



Presents:

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL



A Celebration of the 250th Anniversary
of the Declaration of Independence

MAY 11, 2026 - 7:00 PM

**Galilean House of Worship
5078 A.L. Philpott Hwy. Martinsville, VA**

SmithRiverSingers.org



Program

Dr. Pamela Randall, Director

Beth Chapman, Accompanist

Welcome, Victoria Howard, Miss Commonwealth

Presentation of the Colors by the Colonel George Waller Chapter, SAR Color Guard

B.J. Nolan (Militia), Mark Leviner (Militia), Gene Reamey (Militia)
Pete Lovell (Continental), Mike Bass (Continental), Gary Hollandsworth (Civilian)

The Star-Spangled Banner (Still Water) – arranged by Connor Smith and Desmond Clark

"The Star-Spangled Banner" was written by Francis Scott Key on September 14, 1814, after witnessing the 25-hour British bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore during the War of 1812. Inspired by the American flag still flying at dawn, Key wrote the poem, originally titled "Defense of Fort M'Henry," which was later set to an English tune and adopted as the national anthem in 1931.

God Of Our Fathers – arranged by Mary McDonald

"God of Our Fathers" is a 19th-century American Christian hymn written in 1876 by Daniel C. Roberts for the 100th anniversary of the U.S. Declaration of Independence. It was originally set to different music, but the popular, dramatic version with trumpet fanfare was composed in 1892 by George W. Warren as the "National Hymn".

Battle Hymn of the Republic – arranged by Peter J. Wilhousky

"The Battle Hymn of the Republic" was written by poet and abolitionist Julia Ward Howe in November 1861, setting new, religiously inspired lyrics to the popular Union marching song "John Brown's Body". Published in February 1862, it became a seminal Union anthem, framing the Civil War as a divine moral crusade against slavery.

God is Nigh (Still Water) – arranged by Nicholas McKaig

Dissatisfied with the existing "Lights Out" call, Gen. Butterfield composed a new, less formal tune for his brigade. Originally, it was used as a "going-to-bed" signal in the summer of 1862. It was first used at a funeral in 1862 by Captain John Tidball, who deemed firing volleys over graves unsafe. Taps became an official bugle call after the Civil War and was officially incorporated into military funerals in 1891.

Lyrics

Day is done, gone the sun, from the lakes, from the hills,
from the sky. All is well, safely rest,

God is nigh.

Fading light dims the sight, and a star gems the sky,
gleaming bright from afar, drawing near falls the night.
Thanks and praise, for our days, 'neath the sun, 'neath the stars,
'neath the sky, as we go, this we know,
God is nigh.

Dear Sarah – text by Major Sullivan Ballou, music by James Syler

The "Letter from Sullivan Ballou" was made famous by Ken Burns's epic documentary, *The Civil War*. Ballou wrote this moving letter to his wife, Sarah (which was never mailed), a week before he was killed at First Bull Run. The letter was found among Ballou's effects when his body was retrieved for burial after the war. After Ballou's death, Sarah moved to New Jersey with her youngest son, William. There she remained, never to remarry, until her death in 1917 at age 80. Sullivan and Sarah Ballou are buried side by side at Swan Point Cemetery in Providence, Rhode Island.

Lyrics

My very dear Sarah, the indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days, perhaps tomorrow. And lest I should not be able to write again, I feel impelled to write a few lines that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more. I have no misgivings about or lack of confidence in the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. How great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and sufferings of the Revolution. And I am willing, perfectly willing, to lay down all my joys in this life, and to pay that debt. O Sarah, my love for you is deathless, it seems to bind me with mighty cables that nothing but Omnipotence can break; yet my love of Country comes over me like a strong wind that bears me unresistibly with all those chains to the battlefield.

The mem'ries of blissful moments I have spent with you come creeping over me. But something whispers to me perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar, that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you and when my last breath escapes me, it will whisper your name. O Sarah, if the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall be always near you in the gladdest days and in the darkest nights, always, always, and if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my breath as the cool air fans your temple, it shall be my spirit passing by. Sarah, do not mourn me dead, think I am gone and wait for me, for we shall meet again, wait for me, Sarah.

Inscription of Hope – arranged by Z. Randall Stroope

Trio: Kadeem Breedlove, Tehillah Munye, Bonnie Surma

The Holocaust is a stunning reminder of the tragic results of prejudice and hate toward other people. But it is also a reminder that hope held firm will eventually reign victorious over the greatest of odds. The following words were inscribed on the walls of a cellar in Cologne, Germany, where Jews were hiding from the Nazis during World War II. Hope was all they had to hold on to; hope was their only bridge to a brighter tomorrow.

