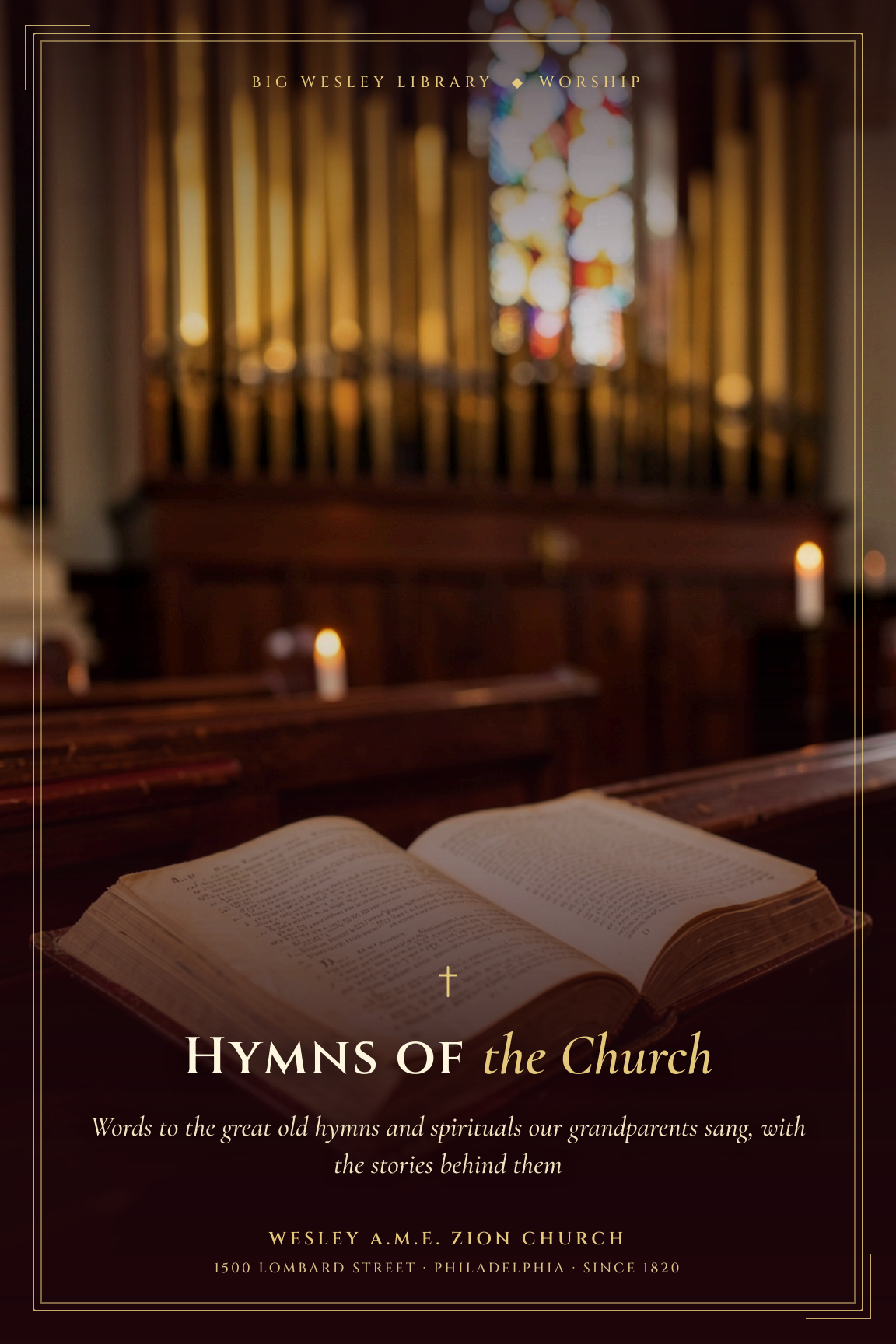


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HYMNS OF *the Church*

*Words to the great old hymns and spirituals our grandparents sang, with
the stories behind them*

WESLEY A.M.E. ZION CHURCH
1500 LOMBARD STREET · PHILADELPHIA · SINCE 1820

HYMNS OF *the Church*

*Words to the great old hymns and spirituals our grandparents sang, with
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THE BLACK CHURCH HAS ALWAYS BEEN A SINGING CHURCH. LONG before there were church buildings or printed hymnals, enslaved men and women sang the faith in spirituals — songs of sorrow, hope and coded freedom. Methodism itself was born singing: Charles Wesley, John Wesley's brother, wrote more than six thousand hymns.

These are some of the best-loved hymns and spirituals in our tradition. All of them are old enough to belong to everyone, so you are free to print and share them. Under each one is a little of its story. Sing them at home, hum them at work, and teach them to your children.

AMAZING GRACE

John Newton, 1779

- 1 Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
 That saved a wretch like me!
 I once was lost, but now am found,
 Was blind, but now I see.
- 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
 And grace my fears relieved;
 How precious did that grace appear
 The hour I first believed!

