



LOGOS

The Newsletter for St. John's Episcopal Church, Arlington

"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it" John 1:5

October 2020

St. John's Regathers for Worship



Led by Rev. Larry Packard and featuring music by Galen Henderson, St. John's regathered for socially distanced outdoor worship on September 13. Members of the St. John's community also joined the service via Zoom. The next outdoor service is planned for October 11.

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Words on Hymns: *Onward, Christian Soldiers*

I got curious about the origins of the hymn *Onward, Christian Soldiers*, so I looked it up. It is a 19th-century English hymn. The words were written by Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould in 1865, and the music was composed by Arthur Sullivan in 1871. Sullivan named the tune *St. Gertrude* after the wife of his friend Ernest Clay Ker Seymer, at whose country home he composed the tune. The Salvation Army adopted the hymn as its favored processional. The piece became Sullivan's most popular hymn.

The text refers to several passages in the Bible using the analogy of warfare, from both the Old and New Testaments. Paul said in Ephesians 6:14-18, "Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."

Baring-Gould (1834–1924) was at that time the curate of a parish in Yorkshire County in the north of England. He recounts how and why he wrote it: "Whitmonday [the day after Pentecost] is a great day for school festivals in Yorkshire, and one Whitmonday it was arranged that our school should join its forces with that of a neighboring village. I wanted the children to sing when marching from one village to the other, but couldn't think of anything quite suitable, so I sat up at night resolved to write something myself. 'Onward, Christian Soldiers' was the result. It was written in great haste, and I am afraid some of

the rhymes are faulty. Certainly nothing has surprised me more than its great popularity."

Baring-Gould allowed the compilers of hymn books to alter the lyrics, but his original words are still used in most modern hymnals. Though it was never meant for publication, the hymn nevertheless found its way into a periodical later that year, and soon it was included in English hymnals around the world. It was suggested by Presbyterian minister and hymnologist Louis F. Benson that it caught on in the United States at least in part because it tapped into the "soldier-spirit left in the hearts of young and old Americans by the four years of the Civil War," which had just ended.

In Baring-Gould's original version, the hymn was sung to *St. Alban*, an adaptation of the third movement of Haydn's *Symphony No. 15 in D Major*. The hymn was not particularly well received. Sullivan's writing of the tune *St. Gertrude* for the hymn popularized it, and this tune has ever since been its standard melody.

The hymn has been widely used, not only in places of worship, but also for a great variety of other occasions. Allan Sutherland, in *Famous Hymns of the World*, describes the wild rejoicing in Philadelphia on election night 1905, when to signal the victory of the Reform Movement, thousands paraded the streets singing this hymn. It was the battle song of Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive campaign in 1912 and also a prime favorite in World War I.

When Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt met in August 1941 on the battleship HMS *Prince of Wales* to agree to the Atlantic Charter, a church service was held for which Churchill chose the hymns. He selected *Onward, Christian Soldiers* and afterwards made a radio broadcast explaining his choice: "We sang *Onward, Christian Soldiers* indeed, and I felt that this was no vain presumption, but that we had the right to feel that we were

...serving a cause for the sake of which a trumpet has sounded from on high. When I looked upon that densely packed congregation of fighting men of the same language, of the same faith, of the same fundamental laws, of the same ideals...it swept across me that here was the only hope, but also the sure hope, of saving the world from measureless degradation.”

The hymn has been sung at many funerals, including that of President Dwight D. Eisenhower at Washington National Cathedral in March 1969. Apart from its obvious martial associations, the song has also been associated with protest against the established order, particularly in the case of the civil rights movement in America.

Due to its militaristic theme and martial melody, the hymn has fallen out of favor in recent years, and some church denominations have removed it from their hymnals entirely. An attempt was made in the 1980s to strip *Onward, Christian Soldiers* from the *United Methodist Hymnal* and the *Episcopal Hymnal 1982* due to perceived militarism. Outrage among churchgoers caused both denominations to back down. The Spiritualists' National Union hymn book has a variation on the hymn entitled *Onward, Comrades, Onward*. In some modern Anglican hymn books, it is replaced with *Onward, Christian Pilgrims* set to the same tune.

Carol Dunlap

LOGOS

LOGOS is published monthly at the beginning of the month, except for a combined July/August issue.

Lisa Pope, LOGOS Editor

Email articles to logos@stjohnsarlingtonva.org. The deadline for the November issue is October 23. Article ideas for future issues are also welcome.

St. John’s Vision Statement

St. John’s Episcopal Church is an inclusive congregation that nurtures Christian spiritual growth and community through worship, education, outreach, mutual care, and fellowship.

St. John’s Mission Statement

St. John’s mission is building a strong spiritual community in Christ; welcoming all who enter our doors, including believers, seekers, and doubters; and reaching out to those in need both within our congregation and around us.

St. John’s Staff and Leadership

Staff

Supply Plus Minister: The Rev. Dr. Laurence K. Packard
 Minister of Music: Lynn Robinson
 Organist: Judith Marcinko
 Family Programs Director: Jonathan Muehlke
 Parish Administrator: Virginia Pearson
 Child Care Provider: Kaitlyn Osteguín
 Sexton: Julio Sorto

Parish Leaders

Peter Olivere, Treasurer
 John Restall, Pledge Clerk
 Eileen Tallent, Chair, Altar Guild

Vestry

Sandy Winger, Senior Warden
 Bryan Harbin, Junior Warden
 Jeff Aitken

Diane Henderson
 Richard Henry
 Peter Olivere

Parish News

Upcoming Events:

➤ The St. John's Book Club will meet outdoors on **Tuesday, October 6**, at 7 p.m. to discuss *Unmarriageable* by Soniah Kamal. The meeting will take place by the Frank Todd Memorial Garden at the corner of South Kensington Street and 4th Street South. Remember to bring something to sit on. Looking ahead, the **November 3** selection is *The Unhoneymooners* by Christina Lauren. This romantic comedy tells the tale of two sworn enemies who embark on the Hawaiian trip of a lifetime. All are welcome!

➤ Experience fun and fellowship without leaving home as St. John's plays virtual bingo on **Saturday, October 24**, at 7 p.m. To obtain bingo cards and be sent the Zoom link to play, send an email to bingo@stjohnsarlingtonva.org or contact Sandy Winger at 703-498-6990.

Rest in Peace:

➤ Lynn Christopher, who entered the life of the Resurrection on September 19.

Thank You to:

➤ All who took part in the Regathering service on September 13 and to the members of the Regathering Committee for their hard work and planning.

➤ Everyone who has continued to send their tithes and offerings to St. John's while the church building is closed.

We celebrate with all who have birthdays in October:

Erin Tallent Baynham, Jacob Beavin, Bryan Harbin, Carrie Harbin, John Hart, Monica Lozano, Raymond McDonald, Taylor Robinson, the Rev. Peter Swarr, and Liz White.

We celebrate with those observing anniversaries in October:

Joy and Bobby Candelieri; Andy and Cathi Del Gallo; Eileen Flynn and Paul Harless; John Hart and Angie Rollet; Heather and Tony Kollath; Dave and Lynn Robinson; Barbara Wien and Robert Herman.

