

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 104 Form: Chorus - Recit (T) - Aria (T) - Recit (B) - Aria (B) - Chorale.

Introduction & updates at melvinunger.com.

NBA I/11; BC A65

Misericordias Domini: 2. S. after Easter (BWV 104, 85, 112)

*1 Peter 2:21-25 (Christ as example; you have returned to the shepherd of your souls)

*John. 10:11-16 (Jesus declares himself to be the Good Shepherd)

Librettist: Unknown; perhaps Christian Weiß the elder

FP: 23 April 1724 (Leipzig: St. Thomas). This cantata belongs to Bach's first cantata cycle in Leipzig (see note).

Instrumentation:

Ob I, II; also Ob d'amore I, II

Taille

Vln I, II

Vla

SATB

Continuo

Form (often homophonic choral insertion)

Ritornello (mm. 1-25) GM

Line 1 (25-36) GM-Bm

Line 2 (37-42) E7-DM

Line 3 (43-45) Bm-DM

Rit (45-46) DM

Line 1 (47-52) DM

Line 2 (fugato: 53-71) Bm-GM

Line 1 (72-83) GM-DM

Line 2 (fugato: 84-111) GM-Em

Line 3 (112-114) Am-GM

The tonal ascent appears related to the idea that the leading of the Good Shepherd means this life can already be a foretaste of heaven (see note for more).

Alfred Dürr writes, "Whether in painting, poetry, or music, baroque art took special delight in the representation of rural life, and particularly the pastoral setting, which seemed calm and peaceful, far from the despotism and intrigues of absolutist princes, and a valuable aid to the realization of ideal feelings, such as love, faith, innocence, friendship, and so on. It therefore comes as no surprise that the Christian faith of the age was enkindled with special ardour by the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. The music of the shepherds—the pastorate—could be directly understood as a symbol of the community watched over by Christ. And a phrase like 'Lead us into Your sheepfold!' (no. 4) could be taken into this world-view without reflection, nor with that touch of the comic which might be felt in it by the modern listener. See Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, translated by Richard Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 299.

In no. 1, triplet eights (a pastoral effect associated with the reference to God as "Shepherd of Israel") (compare Mendelssohn's "He watching over Israel") and staccato quarters (associated with the imperatives "hear" and "appear," are treated in alternating fashion among oboes, strings, and chorus (oboes apparently an afterthought, see note).

Cantata No. 104

Du Hirte Israel, höre

Nº 1. (Coro.)

•Shepherd of Israel sought in prayer: Psalm 80:1 (104/1).

104/1. (Pastorale ♩ = 72.)

1. staccato

G major, G pedal... (Concerning the significance of G major, see note.)

Rocking in Obs, Vln II, Vla.

D major D7 G major G7

C major

24. Soprano. **A** Line 1.

(CORO)

Alto. Du Hir - te I - sra-el, du Hir - te

Tenore. Du Hir - te I - sra-el, du Hir - te

Basso. Du Hir - te I - sra-el, du Hir - te

28. **G major G pedal...**

Punctuating exclamations: "Hear!"

I - sra-el, hö - re! hö - re! du Hir - te I - sra-el,

I - sra-el, hö - re! hö - re! du Hir - te I - sra-el,

I - sra-el, hö - re! hö - re! du Hir - te I - sra-el,

I - sra-el, hö - re! hö - re! du Hir - te I - sra-el,

32.

hö - re, du Hir - te I - srael, hö - re, du Hir - te I - srael,

hö - re, du Hir - te I - srael, hö - re, du Hir - te I - srael,

hö - re, du Hir - te I - sra - el,

hö - re, hö - re, du Hir - te I - sra - el,

Parallel 3rds & 6ths suggest sweetness.

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36.

Line 2. Euphonious counterpoint with parallel 3rds and 6ths.

hö-re, der du Jo-seph hü-test wie der Scha-
hö-re, der du Jo-seph hü-test wie der Scha-
hö-re, der du Jo-seph hü-test wie der Scha-
hö-re, der du Jo-seph hü-test wie der Scha-

G major E7 A major

40.

G major

Line 3.