- 3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.
- 4 The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.
- 5 When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

THE STORY

John Newton was once the captain of a slave ship. After a terrifying storm at sea he turned to God, and years later he became a minister, repented of his part in the slave trade and spoke out for its abolition. *Amazing Grace* is his testimony: no one is too far gone for God's grace.

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

James Weldon Johnson, 1900 · music by J. Rosamond Johnson

- 1 Lift every voice and sing,
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

- 2 Stony the road we trod,
 Bitter the chastening rod,
 Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
 Yet with a steady beat,
 Have not our weary feet
 Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
 We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
 We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
 Out from the gloomy past,
 Till now we stand at last
 Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.
- 3 God of our weary years,
 God of our silent tears,
 Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
 Thou who hast by Thy might
 Led us into the light,
 Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
 Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
 Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
 Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
 May we forever stand,
 True to our God,
 True to our native land.

THE STORY

Written for schoolchildren in Jacksonville, Florida, to celebrate Abraham Lincoln's birthday, this hymn spread from church to church until it became known as the Black National Anthem. Its third verse is a prayer every generation needs.



"O come, let us sing unto the LORD." Psalm 95:1

BLESSED ASSURANCE

Fanny J. Crosby, 1873

- 1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

REFRAIN

*This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.*

- 2 Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

- 3 Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

THE STORY

Fanny Crosby lost her sight as a baby, yet wrote more than eight thousand hymns. When people pitied her blindness, she said that the first face she would ever see would be the face of her Savior.

IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL

Horatio G. Spafford, 1873

- 1 When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.
- REFRAIN
- It is well with my soul,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*
- 2 Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.
- 3 My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

- 4 And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
 The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
 The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
 Even so, it is well with my soul.

THE STORY

Horatio Spafford wrote these words after his four daughters died when their ship sank in the Atlantic. Sailing over the place where they had drowned, he found the faith to write: *it is well with my soul*.

WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS

Joseph M. Scriven, 1855

- 1 What a friend we have in Jesus,
 All our sins and griefs to bear!
 What a privilege to carry
 Everything to God in prayer!
 O what peace we often forfeit,
 O what needless pain we bear,
 All because we do not carry
 Everything to God in prayer!
- 2 Have we trials and temptations?
 Is there trouble anywhere?
 We should never be discouraged;
 Take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Can we find a friend so faithful
 Who will all our sorrows share?
 Jesus knows our every weakness;
 Take it to the Lord in prayer.

- 3 Are we weak and heavy laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.

LEANING ON THE EVERLASTING ARMS

Elisha A. Hoffman, 1887

- 1 What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

REFRAIN

*Leaning, leaning,
Safe and secure from all alarms;
Leaning, leaning,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.*

- 2 O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
O how bright the path grows from day to day,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.
- 3 What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

PASS ME NOT, O GENTLE SAVIOR

Fanny J. Crosby, 1868

- 1 Pass me not, O gentle Savior,
Hear my humble cry;
While on others Thou art calling,
Do not pass me by.

REFRAIN

*Savior, Savior,
Hear my humble cry;
While on others Thou art calling,
Do not pass me by.*

- 2 Let me at a throne of mercy
Find a sweet relief;
Kneeling there in deep contrition,
Help my unbelief.
- 3 Trusting only in Thy merit,
Would I seek Thy face;
Heal my wounded, broken spirit,
Save me by Thy grace.
- 4 Thou the Spring of all my comfort,
More than life to me,
Whom have I on earth beside Thee?
Whom in heaven but Thee?

SWING LOW, SWEET CHARIOT

Traditional spiritual

- 1 I looked over Jordan, and what did I see,
Coming for to carry me home?
A band of angels coming after me,
Coming for to carry me home.

REFRAIN

*Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home;
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.*

- 2 If you get there before I do,
Coming for to carry me home,
Tell all my friends I'm coming too,
Coming for to carry me home.

THE STORY OF THE SPIRITUALS

The spirituals were created by enslaved Africans in America, passed down by voice, not paper. They sang of crossing Jordan and going home, of Moses and Pharaoh, of a chariot coming down. They meant heaven — and many times they also meant freedom in the North. Harriet Tubman, a life-long member of the A.M.E. Zion Church, is said to have used songs to signal to people escaping slavery.

A PHILADELPHIA HYMN WRITER

The Rev. Charles Albert Tindley, a Methodist pastor here in Philadelphia, wrote some of the most loved gospel hymns of the early 1900s, including *Stand By Me* and *We'll Understand It Better By and By*. His songs helped shape the gospel music that followed. Big Wesley's own Rev. John E. Price, who served here in the 1890s, was also known as a hymn writer.



*“O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all
the earth.”*

PSALM 96:1

WESLEY A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

“Big Wesley” · The Freedom Church · Founded June 6, 1820

SUNDAY SCHOOL	9:30 AM
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SUNDAY WORSHIP	11:00 AM
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