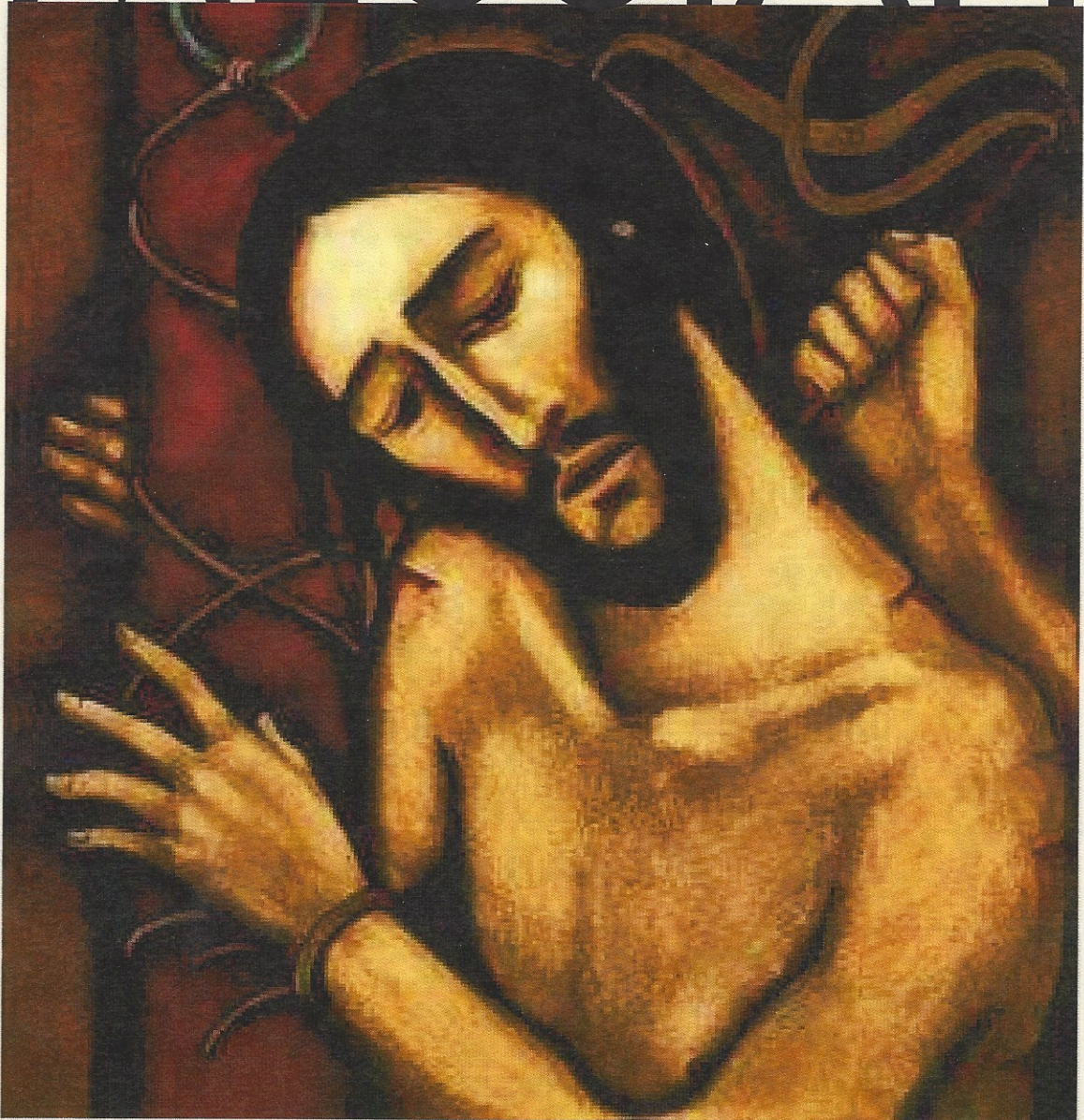


MESSIAH



WILLIAMSBURG UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



In proud recognition of our 50th Anniversary when, in 1964, we moved Williamsburg United Methodist Church from the Duke of Gloucester Street in Colonial Williamsburg to our present location on Jamestown Road, we welcome you this evening to a special concert of George Frideric Handel's *Messiah*, Parts II and III, the Easter portion.

We have been presenting Part I, the Christmas portion of *Messiah*, for the past 15 years. Last December, for the first time, we presented two performances in response to an overflow audience. Before that, some of our patrons had to sit in the narthex and atrium where they couldn't see the performers and could barely hear the glorious music being performed by our professional orchestra and chorus. Because we want everyone to be seated in the sanctuary where the sightlines and acoustics are excellent, we increased our fund-raising efforts to cover the additional expenses for the second performance.

As you know, our *Messiah* concerts are always free and open to the public. However, since there are no ticket sales, grants or sponsors, we depend on three sources of income to support this event. We dedicate a portion of our music ministries budget to *Messiah*, we solicit private funding from individual donors, and we pass the plate for a free-will offering. After we cover our expenses for the orchestra, soloists, advertising, music and supplies, we distribute the net proceeds from the free-will offering to local charities.

If you would like the *Messiah* performances to continue at Christmas and Easter we encourage you to become a private donor. Your gift will go to the *Messiah* Fund, like an endowment, to preserve this event for the future. Please make your check payable to "Williamsburg UMC" and note on the subject line "for *Messiah* Fund." This will ensure that your donation is a designated gift intended to keep Handel's *Messiah* alive in our community as an admission-free event. This is a blessing which spreads happiness throughout the year and brings hope to many deserving people throughout our region.

