



56th Year
2026–2027

BACH

Cantata Vespers



**Grace Lutheran Church
River Forest, Illinois**

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

October 25, 2026

Höchstewünschtes Freudenfest

Most highly desired festival of joy

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.

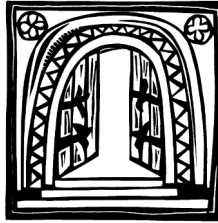
Recording or photography of any kind during the service is strictly forbidden.

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



Reformation Sunday
October 25, 2026

EVENING PRAYER



PRELUDE

Concerto No. 1 in D minor, BWV 1043

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

- I. Vivace
- II. Largo ma non tanto
- III. Allegro

Betty Lewis and Paul Zafer, violinists

Prelude to Evening Prayer

Richard Hillert
(1923–2010)

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.

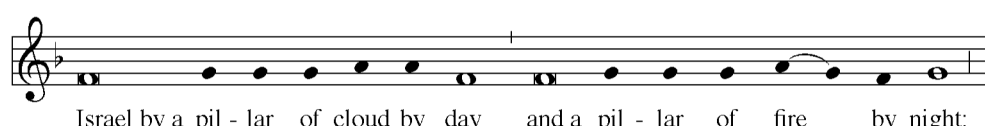
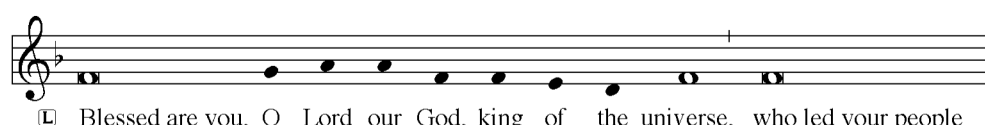
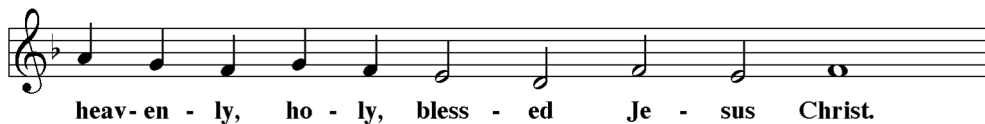


☐ Stay with us, Lord, for it is eve- ning, ☐ and the day is almost o- ver.



☐ 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.

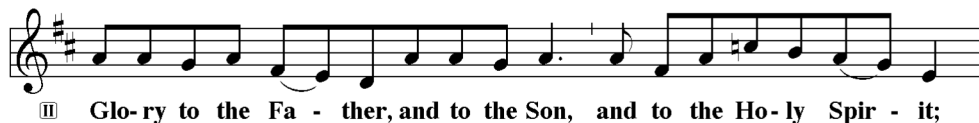
PSALM 141

*All sing parts marked **☐**.*

*Higher (treble) voices sing parts marked **I**. Lower (bass) voices sing parts marked **II**.*

I 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.





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.



Cantate Domino canticum novum,
Sing to the Lord a new song,
cantate Domino,
sing to the Lord,
cantate et benedicite nomini ejus,
sing and bless his name,
quia mirabilia fecit.
for he has done marvelous things.

Cantate et exsultate,
Sing and rejoice,
et psallite in cithara
and make music on the harp
et voce psalmi.
and with the voice of song.

Selected verses from Psalms 96 and 98

Silence for meditation is observed, then:

PSALM PRAYER

L Lord, we sing to you a new song, for your victory is ever new.
In the empty tomb you have given us a glimpse of your future,
and in your victory over death you have shown us
how we shall overcome the last enemy.
As the seas roar and the hills sing together,
we too will praise you for your great triumph,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever.

G Amen.

The offering is gathered.

OFFERING/VOLUNTARY: Prelude in C Major, BWV 545a

J. S. Bach

The offering assists in defraying costs of the Bach Cantata Vespers ministry.
Please make checks payable to Grace Lutheran Church with "Bach Cantata Vespers" in the memo.
You may also contribute online at www.bachvespers.org.
Your generosity is appreciated.



We stand.

HYMN: When in Our Music God Is Glorified

Concertato by Michael D. Costello
(b. 1979)



- All** 1. When in our mu - sic God is glo - ri - fied,
Choir 2. How oft, in mak - ing mu - sic, we have found
All 3. So has the church, in lit - ur - gy and song,
Choir 4. And did not Je - sus sing a psalm that night
All 5. Let ev - 'ry in - stru - ment be tuned for praise;



and ad - o - ra - tion leaves no room for pride,
a new di - men - sion in the world of sound,
in faith and love, through cen - tu - ries of wrong,
when ut - most e - vil strove a - gainst the light?
let all re - joice who have a voice to raise;



it is as though the whole cre - a - tion cried:
as wor - ship moved us to a more pro - found
borne wit - ness to the truth in ev - 'ry tongue:
Then let us sing, for whom he won the fight:
and may God give us faith to sing al - ways:



Al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000. Text © 1972 Hope Publishing Company
Tune and Arrangement: Michael D. Costello. Music © 2016 Michael D. Costello.

