



*All generations shall call me blessed.*

# Bach

## Cantata Vespers

2010–2011

Grace Lutheran Church  
River Forest, Illinois

February 27, 2011

*Cantata 126: Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort*  
(Lord, keep us steadfast in your word)

Eighth Sunday after Epiphany  
February 27, 2011 † 3:45 p.m.

## EVENING PRAYER



### † OPENING †

#### PRELUDE

Chorale Fantasia on “*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*,” Op. 27

Max Reger  
(1873–1916)

*Background notes on the prelude are on page 20 in this worship folder.*

*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 also 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 pillar of cloud by day and a pillar 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 merciful,

and you love your whole creation, and we, your creatures, glorify you,

Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Spir - it. ☑ A - men

# ✠ PSALMODY ✠

*We sit.*

## PSALM 141

*Women sing parts marked ❶. Men sing parts marked ❷. All sing parts marked ❸.*



❸ Let my prayer rise be - fore you as in - cense;



the lift - ing up of my hands as the eve - ning sac - ri - fice.



❶ O Lord, I call to you; come to me quick - ly; hear my voice when I cry to you.



❷ Let my prayer rise be - fore you as in - cense;



the lift - ing up of my hands as the eve - ning sac - ri - fice.



❶ Set a watch be - fore my mouth, O Lord, and guard the door of my lips.



❷ 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. ❶ But my eyes are

turned to you, Lord God; in you I take refuge. Strip me not of my life.

☐ 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.

☐ 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:** *Allein auf Gottes Wort* (Upon God's Word Alone)

Johann Walter  
(1496–1570)

*Allein auf Gottes Wort  
Will ich mein Grund und Glauben bauen,  
Kein menschlich Weisheit will ich nicht,  
Dem göttlich Wort vergleichen.  
Was Gottes Wort klar spricht und richt,  
Soll billig alles weichen.*

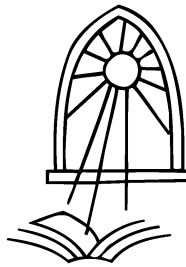
I build on God's strong word secure,  
The rock of faith and mercy's grounding.  
No human wisdom will endure;  
God's word is truth defining.  
The word of God is clear and sure:  
This star o'er all is shining.

*Silence for meditation is observed, then:*

**PRAYER**

☞ Almighty God, gracious Lord,  
pour out your Holy Spirit upon your faithful people.  
Keep them steadfast in your Word,  
protect and comfort them in all temptations,  
defend them against all their enemies,  
and bestow on the Church your saving peace;  
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.

☞ **Amen.**



*The offering is gathered.*

**VOLUNTARY:** Church Sonata #10 in F, K. 244

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756–1791)

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

*We stand at the conclusion of the brass introduction.*

**HYMN:** Eternal Ruler of the Ceaseless Round

Concertato by Paul Bouman  
(b. 1918)

*Stanza three is sung by the choir.*



1 E - ter - nal Rul - er of the cease-less round of cir - cling  
2 We are your own, the chil - dren of your love, as dear - ly  
3 We would be one in ha - tred of all wrong, one in our  
4 Oh, clothe us with your heav'n - ly ar - mor, Lord. Your trust - y



plan - ets sing - ing on their way, guid - ing the  
loved as your be - lov - ed Son; de - scend, O  
love of all things true and fair, one with the  
shield and sword of love en - dure; our con - stant



na - tions from the night pro - found in - to the glo - ry  
Ho - ly Spir - it, like a dove and rule our hearts, that  
joy that finds a voice in song, one with the grief that  
in - spi - ra - tion be your Word; we ask no vic - to -



of the per - fect day: rule in our hearts, that we may  
we may be as one— as one with you, to whom we  
trem - bles in - to prayer, one in the strength that makes your  
ries that are not yours. Give or with - hold, let pain or



live a - new, guid - ed and strength - ened and up - held by you.  
ev - er tend; as one with him, our broth - er and our friend.  
chil - dren free to fol - low truth, and thus in you to be.  
plea - sure fall: to know that we are serv - ing you is all.

