

CANTICUM NOVUM

Jonathan Laabs, Artistic Director

GOD'S
GRACE
20 *for*
Years



CANTICUM
NOVUM

CANTICUMNOVUMWELS.ORG

Saturday, September 12, 6:30 pm
Chapel of the Christ
at Martin Luther College

*Joined by the Martin Luther College Choir
and the Minnesota Valley Lutheran
High School Choraliers*

Welcome!

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2026 concert series of Canticum Novum!

Since its first summer of music-making in 2006, Canticum Novum's mission has remained consistent as "a WELS choir that strives for excellence in proclaiming the name of Christ through the choral art and, through the work of the gospel, seeks to spur God's people on toward excellence in their own musicianship." Numerous compelling performances around the Midwest, a growing roster, guest invitations, collaborations, works with orchestra, featured recordings, and premieres of new music are just some of the many blessings God has showered on our organization over the past 20 years. Well over 100 different singers have enjoyed Christian fellowship, spiritual growth, and artistic inspiration during our week-long retreats and have performed in over 35 different churches throughout the Midwest. A large and varied repertoire has provided a rigorous and edifying backdrop for the choir. God has truly been good to us!

While anniversaries provide a great opportunity to look back and celebrate the past—and we will do plenty of that in today's program!—it is also a chance to press forward toward an exciting future. This year's choir will make a special trip September 11-13 to New Ulm, Minnesota for a performance at Martin Luther College's Chapel of the Christ and other area churches. We look forward to this time to connect with members of the next generation of WELS ministry workers.

As you listen to today's program, we hope that you find not only artistic inspiration in God's remarkable gift of music, but also spiritual edification in the Biblical truths that are proclaimed throughout. On behalf of the singers, staff, and Board of Directors of Canticum Novum, thank you for joining us today and for your support.

In Christ,

Jonathan Laabs

Artistic Director

History of Canticum Novum

Canticum Novum is a chamber choir that strives for excellence in proclaiming the name of Christ through the choral art and, through the work of the gospel, seeks to spur God's people on toward excellence in their own musicianship.

What sets Canticum Novum apart is its unique model: singers from WELS congregations across the Midwest and beyond rehearse independently for several months, then come together once each year for an intensive retreat week filled with rehearsals, fellowship, and performances. This condensed yet deeply collaborative format fosters a strong bond among members and results in spiritually moving, artistically refined concerts.

The ensemble was founded in 2005 following a meeting of musicians at the WELS National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts. Inspired to form a new kind of choir within the Wisconsin Synod, the founding members developed a framework that prioritized flexibility, skill, and a shared mission. Most early members were WELS educators, which led to a summer retreat schedule that could accommodate professional calendars while remaining open to singers from all walks of life. From the beginning, members were expected to have the training and discipline to learn advanced repertoire on their own, allowing precious rehearsal time to focus on musical nuance and ensemble unity.

Canticum Novum presented its first performances in the summer of 2006 under the direction of founder Mike Marquardt, singing during worship at Peace Lutheran Church in Hartford, Wisconsin, and Grace Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. The ensemble has since gathered each summer for its annual retreat and concert series, including featured appearances at the WELS National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts in 2008, 2014, 2017, and 2024.

Now under the artistic direction of Jonathan Laabs, the choir continues to grow in size, scope, and artistic vision. Programming has expanded to include large-scale choral works, commissioned pieces, and an increased online presence. As Canticum Novum moves forward, its mission remains unchanged: to glorify God through beautiful music and to encourage others in their own musical journeys of faith.



