

## Organ Music Notes for April 6th

**Prelude:** J.S. Bach: *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr* BWV 711

**Offertory:** Friedrich Wilhelm Zachau: *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr*

**Communion:** *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr*  
settings by Nikolaus Vetter and Johann Gottfried Walther.

**Postlude:** J.S. Bach: *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr* BWV 715

All of the organ music for today's service comes from the German chorale *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr* (All Praise Be to God on High). This chorale comes from the Gloria movement of a 10th century Eastertide Mass, where it was the melody for the words "et in terra pax hominibus" (and peace on earth) and so has come to be known to musicologists as the "Gloria Chorale."

The prelude and postlude are both settings of the chorale by J.S. Bach, the greatest and most well-known of all the German Baroque composers and organists. The prelude is written in a style called a *Bicinium* which is an old Renaissance term for any work, instrumental or vocal, with only two voices. In this case, the left hand plays accompaniment figures while the right plays the chorale melody in a strict, unadorned form. The postlude, however, is an extremely grand and florid setting for full organ, and was probably originally improvised by Bach and later written down.

For the offertory and communion music, I will play settings of the same chorale by Nikolaus Vetter and Friedrich Zachau, who were both organists a generation before Bach, and by Johann Gottfried Walther, who was his contemporary and also his cousin. The earlier settings are simpler than most of Bach, but Walther's composition is much closer his cousin's intricacy.

Thomas Dawkins, organist/choir director