



2021

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

For many years at Maples, we have asked our church staff, adults, and youth share their thoughts on selected scriptures during Advent. This year, we are adding a few new elements to our devotionals. If we have learned nothing else from the last year, we have learned the importance of family, friends, and community. Each week we will experience devotional based on Scripture, the history behind many well known and unknown Advent/Christmas Carols. On Saturdays, we will share a favorite Advent/Christmas memory from a member of our congregation. We hope that as you journey through this season of Advent, you experience the Hope, Love, Peace, and Joy of Christ!

As you take time each day to read these reflections, prepare yourself. Find a quiet place, maybe by the tree so beautifully decorated in your living room. It might be your favorite comfy chair with a cup of coffee or hot chocolate as you begin or end the day. Wherever you find yourself, take a moment and breathe. You will find the scripture for each day, a reflection, and a prayer. You will also have a few lines below the reading to journal your own response. As we journey together, know that you are loved! The season of advent is all about expectation, longing, loving, and celebration.



1ST WEEK OF ADVENT

November 28th

Read: Luke 1:26-38

Reflection by Dr. Joey Lott, Worship Arts Pastor

Two women...two amazing stories! First, Mary's story continues to amaze me over and over again. A young woman of no reputation or status is visited by an angel and informed that she will become pregnant, by the Holy Spirit, with *the Son of God*. She will carry and give birth to the Savior of the world, the King all of Israel has been waiting for.

Second, which is just as amazing, is the proof Gabriel offers that such a thing is possible. Mary's much older cousin Elizabeth, who has been barren, is six months pregnant! Elizabeth was a woman of standing and reputation. Her husband is a temple priest and she is the daughter of Aaron. Despite that, she did not and could not have children, which would have been a source of great shame for a wife in those days. But after many years, God, in Elizabeth's words, "looked with favor upon" her and "took away [her] disgrace among men." (Luke 1: 25)

If Mary had any concerns about the scandal or costs of being pregnant and unwed, she could look to her cousin—humiliated for much of her married life, but never left or forsaken.

So here we have two women who show courage (Mary) and offer hope (Elizabeth). One helps me face the mystery of a life with Christ. The other reminds me that because of Christ, my circumstances don't have the last word; that even in the darkest places, I am seen and not forgotten in God's story. Both women inspire me to greater faith.

PRAYER: Loving God, give us courage and boldness to live expectantly during this Advent season!

My Response/Thoughts:

November 29th

HISTORY OF AN ADVENT HYMN

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

'O Come, O Come Emmanuel' was originally written in Latin with a title of 'Veni, Veni, Emmanuel' (documents featuring the title and words date back to 1710). The English translation of the Christmas carol came about in 1851 when priest and scholar John Mason Neale's version featured in the pages of *The Hymnal Noted* – a key text in the history of hymns collected by hymnal documenter Thomas Helmore.

Neale also originated the words to "Good King Wenceslas", making him officially one of history's most festive clergymen.

Since Helmore's version, slight adaptations and additional verse translations have coalesced into the version most commonly sung today, which includes two extra verses:

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel – full lyrics

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free thine own from Satan's tyranny; from depths of hell Thy people save, and give them victory o'er the grave. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high, and cheer us by Thy drawing nigh; disperse the gloomy clouds of night,

And death's dark shadows put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Key of David, come and open wide our heav'nly home; make safe the way that leads on high, And close the path to misery. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Adonai, Lord of might, Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height, In ancient times didst give the law In cloud and majesty and awe. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

What is 'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel' about?

Quite unusually for a Christmas carol still commonly performed, there are all sorts of arcane words and expressions littered throughout. This is perhaps because the strong roots of the Latin text come from the 'O Antiphons' (so-called because each one begins with an 'O'), traditionally used during the last seven days of advent during the Roman Catholic Vespers service.

The distinctly biblical feel of the lyrics differ from the more overtly celebratory tone of most carols (there's no herald angels harking nor flocks being watched by night, for example), and the actual nativity narrative doesn't feature in any meaningful way.

The Emmanuel of the title refers to the Hebrew 'Immanuel' which appears in the Book of Isaiah in the Old Testament more as a sign of God's protection than an actual person, whereas in the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament the name Emmanuel refers specifically to Jesus Christ.

November 30th

Read: Isaiah 9:2-7

Reflection by Joel Garrett, Pastor to Youth and Families

The prophet Isaiah spoke to a broken people living in deep darkness. No longer united under any king in David’s line, God’s people were divided amongst themselves and lived under the oppression of enemy powers. The people of Israel were conquered by the Assyrian Empire, while Judah lived in Assyria’s shadow as a tributary. Gone was the joy of David’s kingdom, the splendor of Solomon’s rule. God’s people were splintered, their spirits were low, and many had given up on God entirely.

But Isaiah calls them to see beyond their immediate circumstances, and to look to the great hope they have in God. Yes, Isaiah says, you have walked in darkness—but look! there is a great and everlasting light that has already come to you. God has not forsaken you. In the right time, God will send his anointed one, his Messiah, to break the powers that burden and defeat you.

As we read this passage in the season of Advent, we can receive Isaiah’s words as a promise of the coming of Christ: once as a child in humility and weakness, and then as the King of kings and Lord of all. God has not abandoned us. At Christmas, we look and see that a great and everlasting light has already broken through the darkness.

PRAYER: Almighty God, thank you for sending Jesus to be a light for us in dark places. Help us to look to him whatever our circumstances, and to receive the life he offers.

My Response/Thoughts:

December 1st
HISTORY OF AN ADVENT CAROL

COME THOU LONG-EXPECTED JESUS

"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" was written by Charles Wesley. He wrote the song to commemorate the Nativity of Jesus and prepare for the Second Coming. He intended the song to be sung during Advent and Christmas.

Charles Wesley

In 1744, Charles Wesley looked at the situation of the orphans in the areas around him. He also thought of the great class divide in Great Britain at the time. He considered Haggai 2:7, "Born Your people to deliver, born a child and yet a King, born to reign in us forever, now Your gracious kingdom bring. By Your own eternal Spirit, rule in all our hearts alone; by Your all sufficient merit, raise us to Your glorious throne. Amen."

He adapted this prayer into a hymn and published it in his "Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord" hymnal.

"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" was the first of a number of Wesley's hymns that became known as the "Festival hymns".

The hymn spread throughout England and was made popular by Charles Spurgeon to other denominations.

Spurgeon preached a sermon in 1855 on the hymn to "illustrate his point that very few are "born king" and that Jesus was the only one who had been born king without being a prince."

In 1875, the hymn was first published in the *Methodist Wesleyan Hymn Book*.

The hymn has had a number of tunes and it is unknown what Wesley originally used. The first tune used is believed to be "Stuttgart" written in 1716 by Christian Friedrich Witt.

A later tune used for it was "Hyfrydol", a Welsh tune written in the 1800s by Rowland Hugh Prichard, which is also used for Wesley's *"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"*. Both tunes have the most popular in usage with the hymn.

My Response/Thoughts:

December 2nd

Read: Luke 1:68-79

Reflection by Barry White, Chancel Choir and Leadership Team

Today's text is part of a sequence of praise "songs" – the Magnificat of Mary, Song of Zechariah, and Song of Simeon. Zechariah is the father of John the Baptist. Zechariah's wife Elizabeth and her cousin Mary, the mother of Jesus, were pregnant at the same time. Mary lived with Elizabeth and Zechariah for three months and then returned to her home shortly before Elizabeth's baby was born. Tradition would have named the baby after his father but instead, he and Elizabeth chose to name the baby John.

Zechariah had been unable to speak for some time before the baby John was named. When the name was declared, Zechariah's ability to speak returned, he was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he spoke the prophecy that we call the Song of Zechariah.

Zechariah thanks God for redeeming his people by raising up a mighty Savior from the house of David. Through this act, God has shown the mercy promised to the Jews and has remembered His Holy Covenant. God has remained faithful to God's promises.

Zechariah then recalls the promise of God to Abraham, that God's people, being rescued from their enemies, might serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness. God's way is salvation.

God gave knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. Then by God's tender mercy the dawn from on high will break and give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

So the ultimate message here is Peace!

PRAYER: Dear God, Thank you for the fabulous blessing of your son Jesus, who you sent to us to light our way and guide us onto the path of Peace. Help us to find our way as we remember your great gifts to us. Amen.

My Response/Thoughts:

December 3rd History of an Advent Carol

PEOPLE LOOK EAST

*People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Guest, is on the way.*

Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965) received much encouragement as a writer from her parents, Benjamin Leopold Farjeon, a successful writer and novelist, and Maggie Jefferson Farjeon, daughter of an American actor.

"Nellie," as she was affectionately called by her parents, was a small, shy young girl. She later cared for her dying mother for the twelve years of a long and difficult illness. One brother, Harry, was a composer; and her other brothers, Joseph and Herbert, were writers.

Farjeon had a vivid imagination. Her father encouraged her to write from the age of five. At age eighteen, she penned the libretto for an operetta composed by her brother Harry. In spite of her shyness, she participated in a circle of talented artists, writers, and musicians.

Farjeon grew up in England in a home surrounded by books. She and her brothers both enjoyed reading stories to one another and writing their own. In the United States, Farjeon's best-known work is the hymn "Morning Has Broken" (later recorded by Cat Stevens, now Yusuf Islam, in 1971); but in England, she is beloved as the author of more than eighty children's books and poem collections, most notably *Elsie Piddock Skips in Her Sleep*, *Martin Pippin in the Apple Orchard*, and *The Little Bookroom*.

Some of Farjeon's books won prestigious recognitions, including the Hans Christian Andersen Award and the Carnegie Medal. The artist refused another prize, Dame of the British Empire, explaining that she "did not wish to become different from the milkman." Upon her death, the Children's Book Circle established the Eleanor Farjeon Award in her honor.

"People, Look East" first appeared in *The Oxford Book of Carols* (1928). The lively tune, a traditional French carol BESANÇON, which earlier appeared with the anonymous text, "Shepherds, shake off your drowsy sleep," provides a festive setting for this wonderful Advent text. In the last forty years, this hymn has gained increasing popularity, as evidenced by its appearance in a number of hymnals in the United States.

Key images of the season are abundant. "People, Look East" is the direction of the rising sun and, in the history of Christianity, the direction of the coming Messiah. In stanza two, the bare earth is waiting for the seed that will flourish in the reign of the Promised One. In stanza three, the stars that guided the Magi shape the "bowl" of the heavens, giving signs of hope beyond "the frosty weather." The angels' song, in stanza four, sets "every peak and valley humming," an oblique reference to Isaiah 40:4, "Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low. . ."

December 4th
Advent/Christmas Memory
by
Barbara Watson

“Christmas in Minnesota”

Decorating was different at our house. Many of our friends and family would have lots of decorations inside and out of their homes. We, on the other hand, would just a wreath on the door, a few ornaments and evergreen on the tables - You see Santa brought our Christmas tree. John, my husband, was well....cheap. He would bring a tree home from his office on Christmas Eve, bare of course. The office would need the decorations for the next year. We always went to church on Christmas Eve. In Minnesota, it was beautiful. There was always snow. A winter wonderland!

One Christmas eve, our kids were still young (Bruce 7 years old, Blake 4 years old, and Sandra 1 year old), we were on our way home from church to decorate the tree from the office and then put the kids to bed. While driving home, we turned the corner and lo and behold, there he was! Santa! Santa was walking down the street with a large bag over his shoulder. Bruce cried out, “There’s Santa!” Blake couldn’t speak because he was in shock and Sandra at 1 year old could care less. John in his infinite wisdom said, “We’d better get home and go straight to bed! It looks like Santa is in the neighborhood!” My thoughts were....sure John, we have a lot to do and a tree to decorate!