Presents

God's Grace for 20 Years

Jonathan Laabs, Artistic Director
Jessi Kolberg, Collaborative Pianist

I Will Greatly Rejoice

Knut Nystedt (1915-2014)

Hear My Prayer, O Lord

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Psalm 43: Richte mich, Gott (Op. 78, No. 2)

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809-1847)

Rush, Spirit, Now My Portals

J. Richard Freese

**Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen
from *Ein deutsches Requiem***

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

**The Ground
from *Sunrise Mass***

Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)

The Lord Is the Everlasting God

Kenneth Jennings (1925-2015)

Conducted by Canticum Novum founder, Mike Marquardt

Intermission

Himne

Roelof Temmingh (1946-2012)

Thou Hidden Love

J. Aaron McDermid (b. 1974)

Jesus Christ Is Lord

Philip W. J. Stopford (b. 1977)

O Church, Arise

Arranged by John Hudson

The Last Words of David

Randall Thompson (1899-1984)

Joined by the Martin Luther College Choir and Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School Chargaliers

In Christ Alone

Arranged by Brent Wells

Joined by the Martin Luther College Choir and Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School Chargaliers

Conducted by Martin Luther College Choir director, Dr. Adrian Smith

This Little Light of Mine

Arranged by Moses Hogan (1957-2003)

O! What a Beautiful City

Arranged by Shawn Kirchner (b. 1970)

Program Texts & Notes

I Will Greatly Rejoice

Knut Nystedt (1915-2014)

Isaiah 61:10-11

Performed in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2013 & 2015

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
for my soul shall exult in my God;
for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
He has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up;
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring forth before all the nations!

Hear My Prayer, O Lord

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Psalms 102:1

Performed in 2007, 2008, 2009 & 2018

Hear my prayer, O Lord,
And let my crying come unto thee.

Psalms 43: Richte mich, Gott (Op. 78, No. 2)

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Performed in 2018

Richte mich, Gott, und führe meine Sache
wider das unheilige Volk,
und errette mich von den falschen
und bösen Leuten!
Denn du bist der Gott meiner Stärke;
warum verstößt du mich?
Warum lässtest du mich so traurig geh'n,
wenn mein Feind mich drängt?
Sende dein Licht und deine Wahrheit,
dass sie mich leiten
und bringen zu deinem heiligen Berge,
und zu deiner Wohnung.

Dass ich hinein gehe zum Altar Gottes,
zu dem Gott, der meine Freude und Wonne ist,
und dir, Gott, auf der Harfe danke, mein Gott.

Was betrübst du dich, meine Seele,
und bist so unruhig in mir?
Harre auf Gott!
denn ich werde ihm noch danken,
dass er meines Angesichts Hülfe,
und mein Gott ist.

*Judge me, O God, and lead my cause
against the unholy nation,
and deliver me from the deceitful
and malicious people!
For you are the God of my strength;
why do you cast me away?
Why do you let me be so sorrowful
When my foe oppresses me?
Send your light and your truth,
that they might lead me
and bring me to your holy mountain
and to your dwelling.*

*That I might enter unto the altar of God,
to the God who is my joy and my delight,
and give thanks to you, my God, on the harp.*

*Why are you so troubled, my soul,
and why are you so restless within me?
Hope in God!
for I will still give thanks to him,
Because he is my countenance's help
and my God.*

Rush, Spirit, Now My Portals

Music by J. Richard Freese

Words by Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676)

tr. Jeremy S. Bakken

Composer J. Richard Freese was commissioned by Canticum Novum in 2015 to write the work, "The Breath of the Almighty." The chorale tune of that piece was excerpted and arranged for this setting.

Rush, Spirit, now my portals, be in my heart a guest,
you who gave me, born mortal, a second birth more blest—
proceeding from the Son and from the Father, treasured,
who with both in full measure heav'n's throne and glory share.

You are the oil most holy through which anointed are
my life, my soul, my body to Jesus Christ my Lord—
to be his own, secure—to King, Priest, Prophet reigning—
the God to needy pledging protection that endures.

O Spirit—you who teaches how all should pray aright—
your groan God's ear e'er reaches, your singing his delight;
these prayers to heav'n ascend, they rise and are unceasing,
till God has helped bestowing help only he can lend.

