



# Worship Planning Music Suggestions for Christmas Services

## The Three Christmas Templates for C13

We are providing worship folder templates for three different C13 services:

- A “straight” Christmas Eve worship service following the normal pattern of worship: hymn, confession and absolution, three lessons with psalm and verse, sermon, etc.;
- A Christmas Eve worship service based upon the historic Lessons and Carols service, first utilized at King’s College in Cambridge, England in 1918; and
- A festival Christmas Day service.

## Complete Flexibility

As with Advent, we have tried to make these services completely flexible. We have provided suggestions about where the choir, including children's choirs, might sing in every service. However, if the suggestions are not feasible for your congregation, feel free to modify the worship folder. On Christmas Eve, for example, you can do every song as a carol and not use choir at all. You can replace the children’s choir with the adult choir, or vice-versa. These templates are simply intended to give you suggestions. Please, incorporate them to suit your circumstance and location.

We have offered two Christmas Eve services for two reasons:

The first is so that you might have options to help you decide for yourself whether a *Lessons and Carols* service will work well in your community.

The second is because some congregations might wish to use both. The “straight” service can be offered in the early evening, perhaps around 5:30 p.m. This would be a good time for the children’s choir to sing. It is a service that prospect families who want to get infants/young children to bed on time will appreciate. Then the Lessons and Carols service can be offered later in the night, perhaps at 7:30 p.m. or as late as 10:00 p.m., although a 10:00 p.m. service may have less appeal to prospects.

## In This Document

This document contains music suggestions for both services for Christmas Eve, as well suggestions for Christmas Day.

## CHRISTMAS EVE: THE STRAIGHT SERVICE

The beautiful thing about a service like this is that it gives your prospects a feel for what a normal Sunday morning service is like since it contains the same basic elements.

The music for the service is as follows:

### *Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful*

There are countless settings of this hymn available. A very nice version was arranged by Richard Proulx. [You can listen to a sample and order the music HERE.](#) Note that while the sample is in Spanish, the English is given in the music. The sample also illustrates how this can be performed simply, with just the piano. However, it can also be performed with the organ with trumpet descant. Finally, there are various ways to sing this setting. It can be sung in unison, in two-part, or in SAB.

Therefore, you can do anything with this opening hymn. The C13 template has the entire congregation singing it straight through. However, you can have the choir sing one verse in a simple two-part harmony. You can have the men sing verse 2 and the women verse 3. It is completely flexible.

### *Angels We Have Heard on High*

This favorite carol is sung after the absolution. Countless settings abound. Since it is sung after the absolution, it makes sense to have the congregation sing it. However, as they will have just sung *Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful*, you could have the choir sing this piece.

There is a lovely setting of this hymn, arranged by Peter Niedmann, for unison choir. Any church with a keyboard player and people who like to sing could use it. [You can listen to a sample and order the music HERE.](#)

### *Psalm 96: Today Is Born Our Savior*

The C13 template makes use of a setting of Psalm 96 provided by Francis Patrick O'Brien. [You can listen to a sample and order the music HERE.](#)

This is a great example of making liturgical music accessible to guests. This antiphonal psalm utilizes a portion of the tune *Gloria* for the refrain. That is the hymn that was *just* sung, *Angels We Have Heard on High*. The pieces sound quite different, particularly if you play one on organ and the other on piano. So there is no worry about redundancy. However, the repetition allows guests to easily participate, as that tune will be in their heads.

Note the many options to this psalm. The MP3 sample linked above is performed with the organ and has a choir singing the verses in four-part harmony. It is a very simple harmony. However, the verses can easily be sung in unison. It is not necessary for the choir to sing a descant on refrain. This piece can be performed on any keyboard, organ, or piano. It has

optional parts for other instruments that you can order, but are not necessary. Thus, any church, no matter the level of musical gifts, can use this piece.

However, if your congregation prefers, you can simply swap out this page of the C13 template for the psalm version from CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

### *To Thee My Heart I Offer*

The C13 template suggests swapping out the Verse of the Day with two verses of this fairly well-known carol. As this is a simple piece, this can be a piece for the children's choir. However, it can also be sung by an adult choir or by the entire congregation. You can swap this out for a choral anthem. Do what works best for your congregation.

### *From Heaven Above To Earth I Come*

Although the fact that this hymn has fifteen verses might intimidate some, it need not. This is a Lutheran Christmas classic. Martin Luther wrote this hymn to be part of his family's Christmas Eve entertainment.

