



hristmas. For many of us, the word conjures up happy memories. Good times—simpler times.

Things seem more complicated now. Life has got harder, less certain and more fearful. Pandemic, politics, protests... we can still put up the fairy lights and light the candles, but the world does seem darker than it used to.

In difficult times, we look for hope—something to hold on to, something to look forward to, something or someone that can say to us, "It will get better". But where to find it? Well, to discover real hope this Christmas, look to... the first Christmas. To quote one of the carols in this booklet, we can look back at Jesus being born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago and say, "the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight". Why? Because of who Jesus was and is. One Bible writer, who knew Jesus extremely well, described his arrival in this world like this:

"We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John chapter 1 verse 14)

#### 1. HE CAME FROM THE FATHER

Do things feel a bit out of control? If blind chemical processes are all there is—if there's nothing behind what we can see—then that's all we can expect. But... if there is a divine being who made everything, then there is someone bigger than this life and someone able to direct this world. The first Christmas says that there is such a God—a God of relationship: Father, Son and Spirit. "The one and only Son" came from heaven to earth to show us that he is

there, and that he is in control. But... if God is in control, what is he doing?

#### 2. HE IS FULL OF GRACE

What is God like? "Full of grace"—that is, full of overwhelming kindness. Because he's full of kindness, God is moving things towards the day when he will remake this world perfectly. No more uncertainty, fear, pain or death—only joy and peace. Because he's full of kindness, God was born to do everything necessary to invite us into that future world. Because he's full of kindness, Jesus offers the forgiveness we all need for the ways we've all lived as if this is a world in which we, not God, are in charge.

Christmas tells you that one day things will be better than they have ever been; and that God is inviting you to enjoy it with him.

#### 3. HE IS FULL OF TRUTH

It's hard to find your way in the dark. And sometimes life feels as if we have taken a sudden turn off a well-lit motorway and on to some dark, unfamiliar country lanes. Enter Jesus, "full of truth". He knows the way we need to take and the decisions we need to make. He offers us guidance and confidence in life.

So, here's the Bible's claim: Christmas brings hope. If the Bible's true, Jesus brings us the hope we're all looking for. But *is* it true? Why not find out more for yourself—you have nothing to lose, and a lot of hope to gain.

To find out more: christianityexplored.org
This piece is a shortened version of the booklet
"Hope for a Covid Christmas":
thegoodbook.co.uk/hopechristmas

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"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:6

## 1. Angels From The Realms Of Glory

A ngels 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!

Shepherds, in the fields abiding, Watching o'er your flocks by night; God with man is now residing, Yonder shines the infant Light:

Come and worship...