Text: John W. Chadwick, 1840–1904, alt.  
Music: SONG 1, Orlando Gibbons, 1583–1625



# ✠ WORD ✠

*We sit.*

**READING:** 2 Corinthians 11:19–12:9

<sup>19</sup>For you gladly put up with fools, being wise yourselves! <sup>20</sup>For you put up with it when someone makes slaves of you, or preys upon you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or gives you a slap in the face. <sup>21</sup>To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that!

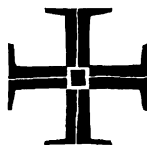
But whatever anyone dares to boast of — I am speaking as a fool — I also dare to boast of that. <sup>22</sup>Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. <sup>23</sup>Are they ministers of Christ? I am talking like a madman — I am a better one: with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless floggings, and often near death. <sup>24</sup>Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. <sup>25</sup>Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; <sup>26</sup>on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters; <sup>27</sup>in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked. <sup>28</sup>And, besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches. <sup>29</sup>Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not indignant?

<sup>30</sup>If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. <sup>31</sup>The God and Father of the Lord Jesus (blessed be he forever!) knows that I do not lie. <sup>32</sup>In Damascus, the governor under King Aretas guarded the city of Damascus in order to seize me, <sup>33</sup>but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

<sup>12:1</sup>It is necessary to boast; nothing is to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. <sup>2</sup>I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. <sup>3</sup>And I know that such a person — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows — <sup>4</sup>was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. <sup>5</sup>On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. <sup>6</sup>But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, <sup>7</sup>even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. <sup>8</sup>Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, <sup>9</sup>but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

**L** The Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.



**READING:** Luke 8:4–15

<sup>4</sup>When a great crowd gathered and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable: <sup>5</sup>“A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell on the path and was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. <sup>6</sup>Some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered for lack of moisture. <sup>7</sup>Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. <sup>8</sup>Some fell into good soil, and when it grew, it produced a hundredfold.” As he said this, he called out, “Let anyone with ears to hear listen!”

<sup>9</sup>Then his disciples asked him what this parable meant. <sup>10</sup>He said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but to others I speak in parables, so that ‘looking they may not perceive, and listening they may not understand.’”

<sup>11</sup>Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. <sup>12</sup>The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. <sup>13</sup>The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe only for a while and in a time of testing fall away. <sup>14</sup>As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. <sup>15</sup>But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance.”

**L** The Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

**HOMILY**

The Rev. Dr. Bruce K. Modahl

**CANTATA:** *Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort*, BWV 126  
(Lord, keep us steadfast in your word)

Johann Sebastian Bach

*Translation of the German text and notes corresponding to each movement are below.  
Background notes for the cantata are found on page 22 in this worship folder.  
Text in boldface type represents text of the chorale, “Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort.”*

**1. CHORUS**

*Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort,  
Lord, keep us steadfast in your word,  
Und steure deiner Feinde Mord,  
And fend off your murderous enemies,  
Die Jesum Christum, deinen Sohn,  
Who Jesus Christ, thy very Son,  
Stürzen wollen von seinem Thron.  
Strive to bring down from his throne.*

An arresting trumpet call, which becomes a repeated motif also for other instruments throughout the movement, announces the introduction of this setting of stanza one of the chorale.\* The text entreats the Lord for protection from the foes of the church. Sopranos carry the chorale melody in long notes in four separate phrases above the supporting polyphonic imitation of the three lower voices. Throughout the movement, trumpet, oboes, strings, and *continuo* engage in a seamless flow of other lines of intricate, independent polyphony.

\*Additional comments on the texts and melodies of the chorales are found on page 22 in “Background.”

## 2. ARIA (Tenor)

*Sende deine Macht von oben,*

Send down thy great strength from heaven,

*Herr der Herren, starker Gott!*

Prince of princes, mighty God,

*Deine Kirche zu erfreuen*

This thy church to fill with gladness

*Und der Feinde bitterm Spott*

And the foe's most bitter scorn

*Augenblicklich zu zerstreuen.*

In an instant far to scatter!

