoire along with piano/orchestral transcriptions and contemporary music. The Los Angeles Times has praised her “rare musicality” and “lovely lyrical grandeur,” and a compositional style that is “charming” and “irresistible.”

Recent highlights include performing as soloist with the Singapore Chinese Orchestra (a traditional Chinese instrument ensemble), the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, the San Diego Symphony, and the Lou Harrison Festival Rutgers Orchestra at Trinity Wall Street. Recent and upcoming recital venues include the Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas Texas, St. Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, New York City, and Christ Cathedral, Garden Grove, California. She will also present concerts in Taiwan and northern Europe.

Chelsea originally hails from San Diego, where her formative music teachers were organists Leslie Robb (St. Paul’s Lutheran, San Diego) and Monte Maxwell (U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis) and pianists Baruch Arnon (New York City), Jane Bastien and Lori Bastien Vickers (San Diego). She studied under Paul Jacobs and John Weaver at The Juilliard School in New York, where she received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees. She also won the John Erskine Prize for academic and artistic achievement, awarded to one graduate per year. After college she moved to Taiwan under a Fulbright scholarship, whereupon she collected folk songs and wrote organ solo and chamber music. She returned to the U.S. to study with Thomas Murray in the Artist Diploma program at Yale University. From 2013–2017 she served as Organist and Concert Series Director at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft. Lauderdale. She currently resides in New York City as Artist-in-Residence at Emmanuel Presbyterian Church.

Ms. Chen has recorded multiple CDs: *Reveries* (2011) at Bethel University, *Live at Heinz Chapel* at the 2005 Convention of the American Institute of Organbuilders, *Eastern Treasures* with violinist Lewis Wong in 2010, and *Live at Coral Ridge* in 2014. Her playing has been aired on CNN.com, “Pipedreams” from American Public Media, Hawaii Public Radio, and Taiwan’s *Good News Radio*. Committed to new music, she has premiered works by composers throughout the world including Ola Gjeilo (Norway/USA), Yui Kitamura (Japan/USA), Paul Desenne (Venezuela), Roderick Gorby (USA), Vincent Rone (USA), and Viviane Waschbüsch (Germany). Her compositions are available exclusively from Wayne Leupold Editions, Inc. She performs regularly with cellist Joseph Lee. Together they released an album entitled *Explorations for Cello and Organ* in 2018. Learn more about her at chelseachen.com.



55th Year

2025–2026

BACH

Cantata Vespers



**Grace Lutheran Church
River Forest, Illinois**

**Sunday afternoons
Lecture at 3:00 p.m.
Prelude at 3:45 p.m.**

September 28

BWV 137

Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren

Praise to the Lord, the almighty King of creation

David Heim, Oak Park, Illinois, homilist

Samuel Barber: Toccata Festiva, op. 36; **Chelsea Chen**, organist

October 26

BWV 79

Gott der Herr ist Sonn und Schild *God the Lord is Sun and Shield*

L. George Detweiler, Norristown, Pennsylvania, homilist

J. S. Bach: Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D Major, BWV 1068

November 23

BWV 57

Selig ist der Mann *Blessed is the man*

Katie Hines-Shah, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Hinsdale, Illinois, homilist

Steven Wente, Concordia University Chicago, organist

December 31

BWV 28

Gottlob! nun geht das Jahr zu Ende *Praise God! Now the year comes to an end*

Performed as part of Grace's New Year's Eve Service of Holy Communion at 7:00 p.m.

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

January 18

BWV 72

Alles nur nach Gottes Willen *Everything according to God's will alone*

JoAnn Post, Lutheran Church of the Ascension, Northfield, Illinois, homilist

Kontras Quartet: Eleanor Bartsch, Sherri Zhang, Ben Weber, and Jean Hatmaker

February 22

BWV 168

Tue Rechnung! Donnerwort *Settle the account! Word of thunder*

Elizabeth Palmer, *The Christian Century*, Chicago, Illinois, homilist

Timothy Spelbring, St. Mark Lutheran Church, Mount Prospect, Illinois, organist

March 29

BWV 68

Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt *God so loved the world*

M. Daniel Carroll R. (Rodas), Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, homilist

David Chervien, Minneapolis, Minnesota, organist

April 19

BWV 146

Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal in das Reich Gottes eingehen