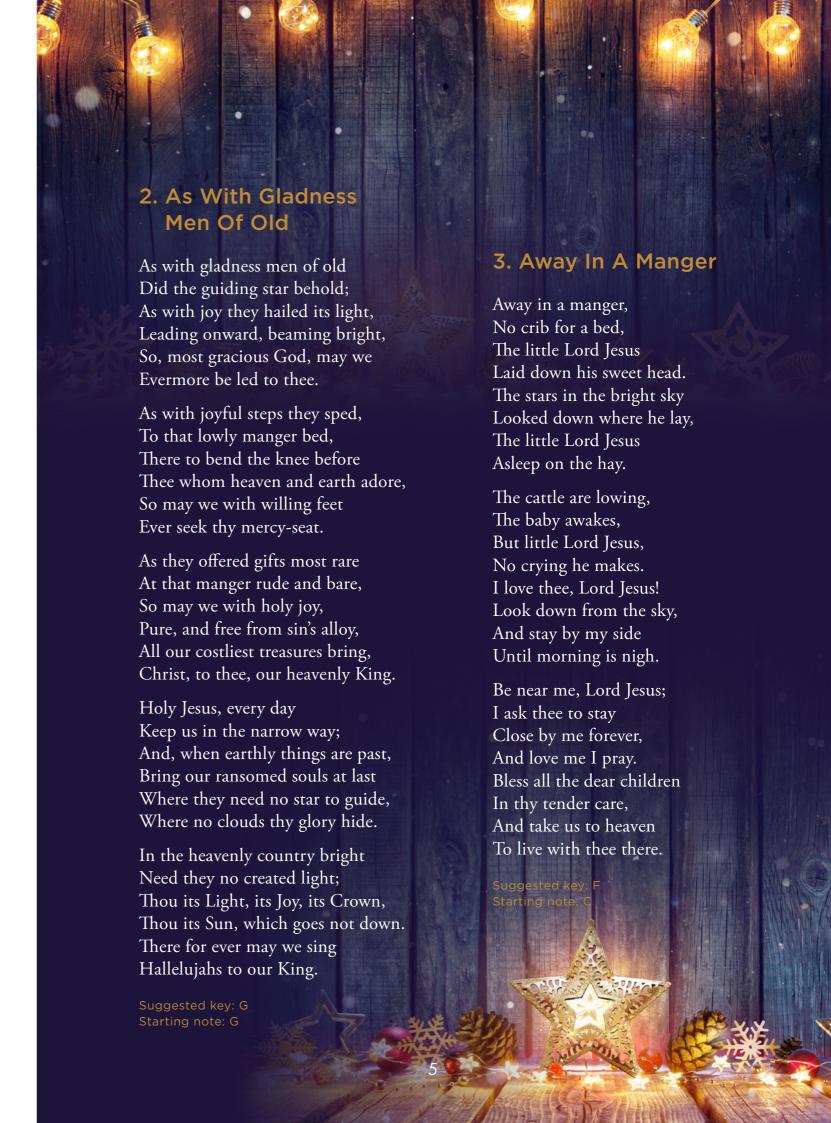
Sages, leave your contemplations, Brighter visions beam afar; Seek the great desire of nations, Ye have seen his natal star:

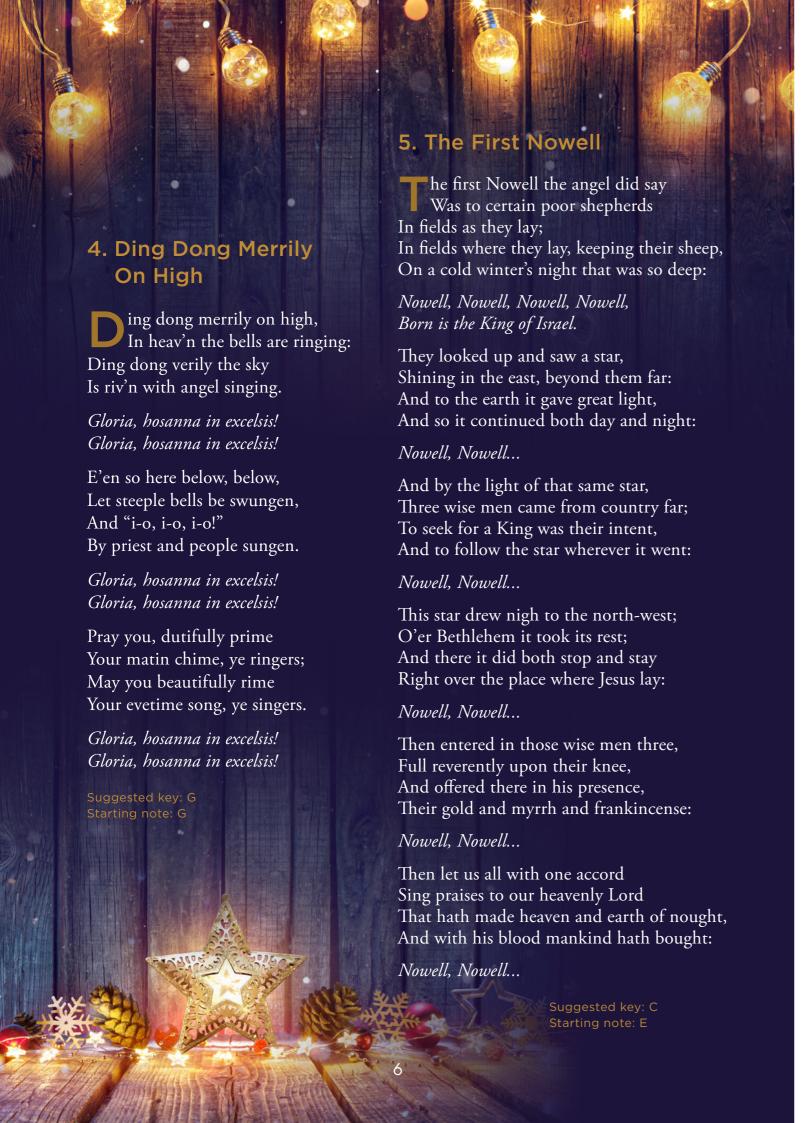
Come and worship...

