

Blurb for December 16, 2018

#### News and Notes

This week we continue our John the Baptist theme with “On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry,” and that great Canadian hymn, “There’s a voice in the wilderness crying.” The choir will sing “Rejoice in the Lord Always” by the well-known Renaissance composer, Anonymous.

#### Sunday Bulletins

Today’s hymn “There’s a voice in the wilderness crying” is a rare breed indeed. It comes to us from Canada. The text is based on Isaiah 40: 3-11, which makes it an ideal Advent hymn for the Sundays that we talk about John the Baptist. Canadian journalist James Lewis Milligan wrote the text in 1925 to celebrate the union of the Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches in Canada. The text was first published in *The Hymnary* (Toronto, 1930), the hymnal of the newly formed United Church of Canada. This was the author’s only hymn text.

In 1938 the Committee for the Hymnal of the Anglican Church of Canada was meeting in Toronto at the home of the editor. The committee liked the text and wanted to use it but all the tunes they had seemed lacking. Henry Bancroft of All Saints’ Winnipeg suggested he go downstairs to a piano and see what he could come up with. Half an hour later he came back up with a rough sketch of the tune. It was a hit with the committee and was published in the 1938 Anglican Canadian hymnal. Although it’s an Advent hymn, the tune is called ASCENSION because it is named after the church that Bancroft had served at in 1936 and 1937: the Church of the Ascension in Hamilton, Ontario. It appears to have made its first appearance in the US in the 1970s and of course was included in our present *Hymnal 1982*.