My Advent/Christmas Memory:



2ND WEEK OF ADVENT

December 5th
Read: Matthew 1:18-25
Reflection by Rev. Sam Jones, Associate Pastor

Decisions. We're all faced with them. Some are easy, others not so much. But when we make decisions, are we doing what God wants us to do or do we rely on an ethic we've become accustomed to? Whichever it is, God has a way of intervening in our decisions. Joseph was prepared to send Mary away in secret, to divorce her in order to spare her the public castigation she would likely face when it was discovered she was carrying a child. He believed that he was doing the right thing since he was "a righteous man," but not willing to shame her. And because he was a Nazirite Jew, Joseph was prepared to rely on the ethic of Jewish legalism in sending Mary away. Yet see how God intervened on behalf of Joseph, Mary, and the child she was carrying!

This Advent season, ask yourself: Am I making decisions based on how I feel at a given moment? Am I relying too much on my environment when deciding? Am I confined to a given cultural context, like finances, status, and "what others will think?" Or am I fervently praying to God to give me direction in my life? When we fully rely on God to guide us in our decisions, things we never could have imagined will happen. It certainly did for Joseph.

PRAYER: O Lord, I fully confess that I am not my own. Help me to not reject your plans for me. I pray that you guide me daily so I may make decisions which are pleasing in your eyes. Amen.

My Response/Thoughts:

December 6th
HISTORY OF AN ADVENT HYMN

HAIL TO THE LORD'S ANOINTED

*"Hail to the Lord's Anointed,
Great David's greater Son!
Hail in the time appointed,
His reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
To set the captive free;
To take away transgression,
And rule in equity."*

James Montgomery (1771-1854) followed in the footsteps of two poetic luminaries—Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley. In many hymnals he is well represented, third only to Watts and Wesley for British hymn writers before 1850, with six hymns in *The UM Hymnal*.

Hymnologist Albert Bailey notes that "One cannot call him a great poet, but he knew how to express with sincerity, fervor, simplicity and beauty the emotions and aspirations of the common Christian."

Montgomery's father was a minister, and his parents later served as missionaries to the West Indies. James remained in Yorkshire and was raised from age 6 in a boy's boarding school administered by the Brethren of Fulneck. Montgomery later said, "There, whatever we did was done in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, whom we were taught to regard in the amiable and endearing light of a friend and brother."

He began writing poetry at age 10, inspired by the hymn of the Moravians, the same group that inspired John Wesley. Despite flunking out of school at age 14, Montgomery found a job in 1792 at a radical weekly newspaper, the *Sheffield Register*. He assumed the leadership of the paper not long after, when the previous editor fled the country fearing persecution for his politics.

At this point, Montgomery changed the name of the paper to the *Iris*, and served for 31 years as editor, during which he was a tireless supporter of social justice. He was jailed twice for his radical views, using the time in prison to write poetry.

This hymn was originally an eight-stanza poem, a paraphrase of Psalm 72 written in 1821 for a Christmas leaflet, "Moravian Ode."

Psalm 72:1-4 reads in the Authorized Version (KJV): "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor."

No doubt, Montgomery knew Isaac Watts' famous paraphrase of Psalm 72, "Jesus shall reign" (*UMH* 157). While Watts' extensive paraphrase of this psalm points explicitly to England's expansion throughout

the world, Montgomery’s paraphrase points to the coming kingdom where the oppressed will be freed and Christ will “rule in equity.”

English literary scholar and hymnologist J.R. Watson would disagree with Bailey’s assessment of Montgomery’s poetic skills, calling him “a considerable poet” who was friends with the great Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Watson suggests that Montgomery was influenced by Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), in which “the end of Jupiter’s tyranny is accompanied by the revival of life on earth, in the spring, as Prometheus is freed.” Watson continues, “Montgomery here writes a Shelleyan drama in miniature, linking it with the coming of the kingdom of God upon earth.”

Montgomery’s closing line of the final stanza, “that name to us is love,” reminds me of Charles Wesley’s closing line at the end of his great hymn, “Come, O thou Traveler unknown”—a narrative ballad that parallels Jacob’s struggle in Genesis 32 with the angel at Peniel.

Wesley concludes his struggle with the revelation that “thy name is love.” For Montgomery, the world had been struggling long and hard with sin and oppression, a world that could (and can) only be redeemed by the one whose name is Love.

My Response/Thoughts:

December 7th

Read: Luke 1:39-45

Reflection by Cindy White, Worship Arts Chair and Chancel Choir Member

This passage documents the first time Jesus is identified as Lord by a human being! Elizabeth, the aging wife of the priest, Zechariah, was shamed and disgraced among the Jewish community because she was barren, yet God chose her to bear a baby, John the Baptist, who would prepare the way for Jesus. Elizabeth believed she would deliver a son and both she and her unborn baby were filled with the Holy Spirit, recognizing the unborn baby Jesus as Lord even though Mary had not yet told Elizabeth she was pregnant. Mary was also shamed and disgraced among her people because she was a pregnant, unmarried woman. In spite of this status, Elizabeth greets Mary with praise, joy and blessings as the mother of the future Lord. Elizabeth honors Mary because of Mary's trust in God's promise of the delivery of the Son of God.

God chose to use two, shamed, disgraced women, to introduce John the Baptist, and then our Lord, Jesus Christ to the world! God took away their shame and made them both blessed and highly regarded among mankind. Both Mary and Elizabeth had the faith to recognize God's promise to them. During this season of Advent, this passage calls on all of us to reflect on the unexpected people God uses to work for His Will. Can we as Christians open our hearts and minds to the unexpected people God chooses to work in our world for His will?

PRAYER: Dear Father In Heaven, grant us the wisdom to acknowledge and accept your works in our lives through the unexpected. May we always open our hearts to accept the shameful by recognizing you have taken the shame away from all mankind with birth of your Son. Help us to honor all we encounter with openness and love. In Christ's Name we pray. Amen

My Response/Thoughts:

December 8th
HISTORY OF AN ADVENT HYMN

Lo How A Rose E'er Blooming

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" is a familiar and beloved Advent hymn. The hymn's origins may be traced back to the late 16th century in a manuscript found in St. Alban's Carthusian monastery in Trier in the original German, "Es ist ein Ros entsprungen." The original stanzas (sources list at least 19 and as many as 23) focused on the events of Luke 1 and 2 and Matthew 2.

The origin of the image of the rose has been open to much speculation. For example, an apocryphal legend has it that on Christmas Eve, a monk in Trier found a blooming rose while walking in the woods, and then placed the rose in a vase on an altar to the Virgin Mary.

Some Catholic sources claim that the focus of the hymn was originally upon Mary, who is compared to the symbol of the "mystical rose" in Song of Solomon 2:1: "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys."

It has been suggested that at a later date Protestants took the hymn, altering its focus from Mary to Jesus. Citing Isaiah 11:1—"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."—some controversy arose as to the original German word in the first line of stanza one: Was it "Ros" (rose) or "Reis" (branch)?

A third passage from Isaiah 35:1 suggests a stronger biblical basis for the image: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."

The image of the rose has had amazing resilience over the centuries. I have an icon that I purchased in a desert monastery in Greece some years ago. Anna, the mother of Mary, is dressed in green and is the larger figure; her daughter Mary is seated in front of her in red. At first it appears that the figure of Jesus, so common with images of Mary, is not present. Then, upon closer examination, one notices that Mary is holding a flower—Isaiah's promise fulfilled.

Theodore Baker (1851-1934) provided the most commonly sung translation of stanzas one and two in 1894. Born in New York and educated in Leipzig, he is remembered primarily for his monumental *Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, the first edition appearing in 1900 with subsequent editions continuing to the present.

The third stanza in the *United Methodist Hymnal* is a slightly adapted version of a stanza written in German by Friedrich Layritz (1808-1859) and translated by Harried Reynolds Kraugh (1845-1925) in 1875.

Layritz's final stanza expands the metaphor of the Rose image, adding fragrance. The author would appear at first to mix his metaphors, but he then petitions the "Flower" to "dispel in glorious splendor the darkness everywhere." Of course, this is no ordinary flower and it represents Christ, the Light of the World. The hymn ends with an allusion to the Nicene Creed—"True man, yet very God"—and petitions the "Flower" to "from sin and death now save us, and share our every load."

Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878), the famous 19th-century translator of German hymns, offers another beautiful version of the first two stanzas from the German. It is interesting to compare her version of stanza one with the stanza we commonly sing:

*A Spotless Rose is growing,
sprung from a tender root,
Of ancient seers' foreshowing,
Of Jesse promised fruit;
its fairest bud unfolds to light,
amid the cold, cold winter,
and in the dark midnight.*

The famous composer Michael Praetorius (1571-1621) helped the popularity of this tune immensely by harmonizing it in his collection *Musae Sioniae* (Zion's Music) in 1609. His harmonization of this German tune, or adaptations of it, may be found in most hymnals.

My Response/Thoughts:

December 9th

Read: Isaiah 35:1-10

Reflection by Daniel Thomas, Leadership Team Chair and Chancel Choir Member

The past two years have been long. We have been assaulted by many external forces and rules and changes. This has often left us feeling hopeless or scared, with our life on a helpless repeat. The movie *Groundhog Day* plays over and over in our heads. Our lives have changed one way or another. Does this sound familiar?

The good news is that Isaiah gives us hope amid this sorrow. He reminds us not to lose our faith and do not fear these times. His words remind us of the hope we have in God's promise. This passage focuses on having Joy and that our focus on God will give us great strength and support from him and his acts. God is working and always looking out for us in our everyday lives.

Many of us plan to travel and vacation for Christmas. The good news is that God does not take a break during Advent, and he continues to protect the faithful and supports his people so that we can genuinely experience true Joy.

The focus of Advent is the waiting and celebration of the birth of Christ. It is filled with excitement and planning. Lights go up, and decorations are done in and outside of our houses. Many people still struggle in this season to experience Joy. However, we can remember that God is with us in good and bad times and his presence and commitment to us are confirmed through Jesus.

PRAYER: *Dear Lord, in the midst of our struggles, help us find your joy. Let us be reminded of your grace and your love for us in the birth of your Son, Jesus. Let all of our struggles and concerns be lifted away as we understand the pure joy offered to us through your Word.*

My Response/Thoughts:

December 10th
HISTORY OF AN ADVENT HYMN

I WANT TO WALK AS A CHILD OF THE LIGHT

From time to time, a hymn captures our imagination because of its simplicity and transparency. Such a hymn is "I want to walk as a child of the light." In singing this hymn, we feel the spirit of Epiphany unfold.

Kathleen Armstrong Thomerson (b. 1934) is a native of Tennessee. She wrote the hymn during the summer of 1966 during a visit to the Church of the Redeemer in Houston, Texas, the location providing the origin for the tune name HOUSTON. Her musical education took place at the University of Texas and Syracuse University, with additional studies at the Flemish Royal Conservatory in Antwerp. She has studied with several of the most noted organists of the twentieth century.

Ms. Thomerson directed music at University United Methodist Church in St. Louis and was on the organ faculties of St. Louis Conservatory and Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville. From 2004 through 2013, she served Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Austin, Texas. In addition to this hymn, she contributed tunes for hymns by Patricia B. Clark in their joint collection, *A Taste of Heaven's Joys: A Collection of Original Hymns* (2005).

"I want to walk as a child of the light" comes to The United Methodist Hymnal by way of the Episcopal Hymnal 1940 supplement, *Songs for Celebration* (1980). A musician with such a distinguished musical pedigree does not usually compose a gospel hymn of such elegant simplicity. A folk-like melody conveys a text based upon a wide range of scriptural allusions and biblical images. *United Methodist Hymnal* editor, Dr. Carlton Young notes some biblical passages that support the text: Isaiah 42:6c, "I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations."; Malachi 4:2, "But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings"; Revelation 21:25b, "And there will be no night there," and 22:5b, "They need no light of lamp or sun."

