



December 24, 2023  
10pm

“Will We Carry  
Forward the  
Christmas Story?”

Christmas Eve

### **Welcome!**

Name tags are in Narthex. Welcome forms in pews.  
For main level restroom, exit front left. More restrooms downstairs.  
We welcome sounds and movements of children in worship.

## **The Love of God Gathers Us**

### **Gathering Music**

*We greet those around us or sit quietly, settling into sacred time and space*

### **Ringling of the Bell**

### **Prelude and Candle Lighting**

“Still, Still, Still”

*Austrian melody*

*Acknowledging the light of Christ among us*

### **Words of Welcome**

### **Choral Anthem**

“Dona Nobis Pacem”

*Unknown German composer*

\* = Sitting or standing

NCH = *New Century Hymnal*

## **Advent Candle Liturgy** *(responsive)*

In this season of Advent, we gather around a wreath...  
We light the candle of HOPE...  
We light the candle of PEACE...  
We light the candle of JOY...  
We light the candle of LOVE... Let us pray:

**Emmanuel, we celebrate your Advent in Jesus. And we light an Advent of new hope in this time and place. Amen.**

### **\*Sung Response**

**“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”**

*traditional carol, chorus by Maren Tirabassi*

**O come, Desire of Nations, bind  
all peoples in one heart and mind;  
Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease;  
fill the whole world with heaven’s peace.  
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel  
is come to birth where all God’s children dwell.**

### **\*Prayer of Longing** *(responsive)*

Holy Center of this holy season — Jesus, child and ruler: all our stars point to your birth, all our wanderings come home to you, all our griefs and delights find a place in the stable where you choose to transform poverty and pain and loneliness and rejection.

**Your light shines in our lives; your peace embraces our struggle; your life opens us to new awareness of our most intimate selves and of our neighbors, however we may encounter them. In your humble birth we discover your everlasting majesty and grace. We welcome you and offer you our thanks and praise. Amen.**

*...the singing bowl welcomes us into silent prayer*

### **\*Assurance of Grace** *(responsive)*

**One: The peace of Christ be with you!      All: And also with you!**

## **\*Passing the Peace**

*We first wave toward the Narthex –to those worshiping with us online  
To those around us: we offer a smile, peace sign, or handshake*

### **Lessons and Carols**

<b>The First Reading Carol (NCH #126)</b>	“Angels, from the Realms of Glory” <b>vs. 1 &amp; 4</b>	Isaiah 9: 2-7
<b>The Second Reading Carol (NCH #133)</b>	“O Little Town of Bethlehem” <b>vs. 1-2</b>	Luke 2: 1-7
<b>The Third Reading Carol (NCH #132)</b>	“Joy to the World” <b>vs. 1-2</b>	Luke 2: 8-12
<b>The Fourth Reading Carol (NCH #125)</b>	“Angels We Have Heard on High” <b>vs. 1-2</b>	Luke 2: 13-14
<b>The Fifth Reading Carol (NCH #148)</b>	“What Child is This?” <b>vs. 1 &amp; 3</b>	Luke 2: 15-20
<b>The Sixth Reading</b>		John 1: 1-14
<b>Lighting the Christ Candle Carol (NCH #144)</b>	“Hark the Herald Angels Sing” <b>vs. 1 &amp; 3</b>	

## Responding To God's Love

**Message** "Will We Carry Forward the Christmas Story?"

**Carol (NCH #139)** "The First Nowell"  
**vs. 1-2**

**A Prayer for Christmastide**

**Invitation to the Offering**

*Greeters pass offering plates.*

*We give by cash, check or electronically (scanning the QR code).*

*Pledged gifts marked for a predecessor church are tracked accordingly.*

*Loose offerings go to St. Croix United Church.*



**Offertory** "Snow on Snow" (In the Bleak Midwinter)  
*by Gustav Holst, arranged by Ruth Elaine Schram*

**\*Offertory Response** "In the Bleak Midwinter"

**What can I offer, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.  
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;  
but what can I offer: all my heart.**

**\*Prayer of Dedication** (*unison*)

**God of all, in Jesus you have come to speak your Word of love and life. Touch us with unearthly joy like the singing of angels. Fill us with wonder like the eyes of children. Teach us to humble ourselves before you like the worshiping magi. May our journey to the manger be only the beginning of a lifetime of serving you. In gratitude and hope, we dedicate our gifts of love, money, and prayer to the work of your love. Amen.**

**\*Benediction**

**\*Preparing to Share the Christ Light**

**\*Carol (NCH #134)**

“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 Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, 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.**

*Please extinguish your candle as lights come up  
We linger as Pastor Clare carries out the light*