Furthermore, your gift will help us continue to be "Doers of the Word" by living out our mission which welcomes, nurtures, and transforms the hearts and souls of people in our community. Please accept our sincere thanks for your thoughtful gift. After 15 extraordinary years, our *Messiah* has won the hearts of many of God's children — the young, the less-than-young, and the young-at-heart. I sincerely thank you for all you do and all you have done to enjoy and support our annual *Messiah*.

Richard

Richard Sowers, conductor
Director of Music Ministries

MESSIAH

by George Frideric Handel

PARTS II & III: The Easter Story

produced and presented by

Williamsburg United Methodist Church

Saturday, April 12, 2014, 5:00 PM

Rev. Dr. Bill Jones, Senior Pastor

Rev. Kay Barré, Associate Pastor

Richard Sowers, Conductor & Director of Music Ministries

Thomas Marshall, Organist & Associate Director of Music

Handel Chamber Orchestra & Chorus

Laura Strickling, soprano

Lou-Anne Smith, mezzo

Garry Sloan, tenor

Branch Fields, bass

Libretto adapted from Holy Scripture by Charles Jennens (1700-1773)

First performance in Dublin, Ireland

13 April 1742

MESSIAH

"The Story of Handel's Messiah"
by Watkins Shaw

First Performance

Dublin 1742

Handel's visit to Ireland in 1741-42 was the outcome of an invitation by the Duke of Devonshire. This probably took the form of a suggestion that a series of subscription concerts in the new Music Room in Fishamble street would be well supported, and also a promise of vice-regal patronage. There is no doubt that Handel composed *Messiah* with this visit in mind. Whether, from the first, he intended that it should be performed for charity is uncertain, though quite probable. However these things may be, it is a fact that *Messiah* received its premiere in the year 1742 in the Irish capital. In writing to (Charles) Jennens (the *Messiah* librettist) on 29 December 1741 to acknowledge the scripture quotations forming the preface to the *Messiah* libretto, Handel said:

The Nobility did me the honour to make amongst themselves a Subscription for 6 nights, which did fill a Room of 600 Persons, so that I needed not sell one single ticket at the door ... Sagra (Signora) Avolio, which I brought with me from London, pleases extraordinary ... as for the Instruments they are really excellent, Mr. Dubourgh being at the Head of them, and the Musick sounds delightfully in this charming Room ... I cannot sufficiently express the kind treatment I receive here ... They propose already to have some more Performances, when the 6 Nights of the Subscription are over.."

Meanwhile, neither in his first series of six concerts (23 December 1741 to 10 February 1742) was there any mention of *Messiah*. But early



George Frideric Handel
(1685-1759)

in March a committee was at work to arrange 'a Performance designed for the benefit of the Hospital [i.e., Mercer's Hospital], the Infirmary, and the Prisoners of the Marshalseas' and there is no doubt that this was to be *Messiah*. The following public announcement appeared on 27 March 1742:

For Relief of the Prisoners in the several Gaols, and for the Support of Mercer's Hospital in Stephen's street, and of the Charitable Infirmary on the Inn's Quay, on Monday the 12th of April, will be performed at the Musick Hall in Fishamble street, Mr. Handel's new Grand Oratorio, called the Messiah, in which the Gentlemen of the Choirs of both Cathedrals will assist, with some Concertos on the Organ, by Mr. Handell. Tickets to be had at the Musick Hall, and at Mr. Neal's in Christ Church-yard, at half a Guinea each. N.B. No Person will be admitted to the Rehearsal without a Rehearsal Ticket, which will be given ad gratis with the Ticket for the Performance when paid for.

The rehearsal was a great success and was attended by 'a most Grand, Polite, and Crowded Audience.' The oratorio itself (described in one newspaper as 'this elegant Entertainment') was adjudged, with enthusiastic hyperbole, 'to the finest Composition of Musick that ever was heard.' At the request of 'several persons of Distinction' the performance was postponed from 12 to 13 April; and, in order that the charities might benefit to the full from the largest possible attendance, an announcement was made asking if ladies 'would be pleased to come without Hoops' and gentlemen without swords, with the object in increasing the space available. In the event, 700 people attended. As for Handel's noble generosity in thus devoting to charity the first performance of what was to become his most renowned masterpiece, one cannot do better than quote the words of Faulkner's *Dublin Journal* for 17 April 1742:

It is but Justice to Mr. Handel that the World should know he generously gave the Money arising from this Grand Performance, to be equally shared by the Society for relieving Prisoners, the Charitable Infirmary, and Mercer's Hospital, for which they will ever gratefully remember his Name.

Each charity received £127. Perhaps it should be mentioned here that Handel's earliest biographer, Mainwaring (whose anonymous 'Memoirs of the Life of Handel' appeared in 1760), knew nothing of the Dublin performances. He asserted that *Messiah* was first performed in London before Handel's

departure for Ireland. But, bearing in mind the date when *Messiah* was completed (14 September), the time when the composer was occupied with *Samson* (29 September to 29 October) and his arrival in Dublin on 18 November after delay at Chester, it is impossible to believe that any performance of the work could have been arranged before Handel left London.

