

# O GOD WHO GATHERS INTO ONE

Oftentimes, an anniversary, or dedication, or a birthday, or some other big celebration has been an occasion for a special hymn or piece of music to be written. And, long after people can remember what the occasion was, great hymns continue to be sung and that's the way it should be.

This hymn, *O God Who Gathers Into One*, was written to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of American Methodism, but, like so many other songs we sing in church, can be enjoyed and sung by people praising God in *any* church.

On Christmas Eve, in 1784, 60 lay preachers met with Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury in Baltimore, Maryland. The two men were elected, ordained and consecrated Bishops by this Christmas Conference. John Wesley had sent a liturgy and doctrinal statement for the occasion, and The Methodist Episcopal Church in America was formally established.

Stanza one lets us sing about all the people who have helped to make our faith strong — people from all times in history who have helped us keep the faith. Who do you think of who has helped make you a better Christian?

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Stanza two lets us sing about the prophets from ancient days who brought us to our present days, faithfully preserving God's word and law. Which prophets and people of old come into your mind?

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Stanza three lets us sing about our present days, and helps us pray for guidance as we seek our Master's will for our lives. Who are the important people in your life today?

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What other prayers do you have to offer for them?

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Stanza four lets us sing about exciting, unknown things to come. Who knows what they are, or what shall be? How often do we get to sing about that? What unknown things in the future do you wonder about?

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Stanza five prays for God to come, once again, and unite all peoples, to warm our heart as John Wesley's heart was strangely warmed, and stir us into new revived service to God. Ask your minister to tell you about the time that John Wesley's heart was strangely warmed at Aldersgate. Below list the people you think about who have served God exceptionally well.

## MY HEROES OF THE FAITH

Their name

What they did

Which stanza of this hymn would you be singing when you thought about them?

Their name	What they did	Which stanza of this hymn would you be singing when you thought about them?
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Does singing about your thankfulness for all of these wonderful people give you a warm feeling inside? \_\_\_\_\_  
In what ways does your own church celebrate its anniversaries, or recognize its early leaders?

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As you sing this hymn, think about those early heroes of your own church and honor them through your good singing.