



*Start the Week with*  
The Hampstead  
Collective

*Bringing live sacred music-making back to Hampstead Parish Church, safely and joyfully every Monday. Seventeen weeks of Bach Cantatas, Handel large-scale works, Sacred Meditations, and Song. Socially-distanced in-person audiences, and live streamed on all social media platforms.*

**Event Eight: Sacred Meditation**  
**JESU, PRICELESS TREASURE**

**19th October 2020, 7-8pm**

Soprano: Marie-Antoinette Stabentheiner

Soprano: Christine Buras

Contralto: Jess Dandy

Tenor: Aidan Coburn

Bass: Ben McKee

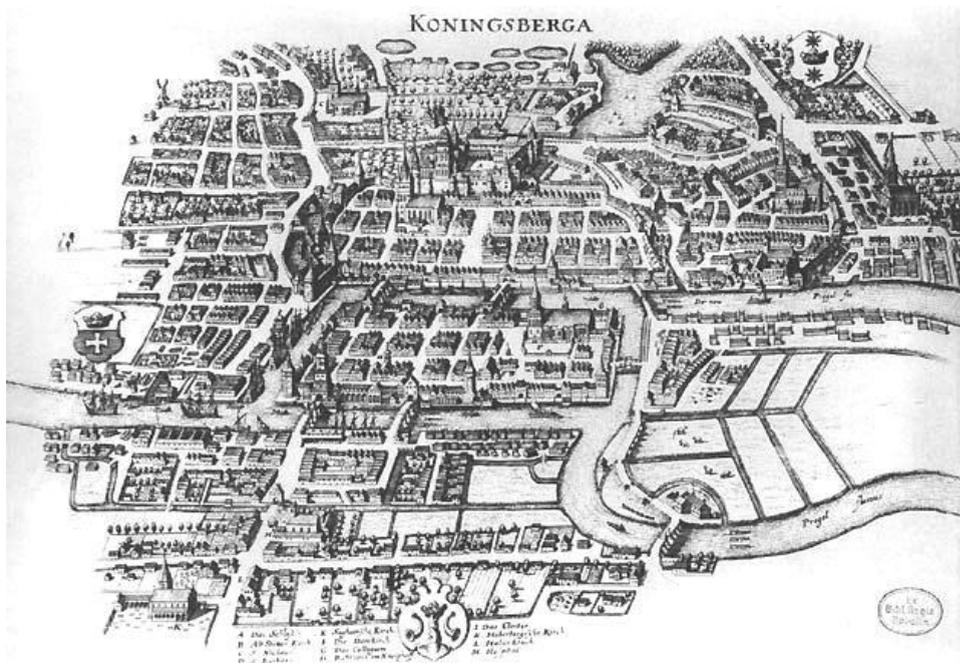
Organist & Director: Geoffrey Webber

Reader: James Pellow

## Programme

<i>Flora meine Freude</i>	Heinrich Albert
<i>Jesu, meine Freude</i> : Chorale variations	Johann Gottfried Walther
<i>Pia desideria</i> 1: Salutation	Philip Jacob Spener
<i>Dir, dir Jehova</i> (3 vv.)	Johann Sebastian Bach
<i>Pia desideria</i> 2: Opening remarks	
<i>Bist du bei mir</i>	Georg Stölzel
<i>Pia desideria</i> 3: The need for reform	
<i>Vergiss mein nicht</i> (2 vv.)	Johann Sebastian Bach
<i>Pia desideria</i> 4: The Word of God	
<i>Jesu, meine Freude</i> (1 v.)	Johann Crüger
<i>Pia desideria</i> 5: The Word of God (cont.)	
Motet: <i>Jesu, meine Freude</i> Movements 1-3	Johann Sebastian Bach
<i>Pia desideria</i> 6: On Actions	
Motet: <i>Jesu, meine Freude</i> Movements 4-7	
<i>Pia desideria</i> 7: On Sermons	
Motet: <i>Jesu meine Freude</i> Movements 8-9	
On Paul's Letter to the Romans	Martin Luther
Motet: <i>Jesu meine Freude</i> Movements 10-11	

The fourth of our series of Sacred Meditations begins with a secular prelude. The original inspiration that gave rise to the text of the chorale 'Jesu, meine Freude' ('Jesu, my joy', famously translated by Catherine Winkworth as 'Jesu, priceless treasure' for use as an English hymn) was a young lady called Flora. The Director of Music at the Cathedral of Königsberg (now Kaliningrad in Russia) in the early seventeenth century was Heinrich Albert, who published a large collection of sacred and secular songs under the title 'Arien' in 1641, including 'Flora meine Freude'. Following the example of Martin Luther in claiming many secular texts and music for sacred use in the Protestant Church, the poet Johann Franck, who probably knew Albert when studying at the University of Königsberg, wrote his six-verse hymn 'Jesu, meine Freude' either during his time in the city or after he returned to his home town of Guben in Lower Lusatia where he became Mayor. (A memorial window to Franck in the *Paul-Gerhardt-Kirche* in Lübben incorporates the first verse of his hymn - see picture.) The melody that helped make Franck's hymn so famous was composed by the Director of Music at the church of St Nicholas in Berlin, Johann Crüger, who included it in his famous collection of hymn tunes, the *Praxis pietatis melica* of 1647. The melody rapidly gained much popularity, and became a source of purely musical inspiration, as we can hear in the variations on the melody for the organ (or other pedal keyboard instrument) composed by Bach's brilliant cousin Johann Gottfried Walther, as selection of which will be played on the main church organ following Albert's 'Flora'.



