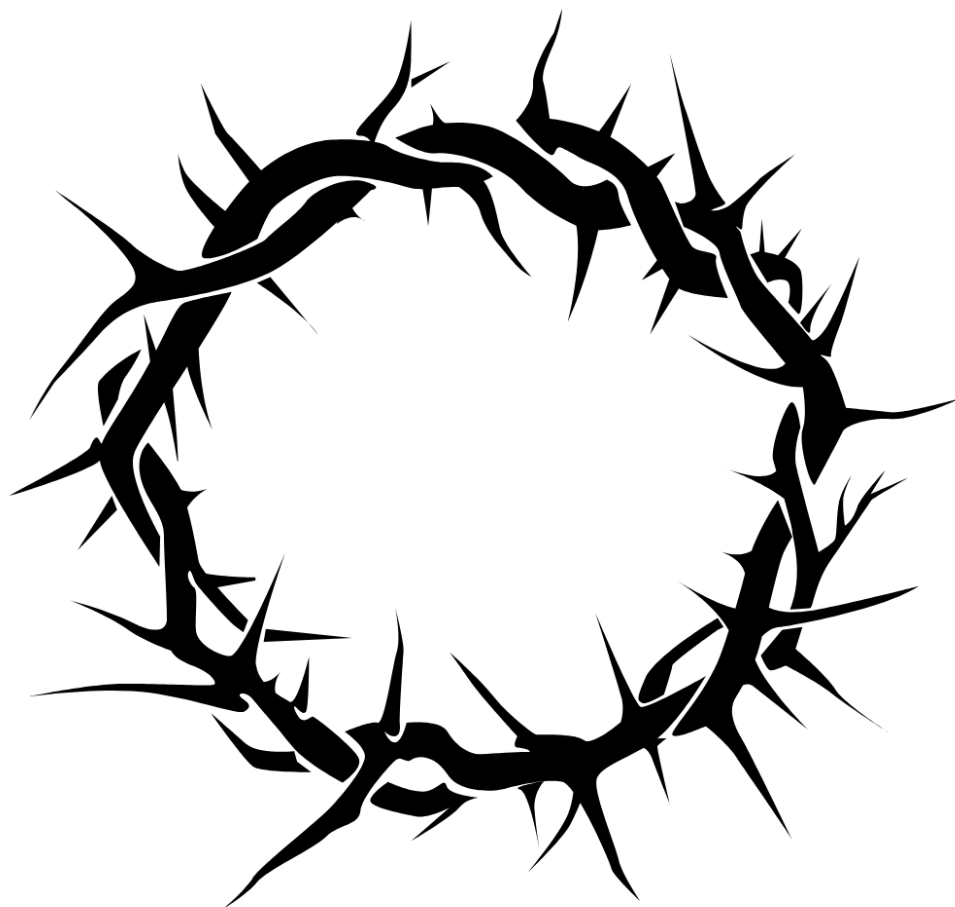


# MESSIAH

*by George Frederic Handel*



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

*Savannah, GA - Since 1800*

# PROGRAM

*April 13, 2025 at 5:00 pm*

PRELUDE - “Religious March on a Theme by Handel”

by Alexandre Guilmant

*Dr. Julia Tucker, Organ*

WELCOME & INVOCATION

*Rev. Dr. Kyle T. Reese, Senior Minister of First Baptist Church*

## “MESSIAH”

*by George Frederic Handel (1685-1759)*

*Selections from Part the Second & Part the Third*

CHORUS - “Behold the Lamb of God”

*Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. (John 1: 29)*

ALTO AIR - “He Was Despised and Rejected”

*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 his hair: He hid not his face from shame and spitting. (Isaiah 50: 6 & 53:3)*

CHORUS - “Surely He Hath Borne Our Griefs”

*Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows! He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him. (Isaiah 53: 4-5)*

CHORUS - "And With His Stripes We Are Healed"

*And with his stripes we are healed.*

*And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53: 5-6)*

TENOR ACCOMPAGNATO - "Thy Rebuke Hath Broken His Heart"

*Thy rebuke hath broken his heart; He is full of heaviness. He looked for some to have pity on him, but there was no man; neither found he any to comfort him. (Psalm 69: 20)*

TENOR AIR - "Behold, and See if There be Any Sorrow"

*Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow. (Lamentations 1: 12)*

TENOR ACCOMPAGNATO - "He Was Cut Off Out of the Land of the Living"

*He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgressions of thy people was he stricken. (Isaiah 53: 8)*