It is said that Luther celebrated the festival in his own house in this original fashion. The first five verses of this hymn were to be sung by a man dressed as an angel, with stanza 6 then sung by the entire family. The children responded to the angel in stanzas 7 to 14, with the final verse sung by the entire group.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP HANDBOOK, page 57.

We have attempted to capture this feeling in the C13 template. It suggests stanzas 1 and 2 be sung by cantors – one male and one female – with the duo singing stanza 3 together. Then the choir joins in on stanzas 4 through 5. Thus, the first part of this hymn is really the choir reciting the message of the angel in song. There are multiple ways you could do this. You could have them sing in harmony or unison. You could have all five verses be choir, or all five verses be a small group. Again, you choose the way best suited for your congregation's abilities.

The cantor/choir part sets up the congregation's response. As Luther did, we have broken the response up. All sing stanza 6. Then the women and men split up the next two verses. The final three verses are sung by all. Once again, adapt as you see fit. Splitting between men and women is a simple divide. What about pulpit side and lectern side? VON HIMMEL HOCH is an *extremely* simple tune! After hearing the choir/cantors, even your guests will be able to sing it well.

To avoid musical dullness, consider varying how this hymn is accompanied. Perhaps have the cantors and choir sing *a capella*. Or, have them sing with piano accompaniment and the congregation sing with the organ.

There are many settings of VON HIMMEL HOCH. In CHRISTIAN WORSHIP you have two: CW38 and CW21. There are two more settings, one with a descant, in THE CREATIVE HYMNODIST: ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS. [Order HERE](#). There are two dramatic settings for

piano found in INTRODUCTIONS AND ALTERNATE ACCOMPANIMENTS FOR PIANO. [Order HERE.](#)

Altogether you have 11 short verses, half of which to be sung by cantors or the choir. It makes this simple but rich carol extremely accessible to any congregation.

### *Let All Together Praise Our God*

The C13 template calls this a “response” to the sermon. It is simply what used to be called the sermon hymn, a hymn that reinforces the Gospel thoughts of the sermon.

It is suggested that everyone sings this. Again, consider THE CREATIVE HYMNODIST. It contains two settings, one with optional descant. They are simple, but creative. Any church could utilize them if they wanted a variety of accompaniment for the verses of this carol.

### *Now Sing We, Now Rejoice*

What a beautiful way to end Christmas Eve worship! The tune *In Dulci Jubilo* dances. Play it as such: quick tempo with a dancing feel.

Here is a fun thought: try to get access to a harpsichord. This hymn played on harpsichord with some woodwind accompaniment is amazing. A simple way to do this is to have the harpsichord play the version from THE LUTHERAN HYMNAL. If you don't have a flautist, use a piano. Have a flautist play the alto part and a clarinet or oboe play the tenor part an octave higher than written.

However, it is equally as fun to sing on organ. Play the first three verses with a lighter registration. Pull out all the stops for the final stanza.

Yet again, there are two settings in THE CREATIVE HYMNODIST.

## CHRISTMAS EVE: LESSONS & CAROLS

We have attempted to choose hymns/carols that not only are accessible to all (i.e. many prospects will have heard many of these songs before and be able to sing along), but that fit well with the previous reading. However, there is completely flexibility here. You can swap out your favorite carols. (It is wise, however, to try and get the carol to match the lesson, so that the Gospel is reinforced with song.) You can insert a choir anthem or children's number wherever you like. Lessons & Carols offers easy adaptability.

Note that we have suggested mainly cradle carols – the softer carols that might actually be sung to a sleeping baby. Save the rafter-shaking rendition of *Joy to the World* for the Festival of the Nativity on Christmas Day. Make this later Christmas Eve service something joyful, yet tranquil.

There are nine hymns/carols suggested in the C13 template. (Ten, if you count the last one as two.)

### *Once in Royal David's City*

The C13 worship folder suggests having a soloist sing the first verse, a choir sing the second verse, and then everyone sing verses 3 and 4. But you can modify this so that everyone sings all four verses, or a choir sings verse 1 and everyone sings verses 2 through 4. Again, customize to fit your church.

