

Strawberry Baptist Association

Spirit



Rev. David Timma - Moderator

Vernon DeLong – Secretary

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God Bless America

“**God Bless America**” is written by Irving Berlin in 1918 during World War I and revised by him in the run-up to World War II in 1938. The later version was recorded by Kate Smith, becoming her signature song. “**God Bless America**” takes the form of a prayer (with introductory lyrics noting that “as we raise our voices, in a solemn prayer”) for God’s blessing and peace for the nation (“stand beside her and guide her through the night”). Irving Berlin wrote the song at the end of World War I while serving in the U.S. Army at Camp Upton in Yaphank, New York. He decided that it did not fit in a revue called “Yip Yip Yaphank,” so he set it aside. The lyrics at that time included the line “Make her victorious on land and foam, God bless America...” as well as “Stand beside her and guide her to the right with the light from above”. In 1938, with the rise of Adolf Hitler, Berlin, who was Jewish, having arrived in the U.S. from Russia at the age of five, felt it was time to revive it as a “peace song”, and it was introduced on an **Armistice Day** broadcast in 1938, and sung by Kate Smith on her radio show. This song has become her calling card. Berlin had made some minor changes; by this time, “to the right” might have been considered a call to the political right, so he substituted “through the night” instead. He also provided an introduction that is now rarely heard, but which Smith always used: “While the storm clouds gather far across the sea / Let us swear allegiance to a land that’s free / Let us all be grateful for a land so fair, / As we raise our voices in a solemn prayer.” In her first broadcast of the song, Kate Smith sang, “that we’re far from there” rather than “for a land so fair”. Berlin changed this when published the sheet music in 1939.

Woody Guthrie criticized the song, and in 1940 he wrote “**This Land Is Your Land**,” originally titled “**God Blessed America For Me**,” as a response. Anti-Semitic groups such as the Ku Klux Klan protested against the song due to its authorship by a Jewish immigrant. In 1943, Smith’s rendition was featured in the patriotic musical film *This is the Army* along with other Berlin songs. The manuscripts in the Library of Congress reveal the evolution of the song from victory to peace. Berlin gave the royalties of the song to The God Bless America Fund for redistribution to Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts in New York City.

The song was used early in the Civil Rights Movement as well as at labor rallies. In 1940, it was the official campaign song for both President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his Republican opponent, Wendell Willkie, representing cultural and religious tolerance. During the 60’s counterculture, it was increasingly used by Christian conservatives opposing secular liberalism and to silence dissenters who were in favor of communism or in opposition to the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. The song has been used by most major sports leagues, including the NHL, MLB, and NFL.

On the evening of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, during a live television broadcast, Speaker Dennis Hastert (*Republican*) and Tom Daschle (*Democrat*), members of the United States Congress, broke out into an apparently spontaneous verse of “**God Bless America**” on the steps of the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. “**God Bless America**” was sung at the Pentagon Memorial dedication on September 11, 2008. On July 21, 2011, the song was played as NASA’s final wakeup call for Space Shuttle *Atlantis* (STS-135), capping the 30-year Space Shuttle program.

*Intro: “While the storm clouds gather far across the sea, Let us swear allegiance to a land that’s free.
Let us all be grateful for a land so fair, as we raise our voices in a solemn prayer.”*

God bless America, land that I love.

Stand beside her and guide her, through the night with the light from above.

From the mountains to the prairies, to the oceans white with foam,

God bless America, my home sweet home,

God bless America, my home sweet home.

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Psalm 119

One of my favorite Psalms is the 119th. It speaks of God's revelation in His Word in several ways, using different terms for what is essentially Scripture. And the images it gives are amazing in how they confront the often-encountered stereotypes people have of God's Word. I find that most Christians are quick to say how much they value the Bible, but I am afraid that much of their perceived value is in the Bible as a Holy Relic, not the revealed Words of Life!!

There are many terms used in the psalm to refer to God's revelation, over and over, but in the first 9 verses we hear of:

The Law of the Lord	Statutes
Testimonies	Commandments
His Ways	Rules
Precepts	And finally, your Word!

