



Johann Sebastian Bach St. John Passion Version II (1725)

3 p.m. Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026
Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus

Welcome to the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus

We are happy to have you with us to hear the praise of God through music and His Word. We are blessed with a reverberant worship space that enhances those praises as they echo throughout the room. This also means that extra noises are also magnified. If it becomes necessary to quiet a distressed child, we encourage you to use the narthex as a place to do so. The narthex windows will allow you to see and participate until you and your child are able to join the assembly again. Thank you for your consideration of those around you.

Thank You for Your Support

The music in this service is made possible in part through the Nurturing Children through Worship and Prayer Initiative funded through a generous grant provided by Lilly Endowment, Inc. The Nurturing Children through Worship and Prayer Initiative seeks to nurture children's faith formation by providing meaningful worship experiences and equipping future pastors and deaconesses, current church leaders, parents and caregivers with the tools and resources necessary to guide children in their spiritual growth.



This musical presentation is also made possible thanks to the generous support of friends like you. Your tax-deductible gift may be designated for Concordia Seminary Music Series expenses. Thank you for your support and generosity. You can give a gift online at csl.edu/give.

*You are cordially invited to join the musicians
for a reception in Koburg Hall immediately following the service.*



Hearing device assistance is available in the chapel by downloading *AudioFetch* to your smart phone. Once installed, connect to the chapel WiFi network "CSLWiFi," using the password "Seminary1839." Then use your personal headphones or earbuds to listen and adjust the sound as needed. If you need assistance, please speak with the tech worker at the back of the chapel. He will be happy to assist.

ST. JOHN PASSION

An Oratorio for Good Friday

By Johann Sebastian Bach
BWV 245-II


Featuring
THE AMERICAN KANTOREI
Maurice Boyer, Music Director

VESPERS


Iesu, iuva.

OPENING VERSICLES

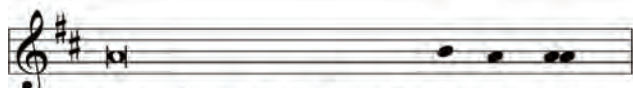
Stand




L O Lord, o - pen my lips,




C and my mouth will de - clare Your praise.



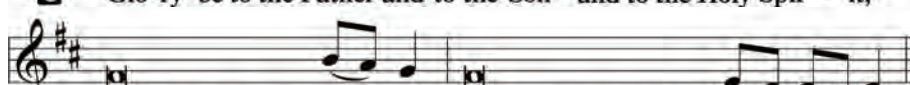
L Make haste, O God, to de - liv - er me;



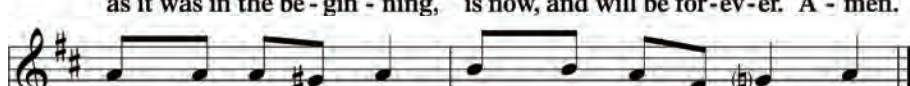
C make haste to help me, O Lord.



C Glo-ry be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spir - it;



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



Praise to You, O Christ, Lamb of our sal - va - tion.

Sit

Erster Teil

1. Chor

O Mensch, beweine deine Sünde groß
Darum Christus seines Vaters Schoß
Äußert und kam auf Erden;
Von einer Jungfrau rein und zart
Für uns er hier geboren ward,
Er wollte den Mittler werden.
Den Toten er das Leben gab
Und legt dabei alle Krankheit ab
Bis sich die Zeit herdrange,
Daß er für uns geopfert würd,
Trüg unser Sünden schwere Bürd
Wohl an dem Kreuze lange.

(“O Mensch, beweine deine Sünde groß,” stanza 1)

2a. Evangelist

Jesus ging mit seinen Jüngern über den Bach Kidron, da war ein Garten, darein ging Jesus und seine Jünger. Judas aber, der ihn verriet, wußte den Ort auch, denn Jesus versammelte sich oft daselbst mit seinen Jüngern. Da nun Judas zu sich hatte genommen die Schar und der Hohenpriester und Pharisäer Diener, kommt er dahin mit Fackeln, Lampen und mit Waffen. Als nun Jesus wußte alles, was ihm begegnen sollte, ging er hinaus und sprach zu ihnen:

Jesus

Wen suchet ihr?

Evangelist

Sie antworteten ihm:

2b. Chor

Jesum von Nazareth.

2c. Evangelist

Jesus spricht zu ihnen:

Jesus

Ich bin's.

Evangelist

Judas aber, der ihn verriet, stand auch bei ihnen. Als nun Jesus zu ihnen sprach: Ich bin's, wichen sie zurück und fielen zu Boden. Da fragete er sie abermal:

Jesus

Wen suchet ihr?

Part One

1. Chorus

O mankind, lament your great sins
because of which Christ left his Father's bosom
and came to earth;
from a virgin pure and tender
was he here born for us;
he wanted to become the mediator.
To the dead he gave life
and thereby cast off all sickness
until the time came
when he would be sacrificed for us,
carrying the heavy burden of our sins
long on the cross.

2a. Evangelist

Jesus went with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden, into which Jesus entered with his disciples. Judas, however, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. Now Judas, having gathered a band of servants of the high priests and Pharisees, came there with torches, lamps and weapons. There Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, went out and said to them:

Jesus

Whom do you seek?

Evangelist

They answered him:

2b. Chorus

Jesum of Nazareth.

2c. Evangelist

Jesus said to them:

Jesus

I am he.

Evangelist

But Judas, who betrayed him, stood also with them. Now when Jesus said to them, I am he, they drew back and fell to the ground. Then he asked them again:

Jesus

Whom do you seek?

Evangelist

Sie aber sprachen:

2d. Chor

Jesum von Nazareth.

2e. Evangelist

Jesus antwortete:

Jesus

Ich hab's euch gesagt, daß ich's sei, suchet ihr denn mich, so lasset diese gehen!

3. Choral

**O große Lieb, o Lieb ohn alle Maße,
Die dich gebracht auf diese Marterstraße!
Ich lebte mit der Welt in Lust und Freuden,
Und du mußt leiden.**

(“Herzliebster Jesu, was hast du verbrochen,” stanza 7)

4a. Evangelist

Auf daß das Wort erfüllet würde, welches er sagte: Ich habe der keine verloren, die du mir gegeben hast. Da hatte Simon Petrus ein Schwert und zog es aus und schlug nach des Hohenpriesters Knecht und hieb ihm sein recht Ohr ab; und der Knecht hieß Malchus. Da sprach Jesus zu Petro:

Jesus

Stecke dein Schwert in die Scheide! Soll ich den Kelch nicht trinken, den mir mein Vater gegeben hat?

5. Choral

**Dein Will gescheh, Herr Gott, zugleich
Auf Erden wie im Himmelreich.
Gib uns Geduld in Leidenszeit,
Gehorsam sein in Lieb und Leid;
Wehr und steur allem Fleisch und Blut,
Das wider deinen Willen tut!**

(“Vater unser im Himmelreich,” stanza 4)

Evangelist

And they said:

2d. Chorus

Jesus of Nazareth.

2e. Evangelist

Jesus answered:

Jesus

I have told you, that I am he; if you seek me, then let these others go!

