



53rd Year
2023–2024

BACH

Cantata Vespers



**Grace Lutheran Church
River Forest, Illinois**

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

January 28, 2024

Jesus schläft, was soll ich hoffen?

Jesus sleeps, what can I hope for?

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.

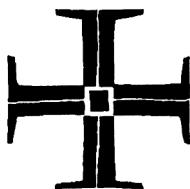
Recording or photography of any kind during the service is strictly forbidden.

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



Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
January 28, 2024

EVENING PRAYER



PRELUDE

String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 51, No. 2

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)

- I. Allegro non troppo
- III. Quasi minuetto, moderato

Kontras Quartet
Eleanor Bartsch, violinist
François Henkins, violinist
Ben Weber, violist
Jean Hatmaker, cellist

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 **I**. Men sing parts marked **II**. 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.

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

II Let my prayer rise be - fore you as in - cense;
the lift - ing up of my hands as the eve - ning sac - ri - fice.



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



II Let not my heart in-cline to an - y e - vil thing; let me not be oc - cu -



pied in wick - ed - ness with e - vil - do - ers. I But my eyes are



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



II Glo - ry to the Fa - ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Spir - it;



I as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and will be for - ev - er. A - men.



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



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

Silence for meditation is observed, then:

PSALM PRAYER

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: *Ich danke dem Herrn vom ganzem Herzen* (from TVWV 7:14) Georg Philipp Telemann
(1681–1767)

Ich danke dem Herrn vom ganzem Herzen,

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,

Im Rat der Frommen und in der Gemeinde der Heiligen.

In the counsel of the faithful and in the assembly of the holy.

Gross sind die Werke des Herrn,

Great are the works of the Lord,

Wer ihr' achtet, hat eitel Lust daran.

Whoever studies them, takes great delight in them.

Psalm 111:1–2

Silence for meditation is observed, then:

COLLECT

- ☐ Merciful and gentle Lord, the crowning glory of all the saints,
give us, your children, the gift of obedience, which is the beginning of wisdom,
so that we may be filled with your mercy
and that what you command we may do
by the might of Jesus Christ our Lord.

☑ **Amen.**

The offering is gathered.

OFFERING/VOLUNTARY: Æ Rømeser (Last Leaf)

Danish Traditional
arr. Danish String Quartet

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.

Your generosity is appreciated.



We stand.

HYMN: Jesus, Priceless Treasure

Setting by Theodore Beck
(1929–2003)



☐ 1. Je - sus, price - less trea - sure, Source of pur - est plea - sure,
Choir 2. In your arms I rest me; Foes who would mo - lest me
☐ 3. Sa - tan, I de - fy you; Death, I now de - cry you;
Choir 4. Hence, all earth - ly trea - sure! Je - sus is my plea - sure,
☐ 5. Hence, all fears and sad - ness, For the Lord of glad - ness,



Tru - est friend to me, Long my heart was burn - ing,
Can - not reach me here. Though the earth be shak - ing,
Fear, I bid you cease. World, you can - not harm me
Je - sus is my choice. Hence, all emp - ty glo - ry!
Je - sus en - ters in. Those who love the Fa - ther,



And my soul was yearn - ing, Lord, with you to be!
Ev - 'ry heart be quak - ing, Je - sus calms my fear.
Nor your threats a - larm me While I sing of peace.
What to me your sto - ry Told with tempt - ing voice.
Though the storms may gath - er, Still have peace with - in.



Yours I am, O spot - less Lamb; Noth - ing I'll al -
Sin and hell in con - flict fell, With their bit - ter
God's great pow'r guards ev - 'ry hour; Earth and all its
Pain or loss or shame or cross Shall not from my
For, what - ev - er I must bear, Still in you lies



low to hide you, Noth - ing ask be - side you.
storms as - sail me; Je - sus will not fail me.
depths a - dore him, Si - lent bow be - fore him.
Sav - ior move me, Since he chose to love me.
pur - est plea - sure, Je - sus, price - less trea - sure!

✠ WORD ✠

READING: Romans 13:8–10

[St. Paul writes:] ⁸Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

℣ The Word of the Lord.

✠ Thanks be to God.

