

# O Little Town of Bethlehem

words: Phillips Brooks (1867)  
tune: Forest Green [trad.] arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1906)

Soprano

1. O lit - tle town of Beth le hem, How still we see thee  
2. For Christ is born of Ma ry, And ga - thered all a -  
3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, The won - drous Gift is  
5. O ho - ly Child of Beth le hem, De - scend to us, we

Alto

Tenor

1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - - hem, How still we see thee  
2. For Christ is born of Ma ry, And ga - thered all a  
3. How si - lent - ly, how si - - lent - - ly, The won - drous Gift is  
5. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - - hem, De - scend to us, we

Bass

4

S

lie! A - - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep, The si - lent stars go  
- bove, While mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep, Their watch of won - dering  
giv'n; So God im - parts to hu - man hearts, The bles - sings of His  
pray; Cast out our sin, and en - ter in, Be born in us to -

A

T

lie! A - - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep, The si - lent stars go  
bove, While mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep, Their watch of won - dering  
giv'n; So God im - parts to hu - man hearts, The bles - sings of His  
pray; Cast out our sin, and en - ter in, Be born in us to

B

8

S  
by. Yet in thy dark streets shi neth, The e - ver - last - - ing  
love. O morn - ing stars to ge ther, Pro - - claim the ho - - ly  
Heav'n. No ear may hear His co ming, But in this world of  
- day. We hear the Christ - mas an gels, The great glad ti - - dings

A

T  
by. Yet in thy dark streets shi neth, The e - ver - last - - ing  
love. O morn - ing stars to ge ther, Pro - - claim the ho - - ly  
Heav'n. No ear may hear His co ming, But in this world of  
day. We hear the Christ - mas an gels, The great glad ti - - dings

B

12

S  
Light; The hopes and fears of all the years, Are met in thee to - - night.  
birth, And prais - es sing to God the King, And peace to men on earth!  
sin, Where meek souls will re - - ceive Him still, The dear Christ en - ters in.  
tell; O come to us, a - - bide with us, Our Lord E(m) man - u - el!

A

T  
Light; The hopes and fears of all the years, Are met in thee to night.  
birth, And prais - es sing to God the King, And peace to men on earth!  
sin, Where meek souls will re - - ceive Him still, The dear Christ en - ters in.  
tell; O come to us, a - - bide with us, Our Lord E(m) man - u el!

B

*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.*

1. 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.
2. 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 Heaven.  
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 blessed 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!