Bach sets a poetic paraphrase of chorale stanza two in an aria for tenor, oboes, and *continuo* in which the singer pleads for divine intervention for protection from the foes of the church. However, at “*zu erfreuen*” (to fill with gladness) the vocal motion becomes animated, and at “*zu zerstreuen*” (to scatter) the singer must negotiate one of the longest and most difficult one-word passages in the repertoire in order to express the longed-for destruction of the enemy.

### 3. RECITATIVE AND CHORALE (Alto & Tenor)

- [Alto] *Der Menschen Gunst und Macht wird wenig nützen,*  
All human will and might will little help us,  
*Wenn du nicht willst das arme Häuflein schützen,*  
If thou wouldst not protect thy wretched people,
- [Both] **Gott Heilger Geist, du Tröster wert,**  
**God, Holy Ghost, dear comforter;**
- [Tenor] *Du weißt, dass die verfolgte Gottesstadt*  
Thou see'st that this tormented city of God  
*Den ärgsten Feind nur in sich selber hat*  
The worst of foes but in itself doth have  
*Durch die Gefährlichkeit der falschen Brüder.*  
Through the great danger posed by untrue brothers.
- [Both] **Gib dein'm Volk einerlei Sinn auf Erd,**  
**Thy people make of one mind on earth,**
- [Alto] *Dass wir, an Christi Leibe Glieder,*  
That we, the members of Christ's body,  
*Im Glauben eins, im Leben einig sei'n.*  
In faith agree, in life united be.
- [Both] **Steh bei uns in der letzten Not!**  
**Stand by us in extremity!**
- [Tenor] *Es bricht alsdann der letzte Feind herein*  
Although e'en now the final foe break in  
*Und will den Trost von unsern Herzen trennen;*  
And seek thy comfort from our hearts to sever,  
*Doch lass dich da als unsern Helfer kennen.*  
Yet in that moment show thyself our helper.
- [Both] **G'leit uns ins Leben aus dem Tod!**  
**Lead us to life and free from death!**

In an unusual duet recitative, individual lines of the third chorale stanza are prefaced with poetic commentary. The alto begins singing two lines of poetry before the tenor joins her to sing together the first line of the chorale text to an embellished form of the original melody. The singers alternate in this manner throughout the movement accompanied only by the *continuo*.

#### 4. ARIA (Bass)

*Stürze zu Boden, schwülstige Stolz!*  
Crash down in ruin, arrogant bombast!  
*Mache zunichte, was sie erdacht!*  
Hurl to destruction what it conceives!  
*Laß sie den Abgrund plötzlich verschlingen,*  
Let the abyss now quickly devour them,  
*Wehre dem Toben feindlicher Macht,*  
Fend off the raging of the foe's might,  
*Laß ihr Verlangen nimmer gelingen!*  
Let their desires ne'er find satisfaction.

In an aria full of rage, the bass accompanied only by the *continuo* expresses the righteous zeal of an Old Testament prophet or a psalmist denouncing the enemies of the Lord. The bass's message of denunciation is intensified in downward arpeggios and wide-ranging skips that are supported by a *continuo* accompaniment of flashing, descending scales and intervals that stomp about in rapid succession. In the middle section of this *da capo* aria the singer echoes the rapid intervals of the *continuo* accompaniment before returning "to the head" of the aria to repeat the fury expressed in the opening section.

#### 5. RECITATIVE (Tenor)

*So wird dein Wort und Wahrheit offenbar*  
Thus will thy word and truth be manifest  
*Und stellet sich im höchsten Glanze dar,*  
And set themselves in highest glory forth,  
*Dass du vor deine Kirche wachst,*  
Since thou dost for thy church keep watch,  
*Dass du des heiligen Wortes Lehren*  
Since thou thy holy Gospel's teachings  
*Zum Segen fruchtbar machst;*  
To prosp'rous fruit dost bring;  
*Und willst du dich als Helfer zu uns kehren,*  
And if thou dost as helper seek our presence,  
*So wird uns denn in Frieden*  
To us will then in peacetime  
*Des Segens Überfluss beschieden.*  
Abundant blessing be apportioned.