-fe, er-schei-ne, der du sit-zest ü-ber
-fe, er-schei-ne, der du sit-zest ü-ber
-fe, er-schei-ne, der du sit-zest ü-ber
-fe, er-schei-ne, der du sit-zest ü-ber

D major B minor

44.

D major

B minor

B Line 1.

-zest ü-ber Che-ru-bim. Du Hir-te
Che-ru-bim. Du Hir-te
Che-ru-bim. Du Hir-te
-zest ü-ber Che-ru-bim. Du Hir-te

D major B D major D pedal...

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60.

der du Jo-seph hü-test wie der Scha - - - - - fe, er -
schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er -

64.

G major G major G7

schei - ne, **Cries: "Appear!"** er - schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er -
schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er -
der du Jo-seph hü-test wie der Scha - - - - -

68.

C major D7 G major A7 D major D7

schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er -
schei - ne, **Cries: "Appear!"** er - schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er -
schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er -
- - - - - fe,

G major

G major
G pedal...

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72. Line 1.

du Hir - te I - sra-el, du Hir - te I - sra-el,
 du Hir - te I - sra-el, du Hir - te I - sra-el,
 du Hir - te I - sra-el, du Hir - te I - sra-el,
 du Hir - te I - sra-el, du Hir - te I - sra-el,

G major

76.

hö - re! hö - re! du Hir - te I - sra-el, hö - re!
 hö - re! hö - re! du Hir - te I - sra-el, hö - re!
 hö - re! hö - re! du Hir - te I - sra-el, hö - re!
 hö - re! hö - re! du Hir - te I - sra-el, hö - re!

Cries: "Hör!"

G major

A7 D major

D pedal...

D7 G major

80.

hö - re, du Hir - te I - sra-el, hö - re,
 hö - re, du Hir - te I - sra-el, hö - re,
 du Hir - te I - sra-el, hö - re, du Hir - te I - sra-el, hö - re, der du
 du Hir - te I - sra-el, hö - re, du Hir - te I - sra-el, hö - re, der du

Line 2 (fugato).

G major A7 D major D7

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84.

In ascending order, the voices present the subject, the other voices interrupting with cries of "Hear!" and "Appear!" The rising order of entries culminates in m. 103, where all exclaim together, "Appear!"

hö - re! hö - re!
hö - re! hö - re!
hö - re! hö - re! der du
Jo - seph hü - test wie der Scha -

G major

G major

88.

hö - re! hö - re!
hö - re! hö - re! der du
Joseph hütest wie der Scha -
fe, er - schei - ne, er -

G major

G7

C major

(D7)

92.

hö - re! hö - re! der du
Joseph hü - test wie der Scha -
fe, er - schei - ne, er -
schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er - schei - ne, er -

G major

A(7)

D major

D7

G major

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107.

111. D major D7 G major G major

Bach ends climactically, foregoing a restatement of the ritornello.

E minor G7 C major D7 G major G major

Nº 2. Recitativo. • Shepherd on high cares for me, why should I worry? (104/2).
Secco 104/2.

1. Tenore. NBA: Hirte NBA: vor

Paired recitative and aria for the tenor.

3. E minor A# dim.7

Phrygian cadence, often used for questions. F# major A# dim.7 B minor

Allusion to Lamentations 3:22-23: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies...are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.

The arioso conclusion over trending bass alludes to Corinthians 10:13: ... God is faithful (Luther 1545: Gott ist getreu). Martin Petzoldt suggests the 3-fold repetition is trinitarian (see *Bach Kommentar* 2:793).

6. **Andante.** (♩ = 60.)

fas-se dich, Gott ist ge-treu, ge-treu, Gott ist ge-treu.

B minor "Treading" bass... B (minor)

• Shepherd hidden; Fearful, I cry "abba" (Aramaic: "father") in faith (104/3). Imitation between oboes d'amore, then between singer and continuo in rising scales, presumably represents the leading of the shepherd (which is hidden, causing fear for the wandering, lost sheep, as referenced in the text).

Nº 3. Aria.
104/3. (Andante con moto ♩ = 80.)

The oboes d'amore provide rustic color.