A very simple option would be to order THE CREATIVE HYMNODIST: ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS. [You can order it HERE.](#) It contains two simple but beautiful settings of *Irby*, the tune for this hymn. One of the settings contains an optional descant. Use piano to play these two settings, one for the soloist and one for the choir. The choir can sing in unison, just like the soloist. Then have the organ come in for the last two verses, sung by the congregation. Simple!

A bit more challenging way to handle this hymn, one a bigger congregation could perhaps handle, would be to use the setting by Robert J. Powell. You'll need to adjust the words in the music you order. (Changing the wording for this setting is perfectly legal, as this text is in public domain.) But it has accompaniment for congregation singing as well as a four-part setting for choir. It also includes parts for a string quartet. [You can hear a sample and order music HERE.](#)

### *Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord*

This is technically an Advent hymn, but the four verses listed in the C13 template fit perfectly with the first reading from Genesis 3.

THE CREATIVE HYMNODIST: ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS has two simple settings for this hymn. One could be used as a descant. You could introduce the hymn, then sing verse 1 using the hymnal setting. Use Setting 2 from CREATIVE HYMNODIST for the second verse. Use Setting 1 from CREATIVE HYMNODIST to stress the powerful message of the third verse. Then go back to the hymnal setting for the final verse. That is a simple way that any church could add beautiful texture to this classic.

### ***Of the Father's Love Begotten***

The C13 template lists three verses of this hymn and suggests you have a cantor sing verse 1 and the choir sing verse 2. Again, you can be flexible, having a cantor and choir sing both.

The reason it is wise to have the first two verses sung by a soloist or choir is that this is one of the more challenging melodies of the carols, a 13<sup>th</sup> century plainsong chant. It will probably not be a carol familiar to the many unchurched guests you will have invited. Having two verses sung by someone else allows those guests to hear the melody. Then, hopefully, they can join in for the final verse, which reminds them that they *should* sing in light of the Good News! “*Let no tongue on earth be silent!*”

Again, there are countless settings for the ancient carol. If you want one that is great for four-part harmony use THE LUTHERAN HYMNAL. The four-part setting is relatively singable. Have the soloist sing verse 1 all by himself/herself with no accompaniment. Have the choir sing verse 2 in four-part, again, with no accompaniment. Then add the music in for verse 3. Combined with the worshipful ambiance of an all candlelight service, that would make this ancient hymn haunting.

### ***Hark, the Herald Angels Sing***

A Christmas Eve must, this is the one carol which doesn't fit the typical cradle carol style. However, it need not be a hymn that you pull out all the stops for either. [HERE is a link to a very nice setting by Richard Proulx.](#) You can listen to a sample and order music there. That setting can be used simply for the accompaniment. Or you can use the three-voice (soprano, alto, bass) harmony, having the choir sing the second verse.

There are copious settings to this hymn. Keep it simple, and let the words take center stage this night.

### ***O Little Town of Bethlehem***

We have four verses listed in the C13 template. If you want to use all four, you can have the men sing verse 2 and women sing verse 3. If you perform it all in piano, considering using one of the arrangements found in INTRODUCTIONS AND ACCOMPANIMENTS FOR PIANO. There are two. The first flows like a ballad. The second reaches down deep, perfect to accompany male singing.

This would be a fine hymn to use as a choir anthem. You can have the women sing a verse, then the men, then four-part harmony for the last verse or two. Another option would be to use the musical setting by Mike Dempsey. [You can hear a sample or order music HERE.](#) It sets the familiar words to a unique, but fitting, melody. It allows for four-part harmony, and while not simple, is not overly challenging either.

### ***Gentle Mary Laid Her Child***

The C13 module has this being sung by the choir. Here are some options.

Sondra Tucker has arranged a beautiful version. [You can order the music HERE.](#) (Sorry, there is no musical sample.) This arrangement is intended to be sung in unison. Thus, if your church has never had a choir before, here is the perfect piece to start! It takes a familiar tune, matches it with a gorgeous arrangement, and has the choir sing in unison. If you prefer to have the congregation sing this carol, consider using this arrangement anyway as the accompaniment. It sounds great on piano or soft organ. It also has an optional part for flute or C-instrument.

Another option would be the setting by Bob Burroughs. [You can hear a sample or order music HERE.](#) This is set for four parts, but much of it is sung in unison. The challenge is that it requires your ladies to hit some high notes. Also interesting is that Burroughs has woven one verse of the classic hymn, *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*, sung to the tune of *Picardy*, into this piece. It is a striking contrast and works quite well.

