



54<sup>th</sup> Year  
2024-2025

# BACH

## Cantata Vespers



**Grace Lutheran Church  
River Forest, Illinois**

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

**February 23, 2025**

**Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort**  
*Lord, keep us steadfast in your word*

## 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.

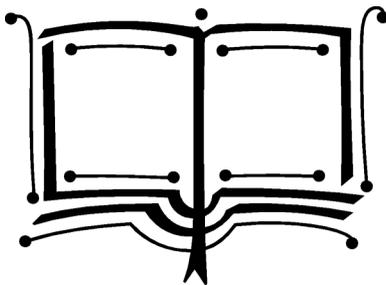
Recording or photography of any kind during the service is strictly forbidden.

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



Seventh Sunday after Epiphany  
February 23, 2025

## EVENING PRAYER



### PRELUDE

Prelude and Fugue in B minor, BWV 544

Johann Sebastian Bach  
(1685–1750)

*Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort*, BWV 1103

J. S. Bach

Steven Wentz, organist

*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. **☑ A - men**

## ✝ PSALMODY ✝

*We sit.*

### PSALM 141

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

**☑** 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.



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

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.

**MOTET:** *Allein auf Gottes Wort*

Johann Walter  
(1496–1570)

Allein auf Gottes Wort

**Upon God's Word alone**

Will ich mein Grund und Glauben bauen,

**Will I build my foundation and faith,**

Kein menschlich Weisheit will ich nicht,

**I will not compare any human wisdom**

Dem göttlich Wort vergleichen.

**To the divine word.**

Was Gottes Wort klar spricht und richt,

**What God's word clearly speaks and judges,**

Soll billig alles weichen.

**To that everything yields.**

Johann Walter, 1496–1570

*Silence for meditation is observed, then:*

**COLLECT**

☞ 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.*

**OFFERING/VOLUNTARY:**

Triptych on “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word”

Walter L. Pelz  
(b. 1926)

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

*Please make checks payable to Grace Lutheran Church.*

*You may also contribute online at [www.bachvespers.org](http://www.bachvespers.org).*

*Your generosity is appreciated.*

We stand at the conclusion of the introduction.

HYMN: The Word of God Is Source and Seed



1 The Word of God is source and seed; it comes to  
2 The Word of God is breath and life; it comes to  
3 The Word of God is flesh and grace, who comes to



die and sprout and grow. So make your dark earth  
heal and wake and save. So let the Spir - it  
sing, to laugh and cry. So dare to be as



wel - come warm; root deep the grain God bent to sow.  
touch and mend and rouse your dry bones from their grave.  
Je - sus was, who came to live and love and die.

*Refrain*



Gau - de - a - mus Do - mi - no, gau - de - a - mus Do - mi - no,  
In the Lord let us re - jice, in the Lord let us re - jice,



gau - de - a - mus Do mi - no!  
in the Lord let us re - jice!

Text: Delores Dufner, osb, b. 1939  
Music: GAUDEAMUS DOMINO, David Hurd, b. 1950  
Text © 1983, 1993 Sisters of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, MN, admin. Augsburg Fortress.  
Music © 1995 Augsburg Fortress.

## ✠ 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. Kathy Nolte



**CANTATA:** *Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort*, BWV 126  
(Uphold us, Lord, by your word)

J. S. 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.*

**1. Chorus**

Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort,  
**Uphold us, Lord, by your word,**  
Und steure deiner Feinde Mord,  
**And direct the murderous rage of your enemies,**  
Die Jesum Christum, deinen Sohn,  
**Who, Jesus Christ, your Son,**  
Stürzen wollen von seinem Thron.  
**They want to overthrow 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.