London Performances 1743-45

On his return to England, Handel cannot but have felt refreshed and encouraged by his visit to Dublin, and better able to put behind him the disappointment of his previous London season. He now added the finishing touches to *Samson* and began to form plans for another series of subscription performances. One thing was certain: it would include no operas. As it was to prove, Handel's last opera was *Deidamia*, given at the end of his 1740-41 season. In September 1742 he wrote to Jennens:

The report that the Direction of the Opera next winter is committed to my Care, is groundless. Whether I shall do something in the Oratorio way (as several of my friends desire) I can not determine as yet.

But so it was to be. He announced a series of six oratorio performances to take place in Covent Garden theatre during Lent 1743, and opened with *Samson* on 18 February. This was so successful that all the remaining five performances were devoted to the same work, and an extension of the series was advertised. If we scrutinize the announcements of these events, we shall not find any reference whatsoever to *Messiah*; however, in the newspaper for 19 March 1743, there was announced 'A New

Sacred Oratorio' as the ninth event in the complete series as extended; and it was under this title that *Messiah* was first brought before the London public. It was performed at Covent Garden on 23 March, and Dubourgh, who was then in London, contributed a violin solo to the proceedings, which also included an organ concerto, played, no doubt, by Handel himself. One thing, however, is certain: the work was not enthusiastically received. This is very surprising after its marked success, bordering on the sensational, in Dublin. It was *Samson* that carried



Young Handel

all before it at Covent Garden that year, with a total of eight performances including every one of the six as first planned. Evidently, when once *Samson* had been heard, it was clear to Handel that it would not be worthwhile to produce *Messiah* in his first six concerts. Perhaps, when placing it third in the additional part of the season, he envisaged the possibility of three further performances. As it turned out, he repeated it only twice (25 and 29 March); and, in spite of the announcement of the seventh performance of *Samson* as 'the Last time of performing this Season' he evidently thought it wise to include yet another per-

formance of that popular work on 31 March as the finale to his season. It is ironic to think that the chief reason for all this was probably the very factor which, in the long run, caused *Messiah* to achieve popular pre-eminence over all Handel's other works: namely that it deals, in the language of Holy Scripture, with an exalted religious theme. A correspondent who cloaked himself under the name of 'Philaethes,' and who declared himself 'a profess'd Lover of Musick, and in particular all Mr. Handel's Performances' thundered thus in the *Universal Spectator* of 19 March 1743:

An Oratorio either is an Act of Religion, or it is not; if it is, I ask if the Playhouse is a fit Temple to perform it in, or a Company of Players [a hit palpably aimed, in anticipation, at people like Susann Cibber and Kitty Clive] fit Ministers of God's Word ... But, it seems the Old Testament is not to be prophan'd alone ... but the New must be join'd with it, and God by the most sacred the most merciful Name of Messiah; for I'm inform'd than an Oratorio call'd by that Name has already been perform'd in Ireland, and is soon to be perform'd here ... As to the Pretence that there are many Persona who will say their Prayers there [i.e., in the theatre] who will not got to Church ... the Assertion is false ... But if the Assertion was true, are the most sacred Things, Religion and the Holy Bible, which is the Word of God, to be prostituted to the perverse Humour of a set of obstinate People? ...

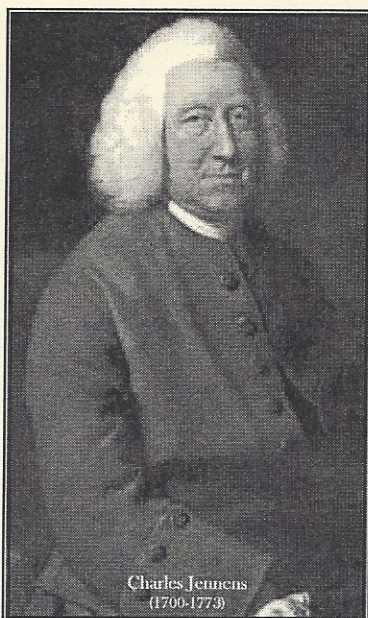
When we recall Handel's advertisement of a 'New Sacred Oratorio' and how he now avoided the title *Messiah* which had been freely used in Dublin, it becomes evident that he was aware of the danger of offending such susceptibilities as 'Philaethes' so pungently expressed. It seems that these opinions had a large following and in great measure accounted for the lack of success of the oratorio on its production in London. There is

no doubt that the reputation of actors and actresses for loose morals ... was a far stronger element in this point of view that we can dream of today. To what extent the music itself was not immediately acceptable is hard to say ...

So, Handel laid *Messiah* aside and did not include it in his next year's Lenten season. However, in spite of those who thought like 'Philaethes,' there were some who were more interested in the music than any alleged impropriety. The society called the 'Academy of Antient Musick' took it up and gave a performance in Feb. 1744, boldly announced without any beating about the bush as 'Messiah: A Sacred Oratorio.'

