

Welcome to the 56th season of
Bach Cantata Vespers!

From the opening notes of the prelude to the final stanzas of the closing hymn, Bach Cantata Vespers are a time for contemplation, prayer, robust hymn-singing, and, above all, listening as the Word of God is proclaimed in the glorious sacred music of Johann Sebastian Bach.

We hope you will join us during the 2026–27 season. You'll hear festive cantatas composed to praise and honor God, as well as cantatas offering comfort in life's trials. The season's preservice music includes renowned harpsichordist Jory Vinikour playing a Bach harpsichord concerto in September and festive works for brass, timpani, and organ by Richard Hillert in May. We'll also be joined by outstanding guest organists throughout the year. The highlight of the season comes in March, with performances of Bach's St. John Passion on Palm Sunday weekend.

These worship services are, of course, free and open to all, but they require substantial resources to produce. Your generous gifts are crucial to the continued presentation of Bach Cantata Vespers. As we look ahead to another season, please consider supporting the series financially, by returning a check in the enclosed envelope or by making a gift online at www.bachvespers.org.

We are immensely grateful for the financial support we receive from all of you and look forward to seeing you in the fall.

Soli Deo Gloria!



The Rev. Michael D. Costello, Grace Cantor

www.bachvespers.org

Year at a glance...

September 27 BWV 148

Bringet dem Herrn Ehre seines Namens

Bruce K. Modahl, homilist; Jory Vinikour, harpsichordist
J. S. Bach: Concerto No. 1 in D minor, BWV 1052

October 25 BWV 194

Höchsterwünschtes Freudenfest

Brian E. Konkol, homilist
J. S. Bach: Concerto for Two Violins in D minor, BWV 1043
Richard Hillert: Prelude to Evening Prayer

November 22 BWV 71

Gott ist mein König

Carla Thompson Powell, homilist; Catherine R. Rodland, organist

January 24 BWV 3

Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid

Dan Heim, homilist; Kontras Quartet

February 28 BWV 159

Sehet! Wir gehn hinauf gen Jerusalem

Craig Mueller, homilist; Steven Wente, organist

March 20, 21 BWV 245

Johannes-Passion

Saturday, March 20, 7:00 p.m. (Preview lecture at 6:00 p.m.)
Sunday, March 21, 4:00 p.m. (Preview lecture at 3:00 p.m.)

Admission is free; free-will offering

April 25 BWV 134

Ein Herz, das seinen Jesum lebend weiß

Robert L. Shaner, homilist; Scott M. Hyslop, organist
Kapelle of Concordia University Chicago, guest choir
Charles P. Brown, conductor

May 23 BWV 129

Gelobet sei der Herr, mein Gott

Jennie English-Dumont, homilist
Richard Hillert: Three Pieces for Brass, Timpani, and Organ



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56th Year
2026–2027
BACH
Cantata Vespers



Grace Lutheran Church
River Forest, Illinois

BACH
Cantata Vespers

56th Year
2026–2027
BACH
Cantata Vespers

Grace Lutheran Church
7300 Division Street
River Forest, Illinois 60305



September 27 BWV 148

Bringet dem Herrn Ehre seines Namens

Bring to the Lord the glory due his name

The season begins with Bach's festive cantata for the 17th Sunday after Trinity, based on a gospel text about honoring the Sabbath. The first movement is a jubilant contrapuntal work for chorus, trumpet, oboe, and string orchestra. After a pair of virtuosic arias, the cantata concludes with an earnest prayer for guidance at all times.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

3:45 p.m. Orchestral/Harpsichord Prelude

J. S. Bach: Concerto No. 1 in D minor, BWV 1052
Jory Vinikour, Chalons-sur-Saône, France, harpsichordist

4:00 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Bruce K. Modahl, Elmhurst, Illinois, homilist

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, *Sicut cervus*, motet

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

Sarah Ponder, mezzo-soprano
Brian Skoog, tenor

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October 25 BWV 194

Höchsterwünschtes Freudenfest

Most highly desired festival of joy

Bach wrote this cantata for the dedication of a new Hildebrandt organ at the church in the small village of Störmthal. The first performance on November 2, 1723, was sung by members of the Leipzig Thomanerchor, with Bach's wife, Anna Magdalena Bach, as the soprano soloist. It was sung again in Leipzig on Trinity Sunday, 1724.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

3:45 p.m. Orchestral Prelude

J. S. Bach: Concerto for Two Violins in D minor, BWV 1043
Betty Lewis and Paul Zafer, violinists

Richard Hillert: Prelude to Evening Prayer

4:00 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Brian E. Konkol, Valparaiso University,
Valparaiso, Indiana, homilist

Vaclav Augustinas, *Cantate Domino*, motet

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

Carolyne DalMonte, soprano
Samuel Rosner, tenor
Jared Esguerra, tenor



November 22 BWV 71

Gott ist mein König

God is my king

An ambitious J. S. Bach, age 22, composed *Gott ist mein König* for the inauguration of the town council in Mühlhausen. The cantata shows the influence of Bach's 17th century predecessors, flowing seamlessly from one section to the next. Vocal and orchestral forces are divided into "choirs" heard from at different times in the cantata. Trumpet fanfares remind us that God is King, as the town council is lifted up and prayed for so that all may prosper.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

