



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.**

October 26, 2025

Gott der Herr ist Sonn und Schild

God the Lord is Sun and Shield

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.

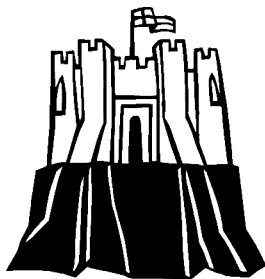
Please silence all cell phones and pagers.

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.

Reformation Sunday
October 26, 2025

EVENING PRAYER



PRELUDE

Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D Major, BWV 1068

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

Ouverture

Air

Gavotte I–II–I

Bourrée

Gigue

We stand, facing the candle as we sing.

SERVICE OF LIGHT



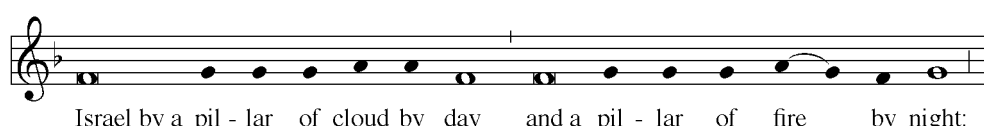
☐ Jesus Christ is the Light of the world, ☐ the light no darkness can over- come.



☐ 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 ❶. Men sing parts marked ❷. All sing parts marked ❸.

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

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, HERR Zebaoth!

How lovely are your dwelling places, O LORD of hosts!

Meine Seele verlangt und sehnt sich nach den Vorhöfen des HERRN;

My soul longs and yearns for the courts of the LORD;

mein Leib und Seele freuen sich in dem lebendigen Gott.

my body and my soul rejoice in the living God.

Denn der Vogel hat ein Haus gefunden und die Schwalbe ihr Nest, da sie Junge hecken:

For the bird has found a home, and the swallow a nest where she lays her young:

deine Altäre, HERR Zebaoth, mein König und Gott.

your altars, O LORD of hosts, my king and my God.

Wohl denen, die in deinem Hause wohnen; die loben dich immerdar. (Sela.)

Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they will praise you continually.

Wohl den Menschen, die dich für ihre Stärke halten

Blessed are those who make you their strength

und von Herzen dir nachwandeln,

and whose hearts are set on the pilgrim way,

die durch das Jammertal gehen und machen daselbst Brunnen;

they pass through the valley of tears and make it a place of springs;

und die Lehrer werden mit viel Segen geschmückt.

and the teachers are adorned with many blessings.

Sie erhalten einen Sieg nach dem andern,

They shall be won from victory to victory,

daß man sehen muß, der rechte Gott sei zu Zion.

so that it may be seen that the true God is in Zion.

HERR, Gott Zebaoth, erhöre mein Gebet; vernimm's, Gott Jakobs! (Sela.)

O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob!

Gott, unser Schild, schaue doch; siehe an das Antlitz deines Gesalbten!

O God, our shield, look, I beseech you; look upon the face of your anointed.

Denn ein Tag in deinen Vorhöfen ist besser denn sonst tausend;

For one day in your courts is better than a thousand;

ich will lieber der Tür hüten in meines Gottes Hause

I would rather be the keeper of the gates of my God

denn wohnen in der Gottlosen Hütten.

than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

Denn Gott der HERR ist Sonne und Schild; der HERR gibt Gnade und Ehre:

For God the LORD is a sun and shield; the LORD gives grace and honor:

er wird kein Gutes mangeln lassen den Frommen.

he will withhold no good thing from the upright.

HERR Zebaoth, wohl dem Menschen, der sich auf dich verläßt!

O LORD of hosts, happy is the one who trusts in you!

Silence for meditation is observed, then:

COLLECT

L Almighty God,
you heard the prayer of Christ, your chosen one,
and raised him to the lasting joy of your presence.
Help us in our pilgrimage toward you to love your Church
and to offer the sacrifice of praise at your altar,
that we may hasten to your home
and joyfully look upon your glorious splendor,
which we have seen in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

The offering is gathered.

