



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.**

January 18, 2026

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

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.

The Second Sunday after Epiphany
January 18, 2026

EVENING PRAYER



PRELUDE

String Quartet No. 19 in C Major (“Dissonance”), K. 465

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

- I. Adagio – Allegro
- II. Andante cantabile

Kontras Quartet

We stand, facing the candle as we sing.

SERVICE OF LIGHT

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

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

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

Joy-ous light of glo - ry: C of the im - mor - tal Fa - ther;

heav- en - ly, ho - ly, bless - ed Je - sus Christ.

We have come to the set- ting of the sun, and we look to the eve- ning light.

We sing to God, the Fa-ther, Son, and Ho- ly Spir - it: You are wor- thy of

be - ing praised with pure voic - es for - ev - er. O Son of God,

O Giv - er of life: The u - ni- verse pro - claims your glo - ry.

The Lord be with you. C And al - so with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. C It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who led your people

Israel by a pil - lar of cloud by day and a pil - lar of fire by night.

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. **C A - men**

† PSALMODY †

We sit.

PSALM 141

Women sing parts marked I. Men sing parts marked II. All sing parts marked C.

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.

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

I 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.

MOTET: Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten, MWV A7

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy
(1809–1847)

1. Mein Gott, du weißt am allerbesten
My God, you know best of all
Das, was mir gut und nützlich sei.
What is good and useful for me.
Hinweg mit allem Menschenwesen,
Away with all human existence,
Weg mit dem eigenen Eingebäu.
Away with our own constructions.
Gib, Herr, das ich auf dich nur bau,
Grant, Lord, that I build only on you
Und dir alleine ganz vertrau.
And completely trust you alone.
2. Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten
Whoever lets the dear God reign
Und hoffet auf ihn allezeit,
And hopes in him at all times,
Den wird er wunderlich erhalten
God will wondrously sustain
In allem Kreuz und Traurigkeit.
In every cross and sorrow.
Wer Gott, dem Allerhöchsten, traut,
Whoever trusts God, the most exalted,
Der hat auf keinen Sand gebaut.
Has not built upon sand.
4. Sing, bet und geh auf Gottes Wegen,
Sing, pray, and walk upon God's ways,
Verricht das Deine nur getreu
Do your part faithfully
Und trau des Himmels reichem Segen,
And trust in heaven's rich blessing,
So wird er bei dir werden neu;
Then he will be renewed in you;
Denn welcher seine Zuversicht
For whoever puts his confidence
Auf Gott setzt, den verläßt er nicht.
In God, he will not forsake.

First movement: Israel Clauder; Second and fourth movements: Georg Neumark
tr. Karen P. Danford

Silence for meditation is observed, then:

COLLECT

¶ Almighty God, to whom our needs are known before we ask:
Help us to ask only what accords with your will;
and those good things which we dare not or, in our blindness, cannot ask,
grant us for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

¶ Amen.

The offering is gathered.

OFFERING/VOLUNTARY

String Quartet No. 19 in C Major (“Dissonance”), K. 465

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

IV. Allegro molto

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: Your Hand, O Lord, in Days of Old

Stanza 2 Setting by Stephen Lancaster



C 1 Your hand, O Lord, in days of old was strong to heal and save;
Choir 2 And lo, your touch brought life and health, gave speech and strength and sight;
C 3 Oh, be our great de - liv - 'rer still, the Lord of life and death;



it tri-umphed o'er dis - ease and death, o'er dark - ness and the grave.
and youth re - newed and fren - zy calmed re - vealed you, Lord of light.
re - store and quick - en, soothe and bless, with your life - giv - ing breath.



To you they came, the blind, the dumb, the pal - sied and the lame,
And now, O Lord, be near to bless, al - might - y as be - fore,
To hands that work and eyes that see give wis-dom's heal - ing pow'r,



the lep - ers in their mis - er - y, the sick with fe - vered frame.
in crowd - ed street, by beds of pain, as by Gen - nes - 'ret's shore.
that whole and sick and weak and strong may praise you ev - er - more.

Text: Edward H. Plumptre, 1821–1891, alt.