3. Chorale

**O great love, O love beyond all measure,
that brought you to this path of torment!
I lived with the world in delight and joy,
and you must suffer.**

4a. Evangelist

So that the word might be fulfilled that he spoke: “I have lost none that you have given to me.” Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it out and struck at the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear; and the servant’s name was Malchus. Then Jesus said to Peter:

Jesus

Put your sword in its sheath! Shall I not drink the cup, which my Father has given to me?

5. Chorale

**Your will be done, Lord God, likewise
on earth as in the kingdom of heaven.
Grant us patience in time of suffering,
to be obedient in love and suffering;
check and steer all flesh and blood
that acts contrary to your will!**

6. Evangelist

Die Schar aber und der Oberhauptmann und die Diener der Juden nahmen Jesum und bunden ihn und führten ihn aufs erste zu Hannas, der was Kaiphas Schwäher, welcher des Jahres Hoherpriester war. Es war aber Kaiphas, der den Juden riet, es wäre gut, daß ein Mensch würde umbracht für das Volk.

7. Arie A

Von den Strikken meiner Sünden
Mich zu entbinden,
Wird mein Heil gebunden.
 Mich von allen Lasterbeulen
 Völlig zu heilen,
 Läßt er sich verwunden.

8. Evangelist

Simon Petrus aber folgte Jesu nach und ein ander Jünger.

9. Arie S

Ich folge dir gleichfalls mit freudigen Schritten
Und lasse dich nicht,
Mein Leben, mein Licht.
 Befördre den Lauf,
 Und höre nicht auf,
 Selbst an mir zu ziehen, zu schieben, zu bitten.

10. Evangelist

Derselbige Jünger war dem Hohenpriester bekannt und ging mit Jesu hinein in des Hohenpriesters Palast. Petrus aber stund draußen für der Tür. Da ging der andere Jünger, der dem Hohenpriester bekannt war, hinaus und redete mit der Türhüterin und führte Petrum hinein. Da sprach die Magd, die Türhüterin, zu Petro:

Magd

Bist du nicht dieses Menschen Jünger einer?

Evangelist

Er sprach:

Petrus

Ich bin's nicht.

6. Evangelist

The band of soldiers, however, and the captain and the servants of the Jews took Jesus and bound him and led him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. It was Caiaphas, however, who counseled the Jews that it would be good for one man to be destroyed for the people.

7. Aria A

To unbind me
from the ropes of my sins,
my Savior is bound.
 To fully heal me
 of all sores of vice,
 he lets himself be wounded.

8. Evangelist

But Peter followed after Jesus with another disciple.

9. Aria S

I follow you likewise with happy steps
and do not leave you,
my Life, my Light.
 Pursue your course,
 and do not cease
 to pull, to push, to urge me on.

10. Evangelist

This same disciple was known to the high priest and went inside with Jesus in the high priest's palace. Peter, however, stood outside at the door. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went outside and spoke with the girl guarding the door and brought Peter inside. Then the maid, the doorkeeper, said to Peter:

Maid

Aren't you one of this man's disciples?

Evangelist

He said:

Peter

I am not.

Evangelist

Es stunden aber die Knechte und Diener und hatten ein Kohlfeu'r gemacht (denn es war kalt) und wärmeten sich. Petrus aber stund bei ihnen und wärmete sich. Aber der Hohepriester fragte Jesum um seine Jünger und um seine Lehre. Jesus antwortete ihm:

Jesus

Ich habe frei, öffentlich geredet für der Welt. Ich habe allezeit gelehret in der Schule und in dem Tempel, da alle Juden zusammenkommen, und habe nichts im Verborgenen geredt. Was fragest du mich darum? Frage die darum, die gehöret haben, was ich zu ihnen geredet habe! Siehe, dieselbigen wissen, was ich gesagt habe.

Evangelist

Als er aber solches redete, gab der Diener einer, die dabeistunden, Jesu einen Bakkenstreich und sprach:

Diener

Solltest du dem Hohenpriester also antworten?

Evangelist

Jesus aber antwortete:

Jesus

Hab ich übel geredt, so beweise es, daß es böse sei, hab ich aber recht geredt, was schlägest du mich?

11. Choral

**Wer hat dich so geschlagen,
Mein Heil, und dich mit Plagen
So übel zugericht?
Du bist ja nicht ein Sünder
Wie wir und unsre Kinder,
Von Missetaten weißt du nicht.**

**Ich, ich und meine Sünden,
Die sich wie Körnlein finden
Des Sandes an dem Meer,
Die haben dir erreget
Das Elend, das dich schläget,
Und das betrübte Marterheer.**

(“O Welt, sieh hier dein Leben,” stanzas 3 and 4)

Evangelist

Now the soldiers and serevants were standing there and had made a coal fire (for it was cold) and were warming themselves. Peter, too, stood with them warming himself. But the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teachings. Jesus answered him:

Jesus

I have freely and openly spoken before the world. I have taught all the time in the synagogue and in the temple, where all Jews gather together, and I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me about this? Ask those about it, who have heard what I said to them! Behold, these same people know what I have said.

Evangelist

As he was saying this, however, one of the servants who stood by gave Jesus a blow to the face and said:

Servant

Is this how you answer the high priest?

Evangelist

But Jesus answered:

Jesus

If I have spoken ill, then make it known that it is ill-spoken; however, if I spoke rightly, why do you strike me?

11. Chorale

**Who has struck you thus,
my Savior, and with torments
so evilly injured you?
You are indeed not a sinner,
as we and our children [are];
of transgressions you know nothing.**

**I, I and my sins,
that can be found like the grains
of sand by the sea,
these have brought you
this misery that has struck you,
and the woeful host of torture.**

11a. Arie B und Choral

Himmel reiße, Welt erbebe,
Fallt in meinen Trauertone,

Jesu, deine Passion

Sehet meine Qual und Angst,
Was ich, Jesu, mit dir leide!

Ist mir lauter Freude,

Ja, ich zähle deine Schmerzen,
O zerschlagner Gottessohn,

Deine Wunden, Kron, und Hohn

Ich erwähle Golgotha
Vor dies schnöde Weltgebäude.

Meines Herzens Weide.

Werden auf den Kreuzeswegen
Deine Dornen ausgesät,

Meine Seel auf Rosen geht,

Weil ich in Zufriedenheit
Mich in deine Wunden senke,

Wenn ich dran gedenke,

So erblick ich in dem Sterben,
Wenn ein stürmend Wetter weht,

In dem Himmel eine Stätt

Diesen Ort, dahin ich mich
Täglich durch den Glauben lenke.

Mir deswegen schenke!

(“Jesu Leiden, Pein und Tod,” verse 33)

12a. Evangelist

*Und Hannas sandte ihn gebunden zu dem Hohenpriester
Kaiphäs. Simon Petrus stund und wärmete sich, da
sprachen sie zu ihm:*

12b. Chor

Bist du nicht seiner Jünger einer?

12c. Evangelist

Er leugnete aber und sprach:

Petrus

Ich bin's nicht.

Evangelist

*Spricht des Hohenpriesters Knecht' einer, ein Gefreundter des,
dem Petrus das Ohr abgehauen hatte:*

11a. Aria B and Chorale

Heaven rend yourself, world quake,
fall into my song of mourning,

Jesus, your Passion

See my agony and anguish –
what I, Jesus, with you suffer!

is for me sheer joy,

Yes, I count your pains,
battered Son of God;

your wounds, crown and scorn

I choose Golgotha
over this base worldly edifice.

my heart's pasture.