Newberry
10 10 10 4



✠ WORD ✠

We sit.

READING: Romans 11:33–36

[St. Paul writes:] ³³O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

³⁴“For who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who has been his counselor?”

³⁵“Or who has given a gift to him,
to receive a gift in return?”

³⁶For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.

℟ The Word of the Lord.

☩ Thanks be to God.

READING: John 3:1–15

¹Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” ³Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” ⁴Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” ⁹Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

¹¹Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”

℟ The Word of the Lord.

☩ Thanks be to God.



CANTATA – PART 1: *Höchstewünschtes Freudenfest*, BWV 194

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 26 and 27 in this worship folder.*

1. Chorus

Höchstewünschtes Freudenfest,
Most highly desired feast of joy,
Das der Herr zu seinem Ruhme
Which the Lord, to his glory,
Im erbauten Heiligtume
In the erected sanctuary,
Uns vergnügt begehen läßt.
Lets us celebrate happily.
Höchstewünschtes Freudenfest!
Most highly desired feast of joy!

The cantata begins with the dotted rhythms (long-short-long) of a French overture welcoming the arrival of this long wished-for festival day. The meter changes from 4/4 to 3/4 when the choir enters, one voice at a time with a fugal subject that places the word *höchster* (highest) on a high note. At the center of the movement a bass solo adds emphasis to the words of the text that specifically welcome the consecration of the organ and the church's renovated interior. The orchestra's French overture returns at the end of the movement; the oboes and violins have exchanged parts, with the strings now providing the swirling decorations and the oboes the steady sixteenth notes.



2. Recitative (bass)

Unendlich großer Gott, ach wende dich

Infinitely great God, ah, turn

Zu uns, zu dem erwählten Geschlechte,

Toward us, your chosen people,

Und zum Gebete deiner Knechte!

And to the prayers of your servants!

Ach, laß vor dich

Ah, let us bring before you

Durch ein inbrünstig Singen

Through ardent singing

Der Lippen Opfer bringen!

The offerings of our lips!

Wir weihen unsre Brust dir offenbar

We dedicate our hearts to you openly

Zum Dankaltar.

At the altar of thanks.

Du, den kein Haus, kein Tempel faßt,

You, whom no house, no temple may hold,

Da du kein Ziel noch Grenzen hast,

For you have no end or limits,

Laß dir dies Haus gefällig sein, es sei dein Angesicht

Let this house be pleasing to you; may your face be

Ein wahrer Gnadenstuhl, ein Freudenlicht.

A true throne of grace, a light of joy.

A *secco* recitative (i.e., “dry,” accompanied only by continuo) speaks the prayers and purpose of the day and introduces the theme of God’s light and grace which will appear in subsequent arias. Bach sets this recitative and the aria that follows in the upper part of the bass’s range, giving the music a light and graceful quality.

3. Aria (bass)

Was des Höchsten Glanz erfüllt,

What is filled with the splendor of the Most High

Wird in keine Nacht verhüllt,

Will not be veiled in night,

Was des Höchsten heiliges Wesen

What the divine nature of the Most High

Sich zur Wohnung auserlesen,

Has chosen for his dwelling

Wird in keine Nacht verhüllt,

Will not be veiled in night,

Was des Höchsten Glanz erfüllt.

What is filled with the splendor of the Most High.

In a spacious 12/8 pasturale for bass, oboe solo, and strings, Bach reassures worshipers that God's glory and light are always present and cannot be overcome by darkness. Glimmers of radiance in the oboe and a sustained low D for the word *Nacht* (night) help create the picture.

4. Recitative (soprano)

Wie könnte dir, du höchstes Angesicht,

How could, Most Holy Countenance,

Da dein unendlich helles Licht

— Since your infinite, brilliant light

Bis in verborgne Gründe siehet,

Sees into hidden foundations —

Ein Haus gefällig sein?

A house be pleasing to you?

Es schleicht sich Eitelkeit allhie an allen Enden ein.

Vanity creeps in everywhere on all sides.

Wo deine Herrlichkeit einziehet,

Where your glory enters in,

Da muß die Wohnung rein

There the dwelling must be pure

Und dieses Gastes würdig sein.

And worthy of this guest.



Hier wirkt nichts Menschenkraft,
Here human strength achieves nothing,
 Drum laß dein Auge offenstehen
So let your eyes stay open
 Und gnädig auf uns gehen;
And look with mercy on us;
 So legen wir in heilger Freude dir
In this way, in holy joy, we lay
 Die Farren und die Opfer unsrer Lieder
Young bulls and the sacrifice of our songs
 Vor deinem Throne nieder
Down before your throne
 Und tragen dir den Wunsch in Andacht für.
And bring before you our wishes in devotion.

The *secco* recitative states, in a cautionary minor key, that it is God's mercy, not human vanity, that makes a dwelling suitable for God's presence. The recitative ends in a major key, leading into the aria.

