



Kensington Presbyterian Church

## *Blue Christmas*

*December 21, 2021*

**WELCOME**, during these times of physical isolation we are putting out these worship services that you can do at home.<sup>1</sup> This doesn't mean you have to do them alone. You can invite those who live with you, or connect with others through the phone or computer, or even in small groups outside.

If you have any prayer requests, ideas, or just want to talk, please reach out to your elder or Rev. Peter (Peter@Kensingtonchurch.ca).

### *Announcements*

**Christmas Eve:** Dec 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

[us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNIUrUT09)

[pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNIUrUT09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/773730107?pwd=eUo2M09YMEw5dkZvdm9uQmpHNIUrUT09)

or phone: 438-809-7799

Meeting ID: 848 0993 7801

Passcode: 7864826

**Regular Worship:** Sunday's at 10:30 a.m.

**Visiting:** If you would like to have a visit please contact Rev. Peter.

We can visit in person (inside or out), over the phone or zoom.

### *Contacts*

Church Office: 514-486-4559.....info@Kensingtonchurch.ca

Rev. Peter Rombeek (pastor).....Peter@Kensingtonchurch.ca  
514-773-4620

Antoinette (families).....Antoinette@Kensingtonchurch.ca

Zoé Dupont-Foisy (music director).....zoedupontfoisy@hotmail.com

<sup>1</sup> note: that the footnotes are not as thorough as an academic paper That said, chunks of this service are adapted from adapted from Daniel Benedict, OSL, Blue Christmas for the Cathedral of St. Andrew's



Nativity - M Moyers

Before you start we invite you to have five candles set up,  
with the middle one as the 'Christ Candle'.



### Call to worship

In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

**The Word became flesh and lived among us,  
full of grace and truth,  
and we have seen his glory.**

In him was life, and the life was the light of all.

**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never  
been able to extinguish it.**



Light the Christ Candle

🎵 Hymn: In the bleak midwinter..... 145 #1-2 (pg 8)