OFFERING/VOLUNTARY: Now Thank We All Our God

Albert L. Travis
(b. 1940)

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

Please make checks payable to Grace Lutheran Church.

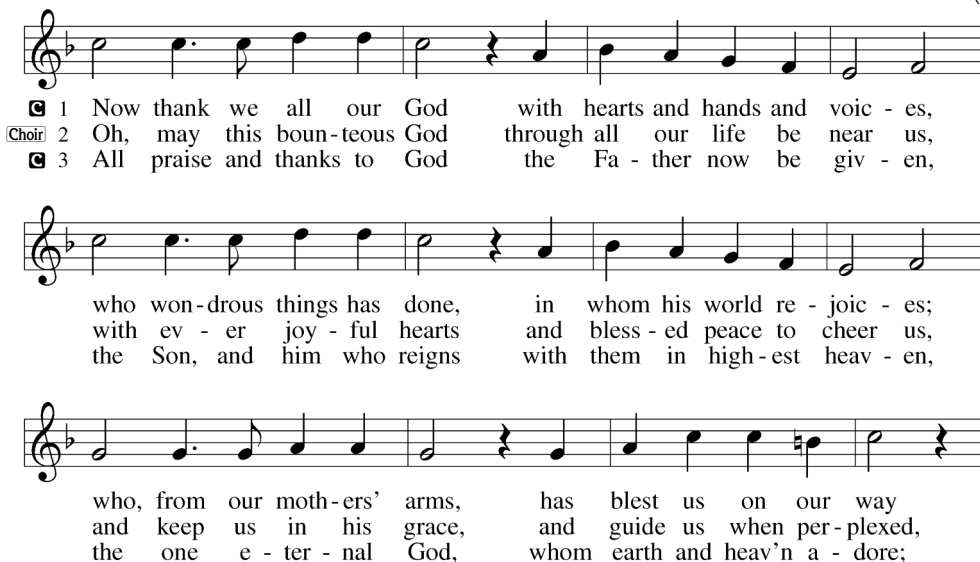
You may also contribute online at www.bachvespers.org.

Your generosity is appreciated.

We stand.

HYMN: Now Thank We All Our God

Concertato by Michael D. Costello
(b. 1979)



1 Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices,
Choir 2 Oh, may this boun-teous God through all our life be near us,
3 All praise and thanks to God the Fa-ther now be giv-en,
who won-drous things has done, in whom his world re-joice-es;
with ev-er joy-ful hearts and bless-ed peace to cheer us,
the Son, and him who reigns with them in high-est heav-en,
who, from our moth-ers' arms, has blest us on our way
and keep us in his grace, and guide us when per-plexed,
the one e-ter-nal God, whom earth and heav'n a-dore;





Text: Martin Rinkhart, 1586–1649; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1829–1878
Music: NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT, Johann Crüger, 1598–1662

✝ WORD ✝

We sit.

READING: 2 Thessalonians 2:3–8

Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction. He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you? And you know what is now restraining him, so that he may be revealed when his time comes. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but only until the one who now restrains it is removed. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, annihilating him by the manifestation of his coming.

📖 The Word of the Lord.

🙏 Thanks be to God.

READING: Revelation 14:6–8

Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth to every nation and tribe and language and people. He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

Then another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

📖 The Word of the Lord.

🙏 Thanks be to God.

HOMILY

The Rev. L. George Detweiler

CANTATA: *Gott der Herr ist Sonn und Schild*, BWV 79

Johann Sebastian Bach

*Translation of the German text and notes corresponding to each movement are below.
Background notes for the cantata are found on pages 20 and 21 in this worship folder.*

1. Chorus

Gott der Herr ist Sonn und Schild.

God, the Lord, is sun and shield.

Der Herr gibt Gnade und Ehre,

The Lord grants mercy and honor,

Er wird kein Gutes mangeln lassen den Frommen.

He lets the righteous lack for no good thing.