Music: OLD 107TH, Marot, *Trente Pseulmes de David*, 1542

† WORD †

We sit.

READING: Romans 12:17–21

[St. Paul writes:] ¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ²⁰No, “if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.” ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- L** The Word of the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

READING: Matthew 8:1–13

¹When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; ²and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.” ³He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I do choose. Be made clean!” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. ⁴Then Jesus said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

⁵When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress.” ⁶And he said to him, “I will come and cure him.” ⁷The centurion answered, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this,’ and the slave does it.” ⁹When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, “Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. ¹⁰I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, ¹¹while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” ¹²And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you according to your faith.” And the servant was healed in that hour.

- L** The Word of the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

HOMILY

The Rev. JoAnn Post

CANTATA: *Alles nur nach Gottes Willen*, BWV 72

Johann Sebastian Bach

(1685–1750)

Translation of the German text and notes corresponding to each movement are below.

Background notes for the cantata are found on pages 22 and 23 in this worship folder.

1. Chorus

Alles nur nach Gottes Willen,

All things according to God's will,

So bei Lust als Traurigkeit,

Both in pleasure and sorrow,

So bei gut als böser Zeit.

In good times and bad.

Gottes Wille soll mich stillen

God's will shall calm me

Bei Gewölk und Sonnenschein.

In clouds and in sunshine.

Alles nur nach Gottes Willen!

All things according to God's will,

Dies soll meine Lösung sein.

This shall be my motto.

The opening chorus is in free da capo form: the beginning material returns at the end, though not as an exact repetition of the first section. Bach's setting of the text emphasizes the word *alles* (all), at first by stretching the word out over two measures of sixteenth notes in the vocal entrances and later by almost shouting it from section to section in the choir. A lyrical line assigned to the sopranos (and to the altos in the repeat) describes "pleasure and sorrow," "good times and bad" as equally part of all that happens according to God's will. Even in the soothing calm of the middle section, the accompanying chords in the orchestra continue to repeat *alles*.

2. Recitative, Arioso, Aria (Alto)

O selger Christ, der allzeit seinen Willen

O blessed Christian, who at all times sinks his will

In Gottes Willen senkt, es gehe wie es gehe,

Into God's will, come what may,

Bei Wohl und Wehe.

In weal and woe.

Herr, so du willt, so muß sich alles fügen!

Lord, as you will, so must all things happen!

Herr, so du willt, so kannst du mich vergnügen!

Lord, as you will, you can please me!

Herr, so du willt, verschwindet meine Pein!

Lord, as you will, my pain vanishes!

Herr, so du willt, werd ich gesund und rein!

Lord, as you will, I become healthy and pure!

Herr, so du willt, wird Traurigkeit zur Freude!

Lord, as you will, sorrow turns to joy!

Herr, so du willt, find ich auf Dornen Weide!

Lord, as you will, I find pasture in thorns!

Herr, so du willt, werd ich einst selig sein!

Lord, as you will, I shall some day be blessed!

Herr, so du willt, – laß mich dies Wort im Glauben fassen

Lord, as you will, – let me seize this word in faith

Und meine Seele stillen! –

And calm my soul! –

Herr, so du willt, so sterb ich nicht,

Lord, as you will, I shall not die,

Ob Leib und Leben mich verlassen,

Though body and life forsake me,

Wenn mir dein Geist dies Wort ins Herze spricht!

If your Spirit speaks this word into my heart!

Mit allem, was ich hab und bin,
With all that I have and am
Will ich mich Jesu lassen,
I want to give myself to Jesus.
Kann gleich mein schwacher Geist und Sinn
Although my weak spirit and mind cannot
Des Höchsten Rat nicht fassen;
Grasp the counsel of the Highest;
Er führe mich nur immer hin
May he lead me always there
Auf Dorn- und Rosenstraßen!
Down the streets of thorns and roses!

The recitative, firmly grounded with a long bass note in the opening measures, becomes an arioso at the words "*Herr, so du willt.*" Each repetition of that prayer is paired with a melodic example of God's ability to turn sorrow to joy, concluding with "Lord, as you will, I shall not die."

