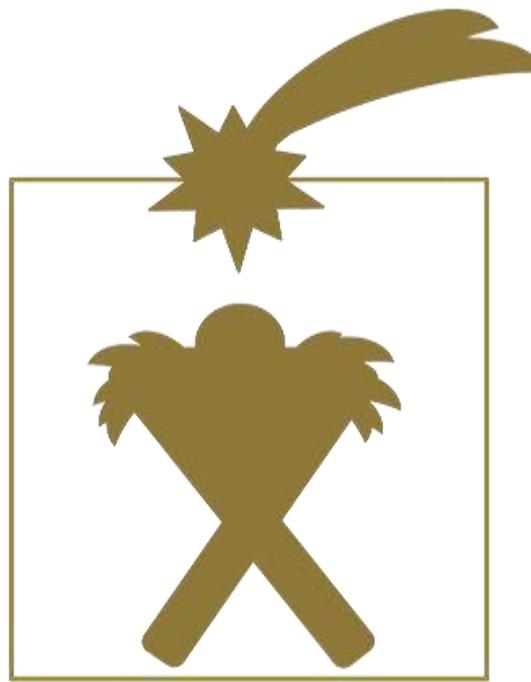


Christmas Eve



Grace Presbyterian Church
Fort Wayne, IN
December 24, 2025

“I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manager.”

Luke 2:10b-12

Prelude *What Child Is This?* arr. by Scott

Welcome

Opening Hymn #401 "Here in This Place"

The Lighting of the Christ Candle – Tammy Menkes & Holly Bouthot

In Luke, Chapter 2, verses 10-12, we hear, "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manager."

Henri Nouwen was a theologian known world-wide. Tonight, I want to share with you his reflection on this passage from Luke.

"God does not want us to be afraid, distant or envious. God wants to come close, very close, so close that we can rest in the intimacy of God as children in their mother's arms. So, God became a little baby. Who can be afraid of a little baby? A tiny little baby is completely dependent on its parents, nurses, and caregivers. Yes, God wanted to become so powerless as to be unable to eat or drink, walk, play or work without the help of many people.

Yes, God became dependent on human beings to grow up and live among us and proclaim the good news. Yes, indeed, God chose to become so powerless that the completion of God's own mission among us became dependent on us. How can we fear a baby we rock in our arms; how can we be envious of a baby who only smiles at us in response to our tenderness? That is the mystery of the incarnation."

Please join me as we share responsively in prayer following the lighting of the Christ Candle.

LIGHT THE CHRIST CANDLE

Heavenly Father, as we light this candle, may your love for all humanity...

Be born in us tonight!

May the love that forgives and transforms...

Be born in us tonight!

May the love which overcomes division and creates understanding...

Be born in us tonight!

May the love that brings the blessing of peace...

Be born in us tonight! Amen!

Special Music – O Holy Night by Adam

Prayer for Illumination

Let us Pray: Gracious God, as we hear again the story of light born into darkness, send your Holy Spirit to open our hearts and minds. By your Word made flesh, speak to us tonight—that we may recognize Christ among us and receive the gift of your peace. **Amen.**

1st Lesson – In the Beginning –Todd German

Genesis 1:1-2 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created. 4 Life was in Him, and that life was the light of men. 5 That light shines in the darkness, yet the darkness did not overcome it.

Hymn #110 “Love Has Come”

2nd Lesson – David’s Son – Pam Callahan

Isaiah 11:1-4a Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him—a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and strength, a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. 3 His delight will be in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what He sees with His eyes, He will not execute justice by what He hears with His ears, 4 but He will judge the poor righteously and

execute justice for the oppressed of the land.

Isaiah 9:6-7 For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on His shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 The dominion will be vast, and its prosperity will never end. He will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain it with justice and righteousness from now on and forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will accomplish this.

Hymn #88 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” verses 1-4

3rd Lesson – Everlasting Kingdom – Nancy Current

Daniel 7:13-14 I continued watching in the night visions, and I saw One like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before Him. 14 He was given authority to rule, and glory, and a kingdom; so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.

Isaiah 16:5 Then in the tent of David a throne will be established by faithful love. A judge who seeks what is right and is quick to execute justice will sit on the throne forever.

Hymn #82 “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

4th Lesson – Birth in Bethlehem – Cathy German

Micah 5:2 Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are small among the clans of Judah; One will come from you to be ruler over Israel for Me. His origin is from antiquity, from eternity.

Matthew 2:6 And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah: because out of you will come a leader who will shepherd My people Israel.

Hymn #121 “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

5th Lesson – Jesus’ Birth Told to Mary – Nancy Current

Psalm 132:11 The Lord swore an oath to David, a promise He will not abandon: “I will set one of your descendants on your throne.

