

Bach 44th Year Cantata Vespers 2014–2015

Grace Lutheran Church ■ River Forest, Illinois
Sunday afternoons ■ Prelude at 3:45 p.m.



September 28, 2014

Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir (BWV 29)

We thank you, God, we thank you

Welcome to Grace Lutheran Church

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

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.

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 28, 2014 † 3:45 p.m.

EVENING PRAYER



PRELUDE

Concerto in G minor for Organ, Strings, and Timpani

Francis Poulenc
(1899–1963)

Kenneth Miller, organ

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.**



☐ Joy-ous light of glo - ry: ☑ 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. ☑ And al - so with you.



☐ Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. ☑ 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.

III 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

☞ 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.

☞ **Amen.**

MOTET: *Verleih uns Frieden – Gib unsern Fürsten*, SWV 354–355

Heinrich Schütz
(1585–1672)

Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich, Herr Gott, zu unsern Zeiten.

Graciously grant us peace in our time, Lord God.

Es ist doch ja kein andrer nicht, der für uns könnte streiten, denn du, unser Gott, alleine.

There is indeed no other, who could fight for us, but you, our God, alone.

Gib unsern Fürsten und aller Obrigkeit Fried und gut Regiment,

Give to our princes and all authorities peace and good government,

daß wir unter ihnen ein geruhig und stilles Leben führen mögen

that under them we may lead a peaceful and quiet life

in aller Gottseligkeit und Ehrbarkeit. Amen.

in all godliness and honesty. Amen.

Martin Luther and Johann Walter

Silence for meditation is observed, then:

COLLECT

☞ O Lord,
your glory shines throughout the world.
We commend our nation to your merciful care,
that we may live securely in peace and may be guided by your providence.
Give all in authority the wisdom and strength to know your will and to do it.
Help them remember that they are called
to serve the people as lovers of truth and justice;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

☞ **Amen.**

The offering is gathered.

VOLUNTARY

Nun lob, mein Seel, den Herren (Now praise, my soul, the Lord)

Anton Heiller
(1923–1979)

*The offering assists in defraying costs of the Bach Cantata Vespers ministry.
Your generosity is appreciated.*

We stand.

HYMN: Rejoice, O Pilgrim Throng

Concertato by Carl F. Schalk
(b. 1929)



- C** 1 Re - joice, O pil - grim throng! Re - joice, give thanks, and sing;
C 2 With voice as full and strong as o - cean's surg - ing praise,
Choir 3 With all the an - gel choirs, with all the saints on earth
C 4 Yet, on and on - ward still, with hymn and chant and song,



your fes - tal ban - ner wave on high, the cross of Christ your king.
send forth the stur - dy hymns of old, the psalms of an - cient days.
pour out the strains of joy and bliss, true rap - ture, no - blest mirth.
through gate and porch and col - umned aisle the hal - lowed path - ways throng.



Re - joice! Re - joice! Re - joice, give thanks, and sing!

- Choir** 5 Still lift your standard high,
still march in firm array,
as pilgrims through the darkness wend
till dawns the golden day. *Refrain*
- C** 6 At last the march shall end;
the wearied ones shall rest;
the pilgrims find their home at last,
Jerusalem the blest. *Refrain*

- △ C** 7 Praise him who reigns on high,
the Lord whom we adore:
the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
one God forevermore. *Refrain*

Text: Edward H. Plumptre, 1821–1891, alt.
Music: MARION, Arthur H. Messiter, 1834–1916

We sit.

✠ WORD ✠

READING: 1 Timothy 2:1–6

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For

there is one God;
there is also one mediator between God and humankind,
Christ Jesus, himself human,
who gave himself a ransom for all —
this was attested at the right time.

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

READING: Matthew 6:25–33

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you — you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ Or ‘What will we drink?’ Or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

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

HOMILY

The Rev. John P. Trump



CANTATA: *Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir*, BWV 29
(We thank you, God, we thank you)

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 20–21 in this worship folder.*

1. Sinfonia

The cantata begins with a splendid instrumental overture that marks the festive nature of the occasion. It features a virtuoso part for solo organ that may have been played by the composer himself.