Königsberg in 1652

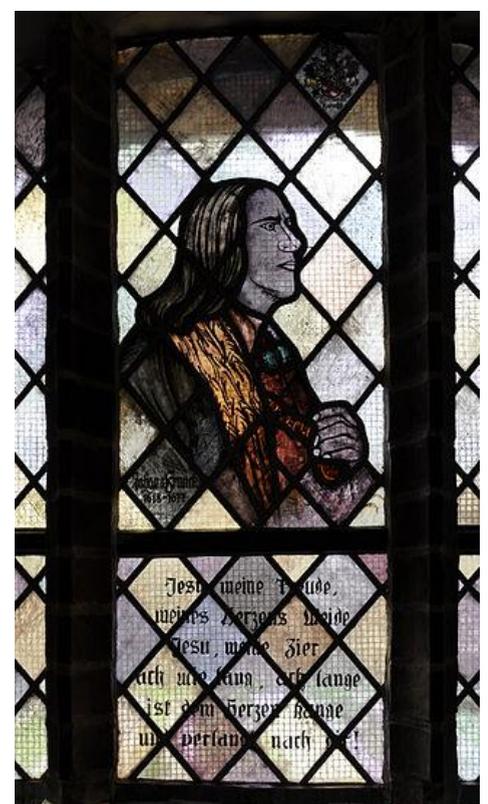
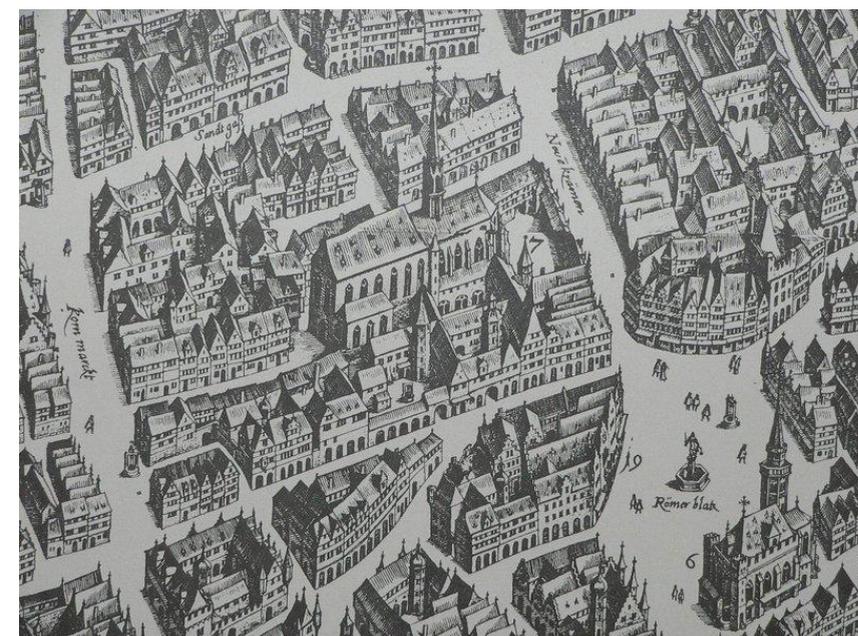


Photo: Andreas Praefcke

Introducing our Sacred Meditation, we hear the opening words of Philipp Jakob Spener's *Pia desideria* of 1676. Spener was chief Pastor in the city of Frankfurt-am-Main, based at the former church of the Franciscan monks, known as the *Barfüßerkirche* (Barefoot Church), and his famous work came about through a request that he had received to write an Introduction to a new edition of popular pastoral sermons by Johann Arndt (1555-1621). Lutheran Pietism in the seventeenth century is perhaps best understood as a reform movement within the church that focused on the inner life of the Christian and the need for outward signs of this inward state, themes essential to the writings of Arndt. Spener's *Pia desideria* is one of the classic texts of this reform movement, though it received its first English translation only as recently as 1964. One of Spener's most significant suggestions was the gathering of like-minded souls in discussion and reading groups, not unlike those established by St Philip Neri in Rome a century earlier as described in our second Sacred Meditation two weeks ago, and as we shall hear, Spener like Philip Neri recommended the use of suitable music as part of these meetings. Of the seven readings from Spener's work included in the programme, the first three come from the first part of the book where he discusses at length what he perceived as the dire state of Lutheranism at this time, and the final four come from his list of recommended solutions.