Luke 1:30-33, 38 Then the angel told her: Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will call His name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end. 38 “I am the Lord’s servant,” said Mary. “May it be done to me according to your word.” Then the angel left her.

Hymn #98 “To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary” verses 1-3

6th Lesson – Mary’s Song of Praise – Pam Callahan

Luke 1:46-55 And Mary said: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, 47 and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior, 48 because He has looked with favor on the humble condition of His servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed, 49 because the Mighty One has done great things for me, and His name is holy. 50 His mercy is from generation to generation on those who fear Him. 51 He has done a mighty deed with His arm; He has scattered the proud because of the thoughts of their hearts; 52 He has toppled the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly. 53 He has satisfied the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. 54 He has helped His servant Israel, mindful of His mercy, 55 just as He spoke to our ancestors, to Abraham and his descendants forever.

Genesis 17:19b I will confirm My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

Hymn #98 “To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary” verses 4-6

7th Lesson – The Virgin Birth – Todd German

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel.

Matthew 1:18-23 The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After His mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit. 19 So her husband Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly. 20 But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is by the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.” Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 23 See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name Him Immanuel, which is translated “God is with us.”

Hymn #347 “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

8th Lesson – Jesus Birth – Cathy German

Luke 2:1, 4-7 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole empire should be registered. And Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family line of David, 5 to be registered along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was pregnant. 6 While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 Then she gave birth to her firstborn Son, and she wrapped Him snugly in cloth and laid Him in a manger—because there was no room for them at the lodging place.

Hymn #115 “Away in a Manger”

9th Lesson – The Angels – Pam Callahan

Psalm 103:20 Praise the Lord, all His angels of great strength, who do His word, obedient to His command.

Luke 2:8-14 8 In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping watch at night over their flock. 9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: 11 Today a Savior, who is Messiah

the Lord, was born for you in the city of David. 12 This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in cloth and lying in a manger.” 13 Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: 14 Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people He favors!

Hymn #113 “Angels We Have Heard on High”

10th Lesson – The Shepherds – *Cathy German*

Luke 2:15-20 15 When the angels had left them and returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go straight to Bethlehem and see what has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” 16 They hurried off and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the manger. 17 After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard, just as they had been told.

Hymn #118 “While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks” verses 1-4

11th Lesson – Jesus, Son of God – *Todd German*

Luke 2:40 The boy grew up and became strong, filled with wisdom, and God’s grace was on Him.

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared with salvation for all people,

Galatians 4:4-5 When the time came to completion, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

John 3:16-17 “For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world that He might condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

Hymn #134 “Joy to the World”

Prayers of Intercession

God of holy night, we pray for a world longing for good news. Bring comfort to those who grieve, hope to those who despair, and peace to places torn by fear and violence.

We lift before you the lonely, the weary, and the forgotten, and we give thanks for the love that gathers us here tonight. As you came to us in a child, come again into our lives and into your world, through Jesus Christ, our Emmanuel. **Amen.**

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

We Light Our Candles (*remember to tilt unlit candles towards upright lit candle*)

Hymn #122 “Silent Night, Holy Night!”

Postlude

Silent Night by Gruber

ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS

To connect to our worship services on Zoom, follow these instructions to watch or listen. You can connect at 5:15 for fellowship; the service starts at 5:30.

Option 1: Automatically Join the Meeting

Follow the link in the email sent every week. This is by far the easiest way to connect to the live video.

Option 2: Manually Join the Meeting

You can download Zoom from <https://www.zoom.us>.

After you have installed the program/app, click on “Join” and enter this information:

Meeting ID: 9712063468 **Password:** 030414

Option 3: Call in to Listen (Audio Only)

On Sunday Morning, you can call to listen to the service. After you call, it will ask you to enter the Meeting ID and Password Below:

Phone Number: (301) 715-8592 **Meeting ID:** 9712063468 **Password:** 030414

Here in This Place
Gather Us In

401



2 We are the young, our lives are a mys-tery. We are the old who
 3 Here we will take the wine and the wa-ter; here we will take the
 4 Not in the dark of build-ings con-fin-ing, not in some heav-en,



yearn for your face. We have been sung through-out all of his-tory,
 bread of new birth. Here you shall call your sons and your daugh-ters,
 light years a-way: here in this place the new light is shin-ing;



called to be light to the whole hu-man race.

call us a-new to be salt for the earth.

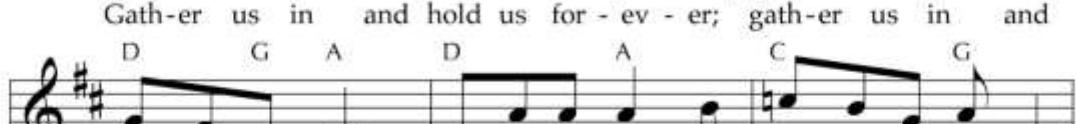
now is the king-dom, and now is the day.



