

Music Notes for June 15th

Prelude: J.S. Bach: Praeludium in A, BWV 536a

Anthem: Harold Arlen: *Get Happy*

Response: *We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace* (arr. Moses Hogan)

Postlude: J.S. Bach: Toccata in E, BWV 566

For the last choral Sunday before our summer break, I have chosen American music for the choir ranging from the era of the Great Depression through to the present. The anthem from the senior choir is Harold Arlen's gospel standard *Get Happy* which was written for Ruth Etting for the Broadway *Nine-Fifteen Revue*, but made popular by Judy Garland in the 1950 film *Summer Stock*. While some of you may ask what a jazz standard has to do with church music, this song is really written in the style of music that would be heard at a revival meeting. Ella Fitzgerald's performance makes the most of this in an extremely gospel style. The arrangement we perform today is a bit more in the jazz vein, which is how Arlen intended it in the first place.

To preview a project that I have in the works, the threefold Amen after the Prayers for Others is a new, beautifully composed miniature that we are singing for the first time. A bit English in style, it is written by an American, Nicholas Sharer. The choral response is a Moses Hogan arrangement of the spiritual *We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace*. There is not much more that I can wish for all of you this summer than the sentiment found in this song.

For the organ music, I turn once again to the standard by which all others are judged, the height of the German Baroque, J.S. Bach. Both of the pieces selected for today are from his output of preludes, toccatas, and fugues. Intended to display his own virtuosity at the keyboard, I can only hope to do them some bit of justice. The Praeludium in A is of a lighter texture while the Toccata in E is about as grand as it gets.

Thomas Dawkins, organist/choir director