We must enter the kingdom of God through much sorrow

Nathan Klein, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, homilist

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

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

May 17

BWV 43

Gott fährt auf mit Jauchzen *God goes up with jubilation*

Robert George Moore, St. Thomas Church, Leipzig, Germany, homilist

Gerald Finzi: Violin Concerto; **Eleanor Bartsch**, violinist

GRACE
LUTHERAN
CHURCH
& SCHOOL

Free-will offering ■ Accessible facility

7300 Division Street, River Forest, Illinois ■ 708-366-6900 ■ bachvespers.org



SUPPORTERS

GUARANTOR

Jill and Martin Baumgaertner
Christopher Family Foundation
John Gustafson
Julie Krueger
in memory of Scott Krueger

SPONSOR

Gerlinde VanDriesen

BENEFACTOR

John Beed
John Bouman and Robin Schirmer
Karl and Daniele Bruhn
Karen Brunssen
Lawrence and Carolyn Garber
Susan Hammon
Case and Pat Hoogendoorn
Cynthia McAra
Elaine Pascu
Bill and Ellen Pullin
John and Liz Rudy
Rev. Robert and Bonnie Shaner
Alfred and Irmgard Swanson

PATRON

Bill and Barbara Urbrock

PARTNER

David and Gay Anderson
Carolyn Becker and Rev. Gale Schmidt
Rev. Robert and Margaret Burke
Franz Burnier
Cathy and Dave Delanoy
Tim Douma
in memory of Carolyn Douma
in memory of Virginia Folgers

Evelyn Grams
Linda Grisham
Joseph and Mary Lu Hanson
Jim and Martha Houston
Gary and Ackli Howell
Gordon and Naomi Rowley
Dorothy Wilkie
Dave and Connie Zyer

FRIEND

Anonymous
in honor of Carolyn and Larry Garber
in honor of Loretta and John Lattyak
Paul and Sharon Applegate
Kay Bowers
Dan Cattau
Janel Dennen and Marc Stopeck
Marilyn J. Fall
Carl Gruendler
in memory of Donna Gruendler
Bob and Kathy Hale
Don and Marion Heinz
Timothy Hildner
George and Kate Hogenson
in memory of Hans Dumpys
Robert Kernan
LaNell Mahler Koenig
John Kolb
Richard and Linda Martens
Janine Ptasinski
Ruth Rehwaldt
Allan and Letitia Spelbring
Rhea Sprecher
in memory of Rev. Keith Johnson
Doris Strieter
Elizabeth Thompson
Steve and Susan Wentz
William Wren

CONTRIBUTOR

Diane Amati
in memory of Sal Amati
Judy Berghaus
in memory of Len Berghaus
John and Katherine Bergholz
Nancy Brinkman
H. David and Alouise Brummer
Helen Costello
Ron Felt
Rev. Gregory Garmer
Daniel and Janet Gensch
Sandra Grams
Lois Harb
Catherine Hegarty
Rev. David Heim and Barbara Hofmaier
Rev. David and Erika Lyle
Rev. Tom and Bonnie Noll
Evangeline Rimbach
Scott and Charlene Schwar
Liene Sorenson

Thank you

The presentation of Bach Cantata Vespers is made possible by the contributions of many donors who are gratefully acknowledged in this worship folder. This listing of supporters acknowledges contributions to the 55th season of Bach Cantata Vespers, beginning at the conclusion of last season. If you see errors or omissions, kindly bring them to our attention by calling the Grace Business Office at 708-366-6900 so that we may correct our records and acknowledge you properly. Gifts received after September 15 may not be acknowledged in this worship folder. Thank you for your continued support of this ministry and for your prayers. *Soli Deo Gloria!*

Special thanks are extended to Karen P. Danford for her translation of the cantata text from German to English, to Dr. William E. Runyan for notes on the prelude, and to Gwen Gotsch for careful editing of materials in this worship folder. Thanks to Dr. Mark Buller for allowing us to use his edition of the Samuel Barber *Toccata Festiva* in today's service, and for the cooperation and permission of G. Schirmer and the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra.

Donate Now



All of the wonderful music that is made at Grace to the glory of God depends on the support of people like you. Please consider making a gift of any size at www.bachvespers.org or by sending a check made out to Grace Lutheran Church (with Bach Vespers in the memo line) to Grace at 7300 Division Street, River Forest, Illinois, 60305.

**GRACE
LU⁺HERAN
CHURCH
& SCHOOL**

7300 Division Street ■ River Forest, Illinois
708-366-6900 ■ www.bachvespers.org