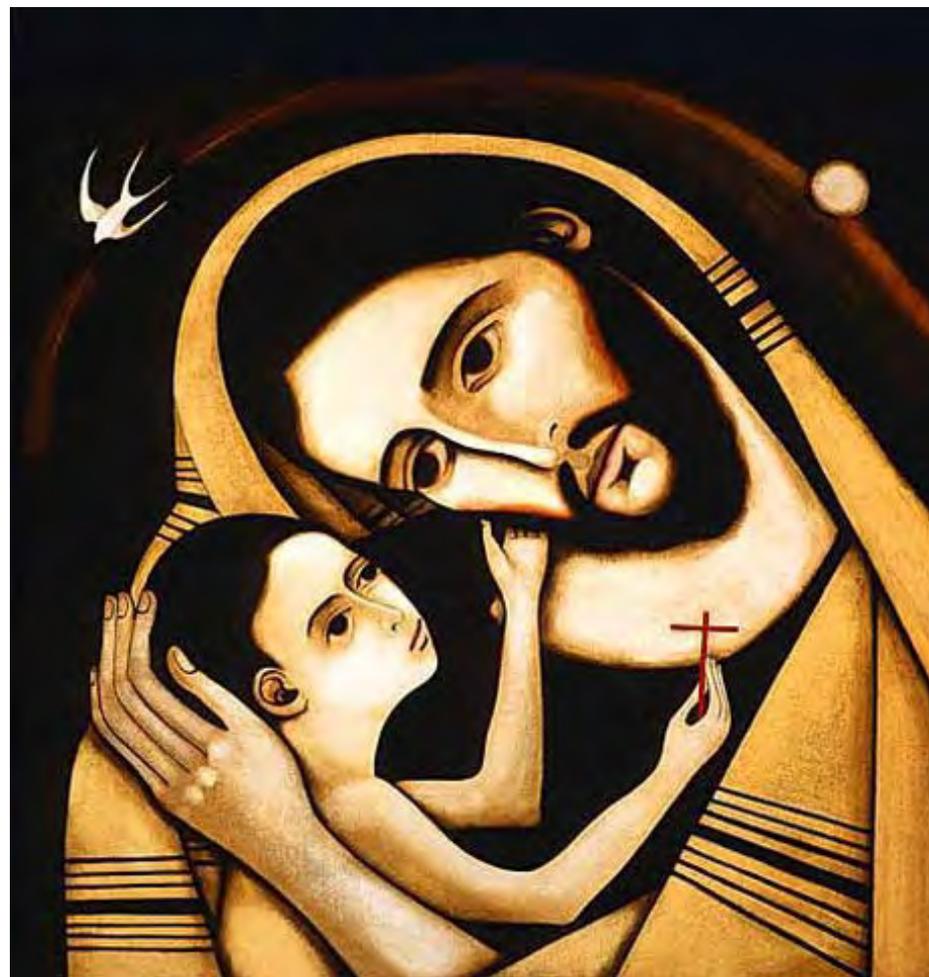
Prayer of Approach

Loving God,  
who waits with us and walks beside us,  
who speaks into all memory and shares every thought,  
wait with us now,  
making this moment precious and close.  
Help us lose ourselves in you:  
in the depth of love that is generous enough to hold us,  
strong enough to wrap us,  
eternal enough to call us and patient enough to accompany us.

May we find in the richness of this time,  
the wealth of memory and value of story,  
the certainty of promise,  
the healing of laughter,  
the generosity of time.

May we find what we need to find,  
know what we need to know  
and trust what we need to trust in you.

So be it.  
Amen<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> by Julie Rennick. in *Blue Christmas*. Wild Goose Publ.

📖 Readings: Psalm 139: 1-18

Lord, you have examined me and you know me.

**You know everything I do;**

**from far away you understand all my thoughts.**

You see me, whether I am working or resting;

you know all my actions.

**Even before I speak,**

**you already know what I will say.**

You are all around me on every side;

you protect me with your power.

**Your knowledge of me is too deep;**

**it is beyond my understanding.**

Where could I go to escape from you?

**Where could I get away from your presence?**

If I went up to heaven, you would be there;

if I lay down in the world of the dead, you would be there.

**If I flew away beyond the east**

**or lived in the farthest place in the west,**

**you would be there to lead me,**

**you would be there to help me.**

I could ask the darkness to hide me

or the light around me to turn into night,

**but even darkness is not dark for you,**

**and the night is as bright as the day.**

**Darkness and light are the same to you.**

You created every part of me;

**you put me together in my mother's womb.**

I praise you because you are to be feared;

all you do is strange and wonderful.

I know it with all my heart.

When my bones were being formed,

carefully put together in my mother's womb,

when I was growing there in secret,

you knew that I was there—

you saw me before I was born.

The days allotted to me

had all been recorded in your book,

before any of them ever began.

**O God, how difficult I find your thoughts;**

**how many of them there are!**

If I counted them, they would be more than the grains of sand.

**When I awake, I am still with you.**

🎵 Hymn: Lo' how a rose e'er blooming #1, 3.....pg 9 (151)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=g458-jXkbpU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g458-jXkbpU)



Reflection: It's the most wonderful time of the year<sup>3</sup>  
It's the most wonderful time of the year!

Only it's not.

Not for everyone.

Not when there is an empty chair at the table.  
Not after the doctor gave you the news.  
Not without their voice joining yours on the Christmas carols.  
Not when your body is ravaged with illness.  
Not when the depression is too much to bear.  
Not when you feel all alone - even in a crowd.  
Not when you are not sure you can even afford the rent or mortgage,  
let alone the presents.

Sometimes trying to smile and say Merry Christmas is... well,  
pretty near impossible.

C.S. Lewis once wrote: "No one ever told me that grief felt so much like fear. I am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid. The same fluttering in the stomach, the same restlessness, the yawning..."

Is this what you feel?

It's the most wonderful time of the year.

Only it's not.

In truth, it has never been the most wonderful time of the year.  
Certainly not in the days surrounding that first Christmas so

long ago. The birth of Jesus was filled with fear, uncertainty, and vulnerability.

It is the story of a teenage girl, pregnant with a child that is not her husband's.

It is the story of a child born almost on the street.

It is the story of a family of refugees who had to flee their homeland

so that their child would not be killed.

It is the story of one sent into the world in peace, and was killed.

It is the story of a light sent to shine in the darkness, which the world snuffed out.

It is the story of God's never-ending, self-giving mercy which was rejected and condemned.

It is not the most wonderful time of the year.

...Only it is!

If we lay down the pressure of presents and the ornaments and the trappings.

If we lay down the need to be merry.

And remember.

Remember the story.

Mary was vulnerable and at risk.