Lyrics

I believe in the sun, even when it is not shining, and I believe in love, even when there's no one there.

And I believe in God, even when He is silent, I believe through any trial, there is always a way.

But sometimes in this suffering and hopeless despair, my heart cries for shelter, to know someone's there.

But a voice rises within me, saying hold on my child, I'll give you strength, I'll give you hope, just stay a little while. I believe in the sun, even when it is not shining, and I believe in love, even when there's no one there.

And I believe in God, even when he is silent, I believe through any trial, there is always a way.

May there someday be sunshine, May there someday be happiness,

May there someday be love, May there someday be peace.

Free-will Offering

Flanders Field – text by John McCrae, music by Paul A. Aitken

"In Flanders Fields" refers to the WWI battlefield region in Belgium (specifically the Ypres Salient) where intense fighting caused widespread devastation. Canadian physician Lt. Col. John McCrae wrote the famous poem in 1915 after losing a friend, inspired by poppies growing around soldiers' graves. The poem popularized the poppy as a symbol of remembrance.

Lyrics

In Flanders fields the poppies blow between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky, the larks, still bravely singing, fly.

Scarce heard amid the guns below. We are the Dead. Short days ago,
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow, loved and were loved, and now we lie in Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe: To you from failing hands we throw the torch.

Be yours to hold it high, if ye break faith with us who die,

We shall not sleep, though poppies grow in Flanders fields.

You Do Not Walk Alone (Still Water) – arranged by Elaine Hagenberg

Lyrics

May you see God's light on the path ahead when the road you walk is dark.
May you always hear even in your hour of sorrow, the gentle singing of the lark.
When times are hard, may hardness never turn your heart to stone.
May you always remember when the shadows fall – You do not walk alone.

I Hear America Singing – arranged by Andre J. Thomas

"I Hear America Singing" is a celebrated 1860 poem by Walt Whitman from his collection *Leaves of Grass*, which highlights the strength of ordinary American workers. Written on the eve of the Civil War, it celebrates the nation's vibrancy, industrial expansion, and individual, blue-collar workers as the true foundation of American democracy and identity.

Lyrics

I hear America singing of its greatness. I hear America singing strong.
I hear America singing of its beauty. I hear America singing today.
Oh, walk together, children. Don't you get weary.
Talk together, children. Don't you get weary.
There's a great camp meeting in the Promised Land.
Sing together, children. Don't you get weary.
Shout together children. Don't you get weary.
There's a great camp meeting in the Promised Land.
We're going to sing of truth and love.
Walk together hand in hand together in peace.
We're going to sing and never tire.
There's a great camp meeting in the Promised Land.
And America's singing!

Lift Every Voice and Sing – arranged by Rollo Dilworth

Often referred to as "The Black National Anthem," *Lift Every Voice and Sing* was a hymn written as a poem by NAACP leader James Weldon Johnson in 1900. His brother, John Rosamond Johnson (1873-1954), composed the music for the lyrics. A choir of 500 schoolchildren at the segregated Stanton School, where James Weldon Johnson was principal, first performed the song in public in Jacksonville, Florida, to celebrate President Abraham Lincoln's birthday. At the turn of the 20th century, Johnson's lyrics eloquently captured the solemn yet hopeful appeal for the liberty of Black Americans. Set against the religious invocation of God and the promise of freedom, the song was later adopted by NAACP and prominently used as a rallying cry during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

Lyrics

Lift every voice and sing, 'til earth and heaven ring, ring with the harmonies of liberty; Let our rejoicing rise high as the list'ning skies, let it resound loud as the rolling sea. Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us, Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us; Facing the rising sun of our new day begun, Let us march on 'til victory is won. Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod, Felt in the days when hope unborn had died; Yet with a steady beat, Have not our weary feet come to the place for which our fathers sighed? We have come over a way that with tears has been watered, We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered, Out from the gloomy past, 'til now we stand at last where the white gleam of our bright star is cast. God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, Thou who has brought us thus far on the way; Thou who has by Thy might Led us into the light, keep us forever in the path, we pray. Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee; Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand, True to our God, True to our native land.