5. Aria (soprano)

Hilf, Gott, daß es uns gelingt,
Help us, God, that we succeed
 Und dein Feuer in uns dringt,
And your fire penetrates within us,
 Daß es auch in dieser Stunde
So that at this hour, too,
 Wie in Esaiae Munde
As once in the mouth of Isaiah
 Seiner Wirkung Kraft erhält
It sustains a powerful effect,
 Und uns heilig vor dich stellt.
And brings us blessed before you.

The soprano's music dances briskly and joyfully over the measured gavotte rhythms of the orchestra. Long melismas in the vocal part illustrate God's fire entering our lives. The text of the middle section refers to the vision of God in the temple in Isaiah 6, where an angel touched Isaiah's lips with a live coal, blotting out his sins. This is a *da capo* aria; the first section is repeated.

6. Chorale

Heilger Geist ins Himmels Throne,
Holy Spirit on the throne of heaven,
Gleicher Gott von Ewigkeit
Equal to God from eternity
Mit dem Vater und dem Sohne,
With the Father and the Son,
Der Betrübten Trost und Freud!
Comfort and joy of the afflicted!
Allen Glauben, den ich find ,
All the faith that I have found,
Hast du in mir angezündt,
You have kindled within me.
Über mir in Gnaden walte,
Rule over me in mercy,
Ferner deine Gnad erhalte.
And further, maintain your mercy.

Deine Hilfe zu mir sende,
Send your help to me,
O du edler Herzensgast!
O you noble guest of my heart!
Und das gute Werk vollende,
And complete the good work
Das du angefangen hast.
That you have begun.
Blas in mir das Fünklein auf,
Kindle within me the little spark
Bis daß nach vollbrachtem Lauf
When, after completing the course,
Ich den Auserwählten gleiche
I may be like those chosen ones
Und des Glaubens Ziel erreiche.
And reach the goal of faith.

The first part of the cantata concludes with the sixth and seventh stanzas of Johann Heermann's 1630 hymn *Treuer Gott, ich muss dir klagen*. Images of fire—*angezündt* (kindled), *Fünklein* (spark)—relate to the preceding aria. Mention of the Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son made the text suitable for Trinity Sunday as well as for the dedication of a church.



CANTATA – PART 2: *Höchsternünschtes Freudenfest*, BWV 194

J. S. Bach

7. Recitative (tenor)

Ihr Heiligen, erfreuet euch,

You holy ones rejoice,

Eilt, eilet, euren Gott zu loben:

Hurry, hurry to praise your God:

Das Herze sei erhoben

Let your heart be lifted up

Zu Gottes Ehrenreich,

To God's realm of glory,

Von dannen er auf dich,

From which he looks on you,

Du heilge Wohnung, siehet

You holy dwelling place,

Und ein gereinigt Herz zu sich

And he draws a purified heart

Von dieser eitlen Erde ziehet.

From this vain earth to himself.

Ein Stand, so billig selig heißt,

A stance, which is rightly called blessed,

Man schaut hier Vater, Sohn und Geist.

One sees here Father, Son and Spirit.

Wohlan, ihr gotterfüllte Seelen!

Come then, you God-filled souls,

Ihr werdet nun das beste Teil erwählen;

You will now choose the best part;

Die Welt kann euch kein Labsal geben,

The world can give you no refreshment,

Ihr könnt in Gott allein vergnügt und selig leben.

In God alone can you live content and blessed.

After the sermon, another *secco* recitative encourages listeners to find their contentment in God.

8. Aria (tenor)

Des Höchsten Gegenwart allein

Only the presence of the Most High

Kann unsrer Freuden Ursprung sein.

Can be the source of our joy.

Vergehe, Welt, mit deiner Pracht,

Vanish, world, with your splendor,

In Gott ist, was uns glücklich macht!

In God is that which makes us happy.

The tenor's G-minor aria is a gigue, with each of the four beats in the measure subdivided into a rocking triplet rhythm. The vocalist is accompanied only by the continuo group. The leaner sound perhaps is a reminder that the world's splendors do not bring happiness. The vocal line, however, has joyful bursts of notes illustrating *Freuden* (joy) and *glücklich* (happy). This is another *da capo* aria.

9. Recitative (bass and soprano)

Bass:

Kann wohl ein Mensch zu Gott im Himmel steigen?

Can a man really ascend to God in heaven?

Soprano:

Der Glaube kann den Schöpfer zu ihm neigen.

Faith can incline the Creator to him.

Bass:

Er ist oft ein zu schwaches Band.

It is often too weak a bond.

Soprano:

Gott führet selbst und stärkt des Glaubens Hand,

God himself guides and strengthens the hand of faith

Den Fürsatz zu erreichen.

To achieve his purpose.

Bass:

Wie aber, wenn des Fleisches Schwachheit wollte weichen?

But what if the weakness of the flesh would give way?