**2. Aria** (tenor)

Sende deine Macht von oben,  
**Send your power from above,**  
Herr der Herren, starker Gott!  
**Lord of Lords, mighty God!**  
Deine Kirche zu erfreuen  
**Your church to delight**  
Und der Feinde bitterm Spott  
**And our enemies' bitter scorn**  
Augenblicklich zu zerstreuen.  
**Momentarily to disperse.**

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 delight) the vocal motion becomes animated and at “*zu zerstreuen*” (to disperse) 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 and tenor)

- [*alto*] Der Menschen Gunst und Macht wird wenig nützen,  
**Human beings' goodwill and power would do little**  
Wenn du nicht willst das arme Häuflein schützen,  
**Were you not willing to protect your little flock.**
- [*both*] Gott Heilger Geist, du Tröster wert,  
**God, Holy Spirit, you dear comforter,**
- [*tenor*] Du weißt, dass die verfolgte Gottesstadt  
**You know that the persecuted city of God**  
Den ärgsten Feind nur in sich selber hat  
**Contains the worst enemy within itself**  
Durch die Gefährlichkeit der falschen Brüder.  
**In the dangerous nature of false brethren.**
- [*both*] Gib dein'm Volk einerlei Sinn auf Erd,  
**Give to your people all one purpose on earth,**
- [*alto*] Dass wir, an Christi Leibe Glieder,  
**That we, as members of Christ's body,**  
Im Glauben eins, im Leben einig sei'n.  
**In faith and in life, may be united as one.**
- [*both*] Steh bei uns in der letzten Not!  
**Stand by us in our final need!**
- [*tenor*] Es bricht alsdann der letzte Feind herein  
**Then when the final foe breaks in**  
Und will den Trost von unsern Herzen trennen;  
**And wants to tear all comfort from our hearts;**  
Doch lass dich da als unsern Helfer kennen.  
**Let yourself then as our helper be known.**
- [*both*] G'leit uns ins Leben aus dem Tod!  
**Lead us into life from death!**

In an unusual duet recitative, individual lines of the third chorale stanza are prefaced with poetic commentary. The alto sings two lines of poetry before the tenor joins her to sing 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!

**Dash to the ground pompous proud ones!**

Mache zunichte, was sie erdacht!

**Destroy what they conceive!**

Laß sie den Abgrund plötzlich verschlingen,

**Let the abyss suddenly devour them,**

Wehre dem Toben feindlicher Macht,

**Battle the rampage of enemy power,**

Laß ihr Verlangen nimmer gelingen!

**Let their demands never succeed!**

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 your word and truth become apparent**

Und stellet sich im höchsten Glanze dar,

**And are presented in the highest glory,**

Dass du vor deine Kirche wachst,

**That you keep watch over your church,**

Dass du des heiligen Wortes Lehren

**That you make the holy word's teaching**

Zum Segen fruchtbar machst;

**A blessing that is fruitful;**

Und willst du dich als Helfer zu uns kehren,

**And if you're willing, as helper, to turn to us,**

So wird uns denn in Frieden

**Then to us will be granted in peace**

Des Segens Überfluss beschieden.

**Blessings in abundance.**

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 us peace, mercifully,**  
Herr Gott, zu unsern Zeiten;  
**Lord God, in our time;**  
Es ist doch ja kein anderer nicht,  
**There is indeed none other**  
Der für uns könnte streiten,  
**Who could fight for us**  
Denn du, unser Gott, alleine.  
**Except you, our God, alone.**

Gib unsern Fürst'n und aller Obrigkeit  
**Grant to our princes and all authority**  
Fried und gut Regiment,  
**Peace and good government**  
Dass wir unter ihnen  
**So that we, under them,**  
Ein geruh'g und stilles Leben führen mögen  
**May lead a calm and quiet life,**  
In aller Gottseligkeit und Ehrbarkeit. Amen.  
**In all godliness 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 follow 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**



**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-ceil. 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.



*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.



- ☐ 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.