A brief return to recitative provides the transition that leads right into the aria, as the vocalist proclaims the aria's main theme without an introduction. That opening statement returns four more times during the aria, emphasizing confidence in giving all of one's self to Jesus. The contrasting middle section depicts the good and bad of life with some "thorny" passages. The obbligato violin parts throughout imitate one another in the style of a formal fugue, with the fugue subject appearing eventually even in the continuo.

3. Recitative (Bass)

So glaube nun!

Now therefore believe!

Dein Heiland saget: Ich willt tun!

Your Savior says: I want to do it!

Er pflegt die Gnadenhand

He takes care that his merciful hand

Noch willgst auszustrecken,

Is always willingly outstretched;

Wenn Kreuz und Leiden dich erschrecken,

When cross and suffering terrify you,

Er kennet deine Not und löst dein Kreuzesband.

He knows your need and loosens the bands of affliction.

Er stärkt, was schwach,

He strengthens what is weak,

Und will das niedre Dach

And despite the lowly roof

Der armen Herzen nicht verschmähen,

Of your poor hearts he will not scorn,

Darunter gnädig einzugehen.

Graciously enterering into them.

A *secco** recitative proclaims Jesus' words from the gospel lesson, "Ich willt tun," (I want to do it) preparing for the soprano aria which begins with these words. Though the centurion in the gospel said, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof," here Jesus willingly comes under the "lowly roof" of the believer's heart.

**Secco recitative*: "dry" recitative, a type of speech-song, notated in rhythm but freely declaimed.

4. Aria (Soprano)

Mein Jesus will es tun, er will dein Kreuz versüßen.

My Jesus wants to do this, he wants to sweeten your cross.

Obgleich dein Herze liegt in viel Bekümmernissen,

Although your heart lies amid many troubles,

Soll es doch sanft und still in seinen Armen ruhn,

It shall rest gently and still in his arms,

Wenn ihn der Glaube faßt; mein Jesus will es tun!

If faith holds him fast: my Jesus wants to do this!

The soprano aria in C major is a bright contrast to earlier movements. Troubles appear in the minor mode of the middle section, but sustained notes give a feeling of contentment and peace. The aria ends with one final statement of “*Mein Jesus will es tun*” coming to rest over a repeated note in the continuo—the same low C that anchored the alto aria.

5. Chorale

Was mein Gott will, das g’scheh allzeit,

What my God wills, that happens always;

Sein Will, der ist der beste.

His will is what is best.

Zu helfen den’n er ist bereit,

He is ready to help all those

Die an ihn glauben feste.

Who believe firmly in him.

Er hilft aus Not, der fromme Gott,

He helps us in our need, this righteous God,

Und züchtigt mit Maßen.

And chastises with moderation.

Wer Gott vertraut, fest auf ihn baut,

Whoever trusts in God and builds firmly on him,

Den will er nicht verlassen.

Those he will never forsake.

A plain four-part setting of a chorale well-known to Bach’s listeners summarizes the cantata.

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- ceit. He has cast down the might - y from their thrones,
and has lift - ed up the low - ly. He has filled the



† PRAYERS †

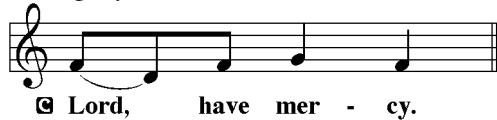
LITANY



▀ In peace, let us pray to the Lord. □ Lord, have mercy.

After each petition:

▀ ...let us pray to the Lord.



□ Lord, have mercy.

The litany continues:

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



▀ Al - le - lu - ia.

The litany concludes:

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

Silence is kept, then:

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



▀ To you, O Lord.

▀ 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.

▀ Amen.



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

■ Our Father, who art in heaven,
 hallowed be thy name,
 thy kingdom come,
 thy will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.

