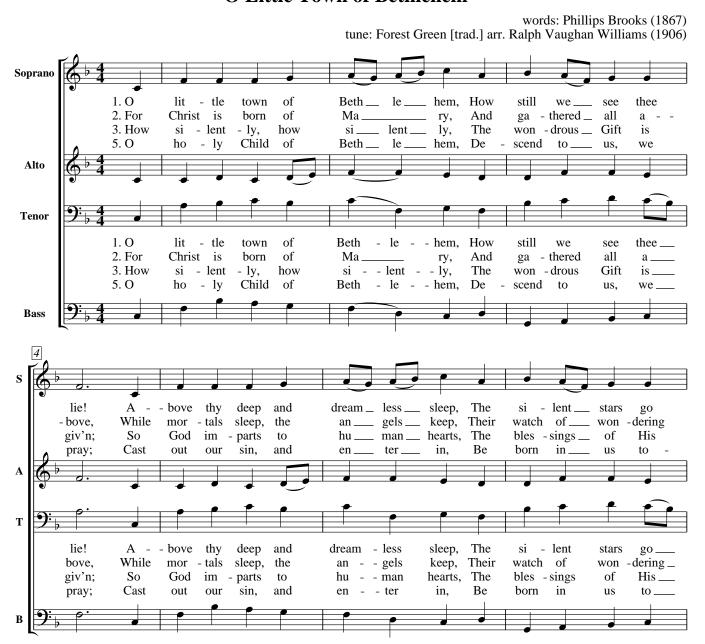
O Little Town of Bethlehem





The text was written by Phillips Brooks (1835-1893), then rector of the Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity, Philadelphia and later of Trinity Church, Boston. He visited the village of Bethlehem in the Sanjak of Jerusalem in 1865 and, a few years later, wrote the poem for his church. His organist Lewis Redner (1831-1908) wrote the music, a tune titled "St. Louis", which is used most often in the United States.

In the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, the English hymn tune "Forest Green" is used instead. "Forest Green" was adapted by Ralph Vaughan Williams from an English folk ballad called "The Ploughboy's Dream" which he had collected from a Mr. Garman of Forest Green, Surrey in 1903.

- 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.
- For Christ is born of Mary,
 And gathered all above,
 While mortals sleep, the angels keep
 Their watch of wondering love.
 O morning stars together,
 Proclaim the holy birth,
 And praises sing to God the King,
 And peace to men on earth!

- 3. How silently, how silently,
 The wondrous Gift is giv n;
 So God imparts to human hearts
 The blessings of His Heav n.
 No ear may hear His coming,
 But in this world of sin,
 Where meek souls will receive Him still,
 The dear Christ enters in.
- 4. Where children pure and happy
 Pray to the blessèd Child,
 Where misery cries out to Thee,
 Son of the mother mild;
 Where charity stands watching
 And faith holds wide the door,
 The dark night wakes, the glory breaks,
 And Christmas comes once more.
- 5. 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!