"I want to walk as a child of the light" communicates deep conviction and personal sincerity, while avoiding any hint of pretence. The first person perspective invites the singer to join Christ, the Light of the World, in discipleship – a journey of faith. The second line of each stanza deepens this commitment:
Stanza 1: "I want to follow Jesus."
Stanza 2: "I want to look at Jesus."
Stanza 3: "I want to be with Jesus."

From a Wesleyan perspective, the theology of this hymn outlines sanctifying grace, the perspective of the Christians as they move toward perfection in the faith, becoming transformed in the image of Christ. Each stanza adds greater luminosity to this walk. In the first stanza, "God set[s] the stars to give light to the world." Christ in turn becomes the "star of my life." References to stars support the hymn's appropriateness for Epiphany. Stanza two expresses the desire to "see the brightness of God." The "Sun of Righteousness" illumines "the way to the Father." The final stanza extends the journey toward the "coming of Christ," an eschatological direction toward our future hope.

As in most gospel hymns, it is the refrain that carries the essence of its meaning; and indeed it is this refrain, with its scriptural allusions that virtually quote from Revelation 21 and 22, that distinguishes this hymn from many earlier expressions of discipleship. While a deeply personal expression of piety, the poet roots her devotional expression firmly in Scripture, avoiding the maudlin and simplistic notions of some gospel songs.

The simplicity of the music and text does not imply a simplistic faith. "I want to walk as a child" reminds us of one of the paradoxes of our faith, that we need to become as a child to fully understand the realm of God (Matthew 18:2-4).

My Response/Thoughts:

December 11th
ADVENT/CHRISTMAS MEMORY
BY
Dr. Joey Lott, Worship Arts Pastor
“Christmas Interruptions”

It was Christmas Eve. I don't remember the year, but it was i think it was around 2005/2006. I was at my house getting things ready for the Christmas celebrations that would begin soon. I was walking outside to my car and my phone rang. It was John Sudduth, who was senior pastor at the time. Here is how the conversation went..."Hey Joey, I know you are getting ready and headed to church shortly. I'm calling to let you know I won't be there tonight, because my retina has detached and I have to lay flat on my back. Karen will read scripture for you and I (John) have already consecrated the elements for communion. You will be great!"

I stopped dead in my tracks. Beth Capuson, our Children and Christian Education Pastor had recently had surgery and was not going to be there that night. What was 3 staff had quickly dwindled to 1. I walked in and told Lynn. I took a deep breath and headed to church. Now I wasn't nervous about being in front of people, I have been leading music and singing just about all my life. This was different. It was Christmas Eve. We were having communion and I had to share during the message time. This night of all nights! Just breathe! Here we go!

We had a 5:30 p.m. service and an 11p.m. service. It was go go go! At the end, while I stood before the congregation at both services, I said "Have a Merry Christmas!" It was a beautiful night. A night filled with Scripture and singing and prayer and Holy Communion. It was a night that, even in the darkness, The Light shone brightly with the Love and Hope of a Savior that was born.

This night could have gone a completely different way, but I learned that the best plans can be even more perfect when interruptions happen. So I want to encourage you to stop worrying about all the plans made when things don't go like you planned. Instead, look at what God can and will do in the interruptions. Just take a breath and go!

My Memory:



3rd WEEK OF ADVENT

December 12th

Read: Luke 1:46b-55

Reflection by Jane Downs: Retired Administrative Secretary

It is impossible for me to read the Magnificat, or Mary's song, without thinking of the beatitudes. Her song turns the idea of being blessed on its head and so did Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Blessed becomes not being just being "happy" or healthy and well to do, but a state of being in God's grace and seeing each other as God sees us. Mary surely faced censure and disbelief, but because of her faith, humility and receptive spirit she rejoiced at the coming of Christ even amidst the storm around her. Her trust in a God of love and righteousness allowed her to focus on the outcome-the salvation of the world! We would do well, especially in these times of unrest and uncertainty, to clear our hearts and minds of anger and distrust when we look at each other and focus on what the Savior did and said as he lived out the beatitudes among us. What is the beatitude that reminds me of Mary the most? Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. When we cleanse our hearts, we will see Him too.

Prayer of St. Francis: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. "O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life." Amen.

My Response/Thoughts:

December 13th
HISTORY OF AN ADVENT HYMN

TO A MAID ENGAGED TO JOSEPH

*To a maid engaged to Joseph,
the angel Gabriel came.
"Fear not," the angel told her,
"I come to bring good news,
good news I come to tell you,
good news, I say, good news."**

"To a maid engaged to Joseph" by Gracia Grindal (b. 1943) is a paraphrase of Luke 1:26-38, the Common Lectionary reading for the Fourth Sunday of Advent in Year B. This Scripture passage tells the story of the Annunciation.

The music was composed in 1984 by Lutheran minister Rusty Edwards at the request of Ms. Grindal specifically for this text. Ms. Grindal's collection *Singing the Story* (1983) is where the hymn first appeared.

The Annunciation took place when the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her she was going to bear the Son of God. The Scripture passage portrays three distinct characters: the angel Gabriel, Mary and the narrator.

Ms. Grindal maintains and clearly distinguishes between each of these characters. Three soloists can introduce the hymn to the congregation and allow the congregation to distinguish each character and follow the story easier, or if sung as a congregational hymn, the effect can be achieved by using separate instruments or by singling out each character with a distinct sound on the organ.

"To a maid engaged to Joseph" makes use of several stylistic features commonly employed by Ms. Grindal. She experiments with the organization of her hymns and often repeats key words and phrases instead of using rhyme. Within this structure, some lines are given freedom to resist repetition. She consciously uses contemporary vocabulary while presenting a message that is straightforward and honest.

Ms. Grindal was born in North Dakota where she lived until age 12. She and her parents then moved to Salem, Oregon, where she finished high school. In 1965, Ms. Grindal graduated from Augsburg College and then spent a year in Oslo, Norway. She continued her education at the University of Arkansas where she received a M.F.A. in 1969.

During the summers of 1967 and 1969, Ms. Grindal worked for Augsburg Publishing House as an editorial assistant. She was a member of the English department and poet-in-residence from 1968-1984 at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. She also earned a master's degree from Luther Seminary in 1983 and joined the faculty in 1984 as a professor of pastoral theology, and is currently teaching there.

Ms. Grindal was a member of the hymn text committee of the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978). She has written articles on topics that include the history of Scandinavian-American Lutheran hymnody, the women of the Norwegian-American Lutheran churches and how to write hymns. Some of her books include *We Are One in Christ*, *Sketches Against the Dark*, *Pulpit Rock*, *Lessons in Hymnwriting* and *A Treasury of Faith*.

Ms. Grindal wrote and translated many hymns that appear in mainline hymnals including Episcopalian, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist and Presbyterian. Currently she is focusing on hymns to accompany the scriptures for Years A, B, and C in the Common Lectionary.

The process of writing hymns and educating others about this process is important to Ms. Grindal. She emphasizes the significance of paraphrasing and translating texts to help inexperienced writers learn their craft.

To Ms. Grindal, great hymn writing is more than being a great poet. She says that “[t]he best hymnody comes from those whose sense of the biblical story and language allows them to set their experience of daily life into the language of Scripture.”

Ms. Grindal’s feels that the hymn should not point to the poet, but become the voice of the community. Ms. Grindal has greatly impacted hymnody not only as a writer but also as a teacher.

*© 1984 Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream, IL 60188; All rights reserved. Used by permission.

My Response/Thoughts:

December 14th

Read: Luke 1:57-66

Reflection by Allen Sanders, Music Associate and Organist

Today's scripture is about the birth of John the Baptist. John's life and ministry was a fulfillment of a prophecy found in the book of Malachi where it says that Elijah the prophet will come before the day of the Lord. John's public ministry spoke of repentance and getting ready for the come of the Christ.

However, we are talking about his birth not his ministry. During the first Christmas, we see a lot of miracles, everything from angels speaking to shepherds, refugees being saved from Herod, magi following a star to the Christ Child, and a virgin giving birth to God in flesh. There is a lot going on! Sometimes it is easy to glaze over this story. John's birth is also a miracle! Scripture says both Zechariah and Elizabeth were very old, to the point where children were no longer a possibility. Also, it was so hard to believe that when an angel told Zechariah that it would happen, that he asked how could he be sure. Then the angel told him that he would not be allowed to speak until John was born. How hard that must have been! He has some of the best/craziest news to tell everyone and he can not speak. The miracle of John's birth is amazing, but it's the silence of Zechariah that strikes me in this story. I am sure it was probably one of the most difficult times of his life! I could not imagine being silenced.

There are times that I feel that is precisely what is needed in our walk with God. We get so caught up in the day to day activity of life and faith. We say our prayers and we read our Bibles, but do we ever just silence everything including our thoughts and ask God to speak to us. No doubt He will speak with His written Word, but even then we can let thoughts creep in and distort the voice of God. I invite you to choose to be silent and hear God this advent season. Listen to what He is saying to you. Be still and know He is God.

My Response/Thoughts:

December 15th

HISTORY OF AN ADVENT HYMN

The Song of Zechariah

A Second-Person Translation*

We bless you, Adonai, God of Israel, for you have come to visit us
and ransom us from bondage.

You have brought forth a strong Deliverer in the house of your child, David.

This is what your prophets, holy ones of ancient times, announced: Deliverance from enemies
and from the hand of all who continually hate us;
mercy among our ancestors,

and your remembrance of your holy covenant.

This is the solemn oath you swore to our ancestor, Abraham, to make us unafraid,
to rescue us from the hand of enemies,
and to serve before you in holiness and righteousness

all the days of our lives.

And this, my little child, shall be called prophet of the Most High, for he shall go before you, Adonai,
to pre-prepare your pathways.

He will make your people know your deliverance

by the forgiveness of their sins.

Through your merciful compassions, our God,
you will bring the dawn from on high to visit us,
to shine upon those kept in dungeons and the shadows of death and to guide our feet into the pathway
of peace.

*Notes on the Translation:

This translation "transfers the persons" (second and third) of the original Greek to help make clear in English that the entire canticle is addressed to God. I have done this for two reasons. First, in Hebrew and Mediterranean worship generally, it was quite common to offer "third person praise" where the one being praised might be considered too holy or lofty to address directly, or where a particular worship ritual did not involve the people (or the priests) "facing" God directly (for example, facing the altar in temple worship). What is important to keep in mind, though, is these cultures understood their "third person praise" to be a way of talking to God rather than talking about God. In English and other Northern language cultures, we have inherited the tradition of "third person praise" in hymnody and to some degree in ritual, but we are increasingly likely not to interpret it as praise "to" God. So by recasting the Song of Zechariah in this way, I hope, first of all, to help us join the early church in using it to offer our praise to God. Second, as an added benefit of this recasting, male language for God is completely avoided. Where "he" appears in this translation, it refers to John the Baptist, who was male.

One additional note may be helpful. Rather than reproduce the Greek exactly, I have tried to produce an English "hymnification" of this Greek hymn. Greek hymnody relied on meter primarily. English, however,

relies more on word order and, to a certain degree, formatting. Both also rely on parallelism to a certain degree. This translation is an effort to take all of that into consideration to render an English "free verse" hymn that "does" what the original Greek hymn was doing, but in a more English way.

The Song of Zechariah is the second "great" canticle recorded by Luke (1:68-79), well-known as the Benedictus, after its incipit in the Latin Vulgate. Zechariah uttered his song as prophecy and praise upon the naming of his son, John the Baptist. Stanza 1 praises God for bringing deliverance from evil and being true to his word spoken by earlier prophets; stanza 2 addresses John, the forerunner of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who would "guide our feet in ways of peace."