TENOR AIR - "But Thou Did'st Not Leave His Soul in Hell"

*But Thou didst not leave his soul in hell; nor didst thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. (Psalm 16: 10)*

CHORUS - "Lift Up Your Heads, O Ye Gates"

*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 the King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty,  
The Lord mighty in battle. 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 the King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts,  
He is the King of Glory. (Psalm 24: 7-10)*

SOPRANO AIR - "How Beautiful Are the Feet"

*How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace,  
and bring glad tidings of good things. (Isaiah 52: 7; Romans 10: 15)*

BASS AIR - "Why Do the Nations Rage"

*Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and 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 against his anointed. (Psalm 2: 1-2)*

TENOR RECITATIVE - "He That Dwelleth in Heaven"

*He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn;  
the Lord shall have them in derision. (Psalm 2: 4)*

TENOR AIR - "Thou Shalt Break Them"

*Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;  
thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. (Psalm 2: 9)*

HYMN - "Rejoice, the Lord Is King" (See reverse of following page)

*Sung in the traditional place of the "Hallelujah Chorus,"  
the addition of this hymn marks the end of Part II.  
The congregation is asked to stand and join in singing.*

SOPRANO AIR - "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth"

*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. (Job 19: 25-26 & I Corinthians 15: 20)*



CHORUS - "Since By Man Came Death"

*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. (I Corinthians 15: 21-22)*

BASS ACCOMPAGNATO - "Behold, I Tell You a Mystery"

*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. (I Corinthians 15: 51-52)*

BASS AIR - "The Trumpet Shall Sound"

*The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible.  
And we shall be changed. (I Corinthians 15: 52-53)*

SOPRANO AIR - "If God Be For Us"

*If God be 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. (Romans 8: 31, 33-34)*

CHORUS - "Worthy Is the Lamb"

*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 honour, and glory, and blessing.  
Blessing and honour, glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne,  
and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. (Revelation 5: 12-14)*

CHORUS - "Hallelujah"

*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 for ever and ever.  
King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah! (Revelation 11:15, 19: 6 & 16)*

# “REJOICE, THE LORD IS KING”

*Text by Charles Wesley*

*\*Tune by George Frederic Handel*



1. Re-joyce, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King a - dore; mor -
2. Je - sus the Sa - vior reigns, the God of truth and love; when
3. His king-dom can - not fail; he rules o'er earth and heaven; the
4. Re - joyce in glo-rious hope! Je - sus the Judge shall come, and

*Refrain*

1-3.



tals, give thanks and sing, and tri - umph ev - er - more.  
he had purged our stains, he took his seat a - bove. Lift up your heart, lift  
keys of earth and hell are to our Je - sus given.  
take his ser - vants up to their e - ter - nal home.

*D.C.*

4.



up your voice; rejoice; a - gain I say, rejoice.

We soon shall hear the arch -



an - gel's voice; the trump of God shall sound, re-joyce!

*\* Handel's tune for this text (GOPSOL) was written at the request of Charles Wesley and named after the country estate of Charles Jennings, the librettist of "Messiah."*

# HISTORICAL INFORMATION

George Frederic Handel was born in Halle, Germany, on February 23, 1685. Despite his father's resistance, Handel received musical training as a young boy. At the age of seventeen, he enrolled in the University of Halle to study law, but eventually dropped out to accept the post of organist at the Halle Cathedral. He became an English citizen in 1726, and was eventually recognized as the "nation's composer." He died on April 14, 1759 and was honored with a state funeral and burial in Westminster Abbey.

The Harvard Dictionary of Music defines the *oratorio* as "a narrative or dramatic work, usually sacred, employing arias, recitatives, ensembles, choruses, and orchestral music, but not intended to be staged." Even though the oratorio is most closely associated with George Frederic Handel (1685-1759), many other composers lay claim to this type of composition. *Messiah* is by far the best known of Handel's oratorios. It was composed within a span of 24 days in 1741 and was written to benefit charities in Dublin, Ireland. Even though the composer is said to have written some works in a shorter length of time, much mystery surrounds the events of those days. It is rumored that Handel rarely left his house, and some accounts state that he hardly ate at all. Others tell of what a spiritual experience it was for Handel and how on several occasions he was moved to tears. It is important to note that Handel borrowed from earlier works in composing *Messiah*.

