
SEPT. 23, 2020



SoundFourth!

Weekly Newsletter for the Choir of First Baptist Church



CHOIR NEWS THIS WEEK:

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Prayer Requests & Praises

A Word from the Director

*"Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done, in whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mother's arms hath blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today."*

Fall is finally here, it seems, and I felt it would be good to start this season with a reflection on the hymn "Now Thank We All our God," a hymn forged in adversity - an adversity that some would think is the end-all and be-all of its situation. And yet, in the midst of great tribulation, this rendering of praise comes from the mind and heart of Martin Rinkart, Lutheran pastor in the city of Eilenberg, Germany. How much could we, in our current situation, relate to the struggles that Rinkart and His church went through? In spite of all their struggles, they thanked God with everything they have and realized that He was not just there in the good times but also in the bad times. Now, we enter this Fall, the harvest season, and we can see that in spite of every hardship of this year that God has continued to bless us and keep us. He continues to do wonderful and wondrous things, and we should continue to rejoice in Him and thank Him with our hearts and hands and, soon, voices! As we reflect on this changing of the season in this turbulent year, we can know that He is still ours today! In this we can proclaim with Christians the world over the same wonderful truth - "all praise and thanks to God the Father now be given!"

In His Service, Braxton

Follow-up on the Retreat

Here is our plan for the upcoming future as we try to start back some of our choral activities:

1. We will have socially distanced choir rehearsals in the Sanctuary or the Fellowship Hall (depends on other programs) starting October 7th at 6:30pm.
2. We will make rotating small groups of singers that will sing on Sundays throughout the month.
3. We will have our Christmas cantata on December 13th and utilize the previously mentioned small groups in that program.
4. We are open minded to the idea of singing again for the town tree lighting if it is held. If we are invited, we will consider what group would be available & willing.



Fall Concert feat. Andrew Scanlon

I am excited to announce our fall concert on October 4th at 4pm in the Sanctuary of our church! This concert is featuring Andrew Scanlon, who is Professor of Sacred Music & Organ at ECU and Organist/Choirmaster of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Greenville! The concert will be able to be attended in person with masks and social distancing, but will also be offered for online streaming! I hope to see you all there or online for it - you won't want to miss this!

Prayer Requests and Praises

- Pray for our church in this time of transition - that we would, as a group and as individuals, shed aside anything that would inhibit us from seeking the will of God as to who He would have as our next pastor. And pray for our new pastor, that even now God would be working in his heart to prepare him for his ministry here in Smithfield!
- Pray for our nation - that we would seek unity and the face of Christ as we go into a volatile time around our elections. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
- Pray for **Jimmy Jones**, who had surgery on Monday and is home recovering. Pray for a speedy recovery and comfort!
- Continue to pray for **Joyce & Henry Wright**, who are mourning the loss of their infant great-granddaughter, **Lily Howard**. Pray for comfort and peace for the entire family.

THE 4TH STREET CONCERT SERIES PRESENTS

FALL CONCERT

FEATURING
ANDREW SCANLON
ORGANIST

FREE ADMISSION
OCT. 4, 2020
4 PM

Music by Bach, Cocherneau,
Mulet, Smart, and Others

First Baptist Church
202 S. Fourth St.
Smithfield, NC 27577

In Person and Online

www.fbcsmithfield.org

Now Thank We All Our God 371

1. Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voice - es,
 2. O may this boun-teous God through all our life be near us,
 3. All praise and thanks to God the Fa-ther now be giv-en,

who won-drous things hath done, in whom His world re-joic-es;
 with ev-er joy-ful hearts and bless-ed peace to cheer us;
 the Son, and Him who reigns with them in high-est heav-en,

who, from our moth-er's arms, hath blest us on our way
 and keep us in His grace, and guide us when per-plexed,
 the one e-ter-nal God, whom earth and heav-en a-dore,

with count-less gifts of love, and still is ours to-day.
 and free us from all ills, in this world and the next.
 for thus it was, is now, and shall be ev-er-more.

Author – Martin Rinkart, 1586 – 1649

English Translation – Catherine Winkworth, 1827 – 1878

Music – Johann Cruger, 1598 – 1662

Tune Name – Nun Danket

Meter – 67.66.66

Scripture Reference – Psalm 147

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that love us.”

~Romans 8:35, 37~

Upon hearing the hymn, one would never realize that this paean of praise was forged during times of tragic experiences. From some of the most severe human hardships imaginable during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) came this stately hymn, often called the nation “Te Deum” of Germany because it has been sung on many occasions of national rejoicing.

Martin Rinkart, born on April 23, 1586, in Eilenberg, Saxony, Germany, was the son of a poor coppersmith. He was for a time a boy chorister in the famous St. Thomas Church of Leipzig, Germany, where J.S. Bach was later musical director. There Rinkart worked his way through the University of Leipzig and was ordained to the ministry of the Lutheran Church. At the age of thirty-one he was called to be the pastor in his native town of Eilenberg. He arrived there just when the dreadful bloodshed was starting. Because Eilenberg was a walled city, it became a frightfully overcrowded refuge for political and military fugitives from far and near. Throughout these war years,

several waves of deadly pestilence and famine swept the city as the various armies marched through the town, leaving death and destruction in their wake. The Rinkart home served as a refuge for the afflicted victims, even through it is said that Martin Rinkart often had difficulty in providing food and clothing for his own family. The plague of 1637 was particularly severe. At its height, Rinkart was the only remaining minister, often conducting as many as forty to fifty funeral services daily. Yet, amazingly enough, he was a prolific writer of seven different dramatic productions on the events of the Reformation as well as a total of sixty-six hymns.

During the closing years of the war, Eilenberg was overrun by invading armies on three different occasions, once by the Austrian army and twice by the Swedish army. During one of the occupations by the Swedish army, there came the demand that a large tribute payment be made by these impoverished people. Rinkart interceded with the leaders of the army with such purpose, supported by the prayers of his people, that the tribute demand was finally reduced to a much smaller amount. It is said that when the Swedish commander would not at first consider Rinkart's request for a lowering of the levy, the pastor turned to his humble parishioners and said, “Come, my children, we can find no mercy with man; let us take refuge with God.” On his knees, Rinkart led his parishioners in prayer and in the singing of a familiar hymn. This demonstration of spiritual fervency so moved the Swedish commander that he reconsidered and finally lowered the demand so the tribute payment.

Germany is the home of Protestant church music, and no hymn, with the exception of Luther's “A Mighty Fortress is our God,” has been used more widely in German churches than has this hymn. The fine English translation by Catherine Winkworth in 1858 has aided its popularity in the English-speaking countries as well as in Germany. This gifted English woman is also the translator of another well-known German hymn, “Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty.”

The majestic tune for this text was written by one of Germany's finest and most prolific composers, Johann Cruger, whose hymnal, *Praxis Pietatis Melica*, published in 1644, was the outstanding German hymnal of the seventeenth century. It had forty-four editions from 1644-1731. This tune with Rinkart's text first appeared in the 1647 edition of the publication.