

Now Sing We, Now Rejoice

“Sing to the LORD a New Song, for he has done marvelous things.” Psalm 98:1

* = Song sheet to be hung on the Christmas tree in the front, center of chancel.

*** PROCESSIONAL: “O Come, Little Children”**

TEXT: written in 1800s by Christoph von Schmid

TUNE: written in 1780 by Johann Schulz

GERMAN CAROL

Congregation:

O come, little children, O come, one and all.
To Bethlehem come to the crib in the stall,
And see what great joy our good Father above
Has sent us this night, a bless'd gift of His love.

Children:

O see, all you neighbors, who lies in the stall.
In clean swaddling clothes is a dear Baby small.
Upon His sweet face shines a heavenly light
Which bathes all the stable in radiance bright.

Congregation:

There lies He, King Jesus, on hay and on straw,
Before Him the shepherds are kneeling in awe.
Above Him the angels in jubilation sing,
While Mary and Joseph keep watch o'er their King.

All:

O kneel with the shepherds and worship the King;
Give thanks to our God for the love that He brings.
In joy, all ye people, your glad voices raise,
And join with the angels in jubilant praise.

*** INVOCATION/RESPONSIVE READING: (“The Happy Christmas Comes Once More”)**

TEXT: written 1817 by Nicolai Grundtvig

TUNE: written 1850 by C. Balle

SCANDINAVIAN CAROL

C...To gaze on Him who gladdens them, the loveliest flower on Jesse's stem.

All Children: Come Jesus, glorious heavenly Guest, keep thine own Christmas in our breast;
Then David's harp-string, hushed so long, shall swell our jubilee of song.

CHRISTMAS PRAYER:

PASTOR INTRODUCTION:

PART 1

NOW SING WE A SONG FROM AGES PAST

SPEAKER: “Psalm 98” is a song of thanksgiving to God for the gift of salvation.

*** GROUP RECITATION:**

Sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvelous things;
his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.
The Lord has made his salvation known
and revealed his righteousness to the nations.

NARRATOR 1: We all have a song in our hearts at Christmastime. No other celebration has had as many songs written for it, and no other holiday sparks the love for music as does Christmas. We enjoy the Psalms, written hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus, to the well loved carols like “Silent Night” and “Joy to the World”. We welcome the beautiful old tunes of “The First Noel” and “What Child Is This?” to the more recent songs of “The Little Drummer Boy” and “Go Tell It on the Mountain”. We love to come rejoicing!

*** SONG:** (Middle Grades) “O, Come Rejoicing” (Second part is optional)

POLISH CAROL

O, come rejoicing, O come rejoicing Bethlehem, rejoice ye!
For of a virgin, for of a virgin God is born unto thee!

REFRAIN: Truly He cometh, Christ, our salvation,
Angels are voicing their jubilation;
Shepherds come to praise Him, oxen kneel before Him,
What a Wonder God has given!

Mary is singing, Mary is singing songs for Thee dear Jesus;
Joseph is watching, Joseph is watching, O'er the Son so glorious.
REFRAIN

NARRATOR 1: Tonight we will take a close look at the birth of Jesus both from the words of Scripture and through the texts and tunes of well known and not so well known Christmas songs and carols. Already we have heard the words to some Christmas carols. The processional “O, Come Little Children” was a German carol written in the 1800s and the responsive reading was from the text of the Scandinavian Carol, “The Happy Christmas Comes Once More.”

