



AUGUST HYMN OF THE MONTH

Our Hymn of the month for August is "My Life Flows On," also known as "How Can I Keep on Singing." The origins of this beautiful hymn are uncertain. Most hymnals, including ours, attribute the words and music to Robert Lowry (1826-1899) because he included it in his famous collection, *Bright Jewels for the Sunday School* (1869). "It was common practice at that time to attribute authorship for songs that appeared in a collection to the person who compiled the volume or for that person to assume authorship."

Lowry was a gifted Baptist preacher on the East Coast and he also composed gospel songs. Among his most famous gospel compositions are "Nothing but the Blood of Jesus," "Shall We Gather at the River," and "Up from the Grave He Arose." He also composed tunes for others' texts, such as MARCHING TO ZION, "Come, We that Love the Lord," and "I Need Thee Every Hour."

Some consider the source of the folksong style melody of this hymn to originate with the Quakers. Pete Seeger learned a version of this song from Doris Plenn, a family friend. She learned the original hymn from her grandmother, who reportedly believed that it dated from the early days of the Quaker movement. The theme of persecution appears in a stanza that is omitted from many hymnals.

*When tyrants tremble in their fear
And hear their death knell ringing,
When friends rejoice both far and near
How can I keep from singing?
In prison cell and dungeon vile
Our thoughts to them are winging,
When friends by shame are undefiled
How can I keep from singing?*

"The Quakers or Society of Friends certainly experienced persecution due to their nonconformist style of worship and pacifist stance toward war and violence. It is easy to imagine that this hymn would offer deep solace for the Quaker community." (History of Hymns by C. Michael Hawn)
However the Quakers did not permit congregational singing in worship until after the American Civil War (and many still do not have music regularly). After hearing Seeger's version in the social activist circles of the fifties, contemporary Quakers have adopted this hymn as a sort of anthem. It was published in the Quaker songbook *Songs of the Spirit*, and the original words, with Plenn's verse, were included in the Quaker hymnal project, *Worship in Song: A Friends Hymnal* in 1996. (Wikipedia)

"Though the origins of this poignant song are somewhat in doubt, its message is clear. 'How Can I Keep From Singing?' is a song of one who has weathered persecution and struggle, but maintains a focus on the Rock, giving thanks for all in song." (C. Michael Hawn)

Sources: Wikipedia and History of Hymns by C. Michael Hawn

Intergenerational Wednesday Night Fellowship

May 24 to August 16 (Wednesdays)

5:00 pm to 7:00 pm EVERY Wednesday

***** EVERYONE IS WELCOME*****

5:00 pm Meal

5:25 pm Devotion

Games, Gym time, Conversation until 7:00 pm

***** EVERYONE IS WELCOME*****



August 23 is coming fast!!! Let's be the church together!!!

We will be offering something for newborn through 12th grade EVERY Wednesday night (except for days there is no school or early release)

starting on August 23.

*There is a community meal at 5 pm for EVERYONE.

*After the meal, the JYF (2nd through 5th), Chi-Rho (6th through 8th), and CYF (9th through 12th) will have devotion, games, and activities until 7:00 pm.

*Childcare will be provided for newborn through 1st grade from 5:15 to 7:15 too.

Very exciting times! Contact Pastor Brown if you have questions.