Soprano:

Des Höchsten Kraft wird mächtig in den Schwachen.

The strength of the Most High becomes mighty in those who are weak.

Bass:

Die Welt wird sie verlachen.

The world will laugh at them.



Soprano:

Wer Gottes Huld besitzt, verachtet solchen Spott.

Whoever possesses God's grace despises such mockery.

Bass:

Was wird ihr außer diesen fehlen!

What except for this will they lack?

Soprano:

Ihr einzger Wunsch, ihr alles ist in Gott.

Their only wish, their all is in God.

Bass:

Gott ist unsichtbar und entfernt:

God is invisible and far away.

Soprano:

Wohl uns, daß unser Glaube lernet,

It is good for us that our faith learns

Im Geiste seinen Gott zu schauen.

To behold our God in the Spirit.

Bass:

Ihr Leib hält sie gefangen.

Their body holds them captive.

Soprano:

Des Höchsten Huld befördert ihr Verlangen,

The grace of the Most High increases their longing,

Denn er erbaut den Ort, da man ihn herrlich schaut.

For he builds the place where he is seen in glory.

Both:

Da er den Glauben nun belohnt

For he now rewards the faithful

Und bei uns wohnt,

And dwells with us,

Bei uns als seinen Kindern,

With us as his children,

So kann die Welt und Sterblichkeit die Freude nicht vermindern.

Thus the world and death cannot diminish our joy.

Often in Bach's vocal works the bass represents the reassuring voice of Christ, but in this dialogue the bass soloist is the one asking the questions while the answers come from the soprano. They unite in a little duet at the end, with the soprano taking the lead and the bass imitating her line.



10. Duet (soprano and bass)

O wie wohl ist uns geschehn,

Oh, how wonderful it is for us,

Daß sich Gott ein Haus ersehn!

That God himself has chosen a house!

Schmeckt und sehet doch zugleich,

Taste and see at the same time,

Gott sei freundlich gegen euch.

That God is friendly toward you.

Schüttet eure Herzen aus

Pour out your hearts

Hier vor Gottes Thron und Haus!

Here before God's throne and house!

With the bass and soprano sometimes moving in imitation of one another but more often in parallel thirds and sixths, Bach celebrates God's intimate friendship with us. The two oboes follow patterns similar to the vocal lines, creating an ever-changing interplay of musical shapes in this duet, which is in *da capo* form.

11. Recitative (bass)

Wohlan demnach, du heilige Gemeinde,

Well, therefore, you holy people,

Bereite dich zur heiligen Lust!

Prepare yourself for holy delight!

Gott wohnt nicht nur in einer jeden Brust,

God dwells not only in each and every breast,

Er baut sich hier ein Haus.

He builds here a house for himself.

Wohlan, so rüstet euch mit Geist und Gaben aus,

Come then, equip yourselves with the spirit and gifts,

Daß ihm sowohl dein Herz als auch dies Haus gefalle!

So that your heart may please him as well as this house!

A final *secco* recitative sums up the lesson of the day: that it takes more than a new church to please God. Armed with the Holy Spirit, our hearts will please God as well.



12. Chorale

Sprich Ja zu meinen Taten,
 Say yes to my deeds,
Hilf selbst das Beste raten;
 Help me to advise what is best;
Den Anfang, Mittl und Ende,
 The beginning, middle and end,
Ach, Herr, zum besten wende!
 Ah, Lord, turn to the best!

Mit Segen mich beschütte,
 With your blessing shield me,
Mein Herz sei deine Hütte,
 My heart is your shelter,
Dein Wort sei meine Speise,
 Your word is my food
Bis ich gen Himmel reise!
 Until I journey to heaven!

The cantata concludes with the ninth and tenth stanzas of Paul Gerhardt's morning hymn *Wach auf, mein Herz, und singe*. Bach's chorale settings in this cantata are straightforward. One can imagine the congregation singing along at this point, joining in the final prayer with a heartfelt "*Sprich Ja.*"