Bach must have been particularly fond of the music, for the organ part was adapted from the *Praeludium* of his *Partita for Unaccompanied Violin in E Major* (BWV 1006). The *Sinfonia* itself was adapted from the fourth movement of a wedding cantata of 1729 (BWV 120a).

After the arresting opening theme (which does not return in full again) the movement consists entirely of rapid organ passagework reminiscent of its origin as a violin solo. Regal trumpets appear throughout to punctuate the ceaseless motion of the organ line.

2. Chorus

Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir und verkündigen deine Wunder.

We thank you, God, we thank you, and proclaim your great wonders.

This grand fugue-like movement for voices and instruments forms the model of two choruses of the later *Mass in B Minor*: “*Gratias agimus*” and “*Dona nobis pacem*” (BWV 232). The two themes are presented several times in intricate relation to each other. Oboes double the violin parts throughout, while trumpets enter later to support and complement the voices. The text is based on Psalm 75:1.

3. Aria (Tenor)

Halleluja, Stärke und Macht

Hallelujah, power and might

Sei des Allerhöchsten Namen!

Be the names of the Most High!

Zion ist noch seine Stadt,

Zion is still his city,

Da er seine Wohnung hat,

Where he has his dwelling,

Da er noch bei unserm Samen

Where he, among our offspring, still

An der Väter Bund gedacht.

Remembers the covenant of our fathers

The tenor and a solo violin participate in a loosely organized duet with *basso continuo* (bass and keyboard) accompaniment. The violin is given long solo passages, but it also interacts with the singer. The text of the three-section *da capo* form praises God in the first part and identifies Zion, the city where God dwells, in the second section.

4. Recitative (Bass)

Gottlob! es geht uns wohl!

Praise God! We are faring well!

Gott ist noch unsre Zuversicht,

God is still our confidence,

Sein Schutz, sein Trost und Licht

His protection, his comfort and light,

Beschirmt die Stadt und die Paläste,

Shields the city and the palaces,

Sein Flügel hält die Mauern feste.

His wings hold the walls secure.

Er läßt uns allerorten segnen,

In all places we are blessed.

Der Treue, die den Frieden küßt,

Faithfulness, which kisses peace,

Muß für und für

Must, forever and ever,

Gerechtigkeit begegnen.

Meet with righteousness.

Wo ist ein solches Volk wie wir,

Where is there a people such as we,

Dem Gott so nah und gnädig ist!

To whom God is so near and merciful!

A recitativo secco (singer and basso continuo alone) presents the text that dutifully praises God for his protection of the city and the people whom he has blessed.

5. Aria (Soprano)

Gedenke an uns mit deiner Liebe,

Think of us with your love,

Schleuß uns in dein Erbarmen ein!

Enfold us in your mercy!

Segne die, so uns regieren,

Bless those who rule us,

Die uns leiten, schützen, führen,

Who lead, protect and guide us,

Segne, die gehorsam sein!

Bless those who are obedient!

This *Siciliano* movement for soprano, oboe, and strings asks God to remember his people affectionately and bless those who govern. The gentle and flowing character of the music perhaps recognizes another side of the nature of the pompous German *Ratsheer* (councilman) of the day. The movement is cast in *da capo* form with a repetition of the opening material.

6. Recitative (Alto and Choir)

Vergiß es ferner nicht, mit deiner Hand

Do not forget also, with your hand

Uns Gutes zu erweisen;

To show us what is good;

So soll

Thus shall

Dich unsre Stadt und unser Land,

Our city and our land,

Das deiner Ehre voll,

Filled with your honor,

Mit Opfern und mit Danken preisen,

Praise you with offerings and thanks,

Und alles Volk soll sagen: Amen!

And all the people shall say: Amen!

A brief *recitativo secco* setting of a prayer text concludes with a startling unison “Amen” for full choir.

7. Aria (Alto)

Halleluja, Stärke und Macht

Hallelujah, power and might

Sei des Allerhöchsten Namen!

Be the names of the Most High!

The movement is a transposition of the text and music of the first part of movement three of the cantata, with the tenor soloist being replaced by the alto and the violin part replaced by the organ.

8. Chorale

Sei Lob und Preis mit Ehren

Glory and praise with honor

Gott Vater, Sohn, Heiligem Geist!

