

## **Midweek Music – Pentecost 15**

**September 16th, 2020**

This week we are featuring a concert from 2009 that was held at St John, it marks the 200th anniversary of Felix Mendelssohn's birth.

Below is from the poster from that time:

# **SACRED CONCERT**

**MUSIC OF BACH AND MENDELSSOHN**

**including**

**MENDELSSOHN'S CHORAL CANTATA  
"IF THOU BUT SUFFER GOD TO GUIDE THEE"**

**Performed by the Choirs  
of St. John Lutheran Church and guests**

**Karen Lewis, Soprano  
Keith Williams, Organist and Conductor**

**Sunday, September 13, 2009 at 3:00 pm  
St. John Lutheran Church  
Champaign**



### **Additional info from St Thomas Church, where the Facebook image is from:**

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809–1847), who is himself inseparably linked with Leipzig, also had a formative influence on Protestant church music: the son of Jewish parents, he was still a child when he converted to Protestantism. His deep religious feelings had a decisive influence on his musical work: In addition to the “Reformation Symphony”, he also wrote the two outstanding oratorios “St. Paul” and “Elijah”. Mendelssohn is also renowned for his rediscovery of Johann Sebastian Bach, who after his death had fallen increasingly into obscurity. His works no longer fitted the spirit of the age. That all changed dramatically in 1829 when the 20-year-old Mendelssohn staged a performance of the St. Matthew Passion and ushered in the “Bach Renaissance”.

### **More information from the Concert Notes:**

#### ***In Heavenly love abiding***

Felix Mendelssohn  
Men's Choir

In heavenly love abiding, no change my heart shall fear;  
And safe is such confiding, for nothing changes here;  
The storm may roar without me, my heart may low be laid  
But God is round about me, and can I be dismayed?

Wherever he may guide me, no want shall turn me back,  
My Shepherd is beside me, and nothing can I lack;  
His wisdom ever waketh, His sight is never dim;  
He knows the way He taketh, and I will walk with Him.

Green pastures are before me, which I have not yet seen;  
Bright skies will soon be o'er me, where darkest clouds have been,  
My hope I cannot measure, my path to life is free.  
My Saviour has my treasure, and He will walk with me.

#### ***Our Father, who from Heav'n above***

***LSB #766***

Introduction from the *Orgelbuchlein*, BWV 636

J.S. Bach

Sing vs. 1,2,5,8 as follows:

v. 1 all; v. 2 women in unison; v. 5 Men; (Interlude)

v. 8 all in unison (sung to the Sonata's opening harmonization)

#### ***Sonata Op. 65, No. 6***

Mendelssohn

*(Choral – Vater unser im Himmelreich)*

*Andante Sostenuto*

*Allegro molto*

*Fuga – Sostenuto e legato*

*Finale – Andante*

#### ***If Thou but Trust in God to guide thee***

***LSB #750***

Introduction from the *Orgelbuchlein*, BWV 642

J.S. Bach

v.1 all; v.2 men; v.3 all

v.4 organ alone, BWV 691

v.5 women; v.6 all; v. 7 all in unison

## ***Wer nur den lieben Gott lasst Walten***

Mendelssohn

Chorale (v.1) Chorus  
Aria (v.4) Soprano solo – Karen Lewis  
Chorale (v.7) Chorus

Felix Mendelssohn has long been regarded as a very important early Romantic composer. He was also an important champion of the works of Johann Sebastian Bach. In 1829, Mendelssohn led the first performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* to be given after the composer's death, and performed a number of Bach's major organ works for the first time in England. As was the case with Mozart and many others since, exposure to Bach's music had a significant influence on Mendelssohn's own compositions. Mendelssohn in particular found great inspiration in Lutheran chorales.

The opening selection is perhaps the second best-known arrangement of a Mendelssohn melody as a hymn-tune (the first being the eponymous tune often used for "Hark, the Herald Angels sing"). The text, by Anita Waring, was published shortly after Mendelssohn's death and has been generally associated with this tune ever since.

Mendelssohn's organ works are of the highest importance, representing as they do the first great works for the instrument of the Romantic Era. The *Six Sonatas*, Opus 65, were published in London in 1845. The Sonata #6 is based primarily on the hymn-tune *Vater unser im Himmelreich*. The tune is outlined at the beginning (today used as the accompaniment for the last verse of Hymn #766,) followed by three softer variations. These lead into a masterful *Toccata* still using the chorale tune as its basis. The *Toccata* concludes with a reiteration of the chorale's closing phrase, immediately followed by a *Fugue* whose subject is based, again, on the chorale tune. The *Sonata* concludes with a restful *Andante*.

The Cantata *Wer nur den lieben Gott lasst Walten* dates from c.1829, the period when Mendelssohn was becoming intimately acquainted with Bach's music, in particular Bach's *Cantatas* and the *St. Matthew Passion*. Its three-movement form echoes many of Bach's own *Cantatas*. The grand opening chorus is in fugal style with each phrase of the chorale introduced imitatively in the upper voices, continuing above the phrase being sung in long notes by the basses. This is followed by a lilting solo aria for soprano in triple meter. The work concludes with another verse of the chorale sung in unison by the entire chorus, with the last phrase repeated in four part harmony for emphasis and dramatic effect.

We are grateful to those singers from other area churches who have joined with us today.

This concert is part of a year-long observance at St. John Lutheran Church of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of (Jakob Ludwig) Felix Mendelssohn (Bartholdy). All of Mendelssohn's organ works will have been performed as Preludes and Postludes in the course of the year, as will a number of Mendelssohn's shorter choral works.