### ***Away in a Manger***

Here is a perfect example of a cradle carol. Consider introducing with light piano, and then dropping out shortly into the second verse. Or have a flute play the melody line along with the piano on the first verse. Then the flute is the only accompaniment for the second verse. Then just sing *a capella* for the third verse. This works well for either tune, *Cradle Song* (the tune for the CW68 version of *Away in a Manger*) or *Mueller*, the tune children often use for this carol.

If you would like to give this carol to the choir, considering using the rework of the entire carol done by Adam Tice and Blake Henson. [You can order the music HERE.](#) (Sorry, there is no musical sample.) Tice has written three new verses. They contain some of the same phrases as the original, and yet contain some new and profound thoughts. Henson has provided new music which recalls the cradle carol style of the original, and yet is unique.

Two-thirds of the song is sung in unison. The third verse begins with two-part harmony, and expands to four-part halfway through. Thus, it isn't overly complicated to learn. It sounds best on the piano, and has the option for a C-instrument part.

### ***What Child Is This***

There are endless settings of this carol, the popular tune *Greensleeves*. THE CREATIVE HYMNODIST has two nice settings. There's a dramatic version in INTRODUCTION AND ALTERNATE ACCOMPANIMENTS FOR PIANO.

This carol comes right after the sermon. If you would like to let the choir sing the first verse to give people time to prepare, considering picking up SIX A CAPELLA CHRISTMAS CAROLS by Richard Proulx. [You can order the music HERE.](#) It has a great *a capella* setting for SATB voices.

A nice concertato setting has been arranged by Marty Haugen. [You can listen to a sample or purchase it HERE.](#) It is intended for SAB voices, but the congregation could join in at any time.

If you want a more contemporary flair, consider Robert Batastini's setting. It has a light jazz feel to it. [You can hear a sample, view a PDF sample of the music, or order the music HERE.](#) This is also intended for SAB voices, but again, the congregation can join in at anytime. Thus, you could use this just for the musical setting. It is intended for piano, but also has optional parts for guitar and flute.

### *Night of Silence / Silent Night*

One of the traditions of Lessons and Carols is that each year, a new carol is introduced. While that is obviously not an essential component, *Night of Silence* might be a wonderful option.

It was written to be sung simultaneously with *Silent Night*. If you play the flowing melody of *Night of Silence*, you can sing *Silent Night* easily. [HERE you can hear a snippet of them being sung together. You can also order the music.](#)

A choir can sing *Night of Silence* in four-part harmony or in unison, and both work while being sung simultaneously with *Silent Night*. There are options for guitar, string quartet, flute, and oboe. Thus, there are multiple ways to use these pieces together. The C13 template recommends the following.

- The choir sings the first verse of *Night of Silence* in unison to piano accompaniment.
- The choir sings the second verse of *Night of Silence* in four-part harmony to piano accompaniment. Possibly add in a flute or oboe.
- Then comes a musical interlude. The piano plays the flowing *Night of Silence* accompaniment, but instead of the *Night of Silence* melody, a flute plays the melody line to *Silent Night*. This lets people see how the two tunes go together. During this interlude, the worship folder could say "Interlude for prayer." It can be the time when hand-held candles are lit from person to person.
- Again, the piano plays the *Night of Silence* accompaniment, but now someone sings the first verse of *Silent Night*. The C13 template suggests a children's choir. It can be just a small group of two or three children, the adult choir, or an adult soloist.
- The piano still plays the *Night of Silence* accompaniment, but now the congregation joins in, singing the second verse of *Silent Night*. The flute and oboe join back in.
- It ends with the piano playing the *Night of Silence* accompaniment. The congregation sings the third verse of *Silent Night*. At the same time, the choir sings the third verse of *Night of Silence* in four-part harmony (or unison, if that is what your choir can best handle).

It is a simple but powerful way to close out the night where we celebrate the birth of our Lord.

## FESTIVAL OF THE NATIVITY

### *When Christmas Morn is Dawning*

Here's a short but beautiful hymn to start the Festival of our Lord. To offer some musical variety, consider using the setting from 34 ALTERNATE HYMN ACCOMPANIMENTS by Edward Meyer on verse 2. [You can order it HERE.](#)

### *Gloria for Christmas*

This harkens back to a song from Christmas Eve. This version of the *Gloria* uses the refrain from *Angels We Have Heard on High*. The verses provide many options for your choir or cantor. You can perform them just using a male and female cantor, singing in unison. You can perform them in four-part harmony. You can use organ or piano. [You can listen to a sample and order the music HERE.](#) Note that GIA lets you download this music. Thus, you can get it instantly.

