

HE KEEPS ME SINGING

Luther B. Bridgers, 1910.

“He Keeps Me Singing” is a hymn written and composed by Luther B. Bridgers following the tragic death of wife and three sons in 1910. It was first published in Charles Tillman’s *“The Revival #6”*, and subsequently 156 other hymnals. The text tune: SWEETEST NAME is sometimes paired with a different title, such as *“There’s Within My Heart a Melody”*. This hymn has been recorded by country music singer songwriter, Slim Whitman, Jake Hess, and Babbie Mason.

Luther Bridgers was born in 1884 and by the age of 17 he had been a zealous preacher of the Gospel. He served as an evangelist in the American South. Bridgers fell in love with a beautiful Kentucky girl and after a romantic courtship, the two were married. As the years flowed by, God gave the happy couple three little boys, and the Bridgers’ prayed they would grow up to honor and serve the Lord.

Pastor Bridgers accepted an invitation to minister at a two week conference in Kentucky in 1910, so he left his family in the care of his father-in-law and made the trip to Kentucky. Looking back over his shoulder, he saw his wife standing at the gate with the baby in her arms and a boy on each side. The two weeks were inspiring and following his last sermon, he couldn't wait to tell his wife about all the blessings. But when he called, it wasn't her voice he heard on that long distance line. He listened in silence to the news that a fire had burned down father-in-law’s house; his wife and all three of his sons had died in the blaze. Distraught, Bridgers leaned heavily on His Savior and expressed his faith in God during a tearful moment by penning words to the hymn, *“He Keeps Me Singing”*.

Luther Bridgers continued to pastor in Georgia and North Carolina and in 1914 he was named General Evangelist by the Methodist Episcopal Church. He met and married Aline Winburn with whom he sired Luther B. Bridgers, Jr. In the years immediately following World War I Bridgers extended his evangelistic outreaches to Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Russia, before retiring in 1945 in Gainesville, Georgia. A gifted singer and pianist, Bridgers also penned a number of other hymns.

~Tull