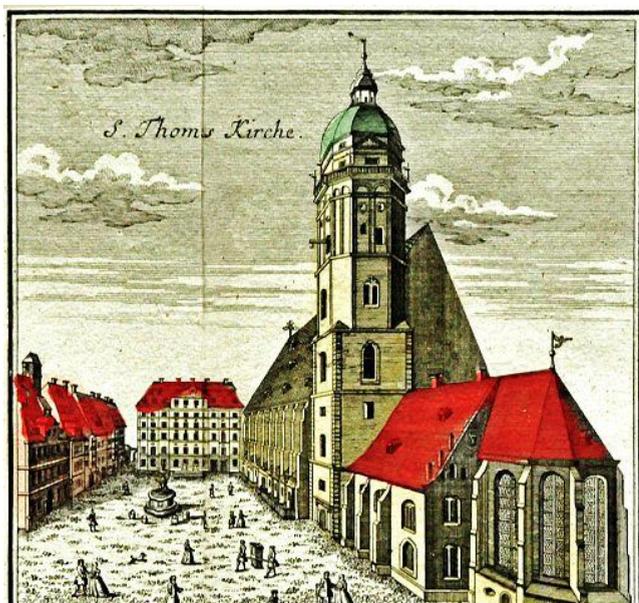
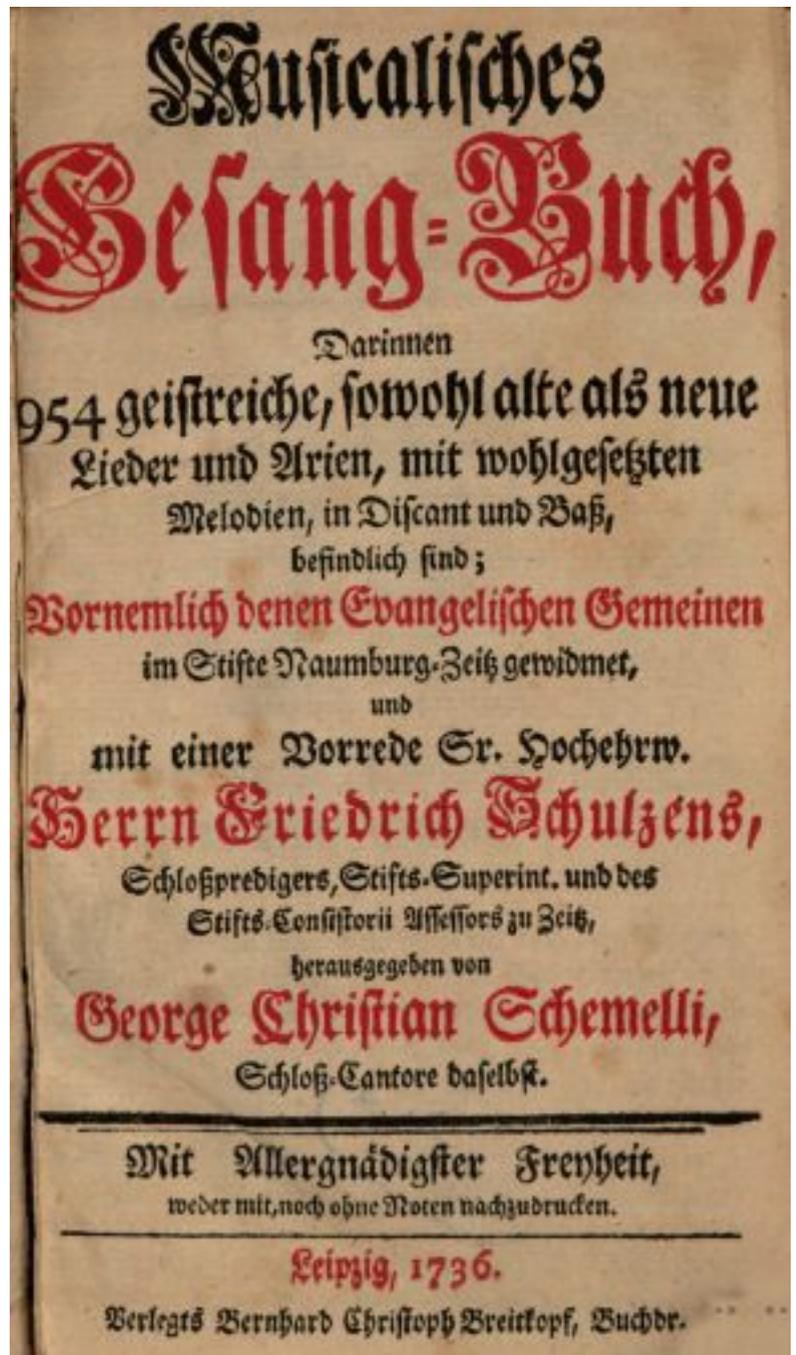


Street plan of Frankfurt (1646) showing the former Franciscan monastery church where Spener was Pastor



Interior of the church in 1653 showing a sermon being preached

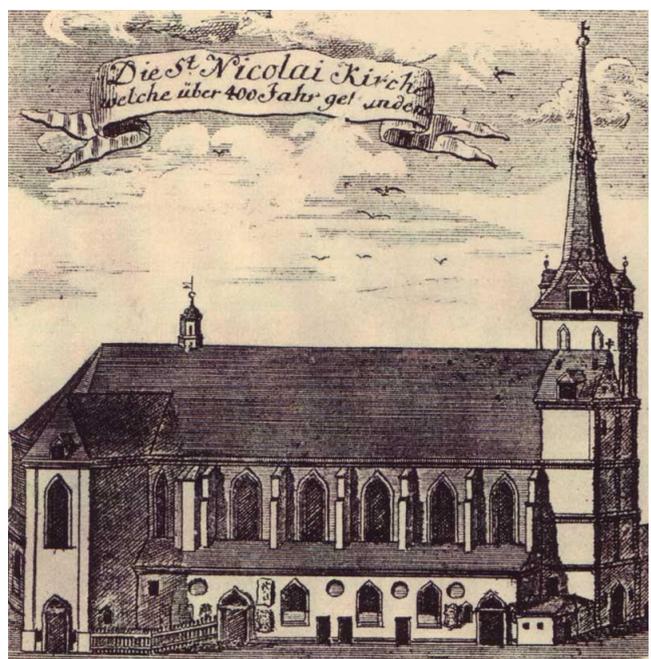
Simple songs, with good tunes and heartfelt religious sentiment, were a fundamental part of the life of Pietism recommended by Spener and others. Bach's contribution to this tradition included acting as music editor for a large collection by Georg Schemelli entitled *Musicalisches Gesang-Buch* (Musical Song-Book) published in Leipzig in 1736, containing 954 songs and arias, old and new. A few of these appear to be original tunes by Bach, including *Dir, dir Jehova* and *Vergiss mein nicht*. The popular *Bist du bei mir* was once copied out by Bach but it actually composed by Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel for his (now lost) opera *Diomedes*. The text is thus not religious in origin, but its Pietist language, on the subject of death, allows it to be heard as referring to Christ.