But God was with her and exalted her among women.

Joseph was disgraced.

But God revealed in Joseph's cause for disgrace God's plan to save the world.

The world was in darkness.

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3 modified from a piece written by the Rev. Diane Hendricks for December 16, 2001

But God sent the light of life to shine.  
The lowly were imprisoned.  
But Jesus set them free.  
The blind wandered aimlessly.  
But Christ gave them eyes to see.  
The lame were rejected.  
But through the song of life they were made to leap and dance.  
The sorrowful grieved.  
But God wipes away our tears.  
We were alone.  
But in Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God is with us.  
The people rejected God.  
But God embraces us.  
The world crucified Christ.  
But God would not allow that to be the last word,  
and gave us the sure hope of the resurrection.  
It is the most wonderful time of the year,  
not because you have to be happy and merry.  
  
But because you don't.  
  
You can have heavy spirits and shattered dreams.  
Broken hearts and deep wounds.  
  
And still God comes to be with you.  
  
To hold you when you cry  
To comfort you.  
To save you.  
To restore you.  
To empower you.  
To strengthen you.

To give you peace.  
To be raised for you.  
and those whom you have loved and lost.  
To offer you eternal life.

It is the most wonderful time of the year.  
For Christ is born.  
Love has come.  
God is with us!

Thanks be to the Lord our God.  
Amen.

 Readings: [Luke 2](#): 1-7

 hymn: Oh Come, oh come, Emmanuel.....122 #1, 3 (pg 10)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePqHReC3ymg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePqHReC3ymg)

Rememberance<sup>4</sup>



the first candle

The first candle we light to remember those whom we have loved and lost.

*light candle from the Christ candle*

We pause to remember their name,  
their voice,  
their face,  
the memory that binds them to us in this season.  
We hold them before God, giving thanks for their lives in ours. . .

... Thank you for the gift each of these people has been in our lives. We want to believe that we will celebrate the treasure of

love with them again, when we are all in your presence forever.  
May this truth sustain our sad and aching hearts and comfort  
us. Comfort us, for we only feel hollowness and emptiness.  
God of sorrowing, draw near!  
Amen.

♪ Oh Come, oh come, Emmanuel.....122 #4 (pg 10)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePqHReC3ymg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePqHReC3ymg)



second candle

We light this second candle to remember the pain of loss:

*light candle from the Christ candle*

The loss of relationships,  
loss of trust,  
loss of jobs,  
loss of health,  
loss of faith,  
the loss of peace and joy.

We gather up the pain and we offer it to You, loving God; asking  
that into our open hands and wounded hearts You will place  
the gift of peace. . .

...God of mystery, we turn to you with open hands and wounded  
hearts. We come before you in need of peace, looking for your  
promises of guidance and protection. We want to place our  
trust in you, but our hearts grow fearful and anxious. Our  
brain may remember, but our heart forgets that you will be  
with us in all that we experience. Teach us to be patient with  
the transformation of our lives, and to be open to the changes  
which we are now going through.

Amen.

♪ Oh Come, oh come, Emmanuel.....122 #5 (pg 10)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePqHReC3ymg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePqHReC3ymg)



third candle

The third candle we light for those who experience a loss of  
direction in their lives.

*light candle from the Christ candle*

God of the Exodus, you led Moses and your people through the  
wilderness to a new land. Hear our prayer.  
We want so much to have a sense of direction, to know where we  
are and where we ought to be headed.  
You ask us to be full of faith, to believe that you are our signpost,  
that you are our wisdom and our guide, and to trust in your  
presence. Your words to us are clear: "Do not fear, I go before  
you." But right now it is dark. . .

...God of our depths, we cry out to you to be our guide. Help us  
to have a strong sense of inner direction and that we may be  
reassured that we are on the right path. Take our lives and use  
them according to your will. Take all that is lost in us and  
bring it home with you.

Amen.

♪ Oh Come, oh come, Emmanuel.....122 #2 (pg 10)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePqHReC3ymg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePqHReC3ymg)



fourth candle

The fourth candle we light as a sign of hope,

*light candle from the Christ candle*

the hope that the Christmas story offers to us. We remember how  
it starts in insecurity and humbleness, surprise and sorrow. We  
remember Mary and Joseph, ordinary people, whose lives and

dreams are unexpectedly changed - who probably became social misfits... not by choice. We remember Jesus, born not in glory but off in the corner of a stable, and celebrated by those stuck on the night shift. We remember Herod, who tried to keep his power and ordered every baby killed.