Bach captures the spirit of the festival in one of his most impressive cantata choruses. The movement features a splendid orchestration with voices joining in the presentation of memorable melodies that are often cast in complex constructions. It begins with an orchestral statement of the first theme by the horns (today we use trumpets) over an accompaniment of throbbing timpani and energetic chordal lines of the strings and woodwinds. The second theme, which begins with several firmly repeated notes, appears in instrument after instrument in the form of a fugue for woodwinds and strings. The horns return, playing the first theme simultaneously with the fugal theme of the other instruments.

The choir enters singing new chordal and imitative material while the instruments repeat the themes of the introduction. Soon the voices join the instruments in an intricately worked-out development of the fugal subject. The text, which expresses undoubting praise of God's righteousness, is taken from Psalm 84:11.



2. Aria (Alto)

Gott ist unsre Sonn und Schild!

God is our sun and shield!

Darum rühmet dessen Güte

Therefore our thankful souls,

Unser dankbares Gemüte,

Praise his goodness,

Die er für sein Häuflein hegt.

With which he tends his little flock.

Denn er will uns ferner schützen,

For he also will protect us,

Ob die Feinde Pfeile schnitzen

If enemies sharpen arrows

Und ein Lästerrund gleich billt.

And an evil hound should howl.

The words of Psalm 84 are slightly paraphrased to begin and conclude this lovely duet in 6/8 meter for alto and oboe. The florid line of the oboe and the graceful melody of the singer match each other nicely. The gentle spirit of the music is altered chromatically to illustrate the sharp arrows of the foes and the “evil hound” of the last line of the text. (*Lästerrund* could also be translated as the blasphemous or malicious dog.)

3. Chorale

Nun danket alle Gott

Now thank we all our God,

Mit Herzen, Mund und Händen,

With heart and mouth and hands,

Der große Dinge tut

Who does great things for us,

An uns und allen Enden,

Here and everywhere;

Der uns von Mutterleib

Who from our mother's womb,

Und Kindesbeinen an

And childhood on, has done

Unzählig viel zugut

For us countless good things,

Und noch itzund getan.

Both now and for all time.

All instruments join in a setting of the chorale *Nun danket alle Gott* (Now Thank We All Our God, LBW 533). The choir sings the first stanza of the hymn by Martin Rinkart (1586–1649) set to a tune by Johann Crüger that first appeared in 1647. The chorale harmonization is relatively straightforward. It is accompanied by the horns' theme from the cantata's opening movement. Along with many other Lutheran chorales of the 16th and 17th centuries this melody was a favorite of Bach, one that he utilized in other choral and organ works. In some circles the original hymn is considered the premier Lutheran song of praise and thanks for God's blessings.



4. Recitative (Bass)

Gottlob, wir wissen

Praise God, we know

Den rechten Weg zur Seligkeit;

The right way to salvation;

Denn, Jesu, du hast ihn uns durch dein Wort gewiesen,

For, Jesus, you have shown it to us through your Word.

Drum bleibt dein Name jederzeit gepriesen.

Thus is your name forever praised.

Weil aber viele noch

But there are many still

Zu dieser Zeit

Who at this time

An fremdem Joch

Must labor under foreign yoke

Aus Blindheit ziehen müssen,

Out of blindness.

Ach! so erbarme dich

Ah, so have mercy

Auch ihrer gnädiglich,

On them graciously,

Dass sie den rechten Weg erkennen

That they recognize the right way

Und dich bloß ihren Mittler nennen.

And call you alone their mediator.

A simply accompanied recitative in which the soloist expresses thanks to God for showing the believer the path to blessedness and prays for compassion on those who “labor under foreign yoke,” that is, those who are linked to unbelievers.

5. Aria (Soprano & Bass)

Gott, ach Gott, verlass die Deinen

God, oh God, abandon your own

Nimmermehr!

Nevermore!

Lass dein Wort uns helle scheinen;

Let your word shine on us brightly;

Obgleich sehr

Although enemies

Wider uns die Feinde toben,

Rage against us mightily,

So soll unser Mund dich loben.

So shall our mouths praise you.