A simple *recitativo secco*, that is, a "dry recitative" with no other instruments than the *continuo*, assures the faithful that as long as the word is proclaimed the church will be protected, peace will be restored and blessings assured.

## 6. CHORUS

*Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich,*  
Grant to us peace most graciously,  
*Herr Gott, zu unsern Zeiten;*  
Lord God, in our own season;  
*Es ist doch ja kein andrer nicht,*  
For there is surely no one else  
*Der für uns könnte streiten,*  
Who for us could do battle  
*Denn du, unser Gott, alleine.*  
Than thou who our God art only.

*Gib unsern Fürst'n und aller Obrigkeit*  
Give to our lords and all authority  
*Fried und gut Regiment,*  
Peace and good governance,  
*Dass wir unter ihnen*  
So that we beneath them  
*Ein geruh'g und stilles Leben führen mögen*  
A most calm and quiet life may lead forever  
*In aller Gottseligkeit und Ehrbarkeit.*  
In godliest devotion and honesty.  
*Amen.*

The closing chorale is sung to the customary four-part harmony for voices and instruments. The first stanza of the movement consists of Luther's prayer for peace based on the Latin antiphon *Da pacem Domine* ("Give Peace, We Pray," LBW 471). The text and tune of a complementary second stanza by Johann Walter are sung without pause to conclude the cantata.

*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**



☐ 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 concludes:*

- L** For the faithful who have gone before us and are at rest, let us give thanks 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.



- L** O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works: Give to us, your servants, the 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.

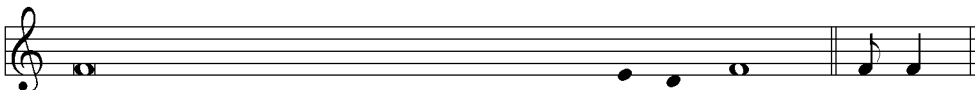
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

## BENEDICAMUS DOMINO



Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

## BENEDICTION




The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, † the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and pre-serve you. A-men

## HYMN: On What Has Now Been Sown


Concertato by James Biery



1 On what has now been sown your bless-ing Lord, be - stow; the  
2 To you our wants are known, from you are all our pow'rs; ac -  
3 Oh, grant that each of us, now met be - fore you here, may



pow'r is yours a - lone to make it sprout and grow. O Lord, in  
cept what is your own and par-don what is ours. Our prais - es,  
meet to - geth - er thus when you and yours ap - pear, and fol - low



grace the har - vest raise, and yours a - lone shall be the praise!  
Lord, and prayers re - ceive and to your word a bless - ing give.  
you to heav'n, our home. E'en so, A - men! Lord Je - sus, come!

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt.  
Music: DARWALL'S 148TH, John Darwall, 1731–1789

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

# LEADING WORSHIP TODAY

The Rev. Dr. Bruce K. Modahl, leader and homilist  
The Rev. Michael D. Costello, cantor and organist for the prelude  
Laura Zimmer, organist for the service

Grace Lutheran Church Senior Choir  
Angela Young Smucker, mezzo-soprano  
Stephen Noon, tenor  
Douglas Anderson, baritone

Greg Fudala and Candice Horton, trumpets  
David Ferguson and Brad Payne, trombones  
Meg Busse and Tricia Wlazlo, oboes  
Dianne Ryan, bassoon

Betty Lewis, Carol Yampolsky, and Lou Torick, violin I  
Laura Miller, Lisa Fako, and Nina Saito, violin II  
Naomi Hildner and Claudia Lasareff-Mironoff, violas  
Susan Ross, cello  
Judith Hanna, bass  
Laura Zimmer, continuo

