

Bach Cantata Vespers

> Grace Lutheran Church River Forest, Illinois

April 17, 2011

Cantata 55: Ich armer Mensch, ich Sündenknecht (I, a poor man, I, a slave to sin)

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.

Third Sunday in Lent March 27, 2011 + 3:45 p.m.

EVENING PRAYER



+ OPENING +

PRELUDE

O Gott, du frommer Gott (O God, My Faithful God)

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Herzlich tut mich verlangen (O Sacred Head Now Wounded)

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

O Traurigkeit, O Herzeleid (O Darkest Woe)

Hermann Schroeder (1904–1984)

Soli Deo Gloria: Homage to Bach

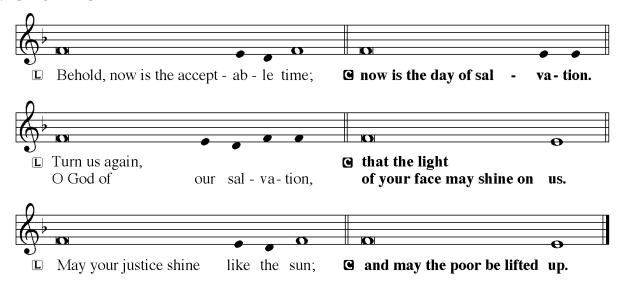
Philip Gehring

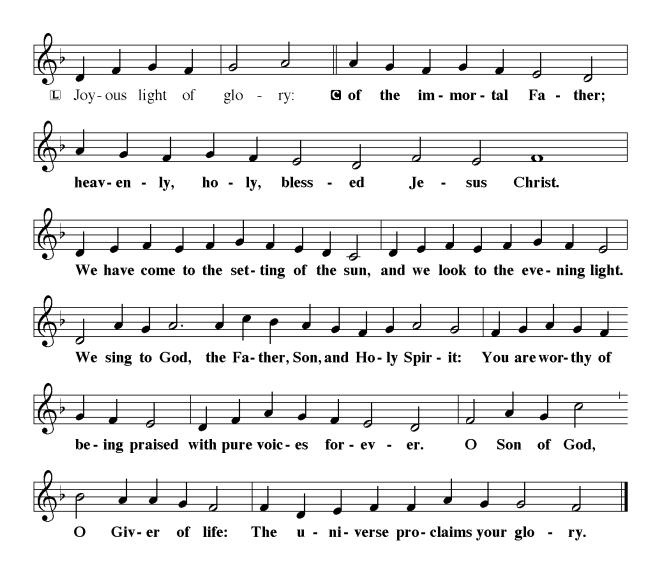
Kyrie Agnus Dei (b. 1925)

Lorraine Brugh, organ

We stand, facing the candle as we sing.

SERVICE OF LIGHT









+ PSALMODY +

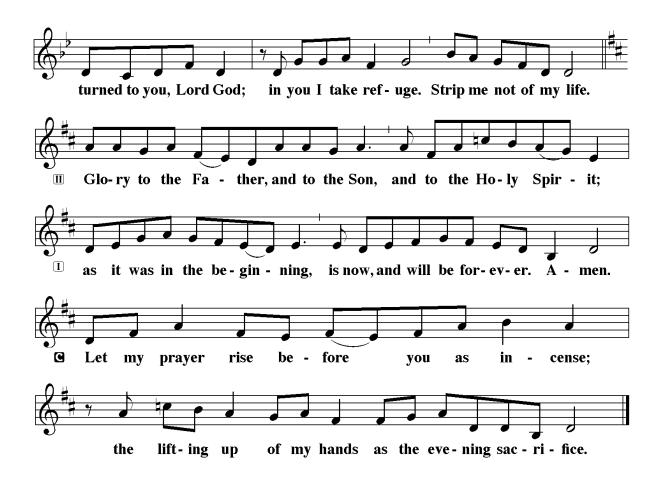
We sit.

PSALM 141

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







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.
- **C** Amen.



MOTET: Kyrie eleison

Hans Leo Hassler (1564–1612)

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison. Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Silence for meditation is observed, then:

PRAYER

E God of mercy and might, in the mystery of the passion of your Son you offer your infinite life to the world. Gather us around the cross of Christ, and preserve us until the resurrection, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

The offering is gathered.

