

## Music Blurbs for 10-13-19

### News and Notes

This week we'll sing "Now thank we all our God" followed by a Bach organ version of the same. The choir will sing "I Will Tell All the World" by local composer John Horman.

### Sunday bulletins

According to our *Hymnal Companion*, "Now thank we all our God" is a hymn that "has become the classic thanksgiving hymn that transcends all national, language and denominational boundaries." In fact, at the end of World War II no one raised a question in Great Britain about singing this German hymn to celebrate the end of the war with Germany. It had also been sung in 1648 at the signing of the treaty that ended the chaos and devastation of the Thirty Years War. To put it in perspective, Germany lost twenty percent of its population and the corridor between Pomerania and the Black Forest lost fifty percent of its population.

Against that backdrop, in 1630 Martin Rinckart wrote this text of thanksgiving amidst the horrors of the war. Its original intent was as a table grace for his children. In a 1663 publication, the text with music was included under the heading "Prayers after Meals."

The music was composed by Johann Crüger and first appeared in 1647 as the musical setting for Rinckart's text. The text and tune have been paired ever since. The tune name NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT comes from, as with most German hymns, the German text for the first line of the hymn. Almost all the German Lutheran hymns we know have come to us through the translations of Catherine Winkworth. Her translation work in the mid nineteenth century is chiefly responsible for our use and knowledge of such well-known hymns as "Now thank we all our God" and "A mighty fortress is our God." "Now thank we all our God" entered the Episcopal *Hymnal* of 1871 and has remained in our hymnals ever since.