Renewal & Consolidation 1749-53 Foundling Hospital 1754

It is plain there was no regular form of *Messiah* so far as we have yet traced it story. The first performance differed from the work as originally composed; the London performances of 1743-45 differed from both. When after a silence of three seasons, Handel at last determined to revive the work in 1749, it is not surprising that he made further changes of it; nor was 1749 the latest year of revisions. But after reviewing the years 1749-53, one has a clear impression that the changes of that period amounted to something more than simply another variety of versions: one senses also a degree of quickened vitality and invigoration not noticeable earlier. The 1749 season included, it is true, no more than a single performance of *Messiah*; but it was now boldly billed under its proper title. From then on, there was never to be another year in Handel's life when it was not to be

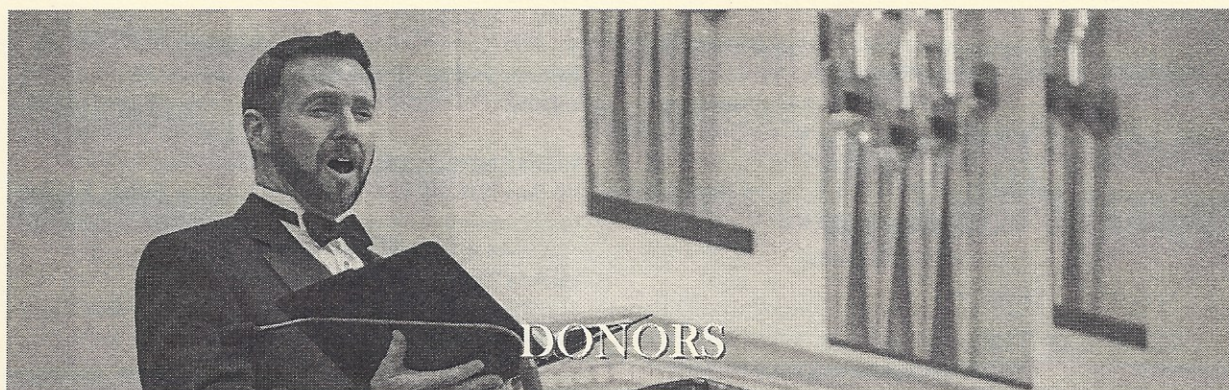


heard in London under his direction ... What remains to be told of *Messiah* during the last six years of Handel's life probably might not justify a separate chapter were it not for the survival of details, so full as to be well-nigh comprehensive, about the performance in the Foundling Hospital on 15 May 1754... The number of tickets sold for the Foundling Hospital in 1754 was 1,219. The orchestra consisted of 15 violins, 5 violas, 3 cellos, 2 double basses, 4 bassoons, and 4 oboes, 2 trumpets, timpani, and 2 horns ... From 1753 Handel, to all intents and purposes, was blind, though still able, no doubt, to write his name. Perhaps it was on this account, soon after the 1754 performance, the Governors of the Foundling Hospital took it on themselves to consult Handel considering 'that it may be very proper to put such Performances under proper Regulations.' As a result, Handel appointed his pupil J. C. Smith, now organist of the Foundling Chapel, to conduct, and

'on Account of this Health he excused himself from giving any further Instructions relating to the Performances.' This has been taken to mean that 1754 was the last year Handel conducted in person at the Hospital. But it would seem that his spirits revived and he resumed his part. Not only did he do so in 1757, but the advertisement, issued shortly before his death, of the performance planned for 3 May 1759 announced that it would be 'under the Direction of George Frederick Handel Esq.' Handel died in the interval between the advertisement and performance, which had to be conducted by the younger Smith ... In each of the years 1754-58 *Messiah* was given once at the Foundling Hospital after having received ... performances at Covent Garden. In 1758 the Academy of Antient Musick gave a further performance of its own ... In 1759 there were 3 Covent Garden performances ... Handel appears to have attended them all, certainly the last, which brought his season to its close as planned. But on 11 April he executed a 4th codicil to his Will ... There was some intention that he should go to Bath for the waters, but he was by now too ill to undertake the journey. In the morning of 14 April he died. The *Whitehall Evening Post* that day reported:

When he went home from the Messiah yesterday se'night, he took to his Bed, and has never rose from it since; and it was with great Difficulty he attended his Oratorios at all, having been in a very bad State of Health for some Time before they began.

So *Messiah* was the last thing Handel performed; he died on the morrow of the 17th anniversary of its first performance. -WS



We take this opportunity to thank the following persons for their gifts to help underwrite the costs of our *Messiah*. These generous people understand the intrinsic value of Handel's epic work, and have contributed funds to ensure that this event is free to the public and that a portion of our proceeds are donated to deserving local charities.

Fishamble Street Society \$500+

Lawrence Strickling, Jr.
Sydney Hans
Anonymous

Handel Society \$250-\$499

Dave & Barbara Amaker
Marilyn & Robert Casey
Linda & Bill Hansell
Bill & Donna Herman
Paul & Jennie Longnecker
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Norb & Maryellen Smith

Conductor's Circle \$100-\$249

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Janet Doesschate
Francis Going
Judith Gossett
Barbara Hamson
Dean Hinders
Ann McGrath
Claude Morrison
Mike Langrehr
Ron Woolever

Invocation

Rev. Dr. Bill Jones
Senior Pastor

MESSIAH

A Sacred Oratorio
by George Frideric Handel

Sinfony from Part I

Handel Chamber Orchestra
Richard Sowers, conductor

PART II

This is the story of the Passion of Christ: the tragic events of Holy Week, Christ's crucifixion, death, and resurrection.

22: Chorus (John 1:29) Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

23: Aria (Isaiah 53:3; Isaiah 50:6) *Lou-Anne Smith, mezzo*
He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He gave his back to the smiters and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. He hid not his face from shame and spitting.

24: Chorus (Isaiah 53:4-5) Surely He hath born our griefs and carried our sorrows.

25: Chorus (Isaiah 53:5) And with His stripes we are healed.

