

THE CHAPEL OF CYPRESS COVE

INTRODUCTION TO WORSHIP SERVICE AND SERMON – SEPTEMBER 26, 2021

Good morning, everyone…"*this is the day that the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it*." We have been led to believe that when the Psalmist wrote this scripture verse (118:24), he had been "uneasy" about the past days and even though he was stressed, he went to the Lord on the sabbath day and praised Almighty God with joy and happiness.

Today, this is a good lesson for us all to go to Almighty God and worship him with joyful praise.

I've asked our church director of music, Roy St Onge to bring us a message of joyful praise. Roy has many talents with one being a Christian certified lay speaker. His wife Gloria will also assist with the service. Worship is a time for inclusion so let us all praise Almighty God by calling ourselves to worship this morning…

Title: **"*This Is Your Life!*** ***Roy St Onge, Certified Lay Speaker***

Scripture: **Psalm 100: 1-5** **September 26, 2021**

I don't know how many of you remember an old tv show called "this is your life." It was hosted by a fellow by the name of Ralph Edwards.

He would bring all sorts of people on the show, mainly celebrities and proceed to tell the audience all about their lives; where they were born, their education, who affected their decisions that brought them to where they were today. So, what does that have to do with bringing you this mornings' message? Well, I'll tell you.

When ted asked me to bring today's message to you, I told him that I was going to speak about john, Jesus' beloved disciple and about some of the miracles that Jesus had performed as told to us, by john.

Ted said to me, "why don't you bring a message to the congregation about yourself?" I'm sure they'd like to know more about you, your music, your military background and you're calling to preach. I told him that I was very shy and didn't like talking about myself. You know what he said? I can't tell you….only kidding. Well, here goes.

I was born in a city about 12 miles north of Boston, Massachusetts. The name of which is well known to a great many folks from New England. I dare say the country. It's Lynn. Yes, yes, I know what you're saying, "Lynn, Lynn, the city of sin, you never go out the way you come in." I've heard that saying all my life. However, Lynn Massachusetts is a very historic city. At one point in time, it was the shoe capitol of the world. In fact, it

founded the first shoe making school in the country. It was also the home of the General Electric Company., where the first American jet engine was developed. It was a great place to grow up.

It seems that music was always a part of my life. I began my solo singing career at the age of 8. I of course was in our church's youth choir, and my first solo was a hymn called "Bring Them In." A while back Jim wert just happened to be playing it on the piano, and I remarked to him, "hey Jim, that was my first solo."

Needless to say, that was just the beginning of my singing career. I continued my singing during my grammar school years, where I was chosen to sing for our graduation exercises. The assistant supervisor of music for the city just happened to hear me, and unknown to me, certain things started to happen. When I entered junior high my music teachers took a special interest in me, and I received a bit of special musical theory, and vocal lessons privately. I also had begun my brass instrument lessons as well. I played both cornet as well as trumpet. When I entered high school, I of course chose the school chorus, as one of my classes. Guess who the director of the chorus was? That's right, the assistant supervisor of music for the city. I of course became the soloist for the chorus throughout my high school years. He and I became close friends and he continued my musical education. I truly believe that he wanted me to take over for him when he retired, but it wasn't to be.

I needed to start making money. So, I began my career in banking. I became part of the International banking department for the then First National Bank of Boston, which was the oldest chartered bank in Massachusetts, in 1784. At that time, we were responsible for transferring funds both domestically as well as internationally. I held several jobs within the department and wound up as a code tester. This meant that I was responsible for verifying numeric codes on the transfer requests that our wire department received and then sent to us for verification.

During this time a place called Vietnam became part of my life. I received a letter from the government that started with "greetings." The next thing I knew was that I was on my way to fort Jackson in Columbia, SC for basic training, with the U.S. Army.

During basic I became part of the chapel choir. I became friends with the chaplain. He wanted me to become his chaplain's assistant. He tried to get my orders changed. He also got me an audition for the 3rd army field chorus, but uncle Sam had different plans for me. After basic I was sent to ft. Gordon, in Augusta, Georgia, where I received my advanced individual training. Since I had some code experience, they assigned me to receive advanced communications training. I really can't tell you too much about it, because it was mainly classified. You know hush, hush! I eventually received my "top secret crypto" clearance while in Vietnam and maintained it for the rest of my tour of duty, with the army.

I have the dubious honor of being a survivor of the "Tet" offensive in 1968. I took part in some of the most intensive fighting of the war. I was part of a special unit stationed on Ton-Son-Anhut airbase in Saigon at the outset of the offensive.

Three days into the offensive my chief officer. called me into his office and told me that I was going to be part of an "A" team being sent to a place called Phu-Bai just outside of the city of Hue, where some heavy fighting was taking place. It was the northern most capitol city of south Vietnam. We were to establish a new base there and then we'd be responsible to maintain secure communications from the DMZ to Danang. There were 12 of us, and we had some very lively times during our time there. I won't go into details. Suffice to say, that

there were times when I'm sure that God had to be watching out for me, because I don't know how I made it out of certain situations. God truly had guided me through my time in Vietnam, through many dangerous and life-threatening times, which I was exposed to.

While I had been away the church of my youth, the first Methodist church of Lynn Massachusetts had merged with another Methodist church. It was difficult to deal with at first because my former church was one of the most historic in the area. It dated back to almost the Revolutionary war days. It had a bell cast by Paul Revere, and held many fond memories for me.

A few weeks after I returned home from Vietnam, I decided to go to one my old haunts. No, not what you're thinking. It was a roller-skating rink. While I was skating around the rink a young lady happened to bump into me. Her name was Gloria. We both wound up on the floor. As time went by, we got to know each other and wound up getting married in 1970.

We both became very involved with our new church. We sang in the choir, started a couples club and did our best to build up interest in the church. During this time, I was asked to join a new choral group that was being formed in Lynn. It was comprised of basically music teachers, and local soloists. It was called "The Concert Singers" of the North Shore. Our director was a Jesuit priest, believe it or not. We sang mainly classical pieces. We sang in Latin, German, French and of course English. Every Christmas season was highlighted by our performing of Handel's Messiah with a full orchestra. It was truly a great experience.

Over the years Gloria and I became members of several theatre productions companies, in our local area. We performed in everything from big musical productions, as well as dramas and or course comedies. As time passed, we were both involved with raising our family and as fate would have it, I received a calling to become a lay speaker in our local church. I took the necessary courses and became the lay speaker for our church. I went on to take further courses and training which entitled me to become a certified lay speaker for the Boston area conference of the United Methodist church. This meant that I was authorized to preach throughout our district conference area. I would be called upon to fill in for the pastors who were either ill or on vacation. I was very busy during the summer, as you can well imagine.

Gloria and I moved to Florida in 2006. We became active in our local Methodist church's choir and various committees. I became the director of our communities' male chorus and held that position for several years. We both became members of the Cultural Park Theatre Company in Cape Coral where we have been involved with many, many productions, too numerous to mention.

It has been my pleasure and honor to become the music director for The Chapel of Cypress Cove…until we had to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, I've seen our choir grow in numbers and increased performance capabilities. Hopefully we will return to our former selves soon and greatly sing to the glory of God once again. This is my hope and prayer.

I haven't gone into great detail with regards to all the groups I've been involved with over the years, such as the Boston Lyric Opera company and many others. However, I hope you have a better idea of what has brought me to where I am today, musically speaking. May God bless you all and may he bless the Chapel of Cypress Cove.

Amen!