In a lengthy duet accompanied by violins playing in unison, the singers implore God not to leave his people. The voices move together mostly in sweet parallel intervals. Only occasionally does one singer sing a passage imitative of the other. The independent violin line forms a filigree of arpeggios and prominent leaps that perfectly complement the singers' flowing lines.

6. Chorale

Erhalt uns in der Wahrheit,

Keep us in your truth,

Gib ewigliche Freiheit,

Give us eternal freedom,

Zu preisen deinen Namen

To glorify your name

Durch Jesum Christum. Amen.

Through Jesus Christ. Amen.

The closing chorale confidently expresses core thoughts of the Reformation in a prayer that we remain true to the faith and offer praise to God through Christ Jesus. The text is the last stanza of a hymn by Ludwig Helmbold (1575) set to a tune of Nikolaus Selnecker (1587). A variant of the triple-meter melody, but not the text, is still found in *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941). Bach sets the chorale for six voices—the usual four-voice choir with doubling instruments, plus a two-voice descant for the horns undergirded by timpani.



Silence is observed, then:

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

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

We stand.

MAGNIFICAT



C 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- ceit. He has cast down the might- y from their thrones,



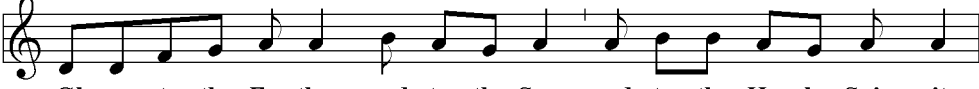
and has lift - ed up the low - ly. He has filled the


 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


 ☐ In peace, let us pray to the Lord. ☑ Lord, have mer - cy.

After each petition:

☐ ...let us pray to the Lord.


 ☑ Lord, have mer - cy.



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.

C Amen.

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.

HYMN: Church of God, Elect and Glorious Tune and Concertato by Michael D. Costello

1. Church of God, e - lect and glo - rious, Ho - ly
 [Choir] 2. God has called you out of dark - ness In - to
 3. Once you were an a - lien peo - ple, Stran - gers
 4. Church of God, e - lect and ho - ly, be the

na - tion, cho - sen race, Called as God's own spe - cial
 his most marv - lous light, Brought his truth to life with -
 to God's heart of love, But he brought you home in -
 peo - ple he in - tends, Strong in faith and swift to

peo - ple, Roy - al priests and heirs of grace:
 in you, Turned your blind - ness in - to sight.
 mer - cy, Cit - i - zens of heav'n a - bove.
 an - swer each com - mand your Mas - ter sends;

Know the pur - pose of your call - ing, Show to
 Let your light so shine a - round you That God's
 Let his love flow out to oth - ers, Let them
 Roy - al priests, ful - fill your call - ing Through your

all his might - y deeds; Tell of love that knows no
 name is glo - ri - fied, And all find fresh hope and
 feel the Fa - ther's care, That they too may know his
 sac - ri - fice and prayer, Give your lives in joy - ful

lim - its, Grace that meets all hu - man needs.
 pur - pose In Christ Je - sus cru - ci - fied.
 wel - come And his count - less bless - ings share.
 serv - ice, Sing his praise, his love de - clare.

Text: Based on 1 Peter 2:9-12, J. E. Seddon, and copyright © 1982 The Jubilate Group (admin. Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream, IL 60188). All rights reserved. Used by permission.
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DISMISSAL

📖 Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

🙏 Thanks be to God!