3:45 p.m. Organ Prelude

Catherine R. Rodland, St. Olaf College,
Northfield, Minnesota, organist

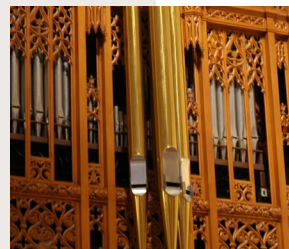
4:00 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Carla Thompson Powell, Metropolitan Chicago Synod,
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, homilist

Heinrich Schütz, *Verleih uns Frieden*, motet

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

Susan Nelson, soprano
Amanda Koopman, mezzo-soprano
Samuel Rosner, tenor
Aaron Wardell, bass-baritone



January 24 BWV 3

Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid

Ah, God, how much heartache

The cantata, composed for the second Sunday after Epiphany in 1725, is based on a 16th-century chorale of the same name written by Martin Moller. An exquisite opening chorus describes heartache and sorrow while subsequent movements remind the believer of the comfort to be found in Jesus. A duet for soprano and alto soberly demonstrates that care and worry can be overcome with joyful singing.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

3:45 p.m. Instrumental Prelude

Kontras Quartet, Chicago, Illinois

4:00 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Dan Heim, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church,
Oak Park, Illinois, homilist

Melchior Franck, *Wo Gott zum Haus*, motet

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

Carolyne DalMonte, soprano
Amanda Koopman, mezzo-soprano
Brian Skoog, tenor
Daniel Eifert, bass

February 28 BWV 159

Sehet! Wir gehn hinauf gen Jerusalem

Behold! We go up to Jerusalem

Bach composed this cantata in 1729 for Quinquagesima, the last Sunday before Lent. Cantatas were not performed in Leipzig churches during the penitential season of Lent, so Bach, anticipating Lent and Holy Week, used this Sunday to present music expressing grief and sorrow over Jesus' crucifixion. The title comes from the gospel lesson for the day in which Jesus foretells his death. Children of Grace Lutheran School join us to sing the final chorale of this cantata.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

3:45 p.m. Organ Prelude

Steven Wente, Concordia University Chicago,
River Forest, Illinois, organist

4:00 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Craig Mueller, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church,
Chicago, Illinois, homilist

Ludwig Senfl, *Non moriar sed vivam*, motet

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

Cassidy Smith, mezzo-soprano
Matthew Dean, tenor
Peter Wesoloski, baritone

Saturday, March 20, 7:00 p.m. BWV 245 Sunday, March 21, 4:00 p.m.

Johannes-Passion

St. John Passion

Bach composed his St. John Passion during his first year in Leipzig. It was first performed at the St. Nicholas Church on Good Friday, April 7, 1724. Recitatives and arias dramatize the scripture text while poetic arias reflect on the meaning of Christ's Passion for us.

The Passion will be presented in concert without intermission. Admission is free; a free-will offering will be received.

Saturday, March 20, 7:00 p.m. (Preview lecture at 6:00 p.m.)
Sunday, March 21, 4:00 p.m. (Preview lecture at 3:00 p.m.)

Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus and Orchestra
in collaboration with Consonance-Chicago Choral Artists

Grace Cantor Michael D. Costello, conducting

Hoss Brock, tenor (Evangelist)
Aaron Wardell, bass-baritone (Jesus)
Peter Wesoloski, baritone (Peter/Pilate)
Carolyne DalMonte, soprano
Sarah Ponder, mezzo-soprano
Brian Skoog, tenor
Daniel Eifert, bass

Pre-concert lecture by Carl Grapentine in the Sanctuary one hour prior to each performance.



April 25 BWV 134

Ein Herz, das seinen Jesum lebend weiß

A heart that knows its Jesus is living

In 1724, after the premiere of his St. John Passion and the busyness of Easter, Bach reworked a secular cantata composed in 1719 in Cöthen for services on Easter Tuesday. Joyful dance rhythms celebrate the risen Christ and his victory over death. The final chorus, "*Erschallet, ihr Himmel!*" ("Resound, you heavens") is a fitting summation of the three-day celebration of Jesus' resurrection.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

3:45 p.m. Organ Prelude

Scott M. Hyslop, Zion Lutheran Church and School,
Dallas, Texas, organist

4:00 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Robert L. Shaner, Hinsdale, Illinois, homilist

Johann Sebastian Bach, *Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg*,
from BWV 4, motet

Kapelle of Concordia University Chicago, guest choir
Charles P. Brown, conducting

Elizabeth Frey, mezzo-soprano
Brian Skoog, tenor

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May 23 BWV 129

Gelobet sei der Herr, mein Gott

Praised be the Lord, my God

Written for Trinity Sunday in 1724, Bach uses the text of Johann Olearius's 1665 hymn "*Gelobet sei der Herr, mein Gott*" to create a five-movement chorale cantata. The festive opening chorus, three buoyant arias, and a concluding four-part chorale all join in jubilant praise of the Triune God.

3:00 p.m. Cantata Preview Lecture

3:45 p.m. Instrumental Prelude

Richard Hillert: Three Pieces for Brass, Timpani,
and Organ

4:00 p.m. Bach Cantata Vespers

Jennie English-Dumont, Bethlehem Lutheran Church,
Chicago, Illinois, homilist

Andreas Hammerschmidt, *Heilig ist der Herr*, motet

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

Susan Nelson, soprano
Amanda Koopman, mezzo-soprano
Peter Wesoloski, baritone