VOLUNTARY: Partita on Werde munter mein Gemüte

Johann Pachelbel (1653–1706)

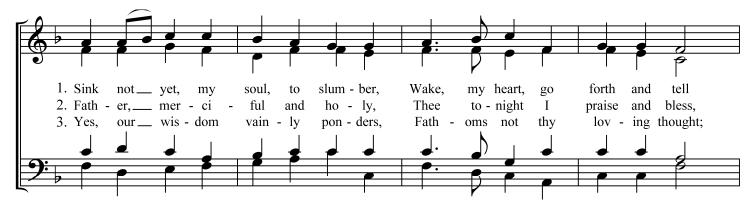
The offering assists in defraying costs of the Bach Cantata Vespers ministry.

Your generosity is appreciated.

We stand.

HYMN: Sink Not Yet, My Soul, to Slumber

Stanza two is sung by the choir in a harmonization by J. S. Bach, with orchestral interludes arranged by Michael D. Costello.







Text: Johann Rist, (1607–1667); tr. Catherine Winkworth (1827–1878) Tune: Johann Schop (c. 1600–1665)

87 87 7788

+ WORD +

We sit.

READING: Philippians 1:3–11

³I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

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

READING: Matthew 18:23–35

"23For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

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

HOMILY

The Rev. Suzanne Burke

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

1. Aria

Ich armer Mensch, ich Sündenknecht, Ich geh vor Gottes Angesichte Mit Furcht und Zittern zum Gerichte. Er ist gerecht, ich ungerecht. Ich armer Mensch, ich Sündenknecht! I, wretched man, I, slave to sin, I go before God's very presence With fear and trembling unto judgment. E'er just is he, unjust am I, I, wretched man, I, slave to sin.

The first two movements of the cantata might be titled "Sinful Man," as they articulate the pitiful position of sinful humans before the presence of God. The first portrays the reaction of the unjust steward of the parable of the Gospel after his master has pronounced judgment upon him. The accompaniment features the treble instruments and the *continuo*, but without the customary viola. The construction of this *pastorale* movement in 6/8 meter pairs the flute and oboe against the two violins, each pair of instruments moving in the sweet harmony of lines a third or a sixth apart. After the instrumental introduction the soloist enters with a complementary line that at times moves with and at times in contrast to the pairs of instruments. Bach gives special attention to the word *Sündenknecht* (servant or slave of sin) in various configurations that might be said to portray the tortured life of sinful man. The doctrine of original sin has seldom been subjected to a more extended and distressed musical examination.



2. Recitative

Ich habe wider Gott gehandelt Und bin demselben Pfad, Den er mir vorgeschrieben hat, Nicht nachgewandelt. Wohin? soll ich der Morgenröte Flügel Zu meiner Flucht erkiesen, Die mich zum letzten Meere wiesen, So wird mich doch Die Hand des Allerhöchsten finden Und mir die Sündenrute binden. Ach ja! Wenn gleich die Höll ein Bette Vor mich und meine Sünden hätte, So wäre doch der Grimm des Höchsten da. Die Erde schützt mich nicht, Sie droht mich Scheusal zu verschlingen; Und will ich mich zum Himmel schwingen, Da wohnet Gott, der mir das Urteil spricht. I have against my God offended And have upon the path Which he did once prescribe for me Not steadfast traveled. Where now? Should I the rosy morning's pinions For this my flight elect now, To take me to the ocean's limits, Yet would e'en still The hand of God Almighty find me And with the rods of sin chastise me. Ah yes! If even hell a bed could For me and all my sins make ready, Yet would indeed the wrath of God be there. The earth protects me not, It threatens wicked me to swallow;

Where God doth dwell, who shall my judgment tell.

The thought of the first movement is continued as the sinner contemplates, the futility of trying to escape the righteous judgment of God by fleeing to heaven or even to hell itself. The thought is similar to that of the Old Testament singer in Psalm 139:7–10. The secco (dry) recitative is sung with only the accompaniment of the basso continuo.

3. Aria

Erbarme dich!

Laß die Tränen dich erweichen,

Laß sie dir zu Herzen reichen;

Laß um Jesu Christi willen

Deinen Zorn des Eifers stillen!

Erbarme dich!

Have mercy, Lord!
Let my tears now make thee soften,
Let them reach into thy bosom;
Let for Jesus Christ's own glory
All thy zealous wrath grow calm now!
Have mercy, Lord!

And I would lift myself to heaven,

The mood shifts as the desperate sinner earnestly pleads for mercy. The flute begins with the simple interval of a rising sixth followed by a step downward, a melodic fragment designed to illustrate the sinner's plea for mercy, a plea that is to be sung again and again by the tenor.* After the instrumental introduction the tenor soloist enters crying repeatedly, "Erbarme dich! (have mercy!)" in recognition of the singer's lost condition. Throughout the movement Bach gives to the accompanying solo flute a difficult, even exhausting line, as if to accentuate the pathetic plight of the sinner. The movement closes with an exact reprise of the introduction.