1. **Ritornello** *mf*

Ob d'am I
Ob d'am II

B minor

4.

Hiccup-like rest adds tension.

A7 D major F#7

6. **A Tenore.**

A Section.

Ver-birgt mein Hir-te sich zu lan-ge-

p Continuo alone... B minor

9. This type of aria is called a "Devisenarie" (a term coined by Hugo Riemann) or "motto aria." After the ritornello, the singer presents the first phrase of the aria as a kind of motto. This is followed by a short instrumental bridge before the aria proper begins. The motto sets the tone (and the literary perspective) for the movement.

11.

ver-birgt mein Hir-te

B minor

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Word painting: Extended melisma for "lange" ("long"): "If my shepherd hides himself too long."

12.

sich zu lan - ge, zu lan - ge, zu lan - ge, zu lan - ge

B minor A7 A minor

15.

- ge, macht mir die Wü - ste all - zu - ban -

D minor B7 E minor A7 D major G minor 7

Word painting: Long, wrenching, chromatic melisma and harmonic instability/chromatic inflection for "all too fearful."

17.

ban -

E minor E# dim.7 B7 C#7 C#7

Chromaticism for "bange" ("fearful").

Enharmonic equivalents

20.

- ge, mein schwacher Schritt eilt dennoch fort, eilt dennoch fort.

F# minor F# minor

Ritornello

23.

E7 A major C#7

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25. B Section. Large leaps up for "schreit."

Mein Mund schreit, mein Mund schreit nach dir, mein
 My mouth cries, my mouth cries to thee, mein

F# minor F# minor F# minor F#7 B minor B minor

28.

Mund schreit, mein Mund schreit nach dir, und du, mein Hirte,

B minor B7 E minor E minor A7 D major

31.

wirkst in mir, und du, mein Hirte, wirkst in mir ein gläubig-

D7 G major D major E7 A major A major D major

Allusion to passages such as Romans 8:15-17. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs... (Abba = Aramaic "father"; see also Mark 14:36, Galatians 4:6.)

34. C

Ab.ba, ein gläubig Ab.ba durch dein Wort.

mf Ritornello

D major

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37.

A' Section. The melismas for "lange" ("long") and "bange" ("fearful") are now even longer.

Ver - birgt mein Hir - te - - - - - sich zu lan - - - - -
 . Ascending duples suggests rising anxiety...

E7 A major B7 E minor B minor A major
 A major A# dim.7

40.

Word painting: Even longer melisma for "lange" ("long"): "If my shepherd hides himself too long."

-ge, - - - - -

B minor F#7 B minor B minor

43.

ver - birgt mein Hir - te - - - - -

B minor B minor B minor

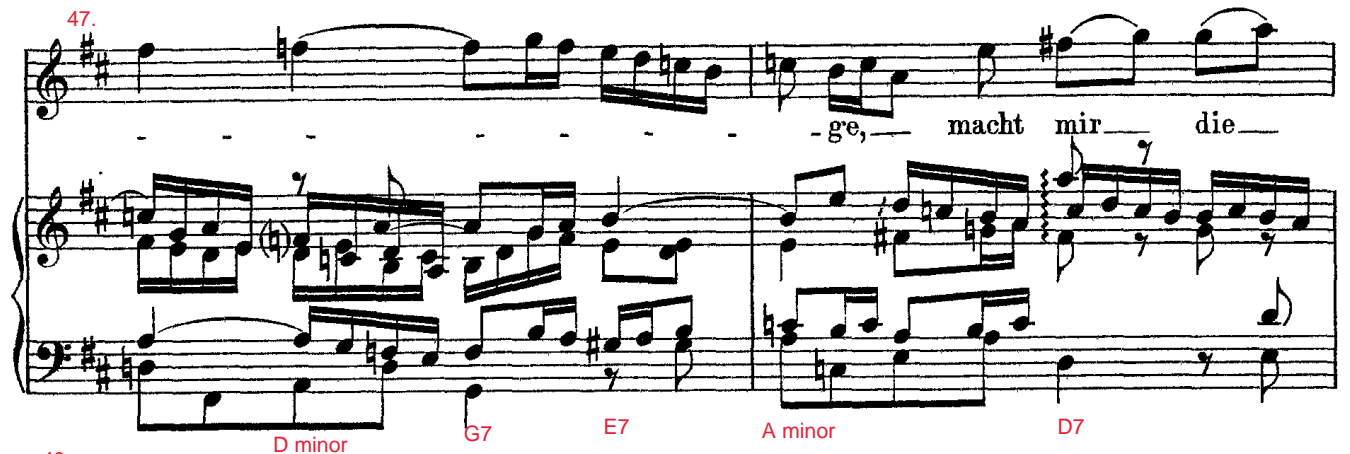
45.