**CHORAL COLLECT:** *Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich* (from *Der Jahreskreis*, Op. 5)

Hugo Distler  
(1908–1942)

Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich,  
**Grant us peace, mercifully,**  
Herr Gott, zu unsern Zeiten;  
**Lord God, in our time;**  
Es ist doch ja kein anderer nicht,  
**There is indeed none other**  
Der für uns könnte streiten,  
**Who could fight for us**  
Denn du, unser Gott, alleine.  
**Except you, our God, alone.**

## 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.

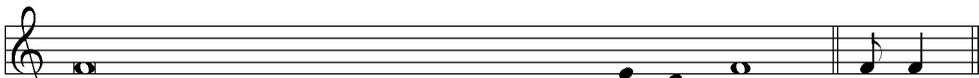
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

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: O God of Light Introduction and Stanza Settings by Richard Hillert (1923–2010)  
 Stanza 4 Setting by Michael D. Costello (b. 1979)



1 O God of light, your word, a lamp un - fail - ing,  
 2 From days of old, through blind and will - ful a - ges,  
 Choir 3 Un - dimmed by time, those words are still re - veal - ing  
 4 To all the world your sum - mons you are send - ing,



shall pierce the dark - ness of our earth - bound way  
 though we re - belled, you gent - ly sought a - gain,  
 to sin - ful hearts your jus - tice and your grace;  
 through all the earth, to ev - 'ry land and race,



and show your grace, your plan for us un - veil - ing,  
 and spoke through saints, a - pos - tles, proph - ets, sa - ges,  
 and quest - ing spir - its, long - ing for your heal - ing,  
 that myr - iad tongues, in one great an - them blend - ing,



and guide our foot - steps to the per - fect day.  
 who wrote with ea - ger or re - luc - tant pen.  
 see your com - pas - sion in the Sav - ior's face.  
 may praise and cel - e - brate your gift of grace.

Text: Sarah E. Taylor, 1883–1954, alt.  
 Music: ATKINSON, H. Barrie Cabena, b. 1933  
 Text © 1952, ren. 1980 The Hymn Society, admin. Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.  
 Music © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

DISMISSAL

**L** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God!



# THOMANERCHOR

L E I P Z I G



Photo © Philipp Kirschner, Leipzig Travel Used by permission

**March 14, 7:30 p.m.**

## **Leipzig Thomanerchor**

*The St. Thomas Boys Choir of Leipzig, Germany  
Thomaskantor Andreas Reize, conducting*

**Purchase tickets (\$25–\$55) at [www.bachvespers.org](http://www.bachvespers.org)  
or call the Grace Music Office at 708-366-6900.**

We strongly urge concert-goers to purchase tickets in advance.  
We expect this concert to be sold out.

# JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

## MASS IN B MINOR

MARCH 29, 2025 7 P.M. ✦ MARCH 30, 2025 4 P.M.

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

**Michael D. Costello**, director  
**Katelyn Lee**, soprano  
**Alexandra Kassouf**, soprano  
**Sarah Ponder**, mezzo-soprano  
**Brian Skoog**, tenor  
**Sam Handley**, bass-baritone



Katelyn Lee



Brian Skoog



Alexandra Kassouf



Sam Handley

Presented in concert with intermission.

Pre-concert lecture with Carl Grapentine begins one hour prior to each performance.

Free admission ■ Free parking  
\$25 Per person suggested donation



Sarah Ponder



Michael D. Costello

**GRACE  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH  
& SCHOOL**

54<sup>th</sup> Year  
2024-2025  
**BACH**  
Cantata Vespers

7300 Division Street ■ River Forest, Illinois ■ 708-366-6900 ■ [www.graceriverforest.org](http://www.graceriverforest.org)

## BACKGROUND NOTES

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 God’s 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, as in the text and translation for today’s performance. 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 have 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 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 Babstsche 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.

