

The background is a dark, textured wooden surface. At the top, several warm white string lights are strung across the frame. In the center, the text '21 hope-filled carols that celebrate Christmas' is displayed in a clean, white, sans-serif font. Below this, the word 'Christmas' is written in a large, elegant, gold-colored script font, followed by the word 'CAROLS' in a smaller, white, all-caps sans-serif font. At the bottom, a collection of Christmas decorations is arranged on a wooden plank surface, including a large gold star, pinecones, snowflakes, and small red and gold ornaments, all illuminated by warm white lights.

21 hope-filled carols that
celebrate Christmas

Christmas
CAROLS



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Christmas. 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

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!*

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

2. As With Gladness Men Of Old

As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright,
So, most gracious God, may we
Evermore be led to thee.

As with joyful steps they sped,
To that lowly manger bed,
There to bend the knee before
Thee whom heaven and earth adore,
So may we with willing feet
Ever seek thy mercy-seat.

As they offered gifts most rare
At that manger rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy,
Pure, and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.

Holy Jesus, every day
Keep us in the narrow way;
And, when earthly things are past,
Bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide,
Where no clouds thy glory hide.

In the heavenly country bright
Need they no created light;
Thou its Light, its Joy, its Crown,
Thou its Sun, which goes not down.
There for ever may we sing
Hallelujahs to our King.

Suggested key: G
Starting note: G

3. Away In A Manger

Away in a manger,
No crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus
Laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky
Looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus
Asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing,
The baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus,
No crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus!
Look down from the sky,
And stay by my side
Until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus;
I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever,
And love me I pray.
Bless all the dear children
In thy tender care,
And take us to heaven
To live with thee there.

Suggested key: F
Starting note: C

4. Ding Dong Merrily On High

Ding dong merrily on high,
In heav'n the bells are ringing:
Ding dong verily the sky
Is riv'n with angel singing.

Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!
Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!

E'en so here below, below,
Let steeple bells be swungen,
And "i-o, i-o, i-o!"
By priest and people sungen.

Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!
Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!

Pray you, dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers;
May you beautifully rime
Your evetime song, ye singers.

Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!
Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!

Suggested key: G
Starting note: G

5. The First Nowell

The first Nowell the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds
In fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep:

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star,
Shining in the east, beyond them far:
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night:

Nowell, Nowell...

And by the light of that same star,
Three wise men came from country far;
To seek for a King was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went:

Nowell, Nowell...

This star drew nigh to the north-west;
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
And there it did both stop and stay
Right over the place where Jesus lay:

Nowell, Nowell...

Then entered in those wise men three,
Full reverently upon their knee,
And offered there in his presence,
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense:

Nowell, Nowell...

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord
That hath made heaven and earth of nought,
And with his blood mankind hath bought:

Nowell, Nowell...

Suggested key: C
Starting note: E

6. God Rest You Merry Gentlemen

God 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

Hark 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

In 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,
Jesus 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

10. It Came Upon The Midnight Clear

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, goodwill to men,
From heaven’s all-gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O’er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains,
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o’er its babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring;
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.

For lo!, the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendours fling,
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.

Suggested key: F
Starting note: F

11. Joy To The World

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

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders and wonders of his love.

Suggested key: C
Starting note: C

12. O Come All Ye Faithful

O come all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him,
Born the King of angels:

*O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!*

God of God,
Light of light,
Lo he abhors not the virgin's womb;
Very God,
Begotten not created:

O come let us adore him...

Sing choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God
In the highest:

O come let us adore him...

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing:

O come let us adore him...

Suggested key: G
Starting note: G

13. O Come O Come Emmanuel

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...

O come thou Day-spring 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...

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...

O come O come Thou 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...

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

14. 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.

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

O 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

On 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

18. See Amid The Winter's Snow

See, amid the winter's snow,
Born for us on earth below,
See, the tender Lamb appears,
Promised from eternal years.

*Hail, thou ever blessed morn,
Hail redemption's happy dawn,
Sing through all Jerusalem,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.*

Lo, within a manger lies
He who built the starry skies;
He who, throned in height sublime,
Sits amid the cherubim.

Hail, thou ever blessed morn...

Say, ye holy shepherds, say,
What your joyful news today;
Wherefore have ye left your sheep
On the lonely mountain steep?

Hail, thou ever blessed morn...

"As we watched at dead of night,
Lo, we saw a wondrous light:
Angels singing 'Peace on earth'
Told us of the Saviour's birth."

Hail, thou ever blessed morn...

Sacred Infant, all divine,
What a tender love was thine,
Thus to come from highest bliss
Down to such a world as this.

Hail, thou ever blessed morn...

Teach, O teach us, Holy Child,
By thy face so meek and mild,
Teach us to resemble thee,
In thy sweet humility.

Hail, thou ever blessed morn...

Suggested key: G
Starting note: G

19. Silent Night, Holy Night

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace!
Sleep in heavenly peace!

Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight!
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Saviour is born!
Christ the Saviour is born!

Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!

Suggested key: Bb
Starting note: F

20. We Three Kings Of Orient Are

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

*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

21. While Shepherds Watched

While shepherds watched
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!”

Suggested key: F
Starting note: F



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Books that celebrate

Christmas



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“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling
among us. We have seen his glory, the glory
of the one and only Son, who came from the
Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 1:14

*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.*

Once in Royal David's City

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