This piece is a great illustration of how to make liturgical music accessible and compelling. By using a refrain, you enable your first-time worship guest to participate immediately. He hears the refrain and you can sing along. By using a new musical setting, you simultaneously bring out treasures, both old and new. For you are singing the ancient text that has been a part of Christian worship for centuries, but presenting it in a new way, utilizing the talents of today's Christians.

### *Psalm 96: All the Ends of the Earth*

The C13 template uses a beautiful version of Psalm 98 with music provided by Lynn Trapp. It sounds more complicated than it is. It is quite easy to play. It is very easy for a choir to sing the verses in parts; however, the verses can be sung in unison by the pastor or a cantor. It can be sung to the organ or piano. It also has parts for two C-instruments and a B-flat trumpet, but they are optional. Thus, this is another example of a piece that can be used in any sized church.

[You can listen to a sample and order music HERE.](#)

### *Christmastime Alleluia*

We suggested a special Gospel Acclamation for Advent. Why not do the same for Christmas? *Christmastime Alleluia*, by James Chepponis, is perfect for this. He has fashioned the verse of the day and Alleluias around the familiar tune *Adeste Fideles*. A cantor sings the Alleluias, and the congregation then repeats. The cantor then sings the verse. The congregation then sings the Alleluias again. Thus, if someone has *never participated in liturgical worship* in their life, they can easily join in for this Gospel Acclamation, because their part is modeled for them by the cantor. There are verses provided for Christmas Day, Holy Family, January 1, Epiphany, and Baptism of our Lord.

This is another perfect example of music that can fit in any church. It can be performed beautifully using nothing but piano or organ. However, it also has parts for glockenspiel, handbells, string quartet, brass quartet, and timpani. You can sing it straight, just using the melody. Or you can have the choir sing the refrain with the congregation, but sing special parts to harmonize.

[You can listen to a sample and order music HERE.](#)

### ***Joy to the World***

The C13 template has this song being sung in entirety by the entire congregation. That is certainly fine. It is a favorite. However, you could break it up too, having the men sing verse 2 and the women sing verse 3. Or you could give one verse to the choir.

A fantastic concertato setting of this hymn has been arranged by William P. Rowan. [You can listen to a sample and order the music HERE.](#) It's an energetic arrangement that contains a lot of options. There are choir parts for every stanza. However, you can have the choir sing any of the stanzas in unison. Or you can have the congregation sing the melody while the choir sings their parts, and they match perfectly. Finally, you do not have to use a choir at all. You can just use this arrangement for musical variety from verse to verse.

It can be performed on the piano or organ and there are optional parts for two trumpets, two trombones, and a timpani. Again, this piece works well in a church with 100 members or in a church with 1,200 members.

### ***Holy, Holy, Holy – the Sanctus***

In the C13 worship folder template, we use the version from Divine Service I of CHRISTIAN WORSHIP SUPPLEMENT.

### ***O Christ, Lamb of God – the Agnus Dei***

This is also the version from Divine Service I in CHRISTIAN WORSHIP SUPPLEMENT.

### ***See in Yonder Manger Low***

This is a simple hymn that will serve well for distribution. The fact that it has a closing refrain allows for people to sing along, at least for that, even as they approach the table. Play the verses softly, then let the refrain soar.

### ***Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising***

What a beautiful Paul Gerhardt hymn! You can find accompaniment versions in both THE CREATIVE HYMNODIST and 34 ALTERNATE HYMN ACCOMPANIEMENTS recommended elsewhere.

*Oh, Rejoice, All Christians, Loudly*

The key to this hymn is to keep it simple on the verses. Don't be afraid to pull back. Try verse 3 playing just the melody line, and playing the bass line on the pedals. Then let the refrain carry the weight and volume it deserves.

If you want the choir to help with closing the service, [you can find a great setting HERE](#). It is by William Braun of Wisconsin Lutheran College. It begins with the choir singing Alleluias. The congregation sings verse 1. The choir sings verses 2 and three. The congregation sings verse 4, with choir and brass quartet adding layers.

Be warned, the brass quartet is not optional. [You can find the music for all the instruments HERE](#).