NARRATOR 2: Perhaps it could be said that the oldest carols were sung at the birth of Jesus. We know that Mary enjoyed singing when she learned that she would be the mother of Jesus:

RECITATION: “And Mary said, ‘My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.’” (Luke 1:46)

NARRATOR 2: We know about the angels and their song:

RECITATION: “Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest.’” (Luke 2:13,14)

NARRATOR 2: Even the shepherds had to express their joy:

RECITATION: “The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen.” (Luke 2:20)

NARRATOR 2: And Simeon praised God for being given the opportunity to see the infant Jesus:

RECITATION: “Simeon took him in his arms and praised God.” (Luke 2:28)

NARRATOR 2: The history behind the true Christmas carol is somewhat cloudy. The earliest Christians did not place great importance on the birthday of Jesus. To them Easter was far more important. Some of the earliest comments on any observance of the festival of Christmas were found in the writings of a Roman bishop named Telesphorus. About 130 years after Jesus was born, Telesphorus wrote that the celebration of a public church service should take place as he said, “in the holy night of the Nativity that they might solemnly sing the angels’ hymn.” One of the first writers of such songs was Aurelius Prudentius who lived from 348 to 413. We still have one of his songs with us today. You may recognize it. This is one of the oldest Christmas songs we have. Let us join in singing this ancient carol.

***SONG:** (Congregation) “Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

TEXT: Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348-413)

PLAINSONG MELODY

PART 6

NOW SING WE, NOW REJOICE!

SPEAKER: The tune and text for the song “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come” were originally written in German by Martin Luther in the 1500s.

*** GROUP RECITATION:**

Give heed, my heart, lift up thine eyes!
What is it in yon manger lies?
Who is this child, so young and fair?
The blessed Christ-child lieth there!

Welcome to earth, thou noble Guest,
Through whom the sinful world is blest!
Thou com'st to share my misery;
What thanks shall I return to thee?

Were earth a thousand times as fair,
Beset with gold and jewels rare,
It yet were far too poor to be
A narrow cradle, Lord, for thee.

SPEAKER: We sing! We rejoice! The message that Christmas brings to us is one of happiness and joy, of life and forgiveness, of hope and salvation as we hear in the words of St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians chapter 4 verse 4!

RECITATION: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”

NARRATOR 1: Church music took on a different light after the Reformation. The music began to put more emphasis on the reverence of tune and a very sacred and scriptural text. This is not to say that the hymns and songs were no longer joyful. The people still enjoyed singing songs with melodies that were powerful, lovely and devotional.

NARRATOR 2: The Reformation also brought about the new idea of congregational singing. Where would our WORSHIP services be today if the congregation wouldn't be allowed to sing? Germany proved to be the beginning for much of this new music. Martin Luther wrote that his family celebrated Christmas by singing his own "From Heaven Above to earth I Come". You just heard three stanzas from this popular fifteen stanza hymn. It is said that a man dressed as an angel sang the first 7 stanzas and the children responded by singing the last 8 stanzas.

Here is another popular Christmas hymn by Martin Luther.

* **SONG:** (Congregation) "To Shepherds as They Watched by Night"

TUNE: Latin Melody

OFFERING

NARRATOR 1: Did you know that we have heard 15 carols this evening? There are hundreds more that we could name.

(Student after student gets up to announce one title per person. Organ may play several as background music or use accompaniment tape of theme song.)

NARRATOR 2: Carols from England:

"Good Christian Men Rejoice"

"The Coventry Carol"

"The First Noel"

"Joy to the World"

"What Child Is This?"

"While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks"

"Once in Royal David's City"

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

NARRATOR 1: Carols from France:

"He Is Born, the Holy Child"

"O Holy Night"

"Pat-a-Pan"

"Bring a Torch Jeannette Isabella"

NARRATOR 2: Carols from Germany:

"O Christmas Tree"

"O Come, Little Children"

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

"How Brightly Shines the Morning Star"

"Still, Still, Still"

NARRATOR 1: Carols from Scandanavia:

"When Christmas Morn Is Dawning"

"I Am So Glad on Christmas Eve"

"The Happy Christmas Comes Once More"

NARRATOR 2: Carols from Slavic countries:

"We Will Rock You"

"Praise to Jesus, Our Salvation"

NARRATOR 1: Carols from Italy and Spain:

"Sleep, O Sleep My Lovely Child"

"A La Nanita"

"Foom, Foom, Foom"

"Hasten Now, O Shepherds"

NARRATOR 2: And Carols from North America:

“Rise Up Shepherd and Follow”

“Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

“Children, Go Where I Send Thee”

“Mary Had a Baby”

“Hush, My Babe, Lie Still and Slumber”

“Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning”

“Away in the Manger”

NARRATOR 1: All these carols share something very special. They were all written for the very same reason, and they are all sung for the very same purpose. They tell of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Their beautiful melodies and comforting messages tell in countless ways that God loved us so much that he sent his Son to redeem all people on that silent night so long ago.

