

Music at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church · 2025–26 Season

Handel's MESSIAH



Friday, December 5
Saturday, December 6
7 pm • The Sanctuary

The Fifth Avenue Chamber Choir & Orchestra
Ryan Jackson, director • Patrick Kreeger, organ

PRESENTED BY THE ARTS & OUR FAITH COMMITTEE

Welcome to Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church!
This evening's program will include a 15-minute intermission.
Please refrain from taking flash photos during the performance.

Music at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church

This concert is the second in this year's series, our thirteenth season bringing choral music to New York City and beyond. We hope you enjoy it. Please read on for more information about upcoming music events at Fifth Avenue. Be sure to mark the dates in your calendar and join us again!

Tickets for choral concerts are available online at fapc.org/tickets.

Talbot: *Path of Miracles*

Friday, Feb. 6, 2026 • 7 pm, Sanctuary & Livestream

Joby Talbot's *Path of Miracles* is an immersive choral journey that traces the ancient pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela through four stirring movements, each evoking a stage of the Camino. Blending haunting medieval chant with striking contemporary harmonies, the work captures the physical trials, spiritual reflection, and profound transcendence experienced by pilgrims across the centuries. This modern choral masterpiece is celebrated for its evocative storytelling and dramatic impact. Our concert is a rare opportunity to hear this deeply moving work performed live.

Bach: *St. John Passion*

Friday, March 27, 2026 • 7 pm, Sanctuary & Livestream

Join us for our annual Lent concert featuring Johann Sebastian Bach's *St. John Passion*—a gripping and deeply moving account of Christ's final hours, and one of Western music's greatest masterpieces. Through intimate arias, urgent choruses, and some of the most beautiful chorales ever written, Bach brings the Passion story vividly to life with unmatched emotional and spiritual depth. Whether you're hearing it for the first time or returning to a cherished favorite, this powerful work offers a profound musical gateway into the heart of Holy Week.

Patrick Kreeger Organ Recital

Sunday, May 24, 2026 • 12 pm, Sanctuary

Free and open to all!

PROGRAM

The Fifth Avenue Choir and Orchestra
Ryan Jackson, director • Patrick Kreeger, organ

MESSIAH

A SACRED ORATORIO

BY
GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL
(1685–1759)

1
PART
THE FIRST

~ *Intermission* ~
(15 minutes)

2
PART
THE SECOND

&

3
PART
THE THIRD

PROGRAM NOTE

Dear Friends,

Welcome to tonight's performance of Handel's *Messiah*. It is a joy to gather with you in the historic Sanctuary of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church for this special occasion. After last year's enthusiastic reception of our chamber version, we are delighted to welcome you back for our second annual presentation of this beloved masterpiece.

Handel composed *Messiah* in the summer of 1741, completing the entire work in just twenty-four days. The result of that astonishing burst of creativity is a work that has captivated audiences for nearly three centuries. Its 1742 premiere in Dublin was an immediate success, and the oratorio has since become a cornerstone of the choral repertoire, cherished for both its musical brilliance and its profound spiritual resonance.

This evening, we are thrilled to perform all three parts of *Messiah*. Part I foretells the coming of Christ and celebrates his birth, offering a fitting meditation for the Christmas season. Part II turns to the Passion, reflecting on Christ's sacrifice and victory over death, and culminates in the iconic "Hallelujah" chorus. Part III proclaims the promise of eternal life, leading to the triumphant "Worthy is the Lamb" and the resounding "Amen." To keep tonight's performance within two hours, we have carefully selected movements that preserve the work's emotional arc and theological depth.

To experience *Messiah* live is to embark on a powerful journey through text and music, one that holds moments of tender introspection alongside passages of radiant joy. Handel's gift lies in the way he shapes scripture into music that feels both timeless and immediate, creating an experience as compelling today as it was at its premiere. Whether this is your first encounter with *Messiah* or part of a cherished holiday tradition, we hope this extraordinary music inspires and uplifts you.

Your presence makes this evening truly special. It is our privilege to share this timeless work with you. May tonight's performance fill your heart with peace and your holiday season with light and love.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan Jackson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ryan" and last name "Jackson" clearly legible.

Dr. Ryan Jackson

William S. Perper Director of Music & Fine Arts Ministries

PART THE FIRST

Overture | *Orchestra*

Arioso | *Kev Schneider, tenor*

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Isaiah 40:1–3

Air | *Kev Schneider, tenor*

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low: the crooked straight, and the rough places plain.

Isaiah 40:4

Chorus

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Isaiah 40:5

Arioso | *Joel Chapman, baritone*

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts: Yet once, a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.

Haggai 2:6–7 and Malachi 3:1

Air | *Caitlin Caruso Dobbs, mezzo-soprano*

But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire.

Malachi 3:2

Chorus

And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Malachi 3:3

Recitative | *Caitlin Caruso Dobbs, mezzo-soprano*

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son,
and shall call His name Emmanuel, "God with us."

Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23

Air and Chorus | *Caitlin Caruso Dobbs, mezzo-soprano*

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain! O
thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength! Lift it
up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah: Behold your God! Arise, shine, for
thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

Isaiah 40:9; 60:1

Chorus

For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be
upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The
Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6

Pifa (Pastoral Symphony) | *Orchestra*

Recitative | *Howell Petty, soprano*

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.
And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone
round about them, and they were sore afraid.