If upon the way of the Cross
your thorns are sown,

My soul walks on roses

because in deep contentment
I sink myself into Your wounds,

when I think thereupon;

Then, amidst the dying—

When stormy weather blows—

grant me a place in heaven

I behold this very place [the Cross] wherein
I daily guide myself through faith.

on account of that [your Passion].

12a. Evangelist

*And Annas sent him bound to the high priest Caiaphas. As
Simon Peter stood and warmed himself, they said
to him:*

12b. Choir

Aren't you one of his disciples?

12c. Evangelist

He denied it however and said:

Peter

I am not.

Evangelist

*One of the high priest's servants, a friend of the man whose
ear Peter had cut off, said:*

Knecht

Sabe ich dich nicht im Garten bei ihm?

Evangelist

Da verleugnete Petrus abermal, und alsobald krähete der Hahn. Da gedachte Petrus an die Worte Jesu und ging hinaus und weinete bitterlich.

(Matthew 26:75)

13. Arie T

Zerschmettert mich, ihr Felsen und ihr Hügel,
Wirf Himmel deinen Strahl auf mich!
Wie freventlich, wie sündlich, wie vermessen
Hab ich, o Jesu, dein vergessen!
Ja, nähm ich gleich der Morgenröte Flügel,
So holte mich mein strenger Richter wieder;
Ach! fallt vor ihm in bitterm Tränen nieder!

14. Choral

**Petrus, der nicht denkt zurück,
Seinen Gott verneinet,
Der doch auf ein' ernsten Blick
Bitterlichen weinet.
Jesu, blikke mich auch an,
Wenn ich nicht will büßen;
Wenn ich Böses hab getan,
Rühre mein Gewissen!**

(“Jesu Leiden, Pein und Tod,” stanza 10)

HOMILY

“The Last Words of Our Lord from Golgotha”
Excerpted from a sermon by Erdmann Neumeister (1671–1756)
Pastor of St. Jakobus and Schoolmaster in Hamburg, Germany, 1719

Servant

Didn't I see you in the garden with him?

Evangelist

Then Peter denied it again, and just then the cock crowed. Then Peter recalled Jesus' words and went out and wept bitterly.

13. Aria T

Crush me, you rocks and you hills,
Cast, O heaven, your shaft of lightning on me!
How wickedly, how sinfully, how presumptuously,
O Jesus, have I forgotten you!
Yes, even if I took the wings of the dawn,
My severe judge would fetch me back;
Ah! fall down before him with bitter tears.

14. Chorale

**Peter, who gives no thought to the past,
denies his God;
yet at a single serious glance [from Jesus],
weeps bitterly.
Jesus, look upon me also,
when I will not repent;
when I have done evil,
stir my conscience!**

Zweiter Teil

15. Choral

Christus, der uns selig macht,
Kein Bö's' hat begangen,
Der ward für uns in der Nacht
Als ein Dieb gefangen,
Geführt für gottlose Leut
Und fälschlich verklaget,
Verlacht, verhöhnt und verspeit,
Wie denn die Schrift saget.

(“Christus, der uns selig macht,” stanza 1)

16a. Evangelist

Da führeten sie Jesum von Kaiphas vor das Richthaus, und es war frühe. Und sie gingen nicht in das Richthaus, auf daß sie nicht unrein würden, sondern Ostern essen möchten. Da ging Pilatus zu ihnen heraus und sprach:

Pilatus

Was bringet ihr für Klage wider diesen Menschen?

Evangelist

Sie antworteten und sprachen zu ihm:

16b. Chor

Wäre dieser nicht ein Übeltäter, wir hätten dir ihn nicht überantwortet.

16c. Evangelist

Da sprach Pilatus zu ihnen:

Pilatus

So nehmet ihr ihn hin und richtet ihn nach eurem Gesetze!

Evangelist

Da sprachen die Jüden zu ihm:

16d. Chor

Wir dürfen niemand töten.

Part Two

15. Chorale

Christ, who saves us,
committed no evil deed,
for us he was captured in the night
like a thief,
led before godless people
and falsely accused,
laughed at, mocked, and spat upon,
as the Scripture says.

16a. Evangelist

Then they led Jesus before Caiaphas into the judgment hall, and it was early. And they did not go into the judgment hall, so that they would not become unclean, but rather that they might partake of Passover. Then Pilate came outside to them and said:

Pilate

What charge do you bring against this man?

Evangelist

They answered and said to him:

16b. Chorus

If this man were not an evil-doer, we wouldn't have turned him over to you.

16c. Evangelist

Then Pilate said to them:

Pilate

So take him away and judge him according to your law!

Evangelist

Then the Jews said to him:

16d. Chorus

We may not put anyone to death.

16e. Evangelist

Auf daß erfüllet würde das Wort Jesu, welches er sagte, da er deutete, welches Todes er sterben würde. Da ging Pilatus wieder hinein in das Richthaus und rief Jesu und sprach zu ihm:

Pilatus

Bist du der Juden König?

Evangelist

Jesus antwortete:

Jesus

Redest du das von dir selbst, oder haben's dir andere von mir gesagt?

Evangelist

Pilatus antwortete:

Pilatus

Bin ich ein Jude? Dein Volk und die Hohenpriester haben dich mir überantwortet; was hast du getan?

Evangelist

Jesus antwortete:

Jesus

Mein Reich ist nicht von dieser Welt; wäre mein Reich von dieser Welt, meine Diener würden darob kämpfen, daß ich den Juden nicht überantwortet würde; aber nun ist mein Reich nicht von dannen.

17. Choral

**Ach großer König, groß zu allen Zeiten,
Wie kann ich gnugsam diese Treu ausbreiten?
Keins Menschen Herze mag indes ausdenken,
Was dir zu schenken.**

**Ich kann's mit meinen Sinnen nicht erreichen,
Womit doch dein Erbarmen zu vergleichen.
Wie kann ich dir denn deine Liebestaten
Im Werk erstatten?**

(“Herzliebster Jesu, was hast du verbrochen,” stanzas 8, 9)

16e. Evangelist

This was so that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spoke when he indicated what death he would die. Then Pilate went back into the judgment hall and called Jesus and said to him:

Pilate

Are you the King of the Jews?

Evangelist

Jesus answered:

Jesus

Do you say this of yourself, or have others said this of me?

Evangelist

Pilate answered:

Pilate

Am I a Jew? Your people and the high priests have delivered you over to me; what have you done?

Evangelist

Jesus answered:

Jesus

My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight over this, so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; now however my kingdom is not from here [this world].

17. Chorale

**Ah, great king, great unto all ages,
how can I sufficiently spread this faithfulness?
No human heart, however, can conceive
of what to give you.**

**I cannot grasp with my mind,
what can compare with your mercy.
How can I then repay you for your deeds of love
in my work?**

18a. Evangelist

Da sprach Pilatus zu ihm:

Pilatus

So bist du dennoch ein König?

Evangelist

Jesus antwortete:

Jesus

Du sagst's, ich bin ein König. Ich bin dazu geboren und in die Welt kommen, daß ich die Wahrheit zeugen soll. Wer aus der Wahrheit ist, der höret meine Stimme.

Evangelist

Spricht Pilatus zu ihm:

Pilatus

Was ist Wahrheit?