***SONG:** (Congregation) “Silent Night”

TEXT: Franz Mohr (1792-1848)

TUNE: Franz Gruber (1787-1863)

AUSTRIAN CAROL

NARRATOR 2: Do you remember what Psalm 98:1 says?

All children: “Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things!”

NARRATOR 1: That’s right. Because of God’s great love for us, we now have a new song to sing. And it’s a song that lasts more than just through the Christmas holiday. It’s a song that says I am redeemed. I am loved. I am saved. I am going to heaven one day, where I will be able to sing songs to my Savior forever and ever.

NARRATOR 2: Just think, whenever we sing these wonderful carols we are joining with those who lived hundreds and even thousands of years ago. We are praising the God of creation, the God of Bethlehem, the God of Calvary, the God of the empty tomb, and the God of heaven. Truly we can say that “Christmas Music Fills the Air”!

THEME SONG: (All children) “Christmas Music Fills the Air”

1. Christmas music fills the air, With melodies sweet and words so fair.

Bells are ringing...Children singing...Tell the story...Of God’s glory. (“O Come, Little Children” interlude)

2. Christmas carols and Christmas praise Are all pure reflections of God’s rich grace.

Notes are weaving...Hearts believing...Tell the story...Of God’s glory. (“I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve” interlude)

3. Christmas angels from above, Sang out with chorus of peace and love.

Shepherds greeted...Then repeated...Told the story...Of God’s glory. (“Silent Night” interlude)

4. Christmas carols now fill the earth With sounds that will echo the Savior’s birth.

Heavenward winging...Hope they’re bringing...Tell the story...Of God’s glory.

Now sing we, now rejoice

Now raise to heaven our voice.

He from whom joy streameth poor in a manger lies.

Not so brightly beameth the sun in yonder skies.

Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!

PRAYERS AND BENEDICTION:

***RECESSIONAL:** (Congregation sings remaining verses) “Now Sing We, Now Rejoice!”

TEXT: unknown about 1300

TUNE: German melody 14th Century

CHRISTMAS MUSIC

Words & Music by Reynold R. Kremer

Arranged by Charles Cushinery

Voice

Piano

G C/E G7 Am F C/E G

8

1. Christ - mas mu - sic fills the air, With mel - o - dies sweet and words so
 2. Christ - mas car - ols and Christ - mas praise Are all pure re - flec - tions of God's rich
 3. Christ - mas an - gels from a - bove Sang out with a - chor - us of peace and
 4. Christ - mas car - ols now fill the earth With sounds that will ec - ho the Sav - ior's

8

C G C G F G7 F

Pno.

15

fair. Bells are ring - ing Child - ren sing - ing Tell the sto - ry Of God's glo - ry.
 grace. Notes are weav - ing; Hearts be - liev - ing; Tell the sto - ry Of God's glo - - -
 love, Shep - herds greet - ed; Then re - peat - ed; Told the sto - ry Of God's glo - - -
 birth. Heav'n - ward wing - ing; Hope they're bring - ing; Tell the sto - ry Of God's glo - - -

15 C/G Dm C Dm G7 C

Pno.

24

24 C G7 C G7 C F C

Pno.

34

ry!

Pno.

34 G7 C G7 C C C G7 C G C Dm G G7 C Dm C G7

44

Pno.

44 C C Dm C/E G Dm G7 C G7

52

ry!

Pno.

52 C G7 C C Dm G

61

Pno.

61 C Dm G7 C G7 C G7