26: Quartet (Isaiah 53:6) *Ms. Strickling, Ms. Smith, Mr. Sloan, Mr. Fields*

All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

27: Recitative (Psalm 22:7) *Garry Sloan, tenor*
All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips and shake their heads, saying:

28: Chorus (Psalm 22:8) He trusted in God that He would deliver Him if He delights in Him.

29: Recitative (Psalm 59:20) *Mr. Sloan*
Thy rebuke hath broken His heart. He is full of heaviness & looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him.

30: Aria (Lamentations 59:20) *Mr. Sloan*
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow!

31: Recitative (Isaiah 53:8) *Laura Strickling, soprano*
He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of thy people was he stricken.

32: Aria (Psalm 16:10) *Ms. Strickling*
But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.

33: Chorus (Psalm 24: 7-9) Lift up your heads, O ye gates and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

34: Recitative (Hebrews 1:5) *Mr. Sloan*
Unto which of the angels said He at any time, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee?"

35: Chorus (Hebrews 1:6) Let all the angels of God worship Him!

36: Aria (Psalm 68:18) *Ms. Smith*
Thou art gone up on high. Thou hast led captivity captive and received gifts for men, yea, even for thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

37: Chorus + Quartet (Psalm 68:1) The Lord gave the word. Great was the company of the preachers!

38: Aria (Romans 10:15) *Ms. Strickling*
How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things.

39: Chorus (Romans 10:18) Their sound is gone out to all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world.

40: Aria (Psalm 2:1-2) *Branch Fields, bass*
Why do the nations so furiously rage together? Why do the people imagine a vain thing? The Kings of the earth rise up and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and His Anointed.

41: Quartet (Psalm 2:3) Let us break their bonds asunder and cast away their yokes from us.

42: Recitative (Psalm 2:4) *Mr. Sloan*
He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn. The Lord shall have them in derision.

43: Aria (Psalm 2:9) *Mr. Sloan*

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron. Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

REQUEST

Although it is a standard practice for our annual Christmas Messiah, we ask that the audience refrain from singing the "Hallelujah" chorus, albeit tempting, for today's concert.

44: Chorus (Revelation 19:6, 11:15) 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 forever and ever. King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

At this time a free-will offering will be collected.

Sonata No. I in C minor

by G. F. Handel
Victoria Hamrick, oboe
Ivy Haga, bassoon
Tom Marshall, harpsichord

PART III

This is the story of Christ's Redemption: Death is swallowed up in final victory over the sin of humankind. We may now celebrate the glorification of Christ in heaven.

45: Aria (Job 19:26; I Corinthians 15:20) *Ms. Strickling*

I know that my Redeemer liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. For now is Christ risen from the dead the first fruits of them that sleep.

46: Chorus (I Corinthians 15:21-22)

Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

47: Recitative (I Corinthians 15:51-52) *Mr. Fields*

Behold I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet.

48: Aria (I Corinthians 15:52-53) *Mr. Fields*

The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality.

49: Recitative (I Corinthians 15:54) *Ms. Smith*

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory.

50: Duet (I Corinthians 15:55-56) *Ms. Smith & Mr. Sloan*

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law.

51: Chorus (I Corinthians 15:57)

But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

52: Aria (Romans 8:34) *Ms. Strickling*

If God is for us who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God who makes intercession for us.

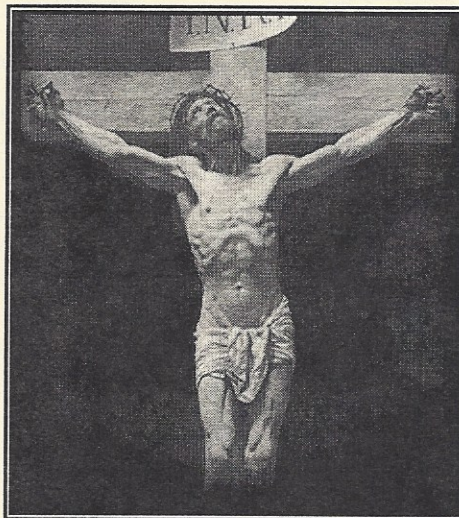
53: Chorus (Revelation 5:9, 12-14)

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain and hath redeemed us to God by His blood to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing! Blessing and honor, glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

Rev. Jones

*Please join us for a reception
in the fellowship hall.*





7he Messiah chorus consists of volunteer singers from Williamsburg UMC and from church choirs throughout the region. We are extremely grateful and deeply indebted to the following singers who have lent their beautiful voices to this year's Easter Messiah as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of our church moving from the Duke of Gloucester Street to Jamestown Road in 1964.