**\*Postlude**

*Departing quietly, we place candles in baskets at exits*

*We carry the Christ light in all times and spaces  
**Peace on Earth and good tidings to all!***

**We thank our poinsettia donors...**

**Pastor Clare Gromoll**

*In celebration of our new beginnings as St. Croix United Church*

**Mary and Milan Horak**

*In memory of Mila and Milo Horak*

**Mindy Peters**

*In thanks for longtime friendships*

**Paula and Walt Richey**

*Dedicated to a new beginning for St. Croix United Church and to great memories of St. Peter's and People's*

**Cindy and John Siegel**

*A wish for peace and good health for everyone in our church and/or whoever enters it*

**Fritz West**

*In memory of Cynthia Evans West and William and Jean West*

**Kathleen Dennison**

**Jill Greenhalgh**

**Andi Favilla**

**Sue Favilla**



*We encourage donors to take flowers home following the service tonight.*

## PRAYER CORNER

*Please hold these joys and concerns in your prayers:*

### *For persons known to us...*

- \*For **Jamie and Jack Lenczewski**, and their daughters, as they welcome a new baby!
- \*For **Pastor Daniel Harrell** as he grieves the recent death of his father.
- \*With the Gromoll family's Lowe Syndrome community, grieving the death of a young man named **Daniel** just before his 31st birthday.
- \*With Jill Greenhalgh and Rolf Dittmann, prayers for peace and comfort for former neighbor, **Jane**, as she enters hospice care.
- \*With Mary Maren Bjork, we pray for all grieving a sudden death of friend, **Carol**.
- \*With Jennifer Halvorsen-Albright, we pray for **Victoria**, whose son struggled with mental health and died recently.
- \*With Mary Ann Litfin, we pray for fiance John's daughter, **Claire**, as she faced into an unexpected pregnancy.


### *And in the wider community...*

- \*For those on the move - safe passage, refuge, and resources to sustain life.
- \*For **all who struggle with mental health challenges** as well as with **grief** during the holidays. May empathy and other vital resources surround all of us.



## Thanks for all 2024 Intended Gifts!

We invite any members and friends who anticipate offering financial support in 2024 to please turn in your form as well. This will help our leaders plan our upcoming ministry. As a newly merged church, we look forward to the coming year! *Giving forms in Narthex.*



# All are welcome to join us Sunday mornings

## Weekly Sunday Worship Service

Choir Rehearsal | 8:30 am (*newcomers welcome!*)

Coffee | 9:00 am

Worship | 9:30 am

Optional nursery care (for infants & tots) | 9:15-10:30 am


Sunday School & Youth Group (age 4 - gr 12) | 9:45-10:15 am

Fellowship | 10:30 am

Adult Faith Conversations | 11:00 am (*childcare provided*)

Thank you to today's partners: Sharon Neuenfeldt (Worship Accompanist), Michael Bjork (Choir Director), SCUC Choir, Mary Binger & Carol Dusbabek (greeters), Rolf Dittmann & Cheri Schwartz (liturgists), Paul Spilseth, Bob Dickie & Mark Stephan (tech team), Jackie Savage (sanctuary organizer, outdoor sign), Andi Favilla & Jenni Shaller (decorations)



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# Angels, from the Realms of Glory

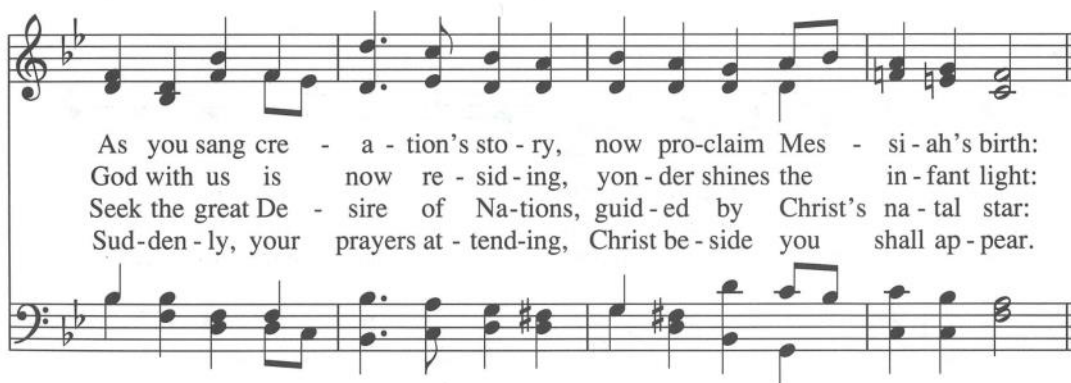
126

James Montgomery, 1816; alt.