# Bach

## Cantata Vespers

2010–2011

<b>March 27</b>	<i>Cantata 182</i>	<b>Himmelskönig, sei willkommen</b> (King of heaven, welcome)
<b>April 17</b>	<i>Cantata 55</i>	<b>Ich armer Mensch, ich Sündenknecht</b> (I, a poor man, I, a slave to sin) Soloist: Tenor Christopher M. Cook
<b>May 22</b>	<i>Cantata 11</i>	<b>Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen</b> (Praise God in his kingdoms - "Ascension Oratorio")

## BACKGROUND OF THE PRELUDE



Johann Baptist Joseph Maximilian Reger was born on March 19, 1873, in Brand, Bavaria. He studied organ under Hugo Riemann in Sondershausen and Wiesbaden. Following professional and financial difficulties resulting from military service, he returned to his childhood home where he focused primarily on his work as a composer. He moved with his family to Munich in 1901 and became widely known as both a pianist and organist. In 1902 he married Elsa von Bercken, a divorced Protestant woman, and as a result, was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church. Reger taught at the *Akademie der Tonkunst* as Josef Rheinberger's successor; however, due to conflicts with the staff of the *Akademie*, Reger resigned one year later. In 1907 he moved to Leipzig, where he would teach as professor of composition at the university until his death. Though he moved to Meiningen in

1911 to serve as *Hofkapellmeister* (court conductor) for George II, the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, and again moved to Jena in 1915, he commuted to Leipzig once a week to teach at the university. It was on one of those trips from Jena to Leipzig that Reger died of a heart attack at the age of 43 on May 11, 1916.

Reger composed an incredible amount of music in his short life, including orchestral, chamber, vocal, and choral works. He composed a great number of pieces for the piano and organ, many of which are in variation form. He wrote seven chorale fantasias for organ, of which the Chorale Fantasia heard this afternoon, based on Martin Luther's chorale, *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*, is the earliest (1898).

The Fantasia on *Ein feste Burg* is said to be one of the most neo-Baroque pieces written by Reger, yet complex counterpoint is paired with incredibly rich harmonic writing to create a grand, Romantic setting. It is clear that Reger paid a great deal of attention to Luther's text, which is included in the score at nearly each statement of the *cantus firmus*. Although each stanza of Luther's hymn, printed below, is given its own unique interpretation, the unified nature of this composition makes a single statement about God, who speaks to us through his Word and has given us the gift of his kingdom forever through his Son, Jesus Christ.

Michael D. Costello

*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott,  
Ein gute Wehr und Waffen;  
Er hilft uns frei aus aller Not,  
Die uns itzt hat betroffen.  
Der alte böse Feind,  
Mit Ernst er's jetzt meint,  
Groß Macht und viel List  
Sein grausam Rüstung ist,  
Auf Erd ist nicht seinsgleichen.*

A secure fortress is our God,  
A good defense and weapon;  
He helps free us from all distress  
That has now befallen us.  
The old evil enemy,  
Is now in deadly earnest;  
His terrible armor is  
Great power and much guile.  
On earth he has no equal.

*Mit unsrer Macht ist nichts getan,  
Wir sind gar bald verloren.  
Es streit' vor uns der rechte Mann,  
Den Gott selbst hat erkoren.  
Fragst du, wer er ist?  
Er heißt Jesus Christ,  
Der Herre Zebaoth,  
Und ist kein andrer Gott,  
Das Feld muss er behalten.*

*Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär  
Und wollten uns verschlingen,  
So fürchten wir uns nicht so sehr,  
Es soll uns doch gelingen.  
Der Fürst dieser Welt,  
Wie saur er sich stellt,  
Tut er uns doch nicht,  
Das macht, er ist gericht',  
Ein Wörtlein kann ihn fällen.*