SOPRANO

Annette Bell
Susan Bookless
Mary Clayton-Kastenholz
Wendy Geiger
Linda Hansell
Karlene Jennings
Phyllis Lee
Helen Parker
Jennifer Phillips
Frances Porter
Mary Liz Sadler
Mary Self
Lynda Sharrett
Marla Sowers
Sue Steberl
Carina Sturdy
Rita Welty

ALTO

Joyce Alewynse
Judy Alexander
Dorothy Beauchamp
Kathryn Blue
Louise Clayton-Kastenholz
Anna Grace Foster
Regina Gerstman
Sue Liddell
Carol Marsh
Terri Morgan
Karen Mosca
Dorothy Nelson
Kit Ober
Mary Stutz

TENOR

Dave Amaker
Ken Brooks
Sarah Clayton-Kastenholz
Lad Culkowski
Eric Dawnkaski
Harry Doyle
Jim Drummond
Bill Forrest
Wil Larkin
Barbara Miller
Valery Pyram
Clyde Self
Dick Storey
Jeremy Utt

BASS

Marshall Atkins
Warren Bell
Bo Bohannon
Vince Byrne
Carlton Casey
Keith Clayton-Kastenholz
Burt Lightner
John Marsh
Gil Monell
Andrew Nelson
Fritz Ober
Robert Weathers



Our Messiah concerts require extraordinary coordination of dozens of volunteers to set up chairs and music stands, move church furniture and pews, bake cookies, set up receptions, function as ushers, sound engineers, flower arrangers, publicists, graphic designers, and people to prepare rehearsal spaces and green rooms for the orchestra, chorus, and soloists. We wish to thank at least the following persons for their extraordinary help in making our Messiah concerts fitting and suitable for the glory of God.

RED COATS

*Wilma Vachal (Capt.), Vivian Golding, Marylyn Voorhess, Mera Hughes,
Dawn Gates, Joyce Hedgepeth, Linda Jones, Donna Ward*

USHERS/TELLERS

Jim Brown, Charles Clark, Bud Voorhess, Bob Simmons, Bob Browning

LOGISTICS TEAM

*Sylvia Allgood, Drew Alexander, Jackson Anderson, Doug Arbuckle, Cindy Banek,
Anthony Batterton, Dorothy Beauchamp, Mary Jo Bennett, Joe Cantrell, Beth Casey, Marilyn Casey,
Beth Chambers, Summer Chambers, Mary Clayton-Kastenholz, Judy Craft, Amy Dassler, Chris Dassler, Reid Dassler,
James Daum, Jay Daum, Sam Foxx, Dr. Stephen Foxx, Wendy Geiger, Rene Goode, Suzan Griffin, Chris Hailey,
Martha Hardman, Ron Hardman, Donna and Bill Herman, Jane Hunley, Gerre Johnson, Dean Johnson,
Marilyn Johnson, Karlene Jennings, William Jones, Bonnie Knizatko, Lianne Koch, Karen Lackey, Fran Lane,
Madelyn Larkin, Cassie Maye, Charlotte McCarter, Jim McCarter, Ann McGrath, Kelly Monteith, Sharon Moss,
Curt Nordeman, Ed Overton, Hamilton Payne, Jennifer Phinney, Mark Phinney, Keith Potter, Maynard Randolph,
Troy Rapp, Nancy Reynolds, Bud Rhodes, Linda Rhodes, Mary Liz Sadler, Maryellen Smith, Peggy Soulen,
Rhoda Jo Stress, Alex Schwartz, Lionel Taylor, Linda Upshaw, Ron Vineyard, Mike Weber, Glenith Whitaker,
Cameron Wojcieszak, Wesley Foundation students; and a very special thanks to all of the many good people whom
we may have inadvertently left off this list because of printing deadlines and faulty memories.*

Laura Strickling, *soprano*

Praised by *The New York Times* for her "flexible voice, crystalline diction and warm presence." Laura Strick-



ling has performed at Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, the Kennedy Center, Wigmore Hall, Dankhaus Chicago, and the Afghanistan National Institute of Music. An alumna of the Berkshire Opera Company Resident Artist Program, Ms. Strickling's operatic roles include Countess Almaviva (*Le nozze*

di Figaro), Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*), Mimi (*La bohème*), Dinorah (*Dinorah*), Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel*), Micaëla (*Carmen*), and Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*). Her past concert engagements include her Avery Fisher and Kennedy Center debuts in *Messiah* (Handel), *Requiem* (Brahms) with the Bel Canto Chorus and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, and *Ninth Symphony* (Beethoven) with Choralis. Her performance of Mozart's *Mass in C minor* and *Exsultate Jubilate* with the Cathedral Choral Society in Washington, DC was broadcast by classical radio station WETA. Ms. Strickling was a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center during the summer of 2013, a resident artist at the Steans Music Institute at Ravinia in 2012, a recipient of the Marc and Eva Stern Fellowship at SongFest in 2011 and 2012, and performed in Weill Music Institute's 2012 Professional Training Program at Carnegie Hall. Her recent competition honors include the Liszt-Garrison International Competition, the Positively Poulenc! Competition, the Liederkrantz Competition, the Bel Canto Chorus Competition, the Schubert Club Competition, the Washington International Competition, the American Prize for Opera Performance, and the Vocal Arts DC Discovery Competition. A Chicago native, Ms. Strickling holds degrees from the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University (M.M. in Voice) and the Moody Bible Institute (B.M. in Sacred Music).

Lou-Anne Smith, *mezzo*

Lou-Anne Smith received a Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance from Baylor University, Waco, TX. After singing professionally with local companies including Virginia Opera, Lou-Anne felt called to church music ministry. She has been Director of Music at Zion Grace United Methodist Church, Norfolk, VA; Great

Bridge United Methodist Church, Chesapeake, VA; Trinity United Methodist Church, Poquoson, VA; and is currently Associate Director of Music for Children and Youth at Williamsburg United Methodist Church. Lou-Anne and her husband, Mark, have two sons, Hunter and Hamilton, all of whom reside in



Poquoson, VA. They are eagerly awaiting the sale of their home in Poquoson so they can finish refurbishing their new home in Williamsburg.