Evangelist

Und da er das gesaget, ging er wieder hinaus zu den Jüden und spricht zu ihnen:

Pilatus

Ich finde keine Schuld an ihm. Ihr habt aber eine Gewohnheit, daß ich euch einen losgebe; wollt ihr nun, daß ich euch der Jüden König losgebe?

Evangelist

Da schrieten sie wieder allesamt und sprachen:

18b. Chor

Nicht diesen, sondern Barrabam!

18c. Evangelist

Barrabas aber war ein Mörder. Da nahm Pilatus Jesum und geißelte ihn.

19ii. Arie T

Ach, windet euch nicht so, geplagte Seelen,
Bei eurer Kreuzesangst und Qual!
 Könnt ihr die unermessne Zahl
 Der harten Geißelschläge zählen,
So zählet auch die Menge eurer Sünden,
Ihr werdet diese grösser finden!

18a. Evangelist

Then Pilate said to him:

Pilate

So you are a king?

Evangelist

Jesus answered:

Jesus

You say I am a king. I was born for this, and came into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth. Whoever is of the truth hears my voice.

Evangelist

Pilate said to him:

Pilate

What is truth?

Evangelist

And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them:

Pilate

I find no guilt in him. However, you have a custom that I release someone to you. Do you wish now that I release the King of the Jews to you?

Evangelist

Then they all cried out together and said:

18b. Chorus

Not this one, but Barrabas!

18c. Evangelist

Barrabas however was a murderer. Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him.

19ii. Aria T

Ah, writhe not, you tormented souls,
at your fear and agony before the cross!
 If you could count the immeasurable number
 of harsh lashes of the scourge,
and likewise also count the multitude of your sins,
you would find the latter to be greater!

21a. Evangelist

Und die Kriegsknechte flochten eine Krone von Dornen und setzten sie auf sein Haupt und legten ihm ein Purpurkleid an und sprachen:

21b. Chor

Sei begrüßet, lieber Jüdenkönig!

21c. Evangelist

Und gaben ihm Backenstreiche. Da ging Pilatus wieder heraus und sprach zu ihnen:

Pilatus

Sehet, ich führe ihn heraus zu euch, daß ihr erkennet, daß ich keine Schuld an ihm finde.

Evangelist

Also ging Jesus heraus und trug eine Dornenkrone und Purpurkleid. Und er sprach zu ihnen:

Pilatus

Sehet, welch ein Mensch!

Evangelist

Da ihn die Hohenpriester und die Diener sahen, schrieen sie und sprachen:

21d. Chor

Kreuzige, kreuzige!

21e. Evangelist

Pilatus sprach zu ihnen:

Pilatus

Nehmet ihr ihn hin und kreuziget ihn; denn ich finde keine Schuld an ihm!

21a. Evangelist

And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and set it upon his head, and laid a purple robe on him, and said:

21.b Chorus

Hail to you, dear King of the Jews!

21c. Evangelist

And they gave him blows on the cheek. Then Pilate went back outside and spoke to them:

Pilate

Behold, I bring him out to you, so that you recognize that I find no fault in him.

Evangelist

Then Jesus went out and wore a crown of thorns and a purple robe. And Pilate said to them:

Pilate

Behold, what a man!

Evangelist

When the high priests and servants saw him, they screamed and said:

21d. Chorus

Crucify, crucify!

21e. Evangelist

Pilate said to them:

Pilate

You take him away and crucify him, for I find no fault in him!

Evangelist

Die Jüden antworteten ihm:

21f. Chor

Wir haben ein Gesetz, und nach dem Gesetz soll er sterben; denn er hat sich selbst zu Gottes Sohn gemacht.

21g. Evangelist

Da Pilatus das Wort hörte, fürchtet' er sich noch mehr und ging wieder hinein in das Richthaus und spricht zu Jesu:

Pilatus

Von wannen bist du?

Evangelist

Aber Jesus gab ihm keine Antwort. Da sprach Pilatus zu ihm:

Pilatus

Redest du nicht mit mir? Weißest du nicht, daß ich Macht habe, dich zu kreuzigen, und Macht habe, dich loszugeben?

Evangelist

Jesus antwortete:

Jesus

Du hättest keine Macht über mich, wenn sie dir nicht wäre von oben herab gegeben; darum, der mich dir überantwortet hat, der hat's größ're Sünde.

Evangelist

Von dem an trachtete Pilatus, wie er ihn losließe.

22. Choral

**Durch dein Gefängnis, Gottes Sohn,
Muß uns die Freiheit kommen;
Dein Kerker ist der Gnadenthron,
Die Freistatt aller Frommen;
Denn gingst du nicht die Knechtschaft ein,
Müßt unsre Knechtschaft ewig sein.**

Evangelist

The Jews answered him:

21f. Chorus

We have a law, and according to that law he should die, for he has made himself out to be the Son of God.

21g. Evangelist

When Pilate heard this, he became more afraid and went back inside to the judgment hall and said to Jesus:

Pilate

Where do you come from?

Evangelist

But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to him:

Pilate

You don't speak to me? Don't you know that I have the power to crucify you, and the power to release you?

Evangelist

Jesus answered:

Jesus

You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above; therefore, he who has delivered me to you has the greater sin.

Evangelist

From then on Pilate considered how he might release him.

22. Chorale

**Through your imprisonment, Son of God,
must freedom come to us;
your dungeon is the throne of grace,
the sanctuary of all believers;
for if you had not gone into bondage,
our bondage would have been eternal.**

23a. Evangelist

Die Jüden aber schrieen und sprachen:

23b. Chor

Lässest du diesen los, so bist du des Kaisers Freund nicht; denn wer sich zum Könige machet, der ist wider den Kaiser.

23c. Evangelist

Da Pilatus das Wort hörete, führete er Jesum heraus und setzte sich auf den Richtstuhl, an der Stätte, die da heißet: Hochpflaster, auf Ebräisch aber: Gabbatha. Es war aber der Rüsttag in Ostern um die sechste Stunde, und er spricht zu den Jüden:

Pilatus

Sehet, das ist euer König!

Evangelist

Sie schrieen aber:

23d. Chor

Weg, weg mit dem, kreuzige ihn!

23e. Evangelist

Spricht Pilatus zu ihnen:

Pilatus

Soll ich euren König kreuzigen?

Evangelist

Die Hohenpriester antworteten:

23f. Chor

Wir haben keinen König denn den Kaiser.

23g. Evangelist

Da überantwortete er ihn daß er gekreuziget würde. Sie nahmen aber Jesum und führeten ihn hin. Und er trug sein Kreuz und ging hinaus zur Stätte, die da heißet Schädelstätt, welche heißet auf Ebräisch: Golgatha.

23a. Evangelist

The Jews, however, screamed and said:

23b. Chorus

If you let this man go, you are not a friend of Caesar; for whoever makes himself a king is against Caesar.

23c. Evangelist

When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus outside and sat upon the judgment seat at the place that is called The Raised Pavement—in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Day of Preparation for the Passover, at about the sixth hour, and he said to the Jews:

Pilate

Behold, this is your king!

Evangelist

But they screamed:

23d. Chorus

Away, away with him, crucify him!

23e. Evangelist

Pilate said to them:

Pilate

Shall I crucify your king?

Evangelist

The high priests answered:

23f. Chorus

We have no king but Caesar.

23g. Evangelist

Then he delivered him to be crucified. They took Jesus and led him away. And he carried his cross, and went up to the place that is called the Place of the Skull, which is called in Hebrew: Golgotha.