Saints before the altar bending, Watching long in hope and fear; Suddenly the Lord, descending, In his temple shall appear:

Come and worship...

Suggested key: F Starting note: A





## 6. God Rest You Merry Gentlemen

od rest you merry, gentlemen, Let nothing you dismay, For Jesus Christ our Saviour Was born upon this day, To save us all from Satan's power When we were gone astray:

O tidings of comfort and joy, Comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heavenly Father A blessed angel came, And unto certain shepherds Brought tidings of the same, How that in Bethlehem was born The Son of God by name:

O tidings...

The shepherds at those tidings Rejoiced much in mind, And left their flocks a-feeding In tempest, storm and wind, And went to Bethlehem straightway, This blessed Babe to find:

O tidings...

But when to Bethlehem they came, Whereat this Infant lay, They found Him in a manger, Where oxen feed on hay; His mother Mary kneeling, Unto the Lord did pray:

O tidings...

Now to the Lord sing praises, All you within this place, And with true love and brotherhood Each other now embrace; This holy tide of Christmas All other doth deface:

O tidings...

Suggested key: Em Starting note: E

## 7. Hark The Herald Angels Sing

ark the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn 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 hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."
Hark the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heav'n adored:
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail th'incarnate Deity:
Pleased, as man, with men to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel!
Hark the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace
Hail the Sun of Righteousness
Light and life to all he brings
Ris'n with healing in his wings
Mild he lays his glory by
Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth
Born to give them second birth
Hark the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Suggested key: F Starting note: C

### 8. The Holly And The Ivy

The holly and the ivy,
When they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood,
The holly bears the crown.

Oh, the rising of the sun
And the running of the deer,
The playing of the merry organ,
Sweet singing in the choir.

The holly bears a blossom, As white as the lily flower, And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ, To be our sweet Saviour.

The rising of the sun...

The holly bears a berry, As red as any blood, And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ To do poor sinners good.

The rising of the sun...

The holly bears a prickle, As sharp as any thorn, And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ On Christmas Day in the morn.

The rising of the sun...

The holly bears a bark, As bitter as any gall, And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ For to redeem us all.

The rising of the sun...

The holly and the ivy, When they are both full grown, Of all the trees that are in the wood, The holly bears the crown.

The rising of the sun...