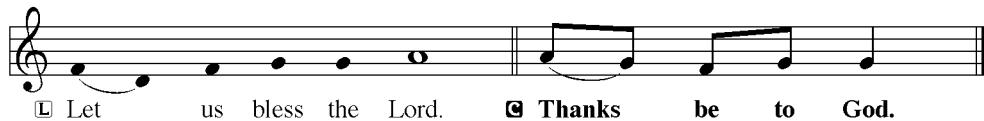
Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses,

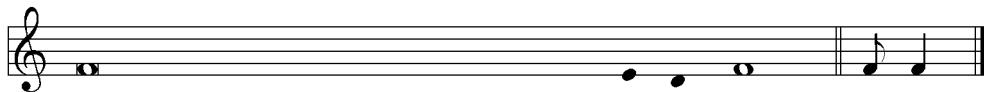
 as we forgive those
 who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,
 and the power, and the glory,
 forever and ever. Amen.

BENEDICAMUS DOMINO & BENEDICTION



Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.



The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you. Amen.



HYMN: God, Who Made the Earth and Heaven

Concertato by Carl F. Schalk
(1929–2021)

C 1 God, who made the earth and heav-en, dark - ness and light:
Choir 2 And when morn a - gain shall call us to run life's way,
Women 3 Guard us wak-ing, guard us sleep-ing, and, when we die,
C 4 Ho - ly Fa - ther, throned in heav-en, all - ho - ly Son,

you the day for work have giv - en, for rest the night.
 may we still, what - e'er be - fall us, your will o - bey.
 may we in your might - y keep-ing all peace - ful lie.
 Ho - ly Spir - it, free - ly giv - en, blest Three in One:

May your an - gel guards de - fend us, slum-ber sweet your mer - cy send us,
 From the pow'r of e - vil hide us, in the nar - row path - way guide us,
 When the last dread call shall wake us, then, O Lord, do not for - sake us,
 grant us grace, we now im - plore you, till we lay our crowns be - fore you

ho - ly dreams and hopes at - tend us all through the night.
 nev - er be your smile de - nied us all through the day.
 but to reign in glo - ry take us with you on high.
 and in wor - thier strains a - dore you while a - ges run.

Text: Reginald Heber, 1783–1826, st. 1, alt.; William Mercer, 1811–1873, sts. 2, 4, alt.; Richard Whately, 1787–1863, st. 3, alt.
 Music: AR HYD Y NOS, Welsh traditional

DISMISSAL

- Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
- Thanks be to God!

