



# **A Certain Small Shepherd**

**Salem Ninth Ward  
Christmas 2011**



## Quartet: O Holy Night

This is a story of a strange and marvelous thing. It happened on a Christmas morning at Hurricane Gap. But before you hear about Christmas morning, you must hear about Jamie.

Jamie's mother died the stormy night he was born.

Like other babies, he cut teeth. He learned to crawl. When he was a year old, he toddled about like other one-year-olds. At two, he carried around sticks and stones like other two-year-olds. He threw balls and built towers of blocks and knocked them down.

Everything that other two-year-olds could do, Jamie could do except one thing. He could not talk.

"Jamie gets everything he wants by pointing," Father explained to Jamie's sisters Honey and Sarah. "Give him time. He'll learn to talk."

At three Jamie could button his shirt and tie his shoes. At four, he followed Father to the stable at milking time. He milked the kittens' pan full of milk.

But even at four, Jamie could not talk like other children. He could only make strange grunting noises.

One day Jamie found a litter of new kittens in a box under the stairs. He ran to the cornfield to tell Father. He wanted to say he had been feeling around in the box for a ball he'd lost, and suddenly his fingers had felt something warm and squirmy, and here were all these kittens.

But how could you tell somebody something if, when you opened your mouth, you could only grunt?

Jamie started running. He ran till he reached the orchard. There he threw himself down in the tall grass and kicked his feet against the ground.

Later, when Father was walking through the orchard, he came across Jamie lying in the grass.

"Jamie," said Father, "there's a new calf in the pasture. I need you to help me bring it to the stable."

Whatever Father did, Jamie helped him

When Father planted, Jamie helped him. When Father mended fences Jamie helped him. When Father lay on his back in the shade of the persimmon tree to rest, Jamie lay beside him. Father told Jamie the names of the birds flying overhead..

On the first morning of school the year that Jamie was six, Father handed him a book, a tablet, a pencil, and a box of crayons.

"You're going to school, Jamie," he said. "I'll go with you this morning."

The neighbors watched them walking down the road together, toward the little one-room schoolhouse.

"Poor foolish father!" they said, and shook their heads. "Trying to make somebody out of that no-account boy!"

Miss Creech, the teacher, shook her head too. With so many children, so many classes, she hadn't time for a boy who couldn't talk, she told Father.

"What will Jamie do all day long?" she asked.

"He will listen," said Father.

Every day Jamie listened. He learned the words on the pages of his book. He learned how to count. He liked the reading and the counting.

But the part of school Jamie liked best was the big piece of paper Miss Creech gave him every day. On it he printed words in squares, like the other children. He wrote numbers. He drew pictures and colored them with his crayons. He could say things on paper.

Every year the people of Hurricane Gap celebrated Christmas in the little white church across the road from Jamie's house. On Christmas Eve the boys and girls gave a Christmas play. People came miles to see it. Miss Creech directed the play.

One afternoon in November, Miss Creech announced it was time to begin play practice.

### *Youth Choir Assembles*

Miss Creech gave the part of Mary to Joan. She gave the part of Joseph to Henry. She asked Sarah to be an angel; Clive the innkeeper. She chose three big boys to be Wise Men, four others to be shepherds. The rest of the boys and girls would sing carols, she said.

Jamie listened to the words he had last heard. Yes, Miss Creech expected him to sing carols.

Then Miss Creech noticed Jamie. "Jamie," she asked, "how would you like to be a shepherd?"

"He's too little," said one of the big shepherds.

"No, he isn't," said Sarah. "If my father was a shepherd, Jamie would help him."

That afternoon Jamie became a small shepherd.

Miss Creech said to the boys and girls, "Forget you are Joan, and Henry, and Clive, and Jamie. Remember that you are Mary, and Joseph, and an innkeeper, and a shepherd, and that strange things are happening in the hollow where you live."

The next day Father went across Pine Mountain to the store. When he came home, he handed Sarah a package. In it was cloth of four colors--green, gold, white, and red.