Gath-er us in, the rich and the haugh-ty; gath-er us in, the

Give us to drink the wine of com-pas-sion; give us to eat the

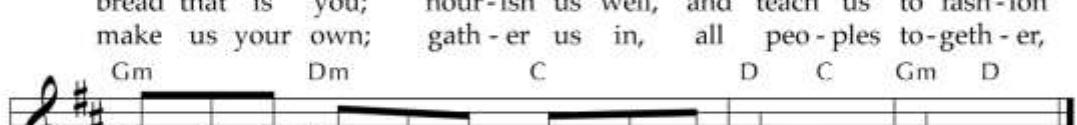
Gath-er us in and hold us for-ev-er; gath-er us in and



proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so low-ly;

bread that is you; nour-ish us well, and teach us to fash-ion

make us your own; gath-er us in, all peo-ples to-geth-er,



give us the cour-age to en-ter the song.

lives that are ho-ly and hearts that are true.

fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

The "you/your" mentioned in every stanza is never identified, but this 1979 hymn is clearly a corporate prayer to God on behalf of the diverse congregation who have assembled for worship, longing to be transformed and used as God's witnesses and for God's purposes.

Love Has Come

110

Capo 3: (D)

F

(Bm7)

Dm7

(Em7)

Gm7

(A)

C



1 Love has come: a light in the dark - ness!
 2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der.
 3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us!

(D) (Bm7) (Em) (A7) (D)

F

Dm7

Gm

C7

F



Love shines forth in the Beth - le - hem skies. See, all
 Love is God now a - sleep in the hay. See the
 Love is life ev - er - last - ing and free. Love is

(A) (D) (Bm) (D) (A) (G) (D)

C

F

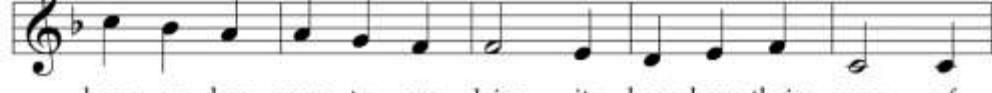
Dm

F

C

B^b

F



heav - en has come to pro - claim it; hear how their song of
 glow in the eyes of his moth - er; what is the name her
 Je - sus with - in and a - mong us. Love is the peace our

(Em7) (F[#]7) (G) (A) (Bm) (A7)

Gm7

A7

B^b

C

Dm

C7



joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to you, a
 heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the name she
 hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the gift of

(D) (A) (G) (A) (D) (A) (A7) (Dsus) (D)

F

C

B^b

C

F

C7

Fsus

F



Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.
 whis - pers. Love! Love! Je - sus, Em - man - u - el.
 Christ-mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Here is a chance to sing a familiar French carol tune with new words, the most important clearly being "Love." The senses "seen and heard" (as in Acts 4:20 and elsewhere) organize the first two stanzas, while the third holds the summary statement: "Love is the gift of Christmas."

TEXT: Ken Bible, 1996

MUSIC: French melody; arr. Eric T. Myers, 2012
 Text © 1996 INWhymns.com (admin. Music Services)
 Music Arr. © 2012 Eric T. Myers

BRING A TORCH

9.9.10.9.9.8

88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som
 2 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, who or - derest
 3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy
 4 O come, thou Root of Jes - se, free thine own from

cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile
 all things might - i - ly: to us the path of knowl - edge
 tribes on Si - nai's height in an - cient times didst give the
 Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple

here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 show; and teach us in her ways to go. Re-joice! Re-joice!
 law in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.
 save and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.

Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

5 O come, thou Key of David, come,
 and open wide our heavenly home;
 make safe the way that leads on high,
 and close the path to misery.

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

6 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
 our spirits by thine advent here;
 disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
 and death's dark shadows put to flight.

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

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
 all peoples in one heart and mind;
 bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
 fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
 shall come to thee, O Israel.

One stanza of this paraphrase of the great O Antiphons may be sung on each of the last days of Advent as follows:

Dec. 17: O Wisdom (2)

Dec. 20: O Key of David (5)

Dec. 23: O Emmanuel (1)

Dec. 18: O Lord of might (3)

Dec. 21: O Dayspring (6)

Dec. 19: O Root of Jesse (4)

Dec. 22: O Desire of Nations (7)

These titles of the coming Christ appeared in daily Vesper antiphons sung during the week before Christmas; their roots date at least to the reign of Charlemagne. Both text and tune are the fruit of 19th-century efforts to reclaim Christian treasures from pre-Reformation sources.

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus 82

1 Come, thou long - ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
 2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and yet a king,

from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
 born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra-cious king-dom bring.