Be to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

Der woll in uns vermehren,

In us he will increase

Was er uns aus Gnaden verbeißt,

What he, with grace, has promised,

Daß wir ihm fest vertrauen,

So that we firmly trust in him,

Gänzlich verlassn auf ihn,

Completely abandon ourselves to him,

Von Herzen auf ihn bauen,

Build on him within our hearts,

Daß unsr Herz, Mut und Sinn

That our heart, spirit and mind

Ihm tröstlich solln anhangen;

Should comfortingly cleave to him.

Drauf singen wir zur Stund:

Therefore we sing at this hour:

Amen, wir werden's erlangen,

Amen, we shall receive it,

Glaubn wir aus Herzens Grund.

If we believe from the depth of our heart.

The popular Reformation chorale melody, *Nun lob, mein Seel, den Herren* (“My soul, now praise your maker,” LBW 519) is set by Bach in an enriched form for all instruments and voices. The trumpets especially add a majestic touch at the close of the first and final chorale phrases.

The chorale text, based on Psalm 103, was written by Johann Graumann (1487–1541), an important Reformation-era theologian. The well-known German folk tune was first printed with this text in 1540 in a collection by Johann Kugelmann that was dedicated to Margrave Albrecht of Prussia, a prince and patron of music.

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:

☩ 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'S PRAYER

☐ 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,

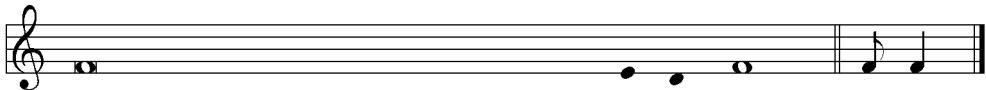
forever and ever. Amen.

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 pre-serve you.

☑ A - men



HYMN: Christ Is the King

Concertato by Paul Bouman
(b. 1918)



- ☐ 1 Christ is the king! O friends, re - jice; broth - ers and sis - ters,
Choir 2 Oh, mag - ni - fy the Lord, and raise an - thems of joy and
☐ 3 O Chris - tian wom - en, Chris - tian men, all the world o - ver,
Choir 4 Let Love's all - rec - on - cil - ing might your scat - tered com - pa -
☐ 5 So shall the church at last be one; so shall God's will on



with one voice let the world know he is your choice.
ho - ly praise for Christ's brave saints of an - cient days.
seek a - gain the Way dis - ci - ples fol - lowed then.
nies u - nite in ser - vice to the God of light.
earth be done, new lamps be lit, new tasks be - gun.



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

Text: George K.A. Bell, 1883-1958, alt.
Music: BEVERLY, Charles R. Anders, b. 1929
Text from *Songs of Praise, Enlarged Edition*, © Oxford University Press. All rights reserved.
Music © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

DISMISSAL

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

*Please join us for a reception in Fellowship Hall
to celebrate the beginning of our 44th year of Bach Cantata Vespers.*

BACKGROUND OF THE CANTATA

The cantata was composed for the Inauguration of the Leipzig Town Council, an annual event that was celebrated with a special service of Holy Communion on the first Monday after August 24, St. Bartholomew's Day. It was performed first in 1731 and again in 1739 and 1749. It is one of seven preserved cantatas that Bach composed for Council inaugurations. The festive nature of the music and the themes of praise, thanksgiving, and commitment of *Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir* (BWV 29) make it appropriate for this inaugural presentation of the 2014–2015 Bach Cantata Vespers Series at Grace.

The interrelation of government and the church in 18th-century Leipzig is well illustrated by the presentation of such cantatas. Johann Sebastian Bach was employed by three separate, but related bodies, namely, the Leipzig Town Council, the local church authorities, and the leaders of the University of Leipzig. Of these, the Council was the most important for Bach. But he also worked with and was governed by obligations toward the other two.

When Bach agreed to come to Leipzig from Cöthen in 1723, he signed an agreement with the Town Council that specified the conditions of his employment as Cantor, listing certain duties to be performed with and under the church and the University leaders. Portions of the agreement were vague, incomplete, or even misleading, which led to a large body of correspondence between Bach and various authorities on matters of teaching duties, salary and payments for service of various kinds, types of music to be performed, number of musicians or students Bach could engage in his ensembles, leaves of absence, scheduling of performances, and other matters. The long list of problems addressed stems also from differences of opinion among Council members, as well as Bach's overarching desire to create and perform an advanced type of music that often taxed the resources made available by the Council. In fairness to the Council, one should not overlook the fact that Bach was also a man of strongly-held convictions and an unquenchable desire to produce for Leipzig a "well-regulated church music" of high quality.