Direct our lives forever in full stride with your mind,
and, when we must surrender to death's hand most unkind,
our time done, help us die with joy on Christ's pure merit
and after death inherit life in our home on high. Amen.

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen (from *Ein deutsches Requiem*)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Performed in 2024, as a part of a full performance of Brahms' Ein deutsches Requiem

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen,
Herr Zebaoth!
Meine Seele verlangt und sehnet sich
nach den Vorhöfen des Herrn;
mein Leib und Seele freuen sich
in dem lebendigen Gott.
Wohl denen, die in deinem Hause wohnen,
die loben dich immerdar.

*How lovely are your dwellings,
O Lord of hosts!
My soul yearns and longs
for the courts of the Lord;
my body and soul rejoice
in the living God.
Blessed are those who dwell in your house,
those who praise you forever more.*

The Ground (from *Sunrise Mass*)

Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)

Performed in 2014, along with the rest of Gjeilo's Sunrise Mass at the WELS National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts

Pleni sunt cæli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.

*Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.*

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Osanna in excelsis.

*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
Dona nobis pacem.

*Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.*

The Lord Is the Everlasting God

Kenneth Jennings (1925-2015)

Isaiah 40: 21-22, 25-26, 28-31

Performed in 2006, 2007, 2013 & 2015

Have you not known? Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
It is God who sits above the circle of the earth,
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
and spreads them like a tent to live in.

To whom then will you compare me,
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.
Lift up your eyes and see: Who created these?
God who brings out their host and numbers them,
calling them all by name: not one is missing.

The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth,
who does not faint or grow weary;
whose understanding is unsearchable.

God gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.
Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;

But those who wait for the Lord
shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

Have you not heard? Have you not known?

Himne

Roelof Temmingh (1946-2012)

Performed in 2018

Te Deum glorificamus
adoramus Deum laudamus te.
Deum benedicimus te.
Alleluia.

*You, God, we glorify,
We adore you, God, we praise you.
God, we thank you.
Alleluia.*

Thou Hidden Love

J. Aaron McDermid (b. 1974)

Based on VATER UNSER

Text by Gerhard Tersteegen (1697-1769)

Translated by John Wesley (1703-1791)

Performed in 2017 & 2018

Thou hidden love of God, whose height,
Whose depth unfathomed no one knows,
I see from afar thy beauteous light,
And inly sigh for thy repose;
My heart is pained, nor can I be
at rest, until I rest in thee.

'Tis mercy all that thou hast brought
My mind to seek its peace in thee;
Yet while I seek, but find thee not,
No peace my wand'ring soul shall see.
O when shall all my wand'rings end,
And all my steps to theeward tend?

Is there a thing beneath the sun
That strives with thee my heart to share?
Ah, tear it thence and reign alone,
The Lord of ev'ry motion there.
Make me thy duteous child that I
May ceaseless "Abba, Father" cry.

Each moment draw from earth away
My heart that lowly waits thy call;
Speak to my inmost soul and say,
"I am thy love, thy God, thy all!"
To feel thy pow'r, to hear thy voice,
to taste thy love, be all my choice.

My heart is pained, nor can it be at rest,
until I rest in thee.

Jesus Christ Is Lord

Philip W. J. Stopford (b. 1977)

Adapted from Philippians 2:6-11

Performed in 2018 & 2021

Though he was in the form of God,
he did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form, he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death,
even death on the cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name that is above ev'ry name,
so that at the name of Jesus ev'ry knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and ev'ry tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

O Church, Arise

Words by Keith Getty (b. 1974)

Music by Stuart Townend (b. 1963)

Arranged by John Hudson

Performed in 2017

O Church, arise, and put your armor on;
Hear the call of Christ our Captain;
For now the weak can say that they are strong
in the strength that God has given.
With shield of faith and belt of Truth,
we'll stand against the devil's lies;
An army bold, whose battle cry is love,
reaching out to those in darkness.