We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering. . .

...We remember the One who shares our burdens, who is the Light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. We remember you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit - three in one, who journey with us into all our tomorrows.

Amen.

♪ Oh Come, oh come, Emmanuel.....122 #6, 7 (pg 10)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePqHReC3ymg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePqHReC3ymg)

### Prayer

Living and loving God,  
who was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
we thank you for your constant love,  
and for the blessings you offer.  
Even when we cannot see or feel you,  
you are there.

In times when we feel insignificant,  
to know we are not.

In times when we feel lost,  
to feel your hand guiding us.

In times when we are hurt,  
to know you are with us.

Help us to remember you and to listen to your voice in the words  
of family, friends and strangers.

May your light shine in our souls  
nurturing us with love, hope & healing.  
May we even be able to share the warmth of your light with  
others.

In Jesus name  
Amen.



Nativity - Rembrandt

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=n036kBC1HEw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n036kBC1HEw)

Benediction

May God bless us this night with hope and with justice.

**May those we care about be held in God's love.**

May Jesus bless us this night with light and with courage.

**May we know that Jesus loves us and he always will.**

May the Holy Spirit bless us tonight with tears and with laughter.

**May we know the warmth and wonder of God's healing love.<sup>5</sup>**

**Amen**

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

the love of God

and the companionship of the Holy Spirit

be with you all. Amen.



5 Ruth Burgess in *Blue Christmas*. Wild Goose Publ.

145 In the bleak mid-winter

Musical notation for the first system of the hymn. It includes a treble and bass clef staff with lyrics: 1. In the bleak mid-winter, frosty wind made moan; 2. Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain; 3. Angels and arch-angels may have gathered there, 4. What can I give him, poor as I am?

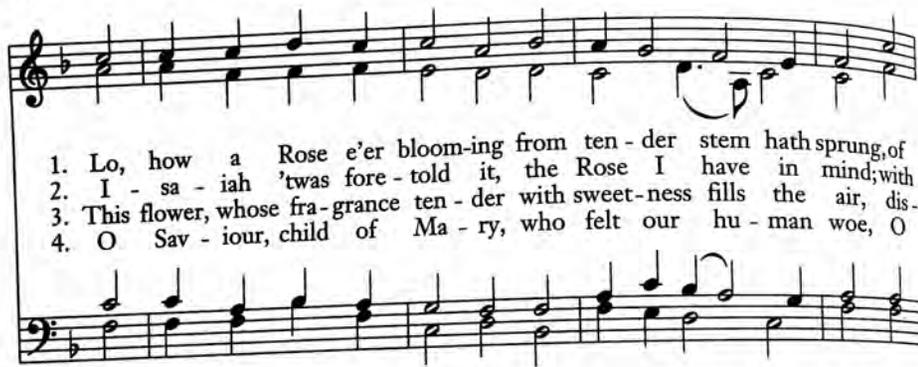
Musical notation for the second system of the hymn. It includes a treble and bass clef staff with lyrics: earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone; heaven and earth shall welcome him when he comes to reign; cherubim and seraphim thronged the air; If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;

Musical notation for the third system of the hymn. It includes a treble and bass clef staff with lyrics: snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak mid-winter a stable place sufficed the but his mother only, in her maiden bliss, if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part; yet

Musical notation for the fourth system of the hymn. It includes a treble and bass clef staff with lyrics: in the bleak mid-winter, long ago. Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ. worshipped the beloved with a kiss. what can I give him - give my heart.

Words: Christina G. Rossetti (1830-1894) Music: Gustav T. Holst (1874-1934)

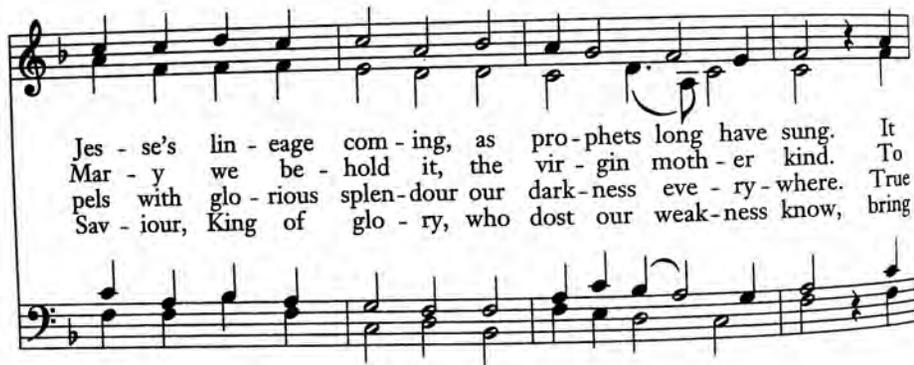
## Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming