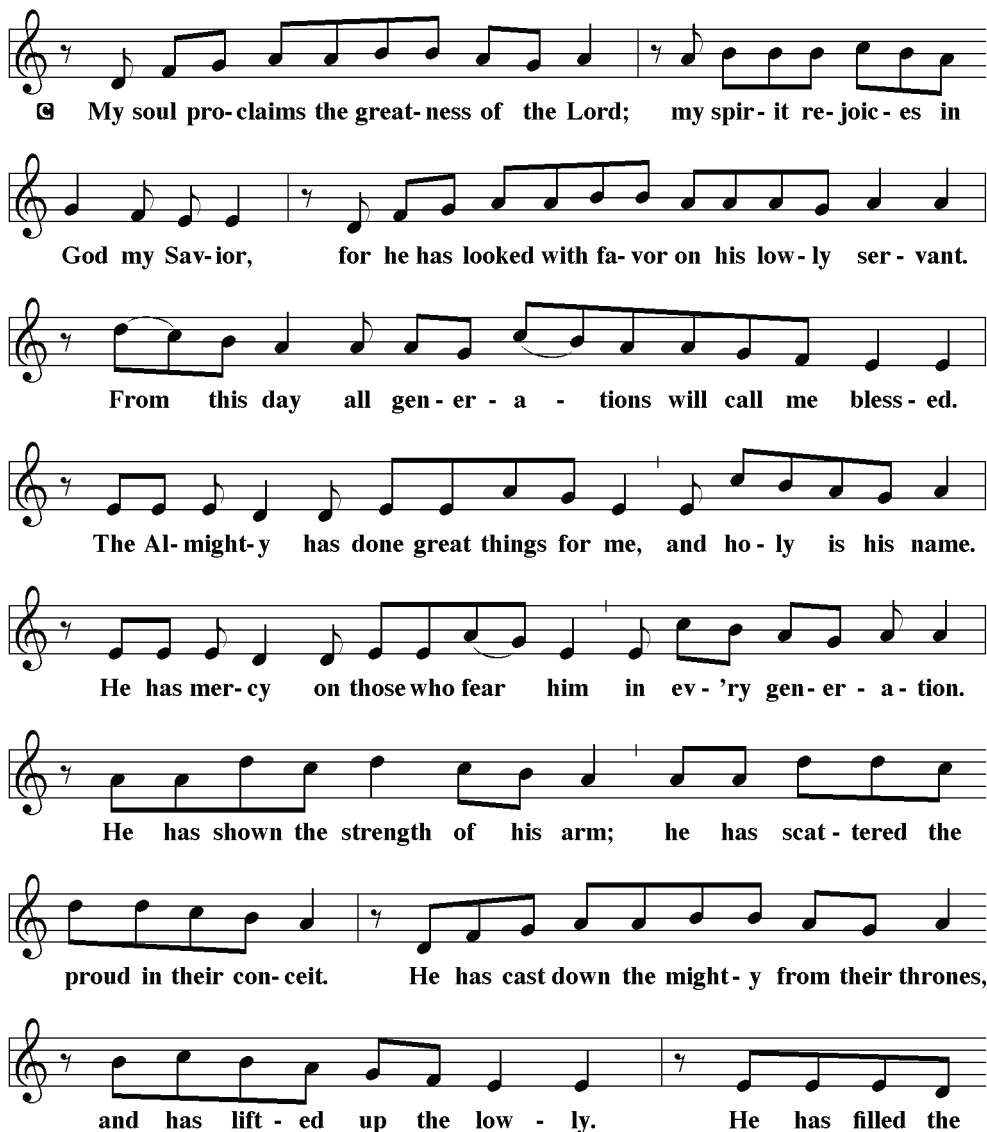
Silence is observed, then:

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.

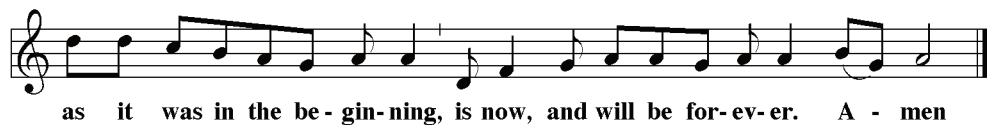
We stand.

MAGNIFICAT



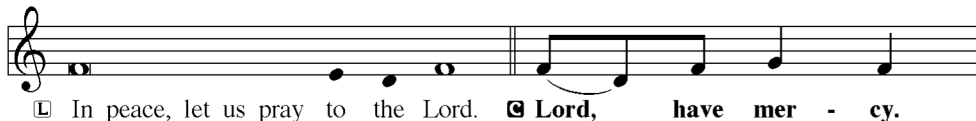
C My soul pro-claims the great-ness of the Lord; my spir-it re-joic-es in
God my Sav-ior, for he has looked with fa-vor on his low-ly ser-vant.
From this day all gen-er-a-tions will call me bless-ed.
The Al-might-y has done great things for me, and ho-ly is his name.
He has mer-cy on those who fear him 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





✠ 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.

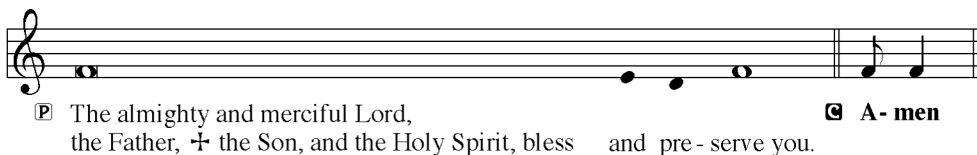
C Amen.