The numerous exchanges of lengthy hand-written correspondence between Bach and the Council (all intended to solve, or at least address such problems) are filled with the obsequious and deferential phrases common to the day which seem to cloud deep-seated differences of opinion. Read today, the exchange of documents causes one to wonder in amazement that the composer had any time left over to make music.

The inauguration of the Leipzig Town Council was celebrated in a festival Lutheran service of Holy Communion in which all of the musical resources of the community at Bach's command could participate. One can imagine that the attendant ceremony included all local magistrates and administrators vested in a way appropriate for one of the leading commercial and artistic cities of the land. In spite of any differences of opinion Bach may have had with the Council members, he no doubt saw the inauguration as a service of great importance. The music of the cantata, the chief music of the service, was designed to match the importance of the occasion.

The author of the text of the cantata is unknown. The work is scored for two oboes, three trumpets, timpani, strings (two violins, viola, cello), *basso continuo* (bass and keyboard), solo organ, solo soprano, alto, tenor and bass, and chorus.

Some of the music of the cantata may sound familiar to the listener, for it also appears in other works of Bach. Such parody was common in Bach's day, and it often extended from revising one's own work for re-use to incorporating the music of other compositions into one's own pieces as a way of paying tribute to another composer. The practice does not of itself indicate any lack of inspiration or effort by the composer.

Carlos Messerli





Douglas Anderson, baritone, is a long-standing member of Grace Lutheran Church and its choir. He has been a soloist in Grace's Bach Cantata Vespers since 1978 and has also been a frequent soloist with Chicago's Music of the Baroque. Dr. Anderson has appeared with many Chicago area ensembles and has performed several times in Evanston's Bach Week Festival. Dr. Anderson is a neurosurgeon and professor at Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood. He is married to Ann, who often performs as flutist at Grace. They are the parents of four children, all of whom have studied music.



Karen Brunssen, mezzo-soprano, has appeared with many of the major symphony orchestras in the United States and abroad. Ms. Brunssen has performed over 60 Bach cantatas and all his major works. She frequently sings for the Bach Cantata Vespers at Grace Lutheran Church where she is also a member of the Senior Choir. Ms. Brunssen is a member of the voice faculty and Co-Chair of Music Performance at the Bienen School of Music, Northwestern University. She is a frequent clinician/master teacher for professional organizations in the United States and at Cambridge University in England.



Michael D. Costello, director, has served as Cantor at Grace since June 2008. He has served as a church musician in several parishes and as a pastor at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Columbia, South Carolina. A native of Pennsylvania, he graduated from Lenoir-Rhyne University in Hickory, North Carolina, and from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina. He has published choral and organ works with several publishers, is Artistic Director of Chicago Choral Artists, serves on the Board of Directors for Lutheran Music Program, home of the Lutheran Summer Music Academy and Festival.



Kenneth Miller, organist, is is Associate Organist and Choirmaster at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Columbia, South Carolina and Instructor in Organ at the University of South Carolina. Miller is a native of North Carolina and is a doctoral candidate in organ performance at Yale University, where he was awarded numerous prizes for his organ-playing, musicianship, and scholarship. He is a graduate of Lenoir-Rhyne University, where he studied sacred music, organ performance, and composition.



Patrick Muehleise, tenor, collaborates with companies throughout the country, such as the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Spire Chamber Ensemble, Haymarket Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Chicago Arts Orchestra, and the Tucson Chamber Artists. His recent engagements include Bach's St. Matthew Passion, Mozart's Mass in C minor and Coronation Mass, Purcell's Dido and Aeneas, Handel's Messiah, Copland's The Tender Land, and Britten's Albert Herring. He recently performed David Lang's Little Match Girl Passion with Bella Voce Camerata, Wagner's Parsifal with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Bach's Magnificat, Haydn's Creation, and Mozart's Coronation Mass with Music of the Baroque.