^{*}This "pleading" figure is a typical Baroque affection or representation of a non-musical thought in the score.

4. Recitative

Erbarme dich! Iedoch nun Tröst ich mich, Ich will nicht für Gerichte stehen Und lieber vor dem Gnadenthron Zu meinem frommen Vater gehen. Ich halt ihm seinen Sohn, Sein Leiden, sein Erlösen für, Wie er für meine Schuld Bezahlet und genug getan, Und bitt ihn um Geduld, Hinfüro will ich's nicht mehr tun. So nimmt mich Gott zu Gnaden wieder an. Have mercy, Lord! However, I now hope That I'll not stand before his judgment, But rather to the throne of grace Of this my righteous Father venture. I'll offer him his Son, His passion, his redemption then, And how he for my sin Hath all repaid sufficiently, And beg him to forbear, Henceforth will I my sin forswear.

Thus take me God into thy grace again.

The sinner continues to sing "Erbarme dich!" but now recognizes that all is not lost; he needs only to forswear his sin and go humbly before the Father's throne of grace, since Christ through his sacrificial death has redeemed him. The calm assurance of the revelation is conveyed by the simple melodic lines of the singer and the long held notes of the chordal accompaniment of the strings.

5. Chorale

Bin ich gleich von dir gewichen, Stell ich mich doch wieder ein; Hat uns doch dein Sohn verglichen Durch sein Angst und Todespein. Ich verleugne nicht die Schuld, Aber deine Gnad und Huld Ist viel größer als die Sünde, Die ich stets bei mir befinde.

Though I now from thee have fallen, I will come again to thee; For now hath thy Son redeemed us Through his fear and pain of death. I do not deny my guilt, But thy mercy and thy grace Are much greater than my sins are, Which I ever find within me.

The choir sums up the thought of the cantata with the usual concluding setting of a familiar chorale in four-part harmony. The text is the sixth stanza of the reflective evening hymn "Werde munter, mein Gemüte" by Johann Rist (1642), not found in recent American Lutheran hymnals. The tune by Johann Schop (c. 1600–1665), however, is found in all Lutheran hymnals connected to other texts, such as "Christians, while on earth abiding" (LBW 440). It may be most familiar as the melody of "Jesu, joy of man's desiring," drawn from Bach Cantata 147. In this form it appears in LBW 219 as the melody for "Come with us, O blessed Jesus."

Silence is observed, then:

- L 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







+ PRAYERS +





After each petition:

L ...let us pray to the Lord.



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.



Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross.

In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

G Amen.

- © 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.
- G 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.

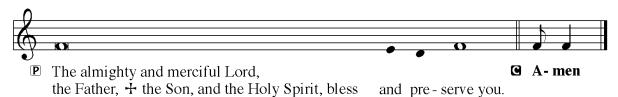
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

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

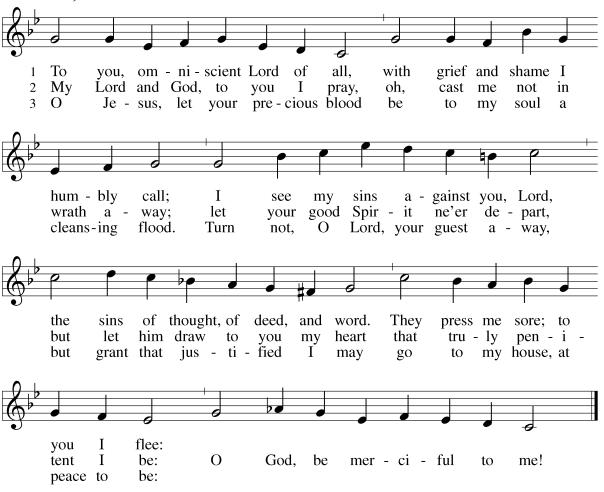
BENEDICAMUS DOMINO



BENEDICTION



HYMN: To You, Omniscient Lord of All



Text: Magnus B. Landstad, 1802–1880; tr. Carl Doving, 1867–1937, alt. Music: VATER UNSER, V. Schumann, *Geistliche Lieder*, 1539

DISMISSAL

L Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

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The Rev. Bruce K. Modahl, leader The Rev. Suzanne Burke, homilist The Rev. Michael D. Costello, cantor Lorraine Brugh, organist