"Make Jamie a shepherd's coat, like the picture in the Bible," Father said to Sarah.

Father went into the woods and found a crooked limb of a tree. He made it into a shepherd's crook for Jamie.

## Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

*Vigorously* ♩ = 92-112

1. Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing      Glo - ry to the new-born King!  
2. Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!      Hail the Son of Righ-teous-ness!

Peace on earth and mer - cy mild,      God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!  
Light and life to all he brings,      Ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.

Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise;      Join the tri - umph of the skies;  
Mild he lays his glo - ry by,      Born that man no more may die;

With th'an - gel - ic host pro - claim Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!  
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them sec - ond birth.

Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing      Glo - ry to the new-born King!

Christmas drew near. At home in the evenings the boys and girls of Hurricane Gap made decorations for the Christmas tree that would stand in the church. They glued together strips of bright-colored paper in long chains. They whittled stars and baby lambs and camels out of wild cherry wood. They strung long strings of popcorn.

Every night, as Father read from the Bible, Jamie added more kernels to his string of popcorn.

"Jamie, are you trying to make a string long enough to reach the top of Pine Mountain?" asked Honey one night.

Jamie did not hear her. He was far away, on a hillside, tending sheep. And even though he was a small shepherd and could only grunt when he tried to talk, an angel wrapped around with dazzling light was singling him out to tell him a wonderful thing that had happened down in the hollow in a cow stall.

Two days before Christmas the mothers of Hurricane Gap and Miss Creech, and all the boys and girls gathered at the church to decorate the tree. Frost-blue berries shone on its feathery green branches. The air around it smelled of spice.

In the tiptop of the tree they fastened the biggest star. Among the branches they hung the other stars and the baby lambs and camels whittled out of wild cherry wood. They looped paper chains from branch to branch. Last of all, they festooned the tree with strings of snowy popcorn.

Beside the tree the boys and girls practiced the Christmas play for the last time.

## Youth Choir

The first No - el the an - gel did say Was to

cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay, *Choir (hums)* In

fields where they lay keep - ing their sheep On a cold win - ter's

night that was so deep. *Choir sings* No - el, No - el, No -

el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el!

When they had finished they started home. Midway down the aisle they turned and looked again at the tree. "Ah!" they said.

Sarah opened the door. "Look!" she called. "Look, everybody! It's snowing!"

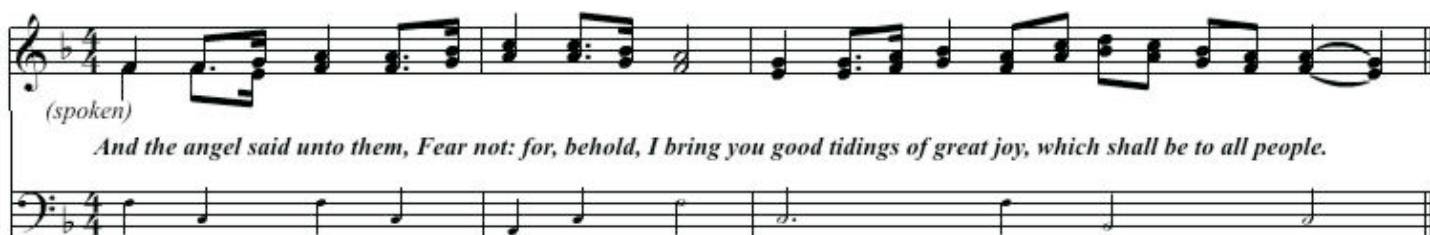
That night at bedtime, Father took the big Bible off the table. Sarah and Honey and Jamie gathered around him at the fire.