Suggested key: F Starting note: F

### 9. In The Bleak Midwinter

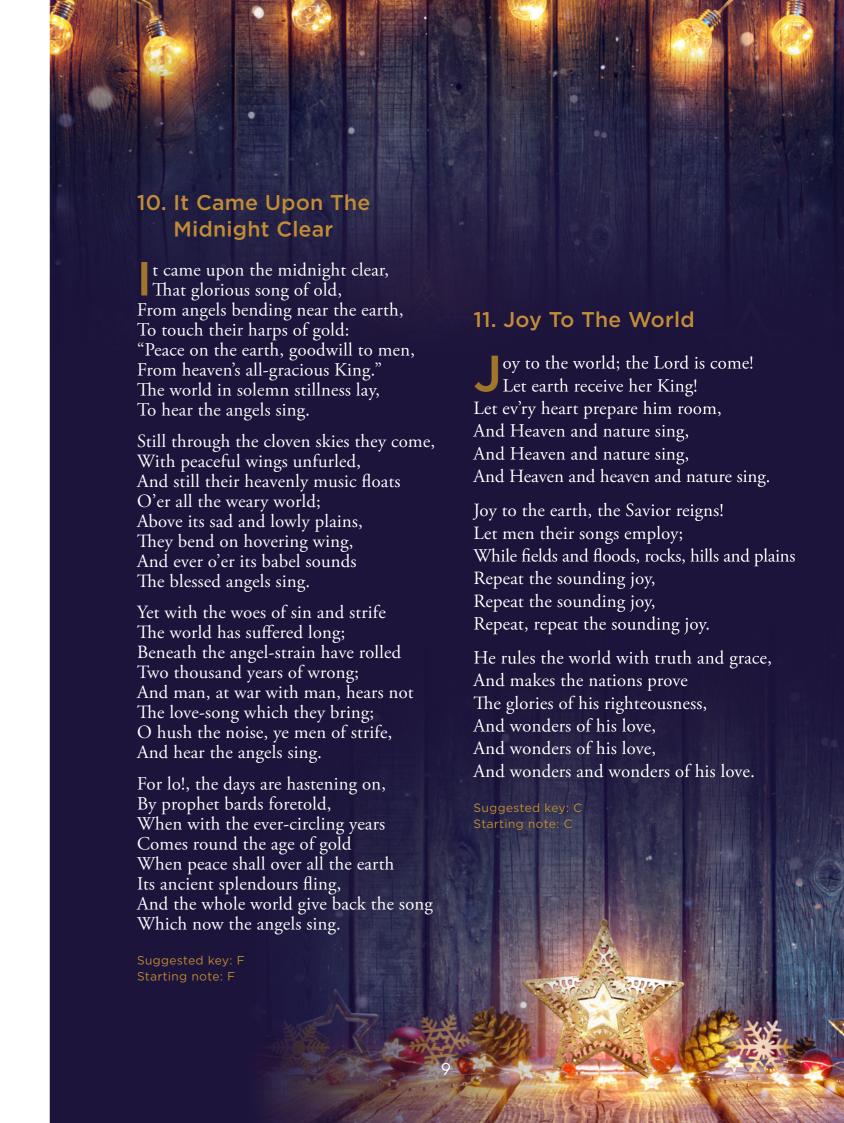
n the bleak midwinter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen,
Snow on snow, snow on snow.
In the bleak midwinter,
Long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, Nor earth sustain; Heaven and earth shall flee away When he comes to reign; In the bleak midwinter A stable place sufficed The Lord God incarnate, Iesus Christ.

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air;
But his mother only,
In her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.

What can I give him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a wise man
I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give him—
Give my heart.

Suggested key: F Starting note: A



#### 13. O Come O Come **Emmanuel** 12. O Come All Ye Faithful O come O come Emmanuel come all ye faithful, And ransom captive Israel Joyful and triumphant, That mourns in lonely exile here O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; Until the Son of God appear Come and behold him, Rejoice Rejoice Emmanuel Born the King of angels: Shall come to thee O Israel O come let us adore him, O come thou rod of Jesse free O come let us adore him. Thine own from Satan's tyranny O come let us adore him, From depths of hell Thy people save Christ the Lord! And give them victory o'er the grave God of God. Rejoice Rejoice Emmanuel... Light of light, O come thou Day-spring come and cheer Lo he abhors not the virgin's womb; Our spirits by Thine Advent here Very God, Disperse the gloomy clouds of night Begotten not created: And death's dark shadows put to flight O come let us adore him... Rejoice Rejoice Emmanuel... Sing choirs of angels, O come Thou Key of David come Sing in exultation, And open wide our heavenly home Sing all ye citizens of heaven above; Make safe the way that leads on high Glory to God And close the path to misery In the highest: Rejoice Rejoice Emmanuel... O come let us adore him... O come O come Thou Lord of Might Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height Yea, Lord, we greet thee, In ancient times didst give the law Born this happy morning; In cloud and majesty and awe Jesus, to thee be glory given; Rejoice Rejoice Emmanuel... Word of the Father,

