

Music Blurbs for 10-20-19

News and Notes

This Sunday our hymns will include “O God our help in ages past,” “Stand by me,” and “Lift every voice and sing.” Our choir anthem will be Moses Hogan’s arrangement of the Spiritual “Hear My Prayer.”

Sunday Bulletins

Today’s hymn “When the storms of life are raging (Stand by me)” was written by Charles Albert Tindley (1851-1933). He was born on Maryland’s eastern shore in the town of Berlin. Some of his descendants still live in the area today in a part of town called Tindleytown.

He has been called the Prince of Preachers and the Father of Gospel music. His father was a slave but his mother was free, which made him free. He grew up among slaves and was not allowed to go to school to learn to read, but somehow he did manage to learn to read. After the Civil War he moved to Philadelphia and found work as a brick carrier and with the help of a local synagogue learned Hebrew. Through a correspondence course with the Boston Theological School he learned Greek. Without a degree, by examination with the highest scores he was qualified to be ordained as a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

After many posts, in 1902 he ended up at the Bainbridge Street Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia where he had at one time volunteered to be sexton. When he arrived it had 130 members. Under his leadership it grew to the point where a new property needed to be purchased in 1906: a church that seated 900 people. Over time it continued to grow to a 10,000 member multi-racial congregation.

Life was not easy for many in his congregation. Tindley went into action, partnering with local business people to not only to help feed the needy, but to

help people find jobs. Tindley and the church even formed a loan and mortgage association to provide loans to create opportunities for people to start their own businesses as well as for people to buy their own homes.

He was also a noted and prolific song writer. Today's hymn "When the storms of life are raging (Stand by me)" is one of his more well-known hymns. As he often did, he wrote both the words and music. It first appeared in his 1905 collection *New Songs of Paradise*. In this hymn we are assured that in spite of all our troubles, Christ has the power to overcome all suffering on earth. Another of his songs helped galvanize African Americans in their struggle for justice. "I'll overcome some day" became the basis of one of the civil rights movement's most iconic songs, "We shall overcome."