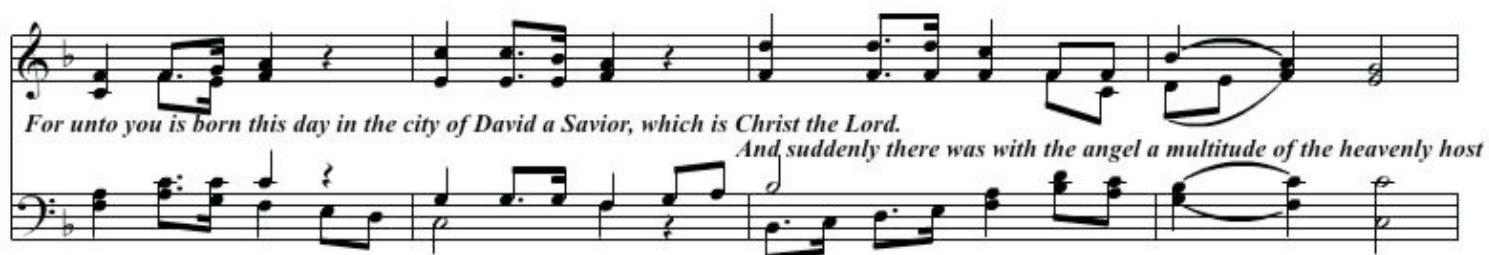
Over the room a hush fell as Father read:

*And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.*

*And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.*



(spoken)  
*And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*



*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.*  
*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host*



*praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*



(Choir)  
Glo - ry to God      Glo - ry to God,      Glo - ry to God,      in the high - est;  
Glo - ry to God in the high - est,      Glo - ry to God in the high - est;  
Glo - ry to God in the high - est;      Glo - ry to God in the high - est;



Peace on earth, good will to men;      Peace on earth, good - will to men!



## Far, Far Away on Judea's Plains

Choir and Congregation

*Joyfully*

♩ = 92-112



1. Far, far a - way on Ju - de - a's plains, Shep - herds of old heard the  
 2. Sweet are these strains of re - deem - ing love, Mes - sage of mer - cy from  
 3. Lord, with the an - gels we too would re - joice; Help us to sing with the  
 4. Has - ten the time when, from ev - 'ry clime, Men shall u - nite in the



joy - ous strains:  
 heav'n a - bove: Glo - ry to God, Glo - ry to God,  
 heart and voice: Glo - ry to God in the  
 strains sub - lime:



Glo - ry to God in the high - est,



Glo - ry to God in the high - est; Peace on earth, good -  
 high - est,



Glo - ry to God in the high - est;



will to men; Peace on earth, good - will to men!



The next morning Jamie looked out on a world such as he had never seen. Hidden were the roads and the fences, the woodpile, and the swing under the oak tree--all buried deep under a lumpy quilt of snow. And before a stinging wind, snowflakes still madly whirled and blew.

Sarah and Honey joined Jamie at that window.

"You can't see across Line Fork Creek in this storm," said Sarah. "And where is Pine Mountain?"

"Where is the church!" asked Honey. "That's what I'd like to know."

Jamie turned to them with questions in his eyes.

"If it had been snowing hard that night in Bethlehem, Jamie," Honey told him, "the shepherds wouldn't have had their sheep out in the pasture. They would have had them in the stable, keeping them warm. Wouldn't they, Father? Then they wouldn't have heard what the angel said, all shut indoors like that."



"When angels have something to tell a shepherd," said father, "they can find him in any place, in any sort of weather. If the shepherd is listening, he will hear."



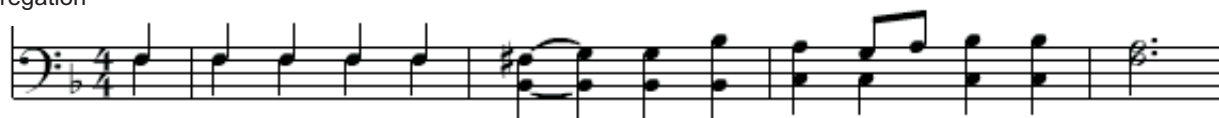
## O Little Town of Bethlehem

*Peacefully*

♩ = 84-100

Choir &  
Congregation

1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, How still we see thee lie.  
 2. For Christ is born of Ma - ry, And, gath - ered all a - bove  
 3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly The won-drous gift is giv'n!