Grace Lutheran Church Senior Choir Katrina Weissberg Beck, soprano Irmgard Swanson, alto Christopher M. Cock, tenor Greg Rohlfing, bass

Donna Port, flute Christine Janzow Phillips, oboe/oboe d'amore Betty Lewis and Lisa Fako, violins Naomi Hildner, viola Susan Ross, cello Judith Hanna, bass

BACKGROUND OF THE CANTATA

Bach solved the challenge presented by the assigned Gospel for the Twenty-Second Sunday after Trinity—the parable of the unjust steward with its theme of human sinfulness in the face of the grace of God—with a cantata of unusual sensitivity and imagination (*Ich armer Mench, ich Sündenknecht,* BWV 55). The libretto begins where the parable ends, after the recital of how the steward, having received God's gracious forgiveness, fails to extend forgiveness in turn to one indebted to him. The text gives the subsequent reflection of the steward on his evil ways.

The author of the libretto, unknown to us today, has divided the cantata into two movements of abject confession before the judge of heaven and two movements that plead for mercy. Of course Bach's congregation would have known the story well and would have expected the condemnation, and they would have understood the plea for forgiveness. They also would have welcomed the message of the mercy and grace of God found in movement four and the following hymn stanza.

The cantata is scored for solo tenor, with a four-part choir singing only the chorale of the last movement. It is Bach's only solo cantata for tenor. The instruments specified are a flute, *oboe d'amore*, strings, and *basso continuo* (keyboard and bass). For purposes of clarity and balance, today's performance will utilize only one instrument for each part. Following historic practice, the work will be conducted from the keyboard.

Ich armer Mensch was first performed on November 17, 1726, in Leipzig. The work is the third of Bach's surviving cantatas for the Twenty-Second Sunday after Trinity. The Epistle for the day was Philippians 1:3–11, in which Paul gives thanks to God for the believers in Philippi and prays for their welfare. The Holy Gospel, Matthew 18:23–35, recounts the parable of the unjust steward. Bach's other cantatas for this Sunday in the church year are Nos. 89 (1723) and 115 (1724), which are equally forthright in their treatment of the subject.

The translation of the original German of a Bach cantata into English can present problems. Some readers are familiar with the original language and need only a reminder of the meaning of the text in translation. Others would like to have a poetic translation that matches the German thought and spirit—one that "reads well" as English poetry or prose. Singers especially need to have an English text that replicates the original but also one that "sings well" with vowels and consonants well chosen and positioned for vocal performance. Finally there is the majority of people, mostly unfamiliar with German, who want to capture the meaning of each foreign word as it is sung and who prefer to sacrifice some poetic beauty for word-for-word comprehension. Such people may become sensitive to Bach's predilection for the text-painting common in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries based on the theory of the *affections*. According to that concept significant non-musical thoughts or words may be given a musical setting that vividly illustrates their meaning. In this way, a downward moving line may indicate obeisance; rapidly moving passages, running; and a long-held note, steadfastness.

The problems of bringing the meaning of a German text to English readers are not unique to cantata texts, although a sung text does present some special problems. There is the matter of word order in a sentence. Unlike English, German syntax often places the verb at the end of the sentence. Also, many German sentences are quite long and complex. German idioms and individual words frequently are difficult to translate exactly into English and while many German words have English cognates, even these lose much of their precise meaning in translation. Finally, the beauty and flow of the poetry of one language are nearly impossible to duplicate in translation. The translated work may be artful in its own right, but it also may not fully convey the style and character of the original. The problem is exemplified by comparing the literal translation of the first line of the cantata with the more poetic English of the printed title: The problem is exemplified in the first line of the cantata. Alternate translations begin "O, poor man," replacing the "I" with the more euphonic (and singable) "O."

For the past few years Grace has printed the translations of the Bach cantatas by Z. Philip Ambrose, a German scholar and student of Bach's works. Dr. Ambrose has made a career project of translating all the vocal works of Bach into English and making these translations available in books and on the Internet. His translations are faithful to the original words and thought and yet are quite readable. We trust that Dr. Ambrose's efforts can contribute to the spiritual and musical enjoyment and understanding of hearers of Bach cantatas.

Carlos Messerli

Bach Cantata Vespers

Join us on May 22 for the final Bach Cantata Vespers of this season. The cantata is #11, Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen (Praise God in his kingdoms), also known as the Ascension Oratorio. Pastor Michael D. Costello, Grace's Cantor, will lead the Grace Senior Choir and orchestra with soloists Maura Janton Cock, Angela Young Smucker, Christopher M. Cock, and Douglas Anderson. David Heim, Executive Editor of The Christian Century, is the homilist. The prelude at 3:45 includes the Concerto for 7 Trumpets and Timpani by Johann Ernst Altenburg and Samuel Barber's Adagio for Strings.

