

Heavenly Light, Heavenly Song: The Christmas Story in the Arts

Saint Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church – Dec. 8, 2024 – Anne-Marie Bouché



The Hymnal 1982 - #124 What star is this, with beams so bright

Unison or harmony

1 What star is this, with beams so bright, more beau - teous
 2 True spake the pro - phet from a - far who told the
 3 The guid - ing star a - bove is bright; with - in them
 4 O Je - sus, while the star of grace im - pels us
 5 To God the Fa - ther, heav - en - ly Light, to Christ, re -

1 than the noon - day light? It shines to her - ald
 2 rise of Ja - cob's star; and east - ern sa - ges
 3 shines a clear - er light, and leads them on with
 4 on to seek thy face, let not our sloth - ful
 5 vealed in earth - ly night, to God the Ho - ly

1 forth the King, and Gen - tiles to his crib to bring.
 2 with a - maze up - on the won - drous to - ken gaze.
 3 power be - nign to seek the Giv - er of the sign.
 4 hearts re - fuse the guid - ance of thy light to use.
 5 Ghost we raise our e - qual and un - ceas - ing praise.

Words: Charles Coffin (1676-1749); tr. *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, 1861, after John Chandler (1807-1876), alt.
 Music: *Puer nobis*, melody from Trier MS., 15th cent.; adapt. Michael Praetorius (1571-1621); harm. *Cowley Carol Book*, 1902



Rogier van der Weyden, *Three Kings Altarpiece (Columba Altarpiece)*, ca. 1451.



Rogier van der Weyden, *Bladelin-Middleburg Triptych*, center panel with Nativity. ca. 1450.



Pembroke Book of Hours, illustration depicting Christ's Advent. Netherlandish (Bruges?) 1465-1470.



Isaiah 9:2, 6

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us. Authority rests on his shoulders, and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, The mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 40:1-11.

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid.



Hugo van der Goes, *Adoration of the Shepherds with Prophets* ca. 1480

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

ADVENT

Words: Johann Olearius (Oelschlaeger), 1671. Translated by Catherine Winkworth, 1862.
 Music: 'Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele' from *Trente Quatre Pseaumes de David*, Geneva, 1551.
 Setting: "Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book", 1931.
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♩ = 160

1. Com - fort, com - fort ye My peo - ple, Speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
 2. For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing In the des - ert far and near,
 3. Yea, her sins our God will par - don, Blot - ting out each dark mis - deed;
 4. Make ye straight what long was crook - ed, Make the rough - er pla - ces plain:

Com - fort those who sit in dark - ness, Mourn - ing 'neath their sor - row's load;
 Bid - ding all men to re - pent - ance, Since the king - dom now is here.
 All that well de - served His an - ger He will no more see nor heed.
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, As be - fits His ho - ly reign,

Speak ye to Je - ru - sa - lem Of the peace that waits for them;
 O that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way!
 She has suff - ered many a day, Now her griefs have passed a - way,
 For the glo - ry of the Lord O'er the earth is shed a - broad,

Tell her that her sins I co - ver, And her war - fare now is o - ver.
 Let the val - leys rise to meet Him, And the hills bow down to greet Him.
 God will change her pi - ning sad - ness In - to ev - er spring - ing glad - ness.
 And all flesh shall see the to - ken That His Word is ne - ver bro - ken.



Master of James IV of Scotland, *Book of Hours: Journey and Adoration of the Magi* (Bruges, ca. 1515-25)



Rogier van der Weyden *Annunciation*, left wing of the Columba Altarpiece (ca. 1451)



Tapestry of the *Annunciation*. (South Netherlandish, 1460-80. N.Y., The Cloisters Museum)

Ezekiel 44:2

Then said the Lord unto me: "This door shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.



Robert Campin. (Master of Flemalle). *Nativity with Shepherds and Midwives*. (South Netherlandish, ca. 1430)

Psalm 19: 1, 4-6

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork....

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,
which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them;
and nothing is hid from its heat.

Come, thou Redeemer of the earth

♩ = 144

SOPRANO

1. Come, thou Re-deem - er of the earth, And ma - ni - fest - thy vir - gin.

ORGAN

Man.

8

- birth: Let ev' - ry age a - dor - ing fall, Such birth be - fits the God of all.

2. Begotten of no human will (lit: seed)
But of the Spirit, thou art still
The Word of God, in flesh arrayed
The Savior, now to man displayed
3. The **virgin womb** that burden gained
With virgin honor all unstained
The banners there of virtue glow
God in his temple dwells below
4. **Forth from that chamber goeth he**
That royal home of purity
A **giant** in two-fold substance one
Rejoicing now his course to run
5. From God the Father He proceeds
To God the Father back He speeds
His course He runs to death and hell
Returning on God's throne to dwell
6. Thy cradle here shall glitter bright
And darkness glow with newborn light
No more shall night extinguish day
Where love's bright beams their power display

Ps. 72:10 - The Kings of Tarshish and the isles shall offer tribute; the Kings of Saba and Sheba shall bring gifts.



Isaiah 60:14 - And they shall worship the prints of thy feet

1 We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

Refrain:

O star of wonder, star of light,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.

2 Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never,
over us all to reign. [Refrain]

3 Frankincense to offer have I;
incense owns a Deity nigh;
prayer and praising, voices raising,
worshiping God on high. [Refrain]

4 Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
sealed in the stone-cold tomb. [Refrain]

5 Glorious now behold him arise;
King and God and sacrifice:
Alleluia, Alleluia,
sounds through the earth and skies. [Refrain]