O come Desire of nations bind

In one the hearts of all mankind

Bid Thou our sad divisions cease

And be Thyself our King of Peace

Rejoice Rejoice Emmanuel...

Suggested key: F

Starting note: C

Now in flesh appearing:

O come let us adore him...

### 14. O Little Town Of Bethlehem

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.

O morning stars together Proclaim the holy birth, And praises sing to God the King, And peace to men on earth. For Christ is born of Mary; And, gathered all above, While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wondering love.

How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.

Suggested key: F Starting note: C

### 15. O Holy Night

holy night! The stars are brightly shining, It is the night of our dear Saviour's birth. Long lay the world in sin and error pining, Till he appear'd and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.

Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices! O night divine, O night when Christ was born; O night divine, O night, O night Divine.

Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming, With glowing hearts by his cradle we stand. So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming, Here come the wise men from the Orient land. The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger; In all our trials born to be our friend.

He knows our need, to our weaknesses no stranger, Behold your King! Before him lowly bend! Behold your King! Before him lowly bend!

Truly he taught us to love one another; His law is love and his gospel is peace. Chains shall he break for the slave is our brother; And in his name all oppression shall cease. Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we, Let all within us praise his holy name.

Christ, is the Lord, oh praise his name for ever, His power and glory evermore proclaim, His power and glory evermore proclaim.

Suggested key: Bb Starting note: D

## 16. On Christmas Night All Christians Sing

n Christmas night all Christians sing
To hear the news the angels bring;
On Christmas night all Christians sing
To hear the news the angels bring:
News of great joy, news of great mirth,
News of our merciful King's birth.

Then why should we on earth be sad, Since our Redeemer made us glad? Then why should we on earth be sad, Since our Redeemer made us glad, When from our sin he set us free, All for to gain our liberty?

When sin departs before his grace, Then life and health come in its place; When sin departs before his grace, Then life and health come in its place; Angels and men with joy may sing, All for to see the newborn King.

All out of darkness we have light, Which made the angels sing this night; All out of darkness we have light, Which made the angels sing this night: "Glory to God and peace to men, Now and forevermore. Amen."

Suggested key: F Starting note: C

# 17. Once In Royal David's City

once in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed.
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ, her little child.