St Thomas's Church,  
Leipzig, where Bach  
worked from 1723.  
Engraving from 1749  
(photo by H.-P. Haack)

Bach's motet *Jesu, meine Freude* is a setting of all the verses of Franck's hymn, using Crüger's melody (slightly adapted), plus verses from Paul's Letter to the Romans, Chapter 8. We don't know the particular occasion for which Bach composed the motet, though a funeral in 1723 has been suggested, or whether the textual juxtaposition was his idea, or that of a Lutheran Pastor, but what we cannot avoid is his unsurpassed musical handling of these texts, creating a powerful symmetrical structure with a fugue at its centre, perhaps inspired in part by the melody itself, with its returning opening phrase, and Franck's repeat of his opening line at the very end. Bach's teacher Dietrich Buxtehude had composed his own setting of the chorale and it is clear from Bach's setting that he knew this, especially in his use of dramatic silences between chords, and his vivid response to certain phrases such as '*Tobe, Welt*' (Rage, world!), set as a challenging run for the bass voice. Like Buxtehude, Bach uses the chorale melody in different ways throughout the piece, though perhaps his most ingenious setting is that in verse 5. Whereas Buxtehude paraphrases the melody in the solo soprano aria, Bach uses the melody as a *cantus firmus*, or fixed melody, in the alto voice, around which a trio texture is placed consisting of the two soprano voices singing over a perpetually moving instrumental-like bass part sung by the tenor. The text of Romans Chapter 8 was of great significance to Protestant theology, as is evident from Martin Luther's commentary, part of which we will hear. St Paul places great stress on the new law (*Gesetz*, as in v.2), and it is this that encourages Bach to write a fugue at the heart of the work (for v.9 - a trick also used to great effect in his *Actus Tragicus* BWV 106 which we will be performing on November 2nd), since strict procedures are required in order to compose a fugue, but one of the most poignant moments in the whole work is where after this fugue, Bach's music suddenly bursts out into free and dissonant chordal writing to express the second part of the verse in which St Paul jumps into the negative to drive home his point as forcefully as possible: *Wer aber Christi Geist nicht hat, der ist nicht sein* (Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him).

Portrait of Crüger by Hirt and engraving of the Church of St Nicholas in Berlin (1740)



## TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

The copyright translation of Spener's *Pia desideria* being read during the Meditation is by Theodore G. Tappert (Augsburg Fortress, 1964).

### **Flora meine Freude**

Meinen Seelen Weide,  
Meine ganze Ruh'.

Was mich so verzükkert,  
Und den Geist bestrikket,  
Flora, das bist du.

Deine Pracht glänzt Tag und Nacht  
Mir vor Augen und im Herzen  
Zwischen Trost und Schmerzen.

**Dir, dir Jehova** will ich singen;  
denn wo ist doch ein solcher Gott wie du?  
Dir will ich meine Lieder bringen,  
ach, gib mir deines Geistes Kraft dazu,  
dass ich es tu im Namen Jesu Christ,  
so wie es dir durch ihn gefällig ist

Zieh mich, o Vater, zu dem Sohne,  
damit dein Sohn mich wieder zieh zu dir;  
dein Geist in meinem Herzen wohne  
und meine Sinne und Verstand regier,  
dass ich den Frieden Gottes schmeck und fühl  
und dir darob im Herzen sing und spiel.

Verleih mir, Höchster, solche Güte,  
so wird gewiss mein Singen recht getan  
so klingt es schön in meinem Liede,  
und ich bet dich im Geist und Wahrheit an  
so hebt dein Geist mein Herz zu dir empor,  
dass ich dir Psalmen sing im höhern Chor.

Flora, my joy  
My soul's pasture,  
All my peace.

What enraptures me,  
And bewitches my mind,  
Flora, it is you.

Your splendour shines day and night  
In my eyes and in my heart,  
Between comfort and pain.  
*(Transl. Jessica Dandy)*

Unto You, unto You, Jehovah, will I sing;  
For where is such a God as You?  
I would bring my songs unto You,  
Ah, give me the strength of Your Holy Spirit,  
That I might, in Jesus' name,  
Do that which is pleasing unto You.

Draw me, oh Father, to Your Son,  
That He may draw me ever closer to You;  
May Your Spirit dwell within my heart  
And govern my reason and understanding,  
That I may taste and feel the peace of God  
And sing and play of it in my heart.

