

Grace Notes

From: Rev. Jim Gorski

August 2025

Rock of Ages

*The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my
God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and
the horn of my salvation, my stronghold – Ps. 18:2*

The most popular hymn in the English language is John Newton's "Amazing Grace." It is the most sung, most recorded, and most loved hymn in the world. While it does not equal the popularity of "Amazing Grace" many people consider Augustus Toplady's "Rock of Ages" to be the second most popular hymn. Recently, I came across an interesting backstory to the hymn and its author.

Augustus Toplady was born at Farnham, in Surrey England, in 1740. He was the only child of an English Army officer who was killed in battle shortly after he was born. His mother raised him in the Christian faith and sent him to Westminster school in London. At the age of sixteen they left England and moved to Ireland.

Soon after moving, Toplady went to hear an uneducated Methodist layman preach to a small group of people gathered in a barn for an evening service. The text for the sermon was Ephesians 2:13: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." That evening, by God's grace, Augustus Toplady was "brought near" to God when he put his faith in Christ and was saved.

Later in life, Toplady reflected on the night of his salvation: "Strange that I, who had so long sat under the means of grace in England, should be brought near to God in an obscure part of Ireland, amidst a handful of God's people met together in a barn, and under the ministry of one who could hardly spell his name! Surely it was God's doing and it is marvelous! The excellency of such power must be of God, and cannot be of man. The regenerating spirit breathes not only on whom, but likewise when, where and as he listeth."

After believing on Christ for salvation, Toplady attended Trinity College in Dublin and graduated in 1760. Two years later, he was ordained as a minister of the Church of England and pastored several churches, including the French Calvinist Chapel in London.

In addition to his pastoral duties, August Toplady, a gifted poet, wrote several hymns and in 1776 he penned the lyrics to "Rock of Ages." Interestingly, Toplady wrote "Rock of Ages" to refute the Arminianism of John and Charles Wesley, with whom he was engaged in a public disputation, and to promote Calvinism. In fact, "Rock of Ages" was originally the climax to an article Toplady wrote in a Christian periodical, *The Gospel Magazine*, in which he supported the doctrine of election by arguing that just as England could never pay her national debt, so man through his own efforts could never satisfy the eternal justice of a holy God.

Never a man of robust health, Toplady contracted tuberculosis around the same time he wrote "Rock of Ages." Two years later, on August 11, 1778, Augustus Toplady, near to death, told his gathered friends: "Oh my friends, how good is God! His presence has been with me! Christ's love is unutterable! I cannot find words to express the comforts I feel in my soul! They are past expression. The consolations of God to such an unworthy wretch are so abundant, that He leaves me nothing to pray for but a continuance of them. I enjoy a heaven already in my soul. My prayers are all converted into praise. It will not be long when God will take me; for no mortal man can live, (bursting into tears of joy) after the glories which God has manifested to my soul."

Soon after declaring these parting words, Augustus Toplady, at the age of thirty-eight, took his last breath on earth and opened his eyes in glory. There he beheld Jesus, whose mercy, love, and grace given to sinners like himself, was the inspiration behind his beloved hymn, "Rock of Ages." While we cannot know Toplady's final thoughts before his soul left his body to be with Christ, perhaps the final stanza of "Rock of Ages" flashed before his mind:

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Yes. Let us hide ourselves in Christ our Savior, the Rock of Ages. He is the only safe place God gives sinners to stand.



*Thank you to all who helped with the
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*Everyone enjoyed a good picnic style
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MaryAnn & Robert Bennett

Dear Grace Presbyterian Church

**We are so grateful for your sweet
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Thank you for sharing your
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for a time of fellowship, food,
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**With love and blessings,
Randy & Christine (Bennett) Johns
and the His People family.**

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Praying for our Nation...

Every Wednesday morning at 10:00 a.m.

Our group of prayer warriors meets in the sanctuary for the sole purpose of praying for our nation. If you cannot attend, please join us in prayer from your home or office during that time as we follow the command to pray for all those in authority.