Our response to the Word in all these forms is also expressed in so many ways. It is so much more than just reading, there is:

Walking in them	Delighting in them
Live and keep!	Longing for them
Being strengthened by them	Running in the way of them
Observing with a whole heart	Having an answer
Comfort in them!	Keeping them with our whole heart
Keeping them diligently	Meditating
Fixing my eyes on	Learning them
Storing them in our heart	and more!!!

And the results of these responses to God's Words are immense, they:

Keep us from shame	Make our way steadfast
Bless us	Keep us pure
Keep us from sin	Reveal wondrous things
Rebuke us	Delight us
Counsel us	Enlarge our hearts
Keep us from greed	

It is an understatement to say there is much to be learned from any of the Scriptures, but that 119th Psalm is rich beyond measure!

David

*Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.
 Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.
 When I feel afraid, think I've lost my way, still You're there right beside me.
 Nothing will I fear, as long as You are near, please be near me to the end.
 Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.
 Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet and a Light unto my path*

Strawberry News

“Joining Together to carry out the Great Commission.”

Pastoral Position

Flint Hill Baptist Church is Searching for a new Pastor. Flint Hill is a Small, Rural, Traditional, Family-Oriented Southern Baptist Church, located about 10 minutes west of Bedford, 45 minutes west of Lynchburg, and 45 minutes southeast of Roanoke, in Southwest Bedford County. Our new Pastor must meet the Biblical Qualification as listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. He must be a man Called by God to Preach the Bible, Minister to an aging Congregation, who will Teach us to Grow as Christians, and Lead us to Witness to our Community, so that we may Grow as a Church. This is a Part-Time Position and is ideal for someone with another source of income, or a student. We are aligned with the BGAV and the SBC and affirm the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message. If you know of someone who may be interested in serving as Pastor of Flint Hill, have them contact Rev. Vernon DeLong, Interim Pastor, at (540) 871-0588. Please send all Resumes to flintheillbaptistchurch@yahoo.com.

Bedford

- *Bedford Baptist was busy during the month of June beginning with **Vacation Bible School** starting June 9th – 12th. We averaged about 77 students with 36 teachers and about 6 youth volunteers. The children gave an amazing end-of-Bible School performance on the following Sunday.
- *We had **Baby Dedication** on Sunday, June 8th. There were 4 babies/toddlers being dedicated. This was a glorious event.
- *Our **Mission Team** went to Charlotte, NC the week of June 15th-21st, for a long hot week of spreading God’s word and manual labor.
- *On June 22, we had **Worship Services at Eagle Eyrie** followed by a picnic lunch and pool time.
- *July will be a much slower month with Business and Worship as usual.

Pecks

- *Our **Mission Team** went to Lynch, KY, the week of June 22nd – 27th. We had an Awesome Time!

Trinity

- *We will have our **Independence Day Celebration** on Sunday, July 6th, at 7:00 pm, with BBQ, Music, and Fireworks. Everyone Welcome!
- *We will be showing the movie **“King of Kings,”** on Sunday, July 13th, beginning at 6:30 pm.

Missions Opportunity

Mission Link International, located here in Bedford, Virginia, is seeking churches that will partner with them in the Great Commission call of multiplying believers, leaders, and churches in East Africa.

Our main objective, MLI Christian Study Centers, are laying the good foundation of God's Word in the minds of pastors and church leaders in Uganda that will help advance the gospel at such a faster rate than sending missionaries ever will. Equipping up to 50-60 new indigenous pastors/ministers each year will impact the lives of countless souls being drawn unto the Lord for salvation, PLUS transform entire villages and communities through the love experienced from their local churches empowered and filled with the Holy Spirit of God.

Training Pastors fulfills the Great Commission in the multiplication part of making disciples that will be laborers sent out to work for our Lord’s harvest (Mat. 9:38).

Listen to powerful testimonies of pastors by visiting: MissionLink.org/trainingpastors

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July

- 1 Pastor's Meeting – *Timber Ridge***
- 4 Independence Day**