Grant me, most High, Your loving kindness,  
That my singing be done right well,  
That my songs resound beautifully,  
And I may worship You in spirit and truth,  
That Your Spirit lift up my heart to You,  
So that, in the celestial choir, I may sing psalms  
unto You.

*(Transl. Jessica Dandy)*



**Bist du bei mir**, geh ich mit Freuden  
Zum Sterben und zu meiner Ruh.  
Ach, wie vergnügt wär so mein Ende,  
Es drückten deine schönen Hände  
Mir die getreuen Augen zu.

If thou art with me, I will go joyfully  
Unto death and my repose.  
Ah, how happy would my end be thus,  
Your beautiful hands closing  
My faithful eyes.  
*(Transl. Jessica Dandy)*

**Vergiss mein nicht**, vergiss mein nicht,  
Mein allerliebster Gott.  
Ach! höre doch mein Flehen,  
Ach! lass mir Gnad geschehen,  
Wenn ich hab Angst und Not,  
Du meine Zuversicht,  
Vergiss mein nicht, vergiss mein nicht.

Forget me not, forget me not,  
My most beloved Father.  
Ah, hear my supplication,  
Ah, have mercy on me,  
In my fear and need,  
You, in whom I trust,  
Forget me not, forget me not.

Vergiss mein nicht, vergiss mein nicht,  
Mein allerliebster Gott.  
Vergib mir meine Sünden,  
Ach! lass mich Gnade finden,  
So hat es keine Not,  
Wenn solche mich anficht,  
Vergiss mein nicht, vergiss mein nicht.

Forget me not, forget me not,  
My most beloved Father,  
Forgive me my sins.  
Ah, let me find mercy,  
So that there be  
No suffering in adversity,  
Forget me not, forget me not.  
*(Transl. Jessica Dandy)*

N. 627 aria adagio 627 für S. Bach D. N. L. G. v.

Vergiß mein nicht, vergiß nicht, mein allerliebster Gott. Ach höre  
doch mein Flehen ach laß mir Gnad geschehen - Herr wenn ich hab  
Angst u Noth Du meine Zuversicht Vergiß nicht, vergiß nicht.

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for a vocal aria. The title is 'N. 627 aria adagio' and it is attributed to '627 für S. Bach D. N. L. G. v.'. The lyrics are written in German and are aligned with the musical staves. The notation includes a treble clef, a 3/4 time signature, and various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. The paper is aged and yellowed.

I 1. **Jesu, meine Freude,**  
Meines Herzens Weide,  
Jesu, mein Begier,  
Ach wie lang, ach lange  
Ist dem Herzen bange  
Und verlangt nach dir!  
Gottes Lamm, mein Bräutigam,  
Außer dir soll mir auf Erden  
Nichts sonst Liebers werden.

II *Romans Ch. 8.1*

Es ist nun nichts Verdammliches  
an denen, die in Christo Jesu sind,  
die nicht nach dem Fleische wandeln,  
sondern nach dem Geist.

III 2. Unter deinem Schirmen  
Bin ich vor den Stürmen  
Aller Feinde frei.  
Laß den Satan wittern,  
Laß den Feind erbittern,  
Mir steht Jesus bei.  
Ob es jetzt gleich kracht und blitzt,  
Ob gleich Sünd und Hölle schrecken:  
Jesus will mich decken.

IV *Romans Chapter 8.2*

Denn das Gesetz des Geistes,  
der da lebendig machet in Christo Jesu,  
hat mich frei gemacht  
von dem Gesetz der Sünde und des Todes.

V 3. Trotz dem alten Drachen,  
Trotz des Todesrachen,  
Trotz der Furcht dazu!  
Tobe, Welt, und springe,  
Ich steh hier und singe  
In gar sichrer Ruh.  
Gottes Macht hält mich in acht;  
Erd und Abgrund muss verstummen,  
Ob sie noch so brummen.

VI *Romans Chapter 8.9*

Ihr aber seid nicht fleischlich,  
sondern geistlich,  
so anders Gottes Geist in euch wohnt.  
Wer aber Christi Geist nicht hat,  
der ist nicht sein.

1. Jesus, my joy,  
pasture of my heart,  
Jesus, my desire,  
ah how long, how long  
is my heart filled with anxiety  
and longing for you!  
Lamb of God, my bridegroom,  
apart from you on the earth  
there is nothing dearer to me.

There is therefore now no condemnation  
to them which are in Christ Jesus,  
who walk not after the flesh,  
but after the Spirit.

2. Beneath your protection  
I am free from the attacks  
of all my enemies.  
Let Satan track me down,  
let my enemy be exasperated  
Jesus stands by me.  
Even if there is thunder and lightning,  
even if sin and hell spread terror  
Jesus will protect me.

For the law of the Spirit  
of life in Christ Jesus  
hath made me free  
from the law of sin and death.

3. I defy the old dragon,  
I defy the jaws of death,  
I defy fear as well!  
Rage, World, and spring to attack:  
I stand here and sing  
in secure peace.  
God's might takes care of me;  
earth and abyss must fall silent,  
however much they rumble on.

But ye are not in the flesh,  
but in the Spirit,  
if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.  
Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ,  
he is none of his.