Susan Nelson, soprano, holds degrees from the University of Illinois and the Eastman School of Music. In 2013 she tied for third place for the 2014 The American Prize in Vocal Performance, Friedrich & Virginia Schorr Memorial Award in the Professional Opera Division. She was also a 2014 Finalist for the Chicago Oratorio Award by the same organization, and is a recipient of a Career Encouragement Award from the MacAllister Foundation. Nelson's 2014–2015 season includes appearances with the Salt Creek Chamber Orchestra, the South Bend Symphony Orchestra, and the Bach Cantata Vespers performance of Bach's Mass in B Minor.



John P. Trump, homilist, is Senior Pastor at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Columbia, South Carolina. He graduated from Muhlenberg College in Pennsylvania, where he majored in English literature. He completed a Master of Fine Arts program in playwriting at Columbia University in New York City before going to Yale Divinity School for his Master of Divinity. Before moving to Columbia, Pastor Trump served parishes in New York City. He fills his time with playwriting, biking, and running to train for marathons.

LEADING WORSHIP TODAY

The Rev. John P. Trump, homilist

The Rev. Robert L. Shaner, leader

Grace Lutheran Church Senior Choir

The Rev. Michael D. Costello, cantor

Kenneth Miller, organist

Susan Nelson, soprano

Karen Brunssen, mezzo-soprano

Patrick Muehleise, tenor

Douglas Anderson, baritone

Greg Fudala, Ross Beacraft, and Candace Horton, trumpet

Tim Coffman and Brad Payne, trombone

Kyle Bellin, timpani

Christine Janzow Phillips and Nancy Hagen, oboe

Dianne Ryan, bassoon

Betty Lewis, Lee Joiner, Mark Agnor, Becky Coffman, and Dave Belden, violin I

Paul Zafer, Carol Yampolsky, Nina Saito, and Elisabeth Brathwaite, violin II

Naomi Hildner, Vannia Phillips, and Amanda Grimm, viola

Craig Trompeter and Vicki Mayne, cello

Judith Hanna, double bass

Laura Zimmer, continuo

Bach Cantata Vespers in Lawndale

by Gwen Gotsch



“The devil flees before the sound of music, almost as much as before the Word of God,” said Martin Luther back in the 16th century.

Musicians from the Bach Cantata Ministry joined the musicians and members of Harmony Community Church in Chicago’s Lawndale neighborhood for a devil-defeating concert and prayer service on Sunday afternoon, July 27, at 4:00 p.m.

The outdoor event, inspired by Harmony’s “Stop the Violence” Community Walks, featured a performance of Bach’s Cantata #80, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” based on the well-known “battle hymn of the Reformation.” Luther’s text reminds Christians that God’s word defeats the devil. “One little word can fell him,” said Grace’s Pastor Bruce Modahl, the preacher for the service. “That one little word is Jesus.” He also reminded the congregation that the devil is always prowling around and “that’s why we have to keep singing and praying and marching and working to make peace.”

Many Grace members and regular cantata-goers joined members of Harmony at the service, held outside under a big tent, on a beautiful, breezy summer afternoon. Harmony’s Praise Team led off the service, inviting the crowd and choir to stand and sing along. The closing prayers included words from a young Spoken Word artist as well as Bach’s “Dona nobis pacem” (Grant us peace) from the B-Minor Mass.

During the offering the audience called for more music. “We want Dr. Anderson to sing.” Baritone Douglas Anderson, long-time Bach Cantata soloist and neurosurgeon at Loyola Medical Center, responded with a rousing a capella rendition of “How Great Thou Art.” As the service ended, Harmony’s Pastor, James Brooks, former Youth Director at Grace, encouraged everyone to “get to know someone you don’t know. That would be a blessing to us all.”

More than fifty singers and orchestral musicians volunteered to take part in the event which included an offering to support Harmony’s mission “to listen and respond with love to those who have been hurt and marginalized.” The church serves the community with education programs, a day camp, food pantry, and other ministries, as well as weekly Sunday worship. (Visit Harmony’s web site at hcc1908.org to support the church with a donation.)



Photos by Georgi Beck

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Special thanks are extended to Leonard Berghaus for tuning the portativ organ.

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