## OTHER PIECES

The C13 worship templates are easily modified in either Microsoft Word or Publisher. You can insert other pieces wherever you want, or swap out what we have in the templates for something else. Therefore, we are supplying some final recommendations in case you want more choir participation. We will include recommendations for a variety of skill levels: easy, medium difficulty, and challenging. You can insert the text of these pieces anywhere you want into the worship folder templates, if you desire for the text to be printed.

### *For Unto Us a Child Is Born - easy*

This is a great piece by John Atteberry that needs only two voices, men and women, and a piano. It is a musical rendition of Isaiah 9: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. It would be a wonderful substitution in the Lessons and Carols service after that lesson. [You can hear a sample and order the music HERE.](#)

### *Sing Gloria - easy*

This is a carol that is so simple the music notes read, “The whole assembly should be able to sing the chorus in three part harmony.” That might be true in a church of life-long WELS members who are all strong singers. But even in a mission church, this is a piece easily accessible to all. It calls for SAB harmony. If you would like to teach an inexperienced choir to sing in harmony, this is a great piece to build their confidence. You could play it with piano accompaniment, although it sounds amazing *a capella*. The congregation could join in on the refrain eventually, if you so desire. [You can listen to a sample or purchase the music HERE.](#)

### *Star of Wonder Christmas Star - easy*

This is a creative piece that sets a new carol – *Star of Wonder* – to a variation of *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*. But it layers that with a verse of *O Little Town of Bethlehem*. Thus, the final verse is sung in two parts, but both are familiar melodies. This piece would lend itself well to a combined choir or children and adults. [You can hear a sample and order the music HERE.](#)

### *Six A Capella Christmas Carols – medium difficulty*

We recommended this earlier, if you wanted the choir to introduce *What Child Is This* on Christmas Eve. But this piece contains fairly simple four-part harmonizations for five other Christmas classics. [You can hear samples of the six carols and order the music HERE.](#)

***Low, How a Rose E'er Blooming*** - medium difficulty

This is a Christmas classic arranged by Rosemary Corrigan Campbell. It still has the slower, contemplative feel. It has the same melody which you know, but the chording is unique and modern. [You can listen to a sample and order the music HERE.](#)

***Christ's Lullaby*** - medium difficulty

This is a new Christmas hymn given to us by Sally Ann Morris. It plays well on piano and has options for flute, cello, harp, and guitar. The first two verses are sung in unison. The final two have four-part harmony, but it is not overly difficult. [You can hear a sample and purchase the music HERE.](#)

***Judah's Land*** - medium difficulty to more challenging

Here is a beautiful Appalachian carol that begins hauntingly. The four parts simply sing "Ah" while an alto solo sings the first verse. But the voices "chase" one another: bass, followed by tenors, followed by altos, followed by sopranos. This sequence repeats later before a gorgeous final verse. [You can listen to a sample and purchase the music HERE.](#) Although the website categorizes this as "easy," that is not necessarily true. The parts aren't overly difficult, but require precise timing, and all the four voices – SATB – must be strong. However, if you can pull it off it is glorious.

***Rejoice and Be Merry*** – more challenging

This is an English gallery carol from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is fun to sing, but almost all of it is four-part harmony, and there isn't much repetition. Therefore, the piece is a bit more challenging. [You can listen to a sample and purchase the music HERE.](#) Note that this could also be saved for Epiphany, as it references the Wise Men and the star.

***Starlight Streams From Ancient Fire*** - more challenging

This is a contemporary Christmas carol, written by Herman Stuempfle. In his text, Stuempfle talks about light in every verses: the light that came from the "ancient fire" (a star), and now casts a bit of light on the baby in the stable; the light of the fire that warms the shepherds; the light of the lamp Mary uses to care for her child; the sunlight of the dawn on Christmas Day. Yet, the final verse states that none of that comes close to the light of Christ, which has dawned this Christmas. The beauty of the poetry is carried well in the new music by Kathy Powell. The website lists this as an easy piece. On the one hand, much of it is easy. The first two verses are sung in unison. The third verse starts in two-part harmony, then splits to four-part. The final verse, however, requires four-part harmony throughout, and it requires singers to carry a descant. That, combined with the fact that this is an unfamiliar tune with some unusual chords, makes us rank this as a bit more challenging, although certainly not beyond any choir who is willing to invest the time.

[You can listen to a sample and order the music HERE.](#)