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

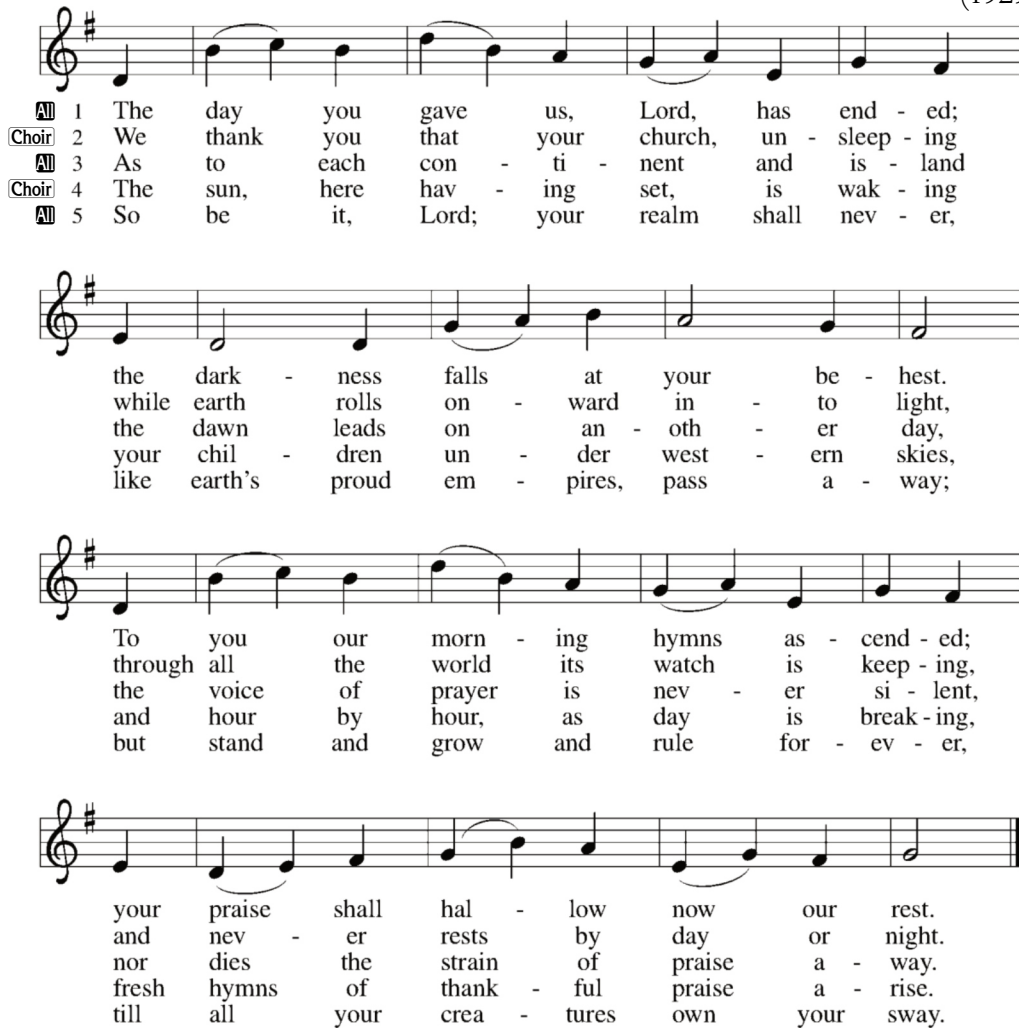
C Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

BENEDICAMUS DOMINO & BENEDICTION



HYMN: The Day You Gave Us, Lord, Has Ended

Concertato by Carl F. Schalk
(1929–2021)



1 The day you gave us, Lord, has end - ed;
Choir 2 We thank you that your church, un - sleep - ing
All 3 As to each con - ti - nent and is - land
Choir 4 The sun, here hav - ing set, is wak - ing
All 5 So be it, Lord; your realm shall nev - er,
the dark - ness falls at your be - hest.
while earth rolls on - ward in - to light,
the dawn leads on an - oth - er day,
your chil - dren un - der west - ern skies,
like earth's proud em - pires, pass a - way;
To you our morn - ing hymns as - cend - ed;
through all the world its watch is keep - ing,
the voice of prayer is nev - er si - lent,
and hour by hour, as day is break - ing,
but stand and grow and rule for - ev - er,
your praise shall hal - low now our rest.
and nev - er rests by day or night.
nor dies the strain of praise a - way.
fresh hymns of thank - ful praise a - rise.
till all your crea - tures own your sway.

Text: John Ellerton, 1826–1893, alt.

Music: ST. CLEMENT, Clement C. Scholefield, 1839–1904

DISMISSAL

 Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

 Thanks be to God!

