

Handel's oratorio *Messiah* is one of the best-known and most-loved pieces of classical music. It was composed around the same time as the beginning of Emanuel Swedenborg's spiritual awakening and has been inspiring congregations and audiences alike for 281 years. Tonight we offer the Christmas section: Part I, as a vespers service to meditate on the Lord's coming to earth. We hope these sentences of Scripture are as poignant for you to hear as they are for us to sing and play.

#### Organ Preludes

Of the Father's Love Begotten – Wilbur Held

In the Bleak Midwinter – David Lasky

Once in Royal David's City – Robert Buckley Farlee

Forest Green – Matthew H. Corl

Prelude on 'This endris nyght' – Healey Willan

Away in a Manger - Lasky

Overture: **Sinfony** from *Messiah* – G.F. Handel

**Hymn 944** – Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Opening of the Word and Invitation to Prayer

#### The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in the heavens, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in heaven so upon the earth. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Reading: *Apocalypse Explained* 612:3

#### Messiah – Handel

**Comfort ye my people**, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." **Every valley shall be exalted**, and every mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight and the rough places plain. **And the glory of the Lord** shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. *Isaiah 40.1-5*

**Thus saith the Lord of Hosts**, yet once a little while and I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land, all nations I'll shake, and the desire of all nations shall come. *Haggai 2:6-7*

The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in. "Behold, He shall come"

saith the Lord of Hosts. **But who may abide** the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire. **And He shall purify** the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. *Malachi 3:1-3*

**Behold, a virgin shall conceive** and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel, God with us. *Isaiah 7:14*

**O Thou that tellest good tidings to Zion**, get thee up into the high mountain. O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid. Say unto the cities of Judah: "Behold, your God!" Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. *Isaiah 40:9 and 60:1*

**For behold, darkness shall cover the earth**, and gross darkness the people. But the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee, and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. *Isaiah 60:2-3*

**The people that walked in darkness** have seen a great light, and they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light hath shined. *Isaiah 9:2*

**For unto us a Child is born**, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called: Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. *Isaiah 9:6*

Reading: *Apocalypse Explained* 242:9

**Hymn 958** – Blessed Night

Pifa "Pastoral Symphony"

**There were shepherds abiding in the field** keeping watch over their flock by night. **And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them** and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. **And the angel said unto them:** "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. **And suddenly, there was with the angel** a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: **Glory to God** in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. *Luke 2:8-14*

**Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion**, shout O daughter of Jerusalem, behold: Thy King cometh unto thee. He is the righteous Savior and He shall speak peace unto the heathen. *Zechariah 9.9-10*

**Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened** and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. *Isaiah 35:5-6*

**He shall feed His flock like a shepherd,** and He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. Come unto Him all ye that labor, that are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Take His yoke upon you and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.  
*Matthew 11:28-29*

**His yoke is easy,** and his burthen is light. *Matthew 11:30*

Reading: *Apocalypse Explained* 612:7

Benediction and Closing of the Word

**Hymn 982** – Lovely Child, Holy Child

Please remain standing for the Hallelujah Chorus; you are welcome to sing.

**Hallelujah:** for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. King of Kings and Lord of Lords.  
*Revelation 19:6 and 11:15 and 19:16*

Organ Postlude

How Great Our Joy! – Kyle Johnson

Minister: Rev. Stephen Cole

Soprano: Heather Gardner

Alto: Joanna Gates

Tenor: Daniel Taylor

Baritone: Matthew Maisano

Choir: Bryn Athyn Festival Chorus

Conductor: Graham Bier

Organist: Leah Martin

Violins: Xuan Yao, Lorenzo Raval, Manuela Romero, Greg Synnestvedt

Violas: Ashley Vines, Michael Stanley

Cellos: Lynne Beiler, Tara Smith

Bass: Timothy Raub

Trumpets: Bill Myers, Dawn Webster

Timpani: Emilyrose Ristine



[www.brynathynchurch.org](http://www.brynathynchurch.org)

# Messiah

at Bryn Athyn Cathedral  
December 16, 2023 at 7:30 pm



Bryn Athyn Church