Zechariah's reference to "the rising sun" (Luke 1:78) caused the early church to use this canticle in morning services, initially at Lauds, the hour of early morning praise. The song is still used for morning prayer by churches with a tradition of daily prayer services. Bert Polman versified Zechariah's song in 1986 specifically for the tune AN WASSERFLÜSSEN BABYLON in an attempt to include a concise paraphrase of this long canticle in the 1987 Psalter Hymnal.

My Response/Thoughts:

December 16th

Read: Luke 1:67-79

Reflection by Brennan Ballard, Director of Media Ministries

The birth of John the Baptist arc of the Christmas story is often one that gets overlooked, usually reduced to Mary visiting Elizabeth, but there's a lot more to it than that. It's a prelude. A precursor for the Christmas story to come, and this passage is the culmination of it. The events leading up to Zechariah's Song are a microcosm of the anticipation that builds within Advent, and the joy that comes with the Savior.

Here's how the story goes: Zechariah was visited by Gabriel before John was conceived, and was told that he's going to have a son named John who would prepare people for the coming of the Lord. Zechariah says that there's no way that could happen, because he and Elizabeth are too old. Gabriel makes Zechariah become silent until John is born for sassing him. Zechariah said nothing for months. Anticipation built. People wondered, "What did he see? It must have been big. Something is coming." There was a sense that something huge was just around the corner, a lot like the sense that Advent gives to us. We're anticipating something truly amazing. And then, Elizabeth gives birth, and, without speaking to Zechariah, names him John. Our verse is Zechariah's unfiltered joy at the coming of his child, and the greater purpose he will serve for the Lord.

With this revelation, Zechariah is the first to know that the Lord has come, and his response is to sing out. Mind that he hasn't spoken in 9 months, but despite how weak his voice must be at this point, he is so overwhelmed with joy that he can't not sing it out. That is the model of joy that the birth of Jesus brings to us. God has built anticipation for such a long time, making us wonder on bated breath as to what grand thing will happen. And then, the waiting ends, and we are overwhelmed with such joy that we must sing out, "The Lord has come!"

PRAYER: Dear Lord, we thank you for the joy you have given us. Though the waiting was hard, we remain faithful in your good works. Through the waiting, you have given us such joy through your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

My Response/Thoughts:

December 17th

HISTORY OF AN ADVENT HYMN

BLESSED BE THE GOD OF ISRAEL

*Blessed be the God of Israel,
who comes to set us free,
who visits and redeems us,
and grants us liberty.
The prophets spoke of mercy,
of freedom and release;
God shall fulfill the promise
to bring our people peace.**

Canon Michael Perry (1942-1996), a most beloved Anglican priest and hymn writer, was born in Beckenham, Kent, England. He was ordained to the ministry in 1965, and married Beatrice Mary Stott in 1967.

He was elected to the General Synod of the Church of England in 1985 and again in 1994. In 1989 he was appointed to his last posting as Vicar of Tonbridge, Kent. He was appointed chairman of the Church Pastoral Aid Society in 1993.

Beginning in early 1996, Perry was increasingly disabled by an inoperable brain tumor from which he died at home on Dec. 9, 1996.

In the early 1960s, Michael Baughen founded the Jubilate group. According to Perry, the group pooled their talents to meet the challenge of a new generation in the UK who wished to extend their singing beyond the foursquare ways of metrical hymnody and the unpredictability of Anglican chant. With the newfound popularity of his "Calypso Carol" and the support of the Church Pastoral Aid Society, *Youth Praise 2* was published in 1969.

In that same year, Baughen began a new project to revitalize the use of Psalms. Perry had been working on paraphrases, including his famous paraphrase of the "Benedictus," "O praise the God of Israel," as well as several Psalms. Baughen asked him to join this project, which was published in 1973 as *Praise Psalms*.

George Shorney of Hope Publishing Company took interest in their work and had already enlisted the independent cooperation of Timothy Dudley-Smith. By securing the publication rights in the United States of the greater Jubilate Hymns group, Shorney hoped to enrich hymn repertoires with English hymn writers.

Perry felt that chant settings of the canticles were difficult for ordinary congregations to easily sing. Soon after his ordination, he began to render the canticles from the *Book of Common Prayer* (1662) into metrical paraphrases. He wanted not only to make them easier to sing, but also to be more easily understood. "Blessed be God" is one such paraphrase of the "Benedictus" or the "Song of Zechariah."

One of 300 hymns, Perry first published his paraphrase in *Praise Psalms* under the title "O Praise the God of Israel."

The text of the "Benedictus" comes from Luke 1:68-79. Zechariah had been made dumb during his wife Elizabeth's pregnancy with John the Baptist. When he hears of his son's birth, his tongue is loosed for his song of praise to the Lord God of Israel.

The first eight verses of the "Benedictus" parallel the "Magnificat" and the last four identify John the Baptist as Jesus' forerunner. Because of its imagery of Christ as the "dayspring" or "dawn" of God's new creation, it became associated with the morning office of Constantinople and with lauds in the Roman and Benedictine offices.

A variety of terms refer to John the Baptist in stanza two including "herald," "forerunner," "prophet of salvation" and "harbinger." Perry condenses the metaphor in the canticle referring to Christ as the "dayspring from on high" and John as the messenger as the "harbinger of Day."

The last line of the hymn—"with songs that never cease!"—would seem to be a hyperbole at first glance, but the text is a literal understanding of eschatology. Our songs will never cease in heaven.

© 1973 Hope Publishing Co, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

My Response/Thoughts:

December 18th
ADVENT/CHRISTMAS MEMORY
BY
Bobbie Ross, pianist

"A New Day"

Revelation 21:4 "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Christmas Eve takes me back about 25 years ago. My husband had died in November. No one planned for me to be alone on Christmas Eve, it just happened. That night I thought I would die, but I didn't. A family in this church said had they known I was alone, they would have invited me to spend Christmas Eve with them.

I played for the 11p.m. Christmas Eve service that night. Our tradition is to end with silent night. As I played the piano, people were singing and lighting candles. Even though the lights in the church were dimming, the light of the candles shone brightly. It was warm and the air was filled with love and hope! As we walked out of the church, the air was crisp. It was midnight and a new day had dawned!

My Advent/Christmas Memory:



4TH WEEK OF ADVENT

December 19th

Read: Luke 2:1-6

Reflection by Gail Ross, Administrative Assistant

The birth of Christ is a great demonstration of God's precise timing. Paul alluded to this in Galatians 4:4 when he tells the churches in Galatia "when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, under the law". Keep in mind that Mary and Joseph were living in Nazareth which was 70 miles north of Bethlehem, making it to be at least a three day journey. But it had been prophesied by Micah 700 years earlier that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. What would cause Mary and Joseph to embark on a three day journey with Mary being with child? Mary would have been at least 3 1/2 months pregnant since she had gone immediately to see Elizabeth after being told she was pregnant. The Bible says Mary stayed with her cousin for three months, plus the trip would have taken about a week each way.

Caesar Augustus issued a decree that the entire Roman world would be taxed. While this was completely a secular decree, Caesar was merely the tool in God's hand to fulfill the prophecy in Micah 5:2 that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph would have to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem since they were of the lineage of David. Romans normally enrolled men where they were living, but Jews counted families according to their ancestral hometowns.

Scripture doesn't reveal much about Mary and Joseph's reactions to the decree. They would have been familiar enough with scripture to know that Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem. Perhaps they were thrilled at the news knowing this was further confirmation that the child Mary was carrying was the Messiah. Had people in Nazareth found out about the pregnancy and began gossiping, or asking the rabbi to discipline the couple, or even trying to convince Joseph to stone Mary since that would have been his rights? The decree could have been their escape from condemnation.

Caesar Augustus tried to make himself a god by taxing the people so he could create monuments in his image and finance his lifestyle, but no one reveres him or pays taxes to him today. But that decree had the most lasting effect in world history. Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem and gave birth to the Messiah. Mary was carrying the Son of God. And that little baby in Mary's womb is still worshipped today and we call him Savior.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, Thank you for this season of Advent. Help us to slow down and appreciate the true reason for celebration. Thank you for sending Jesus at just the right time. Remind us that you are in control and that your invisible hand is moving in our world still today,

My Response/Thoughts:

December 20th
HISTORY OF A CHRISTMAS HYMN

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

*O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie;
above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.*

Many hymns that were written originally for children have captured the imagination of everyone. Such is the case with "O little town of Bethlehem."

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) wrote this beloved Christmas hymn for the Sunday school children at his Philadelphia parish, Holy Trinity Church, following a pilgrimage to Bethlehem in 1865, according to British hymnologist J.R. Watson. The hymn was printed on an informal leaflet in December 1868 and then appeared in *The Sunday School Hymnal* in 1871.

In the United States, the hymn is generally sung to its original tune, ST. LOUIS by Louis H. Redner (1931-1908), a wealthy real estate broker who served as a church organist for his avocation. *UM Hymnal* editor Carlton Young notes that Redner "increased Sunday school attendance at Holy Trinity Episcopal, where Phillips Brooks was rector, from thirty-six to over one thousand during his nineteen years as superintendent."

According to the story, Brooks traveled on horseback between Jerusalem and Bethlehem on Christmas Eve.

"Before dark we rode out of town to the field where they say the shepherds saw the star. It is a fenced piece of ground with a cave in it, in which, strangely enough, they put the shepherds. . . . Somewhere in those fields we rode through, the shepherds must have been. As we passed, the shepherds were still 'keeping watch over their flocks,' or leading them home to fold."

Brooks participated in the Christmas Eve service, writes hymnologist Albert Bailey, "conducted in . . . Constantine's ancient basilica (326 A.D.) built over the traditional site of the Nativity, a cave. The service lasted from 10 P.M. to 3 A.M.!" This sequence of events provided the backdrop for Brooks' children's hymn.

The now omitted original fourth stanza seems directed to children:

*Where children pure and happy pray to the blessed Child, where misery cries out to thee, son of the undefiled;
Where charity stands watching and faith holds wide the door, the dark night wakes, the glory breaks, and Christmas comes once more.*

The composer Redner felt that a line from this stanza—"Son of the undefiled"—led to some amusing criticism lest it should smack of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Brooks then changed that line to 'Son of the Mother mild,' but he afterward decided to omit the third verse altogether from the carol."

Redner noted that the "simple music was written in great haste and under great pressure almost on the Eve of Christmas. It was after midnight that a little angel whispered the strain in my ears and I roused myself and jotted it down as you have it."

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) paired this text with the British folk tune FOREST GREEN for *The English Hymnal* (1906), a marriage that Australian hymnologist Wesley Milgate called "one of the many happy inspirations of the music editor, Vaughan Williams." This tune is the dominant in Great Britain, and the American tune ST. LOUIS has been derided by British hymnologist Erik Routley as "broken-backed and paralytic." Such is the difference in musical tastes of two countries an ocean apart.

Regardless of the feelings about the tune, hymnologists on both sides of the Atlantic agree on the poignancy of the text. Dr. Watson sums it up well: "Not only does the hymn beautifully describe the little town asleep in the December night; it also gracefully modulates from a description of Christmas into an examination of the meaning of Christmas: first in its encouragement of charity and faith, and then into the coming of Christ into the human heart."

My Response/Thoughts:

December 21st
ADVENT/CHRISTMAS MEMORY
By
Sam Jones, Associate Pastor

"Christmas in Germany"

Having grown up in Germany until I was eight years old, I never forgot that magical time of year. The traditions in Germany were a little different than here in the states. I remember rejoicing when I was given by Advent calendar. Coming from a blended American-German family, we celebrated Thanksgiving even though the rest of Germany did not. And that's when we'd get those Advent calendars--a treat behind the door of every day of Advent.

