****

**Hymn Stories ~ His-story**

**Celebrating the Children of God**

**July 11, 2021**

**Opening Hymn: “Jesus Loves Me!”**

Words: Anna B. Warner Music: William B. Bradbury

Anna and Susan Warner lived in a lovely townhouse in New York City where their father, Henry Whiting Warner, was a successful lawyer. But the ‘Panic of 1837 wrecked the family’s finances, forcing them to move into a ramshackle home on Constitution Island on the Hudson, right across from West Point Military Academy.

Needing to contribute to the family income, Anna and Susan began writing poems and stories for publication, launching parallel literary careers which resulted in 106 publication, eighteen of them co-authored. One of their most successful joint projects was a novel titled Say and Seal in which a little boy named Johnny Fox is dying. His Sunday School teacher, John Linden, comforts him by taking him in his arms, rocking him, and making up a little song: ‘Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so….’

The novel became a best seller, second only to Uncle Tom’s Cabin; and when hymnwriter William Bradbury read the words of John Linden’s little song (written by Anna), he composed a childlike musical score to go along with them. ‘Jesus Loves Me’ soon became the best-known children’s hymn on earth.

Morgan, Robert J. (2010) *Then Sings My Soul:150 Christmas, Easter, and All-Time Favorite Hymn Stories*, p. 185

**Closing Hymn: “Children of the Heavenly Father”**

Words: Lina Sandell (Carolina Sandell Berg) 1832-1903 Music: Swedish Folk Tune

Carolina (“Lina”) Sandell was a Lutheran pastor’s daughter in Froderyd, Sweden.  She was very close to her father and, during her childhood, she enjoyed playing quietly in her father’s study as he worked.

She began writing hymns at an early age.  When she was 26 years old, tragedy struck.  She and her father were passengers in a boat crossing Lake Vattern when the boat lurched and her father fell overboard.  As Lina watched in horror, her father drowned before anyone could mount a rescue effort.

When tragedy strikes, some people allow it to destroy them, but Lina’s faith saw her through the tragedy.  Her grief gave her music a new depth and sensitivity.

During her lifetime, Lina wrote 650 hymns.  “Children of the Heavenly Father” is the one that is most familiar to English-speaking congregations.

Copyright 2007, [Richard Niell Donovan](https://sermonwriter.com/richard-niell-donovan/) (2010)