VII 4. Weg mit allen Schätzen!  
Du bist mein Ergötzen,  
Jesu, meine Lust!  
Weg ihr eitlen Ehren,  
Ich mag euch nicht hören,  
Bleibet mir unbewusst!  
Elend, Not, Kreuz, Schmach und Tod  
Soll mich, ob ich viel muss leiden,  
Nicht von Jesu scheiden.

VIII *Romans Chapter 8.10*

So aber Christus in euch ist,  
so ist der Leib zwar tot  
um der Sünde willen;  
der Geist aber ist das Leben  
um der Gerechtigkeit willen.

IX 5. Gute Nacht, o Wesen,  
Das die Welt erlesen,  
Mir gefällst du nicht.  
Gute Nacht, ihr Sünden,  
Bleibet weit dahinten,  
Kommt nicht mehr ans Licht!  
Gute Nacht, du Stolz und Pracht!  
Dir sei ganz, du Lasterleben,  
Gute Nacht gegeben.

X *Romans Chapter 8.11*

So nun der Geist des,  
der Jesum von den Toten  
auferwecket hat, in euch wohnt,  
so wird auch derselbige,  
der Christum von den Toten  
auferwecket hat,  
eure sterbliche Leiber  
lebendig machen, um des Willen,  
daß sein Geist in euch wohnt.

XI 6. Weicht, ihr Trauergeister,  
Denn mein Freudenmeister,  
Jesus, tritt herein.  
Denen, die Gott lieben,  
Muß auch ihr Betrübten  
Lauter Zucker sein.  
Duld ich schon hier Spott und Hohn,  
Dennoch bleibst du auch im Leide,  
Jesu, meine Freude.

4. Away with all treasures!  
You are my delight,  
Jesus, my joy!  
Away with empty honours,  
I'm not going to listen to you,  
remain unknown to me!  
Misery, distress, affliction, disgrace and death,  
even if I must endure much suffering,  
will not separate me from Jesus.

And if Christ be in you,  
the body is dead  
because of sin;  
but the Spirit is life  
because of righteousness.

5. Good night, existence  
chosen by the world,  
you do not please me.  
Good night, you sins,  
stay far behind me.  
Come no more to the light  
Good night, pride and splendour,  
once and for all, sinful existence,  
I bid you good night.

But if the Spirit of him  
that raised up Jesus from the dead  
dwell in you,  
he that raised up  
Christ from the dead  
shall also quicken  
your mortal bodies  
by his Spirit  
that dwelleth in you.

6. Go away, mournful spirits,  
for my joyful master,  
Jesus, now enters in.  
For those who love God  
even their afflictions  
become pure sweetness.  
Even if here I endure shame and disgrace,  
even in suffering you remain,  
Jesus, my joy!

*(Translation from cpdl.org)*

**Preface to the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans** by Martin Luther (1483-1546)

This letter is truly the most important piece in the New Testament. It is purest Gospel. It is well worth a Christian's while not only to memorize it word for word but also to occupy himself with it daily, as though

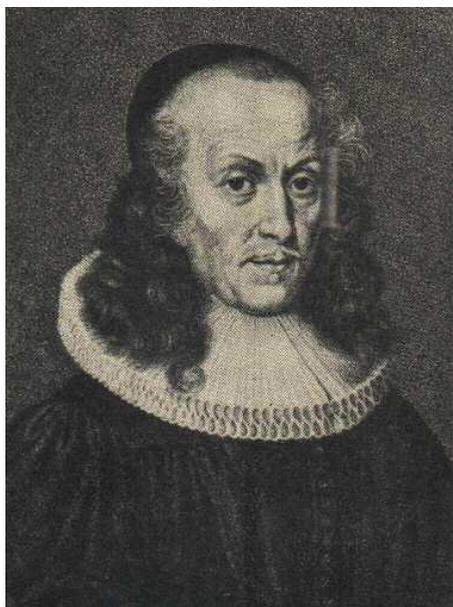
it were the daily bread of the soul. It is impossible to read or to meditate on this letter too much or too well. The more one deals with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes....

St. Paul shows how spirit and flesh struggle with each other in one person. He gives himself as an example, so that we may learn how to kill sin in ourselves. He gives both spirit and flesh the name "law," so that, just as it is in the nature of divine law to drive a person on and make demands of him, so too the flesh drives and demands and rages against the spirit and wants to have its own way. Likewise the spirit drives and demands against the flesh and wants to have its own way. This feud lasts in us for as long as we live, in one person more, in another less, depending on whether spirit or flesh is stronger. Yet the whole human being is both: spirit and flesh. The human being fights with himself until he becomes completely spiritual.

In chapter 8, St. Paul comforts fighters such as these and tells them that this flesh will not bring them condemnation. He goes on to show what the nature of flesh and spirit are. Spirit, he says, comes from Christ, who has given us his Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit makes us spiritual and restrains the flesh. The Holy Spirit assures us that we are God's children no matter how furiously sin may rage within us, so long as we follow the Spirit and struggle against sin in order to kill it. Because nothing is so effective in deadening the flesh as the cross and suffering, Paul comforts us in our suffering. He says that the Spirit, [cf. previous note about the meaning of "spirit."] love and all creatures will stand by us; the Spirit in us groans and all creatures long with us that we be freed from the flesh and from sin. Thus we see that these three chapters, 6, 7 and 8, all deal with the one work of faith, which is to kill the old Adam and to constrain the flesh...