24. Arie B und Chor

Eilt, ihr angefochten Seelen,
Geht aus euren Marterhöhlen,
Eilt – Wohin? – nach Golgotha!
Nehmet an des Glaubens Flügel,
Flieht – Wohin? – zum Kreuzeshügel,
Eure Wohlfahrt blüht allda!

25a. Evangelist

Allda kreuzigten sie ihn, und mit ihm zween andere zu beiden Seiten, Jesum aber mitten inne. Pilatus aber schrieb eine Überschrift und satzte sie auf das Kreuz, und war geschrieben: „Jesus von Nazareth, der Juden König.“ Diese Überschrift lasen viel Juden, denn die Stätte war nahe bei der Stadt, da Jesus gekreuziget ist. Und es war geschrieben auf ebräische, griechische und lateinische Sprache. Da sprachen die Hohenpriester der Juden zu Pilato:

25b. Chor

Schreibe nicht: der Juden König, sondern daß er gesaget habe: Ich bin der Juden König.

25c. Evangelist

Pilatus antwortet:

Pilatus

Was ich geschrieben habe, das habe ich geschrieben.

26. Choral

**In meines Herzens Grunde
Dein Nam und Kreuz allein
Funkelt all Zeit und Stunde,
Drauf kann ich fröhlich sein.
Erschein mir in dem Bilde
Zu Trost in meiner Not,
Wie du, Herr Christ, so milde
Dich hast geblut' zu Tod!**

(“Valet will ich dir geben,” stanza 3)

27a. Evangelist

Die Kriegsknechte aber, da sie Jesum gekreuziget hatten, nahmen seine Kleider und machten vier Teile, einem jeglichen Kriegsknechte sein Teil, dazu auch den Rock. Der Rock aber war ungenähet, von oben an gewürket durch und durch. Da sprachen sie untereinander:

24. Aria B and Chorus

Hurry, you troubled souls,
go out of your caves of torment;
hurry – where? – to Golgotha!
Take up the wings of faith;
flee – where? – to the hill of the cross;
Your welfare blooms there!

25a. Evangelist

There they crucified him, and with him two others on either side, with Jesus in the middle. Pilate, however, wrote an inscription and set it upon the cross; and there was written on it: “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” Many Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city. And it was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Then the high priests of the Jews said to Pilate:

25b. Chorus

Do not write: The King of the Jews, rather that he said: I am the King of the Jews.

25c. Evangelist

Pilate answered:

Pilate

What I have written, I have written.

26. Chorale

**In the depths of my heart
your name and cross alone
blaze at all times and hours,
for that I can be joyful.
Appear for me in this image
as comfort in my distress:
how you, Lord Christ, so gently/copiously
shed your blood unto death!**

27a. Evangelist

The soldiers, however, who had crucified Jesus, took his clothing and made four parts, one part for each soldier; the same also with his robe. The robe, however, had no seam, being woven from top to bottom. Then they said to one another:

27b. Chor

Lasset uns den nicht zerteilen, sondern darum losen, wes er sein soll.

27c. Evangelist

Auf daß erfüllet würde die Schrift, die da saget: „Sie haben meine Kleider unter sich geteilet und haben über meinen Rock das Los geworfen.“ Solches taten die Kriegesknechte. Es stund aber bei dem Kreuze Jesu seine Mutter und seiner Mutter Schwester, Maria, Kleophas Weib, und Maria Magdalena. Da nun Jesus seine Mutter sahe und den Jünger dabei stehen, den er lieb hatte, spricht er zu seiner Mutter:

Jesus

Weib, siehe, das ist dein Sohn!

Evangelist

Darnach spricht er zu dem Jünger:

Jesus

Siehe, das ist deine Mutter!

28. Choral

**Er nahm alles wohl in acht
In der letzten Stunde,
Seine Mutter noch bedacht,
Setzt ihr ein' Vormunde.
O Mensch, mache Richtigkeit,
Gott und Menschen liebe,
Stirb darauf ohn alles Leid,
Und dich nicht betrübe!**

(“Jesu Leiden, Pein und Tod,” stanza 20)

29. Evangelist

Und von Stund an nahm sie der Jünger zu sich. Darnach, als Jesus wußte, daß schon alles vollbracht war, daß die Schrift erfüllet würde, spricht er:

Jesus

Mich dürstet!

Evangelist

Da stund ein Gefüße voll Essigs. Sie fülleten aber einen Schwamm mit Essig und legten ihn um einen Isopen, und hielten es ihm dar zum Munde. Da nun Jesus den Essig genommen hatte, sprach er:

27b. Chorus

Let's not divide this one; rather let's cast lots for it, to see whose it will be.

27c. Evangelist

So that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which says: “They have divided my clothing among themselves and have cast lots over my robe.” These things the soldiers did. However, there stood by Jesus' cross his mother and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. Now when Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother:

Jesus

Woman, behold, this is your son!

Evangelist

Afterwards he said to the disciple:

Jesus

Behold, this is your mother!

28. Chorale

**He took full care of everything
in the last hour;
still thinking of his mother,
he provided for her a guardian.
O mankind, do justice,
love God and humankind,
die thereafter without any sorrow,
and do not be troubled!**

29. Evangelist

And from that hour the disciple took her to himself. Afterwards, when Jesus knew that everything was already accomplished, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, he said:

Jesus

I thirst!

Evangelist

There was a vessel full of vinegar. They filled a sponge with vinegar, placed it on a hyssop branch, and held it directly to his mouth. Now when Jesus had taken the vinegar, he said:

Jesus

Es ist vollbracht!

30. Aria A

Es ist vollbracht!
O Trost vor die gekränkten Seelen!
Die Trauernacht
Läßt nun die letzte Stunde zählen.
Der Held aus Juda siegt mit Macht
Und schließt den Kampf.
Es ist vollbracht!

31. Evangelist

Und neiget das Haupt und verschied.

32. Aria B und Chor

Mein teurer Heiland, laß dich fragen,
Jesu, der du warest tot,
Da du nunmehr ans Kreuz geschlagen
Und selbst gesagt: Es ist vollbracht,
Lebest nun ohn Ende,
Bin ich vom Sterben frei gemacht?
In der letzten Todesnot
Kann ich durch deine Pein und Sterben
Das Himmelreich ererben?
Nirgend mich hinwende
Ist aller Welt Erlösung da?
Als zu dir, der mich versühnt,
O du lieber Herre!
Du kannst vor Schmerzen zwar nichts sagen;
Gib mir nur, was du verdient,
Doch neigest du das Haupt
Mehr ich nicht begehre!
Und sprichst stillschweigend: ja.
(“Jesu Leiden, Pein und Tod,” last stanza)

33. Evangelist

*Und siehe da, der Vorhang im Tempel zeriß in zwei Stück
von oben an bis unten aus. Und die Erde erbebete, und die
Felsen zerrissen, und die Gräber täten sich auf, und stunden
auf viel Leiber der Heiligen.*

(Matthew 27:51–52)

Jesus

It is accomplished!

30. Aria A

It is accomplished!
O comfort for all ailing/sick souls!
The night of sorrow
now counts out its last hour.
The hero out of Judah conquers with might
and ends the battle.
It is accomplished!

31. Evangelist

And bowed his head and passed away.