READING: Matthew 8:23–27

²³And when [Jesus] got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. ²⁵And they went and woke him up, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” ²⁶And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, you of little faith?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. ²⁷They were amazed, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?”

℣ The Word of the Lord.

✠ Thanks be to God.

HOMILY

The Rev. Dr. Karoline M. Lewis

CANTATA: *Jesus schläft, was soll ich hoffen?* BWV 81

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)

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

1. Aria (alto)

Jesus schläft, was soll ich hoffen?

Jesus sleeps, what can I hope for?

Seh ich nicht

Do I not see

Mit erblasstem Angesicht

With pale countenance

Schon des Todes Abgrund offen?

Death's abyss already open?

In music that is both a lament and a lullaby, recorders join the strings in a rocking, uneasy depiction of the calm before the storm. The dissonance in the vocal line and low, held notes for the singer on *schläft* (sleeps) and *offen* (the open abyss of death) are full of anguish and despair, accentuated by descending scales in the bass line.

2. Recitative (tenor)

Herr! warum trittest du so ferne?

Lord! Why are you so far away?

Warum verbirgst du dich zur Zeit der Not,

Why do you hide yourself in the time of my distress,

Da alles mir ein kläglich Ende droht?

When everything threatens me with a miserable end?

Ach, wird dein Auge nicht durch meine Not bewegt

Ah, is not your eye moved by my distress

So sonst nie zu schlummern pfleget?

That at other times never cares to sleep?

Du wiesest ja mit einem Sterne

You pointed out with a star

Vordem den neubekehrten Weisen,

Before to the newly converted Wise Men,

Den rechten Weg zu reisen.

The right way to travel.

Ach leite mich durch deiner Augen Licht,

Ah, guide me by the light of your eyes

Weil dieser Weg nichts als Gefahr verspricht.

Since this path promises nothing but danger.

“Warum? Why are you so far away?” asks the tenor over a series of unstable, dissonant diminished seventh chords. More pleasant harmonies accompany the recollection of the star that led the Wise Men to Jesus, followed by a personal prayer for guidance. The sudden dissonant chord on the word *Gefahr* (danger) warns of trouble ahead.



3. Aria (tenor)

Die schäumenden Wellen von Belials Bächen

The foaming waves of Belial's brooks

Verdoppeln die Wut.

Redouble their rage.

Ein Christ soll zwar wie Wellen stehn,

A Christian should stand like waves.

Wenn Trübsalswinde um ihn gehn,

When the winds of affliction surround it,

Doch suchet die stürmende Flut

For the raging flood seeks

Die Kräfte des Glaubens zu schwächen.

To weaken the power of our belief.

Waves rise and fall at a furious tempo as the storm breaks, with impossibly rapid notes in 3/8 time for singer and violin. Dissonance indicates that the dangerous waves do indeed come from *Belial* (a Hebrew word for devil). But then, in three brief *adagio* statements, comes the reminder from the vocalist that the Christian should stand firm like waves and be brave in times of trouble – even as the storm returns.

One might ask how a Christian can “stand like waves.” Some commentators suggest this is a copyist’s error and the intended word was not *Wellen* (waves) but *Felsen* (rock). Others cite images from the Old Testament, such as the parted waters of the Red Sea in Exodus or medieval paintings as support for the wave imagery.

4. Arioso (bass)

Ihr Kleingläubigen, warum seid ihr so furchtsam?

You people of little faith, why are you so fearful?

As is Bach’s custom, the words of Jesus are sung by the bass. Jesus’ question is repeated over and over again in a conversation with the bass line, lively counterpoint similar to that of Bach’s Two-Part Inventions for keyboard.

5. Aria (bass)

Schweig, aufgetürmtes Meer!

Be silent, towering sea!

Verstumme, Sturm und Wind!

Become still, storm and wind!

Dir sei dein Ziel gesetzt,

A goal has been set for you,

Damit mein auserwähltes Kind

So that my chosen child

Kein Unfall je verletzt.

No accident may injure.

Jesus' rebuke of the storm ("*Schweig! Schweig!*") appears in the oboes d'amore as well as in the vocal line. The winds and the waves in the strings lose some of their intensity and even fall silent at times in the middle section, where the text reminds listeners that Jesus will protect his children from harm.