Luke 2:8-20; Matt. 2:1-2, 9-11

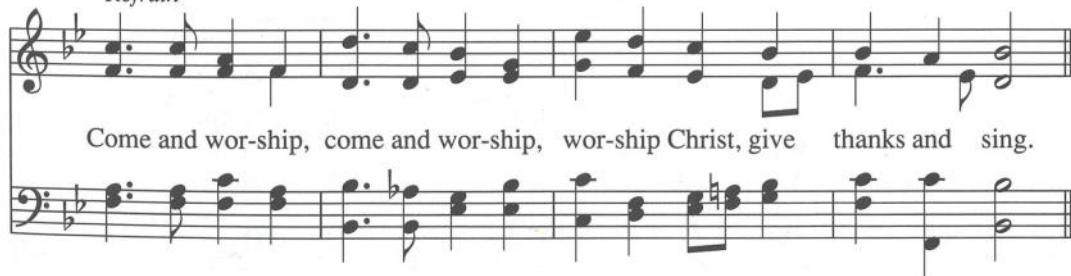


1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,  
3 Sag - es, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;  
4 Saints, be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, watch - ing long in hope and fear,



As you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:  
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light:  
Seek the great De - sire of Na - tions, guid - ed by Christ's na - tal star:  
Sud - den - ly, your prayers at - tend - ing, Christ be - side you shall ap - pear.

## Refrain



Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, give thanks and sing.

*James Montgomery, English journalist, raised a strong voice against injustice in his newspaper Sheffield Iris, in which this hymn was first printed on December 24, 1816. The tune is named for Regent Square Church in London, today a congregation of the United Reformed Church in England and Wales.*

Tune: REGENT SQUARE 8.7.8.7.8.7.  
Henry T. Smart, 1867

## O Little Town of Bethlehem

Mic. 5:2; Luke 2:4-7

Phillips Brooks, 1868; alt.

1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see you lie!  
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and gath - ered all a - bove,  
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given!  
 4 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

A - bove your deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;  
 While mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.  
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the glo - rious love of heaven.  
 Cast out our sin and en - ter in; be born in us to - day.

Yet in your dark streets shines forth the ev - er - last - ing light,  
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth!  
 No one dis - cerns God's com - ing, but in this world of sin,  
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in you to - night.  
 And prais - es sing, and voic - es ring with peace to all on earth.  
 Where yearn - ing souls long to be whole, the dear Christ en - ters in.  
 O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!

*Inspired by a visit to Bethlehem, Phillips Brooks, minister of Holy Trinity Church, Philadelphia, wrote this hymn for the Sunday School's Christmas service. The tune was hastily sketched by the church organist in time for the service.*

Tune: ST. LOUIS 8.6.8.6.7.6.8.6.  
 Lewis H. Redner, 1868  
 Alternate tune: FOREST GREEN

## Joy to the World!

132

Isaac Watts, 1719; alt.

Ps. 98:4-9; Luke 2:11-15

1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth its  
 2 Joy to the earth! the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their  
 3 Christ rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the

prais - es bring; Let ev - ery heart pre - pare Christ room,  
 songs em - ploy; While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
 na - tions prove The glo - ries of God's righ - teous - ness

and heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture  
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing  
 and won - ders of God's love, and won - ders of God's

and heaven and na - ture sing, and  
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re -  
 and won - ders of God's love, and

sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of God's love.

heaven and na - ture sing,  
 peat the sound - ing joy,  
 won - ders of God's love,

*Stanza 1 may be sung, "Joy to the world! the Sovereign comes: . . ."*

*Isaac Watts, an English Congregationalist, freely paraphrased Old Testament psalms to glorify Christ and here develops a hymn of advent and nativity from a psalm.*

Tune: ANTIOCH C.M.  
 Lowell Mason, 1836

## Angels We Have Heard on High

Luke 2:15

Traditional French carol

Transl. st. 1-3, "Crown of Jesus Music II," 1862; alt.  
St. 4, "Carols Old and Carols New," Boston, 1916; alt.

1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,  
2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?  
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see Christ whose birth the an - gels sing;  
4 See the babe in man - ger laid whom the choirs of an - gels praise;

And the moun - tains in re - ply, ech - o back their joy - ous strains.  
Say what may the tid - ings be, which in - spire your heaven - ly song.  
Come a - dore on bend - ed knee, God, our world now en - ter - ing.  
Mar - y, Jo - seph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise.

*Refrain*

Glo - - - - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o, Glo - - - -

The earliest version of this anonymous French carol was first published in 1855. There have been numerous English translations since the 1860s, but the carol did not gain widespread ecumenical usage until the first half of the twentieth century.