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(I Timothy 2: 1-2)



Blessed
is the **NATION**
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is the **LORD.**
Psalm 33:12

The Lord's Supper

will be observed on August 3 at the morning worship service.

Everyone is encouraged to be in prayer and repentance in preparation to partake in this holy sacrament.

Please pray for the following physical concerns and spiritual needs of each, individual.

Physical Well-being of Members and Friends:

Marsha Allison
Don Andries
Toni Andries
Ronney Arnold
Julia Benoit
Donna Blanchard
Gerri & Kit Bonvillian
Kristi Croxton
Shirley Croxton
Warren George
Keith Jackson
Marge Jackson
Gaylan & Amy McLin
Opal Neusetzer
Susan & Charlie Wimberly

Missionaries We Support:

Richard & TC Bailey (MTW) - Perth, Australia
Ellen Barnett (MTW) - Acapulco, Mexico
Margaret Frisbee (PEF) - Tennessee
Matt Roelofs RUF @ Tulane (PCA) - New Orleans
John & Cathy Rug (MTW) - Chile
Kenton Wood (MTW) - Guadalajara, Mexico
Julian Zugg (MINTS) - International

*Then you will call on me and come and pray to me,
and I will listen to you."*
Jeremiah 29: 12



Please Join us every Wednesday

Time: 10:30

Where: Fellowship Hall
Rev. Jim Gorski will be teaching from the book
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"Looking to Christ: The Book of Hebrews"
by Marci Ogrosky

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Just a reminder that the WIC is still collecting pennies for our missionaries! If you have any spare change that you've been looking to get rid of, feel free to drop it in the container in the Foyer or in the Sunday School Rooms.

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WIC Circle Meeting:	Tuesday, August 12 10:00 am
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Don't Forget **Men of the Covenant**

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Philippians 4:19

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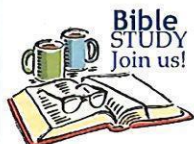
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AUGUST 2025

Back to..



The steadfast love
of the LORD never ceases; his
mercies never come to an end;
they are new
every morning; great is your
faithfulness. "The LORD is my
portion,"
says my soul, "therefore
I will hope in him."

Lamentations 3:22-24

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Communion	4	5	6 10:00 Prayer for The Nation	7	8	9
10 Session Meeting	11	12 10:00 am WIC Circle Meeting	13 10:00 Prayer for The Nation	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 10:00 Prayer for The Nation	21	22	23
24	25	26	27 10:00 Prayer for The Nation	28	29	30
31						

Sundays : 9:15 a.m. Sunday School • 10:45 a.m. Morning Worship Service

Grace Presbyterian Church

Presbyterian Church in America
9526 Joor Road
Baton Rouge, LA 70818

Grace Notes

Jesus and People

"Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:20

Jesus often stopped to talk with and care for people who had needs or questions—people who were poor, ill, or doubtful. This took a lot of time and energy. Jesus understood self-care and made time for prayer and quiet away from everyone, but he also made himself radically available to whomever he met.

Even as he prepared to ascend to heaven, Jesus promised to be with his followers. When Jesus gave his parting instructions, he did not abandon his disciples to the task, but rather said, "I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Jesus has given us his Spirit to walk with us through whatever challenges we face. The Spirit is always here, God with us.

As mentors, we can't match the 24/7 availability of the Holy Spirit, but we can choose to give people high priority. Jesus made time for people and reminds us that whatever we do for others, we do for him (Matt. 25:40). In the Spirit of Christ mentors make themselves available to help others along the way.

May we be as ready to serve, guide, redirect, encourage, confront, teach, share, testify, question, understand, listen, advise, and mentor others as Jesus, by his Spirit, has mentored us. In the Lord's strength, are you available for others, and thus for him to work through you, today? -from *Today Devotional*

Lord, give us the courage and strength to make ourselves available to others. May we invest in people's lives so that the name of Jesus is known throughout the earth. For Jesus' sake, Amen.



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