Garry Sloan, *tenor*

Garry Sloan is an accomplished singer, teacher, and conductor. A regional finalist of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, his singing has been described by Opera News as "warmly liquescent and elegantly phrased." His operatic appearances include Rodolpho in *La Bohème*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Belmonte in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, Beppe in *Pagliacci*, and Tybalt in *Romeo et Juliette*. He has also performed a wide range



of oratorio works and has appeared as a soloist with numerous civic and collegiate choruses. He received a Bachelor of Music from the University of Missouri and has completed studies for a Doctorate of Musical Arts from the University of Oklahoma. He currently lives in Williamsburg with his wife

and two children, and serves as a soloist for Bruton Parish Church.

Branch Fields, *bass*

Branch Fields, whom Opera America describes as "a bass of resonant richness," and *The New York Times* declared to be "a gifted young bass," is delighting audiences and critics alike with his glorious instrument and leading man looks in opera, concert and musical theater. He has sung with Santa Fe Opera, New York City Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Carolina, Michigan Opera Theatre, Utah Opera, Opera San Jose, and many other regional companies throughout the U.S. In con-



cert, Branch has performed with the Munich Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Santa Fe Symphony, Colorado Springs Philharmonic, and the American Symphony Orchestra. Branch's versatility as a singing actor led to his Broadway debut in *SOUTH PACIFIC*, understudying the role of Emile de Becque in the Lincoln Center Theater production, sharing the stage

with Matthew Morrison, Kelli O'Hara and Skipp Suduth. This monumental 2008 revival won 7 Tony Awards. Mr. Fields has since reprised Emile for Utah Festival Opera & Musical Theater (UFOMT), Piedmont Opera, and the historic Ogunquit Playhouse. The 2013-14 season started with a live European radio broadcast of *CANDIDE* from Leipzig, Germany with Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR) led by Kristjan Järvi. He made his Canadian debut as the 5th Jew in *SALOME* at Edmonton Opera, and a return to Carnegie Hall with the American Symphony Orchestra, in R. Strauss' *FEUERSNOT*. He reprised Emile de Becque for Piedmont Opera in March, and joined a workshop at Symphony Space in NYC for a reading of *CLARA*, by Victoria Bond, singing the role of Robert Schumann. Other concerts included an Opera Night with the Williamsburg Symphony, with Metropolitan Opera artists Audrey Luna and Lauren McNeese. Branch heads to Opera North in the summer for Frank in *STREET SCENE* and Alfred P. Doolittle in *MY FAIR LADY*. In the 2012-13 season, Mr. Fields sang his first Don Alfonso in *COSÌ FAN TUTTE* in Bozeman in October, Sarastro in *DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE* at Opera on the James, back to Bozeman for Frère Laurent in *ROMEO ET JULIETTE*, and a reprise of Méphistophélès for Opera Fort Collins in late May. In July, he was in the 12 member ensemble of Lera Auerbach's opera *THE BLIND*, for blindfolded audiences at Lincoln Center Festival. He returned to Martha's Vineyard to add Mustafa in *L'ITALIANA IN ALGERI* to his repertoire, and finished the summer with concerts at The Ocean House in Watch Hill, RI, for Salt Marsh Opera, and in Middlebury for OCM's 10th Anniversary Benefit Gala. Mr. Fields is a Virginian, from Williamsburg. His prodigious talent for singing was discovered at Virginia Tech while doing undergraduate work in chemistry. He was accepted into the Master of Music degree program at Indiana University School of Music, where he

was soon awarded the Cole and Kate Porter Memorial Scholarship and made quick progress studying voice with the great Metropolitan Opera bass, Giorgio Tozzi. He was a member of The Singing Hoosiers, through which he garnered the attention of Maestro Erich Kunzel during their concerts and recordings with the Cincinnati Pops. He can be heard on the Cincinnati Pop's album *Puttin' On the Ritz* (TELARC). Branch was later granted a coveted spot at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia, a full scholarship institution, where he studied with Met baritone Louis Quilico, and participated in summer opera programs in Chiari, Lucca, and Rome, Italy.

Richard Sowers, conductor

Now completing his fifth year as Director of Music Ministries for Williamsburg United Methodist Church, Richard Sowers

oversees a thriving music ministries program with over 400 participants comprising seven vocal choirs, five handbell choirs, a volunteer church orchestra and a professional chamber orchestra. In addition to presenting the annual Messiah, he has also conducted major



works for chorus and orchestra by Durufle, Vivaldi, Britten, Bach, Schubert, Gounod, Buxtehude, Mendelssohn among others. Sowers has served churches in Kentucky and Philadelphia where he was conductor and music director of the Abington Symphony Orchestra. In Lexington, KY he served as Dean of the American Guild of Organists and for over ten years was Director of Choral Activities and Assistant Professor of Voice at Lindsey Wilson College in south central Kentucky. He is the former music director and conductor of The Louisville Chorus and founder, music director and conductor of the Columbia Choral Society and the Lexington Bach Choir. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees in music from the University of Louisville School of Music, attended Indiana University Music School as an associate instructor in voice studying with Metropolitan Opera star Walter Cassel, and completed doctoral studies in choral and orchestral conducting at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He is also a graduate of the Education for Ministry program through the Sewanee School of Theology at The University of the South.