32. Aria B and Chorus

My dear Savior, let me ask,
Jesus, you, who were dead,
now that you have been nailed to the cross
and have said yourself: It is finished,
live now unendingly;
am I set free from death?
in the last pangs of death
Can I, through your pain and dying
inherit the kingdom of heaven?
I will turn nowhere else
Is the redemption of the whole world here?
but to you, who have atoned for me,
O beloved Lord!
Out of pain, you cannot say a single thing;
Only give me what you earned;
yet you bow your head
more I do not desire!
and say silently: yes.

33. Evangelist

*And behold, the curtain in the temple was torn in two pieces
from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were
rent, and the graves opened up, and many bodies of the
saints arose.*

34. Arioso T

Mein Herz, indem die ganze Welt
Bei Jesu Leiden gleichfalls leidet,
Die Sonne sich in Trauer kleidet,
Der Vorhang reißt, der Fels zerfällt,
Die Erde bebt, die Gräber spalten,
Weil sie den Schöpfer sehn erkalten,
Was willst du deines Ortes tun?

35. Aria S

Zerfließe, mein Herze, in Fluten der Zähren
Dem Höchsten zu Ehren!
Erzähle der Welt und dem Himmel die Not:
Dein Jesus ist tot!

36. Evangelist

Die Jüden aber, dieweil es der Rüsttag war, daß nicht die Leichname am Kreuze blieben den Sabbat über (denn desselbigen Sabbats Tag war sehr groß), baten sie Pilatum, daß ihre Beine gebrochen und sie abgenommen würden. Da kamen die Kriegsknechte und brachen dem ersten die Beine und dem andern, der mit ihm gekreuziget war. Als sie aber zu Jesu kamen, da sie sahen, daß er schon gestorben war, brachen sie ihm die Beine nicht; sondern der Kriegsknechte einer eröffnete seine Seite mit einem Speer, und alsobald ging Blut und Wasser heraus. Und der das gesehen hat, der hat es bezeuget, und sein Zeugnis ist wahr, und derselbige weiß, daß er die Wahrheit saget, auf daß ihr gläubet. Denn solches ist geschehen, auf daß die Schrift erfüllet würde: „Ihr sollet ihm kein Bein zerbrechen.“ Und abermal spricht eine andere Schrift: „Sie werden sehen, in welchen sie gestochen haben.“

37. Choral

**O hilf, Christe, Gottes Sohn,
Durch dein bitter Leiden,
Daß wir dir stets untertan
All Untugend meiden,
Deinen Tod und sein Ursach
Fruchtbarlich bedenken,
Dafür, wiewohl arm und schwach,
Dir Dankopfer schenken!**

(“Christus, der uns selig macht,” stanza 8)

34. Arioso T

My heart – while the entire world
with Jesus’ suffering likewise suffers,
the sun cloaks itself in mourning,
the curtain tears, the rock crumbles,
the earth trembles, the graves split open,
because they behold the Creator growing cold –
for your part, what do you wish to do?

35. Aria S

Melt away, my heart, in floods of tears
in honor to the Highest!
Tell the world and heaven the anguish:
Your Jesus is dead!

36. Evangelist

The Jews, however — since it was the Sabbath day, so that the corpses would not remain on their crosses over the Sabbath (for this particular Sabbath day was very great) — asked Pilate that their legs be broken and that they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, since they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs; but one of the soldiers opened his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. And he who saw this has borne witness to it, and his testimony is true, and this same man knows that he speaks the truth in order that you may believe. For all this has taken place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “You shall break none of his bones.” And again, another Scripture says: “They will look upon him whom they have pierced.”

37. Chorale

**Help, O Christ, Son of God,
through your bitter suffering,
that we, always subject to you,
might shun all vice;
and that your death and its cause
we might consider fruitfully,
so that, although poor and weak,
we might offer you a sacrifice of thanksgiving!**

38. Evangelist

Darnach bat Pilatum Joseph von Arimathia, der ein Jünger Jesu war (doch heimlich aus Furcht vor den Jüden), daß er möchte abnehmen den Leichnam Jesu. Und Pilatus erlaubete es. Derowegen kam er und nahm den Leichnam Jesu herab. Es kam aber auch Nikodemus, der vormals bei der Nacht zu Jesu kommen war, und brachte Myrrhen und Aloen untereinander, bei hundert Pfunden. Da nahmen sie den Leichnam Jesu und bunden ihn in leinen Tücher mit Spezereien, wie die Jüden pflegen zu begraben. Es war aber an der Stätte, da er gekreuziget war, ein Garte, und im Garten ein neu Grab, in welches niemand je geleet war. Dasselbst hin legten sie Jesum, um des Rüsttags willen der Jüden, dieweil das Grab nahe war.

39. Chor

Ruht wohl, ihr heiligen Gebeine,
Die ich nun weiter nicht beweine,
Ruht wohl und bringt auch mich zur Ruh!
Das Grab, so euch bestimmt ist
Und ferner keine Not umschließt,
Macht mir den Himmel auf
und schließt die Hölle zu.

40. Choral

**Christe, du Lamm Gottes,
Der du trägst die Sünd der Welt,
Erbarm dich unser,
Christe, du Lamm Gottes,
Der du trägst die Sünd der Welt,
Erbarm dich unser,
Christe, du Lamm Gottes,
Der du trägst die Sünd der Welt,
Gib uns dein Frieden. Amen.**

38. Evangelist

Afterwards, Joseph of Arimathea, who was one of Jesus' disciples (though secretly out of fear of the Jews), asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate allowed it. Therefore, he came and took the body of Jesus away. And Nicodemus also came, who previously had come to Jesus in the night, and brought myrrh and aloe with him, about one hundred pounds. They then took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in linen cloths with spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden near the place where he was crucified, and in this garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. There they laid Jesus, for the sake of the Jewish Day of Preparation, because the grave was nearby.

39. Chorus

Rest well, you holy limbs,
that I will no longer lament;
rest well and bring me also to rest!
The grave – that is appointed for you
and [that] encloses no further anguish –
opens heaven for me
and locks up hell.

40. Chorale

**Christ, Lamb of God,
who takes away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us;
Christ, Lamb of God,
who takes away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us;
Christ, Lamb of God,
who takes away the sin of the world,
grant us your peace. Amen.**

PRAYER

Stand

KYRIE

- C** Lord, have mercy;
Christ, have mercy;
Lord, have mercy.

LORD'S PRAYER

- 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.

COLLECTS

Collect of the Day

- L** Let us pray.
Almighty and everlasting God, You sent Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to take upon Himself our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross. Mercifully grant that we may follow the example of His great humility and patience and be made partakers of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

To Give Thanks for Our Lord's Passion

- L** Almighty and everlasting God, You willed that Your Son should bear for us the pains of the cross and so remove from us the power of the adversary. Help us so to remember and give thanks for our Lord's Passion that we may receive forgiveness of sin and redemption from everlasting death; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C** Amen.

Collect for Peace

- 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 Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

BENEDICAMUS AND BENEDICTION

L Let us bless the Lord.

G Thanks be to God.

P The grace of our Lord † Je - sus Christ and the love of God

and the communion of the Holy Spir - it be with you all.

G A - men.