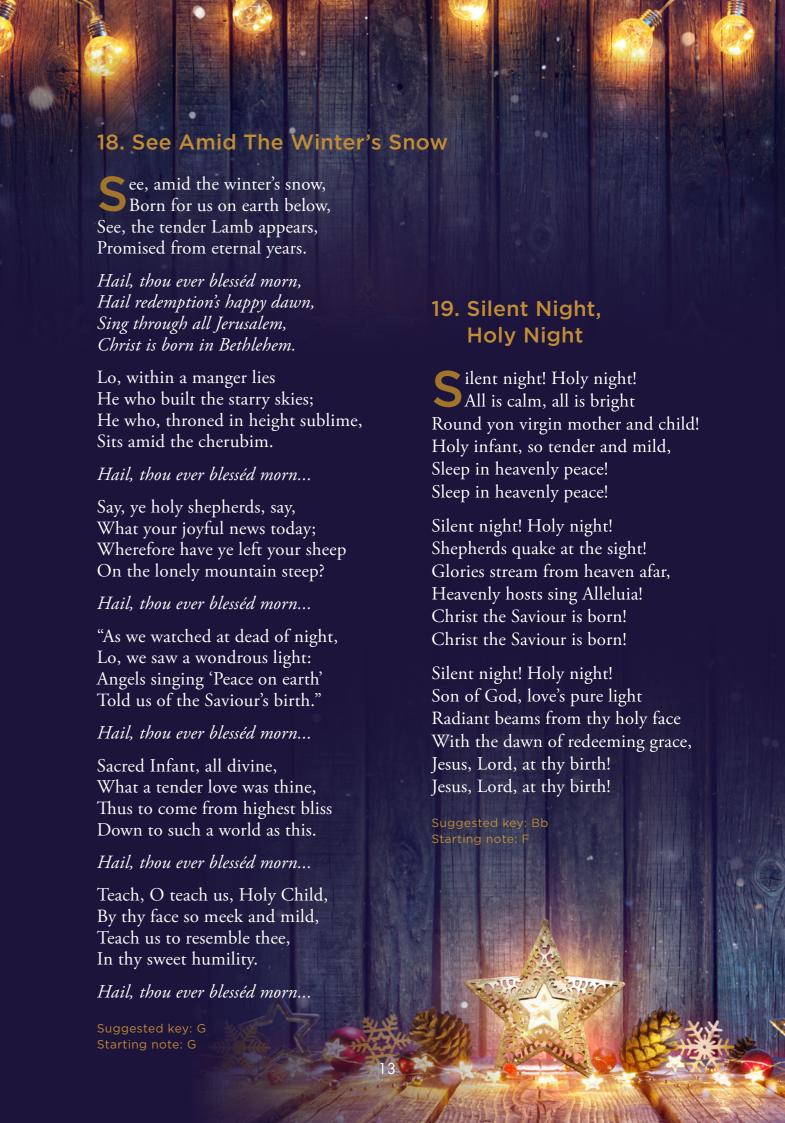
He came down to earth from heaven, Who is God and Lord of all, And his shelter was a stable, And his cradle was a stall: With the poor, and mean, and lowly, Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And through all his wondrous childhood He would honour and obey, Love and watch the lowly maiden In whose gentle arms he lay: Christian children all must be Mild, obedient, good as he.

And our eyes at last shall see him, Through his own redeeming love; For that child so dear and gentle Is our Lord in heaven above: And he leads his children on To the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable, With the oxen standing by, We shall see him, but in heaven, Set at God's right hand on high; When like stars his children crowned All in white shall wait around.

Suggested key: F Starting note: C



### 20. We Three Kings Of Orient Are

e three kings of Orient are, Bearing gifts we traverse afar, Field and fountain, moor and mountain, Following yonder sar.

O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright, Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light.

Born a King on Bethlehem plain, Gold I bring to crown him again, King for ever, ceasing never Over us all to reign.

O star of wonder, star of night...

Frankincense to offer have I, Incense owns a deity nigh: Prayer and praising, all men raising, Worship him God on High.

O star of wonder, star of night...

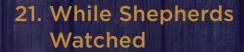
Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume Breathes a life of gathering gloom;— Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

O star of wonder, star of night...

Glorious now behold Him arise, King, and God, and Sacrifice; Heav'n sings Hallelujah: Hallelujah the earth replies.

O star of wonder, star of night...

Suggested key: Em Starting note: B



Their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.

"Fear not," said he, (For mighty dread Had seized their troubled mind), "Glad tidings of great joy I bring To you and all mankind."

"To you in David's town this day Is born of David's line A Saviour who is Christ the Lord— And this shall be the sign."

"The heavenly Babe you there shall find To human view displayed, And meanly wrapped in swaddling bands And in a manger laid."

Thus spake the Seraph, and forthwith Appeared a shining throng Of angels praising God, who thus Addressed their joyful song:

"All glory be to God on high, And to the earth be peace; Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men Begin and never cease!"



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