Tune: GLORIA 7.7.7.7. with refrain  
(LES ANGES DANS NOS CAMPAGNES)  
French carol melody

ri - a in ex-cel-sis De - o.

The image shows a musical score for a Christmas song. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The melody is written in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics 'ri - a in ex-cel-sis De - o.' are written below the treble staff. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes in the melody, and chords and single notes in the bass line. There are some faint, illegible markings above the treble staff, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.

## What Child Is This

148

William C. Dix, 1865; alt.

Luke 2:7-14, 25-32; Matt. 2:11; John 1:14;  
John 19:16b-18, 34

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep - ing?  
2 Why lies the Child in man - ger bare where ox and ass are feed - ing?  
3 Bring gifts of in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, join in ju - bi - la - tion;

Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?  
Give heed, draw near; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.  
The Ho - ly Child, though meek and mild, has come with God's sal - va - tion.

This, this, the an - gels sing, is Christ, God's ho - ly of - fer - ing;  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
Raise, raise the song on high, the moth - er sings her lul - la - by;

Haste, haste your praise to bring the babe, the child of Mar - y!  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the child of Mar - y!  
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the child of Mar - y!

William Chatterton Dix, manager of an English marine insurance company, wrote a number of fine hymns. This one is always sung to the tune Greensleeves, which first appeared in England in 1580 and is mentioned in one of Shakespeare's plays.

Tune: GREENSLEEVES 8.7.8.7.6.8.6.7. with refrain  
English traditional melody, 16th century

## Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Luke 2:10-11, 25-32; 24:46-51;

1 Thess. 4:13-18; Isa. 60:19-20

Charles Wesley, 1739; alt.

1 Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the Christ-child bring;  
2 Christ, by high - est heaven a - dored, Christ the ev - er - last - ing Lord!  
3 Hail the Bear - er of God's peace! Hail the Sun of righ - teous-ness,

Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ner rec - on - ciled!"  
Late in time the Sav - ior comes, off - spring of the Vir - gin's womb.  
Light and life our Sav - ior brings, risen with ra - diant, heal - ing wings.

Joy - ful, all you saints a - rise, join the tri - umph of the skies;  
Veiled in flesh, the God-head see; hail the in - car - nate De - i - ty,  
Mild - ly lay - ing glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

With the an - gel host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
Pleased on earth with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.  
Born to raise us all from earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

*This hymn by Charles Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism, is firmly wedded to Felix Mendelssohn's music. Composed for the four hundredth anniversary of the invention of printing, the music was adapted to this hymn fifteen years later.*

Tune: MENDELSSOHN 7.7.7.D. with refrain  
From Felix Mendelssohn's "Festgesang," 1840  
Arr. William H. Cummings, 1855

Luke 2:8-20; Matt. 2:1-12

Traditional English carol; alt.

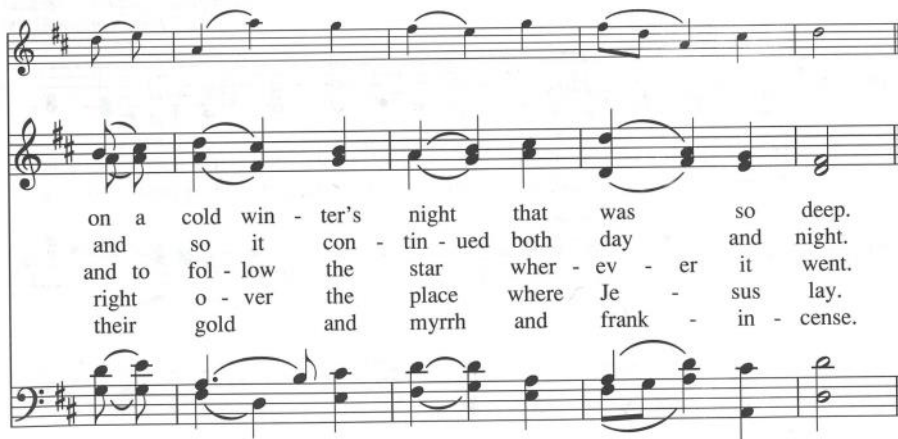
*Descant*

1 The first Now - ell, the an - gel did say,  
 2 They looked a - bove and saw a star  
 3 And by the light of that same star  
 4 This star shone bright in the north - west,  
 5 Then en - tered in those ma - gi three,

was to cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay;  
 shin - ing in the east, be - yond them far,  
 three sag - es came from coun - try far;  
 o'er Beth - le - hem it seemed to rest,  
 and bend - ing low up - on their knee,