Leading Worship Today

The Rev. David R. Lyle, leader

The Rev. JoAnn Post, homilist

Grace Parish Choir

The Rev. Michael D. Costello, cantor

Timothy Spelbring, organist

Katelyn Lee, soprano

Sarah Ponder, mezzo soprano

Peter Wesoloski, baritone

Susan Weber, Lois Harb, ushers

Bill Rohlfing, audio engineer

Al Swanson, Liz Hanson

livestream audio/video

Orchestra

Rebecca Schalk Nagel, oboe

Christine Janzow Phillips, oboe

Kontras Quartet

Eleanor Bartsch, violin I

Sherri Zhang, violin II

Ben Weber, viola

Jean Hatmaker, cello

Douglas Johnson, double bass

Timothy Spelbring, continuo organ

Michael D. Costello, harpsichord

Grace Parish Choir

Soprano

Ann Anderson

Katrina Beck

Sadie Beck

Judy Berghaus

Gwen Gotsch

Linda Grisham

Kate Hogenson

Katrina Jurica

Katelyn Lee

Ellen Pullin

Ngaire Whiteside-Bull

Alto

Karen Brunssen

Leanne Cribbs

Eunice Eifert

Cynthia Hill

Johanna Johnson

Gaye Klopak

Christa Krout

Marilyn Moehlenkamp

Sarah Ponder

Karen Rohde

Irmgard Swanson

Liz Thompson

Tenor

Paul Aanonsen

John Beed

Daniel Krout

Blaine Willhoft

Bass

Douglas Anderson

John Bouman

Mark Bouman

Jeff Cribbs

Glenn Johnson

David Kluge

Richard Martens

Craig Mindrum

Bill Pullin

Peter Wesoloski

BACKGROUND OF THE CANTATA

BWV 72, *Alles nur nach Gottes Willen*, was first performed in Leipzig on the Third Sunday after Epiphany, January 27, 1726. The libretto is from Salomo Franck's cycle of cantata texts for the church year, *Evangelisches Andachts-Opffer* (1714–15). Franck (1659–1725) was Chief Consistory Secretary at the Court of Weimar, where Bach was employed from 1708–17. He wrote cantata texts as early as 1694 and published additional cycles for the 1715–16 and 1716–17 church years. All but two of the cantatas that Bach wrote at Weimar use texts by Franck, whom Bach scholar Alfred Dürr considers to be “the most gifted and original poetic talent with whom Bach collaborated.” The use of the Franck libretto suggests that BWV 72 may be a revision of an earlier Weimar cantata, or perhaps Bach selected the Franck text in 1726 in memory of the poet, who had died the previous year.

BWV 72 is one of four cantatas composed by Bach for the Third Sunday after Epiphany. The gospel lesson assigned to the day is Matthew 8:1–13, in which Jesus heals a leper and later, the servant of a Roman army officer. All four cantatas quote or paraphrase the leper's statement of faith in Matthew 8:2: “Lord, as you will, you can make me clean” (or, as the NRSV translates it, “Lord, if you choose”). All four concern themselves with believers' acceptance of the will of God in good times and bad. The other three focus heavily on death. BWV 156, first performed on the Third Sunday after Epiphany in 1729, begins with the words “I stand with one foot in the grave.”

Today's cantata however, is upbeat, even joyful. In both the bass recitative and the soprano aria which follows it, Franck's text highlights Jesus' response to the leper's request to be cured: “*Ich will es tun!*” I want to do it! I will do it! The opening chorus and the alto recitative and aria also focus on God's promises and actions rather than on human struggles to trust God's will.

Nevertheless BWV 72 has things in common with Bach's other cantatas for this day. The opening choruses of BWV 72 and BWV 73, composed two years earlier, are both in the key of A minor and begin with similar rhythmic patterns in the orchestra. (Did Bach look over the earlier score as he worked on “*Alles nur nach Gottes Willen*”?) A graceful musical motto associated with the words “*Herr, so du willt*” appears in the bass aria in BWV 73; Bach gives the same words a similar emphasis in the gentle arioso section of BWV 72's alto recitative. Musical-rhetorical devices found in today's cantata—the immediate transition from recitative to aria for the alto and the moving restatement of “Jesus wants to do it” at the end of the soprano aria—are also used in BWV 73.

The closing chorale of BWV 72, “*Was mein Gott will, das g’scheh allzeit*,” was the basis of BWV 111, the previous year’s cantata for the Third Sunday after Epiphany. Albrecht of Prussia, the first European ruler to establish Lutheranism as the official state religion of his lands, wrote this chorale text in 1547 in memory of the death of his wife, Dorothea. The melody was composed by 16th century French composer Claudin de Sermisy and first appeared in print in a collection of secular songs in 1528.

After presenting new cantatas for the Christmas celebrations and the first three Sundays after Epiphany in December and January of 1725–16, Bach took a break from performing his own works, presenting instead 18 cantatas by his cousin Johann Ludwig Bach. Very likely he was beginning work on his St. Matthew Passion for Good Friday of 1727.

Gwen Gotsch

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

Background notes on the cantata by Gwen Gotsch. 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.



Katelyn Lee, soprano, is regularly sought after to perform opera, art song, musical theatre, and oratorio. In the opera and musical theatre realm, Katelyn has sung in multiple productions at Lyric Opera of Chicago, including the title role in *Hansel and Gretel*. Other companies include Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Haymarket Opera Company, Chicago Opera Theater, Ozarks Lyric Opera, Cedar Rapids Opera, and Folks Operetta. In concert, Katelyn has sung a wide variety of repertoire. She can be heard in the role of Angel on Music of the Baroque's recently released live album of Handel's *Jephtha*, its first commercial recording in the United States. Other concert credits include Grant Park Symphony, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, New Philharmonic Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony, Indianapolis Baroque Orchestra, Chicago Master Singers, Apollo Chorus of Chicago, Elgin Symphony Orchestra, Champaign-Urbana Symphony, Fort Wayne Philharmonic Orchestra, and Chicago a cappella.