## Leading Worship Today

The Rev. David R. Lyle, leader

The Rev. Kathy Nolte, homilist

Grace Parish Choir

The Rev. Michael D. Costello, cantor

Steven Wentz, organist

Amanda Koopman, mezzo soprano

Ace Gangoso, tenor

David Govertsen, bass-baritone

Susan Weber, Martin Becker,  
and Susan Scherer, ushers

Bill Rohlfling, audio engineer

Al Swanson and Liz Hansen  
livestream audio/video

## Orchestra

Charles Roberts, trumpet

Christine Janzow Phillips, oboe

Meg Busse, oboe

Dianne Ryan, bassoon

Betty Lewis, violin

Paul Zafer, violin

Becky Coffman, viola

Jean Hatmaker, cello

Michael Hovnanian, double bass

Timothy Spelbring, continuo organ

Michael D. Costello, harpsichord

## Grace Parish Choir

### Soprano

Ann Anderson

Katrina Beck

Judy Berghaus

Janel Dennen

Gwen Gotsch

Linda Grisham

Sarah Gruendler-Ladner

Katrina Jurica

Liz Rudy

### Alto

Kjersti Anderson-Uribe

Karen Brunssen

Lois Cornils

Leanne Cribbs

Eunice Eifert

Lois Guebert

Catherine Hegarty

Johanna Johnson

Gaye Klopach

Amanda Koopman

Christa Krout

Jennifer Luebbe

Marilyn Moehlenkamp

Karen Rohde

Irmgard Swanson

Liz Thompson

### Tenor

Paul Aanonsen

John Beed

Ace Gangoso

Daniel Krout

Colin Krueger

John Rudy

Blaine Willhoft

### Bass

John Bouman

Jeff Cribbs

David Govertsen

David Kluge

Greg Rohlfling



## BIOGRAPHIES



**Michael D. Costello**, director, has served as Cantor at Grace since 2008. Pastor Costello 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, Costello graduated with a Bachelor 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. Pastor Costello has published choral and organ works with several publishers, sings as a baritone with St. Charles Singers and the Grant Park Music Festival Chorus, and is Artistic Director of Consonance – Chicago Choral Artists.



**Ace Gangoso**, tenor, enjoys an eclectic musical career in Chicago as a singer, liturgical musician, pianist, and teacher. He is on the regular rosters of the Chicago Symphony Chorus, Grant Park Chorus, Chicago a cappella and Fourth Coast Ensemble; this season Ace will make his debut with the Lyric Opera Chorus. An active church musician, Ace is the Director of Music Ministry at St. John XXIII Parish in Evanston; additionally, he is a pianist for the Chicago Black Catholics Choir and a supplementary musician at several parishes in the Archdiocese of Chicago. He holds bachelor's degrees from the University of Central Arkansas and a master's degree in voice performance from Northwestern University; he continues voice study with NU Professor W. Stephen Smith.



**David Govertsen**, bass-baritone, is a Chicago native who has appeared as a soloist with numerous opera companies, including Lyric Opera of Chicago, Santa Fe Opera, Tulsa Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, and the Haymarket Opera Company. He is a member of the vocal chamber quartet Fourth Coast Ensemble, performing art song in Chicago and throughout the Midwest. As a concert soloist Mr. Govertsen has performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Madison Symphony Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Grant Park Orchestra, Santa Fe Symphony, and Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, among others. He is an alumnus of the Ryan Opera Center and the Santa Fe Opera and Central City Opera apprentice programs and holds degrees from Northwestern University, Northern Illinois University, and the College of DuPage. Mr. Govertsen is currently on the faculty at North Park University, Lewis University, and the College of DuPage.



**Amanda Koopman**, mezzo soprano, has recently performed as soloist in Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Bach's *Mass in F* with Music of the Baroque, performed several recitals in cities in China, and Bach's *Mass in B Minor* with Bella Voce. She has participated as soloist for the Northwest Symphony Orchestra and is a regular soloist with the Bach Cantata Vespers series at Grace. She has performed with the Chicago Arts Orchestra, Grant Park Music Festival, Music of the Baroque, Elgin Master Chorale, and University of Illinois at Chicago. She graduated from Northwestern with her Masters in vocal performance in 2011.



**Betty Lewis**, violinist, received her bachelor's degree from Chicago Musical College at Roosevelt University as a student of Elaine Skorodin. She 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.



**Kathy Nolte**, homilist, is Associate to the Bishop for the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Pastor Nolte served as pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Oak Park from 2008 until 2024 and previously as pastor at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in North Aurora. She is a graduate of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, where she majored in Biology.



**Steven Wente**, organist, is Distinguished Professor of Music Emeritus and was recently named organist laureate at Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Illinois. He serves as Cantor at First Saint Paul's Lutheran Church, Chicago, a position he has held since 2010. As an organist, he has performed recitals in various locations in the United States. He has written on the topics of the organ and church music, especially its expression within Lutheran practice.

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