Leading Worship Today

The Rev. David R. Lyle, leader

The Rev. L. George Detweiler, homilist

Grace Parish Choir

The Rev. Michael D. Costello, cantor

Timothy Spelbring, organist

Maura Janton Cock, soprano

Sarah Ponder, mezzo soprano

Daniel Eifert, bass-baritone

Bill Rohlfing, audio engineer

Al Swanson, George Hogenson

livestream audio/video

Orchestra

Charles Roberts, Sarah Heimberg, Greg Strauss, trumpets

Tim Coffman, Brad Payne, trombones

Sarah Christiansen, timpani

Jean Bishop, Cynthia Fudala, flutes

Christine Janzow Phillips, Meg Busse, oboes

Lynette Pralle, bassoon

Betty Lewis, Paul Zafer, Caroline Slack, Lou Torick, violin I

François Henkins, Becky Coffman,

Kjersti Nostbakken, violin II

Naomi Hildner, Bridget Andes, viola

Jean Hatmaker, cello

Douglas Johnson, double bass

Timothy Spelbring, continuo organ

Michael D. Costello, harpsichord

Grace Parish Choir

Soprano

Katrina Beck

Sadie Beck

Judy Berghaus

Maura Janton Cock

Janel Dennen

Gwen Gotsch

Linda Grisham

Sarah Gruendler-Ladner

Kate Hogenson

Katrina Jurica

Ellen Pullin

Ngairé Whiteside-Bull

Alto

Karen Brunssen

Leanne Cribbs

Eunice Eifert

Catherine Hegarty

Cynthia Hill

Martha Houston

Johanna Johnson

Gaye Klopach

Christa Krout

Jennifer Luebbe

Marilyn Moehlenkamp

Sarah Ponder

Karen Rohde

Irmgard Swanson

Liz Thompson

Helen VanWyck

Tenor

Paul Aanonsen

John Beed

Daniel Krout

Colin Krueger

Blaine Willhoft

Bass

John Bouman

Mark Bouman

Karl Brunssen

Jeff Cribbs

Daniel Eifert

Glenn Johnson

David Kluge

Bill Pullin

BACKGROUND OF THE CANTATA

Gott der Herr ist Sonn und Schild was written for the Festival of the Reformation in 1725. Although the festival was not formally established among Lutherans for at least one hundred years after Martin Luther's death in 1546, in the intervening years the celebration of the reforms instituted by him had been commemorated annually in various ways and on various dates. In 1667, the 150th anniversary of Luther's posting of the controversial *Ninety-Five Theses* on the Castle Church door in Wittenberg, the Saxon Elector in German designated October 31 as the date to celebrate.

The commemoration of the religious reformation in Germany has always centered on the scriptural foundations of church teaching, practice, and institutional reform established by Luther. At first the day was observed as an opportunity to give thanks to God for the preservation of the true Word and for deliverance from foes of the faith. As time passed, in regions where Lutheranism was dominant, it became an important public and religious occasion, during which the chief tenets of faith clarified by Luther were extolled; often the distinctions between the Roman Catholic and Lutheran beliefs and practices were also emphasized. (Even today, many in America can remember when Reformation Day provided Lutherans with a special opportunity to give voice to these divisive distinctions.) Since the 16th century interest in the observance has waxed and waned, but the four centennials of 1617, 1717, 1817, and 1917, as well as the intervening semi-annual celebrations, were particularly significant.

At St. Thomas Church in Leipzig Reformation Day was observed with extended festive services of Holy Communion and prayer led by the Superintendent Pastor and Cantor Bach. Besides the assigned prayers, readings, and a sermon, many of the items of the liturgy were performed in special musical settings. These festive services with their elaborate musical components were especially impressive for the population in a day when the Lutheran church was often the place to be to hear the best and latest fine music of the time.

At the beginning of the service after the organ prelude a Reformation Day *Introit* motet was sung, followed by concerted settings of the *Kyrie* and *Gloria in excelsis* performed by the choir with instrumental participation. A setting of the *Gloria in excelsis* as the hymn "All Glory Be to God on High" (LBW 166) and the creed as the hymn "We All Believe in One True God" (LBW 374) were sung by the congregation, although the creed may have also been chanted in German. The cantata for the day was performed before the sermon, and both of these elements were based on the Reformation Gospel text. A concerted setting of the great Christian canticle of praise, the *Te Deum* (not normally found in a Holy Communion service), was sung with trumpets and drums.