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The 40th Anniversary season of Bach Cantata Vespers at Grace is underwritten in large part by a grant from the Christopher Family Foundation, in memory of Walter and Maxine Christopher.

The presentation of Bach Cantata Vespers is made possible by the contributions of many donors who are hereby gratefully acknowledged. Please inform the Grace business office of any errors or omissions.

If you would like to add your name to our Bach Cantata Vespers mailing list or would like to contribute to the series, a form is located in the atrium and, online, at www.bachvespers.org.

BIOGRAPHIES



Lorraine S. Brugh, organist, is Associate Professor of Music and Director of Chapel Music at Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana. She is University Organist and the Frederick J. Kruse Endowed Chair in Church Music. Dr. Brugh is the director of the Kantorei, and teaches organ and church music. She helped lead the development of the ELCA's Evangelical Lutheran Worship and is co-author of The Sunday Assembly, published in 2008 to help church leaders incorporate the hymnal's materials into worship services. She has been involved in the development of Lutheran music and worship practices for many years and in July 2010 became president of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians. She serves as executive director of the University's Institute of Liturgical Studies, which annually brings church leaders across the country together to study and reflect upon worship practices.



The Rev. Suzanne Burke, homilist, serves as senior editor for worship at Augsburg Fortress, where she guides the development of the Sundays and Seasons family of annual worship planning resources. In her home congregation, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, she shares responsibility for the PreK–K Sunday School class, co-directs the Godly Play ministry for young children, and sings in the choir. She is an ordained pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.



Christopher M. Cock, tenor, is Professor of Music at Valparaiso University, where he is Director of Choral and Vocal Activities, the Bach Institute, and holds the Phyllis and Richard Duesenberg Chair in Lutheran Music. He has appeared as a solo artist with Maestros Robert Shaw and Helmut Rilling and with many major symphony orchestras and at festivals in the United States. He frequently appears in his signature role as a Bach Evangelist and often has been a soloist at Grace's Vesper Cantata services.



Sunday through Friday

June 19-24

Closing worship/performance Friday, June 24 at 7:15 p.m.



Study the music of Johann Sebastian Bach at this one-week intensive camp for high-school students.

Perform one of Bach's sacred cantatas with professional voice teachers and orchestral musicians from the Chicago area.

Perform other music for worship, including chamber orchestral works, motets, psalms, and hymns.

Choral track for singers of all voice parts who wish to sing in an excellent choral ensemble and develop their voice in private coaching sessions.

Orchestral track for violin, viola, cello, and double bass players (limited spots available) who wish to perform in an excellent orchestral ensemble and develop their skills in private lessons.

Learn more about this camp for high school singers and string players online at www.bachvespers.org/camp

Bach Cantata Vespers

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

September 25 Cantata 69 Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele

Praise the Lord, my soul

Cantata 211 Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht (Kaffeekantate)

Be quiet, don't chatter (Coffee Cantata)

Performed during a reception following Vespers

October 23 Cantata 70 Wachet! Betet! Wachet!

Watch! Pray! Pray! Watch!

November 20 Cantata 62 Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland

Savior of the nations, come

Guest Choir: Kapelle, Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Illinois Guest Conductor: Charles Brown, Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Illinois

December 25 Cantata 63 Christen, ätzet diesen Tag

Christians, engrave this day

Performed as part of Grace's Sunday Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.

January 8 BWV 248.3 Herrscher des Himmels, erhöre das Lallen

Ruler of heaven, give ear to our stammer (from the Christmas Oratorio)

Performed as part of Bach for the Sem, a 4:00 p.m. concert to benefit
the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (tickets available at the door)
Director: Mark P. Bangert, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, IL

January 29 Cantata 124 Meinen Jesum lass ich nicht

My Jesus I will not leave

February 26 Cantata 52 Falsche Welt, dir trau ich nicht!

False world, I do not trust you!

March 25 BWV 232 Messe in h-Moll

Mass in B minor

Performed in a 4:00 p.m. concert, free and open to the public Guest Choir: Concert Choir, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois Guest Conductor: Paul Wiens, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois

April 22 Cantata 249 Kommt, eilet und laufet [Oster-Oratorium]

Come, hasten and run (Easter Oratorio)

May 20 Cantata 128 Auf Christi Himmelfahrt allein

On Christ's ascension into heaven alone

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