In fields where they lay keep - ing their sheep,  
 And to the earth it gave great light,  
 To seek for a king was their in - tent,  
 And there it did both stop and stay,  
 They of - fered there, in great rev - erence,

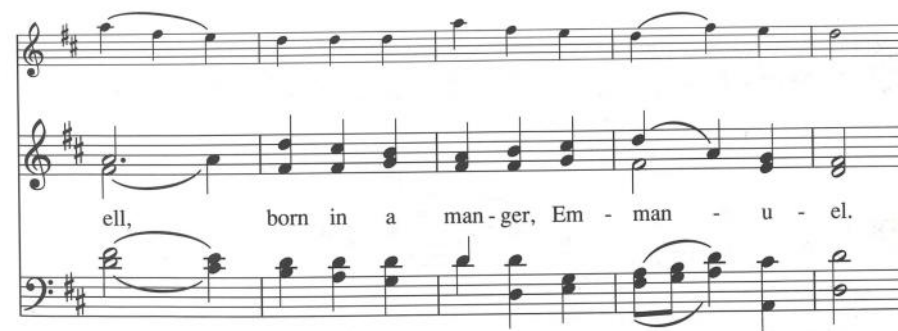




on a cold win - ter's night that was so deep.  
and so it con - tin - ued both day and night.  
and to fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went.  
right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.  
their gold and myrrh and frank - in - cense.



*Refrain*  
*Refrain*  
Now - ell, now - ell, now - ell, now -



ell, born in a man - ger, Em - man - u - el.

Though perhaps of earlier origins, this anonymous English carol first appeared in print in the nineteenth century. "Nowell" stems from the Latin *novellae* (news) and is used as a joyous greeting to celebrate Jesus' birth.

Tune: THE FIRST NOWELL Irr. with refrain  
Traditional English melody  
Harm. Christmas Carols New and Old, 1871  
Descant, Edward Shippen Barnes, 1937

## Silent Night, Holy Night

134

Joseph Mohr, 1818

Transl. John F. Young, c. 1863; alt.

Luke 2:1-20

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night, all is calm, all is bright  
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night, shep-herds quake at the sight,  
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Child of God, love's pure light,

Round yon vir - gin moth-er and child. Ho - ly in - fant so ten - der and mild,  
 Glo - ries stream from heav-en a - far, heav-en-ly hosts sing Al - le - lu - ia;  
 Ra - dant beams from your ho-ly face bring the dawn of re - deem - ing grace;

Sleep in heav - en-ly peace, sleep in heav - en-ly peace.  
 Christ the Sav - ior is born, Christ the Sav - ior is born.  
 Je - sus Christ at your birth, Je - sus Christ at your birth.

Stil-le Nacht, hei-li-ge Nacht!  
 Al-les schläft, ein-sam wacht  
 Nur das trau-te, hoch-hei-li-ge Paar  
 Hol-der Kna-be im lock-i-gen Haar,  
 Schlaf in himm-li-scher Ruh,  
 Schlaf in himm-li-scher Ruh!  
 (Original German text by Joseph Mohr)

Po-la'i e, po ka-ma-ha'o,  
 Ma-lu-hia, Ma-lama-lama,  
 Ka ma-kua-hi-ne a-lo-ha, e,  
 Me ke kej-ki He-mo-lele e,  
 Mo'e me ka ma-lu-hia la-ni,  
 Mo'e me ka ma-lu-hia la-ni.  
 (Hawaiian transl. Stephen Desha)

This beloved carol was created when, the day before Christmas, the organ broke down in an Alpine village church. The priest, Joseph Mohr, gave a new poem to the organist, Franz Gruber, to be set to music. Gruber composed the music on the guitar, and it was sung with guitar on Christmas.

¡No-che de paz; no-che de a-mor!  
 To-do duer-me en de-rre-dor.  
 En-tre los as-tros que es-par-cen su luz,  
 be-lla, a-nun-cian-do al ni-ñi-to Je-sús,  
 bri-lla la es-tre-lla de paz;  
 bri-lla la es-tre-lla de paz.  
 (Spanish transl. Federico Fliedner; alt.)

Csen-des éj, szent-sé-ges éj!  
 Min-de-nek nyug-ta mély;  
 Nincs fenn más, csak a szent szü-le pár,  
 Drá-ga kis-de-dük ál-ma-i-nál.  
 Szent fi-ú a-lud-jál,  
 Szent fi-ú a-lud-jál!  
 (Hungarian transl. anon.)

Tune: STILLE NACHT Irr.  
 Franz Gruber, 1818