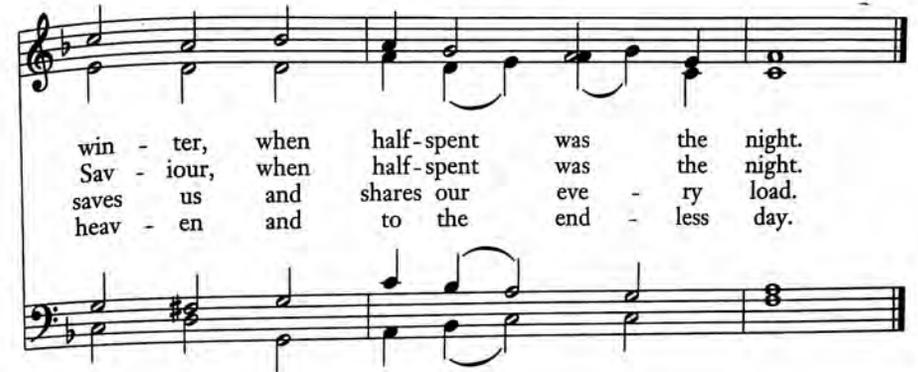
1. Lo, how a Rose e'er bloom-ing from ten - der stem hath sprung, of  
 2. I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, the Rose I have in mind; with  
 3. This flower, whose fra-grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the air, dis -  
 4. O Sav - iour, child of Ma - ry, who felt our hu - man woe, O



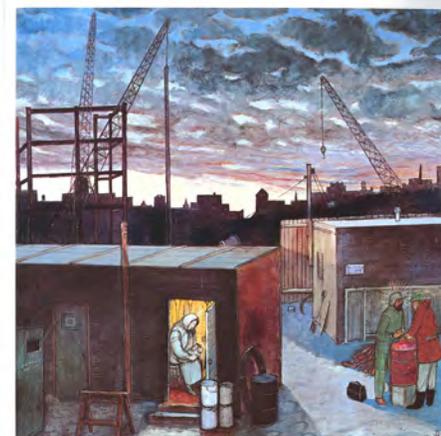
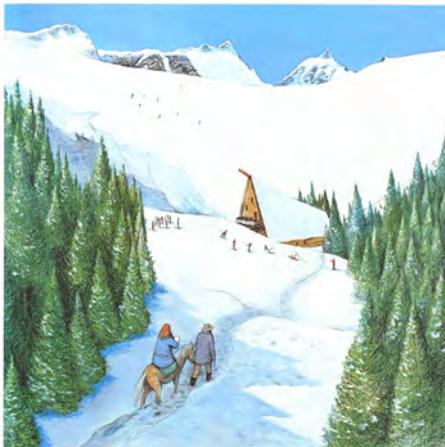
came, a flower - et bright, a - mid the cold of  
 show God's love a - right, she bore to us a  
 flesh, yet ver - y God, from sin and death he  
 us at length, we pray, to the bright courts of



Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing, as pro - phets long have sung. It  
 Mar - y we be - hold it, the vir - gin moth - er kind. To  
 pels with glo - rious splen - dour our dark - ness eve - ry - where. True  
 Sav - iour, King of glo - ry, who dost our weak - ness know, bring



win - ter, when half - spent was the night.  
 Sav - iour, when half - spent was the night.  
 saves us and shares our eve - ry load.  
 heav - en and to the end - less day.



# Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel

Unison

1. Oh come, oh come, Em-man - u - el, and ran-som cap-tive  
 2. Oh come, oh come, thou Lord of might, who to thy tribes on  
 3. Oh come, thou Wis-dom from on high, and or-der all things  
 4. Oh come, thou Branch of Jes - se, free thine own from Sa-tan's  
 5. Oh come, thou Key of Da - vid, come and o - pen wide our

Em Bm G Am Em D Bm C

Refrain

un - til the Son of God ap-pear.  
 in cloud and maj-es - ty and awe.  
 and cause us in her ways to go. Re-joyce, re-joyce!  
 and give them vic-tory o'er the grave.  
 and close the path to mis - er - y.