6. Recitative (alto)

Wohl mir, mein Jesus spricht ein Wort,

Happily for me, my Jesus speaks a word,

Mein Helfer ist erwacht,

My helper is awake,

So muss der Wellen Sturm, des Unglücks Nacht

And so the storm's waves, the night's misfortune

Und aller Kummer fort.

And all sorrow must go.

The alto, the original "I" caught in the storm of the libretto, announces the restoration of peace and calm, thanks to Jesus.



7. Chorale

Unter deinen Schirmen

Beneath your shield

Bin ich für den Stürmen

I am free from the storms

Aller Feinde frei.

And all enemies.

Laß den Satan wittern,

Let Satan sniff around,

Laß den Feind erbittern,

Let the enemy be embittered,

Mir steht Jesus bei.

Jesus stands by me.

Ob es itzt gleich kracht und blitzt,

Though it now thunders and flashes,

Ob gleich Sünd und Hölle schrecken,

Although sin and hell terrify,

Jesus will mich decken.

Jesus will protect me.

The second stanza of the chorale, *Jesu Meine Freude* (known in English as “Jesus, Priceless Treasure”) brings the story and the lesson of the cantata back into the world of the congregation with a familiar, reassuring tune and text.

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:

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



The litany concludes:

- L** Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Silence is kept, then:

- L** Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ, our Lord.



- L** O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works: Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments; and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God forever.

C Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

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

C Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come,

thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory,

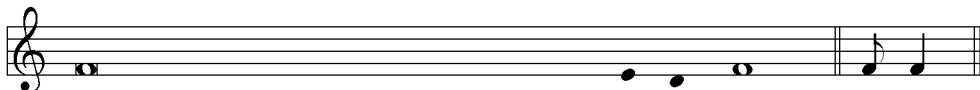
forever and ever. Amen.



BENEDICAMUS DOMINO & BENEDICTION



☐ 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: How Can I Keep from Singing

Setting by Jeremy J. Bankson
(b. 1975)



1 My life flows on in end-less song; a-bove earth's lam-en - ta - tion,
2 Through all the tu - mult and the strife, I hear that mu-sic ring - ing.
☐ 3 What though my joys and com-forts die? The Lord my Sav-ior liv - eth.
4 The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a foun - tain ev - er spring-ing!



I catch the sweet, though far-off hymn that hails a new cre - a - tion.
It finds an ech - o in my soul. How can I keep from sing-ing?
What though the dark - ness gath-er round? Songs in the night he giv - eth.
All things are mine since I am his! How can I keep from sing-ing?

Refrain



No storm can shake my in-most calm while to that Rock I'm cling-ing.



Since Christ is Lord of heav-en and earth, how can I keep from sing-ing?

Text: Robert Lowry, 1826–1899

Music: HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING, Robert Lowry, alt.



DISMISSAL

☞ Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

☞ **Thanks be to God!**

Leading Worship Today

The Rev. Dr. David R. Lyle, leader
The Rev. Dr. Karoline M. Lewis, homilist

Grace Parish Choir
The Rev. Michael D. Costello, cantor
Timothy Spelbring, organist

Marybeth Kurnat, soprano
Sarah Ponder, mezzo soprano
Ace Gangoso, tenor
David Govertsen, bass-baritone

Gerlinde VanDriesen and Susan Weber, ushers
Bill Rohlfling, audio engineer
Liz Hanson and Al Swanson,
 livestream audio/video

Orchestra

Matt Baker, trumpet

Lisette Kielson, Mirja Lorenz, recorders
Christine Janzow Phillips, Meg Busse, oboe/d'amore
Dianne Ryan, bassoon

Kontras Quartet

Eleanor Bartsch, violin 1
François Henkins, violin 2
Ben Weber, viola
Jean Hatmaker, cello

Douglas Johnson, double bass
Timothy Spelbring, continuo organ

Grace Parish Choir

Soprano

Ann Anderson
Judy Berghaus
Janel Dennen
Donna Dumpys
Gwen Gotsch
Sarah Gruendler-Ladner
Kate Hogenson
Katrina Jurica
Marybeth Kurnat
Val Poulos
Ellen Pullin
Liz Rudy
Ngairé Whiteside-Bull