America – arranged by Mary McDonald

"America the Beautiful" began as a poem written by Katharine Lee Bates in 1893, inspired by the vast, scenic view from the summit of Pikes Peak in Colorado. Published in 1895, it was later paired with an 1882 melody by Samuel A. Ward to become one of the nation's most cherished patriotic hymns.

The Lord Bless You and Keep You – Peter C. Lutkin

Orchestra

George Rodriguez – Violin 1	Samantha Allen – Violin 1	Donna Stewart – Violin 2
Cathy Fisher – Violin 2	Caroline Jarrell – Viola	Elana Conway – Viola
Lee Richey – Cello – Principal	Cori Trenczer – Cello	Julee Hickcox – Flute
Sarah Wardle-Jones – Flute	Mark Biggam - Oboe	Kevin Lewis – Trumpet
Nathan Tollison – Trumpet (MVHS)	Devyn Williams – Trumpet (MVHS)	Robb Shipp – Trombone
Ed Spencer – Trombone	Tyler Harding – Trombone (MVHS)	Emily McNair – French Horn
Addison Harris – French Horn (BHS)	Robert Chernault - Tuba	Andy Burnette – Percussion
Scott Allred – Percussion	Ben Flaneary – Percussion	James McArthur – Percussion

Smith River Singers

Soprano: Hazel Allen, Karen Beckett, Rachel Beneke, Gael Chaney, *Allison Collins, Flora Diehl, Callie Doss, Maxine Edwards, Rena Edwards, *Courtney Eure-Hart, Mary Jane Fields, Claire Gallop, *Erin Givens, Gayle Harms, Robin Haymore, Susan Largen, Susan Lyford, *Mary Ann McConnell, Whitney Melton, *Tehillah Munye, *Emily Patton, Anita Ray, DeLois Seaton, *Ashley Smallwood,

Alto: Margaret Caldwell, Brenda Cochran, Lori Doss, Ashley Dunovant, Myrna Ferguson, Betsy Hager, Kristin Hale, Joyce Hankins, Susan Henderson, Suzanne Hutchens, Kathy Long, Sandra Lyford, *Lucy Moore, Ashlee Mullis, Jan Norman, Mary Ann Peak, *Tara Phillips-Merrell, Kim Snyder, Shirley Stegall, Deborah Stone, *Bonnie Surma, *Jasmine Taylor-Vasquez, Susanne Moore Travis, Gloria Vipperman, Katherine Walker, Sharon Wigington, Lynn Wolf, Jan Zampich

Tenor: *Kadeem Breedlove, Richard Caldwell, John Christian, Sharon Coleman, John Fulcher, Camella Johnson-Gunn, Douglas Lawrence, Andy Lyford, *David McEntire, Lynn Pedersen, O. Cliff Rood, *Will Zimmer

Bass: *Rob Bailey, Smith Chaney, Andrew Doss, Jeff Franklin, Scott Norman, *Spencer Phillips-Merrell, *Jeff Stegall, *Terrence Taylor, Hunter Tinch, L. Stan Wright, Jr.

*Member of Still Water

Special Thanks

First Baptist Church-Martinsville – Rehearsal Space and Lending Library
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Andy Lyford – Piano Tuning
Adam Davis – Daydream Photography LLC
Shasta Carmichael – Sound Technician
Jennifer Doss – Marketing Consultant, Reach Studio

In Loving Memory

Mrs. Kitty Currie Neal, June 16, 1931 -January 13, 2026
Ms. Ruth Pace, February 1, 1925 - March 16, 2026

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“God Bless America,” a simple one-verse song became an overnight hit, and a hopeful song as war threatened.

“It’s not a patriotic song,” composer Irving Berlin said in a 1940 interview, “but an expression of gratitude for what this country has done for its citizens, of what home really means.”

Today, many Americans consider “God Bless America” an unofficial national anthem of the United States.



**SMITH RIVER SINGERS is a volunteer community chorus based in Martinsville, Virginia,
under the direction of Dr. Pamela Randall and is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.**

**OUR MISSION is to enrich the cultural life of our community through the pursuit of artistic excellence
in choral music performance.**



Smith River Singers is proud to be a community partner of Piedmont Arts

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Please check out our PBS special at Buzz4Good.com, featuring the Smith River Singers and highlighting our community, or at youtube.com at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XD5iqI02iz4>

**Rehearsals resume September 14, 2026, at First Baptist Church, Martinsville, 7:00 PM
Please join us!**

**Mark your calendar now for our Christmas Concert on December 14, 2026, 7:00 PM
Galilean House of Worship**



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