Handel traveled to Dublin to conduct the first performance of the work and stayed from October of 1741 until August of 1742. *Messiah* premiered on April 13, 1742 in the Dublin Music Hall. This was during the Lenten Season when secular entertainment, such as opera, was not allowed. It was requested, due to the pre-concert popularity of *Messiah's* premier, that women refrain from wearing hoops to the concert to make room for more people. March 23, 1743, marked the first London performance at Covent Garden.

The libretto for *Messiah* was compiled by Charles Jennens, and is taken entirely from the Bible. Jennens was an amateur musician and collaborated with Handel on other works including *Saul* and *Israel in Egypt*. *Messiah* is a hallmark of Jennens' work in the oratorio genre; weaving together scriptures from all over the Bible into a seamless masterpiece. *Messiah* is the only one of Handel's works to use both Old and New Testament texts. Like *Israel in Egypt*, *Messiah* is non-dramatic, and tends to be more meditative than narrative. *Messiah* does not tell a story - rather, it has a theme. People during the 1700s had a solid knowledge of the Bible and were familiar enough with the story being portrayed that they were able to "fill in the gaps."

There was great resentment toward *Messiah* even before it premiered in London. Many members of the clergy, including John Newton (author of "Amazing Grace"), had a problem with the sacred words of the Bible being performed in a secular theatre. Because of this, Handel often performed/advertised *Messiah* without its title. There are many instances where it was referred to simply as "A New Sacred Oratorio."

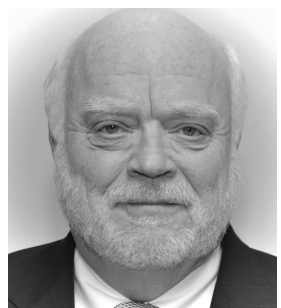
*Messiah* is written in three parts and takes over three hours to perform. Part I includes the prophecies and birth of the *Messiah*, Part II deals with the passion and resurrection, and Part III focuses on our triumph over death. The work can be subdivided further into "scenes" which textually and tonally unify a recitative, aria, and chorus. *Messiah* includes instrumental movements, vocal arias, accompanied and unaccompanied recitatives, and SATB choruses.

# BIOGRAPHIES



**LaDejia Tenille Bittle** (Mezzo-Soprano Soloist) recently completed her Master of Music degree in Opera Theater at The University of South Carolina where she studied with Rachel Calloway. In March of 2024, she placed second place at NATS regionals and advanced to the Final National Round where she then placed second. She has appeared as a soloist in *Messiah*, Bach's *St. John Passion*, Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, and John Rutter's *Requiem*. Her most recent solo work includes the World Premiere of *A Celebration Mass: A Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* by Dr. Sharon J. Willis. LaDejia also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wingate University (NC) where she majored in Vocal Performance. During her four years at

Wingate, she was a part of both of the auditioned choirs, Wingate University Singers and Chamber Choir. She also sang in the United in One Gospel Ensemble which she directed for three years. Originally from High Point, NC, LaDejia's passion and gift for singing was fostered in the Black church, where she participated in church choirs, worship teams, and the liturgical dance and mime team. After graduating from Wingate, she taught chorus in the North Carolina Public School system for three years before pursuing her master's degree and went back to teaching chorus after she completed her second degree.



**Bill Gardner** (Tenor Soloist) was born in Beaufort, South Carolina at Parris Island. He received a Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance from Mars Hill College and a Master of Church Music degree with a performer's certificate from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He was ordained by Bull Street Baptist in Savannah, GA in 1972 and retired in 2009 after 42 years of ministry, 37 at Bull Street Baptist. During his Seminary years, Bill was soloist with the Seminary Oratorio Chorus and the Louisville Bach Society. In Savannah, he was the tenor soloist with the Handel Society for its annual performance of Handel's *Messiah*. He

has been tenor soloist for many oratorios and cantatas including *Messiah*, *Elijah*, *The Creation*, *St. John Passion*, *B minor Mass*, and others. He sang in concerts at Carnegie Hall during two seasons in an auditioned chorus under the direction of Robert Shaw and has performed as a guest soloist with the Savannah Symphony, the Georgia Southern Symphony, the Hilton Head Choral Society and the Beaufort Symphony. He directed the Savannah Symphony Chorus for two seasons from 1991-93. He has been a member of the CenturyMen (an auditioned male chorus) since 1974, serving as president in 2012.