Alto

Karen Brunssen
Lois Cornils
Leanne Cribbs
Eunice Eifert
Cynthia Hill
Martha Houston
Christa Krout
Jennifer Luebbe
Marilyn Moehlenkamp
Sarah Ponder
Karen Rohde
Irmgard Swanson
Liz Thompson

Tenor

Paul Aanonsen
John Beed
Ace Gangoso
Daniel Krout
Colin Krueger
Justin Martin
John Rudy
Blaine Willhoft

Bass

Douglas Anderson
John Bouman
Mark Bouman
Jeff Cribbs
David Govertsen
David Kluge
Craig Mindrum
Bill Pullin
Greg Rohlfling





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Prelude at 3:45 p.m.**

January 28
BWV 81

Jesus schläft, was soll ich hoffen? *Jesus sleeps, what can I hope for?*
Karoline M. Lewis, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, homilist
Kontras Quartet: Eleanor Bartsch, François Henkins, Ben Weber, and Jean Hatmaker

February 25
BWV 144

Nimm, was dein ist, und gehe hin *Take what is yours and go away*
Ole Schenk, United Lutheran Church, Oak Park, Illinois, homilist
Florence Price: Andante Moderato for Strings; **Vivian Fung**: Pizzicato for String Orchestra
Richard Hillert: Prelude to Evening Prayer

March 24
BWV 182

Himmelskönig, sei willkommen *King of Heaven, welcome*
Jerome Burce, Roaming Shores, Ohio, homilist
Steven Wente, Concordia University Chicago, organist

April 21
BWV 12

Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen *Weeping, wailing, fretting, fearing*
Michael D. Costello, Grace Lutheran Church and School, River Forest, Illinois, homilist
Joseph Haydn: Symphony No. 30 in C Major (*"Alleluia"*)
Kapelle of Concordia University Chicago, guest choir; **Charles P. Brown**, conductor

May 19
BWV 37

Wer da gläubet und getauft wird *Whoever believes and is baptized*
Amy Gillespie, St. James Lutheran Church, Lake Forest, Illinois, homilist
Stephen Buzard, St. James Cathedral, Chicago, Illinois, organist

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BACKGROUND OF THE CANTATA

In the spring of 1723, the Leipzig town council deliberated on whether to appoint J. S. Bach as Cantor at the St. Thomas Church. The record of the meeting quotes one councilman, Dr. Steger, as saying he would vote for Bach but with the caveat that “he should make compositions that were not theatrical.”

What was he worried about? While Bach’s celebrated contemporaries George Frederic Handel and Georg Philipp Telemann both composed for the stage, he himself never wrote an opera. Was he too serious a composer or such a sober Lutheran that he refused to devote time to frivolous spectacles? We don’t know. The simple reason may be that he never lived and worked in a city that had an opera house. But the councilman apparently recognized that new music composed for early 18th century Lutheran worship services was indeed trending toward a more theatrical style.

In 1700 Erdmann Neumeister, a young Lutheran theologian and poet, had written and published *Geistliche Cantaten statt einer Kirchen-Music* (Sacred Cantatas Instead of Church Music), a cycle of free-verse texts for the liturgical year that were modeled on the libretto of the Italian secular opera. The alternating recitatives and arias provided opportunities for drama and characterization, presenting images, actions and emotions that could be depicted in music. Over the next 30 years Neumeister published additional collections and other pastors and poets followed suit, and texts evolved to include biblical quotes and chorales as well as original poetry. Composers all over Germany, including J. S. Bach, set these texts to music for use in Sunday services and on festival days.

Bach’s St. John and St. Matthew Passions are obvious examples of compositions that use music to heighten the dramatic impact of the story. A number of his cantatas, both sacred and secular, also have dramatic story lines or dialogue. These include today’s cantata, BWV 81, *Jesus schläft, was soll ich hoffen?* (Jesus sleeps, what can I hope for?). Presented on January 30, 1724, less than a year after Bach took up the position in Leipzig, the cantata shows what the composer might have done if he had written music for the opera house in Hamburg or Dresden.