HYMN

Now Thank We All Our God

LSB 895

1 Now thank we all our God With hearts and hands and voic - es,
2 Oh, may this boun-teous God Through all our life be near us,
△ 3 All praise and thanks to God The Fa - ther now be giv - en,

Who won-drous things has done, In whom His world re - joic - es;
With ev - er joy - ful hearts And bless - ed peace to cheer us
The Son, and Him who reigns With them in high - est heav - en,

Who from our moth - ers' arms Has blest us on our way
And keep us in His grace And guide us when per - plexed
The one e - ter - nal God, Whom earth and heav'n a - dore:

With count - less gifts of love And still is ours to - day.
And free us from all ills In this world and the next!
For thus it was, is now, And shall be ev - er - more.

Text: Martin Rinckart, 1586–1649; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.
Tune: Johann Crüger, 1598–1662.

Soli Deo Gloria

PARTICIPANTS

THE AMERICAN KANTOREI

Maurice Boyer
Music Director

John Swedberg – Evangelist
Warren Frye – Peter
Emily Truckenbrod – Maid

Jeffrey Heyl – Jesus
Martin Dressler – Pilate
Patrick Zelaya – Servant

ARIAS

Soprano

Lea Zelaya (Zerfließe, mein Herze)
Emily Truckenbrod (Ich folge dir
gleichfalls)

Tenor

Keith Boyer (Zerschmettert mich |
Ach, windet euch nicht so)

Alto

Raphaella Zavaglia (Von den Stricken)
(Es ist vollbracht)

Bass

Martin Dressler (Eilt, ihr angefochten
Seelen | Mein teurer Heiland)

CHORUS

Soprano

Kathryn Crumrine
Julia Dinkins
Megan Glass
Sarah Gulseth
Marita Hollander
Emily Truckenbrod*
Lea Zelaya*

Tenor

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David Gilson
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Christine Sasse
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Michelle Malawey

Viola

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Anna Lackschewitz

Cello

Andrew Ruben, *Principal*
Stephanie Hunt

Cello and Viola da Gamba

Stephanie Hunt

Double Bass

Carolyn White

Flute 1

Jennifer Adams, *Principal*

Flute 2

Ann Dolan

Oboe and English Horn

Ann Homann, *Principal*

Oboe and Oboe d'amore

Eileen Burke

Organ (and Rehearsal Accompanist)

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Acknowledgments

Oratorio text from John 18 and 19; Matthew 26:75 and 27:51–52. Aria texts after Barthold Heinrich Brockes, Christian Heinrich Postel, and unknown. Chorale texts: “O Mensch, beweine deine Sünde groß,” stanza 1, Sebald Heyden, 1530 (Mvt. 1); “Herzliebster Jesus, was hast du verbrochen,” stanzas 7, 8, and 9, Johann Heermann, 1630 (Mvts. 3 and 17); “Vater unser im Himmelreich,” stanza 4, Martin Luther, 1539 (Mvt. 5); “O Welt, sieh hier dein Leben,” stanzas 3 and 4, Paul Gerhardt, 1647 (Mvt. 11); “Jesu Leiden, Pein und Tod,” stanzas 10, 20, and last, Paul Stockmann, 1633 (Mvts. 14, 28, and 32); “Christus, der uns selig macht,” stanzas 1 and 8, Michael Weiße, 1531 (Mvts. 15 and 37); “Mach’s mit mir, Gott, nach deiner Güte,” C. H. Postel, 1700 (Mvt. 22); “Valet will ich dir geben,” stanza 3, Valerius Herberger, 1613 (Mvt. 26); “Christe, du Lamm Gottes,” medieval liturgical text, melody attr. to Martin Luther, 1528.

English translation of St. John Passion (Version II) © 2026 Maurice Boyer.

Homily from Erdmann Neumeister, *Geistliche Bibliothec: Bestehend aus Predigten auf alle Sonntage und Festtage des Jahres, nach Anleitung allerhand Geistlicher Bücher gehalten und mit Neuen Liedern beschlossen* [A Sacred Library: From the Sermons for Every Sunday and Feast Day of the Church Year, According to the Instruction of Many and Various Sacred Books and with the Addition of New Hymns]. Hamburg: Christian Liebezeit und Theodor Christoph Felginern, 1719. 521–541. Translated, adapted, and preached by Rev. Dr. Jason D. Lane.

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The instrumentalists in this service are members of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada.

J.S. BACH'S *ST. JOHN PASSION*

SOME REFLECTIONS

By Maurice Boyer

Background

It was for Vespers on Good Friday 1724 in the St. Nicholas Church that Johann Sebastian Bach's *St. John Passion* was first heard by Leipzig congregants. The following year, which Bach devoted to the composition of chorale based works, he revisited the piece, making revisions to the recitatives and chorales, and substituting arias as well as the opening and closing movements. It is this version that we offer today.

As in Bach's time, a sermon bridges Part I and Part II of the Passion. Today, it is drawn from a sermon by Erdmann Neumeister, a contemporary of Bach. We have also retained the Leipzig tradition of ending all Vespers services, including Good Friday, with "Now Thank We All Our God." Thanks, indeed, be to God for His unfathomable love made manifest in the Christ!

The Libretto

The bedrock of the work is the Passion narrative as found in the Gospel according to St. John, the 18th and 19th chapters, with the addition of two passages from the Gospel according to St. Matthew — Peter weeping bitterly (Matt. 26:75) and the curtain of the temple being torn in two (Matt. 27:51–52).

The other two layers, offering commentary upon and inviting participation in the unfolding events, are solo movements and chorales. In both cases, the first-person singular (the individual) and the first-person plural (the community) as well as the present tense are used. The chorales would all have been familiar to Leipzig congregants who would have been able to "sing along" inwardly. The solo movements would have provided a new layer of insight.

We do not know for certain who was responsible for assembling the libretto. Bach, however, must have been strongly involved in selecting the chorales and the poetic texts for the arias as well as their careful placement in the unfolding of the piece. Indeed, it is always at critical points that they interrupt the narrative to "pull, push, implore" (as the first soprano aria states) or to exhort, interpret, comfort.

The Opening and Closing of the Work

The bookends of the piece — two chorale fantasias — stand outside the narrative itself. The opening movement call to repentance ("O mankind, lament your great sin") and confession of faith in saving work of Christ the Mediator born of a Virgin who "gave life to the dead," "laid down all sickness," and "was sacrificed for us on the cross." This movement offers an eagle's view of the whole narrative, the economy of salvation: incarnation – death – resurrection. For the closing of the work, what more appropriate choice could there be for a setting of the St. John Passion narrative than "Christe, du Lamm Gottes" (O Christ, Thou Lamb of God)? Indeed, it is in this Gospel that we hear in the opening chapter John the Baptizer's confession: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29 ESV).

The Heart of the Work

At the halfway point of Part II, embedded at the center of a large-scale chiasmic (cross-shaped) structure, is the chorale "Through Your imprisonment, Son of God, must freedom come to us." The melody of this chorale would have been familiar, but the text itself would likely not have been so since it is not a chorale text. (Was it chosen by Bach himself? Perhaps.)

Falling right before Jesus is crucified, the chorale speaks in unequivocal terms of the great inversion, the paradox, the wondrous mystery at the heart of the Christian faith: His imprisonment (*Gefängnis*) means our freedom (*Freiheit*), His prison cell (*Kerker*) is the throne of grace (*Gnadenthron*), our "place of freedom" or haven (*Freistatt*). This interruption

in the flow of the fast-paced narrative, as a seeming aside, is in fact the high point of the whole work. In effect, it casts a “spotlight” on the One who, as the chorale says, bled “milde,” a word that means at once gently and copiously, generously. Jesus said, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:32 ESV). The cross is His “throne of grace.” It is there that He is glorified.