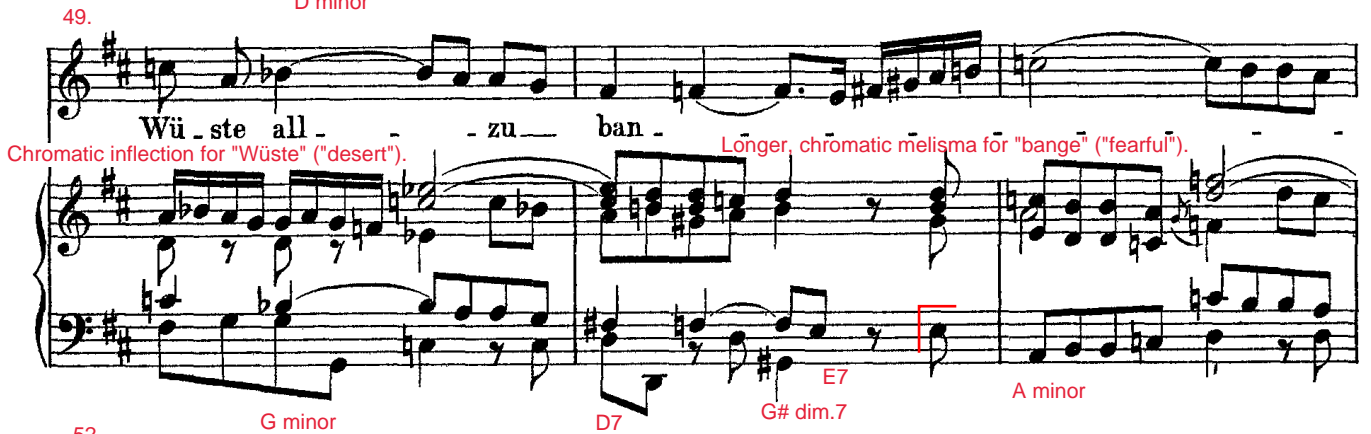
Word painting: Another long melisma for "lange" ("long"): "If my shepherd hides himself too long."