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.



JoAnn Post, homilist, has served as pastor of Lutheran Church of the Ascension, Northfield, Illinois, since October 2014. Prior to that call, she served parishes in Alaska, Georgia, Wisconsin, and Connecticut. In addition to her work as a parish pastor, Rev. Post is the author of two books and an occasional writer for *The Christian Century*. She is actively involved with two multi-congregation initiatives: the Glenbrook Parish, a consortium of five ELCA congregations in Northfield Township, and the Willow Road Congregations, an ecumenical consortium of four congregations in Northfield. She has served on the Metro Chicago Synod Council and its executive team. She has also served on the board of Lutheran Campus Ministry–Northwestern University. Rev. Post is married to the Rev. Dr. James Nieman, formerly president of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC). Together, they have two adult daughters and a grandson.



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.



Kontras Quartet boldly explores the evolving role of chamber music in the new millennium. Equally committed to time-honored classics, contemporary compositions, and genre-bending collaborations, Kontras strives to continually enrich the string quartet art form, expand audiences, and champion diverse voices.

Formed in 2009, the “superb Chicago-based ensemble” (Gramophone Magazine) has become known for its vibrant and nuanced performances, “crisp precision” (Palm Beach Daily News), “superlative artistry” (CVNC Arts Journal), and a passion for exploring the folk roots of classical music. Kontras’s “enjoyable musical personality” (Fanfare Magazine) and welcoming, friendly approach to the recital stage have attracted audiences near and far for over fifteen years. Kontras means ‘contrasts’ in the Afrikaans language – fitting for a string ensemble whose colorful repertoire spans centuries, genres, and continents.

Kontras Quartet’s recent engagements include international tours of South Africa and Europe, broadcasts on classical radio stations nationwide (including Performance Today and a 3-month residency with Chicago’s WFMT 98.7 FM), performances at Chicago’s Symphony Center and the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., and television appearances on NBC and PBS. Kontras served as Artists in Residence with San Diego’s Art of Elan from 2018–2021, commissioning and premiering multiple new works, and collaborating with numerous artists including Malashock Dance and Branford Marsalis.

2024’s “All Made of Stories” on MSR Classics is Kontras’s fifth studio album. The first, “Origins,” also on MSR Classics, features music honoring the diversity of the founding members’ home countries. 2013’s “Lucid Dreamer,” a Chamber Music America commission, treads the line between classical and American folk music and invigorated Kontras’ now ongoing collaboration and friendship with the esteemed Kruger Brothers trio. 2017’s “Roan Mountain Suite” and 2023’s “Moonshine Sonata” are also Kruger collaborations. Other notable projects for the Kontras/Kruger pairing include national and international tours, performances at Merlefest and Telluride festivals, and an appearance on Late Night with David Letterman with Steve Martin on banjo.

All four Kontras members are passionate music educators. Currently holding faculty positions at Elmhurst University, Kontras served as Quartet in Residence at Western Michigan University from 2014 through 2020. The group has held short-term teaching residencies at the University of Chicago, University of California–San Diego, University of Oregon, and many others. In 2016, Kontras received a grant from the Boeing Company to perform outreach programs for thousands of students across the Chicagoland area. Kontras travels to Virginia each summer for their beloved Kontras Quartet Chamber Music institute, which teaches the joy of the string quartet to advanced students and adult amateur learners against the beautiful backdrop of the Appalachian Mountains.

Kontras Quartet gained early acclaim during a four-year chamber music residency with the Western Piedmont Symphony established through Chamber Music America’s Residency Partnership Program. While in North Carolina, the quartet made a significant community impact in the Hickory metro area with their innovative and interactive programming, performing for over 40,000 school-age and college students in addition to their popular recital series.

Kontras Quartet’s early mentors included the Vermeer and Juilliard Quartets.



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.

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 Cherwien, 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 fähret 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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