Among other hymns included in the service were such grand classic chorales as “O God, Our Lord, Thy Holy Word” (*The Lutheran Hymnal* 266), “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in your Word” (LBW 230), “Now Thank We All Our God” (LBW 533), and “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” (LBW 228).

The cantata for today was first performed on Reformation Day, October 31, 1725, in Leipzig as part of Bach’s third complete annual cycle of cantatas. The Epistle for the day was 2 Thessalonians 2:3–8, with its exhortation to remain steadfast in the faith. The Holy Gospel was Revelation 14:6–8, which points out the need to fear and glorify God in the face of the judgment. Reference is also made in the Gospel to “fallen Babylon,” which could have been interpreted to mean foes of the Christian, although it was more likely interpreted by Lutherans as a reference to the Roman Catholic Church itself.

Bach must have been fond of this cantata, for he later used the music of the opening chorus and the soprano and bass duet to form two movements of the *Gloria in excelsis* in his *Mass in G major* (BWV 236).

The six movements of the cantata text, compiled by an unknown author, interpret the message of the Holy Gospel, emphasize the praise and thanks due to God for the strength of his love and faithfulness, and make a plea for God’s continued guidance and protection.

The cantata is scored for 2 horns (today we use cornets), 2 oboes, 2 flutes, strings (2 violins, viola, cello), *basso continuo* (keyboard and bass), soprano, alto, and bass solos, and choir.

Carlos Messerli

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

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.



Maura Janton Cock, soprano, is Adjunct Professor of Voice at Valparaiso University. She earned degrees from the University of Arizona (Tucson) and Minnesota State University-Moorhead. She has appeared as a soloist with the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony, the Tucson Symphony, the Southwest Michigan Symphony, and the Northwest Indiana Symphony. She has worked extensively with Robert Shaw and Helmuth Rilling. Recent engagements include performances with the Michigan Bach Collegium, Bach Chamber Choir and Orchestra of Rockford (Illinois), Miami Bach Society, Dayton (Ohio) Bach Society and the Cuesta Master Chorale and Orchestra (California). She has frequently been a soloist for Bach Cantata Vespers at Grace.



L. George Detweiler, homilist, was born and grew up in Bucks County, Pennsylvania where his first job was working on his uncle's dairy farm. After college he attended the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (M. Div.), and Princeton Seminary (D. Min.). He has served pastorates in New York City, Connecticut, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania. He has served both small and large congregations, and been an intentional interim pastor for most of the last 20 years. One of those interims was in a congregation with an annual series of Bach cantata vespers. A devotee of Bach's music and life, he enjoys playing Bach's organ music. He and his wife, Debra, have four grown children and nine grandchildren and reside in Norristown, Pennsylvania.



Daniel Eifert, bass-baritone, is a former member of the Chicago Symphony Chorus and the Grant Park Music Festival Chorus, where he also made appearances as a soloist. He has been featured with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, the Symphony of Oak Park and River Forest, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the Apollo Chorus of Chicago, and the San Luis Obispo Master Chorale of California. Daniel enjoyed a collaboration with the Bach Institute of Valparaiso University, where he appeared in performances of Bach's four major choral works. In October 2017, Daniel joined the VU Chorale with the Leipzig Baroque Orchestra for a celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in Germany. He earned degrees from Valparaiso University and the University of Minnesota. Daniel currently resides in Wisconsin with his wife and three children.



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.



Sarah Ponder, mezzo-soprano, enjoys a busy career as a soloist and versatile ensemble singer, performing with Chicago institutions such as Lyric Opera Chicago, Chicago Symphony Chorus, Chicago a cappella, William Ferris Chorale, and Music of the Baroque in addition to various appearances in the region. A passionate educator and performer, Ponder holds an outreach position with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra where she works with at-risk youth and has also recorded original works with Carnegie Hall's Lullaby Project. She has also performed several solo concerts with famed Maestro Riccardo Muti at the piano, bringing opera to new audiences.

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Special thanks are extended to Karen P. Danford for her translation of the cantata text from German to English and to Gwen Gotsch for careful editing of materials in this worship folder.

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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 72

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

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