sich - - - - - zu - - - - - lan - - - - -

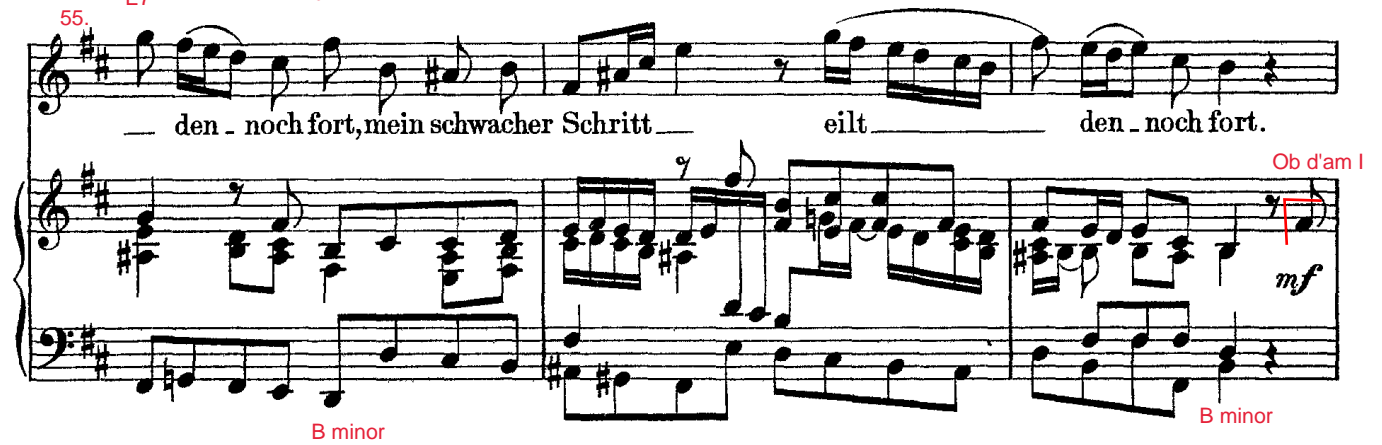
D7 D# dim.7 E minor A minor D7

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47. 
-ge, macht mir die

49. 
Wü - ste all - zu - ban -
Chromatic inflection for "Wüste" ("desert"). Longer, chromatic melisma for "bange" ("fearful").

52. 
-ge, mein schwacher Schritt eilt
Energetic melisma for "eilt" ("hastens").

55. 
den - noch fort, mein schwacher Schritt eilt den - noch fort.
Ob d'am I

58. 
Ritornello
Ob d'am II

61.

No. 4. Recitativo.

104/4.

1. Basso.

•Pasture is Word of God, sheepfold is heaven (104/4).

Paired recitative and aria for bass.

Ja, die - ses Wort ist mei - ner See - len Spei - se, ein
Yes, this word is my soul's food, a

3.

Labsal meiner Brust, die Weide, die ich meine Lust, des Himmels Vorschmack, ja mein Al les
tonic to-my breast, the pasture, which I [call] my pleasure, - heaven's foretaste, yes, my all

Regarding "foretaste of heaven," see comment about form at no. 1.

6.

heisse. Ach! sammle nur, o gu - ter Hirte, uns Ar - me und Verwirr.te; ach!
do-call. Ah! gather (then) O good shepherd, us poor and straying-ones; Ah,

NBA: Verirrte

9.

lass den Weg nur bald ge - endet sein und führe uns in deinen Schafstall ein.
let this path but soon ended be and lead us into thy sheepfold - .

The text alludes to Jesus' words: "He who does not enter the sheepfold (Luther 1545: Schafstall) by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber; but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep...My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:1-3, 27-28).

contrast to the Old Testament invocation of no. 1, the libretto now presents a New Testament perspective as reflected in Jesus' words in the day's Gospel: "I am the good shepherd..." (John 10:14) as well as in the day's Epistle: "You were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd...of your souls" (1 Peter 2:25). The aria's text reflects the Christian doctrines of "Already - Not Yet" and "Foretaste of Heaven": Christ's kingdom and the believer's blessings are already here but not yet consummated. Bach expresses these ideas with contrasting textures and dynamics and with melodic anticipations.

Da capo **Nº 5. Aria.** • Flock of Jesus receive kindness now & reward later (104/5).
104/5. (Pastorale ♩ = 66.)

Ob d'am I/Vln I
Vln II
Via

Ritornello *mf*

The siciliano-like triplet motion, pedal points, and oboe d'amore underscore the pastoral theme (as in movement no. 1).

D major
D pedal...

D major D major E7

6. **A Basso.**

Variant of ritornello melody...

Be - glück - te Her - de, Je - su Schafe, be - glückte Her - de,

The dynamic markings are original... *p*

A major

A major

D major
D pedal...

"Foretaste of heaven" expressed with contrasting texture.

9. Je - su Schafe, die Welt ist euch ein Himmelreich, ein Him - mel - reich, die Welt ist

Continuo alone...

D major E7

11.

Anticipations suggest "foretaste of heaven" as referenced in the text.

euch ein Him - mel - reich, die Welt ist euch ein Him - mel - reich, be - glück -

A major

C#7

F# minor

A major

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13.

- te Her-de, Je-su Scha - fe, die Welt ist euch ein Himmelreich...

E7 A7 D major E7 A major A major

16.

Ritornello

A major A major

19. **B**

Be-glückte Herde, Je-su Schafe, be-glückte Herde, Je-su Schafe, die

A major A major D7 D pedal... G major (A7)

22.

