

# Women in Ministry!



## Song Writer & Witness: Fanny J. Crosby



Frances Jean (Fanny) Crosby (1820-1915) was one of the most prolific hymn writers of her generation. There are fifteen of approximately 9,000 of her hymns in our most current hymnal (1989). Blinded by an infection as a baby, she was sent to “the

Blind School” at age 15. She later taught English and History at this same school. By the middle of the century many in the United States considered her the most famous of ANY leader in country. Even when publishers published her poetry under pseudonyms she continued to write. And the stories of impact on others over the centuries has been tremendous.

In 1906 Ira D. Sankey (traveling Holiness worship leader) included several of Crosby’s hymns in *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns*. Sankey shares the following about the hymn “Blessed Assurance.”

During the war in the Transvaal in 1900, when the soldiers going to the front were passing another body of soldiers who they recognized, their greetings used to be “Four-nine-four, boys; four-nine-four.” The salute would invariable be answered with “Six further on, boys; six further on.” The significance of this was that, in *Sacred Songs and Solos* . . . Number 494 was “God be with you till we meet again;” and six further on, or number 500 was “Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine.”

Fanny Crosby was never ordained by a church or denomination, but she was truly a woman in ministry. Her gracious spirit has been a model for hymn writers and lyricists during her lifetime and the century since.

“Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
O what a foretaste of glory divine!  
...This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.”

The last few days I’ve seen National Siblings Day, National Hug Day, National No House Work Day (no kidding-April 7), National you name it ... Facebook knows!

I’m writing this newsletter on April 13 and today it is [National Make Lunch Count Day](#), [National Peach Cobbler Day](#), [National Scrabble Day](#), [National Thomas Jefferson Day](#), and [National Bookmobile Day](#). With all these going on I wondered about a National Bible Day or a Christian History Month. There are a multitude of reasons that a Christian History Month could be in poor taste but there is an International Day of the Bible: November 23.

Several years ago my aunt gave me my great aunt’s Bible. Her name was Isabel (Beezley) Holcomb. Isabel worked for a time at the Gospel Trumpet Co., then she and her husband, also ordained clergy, headed to the North West to be church planters for the Church of God. In her Bible I found two newspaper clippings, probably from the *Gospel Trumpet* since they were poems. Isabel wrote notes in the margins and on the back flap. The Bible is obviously well used.

International Bible Day — does my Bible look well used? Does yours?

### Regional Church of God Meeting/Round Tables

If you are anywhere close, be sure to register ASAP for one of the Regional Meetings. The first is just two weeks away in Portland/Vancouver (April 26-28). The second will be in Anderson (June 21-23) and the third in Philadelphia (Sept 27-29). You can register on the CHOG website (Jesus is the Subject). I will be in Vancouver and Anderson and would love to meet you. Maybe we can have coffee or catch lunch. You are important in the ongoing conversation about women clergy in the Church of God!



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MaryAnn Hawkins, Convener  
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