We find in this letter, then, the richest possible teaching about what a Christian should know: the meaning of law, Gospel, sin, punishment, grace, faith, justice, Christ, God, good works, love, hope and the cross. We learn how we are to act toward everyone, toward the virtuous and sinful, toward the strong and the weak, friend and foe, and toward ourselves. Paul bases everything firmly on Scripture and proves his points with examples from his own experience and from the Prophets, so that nothing more could be desired. Therefore it seems that St. Paul, in writing this letter, wanted to compose a summary of the whole of Christian and evangelical teaching which would also be an introduction to the whole Old Testament. Without doubt, whoever takes this letter to heart possesses the light and power of the Old Testament. Therefore each and every Christian should make this letter the habitual and constant object of his study. God grant us his grace to do so. Amen.

*(Transl. Bro. Andrew Thornton, OSB, for the Saint Anselm College Humanities Program, 1983.)*



Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705)

The name of the Pietists is now known all over town.  
Who is a Pietist? He who studies the Word of God  
And accordingly leads a holy life.  
This is well done, good for every Christian.  
For this amounts to nothing if after the manner of  
rhetoricians  
And disputants one puts on airs in the pulpit  
And does not live holy as one ought according to the  
teaching.  
Piety above all must rest in the heart.

Joachim Feller, 1689

(tr. Dale W. Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, 1978)

## Performer Biographies



**James Pellow** trained as an actor with the Actor's Company, London. In rep, he has played the Manor Pavilion Theatre, Sidmouth, Theatre Royal, Windsor, Pomegranate Theatre, Chesterfield, and Landmark Theatre, Ilfracombe. Favourite roles include Lord Boothroyd in *Lloyd George Knew My Father*, Sir in *The Dresser*, Hobson in *Hobson's Choice* & Sir Cecil in *The Kingfisher*. James has played Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Jermyn Street & Cochrane Theatres, London, & French tour with Antic Disposition). He has worked with The Hampstead Players a number of times, notably in *Under Milk Wood*. Other theatre credits include *Worm's Eye View* (Lyceum Theatre, Crewe); *The Wireless Years* (Players Theatre, London & UK tour); *The Double Deceit* (Jermyn Street Theatre, London) and *Ballroom* (Waterloo East Theatre, London). James has played Dame in pantomime many times, most recently as Widow Twankey in *Aladdin* (Shanklin Theatre, Isle of Wight). He has written *Just James* & *Pellow Talk* and toured his own one-man plays *Lady Bracknell's Legacy*, *Her Majesty Fed an Elephant* and *The Coronation of Rosie Pink*. For radio he has written and narrated *The Diary of the Rev Samuel Trubshawe*. He has also written *A Lifetime on The Titanic*, the biography of Edith Haisman, a survivor of the 1912 disaster.



**Marie-Antoinette Stabentheiner** was born and raised on a farm in the Austrian Alps. Even without any knowledge of “Sound of Music” she followed the path of becoming a singer. After finishing her studies at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna she found herself thrown into a Viennese soloist world filled with music of Mozart, Beethoven and all their relatives.

As she lost her heart to polyphonic singing through an acquaintance with a composer called Tallis in her earlier years at university, she decided to come to Britain to train her sight reading skills and enjoy one per part singing in groups and consorts.

Hampstead Parish Church was her very first musical home when she left the continent and she feels a strong bonding towards the community and their musicians as well as she's loving to teach the Choristers of HPC every week.

When there's no pandemic going on she still travels once a month to the continent for concerts and to see her friends and family.



**Christine Buras** is an American soprano from Washington D.C. and has been a member of the Hampstead Parish Church Choir for three and a half years, though she first depped there on a very memorable Ash Wednesday in 2009 when only half the choir (and no conductor!) turned up for the service. She was a chorister at Washington National Cathedral, where she also made her professional debut in George Crumb's Ancient Voices of Children. Christine fully intended to become a respectable orthopaedic surgeon, but the combination of 8 am Chemistry lectures and the realisation that she loved singing in choirs more than anything else made her reconsider. Christine received her bachelor's degree in Music History and Theory from the University of Chicago, including a year spent in the Music Department at King's College London, and subsequently received her masters in Historical Performance from Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. She then returned to London second masters degree in Vocal Studies from the Royal Academy of Music, and has been living in the UK since then. When not singing, Christine can often be found knitting jumpers, walking on mountains in Scotland, and hosting extravagant dinner parties.

<http://www.christineburas.com>



**Jess Dandy** is a Cumbrian contralto and director of the mental health initiative, SongPath. A regular at Hampstead since 2017, Jess grew up vicariously in the tradition of Working Men's Choirs, singing hymns with her grandfather, and later formalising those early influences as a choral scholar at Trinity College, Cambridge, where she sometimes made time for her Modern & Medieval Languages degree, particularly when it involved spending a year masquerading as a student in Lyon. A postgraduate degree and fellowship at Guildhall School of Music & Drama followed, where she got to know Aidan & Cath, with some sporadic depping at Hampstead Parish Church back in 2013. She now divides her time (COVID-19 notwithstanding) between Cumbria & London, worming through books, and tramping where the mood takes her.

