

The following Christmas Hymn stories were provided at the 10:30 am service on January 3, 2010.

Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow

TUNE: RISE UP, SHEPHERD, AND FOLLOW

This African-American spiritual was included in Natalie Curtis Burlin's *The Hampton Series – Negro Folk-Songs* (1909). Aided by investigative work and phonograph records, Curtis produced this four-part work of African-American spirituals for the Hampton School, Virginia.

James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson included it in their *Second Book of Negro Spirituals* (1926).

The hymn is based on the birth narrative in Luke 2:8-15:

8 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

*¹⁴'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!'*

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.'

In the preface to his volume James Weldon Johnson states his belief that this and other Christmas spirituals are probably from the period after the Emancipation and are therefore relatively late in their development.

The present form of the spiritual is from *Lead Me, Guide Me: The African-American Catholic Hymnal* (1987).

Let us sing the entire hymn.

What Child Is This

Tune: GREENSLEEVES

William Chatterton Dix wrote this text as a poem "The Manger Throne." It was published as a hymn in John Stainer's *Christmas Carols New and Old*.

Dix was born in Bristol, England, in 1837 and educated at Bristol Grammar School. He became manager of a Maritime Insurance Company in Glasgow. As a gifted writer he wrote two devotional books, translated hymns from Greek, and wrote several collections of poetry which included texts for hymns. He died 1898.

GREENSLEEVES is a traditional English ballad which has been the setting for many different texts. William Shakespeare speaks of it through two of his characters in the Merry Wives of Windsor. In act 5, scene 5, Falstaff says, "Let the sky rain potatoes; let it thunder to the tune of 'Green Sleeves.' "

One of its early appearances as a hymn tune was the Wait's carol found in New Christmas Carols of 1642 where it is the setting for "The old year now is fled." By the seventeenth century "waits" were professional musicians employed as town minstrels.

John Gay's The Beggar's Opera used GREENSLEEVES as the tune for Macheath's aria after he has been condemned to death. The tune was first used as the setting for Dix's text in Christmas Carols New and Old where it has greatest significance for us since it proclaims the birth of Christ the king and God's righteous realm.

We will sing the entire carol and remain seated for the singing.

29

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Tune: GO TELL IT

Having heard the refrain, John Wesley Work II wrote the present stanzas of this hymn shortly after the turn of the century. It was included in the collection American Negro Songs and Spirituals (1940).

John Wesley Work II was born, educated, worked, and died in Nashville. He earned a MA in history and Latin at Fisk University. He was instructor of Greek and Latin until 1906 when he was appointed chair of the department. Work and his brother, Frederick Jerome, were leading figures in the preservation, performance, and study of African-American spirituals. They published several collections of slave songs, spirituals and folk songs of the African American. In 1923, Work was named president of Roger Williams University, Nashville, a position he held at the time of his death.

GO TELL IT is an African-American tune usually associated with this text arranged by John Wesley Work III (1902-1967), who continued the work begun by his father and uncle. The younger Work was educated at Fisk University, Columbia University, and Yale University, after which he directed the glee club at Fisk for four years until his appointment as professor of music theory in 1931.

The harmonization is by Presbyterian, Melva Wilson Costen. She teaches worship and music at the Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta and was chair of the committee that compiled The Presbyterian Hymnal.

We will sing the entire hymn. Let's stand.

66

We Three Kings of Orient Are

Tune: THREE KINGS OF ORIENT

This is an Epiphany hymn and affirms the revealing of Jesus as light to people beyond Israel. The visit of the three kings or astrologers from the East is an expression of Christ's revelation to the world. The story symbolizes the universality of our ministry.

Both text and music of this rhythmic hymn were composed by John Henry Hopkins, Jr., and included in his *Carols, Hymns, and Songs*.

Hopkins was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1820, and was educated at the University of Vermont and General Theological Seminary, an Episcopal school in New York City. He served several parishes but distinguished himself in the area of religious music, becoming the first professor of church music at General Theological Seminary from 1855 to 1857. He was editor of the Church Journal from 1853-1868. In addition, Hopkins designed stained-glass windows and Episcopal seals and forms. He died near Hudson, New York, in 1891.

The musical introduction of the tune for The Presbyterian Hymnal is by Robert Stigall, director of music at Myers Park Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, North Carolina, from 1963 to 2008, quite a run for an organist. Our organist Dick Judd has had quite a run with us and is still running!

Let us sing verses 1 and 5 of the hymn # 66 which I hear is one of Cornel's favorites. You may remain seated for the singing.

60

Silent Night, Holy Night

Tune: STILLE NACHT

This is one of the most popular Christmas Carols. Apart from *O Holy Night* it is one of the most sung. The words and tune are beautiful. Most of us remember the carol from childhood and many associate it with Christmas Eve Candlelight Services where the song is sung by the light of candles held by congregants as we do here on Christmas Eve.

The hymn was written by Joseph Mohr for a Christmas festival at St. Nicholas Church, near Salzburg, Austria. The story is told that the organ was not functioning the day of the service and Mohr decided to write a new hymn that would not require organ accompaniment. He took it to his friend Franz Xaver Gruber and asked him to write a suitable tune. The two sang the new hymn as Gruber accompanied on the guitar. The village choir joined in repeating the last line of each stanza in four-part harmony.

Karl Mauracher came to repair the organ and Father Mohr sang the new hymn for him, giving him a copy of it. As Mauracher traveled from town to town repairing church organs he introduced the hymn to the people. In Zillerthal, a glovemaking family by the name of Strasser who were also singers heard the hymn and sang it at the Leipzig Fair in 1831.

In 1854, after some question as to authorship Gruber wrote a letter to Berlin detailing the events surrounding the creation of the hymn.

Joseph Mohr was born in Salzburg in 1792 and was a chorister at the cathedral there. He attended Salzburg University and was ordained a priest in 1815. He served several parishes until his death in 1848.

Franz Xaver Gruber was born in Austria in 1787. His father did not want him to be a musician so Franz secretly took violin lessons and later studied organ. He was a teacher and also organist at St. Nicholas Church, where he met Mohr. Later he became teacher then headmaster at Berndorf. He died in 1863.

We will sing the entire hymn. Please stand.

Information from: The Presbyterian Hymnal Software Edition