

## Music Notes for November 30th

**Prelude:** Jacek Rzadkowski: *Wachet auf, ruft uns die stimme* (2003)

**Introit:** Chorale: *Wake, awake for night is flying*

**Anthem:** J.S. Bach: Chorale: *Zion hört die Wächter singen*

**Offertory:** Johann Gottfried Walther: Fuge super *Wachet auf, ruft uns die stimme*

**Response:** J.S. Bach: Chorale: *Gloria sei dir gesungen*

**Postlude:** Max Reger: *Wachet auf, ruft uns die stimme*

As we enter into the season of advent, our guest preacher for the morning has asked me to prepare music to underscore the theme of watchfulness. As such, I have picked a famous Lutheran chorale by the name of *Wachet auf* which literally means "wake up" in German. The text of the chorale is by Philipp Nicolai, author of many hymns and one of the last examples of the German *Meistersinger* tradition, a guild of artisan musicians who wrote their own words and music similarly to the modern day singer/songwriter, but under a highly codified set of rules. The chorale was made most famous by J.S. Bach in his cantata BWV 140 of the same name; we sing two movements from this cantata for you today. English speaking congregations often know this hymn by the title "Sleepers, wake!"

Jacek Rzadkowski is currently the organist at one of the major churches in Lodz, Poland. (I would have more information on him, but all of the literature I could find is in Polish, a language with which I have no working knowledge). He has written a set of chorale preludes in homage to Max Reger, and his setting of this chorale is the one that I will perform as a prelude, while for the postlude, I will play the Reger setting of the same tune. Comparing the pieces is simultaneously simple and difficult. They share the same melody, but the harmonies from the early 20th century versus those from the early 21st are vastly different. More different still is Walther's setting from the 17th century, the offertory, which is a strict fugue in C major.

Bach's cantata is in seven movements, three of which draw on the text and melody of the chorale. The first movement that we sing today as an anthem is the unison chorale "Zion hears the Watchman singing," accompanied by organ and English horn. The benediction response is the closing chorale from the same piece "'Gloria' be sung unto you." The melody in the latter is uppermost, and the harmonisation is used in many hymnals to this day. The words at the end "i-o, i-o" symbolize "Alpha and Omega" and the Latin *in dulci júbilo* means "in sweet rejoicing." *In dulci júbilo*, with a different tune, is in turn a chorale of its own on which is based the English carol *Good Christian Men, Rejoice*.

Thomas Dawkins, organist/choir director