The Final Chorus

Right before we reach the final chorus, “Ruht wohl” (Rest well / be fully at rest), we witness the deposition of Jesus. Joseph of Arimathea has received permission from Pilate to take down the body of Jesus. Nicodemus also comes, bearing myrrh and aloes. They lay the body in a new grave, one in which no one had yet laid, in a garden near Golgotha. The narrative, which began in a garden, ends in a different garden.

What follows, musically cast in the form of a noble Sarabande-like form, is an intimate and tender lullaby to the “heilige Gebeine” (holy bones). At the heart of this tri-partite chorus stand words that are vast in significance: “Das Grab, so euch bestimmet ist und ferner keine Not *umschließt*, macht mir den Himmel auf und *schließt* die Hölle zu” (The grave – that is appointed for you and [that] encloses no further anguish – opens heaven for me and locks up hell). In German, the verbal parallelism (“umschließen” meaning “to enclose” and “zuschließen” meaning “to lock up”) captures all the more the finality of this sealing up of death: His death has destroyed Death.

The Mystery, the Paradox

Jesus “lets Himself be bound” in order to “unbind the ropes of sin.” He lets Himself “be wounded” in order “fully to heal.” So, “flee to the hill of the cross” for “there blooms your welfare.” There, the “Hero out of Judah,” “triumphs with might” and says in the end: “It is accomplished.”

Soli Deo Gloria



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN KANTOREI

Initially founded in 1955 as the Concordia Cantata Chorus, the ensemble under the direction of the late Rev. Robert R. Bergt became known for specializing in the music of J.S. Bach, his contemporaries, and the later composers he influenced. In its early years, the vocal group toured many cities throughout the United States, appearing at national conventions and music festivals. The Cantata Chorus also represented the United States at the 1966 International Heinrich Schütz Festival in Delft, Holland, sponsored by the Dutch government. This performance led to several recording sessions at the Christian Radio Broadcasting and Recording Studios in Hilversum and a subsequent tour to London, Cambridge and five cities in Germany. Later renamed the American Kantorei, the choral and orchestral ensemble has been widely praised for its excellence, with a number of recordings to its name.

Following a hiatus of 20 years, the American Kantorei was revitalized in 1993 at the behest of its major sponsors, Lori and Robert Duesenberg, and Phyllis and Richard Duesenberg. The ensemble was the sole performing entity for the *Bach at the Sem* series at Concordia Seminary. From 1993 until Maestro Bergt's death in 2011, the American Kantorei performed all the major choral works of J.S. Bach, including the Passions, Masses, oratorios, motets and more than 50 cantatas. Other composers also were featured, including Buxtehude, Schütz, Mendelssohn and Beethoven. For several years, the American Kantorei *Bach at the Sem* performances were broadcast on the former radio station KFUE FM Classic 99. Robert Bergt was honored in 1999 with the Wittenberg Award by The Luther Institute in Washington, D.C. This award for Bergt's scholarship and musicianship was presented in conjunction with a concert by the American Kantorei at The Lutheran Church of the Reformation in Washington, D.C.

A new direction for the American Kantorei began in the spring of 2017 when the ensemble was incorporated as an independent tax-exempt entity with IRS 501(c)(3) status and a governing board. Under the artistic direction of Dr. Maurice Boyer, the ensemble continues its respected tradition specializing in the music of J.S. Bach and making that music accessible to the St. Louis community. The mission of the American Kantorei is made possible by our host congregation, St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Des Peres, Mo., and many generous donors and volunteers.

MAURICE BOYER, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Dr. Maurice Boyer is music director of the American Kantorei. He is active as both choral and orchestral conductor. He is professor of music at Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill., where he conducts the chamber orchestra and chapel choir and teaches aural skills. He is associate conductor of the Symphony of Oak Park and River Forest.

Although born in the United States, he lived until the age of 18 in Aix-en-Provence, France, where his missionary parents taught music at the Reformed Theological Seminary (now Faculté Jean Calvin). In Aix-en-Provence, he began his musical training (piano, voice and solfège). Boyer holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in orchestral conducting from the University of Maryland, College Park; his dissertation explored the compositional process and performance history of the Seventh Symphony of Jean Sibelius. His Master of Music in choral conducting and his Bachelor of Music in sacred music (with piano as his principal instrument) were earned at Westminster Choir College of Rider University in Princeton, N.J. His principal conducting teachers have been Joseph Flummerfelt, Kenneth Kiesler and James Ross. He also studied theology at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Boyer has been artistic director of the Chicago-based choral ensemble Aestas Consort and Heritage Chorale. He was assistant to Maestro John Nelson for several projects both in the United States and in France. He has served as assistant chorus master and guest chorus master with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. He was guest conductor for the Peoria Bach Festival and guest chorus master for Chicago's Music of the Baroque. He has additionally been active as a church music director.

Among his areas of sustained interest and research are the sacred choral works of J.S. Bach — historical performance practice and theology — and the symphonic music of Mozart, Mahler and Sibelius.



Concordia Seminary Children's Choir

Lois Eatherton, Director

Benjamin Appel	Rebekah Goetz	Kaitlyn Meyer
Courtney Bangert	Fiona Golden	Elijah Mudge
Kyla Bangert	Andrew Heimer	Solveig Preus
Elliott Cervi	Elise Heimer	Jaina Reinitz
James Cervi	Lucy Hensley	Laura Rousch
George Dougherty-Pease	Thomas Hensley	Mary Rousch
Titus Dressler	Rachel Hoehner	Fred Stegman
Jude Dressler	Abraham Janssen	Gus Stegman
Eden Glowczewski	Lucy Lane	Beatrice Tinetti
Evie Goerss	Una Lane	Evangeline VanOrman

About Concordia Seminary Children's and Youth Choirs

The Concordia Seminary Children's Choir is open to students in grades 4–8. The choir rehearses Sunday afternoons and sings for four Seminary services or concerts in the chapel each year.

The Concordia Seminary Youth Choir is open to high school students. The choir rehearses Sunday evenings and participates in Seminary services and concerts throughout the year.

For more information about the Children's Choir, please contact Lois Eatherton at eathertonl@csl.edu.

For more information about the Youth Choir, please contact Dr. Sam Eatherton at eathertons@csl.edu.



St. John Passion by Johann Sebastian Bach (1725)

Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026, 3 p.m.

Featuring the American Kantorei and Orchestra and the Concordia Seminary Children's Choir

Choral Evening Prayer for Eastertide

Sunday, May 10, 2026, 3 p.m.

Featuring the Seminary Chamber Choir, *Laudamus*, St. Louis Lutheran Chorale, Concordia Seminary Children's Choir, Concordia Seminary Youth Choir and instrumentalists

Summer Carillon Series

Each Tuesday in June 2026, 7 p.m.

Featuring national and international carillonneurs performing pieces on the 49-bell carillon in Luther Tower. The public is invited to bring picnics and lawn chairs and gather on the grounds near the tower to enjoy the performances.

To learn more about the Seminary's annual music events, including the Concordia Seminary Music Series, please visit csl.edu/music.



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