<https://www.jessdandycontralto.com>

<https://www.songpath.co.uk>



**Aidan Coburn** first sang with the senior choir at HPC when he was just sixteen in an undisclosable year, and has been involved with music making at the church in various ways ever since. Between then and now, Aidan read undergraduate music at Gonville and Caius College Cambridge and postgraduate vocal studies at Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Aidan taught academic music at The London Oratory School where, in addition to teaching the choristers, he also directed the internationally renowned Schola Cantorum, and ran the Singup Chorister Outreach Programme. As a singer, Aidan has worked with, amongst others, Glyndeboune and Wexford Festival Operas and at the Royal Opera House. In addition to singing, Aidan has performed widely as a conductor, having founded Shadwell Opera (with whom he won the International Herald Angel Award at Edinburgh Fringe Festival), and now conducting the Colla Voce Singers. At Hampstead, Aidan continues to sing in the senior choir as well as directing the Junior Choir and the Community Choir.



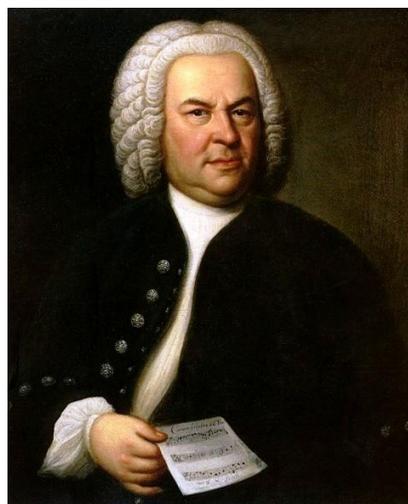
**Ben McKee** has been the regular bass at Hampstead Parish Church for the last eighteen months, namely attracted by the prospect of out-bassing his cousin, Malachy Frame. He began his career as a chorister at King's College, Cambridge, was a music scholar at The King's School, Canterbury, and then studied music at the University of Manchester. Whilst there, he co-founded the Halle Youth Choir, was assistant conductor of the Hallé Youth choir, and conducted the university's chamber choir, Ad Solem. As an accomplished bass-baritone, Ben has developed a reputation for both his consort work and performances of new music. In the UK, he is a member of Fieri Consort and Siglo de Oro and regularly sings with groups including the BBC Singers, The Gesualdo Six, Ex Cathedra, The Dunedin Consort, The English Concert, ORA Singers, EXAUDI and Tenebrae. Ben also performs abroad with Theatre of Voices, Chamber Choir Ireland, Coro Casa da Musica in Porto, and was formerly a member of Ars Nova, Copenhagen. As a chorus master, Ben has worked for Coro Casa da Musica under Paul Hillier, preparing the choir for especially challenging programmes including Ligeti's Drei Phantasien. As a soloist, Ben frequently sings oratorio, with recent appearances at the Gaida Festival in Vilnius and St Paul's Knightsbridge, Hampstead Parish Church and Chester Cathedral.

<https://fiericonsort.co.uk/portfolio/ben-mckee/>  
<http://www.benmckeephoto.co.uk>



**Geoffrey Webber** is Organist and Assistant Director of Music at Hampstead Parish Church. After being a chorister at Salisbury Cathedral and Music Scholar at the King's School, Worcester, he became Organ Scholar of New College, Oxford in 1977. He remained in Oxford after graduating to pursue academic research alongside his practical activities, and he has maintained this combination ever since. In Oxford he became University Organist and Director of Music at University Church of St Mary the Virgin, and served as Acting Organist at both New College and Magdalen College. In 1989 he moved to Cambridge where he combined the post of Precentor and Director of Studies in Music at Gonville & Caius College with teaching for the Faculty of Music, working as an Affiliated Lecturer and establishing the M.Mus. degree in Choral Studies. In addition to his work at Hampstead, he now serves as Associate Director of Armonico Consort and General Editor of the Church Music Society. His publications include the monograph *North German Church Music in the Age of Buxtehude* (OUP) and as co-editor, the *Cambridge Companion to the Organ* (CUP), and his recordings with the choir of Caius College are noted for their unusually wide range of repertoire.

We're delighted that the **The Hampstead Players** are providing readers for this series of meditations. The Hampstead Players are a notable amateur theatre group based at Hampstead Parish Church and founded in 1976 by the Vicar at that time, Graham Dowell. The Players generally perform two major productions a year, ranging from Shakespeare to Brecht, T.S. Eliot to Tom Stoppard, Anouilh to Arthur Miller. The group also makes dramatic contributions to church worship, and organises play-readings (most recently via Zoom), poetry evenings and literary hours throughout the year. In November 2019, the group staged a widely acclaimed production of *The Sound of Music* with live orchestra. Membership of The Hampstead Players is open to all who love creating good theatre. Further details on past productions and on becoming a member can be found at [www.hampsteadplayers.org.uk](http://www.hampsteadplayers.org.uk)



**J. S. Bach**

If you develop any symptoms of Coronavirus within 14 days of attending Hampstead Parish Church, you should refer to [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or call 111 for advice on getting tested. In the event of testing positive, you must inform the NHS Test and Trace service of your attendance at Hampstead Parish Church.

## **NEXT WEEK**

**26th October, 7-8pm, Live from Hampstead Parish Church**

**Bach Cantatas:**

**BWV 56: Ich will den Kreuzstab gerne tragen**

**BWV 169: Gott soll allein mein Herze haben**



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<https://www.thehampsteadcollective.com/become-a-friend-of-the-collective>

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