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep The si - lent stars go by;  
 While mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep Their watch of won-d'ring love.  
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts The bless-ings of his heav'n.



Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth The ev - er - last - ing Light.  
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er Pro - claim the ho - ly birth,  
 No ear may hear his com - ing; But in this world of sin,



The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee to - night.  
 And prais - es sing to God the King, And peace to men on earth. *Interlude after*  
 Where meek souls will re - ceive him, still The dear Christ en - ters in. *2nd verse*



At eleven o'clock that morning the telephone rang.

It was Miss Creech. "I've just got the latest weather report. This storm is going on all day, and into the night."

The telephone, once it started ringing, didn't stop. No matter if it rang a long and a short, a short and two longs, or whatever, everyone on the Hurricane Gap line listened. The news they heard was always bad. Drifts ten feet high were piled up along the Trace Branch road. The road up Pine Mountain was closed. The children couldn't get to the church for the Christmas play. And then the telephone went silent, dead in the storm.

Meanwhile, the storm continued.

At dinner Jamie sat at the table staring at his plate.

"Shepherds must eat, Jamie," said Father.

Still Jamie stared at this plate.

"Know what?" said Sarah. "Because we're all disappointed, we won't save the Christmas stack cake for tomorrow. We'll have a slice today. As soon as you eat your dinner, Jamie."

Still Jamie stared at this plate. He did not touch his food.

"You think that play was real, don't you, Jamie?" said Honey. "It wasn't real. It was just a play we were giving, like some story we'd made up."

Jamie could hold his sobs no longer. His body heaved as he ran to Father. Father laid an arm about Jamie's shoulders. Sometimes, Jamie," he said, "angels say to shepherds, 'Be of good courage.' "

On through the short afternoon the storm raged.

Father heaped more wood on the fire. Sarah sat in front of the fire reading a book. Honey cracked hickory nuts on the stone hearth. Jamie just sat.

"Bring the popper, Jamie, and I'll pop some corn for you," said Father.

Jamie shook his head.

"Want me to read to you?" asked Sarah.

Jamie shook his head.

"Jamie still thinks he's a shepherd," said Honey.

After a while Jamie left the fire and stood at the window, watching the wild storm. He squinted his eyes and stared. He motioned to Father to come and look.

Through the snowdrifts trudged a man, followed by a woman. They were bundled from head to foot, and their faces were lowered against the wind and the flying snow.

"Mercy!" said Father, as he watched them turn in at the gate.

As Father opened the door to them, a gust of snow-laden wind whisked into the kitchen.

The man and the woman followed Father into the front room and sat down before the fire.

"Where did you come from?" asked Father.

"The other side of Pine Mountain," said the man.

"Why didn't you stop sooner?" asked Father

"We did stop," the man said. "At three houses. Nobody had room," He and the woman sat looking numbly into the fire.

"How far were you going?" asked Father.

"Down Straight Creek," said the man. He nodded his head toward the woman. "To her sister's."

"You'll never get there tonight," Father said.

"Maybe," said the man, "maybe there'd be a place in your stable."

"We could lay blankets on the kitchen floor," said Father.

The woman looked at the children. She shook her head. "The stable is better," she said.

When the man and the woman had dried their clothes and warmed themselves, Father led the way to the stable. He carried an armload of quilts and on top of them an old buffalo skin. From his right arm swung a lantern and a milk bucket.

"It's cold in that stable," Father said, as he started out the kitchen door. "Bitter cold."

On the doorstep he turned. "Don't wait up for me," he called back. "I may be gone a good while."

Over the earth darkness thickened. Still the wind blew.

The clock on the mantle struck seven.

"I wish Father would come!" said Honey.

When the clock struck eight Sarah said "Why don't we hang up our stockings and go to bed? Jamie, it's time to hang up your stocking, too, and go to bed."

Jamie did not answer. He sat staring into the fire.