Upcoming Events

PALM SUNDAY

April 13, 2014

worship services at 8:15 AM & 11 AM

featuring

Carol Choir

Wesley Choir

Canticles of Praise

Bells of Praise

Sanctuary Choir

Chancel Choir

MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 17, 2014

worship at 7:00 PM

featuring

The Charles Wesley Singers

GOOD FRIDAY

April 18, 2014

Taize Worship at 7:00 PM

EASTER SUNDAY

April 20, 2014

services at 6:30 AM, 8 AM, 9:30 AM, and 11 AM

featuring the Easter Festival Choir &

Williamsburg Brass Ensemble

5TH ANNUAL WESLEY HERITAGE SUNDAY

Sunday, May 18 at 8:15 AM and 11:00 AM

featuring the founders of the Methodist Church

in 18th Century Period Costume

Rev. John Wesley

Rev. Charles Wesley

Mrs. Sarah Wesley

Bishop Francis Asbury

Rev. Jesse Lee

WUMC Brass Ensemble



HANDEL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Richard Sowers, conductor

VIOLIN

Arkady Heifets, concertmaster

Nadine Theriault

Karen Stowe

Lesa Bishop

Susan Bedell

Valerie DeBrava

Caroline Little

Violaine Michel

VIOLA

Jena Chenkin

Tom Stevens

CELLO

Sarah Glosson

Ulysses Kirksey

BASSOON

Ivy Haga

Ashley Pitzer

OBOE

Victoria Hamrick

David Boone

TRUMPET

Wendell Banyay

Robert Spaeth

ORGAN & HARPSICHORD

Thomas Marshall

TIMPANI

Dan Knipple

REHEARSAL ACCOMPANISTS

Thomas Marshall

Elaine Howell, Carina Sturdy



Carol Choir, For children in grades K, 1, 2. Rehearses every Thursday from 5:00 PM to 5:30 PM in room 173. Provides music in worship 4-6 times per year. Lou-Anne Smith, director.

Wesley Choir, For children in grades 3, 4, 5. Rehearses every Thursday from 6:15 PM to 7:00 PM in room 173. Provides music in worship 4-6 times per year. Lou-Anne Smith, director.

Joyful Noise Ringers, For children in grades 3, 4, 5. Rehearses every Thursday from 5:30 PM to 6:15 PM in room 151. Lou-Anne Smith, director.

Canticles of Praise, For youth in grades 6-12. Rehearses every Sunday from 4:30 PM to 5:30 PM in room 173. Provides music in worship 4-6 times per year. Lou-Anne Smith, director.

Bells of Praise, For youth in grades 6-12. Rehearses every Sunday from 3:30 PM to 4:15 PM in room 112. Provides music in worship 4-6 times per year. Tom Marshall, director.

Sanctuary Choir, For adults and advanced high school students. Sings at the 8:15 AM worship service on Sundays. Rehearses Thursdays from 7:00 PM to 8:45 PM in the sanctuary. Richard Sowers, director, Tom Marshall, accompanist.

Chancel Choir, For adults and advanced high school students. Provides music for worship at the 11 AM service on Sundays. Rehearses Thursdays from 7:00 PM to 8:45 PM in the sanctuary. Richard Sowers, director, Tom Marshall, accompanist.

The Charles Wesley Singers, A chamber choir culled from the Sanctuary and Chancel choirs. Rehearses on Thursday evenings. Presents primarily a *cappella* music for worship. Richard Sowers, director, Tom Marshall, accompanist.

Sine Nomine Ringers, For intermediate adult ringers. Provides music in worship 4-6 times per year. Rehearses every Tuesday from 11 AM to 12 noon in room 112. Lou-Anne Smith, director.

Covenant Ringers, For advanced adult ringers. Provides music in worship 4-6 times per year. Rehearses every Tuesday from 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM in room 112. Tom Marshall, director.

Bell Quartet, a self-directed group of four players who prepare and present music in worship occasionally. Meets Mondays from 5 PM to 6 PM in room 112.

Chancel Orchestra, For youth and adults who play string, brass, woodwind or percussion instruments. Rehearses on selected Mondays from 5:15 PM to 6:00 PM in room 114. Richard Sowers, conductor.

Brass Ensemble, A select ensemble for trained musicians who are proficient in trumpet, trombone, French horn or tuba. Rehearses select Mondays from 5:15 PM to 6 PM in 114. Richard Sowers, director.

Woodwind Ensemble, A select ensemble for trained musicians who are proficient on flute, oboe, clarinet, etc. Rehearses select Mondays from 5:15 PM to 6 PM in 114. Margaret Carlson, principal.

String Ensemble, A select ensemble for trained musicians who are proficient on violin, viola, cello, or bass viol. Rehearses select Mondays from 5:15 PM to 6 PM in 114. Myfanwy Morgan, principal.

Messiah Chorus, for advanced singers from our WUMC church choirs and from surrounding church choirs throughout the region. We present the Christmas portion (Part I) of Handel's Messiah every year on the first Friday and Saturday of December. Accompanied by our professional Handel Chamber Orchestra and outstanding professional soloists. The Handel Chamber Orchestra and Chorus also present the Easter portion (Parts II and III) of Handel's Messiah on the Saturday before Palm Sunday. Richard Sowers, music director and conductor. Tom Marshall, organist, harpsichordist, and chorus rehearsal accompanist.

Handel Chamber Orchestra, open to professional players only. Auditions by appt. Richard Sowers, music director

Summer Choir, For visitors and members of the congregation, middle school students through adults. Rehearses only on Sunday mornings, June-August.