*Join us for a reception in Fellowship Hall to meet the Rev. Dr. Brian E. Konkol,
sponsored by Valparaiso University.*



Leading Worship Today

The Rev. David R. Lyle, leader
The Rev. Brian E. Konkol, homilist
Grace Parish Choir
The Rev. Michael D. Costello, cantor
Carolyne DalMonte, soprano
Sam Rosner, tenor
Jared V. Esguerra, tenor
Susan Weber, Lois Harb, ushers
Bill Rohlfling, audio engineer
Al Swanson, Liz Hanson,
 livestream audio/video

Orchestra

Christine Janzow Phillips, Adele-Marie Buis,
 Natalie Swenson, oboes
Dianne Ryan, bassoon
Betty Lewis, Paul Zafer, Caroline Slack,
 Lou Torick, violins I
Francois Henkins, Becky Coffman,
 Kjersti Nostbakken, violins II
Naomi Hildner, Ben Weber, violas
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
Carolyne DalMonte
Janel Dennen
Gwen Gotsch
Linda Grisham
Kate Hogenson
Katrina Jurica
Marybeth Kurnat
Ellen Pullin
Liz Rudy
Ngaire Whiteside-Bull

Alto

Kjersti Anderson-Uribe
Karen Brunssen
Lois Cornils
Leanne Cribbs
Catherine Hegarty
Cynthia Hill
Martha Houston
Johanna Johnson
Gaye Klopach
Christa Krout
Jane Hinlicky Lauritsen
Jennifer Luebbe
Charlotte Meyer
Karen Rohde
Irmgard Swanson
Liz Thompson

Tenor

Paul Aanonsen
John Beed
Jared V. Esguerra
Ace Gangoso
Daniel Krout
Colin Krueger
Sam Rosner
John Rudy
Blaine Willhoft

Bass

Douglas Anderson
John Bouman
Mark Bouman
Jeff Cribbs
Glenn Johnson
David Kluge
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BACKGROUND OF THE CANTATA

On November 2, 1723, Johann Sebastian Bach traveled to Störmthal, nine miles southeast of his home in Leipzig, Germany, to perform special music for the dedication of the town's remodeled church and new organ. The organ had been built by Zacharias Hildebrandt, one of his first as an independent craftsman, and Bach, an acknowledged expert, had done the final examination of the organ, reporting to the authorities on November 2 that it was a satisfactory instrument.

Asked to provide music for the organ's consecration, Bach adapted a secular cantata he had composed earlier in 1723 at the Court of Köthen, before he had moved his family to Leipzig and taken up the position of Kantor at the Thomaskirche. This earlier cantata, the predecessor to BWV 194, appears to have been a large-scale tribute or homage to someone or some special occasion. To make it suitable for a worship service, Bach added two familiar chorales as well as recitatives before each aria, which themselves were given new texts.

The published text for the November 2 performance was dedicated to the man who owned the estate in which Störmthal lay and who had paid for the renovations and the organ: Herr Statz Hilmor von Fullen. His titles included Knight of the Holy Roman Empire and gentleman-in-waiting to the King of Poland. It is not known who authored the new words for BWV 194. The text may have come from Bach himself; new poetry would have to be closely matched to the existing music and this task may have been more satisfactorily completed by the composer. On the other hand, a local poet or pastor may have provided the text, especially for the lengthy recitatives which focus on God dwelling in our hearts rather than on the splendors of the church renovation. Bach or whoever provided the text was well versed in the Bible and Lutheran theology and used multiple scriptural references and images.

There is only one existing set of vocal parts from the Störmthal performance of the cantata, suggesting that it was originally performed with only a small ensemble of soloists. Some Bach experts suggest that Anna Magdalena Bach (1701–1760) was the soprano soloist in Störmthal. She had been a salaried court singer in Köthen when she married Johann Sebastian in 1721, seventeen months after the death of his first wife, and she may have sung the soprano part in the performance of the secular work in Köthen. Women were not allowed to perform publicly in the churches of Leipzig, but the situation in Störmthal may have been different. We know that Anna Magdalena returned to Köthen in 1729 to sing at Prince Leopold's funeral. In addition to her gifts as a soprano, she was a skilled musician and copyist; many manuscripts of Bach's music are in her elegant hand.



The cantata is made up of dance movements, similar to an orchestral suite: the opening movement is a French overture and the arias that follow include a pastorale, a gavotte, a gigue, and a minuet. With the added recitatives and chorales it has twelve movements and was performed in two parts, before and after the sermon.

The cantata's festive theme of praise, along with Trinitarian language of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, made it suitable for further performances on Trinity Sunday; parts or all of it were presented on that day in 1724, 1726 and 1731. Bach's son William Friedemann led a performance of *Höchstgewünschtes Freudenfest* in Halle in 1751, a year after his father's death.

The organ of Störmthal is still in use, mostly unaltered since Bach's time. A restorer in 1934 remarked that it was tuned about a whole tone lower than today's standard concert pitch, which accounts for the unusually high range of the Störmthal parts for soprano and bass; they were probably sung a whole tone lower than notated. When the cantata was performed again on Trinity Sunday in Leipzig in 1724, Bach altered the bass recitatives, providing alternative notes for the high passages, but he did not change the high notes in the bass aria.

The cantata is scored for strings, three oboes and continuo. Though performed at the dedication of a new organ, the cantata does not feature organ music. But Bach surely must have taken other opportunities during the service to sit at the organ bench and show off what the new instrument could do.