In Germany, *Der Nikolaus* ("Santa Claus") would come around on December 6th which was the Feast of St. Nicholas. On the evening before, you were to put your house shoes outside your door and in the morning, Nikolaus would bring you treats if you had been good. On Christmas Eve, while you were attending Christmas Eve services at church, walking to and from church in the snow, you'd be hoping that the *Christkindl* (the "Christ child") would pay you a visit to bring presents if you'd been good.

Now that I'm all grown up, my family has blended some of these traditions together which has made for a wonderful Christmas experience. We still go to church on Christmas Eve and have even still honored the Feast of St. Nicholas. But above all, we thank God for the birth of the real *Christkindl*.

Frohe Weinachten!

My Response/Thoughts:

December 22nd
HISTORY OF A CHRISTMAS HYMN

ANGELS FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY

*Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.*

James Montgomery (1771-1854) followed in the footsteps of two poetic luminaries—Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley. In many hymnals he is well represented, third only to Watts and Wesley for British hymn writers before 1850, with six original hymns in *The UM Hymnal*.

American hymnologist Albert Bailey notes that "One cannot call him a great poet, but he knew how to express with sincerity, fervor, simplicity and beauty the emotions and aspirations of the common Christian." But British hymnologist J.R. Watson states, "James Montgomery was a well known poet, highly thought of by his contemporaries such as Shelley and Byron."

Montgomery's father was a minister, and his parents later served as missionaries to the West Indies. He remained in Yorkshire, and from age 6 was raised in a boy's boarding school run by the Brethren of Fulneck. Montgomery later said, "There, whatever we did was done in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, whom we were taught to regard in the amiable and endearing light of a friend and brother."

He began writing poetry at age 10, inspired by the hymns of the Moravians, the same group that influenced John Wesley. Though he flunked out of school at age 14, Montgomery found a job in 1792 at a radical weekly newspaper, the *Sheffield Register*.

He assumed the leadership of the paper when the previous editor, due to his politics, had to flee the country for fear of persecution. Montgomery then changed the name of the paper to the *Sheffield Iris* and served for 31 years as editor.

"Angels from the realms of glory" was first published on Christmas Eve 1816 in the *Sheffield Iris*. The hymn has a sense of urgency and excitement, magnified by the use of imperative verbs throughout, especially in the refrain: "Come and worship . . ."

While such language seems harsh to modern ears, and indeed seems to end the Christmas hymn on a bit of a "downer," it completes a thoughtful progression from the first to the last stanzas. The Angels song (stanza one) leads to the Shepherds' adoration (stanza two), and to Sages' gifts (stanza three), and to Saints' praise in heaven (stanza four), and finally, to the Sinners' repentance on earth (stanza five).

Mr. Watson points out that the final original stanza, "appealing to the sinners, is highly appropriate because it echoes the Psalm for Christmas morning, Psalm 85, especially verse 10: 'Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other.'"

The themes of justice and mercy as well as the image of broken chains are also appropriate in the context of the poet's life. His newspaper denounced the social evils of his day, especially the slave trade. Montgomery was even jailed for his radical views: once for publishing a poem that celebrated the fall of

the Bastille, and another time for denouncing the actions of the Sheffield police during a riot. He used the time in prison to write poetry.

Even though the original final stanza may seem to put a damper on unbridled Christmas joy, Montgomery reminds us that the Nativity was more than a sweet manger scene.

As many texts from Isaiah and the prophets remind us, the Incarnation was an event celebrating the liberation of oppressed peoples by a just and merciful God taking on human form. Let us celebrate, in the words of Montgomery, that God's "justice now revokes [our] sentence" and that God's "mercy . . . break[s] [our] chains"!

My Response/Thoughts:

December 23rd

Read: Luke 2:8-20

Reflection by Rev. Stephen Sparks, Senior Pastor

All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them. Luke 2:18-20. There are 3 (three) responses in this passage. The people that heard the story, the Shepherds who had a transcendent moment as they experienced the story and Mary who was part of the story. All three were different. The hearers were astonished as they were hearing and not experiencing. The shepherds were glorifying and praising. They had lived it. They had seen and experienced. They were changed. Forever. Transformed. The difference between them and the ones they told was the experience. Same for us today. Transformation happens for us in experiencing God in ways that are real. And transcendent. That's the purpose of small groups as well as worship. To meet God there and be changed. We are the shepherds and sometimes the hearers of the story. Hearing is often never enough. This season I encourage you to allow Jesus to take you on a experience not just heard but lived. It will change you. Forever. Oh, and Mary. She thought often about what she had seen and heard. When God uses you to accomplish His purposes and you see it happen you think about those things a lot. It changes you too. Often in ways you don't realize at the moment.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus this season lead to experiencing your presence for real in new ways and let me be changed. Use me. And give me something to ponder.

My Response/Thoughts:

December 24th
HISTORY OF A CHRISTMAS HYMN

INFANT HOLY INFANT LOWLY

*Infant holy,
infant lowly,
for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing,
little knowing,
Christ the babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging
angels singing,
noels ringing,
tidings bringing:
Christ the babe is Lord of all.*

The hymn singing traditions in eastern European countries are rich and diverse, but virtually unknown in hymnals published in the United States. We have a large selection of hymns from German sources, for example, through the translations of John Wesley, who was especially interested in Moravian hymns, in the eighteenth century and Catherine Winkworth in the nineteenth century. To a lesser degree, hymns translated from French, Italian, Spanish, and a few from Scandinavian countries are represented as well. During the twentieth century, the lack of good singing translations from eastern European countries was further exacerbated by world wars, the rise of the Third Reich, and the Iron Curtain.

Manuscripts of Polish sacred song date back to at least the thirteenth century in the Catholic Church. Even though these songs may have been initially influenced by the plainsong used in the offices and Mass settings of the Church, local musical variations soon influenced the performance of these. These seem to have developed because regional synods in the Church encouraged the use of Polish, rather than the standard Latin characteristic of the Church in Rome. The use of the vernacular language produces changes in the music to accommodate the natural prosody and rhythm of that language. Throughout the seventeenth century and those that followed, regional hymn collections were published—each with distinct, local musical styles, making it difficult to develop a uniformly known body of congregational song throughout Poland.

Polish hymn scholar Daniel Neises describes some of the general characteristics of Polish sacred song: “Polish religious songs are a distinct repertory of congregational songs composed in the vernacular and in a musical idiom derived from Polish folk music. They are typically strophic, monophonic, and are characterized by asymmetrical time signatures and ambiguous modality which commonly oscillates between major, minor, and modal qualities.”

Hymnals vary in how they notate the metrical structure of the melody *W Żłobie Leży*. *The United Methodist Hymnal* begins with the initial two eighth notes as pick-up notes to the first complete measure. Some other hymnals start the hymn with the two eighth notes on the first strong beat (downbeat) of the initial measure. This perhaps indicates the asymmetrical ambiguity of this tune. The first choice feels more natural in English, but undoubtedly the latter fits Polish prosody better.

It is no accident that one of the few Polish hymns we have in English is a Christmas carol. Daniel Neises continues: “Perhaps the most well-known and beloved part of the Polish religious song repertory is its

superb 'kolędy', or Christmas carols. These, if any, are the most likely of all Polish hymns to be found in English translations, and are certainly among the finest Christmas songs from any tradition."

Originally, the term "kolędy" was probably derived from the Latin "calendae" [Kanende], which literally referred to the first day of the month. Slavic uses of the term broadened to include the first day of the year, the winter solstice, Christmas, as well as New Year's Day. Not all kolędy would be Christian, though the Christian carols are certainly a part of the broader tradition. A kolędy would be sung in conjunction with the visit of the priest to a home and, eventually in Slavic traditions, walking from house to house—in other words, Christmas caroling. The carolers, called *kolednicy*, perform in neighborhoods between Christmas and the Feast of the Epiphany, carrying a star on a pole and a Nativity scene. Dressed in folk costumes as angels, shepherds, and kings, the carolers enact Nativity plays with a comedic touch, and they sing. The term is more generic now and can refer to singing any Christmas carols in Polish.

Edith Margaret Gellibrand Reed (1885-1933) was a British musician and playwright. Her education included study at the Guildhall of Music in London, and she was also an associate in the Royal College of Organists, where she assisted Percy Scholes (1877-1958), the compiler of the first edition of the influential reference work, *The Oxford Companion to Music* (1938), in editing educational materials. She also wrote two mystery plays, *Christmastide: A Nativity Play* (1932) and *With Jockey to the Fair: A May-Day Play*, published posthumously in 1936, as well as a reference work, *Story Lives of the Great Composers* (1925).

She is now known for her translation of the Polish carol "W Żłobie Leży" which she found in the hymn collection *Spiewniczek Piesni Koscielne* (1908), though its origins may be as early as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Her translation was published in the periodical *Music and Youth*, Volume I, No. 12 (December 1921). From there it spread to hymnals and increased in popularity.

Because the music is stately and in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter, some have called *W Żłobie Leży* the first polonaise, one of many Polish dances with folk roots. Polish pianist Frederic Chopin (1810-1849) popularized the polonaise. While this comparison may not be accurate, it is accurate that the general character of *W Żłobie Leży* would be similar to one of the most important national dances in Poland.

My Response/Thoughts:

**December 25th
CHRISTMAS MEMORY**

**BY
Caysee Sanders, Children’s Music Director**

What is your favorite Christmas memory? Close your eyes and imagine Christmas from the different stages in your life. For some they will remember when they received a special gift as a child, for others it could be traveling to another place or eating their favorite meal. I’ve only had 32 Christmases, so sitting down to write about a specific memory was a challenge. As I was thinking back to choose one, I kept coming back to one particular feeling instead of a memory. Warmth. The Christmas season for me is always filled with warmth. Singing carols loudly with my big brother in the back seat. Having the opportunity to cook with my mom, grandmother, and my husband’s grandmother. Seeing family that lives far away. Watching my daughter open her Christmas presents and teaching her to make candy. Laughing late into the night playing a never ending game of Uno. I am fortunate enough to have an abundance of positive memories. I know that everyone has not been as fortunate as I have, but I challenge you to make a new beginning. Start a new tradition with your family. Build the memories with your spouse, children, grandchildren, and friends that you want to have. Remember that when there are hard times in this season that God is with you every step of the way. I hope that you have the merriest of Christmases, and that you will look fondly back on this day next year.

My Advent/Christmas Memory:



First Week of Christmas

December 26th
HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS

JOY TO THE WORLD

by Isaac Watts

The United Methodist Hymnal, No. 246

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing.

“Joy to the world” is perhaps an unlikely popular Christmas hymn. First of all, it is based on a psalm, and, second, it celebrates Christ’s second coming much more than the first. This favorite Christmas hymn is the result of a collaboration of at least three people and draws its initial inspiration not from the Christmas narrative in Luke 2, but from Psalm 98.

The first collaborator was the English poet and dissenting clergyman, Isaac Watts (1674-1748). He paraphrased the entire Psalm 98 in two parts, and it first appeared in his famous collection, *The Psalms of David, Imitated in the Language of the New Testament* (1719).

“Joy to the world” was taken from the second part of the paraphrase (Psalm 98:4-9), entitled “The Messiah’s Coming and Kingdom.” Watts, commenting on his paraphrase of the psalm, notes: “In these two hymns I have formed out of the 98th Psalm I have fully exprest what I esteem to be the first and chief Sense of the Holy Scriptures . . .” For Watts, the psalms were not to be viewed as biblical material in their own right, but had value only inasmuch as they pointed toward the New Testament.