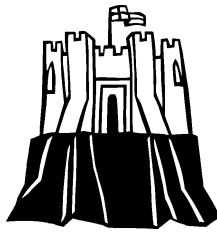
*Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn  
Und kein' Dank dazu haben.  
Er ist bei uns wohl auf dem Plan  
Mit seinem Geist und Gaben.  
Nehmen sie uns den Leib,  
Gut, Ehr, Kind und Weib,  
Laß fahren dahin,  
Sie habens kein' Gewinn;  
Das Reich muss uns doch bleiben.*

With our might nothing is accomplished,  
We are very soon lost.  
Before us battles the Right Man,  
Whom God himself has chosen.  
Do you ask, who he is?  
His name is Jesus Christ,  
The Lord Zebaoth,  
And is no other God,  
He must maintain the field.

And if the world were full of devils,  
And they wanted to devour us,  
We will not be very afraid,  
We shall indeed succeed.  
The prince of this world,  
However angrily he acts,  
He does not harm us.  
That means he is judged,  
One little word can fell him.

The Word they shall let stand  
And receive no thanks for it.  
He is definitely with us in the plan  
With his Spirit and [his] gifts.  
If they take our bodies from us,  
Our possessions, honor, child and wife,  
Let [them] go there.  
They have [it as] no prize;  
The kingdom must surely remain for us.

Literal translation



## BACKGROUND OF THE CANTATA

If you have attended Reformation festival services at a Lutheran Church at any time, you have probably sung “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word” (LBW 230), for it has become a fixture of Reformation worship. This is also the hymn that, in text and tune, forms the basis of Cantata 126. The three stanzas of the original chorale, *Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort*, by Martin Luther (1546), form a fervent prayer for fidelity to the Word, for peace for the church, and for protection by God on our heavenward way. In its original version the wording of the second line of the first stanza specifically prays for protection from the onslaughts of “Turks and the Pope.” The fear of both was quite real to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Germans, for during that time the Muslim Turkish army was threatening Vienna, and the simultaneous persecution of Lutheran and other Protestant reformers by various Roman Catholic governments and their armies was well known. The dated phrase is now generally replaced by wording that implores God for refuge and for peace for the church and its members. Most modern American Lutheran hymnals translate the sentence to read, “Curb those who by deceit or sword.”

But the cantata is much more than a setting of three stanzas of a Reformation-era chorale. Its six movements are an interesting and well-unified conflation of seven hymn stanzas and two melodies: Stanzas 1, 2, and 3 are by Martin Luther; stanzas 4 and 5 are paraphrases based on stanzas by his colleague Justus Jonas; stanza 6, written by Luther, is based on a Latin antiphon for peace; stanza 7 is by Luther’s musical advisor, Johann Walter. The original chorale melody by Luther appears only in movement one; another tune, VERLEIH UNS FRIEDEN (“Grant Peace, We Pray,” LBW 471), also by Luther, appears in the sixth movement. To complicate matters, the text and tune of a seventh stanza by Johann Walter has been appended to Luther’s last stanza to conclude the cantata. The two Luther chorale melodies are similar, for they are both related to the old chant tune VENI REDEMPTOR GENTIUM (LBW 28). Walter’s melody is also similar.

To understand the appearance of these various chorales in one cantata, one must examine the chorale book in use in Leipzig at that time,\* where worshippers would find the seven stanzas that were to appear in Bach’s cantata gathered together in one place. Traditionally these stanzas were often treated in services as one extended chorale in two parts; each had its own melody, but with a single textual theme. While the creator of the cantata libretto is unknown, in Cantata 126 Bach had, once again, based his cantata on elements of worship that were familiar to his congregations, in this case a chorale assembled from four different sources.

The cantata was first performed in Leipzig on February 4, 1725, on Sexagesima Sunday—the old name of the second-last Sunday before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. (The Sunday was so named for it occurred approximately 60 days before Easter.) The Epistle for Sexagesima Sunday is 2 Corinthians 11:19–12:9, which speaks of God’s help for the weak, illustrated chiefly by events from Paul’s own experiences. The Gospel is Luke 8:4–15, the parable of the sower of the seed that is God’s Word.