The libretto for BWV 81 is based on the gospel lesson for the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany, Matthew 8:23–27. Jesus’ disciples are in a boat on the Sea of Galilee as a storm is brewing. Jesus is there, too, but he’s sleeping, absent, at least at first. In the libretto, author unknown, the disciples’ anguish, expressed in the first-person “I” of the text, is also the lament of the present-day Christian, navigating the storms of life, afraid of death and affliction, and asking “Lord, why are you so far away?” In the second half of the story, Jesus is present; he stills the storm and in speaking to the disciples, also rebukes and reassures Bach’s congregants.

The music heightens the drama of the scenes in the biblical story: the disciples' anguish and anxiety at the coming storm as Jesus lies asleep; the raging waves and terror as the storm bursts; and finally, Jesus' calming authority over wind and waves. The action and emotions depicted in the music pull the listener into the story in a way that the words alone cannot. While the most conservative of Bach's listeners (including his employers) may have preferred a less visceral approach, the "theatrical" music offers a deeper devotional experience. Like classical drama the cantata's movements arouse pity and fear and then provide a catharsis, a resolution – but not a tragic one, because faith in Christ provides hope and comfort.

Gwen Gotsch

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Background notes on the cantata by Gwen Gotsch. Used by permission.



BIOGRAPHIES



Michael D. Costello, director and organist, 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 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.



Marybeth Kurnat, soprano, is a public school music educator, soprano, and choral composer in the Chicago area. She earned a bachelor's degree in music education from Northern Illinois University, where she studied voice with Diane Ragains and saxophone with Steve Duke. She has taught in Illinois public schools since 2011, and currently serves as a vocal and instrumental music educator for the DeKalb School District. Kurnat is a District 8 representative for the Illinois Music Education Association. She is a member of Chicago Choral Artists, St. Charles Singers, and Grant Park Music Festival Chorus.





Karoline M. Lewis, homilist, is the Marbury E. Anderson Chair in Biblical Preaching at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, where she has taught since 2007 and is ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. She is the Program Director for the Festival of Homiletics, a contributing writer for the website *Working Preacher*, and co-host of the site’s weekly podcast, *Sermon Brainwave*. Lewis is author of a number of books including: *Preaching the Word: Contemporary Approaches to the Bible For The Pulpit*; *Belonging: Five Keys to Unlocking Your Potential as a Disciple*; *A Lay Preacher’s Guide: How to Craft a Faithful Sermon*; *Embody: Five Steps to Leading With Integrity*; *SHE: Five Keys to Unlock the Power of Women in Ministry* and *John: Fortress Biblical Preaching Commentaries*.



Sarah Ponder, mezzo-soprano, enjoys a busy career as a soloist and versatile ensemble singer, performing with Chicago institutions such as Lyric Opera Chicago, Chicago Symphony Chorus, Chicago a cappella, William Ferris Chorale, and Music of the Baroque in addition to various appearances in the region. A passionate educator and performer, Sarah holds an outreach position with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra where she works with at-risk youth and has also recorded original works with Carnegie Hall’s Lullaby Project. She has also performed several solo concerts with famed Maestro Riccardo Muti at the piano, bringing opera to new audiences.



The Kontras Quartet has been described as “a tightly crafted and beautiful instrument” (CVNC Arts Journal) and has been commended by Gramophone Magazine for their “scrupulous shading and control” and “enjoyable musical personality” (Fanfare Magazine). Kontras means “contrasts” in the Afrikaans language – fitting for a string ensemble whose colorful repertoire spans centuries, genres, and continents. The Quartet’s recent engagements include tours of South Africa and Switzerland; broadcasts on Performance Today and a three-month residency with

Chicago’s WFMT 98.7 FM; appearances on NBC and PBS; and sold-out performances in San Diego, Chicago, Washington D.C., Telluride, Salt Lake City, Raleigh and Arizona. The Kontras Quartet records for MSR Classics and DoubleTime Music, and has released three critically acclaimed albums, including the premiere recording of Dan Visconti’s Ramshackle Songs. Kontras enjoys educational work of all kinds and has been in residence at Grace Lutheran Church and School for the last six seasons, presenting concerts at Grace, interacting with students at Grace Lutheran School, and performing regularly during services of worship.

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