A comparison between Watts’s psalm paraphrase and the original verses in the King James translation of Psalm 98:4-9 demonstrates considerable freedom:

“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King. Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together. Before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.” (KJV)

Curiously, stanza three is the exception. It is not based on Psalm 98 and is sometimes omitted:

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

The “curse” is a reference to Genesis 3:17 when God says to Adam following the eating of the apple from the tree, “Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.” (KJV) As a part of “five-point Calvinism,” the “total depravity of man”, the curse is a significant part of classic Reformed theology, Isaac Watts’ theological perspective.

Though *The United Methodist Hymnal* (1989) retains the original text, the hymnal of the United Reformed Church in the UK, *Rejoice and Sing* (1991), altered the stanza as follows:

*No more let thorns infest the ground,
or sins and sorrows grow;
wherever pain and death are found
he makes his blessings flow.*

The second collaborator was an unwitting one, George Frederic Handel (1685-1759), the popular German-born composer residing in London. Though contemporaries in England, they did not collaborate on this hymn. Another pieced together portions of Handel's *Messiah* to make up the tune that we sing in North America. The opening bars for the chorus, "Lift up your heads," was adapted to the incipit "Joy to the world." An instrumental portion of the opening tenor recitative, "Comfort ye," provides a basis for the text "heaven and nature sing." Such borrowings were common, the aesthetic notion being that the music of great musicians had in itself an innate beauty. Even a crude pastiche of "great music" implied that the result would also be of high quality.

The third collaborator who assured that this tune and text would appear together in the United States was the Boston music educator, Lowell Mason (1792-1872). It was Mason, a musician with significant influence in his day, who published his own arrangement of Handel's melodic fragments in *Occasional Psalms and Hymn Tunes* (1836) and named the tune Antioch. While this is not the only tune to which Watts's text is sung, it is certainly the dominant one. Actually, this tune remains virtually unknown in Great Britain.

When sung to Antioch, the text is repeated in the second section, reflecting a particular early American treatment of the melody called a "fuging tune." A fuging tune was a compositional device initiated by American-born composer William Billings (1746-1800) where voice parts enter one after the other in rapid succession, usually repeating the same words.

The result of the fuging tune section is quite effective for the first stanza—"heaven and nature sing"—and the second stanza—"repeat the sounding joy"—and the fourth stanza, "wonders of his love" For the third stanza, with the text "far as the curse is found" echoing of Genesis 3:17-18 and Romans 5:20, the fuging compositional device seems a bit rollicking.

The result is a favorite Christmas hymn based on an Old Testament psalm, set to musical fragments composed in England, and pieced together across the Atlantic in the United States!

My Response/Thoughts:

December 27th
HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

This favorite Christmas hymn appears to be the result of a collaboration of several people. What we sing is a 19th-century version of a hymn written in the 18th century.

The Latin text comes from the Roman Catholic tradition, found in an 18th-century manuscript in the College at Douai. The college was located in northern France beginning around 1561 and continuing until it was suppressed in 1793. The college was exiled to England at the time of the French Revolution (1789-99).

One possibility is that John Francis Wade (c.1711-1786) was an English musician at the college. Methodist hymnologist Fred Gealy notes: "Seven manuscripts containing the Latin hymn are known; they are dated 1743-61. All appear to have been written, signed, and dated by John Francis Wade, an Englishman who made his living by copying and selling plainchant and other music."

Research by Dom John Stéphan, author of *The Adeste Fidelis: A Study of Its Origin and Development* (1947), has determined that the first and original manuscript was dated in 1743, indicating that Wade composed both the Latin words and the music between 1740 and 1743.

The English language translation of stanzas one, two, three and six is the work of Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880), a translator of Latin hymns during the Oxford movement who worked closely with Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-1890), a leader in the movement. Oakeley became a Roman Catholic and was known for his ministry to the poor at Westminster Abbey. Oakeley's stanzas, penned in 1841, first appeared in F.H. Murray's *Hymnal for Use in the English Church* (1852) under the title "Let us go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass." (Luke 2:15)

Abbé Etienne Jean François Borderies (1764-1832), who was inspired upon hearing the hymn, translated three additional stanzas, of which four and five are included in the *UM Hymnal*, to fill out the Christmas story. Other versions and many alterations exist as well.

The invitation to "come, all ye faithful, . . . to Bethlehem" places the singer both among the shepherds who rushed to see the Christ child, and in the long procession of the "faithful" that have journeyed to Bethlehem in their hearts for over 2,000 years.

Of particular note is the second stanza that draws heavily upon the Nicene Creed:

*True God, of true God,
Light from Light Eternal,
lo, he shuns not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father,
begotten, not created.*

This paraphrases the text of the Creed very closely:

*"We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,*

*God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made."*

Thus, singing stanza two establishes a link to the church that reaches back to 325 A.D., at the Council of Nicea, where the Creed originates.

In the third stanza, the "faithful" join their voices with the angels singing "Gloria in excelsis Deo" (Luke 2:14). The refrain then becomes a cosmic chorus uniting heaven and earth.

Stanza four invites us to model our response on that of the shepherds: "We too will thither / bend our joyful footsteps." An omitted stanza notes the appearance of the magi:

*Lo! star-led chieftans,
Magi, Christ adoring,
offer him incense, gold, and myrrh;
we to the Christ child
bring our heart's oblations.*

The fifth stanza takes a decidedly different tone, placing us not only at the manger scene as one of the humble who have come to see the Christ child, but actually in the manger! Note that there is no comma after "sinners," indicating that it is not just the "Child" in the manger, but we who join him there in humility, "awe and love":

*Child, for us sinners
poor and in the manger,
Fain we embrace thee, with awe and love:
Who would not love thee,
loving us so dearly?*

The rhetorical question leaves us almost unable to sing the refrain aloud.

The tune *Adeste Fidelis* by Wade has served this text well—though about as many variations have appeared for the tune over the years, as for the text. The refrain has a fugal feel with the staggered entry of voices until all four parts join in the imperative: "O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord."

My Response/Thoughts:

December 28th
HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS

SILENT NIGHT HOLY NIGHT

*Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
Alles schläft, einsam wacht
nur das traute hochheilige Paar,
Holder Knabe mit lockigem Haar,
schlaf im himmlischer Ruh.*

The story of "Stille Nacht" is one of the most endearing and enduring in Christian hymnody, though highly romanticized. Joseph Mohr (1792-1848) was an Austrian cathedral chorister in Salzburg as a boy. He was ordained into the Catholic priesthood in 1815. He spent most of his life ministering in parishes near Salzburg. Living a simple life, he died in poverty after giving away what little he had to the poor.

In 1816, Mohr penned the original six stanzas of the poem that would make him famous around the world. He was serving as an assistant priest in Oberndorf, now a skiing area in the Austrian Alps. Franz Xaver Gruber (1787-1863) was an Austrian cantor and school teacher, holding church positions near Salzburg including Oberndorf. While a prolific composer, little was published and none known now save this *Weihnachtslied* (Christmas carol). Tradition has it that the carol was composed for a text by his assistant priest Joseph Mohr on short notice for the Christmas Eve Mass in Oberndorf in 1818. While it was first accompanied on guitar, it may not have been because the organ didn't work. As Carl Daw Jr. notes, "the organ at St. Nicholas Church was in chronic need of attention." (Daw, 126) That this was due to mice eating the bellows cannot be verified and probably is closer to apocryphal romanticism than fact. We do know, however, that Joseph Mohr had a guitar it use seems to have been for aesthetic reasons rather than an organ emergency: the guitar was more appropriate for accompanying this folk-like melody than an organ. Though this was not the normal instrument for the Mass, it was used in this case to great effect. Joseph Mohr's guitar is housed at the Hallein's Franz Gruber Museum.

Carl Daw notes that the first performance on Christmas Eve, 1818, was at Mohr's request to compose a setting for "two solo singers and choir, with guitar accompaniment. . . . Gruber took his composition to Mohr who happily approved it. At the Christmas Eve Mass, Mohr sang the tenor part and played the guitar, Gruber sang the bass part, and the local choir sang a refrain consisting of a repeat of the last four measures." (Daw. 126).

Karl Mauracher, an organ builder, traveled to Arnsdorf in 1821, during which time he obtained a copy of the manuscript. The carol was taken to the Leipzig trade fair in 1831 and first published in 1838 in an adapted version where its popularity spread as a "Tyrolean Folk Song." The melodic version that we now sing is somewhat different from Gruber's original, having taken on more of the characteristics of an idyllic folk song of this region. This adaptation has contributed to its reception and continued popularity.

In the only surviving autograph of the Mohr-Gruber collaboration at the Carolino Augusteum in Salzburg, one can see the difference between Gruber's original melody and the popular adaptation in use today. The manuscript here, discovered in 1995, dates from 1821. It contains six stanzas from which we sing stanzas 1, 6, and 2, in that order. The accompaniment is in the facsimile of the musical score, is idiomatic of the guitar, and would not work on the organ. The inscription in the upper right reads, "Melodie von Fr Xav Gruber."

Musical arrangements and English translations of the song have a life of their own. The literal translation may surprise some singers:

*Silent night, holy night!
All are asleep; alone awake
only the faithful and most holy pair,
Gentle boy with curly hair,
sleep in heavenly peace.*

Most hymnals contain versions primarily derived from a translation by Episcopal minister John Freeman Young (1820-1885) around 1859. Often translations by several authors are included in a single version of this carol. *The United Methodist Hymnal* uses Young's translation for the first three stanzas and ascribes the fourth stanza to an anonymous translator, though it now appears that it was written by the English woman Jane Montgomery Campbell (1817-1878). The fourth stanza, which no reference to the original German, completes the scene painted in the first three by inviting us to form a circle around the Holy Family and sing "Christ the Savior is born." For numerous English translations of "Stille Nacht,"

The original Austrian carol has not only inspired many musical arrangements and translations, but also completely new carols based on the ideas of the original German poem. Of special note is a Chinese hymn written to a pentatonic (five-note) melody. "Holy Night, Blessed Night" ("Sheng ye jing") is so similar in spirit to the Austrian version, that it has been nicknamed the "Chinese Silent Night," written by the Rev. Wei-yu Zhu and Jing-ren Wu (1921). Mohr's text seems to have inspired the Chinese poets. Indeed, several themes and images are common to both hymns. Pastor Qu-gui Shi, now living in Shanghai, was mentored by the Rev. Zhu, and added the melody in 1982 partly as a way to honor his teacher. In a conversation with Pastor Shi, he said that his intent was to compose a melody that reflected the spirit of the text and that would be in a musical idiom that Chinese Christians would understand and feel. The first stanza, in a paraphrase by Taiwanese missionary Kathleen Moody, follows:

*Holy night, Blessed night,
Stars shine brightly, earth is still:
Hills and valleys, field and woodlands,
All surround the small town of Bethlehem.
In a manger Christ the Lord sleeps.*

Welsh hymnologist Alan Luff discusses the influence and performance of this carol: "'Stille nacht' now appears in many languages, and has passed readily from culture to culture. Although to some it may appear sentimental, in the original and in good translations there is an emphasis on the awe and wonder, and on the cosmic quality of the Incarnation. The musical arrangement and performance can thus make or break it as a legitimate piece of worship. Cloying harmonies and sentimentalized performance are contrary to the original conception of an innocent song with a light accompaniment."

Finally, while the origins of any hymn are of interest, like Scripture, we find meaning not only in its origins, but also in its meaning today. We must not forget that the original context was that of Palestine, a country occupied by Roman forces. Mary and Joseph's journey to an insignificant village outside of Jerusalem was forced by the census required by Roman authorities. It made no difference that she was pregnant. Lodging was denied them several times until they were given shelter in a dank, smelly, dirty stable, hardly the place to give birth to a child. Yet, at that moment the Divine intervened in the presence of God in human form. The original literal translation from the German of stanza three has the child uttering a laugh (*lacht*) from his Divine mouth (*göttlichen Mund*), a laugh of love (*Lieb*). The infant with "curly hair" in stanza one, a very human description of the child, is combined with a child laughing in love in stanza three. Human infants cry at birth; only a Divine Infant would laugh in love!