Gwen Gotsch

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 of Arts 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 frequently as a guest musician with other local ensembles.



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.



Paul Zafer, violinist, serves as concertmaster of the Chicago Sinfonietta and is a member of the Chicago Philharmonic and the Peninsula Music Festival Orchestra in Wisconsin. He previously held faculty positions at Wheaton College and Camp *Musical des Laurentides* in Quebec, Canada, and was a violin coach for chamber music at the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra and the orchestras at DePaul University. He currently works at Kenneth Warren & Son, Ltd., and is on the faculty of the Music Institute of Chicago Academy.



Carolyn DalMonte, soprano, is a versatile artist whose skills are equally at home in opera, oratorio, art song, and choral music. She brings her signature richness of vocal color, superb language skills, and extraordinarily sensitive musicianship to each of her musical endeavors. Ms. DalMonte is a voice teacher in downtown Chicago and anywhere in the world via Zoom. In the rare moments that she's not singing or teaching, she loves to take long walks, explore the arts in Chicago, and lounge in the sun with her dog, Apollo. Ms. DalMonte is a proud graduate of the University of Delaware and Westminster Choir College and is a student of Braeden Harris.





Brian E. Konkol, homilist, is the 20th president of Valparaiso University. He is focused on strengthening the University's mission to prepare students for leadership and service in church and society. Konkol brings an international background in ministry, education, and public engagement.

Originally from Amherst Junction, Wisconsin, he began his ordained ministry in Guyana with the Evangelical Lutheran Church, where he served congregations, lectured at the Lutheran Lay Academy, and co-hosted the nationally televised program *Word for the World*. His work there also included community initiatives focused on interfaith cooperation, youth development, and much more. Rev. Konkol later served in South Africa with the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission program, while assisting in parish ministry and lecturing at the Lutheran Theological Institute. His work included participation with international faith organizations at United Nations climate discussions.

Before coming to Valparaiso, Konkol held leadership roles in both congregational and higher education settings, including serving as Vice President and Dean of Hendricks Chapel at Syracuse University. Konkol holds degrees from Viterbo University, Luther Seminary, and the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. He and his wife, Dr. Kristen Konkol, have two children.



Samuel Rosner, tenor, is a performer and composer based in Chicago. His recent performances include Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* with Salt Marsh Opera and the tenor soloist in Stacy Garrop's *Terra Nostra* with the Elgin Symphony and Master Chorale. Samuel will be singing the role of Zev in the world premiere of Martin Brody's *The Carp* with Ecce Arts. Samuel will be premiering the role in Boston, followed by a performance at Villa i Tatti in Florence, Italy. He recently earned his Graduate Diploma at the Juilliard School, and previously attended the Dual Degree Program between Harvard University and New England Conservatory, in which he studied linguistics at Harvard and vocal performance at NEC. As a composer, Samuel has written vocal, instrumental, chamber, choral, and electroacoustic works, as well as numerous film scores.



Jared V. Esguerra, tenor, is a versatile Filipino-American performer whose repertoire spans opera, concert works, and musical theater. Last season, Jared reprised the role of Yakuside in *Madama Butterfly* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, debuted with the Bellingham Chamber Chorale as the tenor soloist in Mozart's *Vesperae solennes de confessore* and *Great Mass in C Minor*, and made his role and company debut as Alfredo in *La Traviata* with the Opera Company of Middlebury. Recent highlights include his Lyric Opera solo debut as Vince in *The Listeners*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Madison Symphony Orchestra, and his Cincinnati Opera debut in *Madama Butterfly*. Previous engagements include appearances with Chicago Opera Theater, Chautauqua Opera, Opera San José, and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, where he received the Richard Gaddes Career Award. Concert appearances include performances with the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and Chicago Sinfonietta.

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



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56th Year

2026–2027

BACH

Cantata Vespers



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River Forest, Illinois**

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

September 27

BWV 148

Bringet dem Herrn Ehre seines Namens

Bring to the Lord the glory due his name

Bruce K. Modahl, Elmhurst, Illinois, homilist

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

October 25

BWV 194

Höchsterwünschtes Freudenfest *Most highly desired festival of joy*

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

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

Richard Hillert: Prelude to Evening Prayer

November 22

BWV 71

Gott ist mein König *God is my king*

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

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

January 24

BWV 3

Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid *Ah, God, how much heartache*

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

Kontras Quartet, Chicago, Illinois

February 28

BWV 159

Sehet! Wir gehn hinauf gen Jerusalem *Behold! We go up to Jerusalem*

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

Steven Wente, Concordia University Chicago, organist

March 20, 21

BWV 245

Johannes-Passion *St. John Passion*

Admission is free; free-will offering

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

April 25

BWV 134

Ein Herz, das seinen Jesum lebend weiß *A heart that knows its Jesus is living*

Robert L. Shaner, Hinsdale, Illinois, homilist

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

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

May 23

BWV 129

Gelobet sei der Herr, mein Gott *Praised be the Lord, my God*

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

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

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