

## Music Notes for March 24, 2024

The service music during Lent includes the Presentation Hymn (“What shall I render unto you, O God”, listen [here](#)), the Sanctus by David Hurd, one of the preeminent Black composers of the Episcopal Church (listen [here](#)), and the Fraction Anthem (“Christ our Passover, listen [here](#)). The Psalms during Lent will be sung using simple congregational antiphons, mostly composed by me, with verses sung by the choir to traditional plainsong chants. The psalms will be sung *a capella*, with a simple bell accompaniment to give the pitches.

Today’s prelude is a brief composition “Prelude and Fugue”) by Carl Heinrich August Geissler, the organist of the Stadtkirche in Zschopau (in the Saxony area, southeast of Leipzig), beginning there in 1822. In addition to his musical activities, he was quite politically active and was arrested and imprisoned in 1849 for working towards a government based on republican and democratic ideals. Although he was pardoned in 1850, his record prevented him from working as a musician and he spent his final years running a boarding house in the spa town of Bad Elster.

The Palm Sunday service today opens with the Liturgy of the Palms, concluding with the processional hymn “All Glory, Laud and Honor.” The hymn will be sung with piano and bells. This hymn text was written by St. Theodulph of Orleans in 820 while he was imprisoned in Angers, France, for conspiring against the King, with whom he had fallen out of favor. The text acts as a retelling of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. The medieval church re-enacted this story on Palm Sunday using a standard liturgy that featured this hymn. The priests and people would process from the fields to the gate of the city, following a living representation of Jesus seated on a donkey. The original text was 39 couplets (78 lines), of which we only sing 12 lines today. The tune we use was composed in 1613 by Melchior Teschner for the hymn, “*Valet will ich dir geben*” (Farewell, I gladly bid thee). The hymn has been sung to this tune at least since the 1860s.

Today’s anthem is “My song is love unknown,” in a setting composed by Arlen Clarke (b. 1954), music director at St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Church in Greenville, SC. This is a new tune with a flute obbligato line, and the text is by Samuel Crossman, written in 1864. Crossman was a Puritan minister who was ejected from the Church of England due to his opposition to the Act of Uniformity 1662. During his exile from the Church of England, he wrote this hymn as a poem in 1664. It was first published in *The Young Man’s Meditation* and then became published as an Anglican hymn in 1684, after Crossman had rejoined the Church of England in 1665 and two years after his death.

The music during communion during Lent will be Taizé-style chants. Today’s is “*Per crucem*” (“By your cross”). This chant is meant to be sung in canon, and so after singing the entire chant through once you are invited to begin repetitions starting at any of the lettered sections. As with the chants from some previous weeks, this chant was written by Jacques Berthier, who was the organist at St. Ignace Church in Paris from 1961 until his death in 1994. Berthier is best known,

of course, for his extensive output of service music for the Taizé community near Cluny, Burgundy.

The closing hymn is "*O sacred head, sore wounded*". This well-known hymn was translated from the seventh section of the Latin poem "*Salve mundi salutare*," by the hymn-writer Paul Gerhardt (1607 – 1676). Robert Bridges translated the German text into the English hymn we have today. The text and tune ("*Herzlich tut mich verlangen*") have been associated since they were first published together in 1656. The much-beloved harmonization from the Hymnal 1982 is by J.S. Bach, and you are invited to sing in harmony as we begin our journey through Holy Week.