"That Jamie!" said Honey. "He still thinks he's a shepherd!" She hung her stocking under the mantel.

"Jamie," said Sarah, "aren't you going to hang up your stocking and go to bed?" She pulled the trundle bed from beneath Father's bed, and turned back the covers. She turned back the covers on Father's bed. She hung up her stocking and followed Honey upstairs.

"Jamie!" she called back.

Still Jamie stared into the fire. A strange feeling was growing inside him.

## Harp

*Peacefully* ♩ = 80-100



Spoken narration

He felt afraid. What was that he heard? The wind? Only the wind?  
He lay down on his bed with his clothes on. He dropped off to sleep. Something awakened him.



He sat upright quickly. He looked around. His heart beat fast. Everything was as it had been when he lay down. The fire was burning; two stockings, Sarah's and Honey's, hung under the mantel; the clock was ticking solemnly.



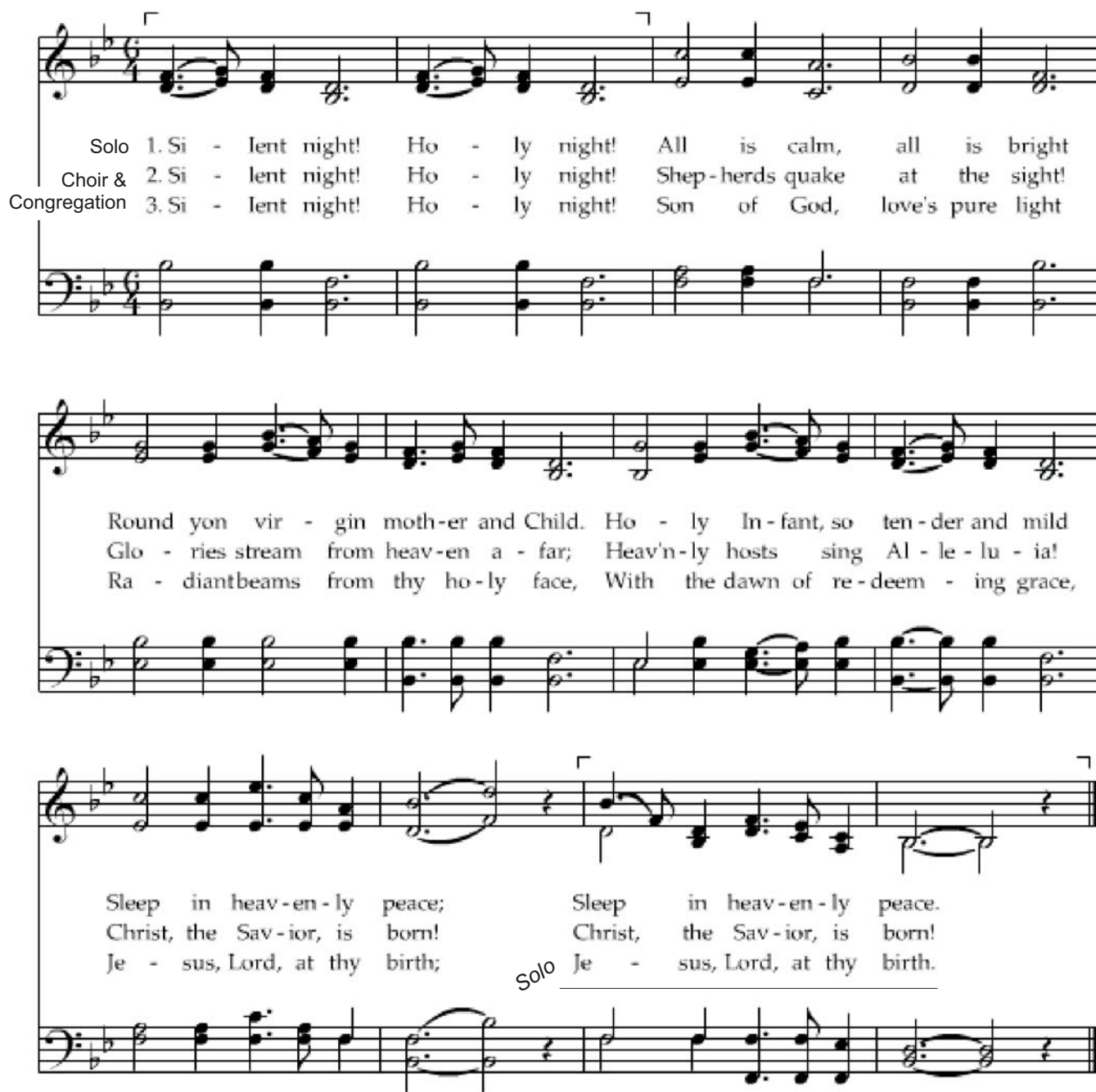
He looked at Father's bed. The sheets were just as Sarah had turned them back.  
There! There it was again. It sounded like singing. "Glory to God. On earth peace."  
Jamie breathed hard. Had he heard that? Or had he only imagined it in the wind?  
He lay down again and pulled the quilts over his head.