One call to war: to love the captive soul,
But to rage against the captor;
And with the sword that makes the wounded whole,
we will fight with faith and valor.
When faced with trials on ev'ry side,
we know the outcome is secure;
And Christ will have the prize for which He died;
an inheritance of nations.

Come, see the cross where love and mercy meet,
As the Son of God is stricken;
Then see His foes lie crushed beneath His feet,
for the Conqueror has risen!

So Spirit, come, put strength in ev'ry stride.
Give grace for ev'ry hurdle,
That we may run with faith to win the prize
of a servant good and faithful.
As saints of old still line the way,
retelling triumphs of His grace,
We hear their calls and hunger for the day
when with Christ we stand in glory.

The Last Words of David

Randall Thompson (1899-1984)

2 Samuel 23: 3,4

Performed in 2023

He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.
And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth,
even a morning without clouds;
as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.
Alleluia. Amen.

In Christ Alone

Keith Getty (b. 1974) & Stuart Townend (b. 1963)

Arr. Brent Wells

In Christ alone my hope is found;
he is my light, my strength, my song—
this cornerstone, this solid ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all,
here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, who took on flesh—
fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones he came to save.
Till on the cross as Jesus died,
the wrath of God was satisfied.
For ev'ry sin on him was laid;
here in the death of Christ I live.

No guilt in life, no fear in death—
this is the pow'r of Christ in me.
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man,
can ever pluck me from his hand;
Till he returns or calls me home—
here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

This Little Light of Mine

Traditional Spiritual

arr. Moses Hogan (1957-2003)

Performed in 2006, 2007, 2008 & 2015

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

All through the night I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

My God gave it to me, I'm gonna let it shine, children.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

O! What a Beautiful City

Traditional Spiritual

arr. Shawn Kirchner (b. 1970)

Performed in 2024

O! What a beautiful city!
Twelve gates to the city,
Halleluia!

Have you heard about the city?
The streets are paved with gold!
Twelve gates to the city,
Halleluia!

Three gates in-a the east!
Three gates in-a the west!
Three gates in-a the north!
Three gates in-a the south!

See those gates of pearl,
open to all the world.
Twelve gates to the city,
Halleluia!



Biographies



Jonathan Laabs has been an active conductor, clinician, performer, and music educator throughout the Midwest and beyond. This summer marks his sixteenth as the artistic director and conductor of Canticum Novum. Laabs also serves as the artistic director and conductor of the Bel Canto Chorus of Milwaukee, as well as the director of the Sheboygan Symphony Chorus. Previously, he held a position as Professor of Music and Music Division Chairman at Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota, where he conducted the College Chorale and Women's Choir and also taught courses in conducting, choral literature, and aural theory. As a dedicated educator, Laabs has worked with singers of all ages, teaching vocal music in elementary, secondary, collegiate, and adult settings.

As a guest conductor and clinician, Laabs has led WELS Choral Festival (2010, 2011, 2024), twice conducted the National High School Honors Choir at the WELS National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts held at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin (2014, 2017), and co-conducted the opening Festival Concert in 2024. In 2018, he was one of twelve international conductors selected as a fellow at the Chorus America Conducting Academy in Fullerton, California, where he studied and performed choral-orchestral works by Bernstein, Mendelssohn, and Mozart. He earned a master of music in choral conducting from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where he studied conducting with Dr. Zachary Durlam.

Also an active soloist, Laabs' performance highlights include Handel's *Israel in Egypt* and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Bel Canto Chorus of Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Chamber Orchestra, an international tour to Argentina and Uruguay of Mozart's *Requiem* and Faure's *Requiem* with Bel Canto International and the Texas Choral Consort, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs* with the Falls Baptist College Orchestra and Chorus, and Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem* with the Martin Luther College Choir and Orchestra.

Jonathan and his wife, Erin, live in Jackson, Wisconsin, with their three children: Genevieve, Mariah, and Garrett.