Luke 2:8–9

Arioso | *Howell Petty, soprano*

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone
round about them, and they were sore afraid.

Luke 2:9

Recitative | *Howell Petty, soprano*

And the angel said unto them: Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of
great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of
David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:10–11

Arioso | *Howell Petty, soprano*

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host
praising God, and saying:

Luke 2:13

Chorus

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will toward men.

Luke 2:14

Air | *Hannah Penzner, soprano*

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold,
thy King cometh unto thee. He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace
unto the heathen.

Zechariah 9:9–10

Recitative | *Aryssa Burrs, mezzo-soprano*

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

Isaiah 35:5–6

Air | *Aryssa Burrs, mezzo-soprano, and Rachel Mikol, soprano*

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, and He shall gather the lambs with His
arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.
Come unto Him, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and He will give you rest.
Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart,
and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Isaiah 40:11 and Matthew 11:28–29

Chorus

His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light.

Matthew 11:30

~ *Intermission* ~
(15 minutes)

PART THE SECOND

Chorus

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

John 1:29

Air | Aryssa Burrs, mezzo-soprano

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 the hair;
he hid not his face from shame and spitting.

Isaiah 53:3

Chorus

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, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:4–6

Recitative | Cristóbal Arias, tenor

All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips,
and shake their heads, saying:

Psalms 22:7–8

Chorus

He trusted in God that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him,
if He delight in Him.

Psalms 22:8

Air | Max Parsons, baritone

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.

Psalms 2:1–2

Chorus

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us.

Psalm 2:3

Recitative | *Cristóbal Arias, tenor*

He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn:
the Lord shall have them in derision.

Psalm 2:4

Air | *Cristóbal Arias, tenor*

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a
potter's vessel.

Psalm 2:9

Chorus

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 19:6; 11:15; 19:16

PART THE THIRD

Air | *Francesca Lionetta, soprano*

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; 1 Corinthians 15:20

Recitative | *Fredy Bonilla, baritone*

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:

1 Corinthians 15:51–52

Air | *Fredy Bonilla, baritone*

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

1 Corinthians 15:52–53

Air | *Erinn Sensenig, soprano*

If God be for us who can be against us? Who shall lay any thing 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 8:31–34

Chorus

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. Amen.

Revelation 5:12–13

THE FIFTH AVENUE CHOIR

Sopranos

Brittany Hewitt
Rachel Mikol

Choir Administrator

Hannah Penzner
Howell Petty
Erinn Sensenig
Rebecca Soelberg

Alto

Aryssa Burrs
Sharon Byrne
Caitlin Caruso Dobbs
Mckenzie Kitchen
Francesca Lionetta

Tenor

Cristóbal Arias
Nate Hodgson
Alex McCoy
Nick Prior
Kev Schneider

Bass

Fredy Bonilla
Joel Chapman
Mark Hosseini
Emery Kerekes
Max Parsons

ORCHESTRA

Concertmaster Krista Bennion Feeney • *Violin* Annemarie Schubert • *Viola* Jessica Troy
Cello Nathan Whittaker • *Double Bass* Josue Alfaro Mora • *Trumpet* Perry Sutton, Vincent Lim
Timpani Danny Mallon • *Harpichord* Caitlyn Koester
Organ Patrick Kreeger, Associate Organist, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church
Orchestra Contractor Nathan Whittaker

ABOUT THE FIFTH AVENUE CHAMBER CHOIR

Founded in 2013, the Fifth Avenue Chamber Choir is a vocal ensemble comprising some of New York's finest professional singers. With a diverse repertoire spanning Renaissance polyphony through contemporary American, the choir presents an exciting series of sacred music concerts each season. Although the size of the choir varies between sixteen and twenty-four singers, the ensemble's primary goal never changes: we seek to uplift and inspire all who hear us through passionate, engaging, and highly-polished performances of sacred choral music.

SPECIAL THANKS

...to all the members of the Arts and Our Faith Committee (chaired by Nancy Moore) for their vision, leadership, and hands-on support of this series, and to our dedicated team of volunteer ushers and greeters. This series could not take place without you!

...to Fifth Avenue's wonderful Communications and Facilities teams for all the ways they support this series and make it possible.

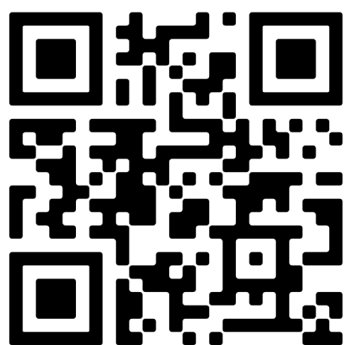


**We invite you back for our
Christmas Eve Candlelight Services**
Wednesday, December 24 • 7:30 pm & 11 pm

Music begins one half hour before the service.
The 7:30 pm service is also available on livestream.

Music at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church

Scan this code or visit fapc.org/list to join our email list
and learn more about the incredible music at Fifth Avenue
Presbyterian Church and our upcoming performances!



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