Welt ist euch ein Himmelreich, ein Him - melreich, die Welt ist euch ein Him - mel -

D major D7 G major E7 A7

Continuo alone...

Anticipations for "foretaste of heaven."

25.

reich, die Welt ist euch ein Him - melreich, be-glück - te Her-de, Je - su Scha -

D7 G major F#7 B minor D major G major A7 D7

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27.

...fe, die Welt ist euch ein Him-mel-reich...

G major A7 D major D major

29.

Ritornello

D major D pedal... D major

32.

Hier schmeckt ihr Je-su Gü-te schon und hof-fet

Ob d'am I Vln I

D major D major F#7 B7

Extended notes for "hoffe" (to "hope").

Apparent allusions to passages such as Psalm 34:8:
O taste and see that the Lord is good!...
1 Peter 2:3: You have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

35.

The doctrine of "Already - Not Yet" is expressed with contrasting textures.

noch des Glau-bens Lohn, und hof-fet noch des Glaubens Lohn nach

Ob d'am/Vln I & II

E minor A7 D major F#7 B minor A7 D major B minor

38.

ei-nem sanf-ten To-des schla-

Chromatic inflection

Long, low note for "sleep of death."

N6 C major A# dim.7 B minor F#7 G major

The reference to "sanften Todesschlafe" ("gentle sleep of death") is prepared with a N6 chord, after which the oboes reenter pianissimo with the pastoral triplets (2x).

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40.

...fe; hier schmeckt ihr Je-su Gü - te schon und hof - fet

Ob d'am/Vln I

Vln II

B7 E7 A7

43.

noch des Glau - bens Lohn, und hof - fet noch des Glau - bens Lohn nach

Ob d'am/Vln I & Vln II

Continuo alone...

D major C#7 F# minor C7 F# minor

46. Very long notes for "sleep of death."

ei - nem sanften To - des - schla -

R.H.

pp

N6 G major F# minor D major

48.

Singer reaches the lowest note for his final reference to the "sleep of death."

...fe, nach ei - nem sanften To - des - schlafe.

F#7 B minor C#7 F# minor Da Capo. F# minor

104/6. No. 6. Choral. (Mel: „Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr!“)

Soprano ^{1/5}. (See also 85/3.) •Shepherd's Psalm: Psalm 23:1–2 (104/6).

+Ob I
Vln I

+Ob II
Vln II

+Taille
Via

Basso.

Der Herr ist mein ge - treu - er Hirt, dem ich mich ganz ver - traue - e!
zur Weid' er mich, sein Schäflein, führt, auf schö - ner, grü - ner Au - e!

Der Herr ist mein ge - treu - er Hirt, dem ich mich ganz ver - traue - e!
zur Weid' er mich, sein Schäflein, führt, auf schö - ner, grü - ner Au - e!

Der Herr ist mein ge - treu - er Hirt, dem ich mich ganz vertraue!
zur Weid' er mich, sein Schäflein, führt, auf schöner, grüner Au - e!

Der Herr ist mein ge - treu - er Hirt, dem ich mich ganz ver - traue - e!
zur Weid' er mich, sein Schäflein, führt, auf schö - ner, grü - ner Au - e!

NBA: grünen

Martin Petzoldt suggests the tenor's voice leading suggests a wayward sheep hurrying to catch up and that this detail underscores the catechismal function of the chorale (encouraging believers to trust the Good Shepherd). See Bach Kommentar 2:796.

A major 9. A major A major

zum fri - schen Was - ser leit't er mich, mein' Seel' zu la - ben

zum fri - schen Was - ser leit't er mich, mein' Seel' zu la - ben

zum fri - schen Was - ser leit't er mich, mein' Seel' zu la - ben

zum fri - schen Was - ser leit't er mich, mein' Seel' zu la - ben

12. B minor NBA: selig B minor E major A major

kräf - tig - lich durch's sel' - ge Wort der Gna - den.

kräf - tig - lich durch's sel' - ge Wort der Gna - den.

kräf - tig - lich durch's sel' - ge Wort der Gna - den.

kräf - tig - lich durch's sel' - ge Wort der Gna - den.

F# minor F# minor A major A major A major