Jessi Kolberg is a well-known musician in the Milwaukee metropolitan area. She graduated with honors from Wisconsin Lutheran College with a music degree in piano performance, vocal performance, and church music. She teaches piano, organ, voice, and violin at Wisconsin Lutheran High School and voice and piano at Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School. She is an accompanist for the Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy since 2003, staff accompanist at Alverno College (2011), accompanist for the Ozaukee Chorus (2019), the Wisconsin Gossellers (2022) and the Milwaukee Chamber Choir (2024), and serves as the full-time organist at Loving Shepherd Lutheran in Brown Deer.

A highly in-demand collaborator, Jessi frequently plays for choir concerts, studio recitals, and competitions, and performs with Symphony 847 and the Kenosha, Menomonee Falls, Lake County, and Kettle Moraine Symphony Orchestras. As a professional soprano, Jessi has sung with the Bel Canto Chorus and Choral Artists, the Milwaukee Chamber Choir, and Canticum Novum, and is a soloist for the National Anthem at local sporting events. She can also be seen playing violin with the acoustic rock duo, The Nightinails. Jessi and her husband Austin reside in Wauwatosa.



Canticum Novum

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Joanna Ericson—Mequon, Wisconsin
Anne Hafenstein—Pewaukee, Wisconsin
Kari Hahm—Plymouth, Minnesota
Naomi Hathaway—Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Martha Johnson—Hubertus, Wisconsin
Jessi Kolberg—Wauwatosa, Wisconsin
Erin Laabs*—Jackson, Wisconsin
Emma Nolte—Madison, Wisconsin
Kayli Pesch—Hartford, Wisconsin
Sarah Schlicht—West Bend, Wisconsin
Lisa Uttech—Waukesha, Wisconsin
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ALTO

Nicole Cottman—Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Madelyn Krueger—Bloomington, Minnesota
Naomi Laabs—Madison, Wisconsin
April Marquardt*—St. Paul, Minnesota
Melissa Nolte—Appleton, Wisconsin
Jessica Peck—Madison, Wisconsin
Rachel Pierson—Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Jessica Randazzo—Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin
Rachel Renno—New Ulm, Minnesota
Kiara Ristow—Weyauwega, Wisconsin
Kari Tiarks—Appleton, Wisconsin
Karen Vasatko—Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

TENOR

Joseph Eick—Waukesha, Wisconsin
Danny Hafenstein—Pewaukee, Wisconsin
Lucas Krogmann—Oconomowoc, Wisconsin
Colin Krueger—Bloomington, Minnesota
Jarrod Pfarr—Appleton, Wisconsin
Alex Randazzo—Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin
Matt Reichardt*—Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Zach Scharlemann—New Ulm, Minnesota
Eric Stein—West Bend, Wisconsin
David Wendland—Madison, Wisconsin

BASS

Cameron Ausen—Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin
Ryan Kluba—West Bend, Wisconsin
Andrew Kramer—Sun Prairie, Wisconsin
Mike Marquardt—St. Paul, Minnesota
Seth Marquardt—St. Paul, Minnesota
Paul Mleziva—Jackson, Wisconsin
Levi Nagel*—Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Matthew Schmidt—West Bend, Wisconsin
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- **Visit our website:** Go to canticumnovumwels.org/contact or scan the QR code to the right to quickly fill out the contact form online.



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Canticum Novum relies on the generosity of individuals like you to continue its mission of bringing the gospel to life through song. Your donations help cover essential expenses, such as purchasing music, printing programs, supporting guest artists, and more. With your support, we can continue to inspire musical excellence and share the joy of music with God's people. Your support makes a lasting impact, and we are deeply grateful for your generosity.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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- **Donate after the concert:** Look for designated donation areas and place your gift there.
- **Give online:** Visit canticumnovumwels.org/contribute or scan the QR code to the right. You can donate via PayPal or mail a check using the address provided on the page.





2006



2007



2010



2017



2018



2021

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