**Michelle Jarrell** (Soprano Soloist) is an Atlanta soprano that is no stranger to Savannah audiences. She made her debut with the Savannah Philharmonic Orchestra in excerpts from Handel's *Messiah* in 2010 and was invited to subsequent performances as guest soprano on the Holiday Pops concerts in the Cathedral. She has performed as a concert and oratorio soloist with symphonies and choral groups around the south. Recent appearances include soprano soloist in Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, DuBois' *The Seven Last Words of Christ*, Requiems by Mozart, Rutter, and Fauré, Bach's solo cantata for soprano and orchestra, *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*, Mozart's *Exsultate, Jubilate*, as well as

numerous other cantatas by Bach and Mozart. Michelle began her opera training as Resident Artist with opera Carolina in Charlotte, NC. Michelle earned her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Music degrees in vocal performance from the Petrie School of Music at Converse College in Spartanburg, SC - sharing the same voice teacher as Justin Addington and Evan Goetz, and forming a collaborative and musical friendship that continues to this day.



**Chad Sonka** (Baritone Soloist) is establishing himself as an artist with a diverse array of skills in the world of voice. Recent performances include stage directing the world premiere of *The Eleanors* by Goble/Ching. He also performed Marcello in Quad Cities Opera's production of *La bohème*. Previous performing credits: *Tosca* (Scarpia – cover) with Central City Opera; *Gianni Schicchi* (Marco) with Savannah Music Festival; *Man of La Mancha* (Don Quixote) with Cedar Rapids Opera; *Elijah* (Elijah) with Manhattan School of Music; and *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (King Melchior) with Nevada Opera. Equally versed in concert works, he performed Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* as his Carnegie Hall debut. He was also the first-place winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions – Iowa District in 2017. Chad's accolades extend beyond his own singing as a director, teacher, and administrator. Since 2017, Chad has served on Iowa State University's voice faculty and was named the Shakeshaft Master Teacher for 2022-2023 for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He currently serves as President of the Iowa Chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) and Education and Outreach Coordinator of the Sherrill Milnes VOICE Programs.



**Jonathan Murphy** is Organist and Director of Music at First Presbyterian Church in Savannah. A former Lecturer of Collaborative Piano and Opera at Georgia Southern, he is still very active in playing and coaching and performing at his own undergraduate alma mater, as well as throughout the region. Jonathan is also an alumnus of the University of Tennessee, where he was a member of the Knoxville Opera Studio, and the University of Oklahoma, where he was a Weitzenhoffer Opera Fellow. Among Jonathan's operatic roles are Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Pylade (*Iphigénie en Tauride*), Peter Quint (*The Turn of the Screw*), Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*), Elvino (*La Sonnambula*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), Nerone (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*). As an opera coach, he has prepared roles and operas for performances at the Metropolitan Opera, Dallas Opera, San Francisco Opera, San Diego Opera, and Santa Fe, among others. Among the international artists with whom he has had the privilege to work are Samuel Ramey, Leona Mitchell, Robert Hale, Clifton Forbis, Kurt Ollmann, William Powers, and Jay Hunter Morris. Jonathan's concert work includes Mozart's Mass in C Minor, Dubois' *The Seven Last Words of Christ*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Saint-Saëns' *Oratorio de Noël*, and the Requiems of Mozart and Verdi. His 2019 performance as tenor soloist in Craig Hella Johnson's *Considering Matthew Shepard* was broadcast on Michigan Public Radio.

*(Biographies continued on the following page.)*



**Justin L. Addington** (Conductor) is the Associate Minister for Music & Worship at the First Baptist Church of Savannah, GA. He holds a bachelor's degree in Music Education from Limestone College (now University), a master's degree of Church Music in choral conducting from Concordia University Wisconsin, and a doctorate of theology in worship studies from the Robert E. Webber Institute. Justin's master's thesis was entitled "Handel's Messiah: an Historical Approach for the Church Choir." Highlights of his 25 year career include the development of a nationally recognized concert series, the release of a professionally recorded organ CD, two substantial pipe organ projects, and choir tours to England, Italy, Austria, and Carnegie Hall. Major conducting credits include Handel's *Messiah*, Vivaldi's

*Gloria*, Stainer's *The Crucifixion*, Faure's *Requiem*, and Dubois' *The Seven Last Words of Christ*. In addition to his work as a church musician, Justin has taught music in the public schools, served as a board member for several non-profit arts organizations, and worked as an actor and musical director/pianist for numerous semi-professional and community theater companies. In the Savannah area, Justin is the accompanist for the Richmond Hill High School Chorus, is a past dean of the local chapter of the American Guild of Organists, and is the founding director of the newly-formed Savannah Men's Chorale.