Is-rael's strength and con-so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art;
 By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;

dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long-ing heart.
 by thine all - suf-fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo-rious throne.

With its opening "Come," this hymn sounds the note of entreaty and invitation that characterizes the Advent season (from the Latin *adventus* = "coming"). Its blending of memory and hope helps us to give voice to our present faith as we stand between the past and the future.

121 O Little Town of Bethlehem

1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y and, gath - ered all a - bove,
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given!
 4 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by,
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heaven,
 cast out our sin and en - ter in; be born in us to - day.

Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light;
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
 No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad ti - dings tell;

the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
 and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all on earth.
 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
 O come to us; a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!

Though he was famed during his lifetime as a great preacher, no sermon Phillips Brooks ever preached has been heard or read by as many people as have sung this carol he wrote in December 1868 for the Sunday School children of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.

TEXT: Phillips Brooks, 1868
 MUSIC: Lewis Henry Redner, 1868

ST. LOUIS
 8.6.8.6,7.6.8.6
 (alternate tune: FOREST GREEN)

98 To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary

Capo 3: (Em) (B7) (Em) (Am) (B) (Em)
 Gm D7 Gm Cm D Gm



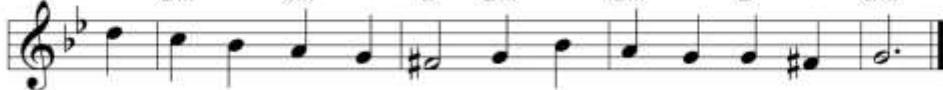
1 To a maid whose name was Mar - y, the an - gel Ga-briel came.
 2 "For you are high - ly fa-vored by God the Lord of all,
 3 But Mar-y was most trou-bled to hear the an-gel's word.
 4 "Fear not, for God is with you, and you shall bear a child.
 5 "How shall this be?" said Mar - y, "I am not yet a wife."
 6 As Mar-y heard the an - gel, she won-dered at his words.

(Em) (B7) (Em) (G) (D) (G)
 Gm D7 Gm B♭ F B♭



"Fear not," the an - gel told her, "I come to bring good news;
 who e - ven now is with you. You are on earth most blest;
 What was the an - gel say - ing? It trou-bled her to hear,
 His name shall be called Je - sus, God's off-spring from on high.
 The an - gel an-swered quick - ly, "The power of the Most High
 "Be - hold, I am your hand-maid," she said un - to her God.

(Em) (Am) (B) (Em) (Am) (B) (Em)
 Gm Cm D Gm Cm D Gm



good news I come to tell you, good news, I say, good news."
 you are most blest, most bless - ed; God chose you, you are blest!"
 to hear the an - gel's mes - sage, it trou-bled her to hear.
 And he shall reign for - ev - er, for - ev - er reign on high."
 will come up - on you short - ly, your child shall be God's child."
 "So be it; I am read - y ac - cord - ing to your word."

Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

This 20th-century ballad-like retelling of the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38) displays many characteristics of a folksong style, especially repetition in both text and tune and short quotations included in the narrative. Such features help to make a song both memorable and singable.

TEXT: Gracia Grindal, 1982, alt.
 MUSIC: Rusty Edwards, 1982
Text and Music © 1984 Hope Publishing Company

ANNUNCIATION
 7.6.7.6.7.6

Silent Night, Holy Night! 122

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight;
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light
 4 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Won - drous star, lend thy light;
 'round yon vir - gin moth-er and child! Ho - ly In-fant, so ten-der and
 glo - ries stream from heav-en a - far, heaven-ly hosts sing "Al - le - lu -
 ra - diant beams from thy ho-ly face, with the dawn of re-deem - ing
 with the an - gels let us sing Al - le - lu - ia to our
 mild, sleep in heav-en-ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 ia: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born!"
 grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.
 King: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born.

GERMAN

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

KOREAN

1 고요한밤 거룩한밤
 어둠에 묻힌밤
 주의부모 앉아서
 감사기도 드릴때
 아기잘도 잔다
 아기잘도 잔다

SPANISH

1 *¡Noche de paz, noche de amor!*
Todo duerme en derredor,
entre los astros que esparsen su luz,
bella, anunciando al niñito Jesús,
brilla la estrella de paz,
brilla la estrella de paz.

The tradition that this carol's tune was created for guitar accompaniment at its first singing on Christmas Eve 1818 seems reliable, though a recent find shows that the text was about two years old. But there is no question that this is now a favorite Christmas carol worldwide.

TEXT: Joseph Mohr, 1816; stanzas 1-3, English trans. John Freeman Young, 1863;
 stanza 4, English trans. Jane Montgomery Campbell, 1863, alt.
 MUSIC: Franz Xaver Gruber, 1818
 Korean Trans. © The Christian Literature Society of Korea

STILLE NACHT
 Irregular