



Telling Our Stories
250 Years of United Methodism
in the New York Area

1766-2016 www.nyac.com/250years



Hymn Writer, Teacher, and Mission Worker

1820-1915

Fanny Crosby

Fanny Crosby was a prolific writer of gospel music and a powerful advocate for special education and inner city rescue missions.

Crosby (1820-1915) was born in Brewster, NY. Having lost her sight as an infant, Fanny became an advocate for special education and passionate about sharing the Good News with people often overlooked by society and churches.

Active in Methodist congregations throughout her lifetime—she even earned the nickname, “the Methodist saint”—Fanny worshipped with congregations in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and, finally, at First Methodist Church in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

A lifelong poet, Crosby wrote over 8000 hymns and gospel songs—more than Charles Wesley and Isaac Watts combined. Her works include countless Protestant standards, including “Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine,” “Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross,” and “Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior.”

Crosby’s songs reached a wide audience and made her a celebrity. However, a desire to share the love of Jesus motivated her, not a quest for fame. She sang for presidents and power brokers, but her enduring legacy is the fact that humble people continue to experience God’s grace through her music.

For Discussion

- Look at some hymns by Fanny Crosby in the Methodist Hymnal. What still makes them relevant today?
- Open “Faith We Sing” or “Worship and Song” and look at some of the newer songs. What are the social issues that concern song-writers today?
- What are the elements of a good hymn? One writer listed them as: personal language; in the present; simple language; stickiness (i.e. easy to remember); and theologically sound. Do you agree? What other aspects would you include?

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