*The following community organizations are  
represented in today's performance:*

*American Guild of Organists  
Cathedral Basilica of St. John the Baptist  
Christ Episcopal Church  
First Baptist Church  
First Presbyterian Church  
Georgia Southern University  
Richmond Hill High School  
River City Brass  
Savannah Men's Chorale  
Savannah Philharmonic Orchestra & Chorus*

*Savannah VOICE Festival  
Savannah Youth Orchestra  
Skidaway Island Methodist Church  
St. George's Episcopal Church  
St. John's Episcopal Church  
St. Peter's Episcopal Church  
St. Thomas' Episcopal Church  
Universalist Unitarian Church  
Wesley Monumental United Methodist Church  
Wilmington Island Methodist Church*

***The first performances of "Messiah" were fundraisers for children and the poor.  
As you leave today, a love offering will be collected for Shelter From the Rain  
- a Savannah-based charity that aids single mothers and children.***

# COMMUNITY CHORUS

Phyllis Albertson  
Glenda Anderson  
Will Barnes  
Carol Benton  
Charlie Benton  
Ethan Blendowsky  
Marilyn Borst  
Mark Borst  
Garrett Carr  
Danny Cohen  
Betsy Davis  
Sarah Davis  
Seekie Drysdale  
Wayne Drysdale  
Jane Elwell  
John Van Epps  
Gretchen Ernest  
Norma Finley  
Leslie Fitzgerald  
Dianne Gardner  
Jane Gilchrist  
Cathy Girardeau  
Evan Goetz

Chuck Goossen  
Ash Grimmett  
Katherine Grimmett  
Kim Grimmett  
Rob Harrelson  
Christopher Hendricks  
Emi Higashiyama  
Christine Hoffmeyer  
Dan Huffer  
Kai Jorgensen  
Katy Keyes  
Patricia Koch  
Wes Krulic  
Beth Logan  
Ellen Lea  
Ernest Lee  
Betsy Longstreth  
George Longstreth  
Carol Melton  
Kara Mobley  
Janet Morris  
Jeanne Mundy  
Cary Negley

Deborah Nelson  
Marion Nesterenko  
James Norris  
David Rigsby  
Terilyn Palanca  
Liz Palles  
Renee Portell  
Sue Prior  
Ginger Pruden  
Geraldine Pufahl  
Deanne Rimes  
Ken Rimes  
Larry Roberson  
Ruth Ann Roberson  
Joanna Sellman  
Gina Shields  
Liz Stephenson  
Abbey Habeeb Terry  
Kaleb Wimes  
Lynn Withers

# CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

## **Violin I**

Kerri Sellman  
Julia Sellman

## **Violin II**

Ben Cork  
Marsha Krantz

## **Viola**

Grace Davidson  
Annette Park

## **Cello**

Emily Calhoun  
Leah Dutton

## **Bass**

Marc Chesanow

## **Harpsichord**

Julia Tucker

## **Trumpet**

Anthony Lacivita

## **Tympani**

Tom Hoffman

## **Organ**

James Richardson

# A WORD OF WELCOME

*Welcome to First Baptist Church of Savannah, GA. Our congregation believes Jesus treated everyone with a spirit of love and equality. Therefore, we accept every individual without regard to age, gender, race, ethnicity, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, political affiliation, or socio-economic status. We affirm all persons as created in the image of God. At First Baptist Church, individuals can find family, families can find community, the injured can find healing, and all can seek truth and justice. We labor together in love for each other, our community, our world, and our God.*

*No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, in this place and by these people,  
**you are welcomed, you are accepted, and you are loved.***

# ABOUT OUR CHURCH

*First Baptist Church was founded in 1800 and occupies the oldest standing house of worship in the city. Even though our congregation was instrumental in the founding of the Southern Baptist Convention, our church was one of the first in the south to leave that body. First Baptist Church is affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the Baptist World Alliance, and the Alliance of Baptists.*

*For more information about our church and its ministries, visit [www.fbc-sav.org](http://www.fbc-sav.org).*

# HOLY WEEK EVENTS

## **Maundy Thursday - April 17th**

*Chapel Open from 12:00 noon until 2:00 pm  
for Silent Prayer and Holy Communion*

## **Good Friday - April 18th**

*Candlelight Tenebrae Service at 6:00 pm  
with Scripture and Organ Music*

## **Holy Saturday - April 19th**

*Easter Egg Hunt in Orleans Square at 10:00 am  
All Children and Families Are Welcome*

## **Easter Sunday - April 20th**

*Flowering of the Cross Before Worship  
Worship Service with Brass Quintet at 11:00 am*