Em D G Am Em G D Em Bm

Is - ra - el, that mourns in low - ly ex - ile here,  
 Si - nai's height, in an-cient times didst give the law  
 far and nigh; to us the path of knowl - edge show,  
 tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple save,  
 heaven - ly home; make safe the way that leads on high

Am Bm Em Am Em Bm

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

G Am D Em C/B Em Am Bm Fm

6. Oh 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!...
7. Oh come, desire of nations, bind  
 all peoples in one heart, one mind;  
 bid envy, strife and discord cease,  
 and be thyself our source of peace.  
 Rejoice!...

1. Oh! viens bientôt, Emmanuel,  
 nous délivrer du joug cruel,  
 et du péché briser la loi;  
 ton peuple entier s'attend à toi.  
 Joyeux, levez les yeux au ciel,  
 voici venir Emmanuel!
2. Oh! viens bientôt, que ta clarté  
 dissipe nos obscurités.  
 Errants et tristes dans la nuit,  
 nous appelons le jour qui luit.  
 Joyeux, levez les yeux au ciel,  
 voici venir Emmanuel!
3. Oh! viens bientôt, descends vers nous,  
 Saint Fils du ciel, aimant et doux.  
 Aux coeurs troublés apporte donc  
 la paix divine du pardon.  
 Joyeux, levez les yeux au ciel,  
 voici venir Emmanuel!
4. Oh! viens bientôt, puissant Sauveur,  
 nous réveiller de nos langueurs!  
 Il n'est que toi, céleste Pain,  
 qui puisse apaiser notre faim.  
 Joyeux, levez les yeux au ciel,  
 voici venir Emmanuel!

Words: Latin, 13th century; translation, John Mason Neale (1818-1866); French, H. Écuyer  
 Music: Gregorian plainsong; arrangement, Healey Willan (1880-1968)  
 Words: public domain Music: arrangement, copyright © Michael Willan, executor of the estate of Healey Willan

# Silent Night

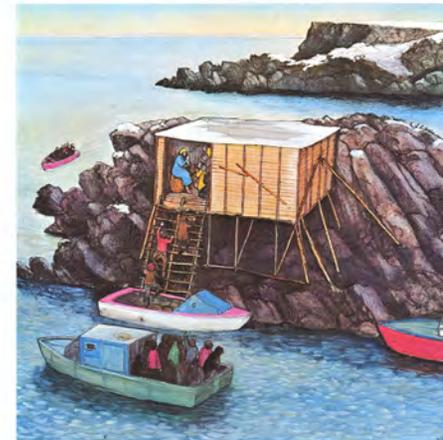
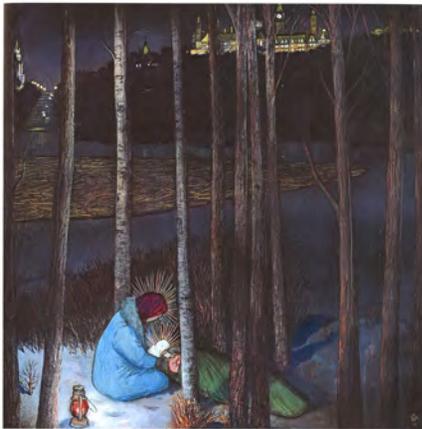
1. Si - lent night! ho - ly night! All is calm,  
 2. Si - lent night! ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake  
 3. Si - lent night! ho - ly night! Son of God,  
 1. Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,

ho - ly in - fant so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly  
 heaven - ly hosts sing "Hal - le - lu - jah, Christ, the Sav - iour is  
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy  
 Hol - der Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - lisch - er

all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child,  
 at the sight: glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,  
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face,  
 ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.

peace; sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
 born! Christ, the Sav - iour is born!  
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.  
 Ruh', schlaf in himm - lisch - er Ruh'.

Words: German, Joseph Mohr (1792–1848), translation, John Freeman Young (1820–1885)  
 Music: Franz Gruber (1787–1863)



closing pictures by  
 W Kurelek in  
*Northern Nativity*