

Music Blurbs for 2-17-19, President's Day weekend

News and Notes:

This week we'll sing "Jesus shall reign," "Lord whose love through humble service," and "Christ for the world we sing." The choir will be singing "Blest Are They."

Sunday Bulletins:

Today's prelude is a toccata by Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643). The word toccata comes from the Italian word *toccare*, meaning "to touch." They were intended to be virtuoso pieces with fast-moving, lightly-fingered, rapid runs and arpeggios displaying the performer's dexterity. Frescobaldi was unique for his time in that his compositional output was primarily instrumental. He was hailed as one of the leading trendsetters of the keyboard.

His style is a hallmark of the emerging Baroque period, reaching heights of emotional intensity and extravagance reminiscent of the baroque architecture of his time. What you will notice is that the driving rhythms of Vivaldi are not yet there. An understanding of tonality as we hear and understand it had also not yet evolved and was still another fifty to seventy five years away. The early baroque was a period of experimentation and exploration of new musical possibilities.

Today's postlude is yet another Bach setting of "Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr'" BWV 711 ("To God alone be the glory"). It comes from a group of chorale settings once known as the Kirnberger collection. Johann Kirnberger was a student of Bach and wanted to get all the chorale settings of Bach published. These settings constitute a collection only inasmuch as Kirnberger compiled them for a publisher. Some are even believed to not be composed by Bach. As fate would have it they were never published until after Kirnberger's death. This setting is a bicinium. The "bi" refers to two, as in two voices: one on one keyboard and the other on another keyboard. It was very often the opening variation in chorale partitas. In secular music of the day, a partita was a dance suite. In sacred music, the term partita referred to a set of variations on a chorale tune. Perhaps this piece was part of a lost partita.