As we sing this carol on the 200th anniversary of its first performance, we must not forget that the Holy Family sought refuge in a foreign country within a few years of Christ's birth because their lives were in danger. We sing "Silent Night" today not as an escape, but in hope and solidarity with the millions who live in poverty, political oppression, and who must forcibly migrate in order to survive.

My Response/Thoughts:

December 29th
HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS

"The First Noel"

Anonymous, Traditional English Carol,
The United Methodist Hymnal, 245

*The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in field where they lay keeping their sheep
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
born is the King of Israel.*

This Epiphany carol raises several questions. First, "What is a carol?" While the majority of carols are associated with Christmas, the folk carol tradition was employed at other high seasons of the Christian year, including Holy Week and Easter. Although Christmas carols are found throughout the world, their origin is largely European. Usually, no author or composer can be ascribed to them. Historically, carols would have been sung outside the Catholic Mass in non-liturgical gatherings and spread through oral tradition. In their earliest forms, the carols would have been ways of preserving and spreading biblical or quasi-religious narratives among those who were not literate.

Christmas hymns, by contrast, are a part of the literate song tradition. While carols began to flourish during the medieval era, Christmas hymns can be traced back to the fourth century during the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) and subsequent councils, where the adoption of the Nicene Creed defined the nature of Christ in what became orthodox theology. Early Latin hymns from this time were polemical statements that explained the doctrine of the Incarnation in opposition to Arianism, a concept that asserted that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was created by God at a specific point in time and was an entity distinct from God the Father, and therefore subordinate to the Father. "Corde natus de Parentis" ("Of the Father's love begotten," *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 184) is one of the most famous hymns from this era that is still sung. The Spanish judge Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (c. 348–c. 413) left a legacy for the church's sung faith that has lasted for centuries.

Since that time, telling the story of the birth of Christ in song has been an important tradition, especially in the Western Church. Since congregational participation, including singing, was very limited in the medieval Catholic Mass, the people's song developed outside the church. In most cases, the composers of these carols have long been lost in time, partly a function of their oral tradition. Undoubtedly, carols existed in oral forms long before being published in collections.

The second question is, "What does 'Noel' mean?" "Nowell," the English transliteration, comes from the old French "Nouel" or "Noël," modern French. The derivation of this word probably relates to the earlier Latin term "natalis" or birth. In Latin, "Dies natalis" means "birthday." Some suggest that "Noel" is also related to "novellare" or "nouvelle" meaning "new" —something to tell. As hymnologist and hymnwriter Carl P. Daw, Jr. indicates, *The Oxford English Dictionary* notes the earliest use of "Nowel" is in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (c. 1395) where the poet cites "The Franklin's Tale" (1255): "And 'Nowel' crieth every lusty man" (Daw, 2016, 154).

"The First Noel" has its roots in the fifteenth century in its oral form, and it appeared on eighteenth-century broadsides in Helston, near Cornwall (Keyte and Parrott, 1992, 482). It was published first in the revised edition of *Some Ancient Christmas Carols* (1823), edited by Davies Gilbert. Its publication in the

famous *Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern* (1833), compiled by William Sandys in London (Sandys, 1833, 74–75) increased the carol's prominence. Originally in nine stanzas, five are commonly used in most hymnals today. Though the angels' appearance to the shepherds (Luke 2:1–20) is the subject of the first stanza, most of the carol focuses on the journey of the magi (Matthew 2:1–12), giving the carol an Epiphany focus.

The melody of this carol is the subject of some speculation. The first printing of the tune comes from *Christmas Carols, Ancient and Modern* (1833) by William Sandys (See <https://archive.org/details/christmascarolsa00sandrich/page/194/mode/2up>). This version of the tune was transcribed from a Cornwall collection (1827) and, indeed, bears some resemblance to other tunes from this region. The stanzas consist of two sections that are identical plus the refrain that is so similar that it appears to be a variant of the first two. Rather than a standard Bar Form (AAB), the musical structure of many German tunes like LOBE DEN HERRN ("Praise to the Lord, the Almighty," *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 139), this tune is AAA'.

British hymnologist Erik Routley (1917–1982), never one to mince words, noted: "But may we not whisper that THE FIRST NOWELL, beloved though it is, is really a terrible tune?" Recalling the extreme repetition, he concludes, "Something has gone amiss, surely, with the transmission of this tune" (Routley, 1958, 96). Perhaps, however, the musical structure is closer to the medieval storytelling form *chanson de geste*. This musical structure was used by clerics between the eleventh and twelfth centuries to tell epic stories in northern France. While little of the music is preserved, the *chanson de geste* repeated a simple melodic formula to tell the story, very similar to the melodic structure of our carol. For this author, this seems to be a more logical explanation of the extreme repetition in the melody rather than some other speculations, including notions that the singer forgot the proper melody, or it was transmitted improperly. Furthermore, Cornwall, on the southeastern tip of England, is on the English Channel directly across northern France. The telling of the story may have superseded the need for an interesting melody.

Undoubtedly, the melody and text have been smoothed out over the centuries to the form we have it today, but its essential character probably remains intact. An early version of the first couplet reads: "The first Nowell that the Angel did say / Was to three poor shepherds in fields as they lay." *The Cornish Songbook* (1929), edited by Ralph Dunstan, prints the first stanza as follows:

*O well, O well, the Angels did say
To shepherds there in the fields did lay;
Late in the night a-folding their sheep,
A winter's night, both cold and bleak.
O well, O well, O well, O well,
Born is the King of Israel.*

Since the carol was transmitted by aural/oral tradition, it is not impossible that the lesser known French word "Noël" sounded like "O well."

Sir John Stainer (1840–1901) standardized the melody as we know it and provided a harmonization that has become the customary one today. Sandys published Stainer's arrangement in *Christmas Carols New and Old* (1876). The eight-measure melody appears twice for each stanza, plus the refrain variant. Stainer enhanced the refrain by allowing the tenors to soar to a high F-sharp on the final "Noel," giving it a sense of climax, while the soprano maintains the repetition throughout. Tenors look forward to taking the spotlight at that point, leaving the sopranos on the original tune that becomes a less interesting counter melody.

December 30th
HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS

GOOD CHRISTIAN FRIENDS REJOICE

*Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
News, news!
Jesus Christ is born today!
Ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!*

Most of the songs sung at Christmas are really Christmas hymns. “Good Christian friends, rejoice” is truly a Christmas carol from the medieval carol tradition.

As *UM Hymnal* editor Carlton Young points out, folk carol “texts may be either sacred or secular, and usually are of unknown authorship. The sacred texts in the English and continental traditions are for the most part about the nativity of Jesus and other major feasts and days in the Christian calendar. . . . Most authorities link dance to the folk carol.”

The Oxford Movement of 19th-century England resurrected many ancient Greek and Latin hymns and translated them for modern use. The chief proponent of this movement was John Mason Neale (1818-1866). It is no accident that one may sing Neale’s translations throughout the entire Christian year since the observance of the Christian calendar was part of the revival of the Oxford Movement.

“Good Christian friends, rejoice” is rather unusual compared to other translations rendered by Neale in that the original song was in two languages—Latin and German. The technical term for this is *macaronic*, meaning Latin plus the vernacular language, thus this song is classified as a macaronic carol.

Macaronic carols were most certainly not sung as a part of the medieval Roman Catholic liturgy for at least three reasons: only Latin would have been sung in the Mass at this time; macaronic carols used dance-like rhythms in contrast to unmeasured flow of plainsong chant; and folk instruments including percussion were often used to accompany these songs, instruments usually not permitted in the Mass.

Folk carols were music the people used in more civic and domestic festival celebrations outside of the liturgical structure of the Mass.

Some controversy stems from Neale’s original first line of the carol, “Good Christian men, rejoice.” Today’s standards for inclusive language in reference to humanity result in the change of this line in most hymnals published in the last 20 years. In addition to the solution chosen for *The UM Hymnal*, others have resolved this dilemma with “Good Christian folk” or Good Christians all.”

Interestingly enough, the original Latin does not refer to “men” or people at all. A literal translation of the original stanza follows, coming from Methodist hymnologist Guy McCutchan’s text, *Our Hymnody* (1937):

*In sweet jubilation
Now sing and be joyful!
The joy of our hearts*

Lies in a manger
And shine like the sun
In the lap of his mother
Alpha and Omega (beginning and end)!

The second unusual feature about this carol is the atypical change in meter that takes in its early part: "News, news!" As it turns out, this interjection is the result of an error. Neale's translation was first included in his own collection, *Carols for Christmas-tide* (1853).

According to Carlton Young, Thomas Helmore, serving as the music editor for the volume, "incorrectly transcribed the tune from the old notation and added two notes after each third phrase. To accommodate the change in meter Neale added 'News, news,' 'Joy, joy,' and 'Peace, peace.'" In *The UM Hymnal*, "News, news!" has been maintained for each stanza.

A popular choral work, "Christmas Day," by the famous British composer Gustav Holst (1874-1934) incorporates this carol with the "error" and, though some hymnals omit it, the inclusion of "News, news!" has become a standard version for many.

All this said, the message of the carol is clear and may be found in the last line of each stanza: "Christ is born today!" "Christ is born for this!" "Christ was born to save!"

My Response/Thoughts:

December 31st
HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

"Hark! the Herald Angels Sing"
by Charles Wesley
The United Methodist Hymnal, No. 240

*Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Refrain: Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King!"*

The opening lines of this favorite Christmas hymn echo Luke 2:14, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace. . ." (KJV). Immediately, the hymn writer established a cosmic connection between the heavenly chorus and our hope for peace on earth. While many Christmas carols recount in one way or another the Christmas narrative, Wesley provides a dense theological interpretation of the Incarnation.

Wesley begins not with the prophets, the Annunciation to Mary, the journey to Bethlehem or the search for a room, but *in media res* – in the middle of the action. Rather than citing the final phrase of Luke 2:14 – "good will toward men" (KJV) – he offers his theological interpretation – "God and sinners reconciled." This is indeed a stronger theological statement. Note that lines 2, 3, and 4 of the opening stanza are placed in quotation marks, an indication that they are virtually citations from Scripture. Wesley includes his theological interpretation of the last poetic line within the quoted material indicating the strength and authority of his perspective.

"God and sinners reconciled" was a natural interpretation since the hymn was written within a year of Charles Wesley's conversion. It first was published under the title "Hymn for Christmas Day" in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739) in ten shorter stanzas, each stanza half the length of the stanzas we sing today. The hymn that we now sing is the result of many alterations by numerous individuals and hymnal editorial committees.

Changes in hymn texts are quite common. The average singer on Sunday morning would be amazed (or perhaps chagrined) to realize how few hymns before the twentieth century in our hymnals appear exactly in their original form. Perhaps the most notable change in this hymn was Wesley's first line. The original read, "Hark how all the welkin rings!" "Welkin" is an archaic English term referring to the sky or the firmament of the heavens, even the highest celestial sphere of the angels. This term certainly supported the common eighteenth-century notion of the three-tiered universe, where the top tier includes the celestial beings, the lowest tier the normal activities of humanity (birth, death, marriage, work, sickness) and the natural created order (rain, drought, natural disasters), and the middle tier where celestial beings influence the activities of beings and events on earth with their superhuman powers.

Gratefully, George Whitefield (1740-1770), a powerful preacher and friend to the Wesley brothers, made several changes to this hymn in his *Collection* (1753). He eschewed the original first line for the scriptural dialogue between heaven and earth. Wesley scholar and professor at Perkins School of Theology, Dr. Ted Campbell, comments on Whitefield's modification of the first line with his characteristic humor: "I have wondered if anybody but Charles knew what a welkin was supposed to be. Maybe John looked at the draft version and said, 'It's ever so lovely, Charles, but whatever on earth is a 'welkin'?' So, all the more reason to give thanks for the editorial work of George Whitefield."

