

## Music Blurbs for 4-7-19

### News and Notes

This week, once again we welcome members of Chris Sanchez's Capital Strings Suzuki class which meets here at St. James'. They will be playing the prelude and accompanying the choir on three movements, all from Buxtehude's cantata on the Lutheran hymn "Jesu, meine freude" (Jesus, my joy). Hymns will include "What wondrous love is this," and "Lift high the cross."

### 8:00 bulletins

Today's closing hymn "Lift high the cross" had long been popular in British congregations. When it first appeared in the 1979 Episcopal Church's publication *Hymns III*, it became an overnight hit. The text is considered by some to be the 20<sup>th</sup> century replacement of "Onward Christian soldiers." The original text by George Kitchin was written for a festival for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1887. The text recalled the vision of the cross seen by the emperor Constantine: "in this sign you will conquer." In 1916, Michael Newbolt revised the text for the supplement to *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. For the US version that appeared in *Hymns III*, the number of verses was pared down to four, the militaristic imagery was removed, and more inclusive language was employed. The tune CRUCIFER was the music written for this text in the 1916 *Hymns Ancient and Modern* supplement. The tune name suggests both the person that carries the cross in a liturgical procession as well as the Christian who bears the cross as a sign of baptism.

### 10:30 bulletins

Much of today's music is from a cantata by Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707). While he is known to us mostly as an organist, he also composed a wide variety of instrumental and choral music as well and is considered one of the most important composers of the middle Baroque period. At his post at Marienkirche in

the prominent north German city of Lübeck, he would have been expected to provide choral music for Sunday worship. Cantatas were used in the Lutheran liturgy in a way similar to our use of anthems. They tended to be longer and eventually grew in to multi-movement works. They also bore a relationship to the body of hymns that people knew. A typical Buxtehude cantata ran about seven to ten minutes while a generation later, a Bach cantata lasted 20 to 30 minutes. Of course services at that time lasted about four hours, but it is also important to understand that in keeping with the Lutheran idea of music as exegesis, the cantatas and hymns were considered sermons in sound, enhancing the worshippers' understanding of Scripture.

Today's cantata, "Jesu, meine freude" (Jesu, my joy) is based on the Lutheran hymn of that name. The text of each section of the work uses a different verse of the hymn. Musically, each "verse" references the music of the hymn that everybody would have known and uses that music as a springboard to a new musical composition. Since the middle Baroque wasn't quite ready yet to go as far as having a series of completely different movements, Buxtehude uses a device called a "ritornello," literally a "return." This small section for instruments returns in between the movements giving the work a sense that it is one continuous piece. Since in our worship style we do not have time to perform the whole work, we have deconstructed it and hope that we can give you a taste of the original.