The work is scored for a (high) trumpet in D, 2 oboes, strings (2 violins, viola, cello), *basso continuo* (keyboard and bass), alto, tenor, and bass solos, and four-part choir.

\* The arrangement of the chorales in the Leipzig book in Bach’s day follows that of *Das Babstische Gesangbuch* (1545), where *Erhalt uns, Herr* was first printed followed immediately by *Verleih uns Frieden*, also by Luther. The chorales are followed in turn by a prose prayer for peace that is possibly also by Luther. The practice of singing the chorales in succession, possibly with the addition of the Walter stanza, began sometime between their creation in the sixteenth century and the eighteenth-century publication of the Leipzig chorale books.

# BIOGRAPHIES



**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 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.



**Michael D. Costello**, organist, is Cantor at Grace Lutheran Church and School. A native of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, he has served parishes in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and South Carolina as a church musician and also served St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Columbia, South Carolina, as assistant pastor. Pastor Costello graduated from Lenoir-Rhyne University in Hickory, North Carolina, and from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina, where he received his master of divinity degree. In 1999 he won the Ruth and Paul Manz award and the Region IV Young Organists Competition of the American Guild of Organists. Pastor Costello is known best for his creative hymn improvisations, sensitive service playing, and as a composer of music for both choir and organ. He has published works with MorningStar Music Publishers and Augsburg Fortress. He is currently President of Region 3 of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians.



**Greg Fudala**, trumpeter, maintains an active freelance trumpet career in the Chicago area and is currently a rostered member of the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra. He performs regularly with the Elgin Symphony, Northwest Indiana Symphony, Chicago Chamber Orchestra, and Chicago Brass Quintet. He has backed up such performers as Tony Bennett, Ray Charles, Olivia Newton John, Bobby Vinton, The Temptations, and The Buckingham's. Mr. Fudala is also director of bands in the Mt. Prospect Public Schools. He formerly served as Adjunct Professor of Trumpet at Concordia University-Chicago and Valparaiso University and as assistant director of bands at DePaul University.



**Bruce K. Modahl**, homilist, has been Senior Pastor of Grace since September of 1998. Before that he served churches in Tampa, Florida, Virginia Beach, Virginia, and St. Louis, Missouri. Pastor Modahl received his Doctor of Ministry from Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia; a Master of Theology in homiletics from Princeton, a Master of Divinity from Christ Seminary – Seminex, St. Louis, Missouri and his undergraduate degree from Concordia Senior College in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. He was named a Pastor-Theologian by the Center for Theological Inquiry in Princeton. Pastor Modahl is married to Jackie Pearson. They have two adult children, Martin and Rachel.

*Biographies continue on the next page.*



**Stephen Noon**, tenor, is a frequent performer in and outside of the Chicago area, and has appeared with Santa Fe Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Chicago Opera Theater. On the concert stage, he has appeared with groups such as the Eugene Symphony, Music of the Baroque, Madison Bach Musicians, Grant Park Symphony, Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan, the Elgin Symphony, the Elgin Choral Union, Handel Week Festival, the Bach Institute at Valparaiso University, the Racine Symphony, the Rockford Bach Festival, and the Milwaukee Ballet where he performed in a choreographed version of Mozart's *Requiem*. Originally from Connecticut, Mr. Noon attended Northwestern University, where he also received his bachelor's and master's degrees.



**Angela Young Smucker**, mezzo-soprano, has performed throughout the United States and Germany in oratorio, concert works, and opera. A resident of Chicago, Ms. Young Smucker performs with the Chicago Symphony Chorus, Grant Park Festival Chorus, and Vox 3 Collective. With the Bach Institute of Valparaiso University, she also serves as the resident alto soloist and section leader for the Bach Institute in addition to her position as Adjunct Instructor of Music at the University. She holds degrees from Valparaiso University and the University of Minnesota and has studied with Maura Janton Cock, Steven Rainbolt, and Lawrence Weller.



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