The familiar first line we now sing sets up the opening stanza as an expansion of the song of the angels in Luke 2:14. Rather than exerting influence in the form of spirits, demons, or other beings said to inhabit the middle zone of the three-tiered universe, God, through the Incarnation, comes directly to earth in human form, the "Word made flesh . . . [dwelling] among us . . . full of grace and truth" (John 1:14, KJV). The change in the opening line is perhaps the most significant alteration of the many that have taken place in this hymn over the centuries.

The second most significant change from the original is the addition of the refrain, reiterating the first phrase of Luke 2:14. This came about for musical reasons. Almost exactly 100 years after the hymn's composition, Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) composed a cantata, *Festgesang* (1840), celebrating the 400th anniversary of the invention of moveable type by Johannes Gutenberg. A chorus from this cantata was adapted and paired with Wesley's text in *The Congregational Psalmist* (1858) by an English musician and singer under Mendelssohn, William H. Cummings (1831-1915). A famous and influential hymn collection, *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1861), carried this arrangement and helped to standardize its form and promote its broader use. Pairing the tune MENDELSSOHN with Wesley's text caused two additional changes from the original. Two of Wesley's short stanzas were combined into one to fit the longer tune; a refrain, repeating the first two lines of stanza one, was added to accommodate the tune. There is no doubt that most of the alterations to Wesley's original text combined with Mendelssohn's rousing tune have helped to make this one of the most festive and popular of all Christmas hymns.

The final four stanzas of Wesley's original are usually omitted. This is understandable as they are theologically and biblically dense with allusion and, perhaps, not as poetic as the oft-quoted stanzas. Yet they give us insight into Wesley's theology of the Incarnation:

*Come, Desire of nations, come,
Fix in us Thy humble home;
Rise, the woman's conqu'ring Seed,
Bruise in us the serpent's head.*

*Now display Thy saving power,
Ruined nature now restore;
Now in mystic union join
Thine to ours, and ours to Thine.*

*Adam's likeness, Lord, efface,
Stamp Thine image in its place:
Second Adam from above,
Reinstate us in Thy love.*

Let us Thee, though lost, regain,

*Thee, the Life, the inner man:
O, to all Thyself impart,
Formed in each believing heart*

The allusions to Scripture and various Wesleyan theological concepts are many. A few must suffice. "Desire of nations" is a reference drawn from Haggai 2:7: "And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come . . ." Handel incorporated this passage into *Messiah* (1741) in a bass solo in the Christmas portion of the oratorio. John Mason Neale, translating the Latin hymn *Veni, veni Emanuel* in the middle nineteenth century, cited this reference into the final stanza of his hymn: "O come, Desire of nations, bind/in one the hearts of all mankind."

Wesley often used the words, "mystic union," a Moravian concept that he incorporated into Wesleyan theology in the second stanza cited above. In the third stanza above, we are reminded of *imago Dei* in the phrase, "Stamp Thine image in its place," taking on the image of God in place of that of sinful Adam, a reference to the Wesleyan concept of sanctification.

"Hark! the herald angels sing" highlights the virgin birth, the universal application of the coming of "th'incarnate Deity" to all nations, and that Christ, who was "pleased with us in flesh to dwell," gives humanity a "second birth." The "second" or "new birth" was essential to Wesleyan theology in light of a controversy with the Moravians. The importance of this was illustrated in John Wesley's sermon, "The Marks of the New Birth" that provides extensive scriptural basis for his view.

The final stanza in most hymnals paraphrases the beautiful biblical citation from Malachi 4:2: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (KJV).

Each Christmas season we are invited by this venerable hymn to join the angels in swelling the cosmic chorus:

*With th'angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Refrain: Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King!"*

My Response/Thoughts:

January 1st
HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS

GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

"Go, Tell It on the Mountain"

by John W. Work, Jr.

The United Methodist Hymnal, No. 251

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere; go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.

*While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night, behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.**

"Go, tell it on the mountain" provides the opportunity to tell the story of how singing African American spirituals saved a university.

The Fisk Jubilee Singers (drawing their name from Leviticus 25—the year of jubilee) were founded as a ten-member touring ensemble to raise funds for debt-ridden Fisk University. Taking the entire contents of the University treasury with them for travel expenses, they departed on October 6, 1871, from Nashville on their difficult, but ultimately successful eighteen-month tour, a triumph that is still celebrated annually as Jubilee Day on the campus. Though not the original repertoire of the group, by the time they reached New York in December of that year, their concerts grew to include more and more spirituals, until their program consisted primarily of choral arrangements of spirituals or, according to African American scholars C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya, "anthemized spirituals."

They have been credited with keeping the Negro spiritual alive. Spirituals scholar Sandra Jean Graham places this development in context: "The students were at first reluctant ambassadors for the songs of their ancestors. As [Jubilee] singer Ella Sheppard recalled, 'The slave songs were never used by us then in public. They were associated with slavery and the dark past and represented the things to be forgotten. Then, too, they were sacred to our parents, who used them in their religious worship . . . It was only through persuasion that the students sang their spirituals privately for [the University's treasurer, George L.] White [who was a white man], and through White's coercion that they sang them in concert."

Taking the spiritual to white and black audiences in the United States and Europe earned the school and the spiritual an international reputation. The small ensemble of two quartets and a pianist grew to a full choral ensemble. Other historically black colleges eventually followed the same pattern, including Howard University (Washington, D.C.) and Tuskegee Institute (now University, Tuskegee, Alabama).

The earliest version of the spiritual appeared in in *Religious Folk Songs of The Negro, as Sung on The Plantations*, new edition (1909) with the heading "Christmas Plantation Song" with different stanzas and in slave dialect:

When I was a seeker I sought both night and day. I ask de Lord to help me, An' He show me de way.

He made me a watchman Upon the city wall, [a reference to Isaiah 21:11-12] An' if I am a Christian I am the least of all.

Chorus:

Go tell it on de mountain, Over de hills and everywhere. Go tell it on de mountain, Dat Jesus Christ is born.

A few smaller and less broadly circulated versions use these stanzas or a variation, for example, "When I was a sinner . . ."

African Canadian composer R. Nathaniel Dett (1882-1943) added another harmonization and stanza in the volume he edited, *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro As Sung At Hampton Institute* (1927). His stanza follows:

If you cannot sing like Angels, If you cannot pray like Paul, You can tell the love of Jesus, You can say he died for all.

Dett's stanza, or some version of it, is now most commonly associated with the spiritual, "There is a balm in Gilead."

John Wesley Work, Jr. (1872?-1925), along with his brother Frederick Jerome Work (1878?-1942), led the Fisk Jubilee Singers from 1898-1904. Baptist hymnologist William J. Reynolds cites recollections by John Wesley Work, Jr.'s son about the role of "Go, tell it" on the campus: "[John Wesley Work, III] took pleasure in recalling his early days as a child on the campus of Fisk University where his father was a teacher. Very early on Christmas morning, long before sunrise, it was then the custom for students to gather and walk together from building to building singing ["Go, tell it on the mountain]."

Concert arrangements of spirituals were published in Frederick Work's *New Jubilee Songs, as Sung by the Fisk Jubilee Singers* (1902), a collection that may have been co-edited by John Wesley Work, though his name does not appear in this collection. "Go, tell it" appears in another collection for solo voice and four-part choir edited by John Wesley Work, III (Work, Jr.'s son) in *American Negro Songs and Spirituals: a Comprehensive Collection of 230 Folk Songs, Religious and Secular* (1940).

Drawing on an adaptation of the Work brothers' setting, *The Pilgrim Hymnal* (1958), edited by Hugh Porter (1897-1960), professor in the Sacred Music Department at Union Seminary (New York), was the first mainline hymnal to include the spiritual. John Wesley Work's stanzas based on Luke 2:8-20 have become the standard versions in hymnals:

1. *While shepherds kept their watching . . .*
2. *The shepherds feared and trembled . . .*
3. *Down in a lowly manger . . .*

From this hymnal, versions of "Go, tell it" have spread to the point that it has become one of a "canon" of spirituals found in virtually every hymnal today.

John Wesley Work, Jr. (sometimes designated John Wesley Work II to distinguish him from his son) received his master's degree from Fisk University, and after further study at Harvard, began teaching Latin and Greek at the University in 1898. He trained the Jubilee Singers and was a leader in preserving and performing African American spirituals. He taught at Fisk University until 1923 when he was relieved of his duties due to changing attitudes toward the spiritual. He then went on to be President of Roger Williams University in Nashville until his death in 1925.

UM Hymnal editor Carlton R. Young notes African American theologian James H. Cone's interpretation of this spiritual. Dr. Cone states that "the conquering King, and the crucified Lord . . . has come to bring

peace and justice to the dispossessed of the land. That is why the slave wanted to 'go tell it on de mountain.'"

William Farley Smith (1941-1997), who provided arrangements for most of the spirituals in *The United Methodist Hymnal* (1989), adapts Work's arrangements and, according to Dr. Carlton Young, "tastefully embellishes the chorus and the end of the verses with the blue note, chromatic turns, and the turn-of-the-century male quartet textures and voice leadings. It improves but does not abandon [Hugh] Porter's European setting."

Other versions of this spiritual have been adapted to fit specific situations. For example, during the Civil Rights movement, the following was sung in Alabama:

*I wouldn't be Governor Wallace,
I'll tell you the reason why,
I'd be afraid He might call me
And I wouldn't be ready to die.*

The spiritual has inspired works in other media. Author James Baldwin's (1924-1987) first major work and semi-autobiographical novel was titled *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953). The novel discusses the role of the paradoxical church as experienced by African Americans, both as the incubator for repression and hypocrisy and as a foundation for hope, identity, and community. The ABC network produced a movie using this title in 1984.

Regardless of which version that is sung, "Go, tell it on the mountain" has become a truly American contribution to the telling of the Christmas story that is now sung around the world.

**Given oral tradition, the wording of African American spirituals varies from version to version and, given the dialects of the spirituals in their original form, even the spelling of words. For example, many traditional African American sources use the spelling "shone" in the first stanza. The editors of The United Methodist Hymnal modernized this spelling to "shown." This is but a small example of the many changes that take place between a spiritual as sung in its original context and the printing of it in a hymnal.*

My Response/Thoughts:



NEW YEARS BLESSINGS!!!!!!

Websites:

UM Discipleship Ministries History of Hymns: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/history-of-hymns>

Hymnary: https://hymnary.org/text/praised_be_the_god_of_israel

Other Sources:

Carl P. Daw, Jr., *Glory to God: A Companion* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2016).

Hugh Keyte and Andrew Parrott, *The New Book of Oxford Carols* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Alan Luff, "The First Nowell the Angel Did Say." *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*. Canterbury Press, <http://www.hymnology.co.uk/t/the-first-nowell-the-angel-did-say> (accessed October 17, 2020).

Erik Routley, *The English Carol* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1958).

William Sandys, *Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern* (London: Richard, Beckley, 1833). See the following link for the carol: <https://archive.org/details/christmascarolsa00sandrich/page/74/mode/2up> (accessed October 17, 2020).

Cecil J. Sharp, Frank Kidson, Lucy E. Broadwood, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and A.G. Gilchrist, "Carols," *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 5, no. 18 (January 1914), 1–30: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4434000> (accessed October 17, 2020).

John Stainer, ed., *Christmas Carols New and Old* (London: Novello, Ewer and Co., 1850), <https://archive.org/details/christ00bram/page/n3/mode/2up> (accessed October 18, 2020).