

## Notes from the Music Director (No. 6)

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Rochester, Pennsylvania

### Henry Doktorski, III

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Johann von Rist

Today in the Gospel of John, Jesus explains, “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.” Jesus said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

Our Hymn of the Day, “O Living Bread from Heaven,” with text by Johann von Rist

and tune by Samuel S. Wesley is a classic from the hymn repertoire.

*O living Bread from heaven, how well you feed your guest!  
The gifts that you have given have filled my heart with rest.  
Oh, wondrous food of blessing, oh, cup that heals our woes!  
My heart, this gift possessing, with praises overflows!*

Johann von Rist (1607-1667) was the son of a Lutheran Pastor in what is today Hamburg, Germany. He received his early training at the Gelehrtschule des Johanneums in Hamburg and the Gymnasium Illustre in Bremen; he then studied theology at the University of Rinteln.

In 1635 he was appointed pastor of the village of Wedel on the Elbe River. He wrote poetry and dramatic works, but today is best known for his hymns. Rist's German text for "O Living Bread from Heaven" was translated into English poetry by Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878).

The music used for today's hymn (known by the name "Aurelia") was composed by Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810-1876), an English organist who was born into a family of poets, theologians and church musicians. He was the son of the English organist Samuel Wesley (1766-1837) and the great nephew of John Wesley (1703-1791), the founder of the Methodist Church.



Samuel Sebastian Wesley

Samuel S. Wesley was famous during his lifetime as an organist and choir director. He composed organ works, choir anthems, service music and hymn tunes. Aurelia has been published in at least 306 hymnals and is best-known as the tune for "The Church's One Foundation," a hymn text written by yet another Samuel (apparently a popular name in Great Britain during the day): Samuel J. Stone (1839-1900).

You can hear the Choir of Clifton College, Bristol, United Kingdom, sing Samuel S. Wesley's Aurelia (with the more common text "The Church's One Foundation") on YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_UaYAVm2R28](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UaYAVm2R28).

## Sources

Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version (Zonderfan: 1989)  
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WOV: With One Voice (Augsburg Fortress: 1995)  
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