## Silent Night

*Peacefully*

♩ = 80-100

**Harp accompaniment**


Solo 1. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright  
 Choir & 2. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight!  
 Congregation 3. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Son 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'n - ly hosts sing Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face, With 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, Lord, at thy birth; Solo Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.



"Get up, Jamie," he heard Father saying. "Put your clothes on, quick."

Jamie opened his eyes. He saw daylight creeping into the room. He saw Father standing over him, bundled in warm clothes.

Wondering, Jamie flung the quilts back and rolled out of bed.

"Why, Jamie," said Father, "you're already dressed!"

Father went to the stairs. "Sarah! Honey!" he called. "Come quick!"

"What's happened, Father?" asked Sarah.

"Where are we going?" asked Honey, as she fumbled sleepily with her shoelaces. "To the stable?"

"The stable was no fit place," said Father. "Not on this bitter night. Not when the church was close by, and it with a stove and coal for burning."

Out into the cold, silent, white morning they went. The wind had stopped. Snow no longer fell. The clouds were lifting. One star in the vast sky, its brilliance fading in the growing light, shone down on Hurricane Gap.

Father led the way through the drifted snow. The others followed, stepping in his tracks.

As Father pushed open the church door, the fragrance of the Christmas tree rushed out at them.

Father walked quietly up the aisle. Wonderingly, the others followed. There, beside the star-crowned Christmas tree, where the Christmas play was to have been given, they saw the woman, lying on the old buffalo skin, covered with quilts. Beside her sat the man.

The woman smiled at them. "You came to see the baby?" she asked, and lifted the cover.

Sarah went first and peeped under the cover. Honey went next.

"You look too, Jamie," said Sarah.

Jamie leaned forward and took one quick look. Then he turned, shot down the aisle and out of the church, slamming the door behind him.

To the house Jamie made his way, half running along the path Father's big boots had cut through the snowdrifts.

Inside the house he hurriedly pulled his shepherd's robe over his coat. He snatched up his crook from the chimney corner.

With his hand on the doorknob, he glanced toward the fireplace. There, under the mantel, hung Sarah's and Honey's stockings. And there, beside them, hung his stocking! Now who had hung it there? It had in it the same bulge his stocking had had every Christmas morning since he could remember--a bulge made by an orange.

Jamie ran to the fireplace and felt the toe of his stocking. Yes, there was the dime, just as on other Christmas mornings.

Hurriedly he emptied his stocking. With the orange and the dime in one hand and the crook in the other, he made his way toward the church.

Without looking to the left or right, Jamie hurried up the aisle. Beside the pallet he dropped to his knees.

"Here is a Christmas gift for the Child," he said, clear and strong.

"Father!" gasped Sarah. "Father, listen to Jamie!"

The woman turned back the covers from the baby's face. Jamie gently laid the orange beside the baby's tiny hand.

"And here's a Christmas gift for the Mother," Jamie said to the woman as he put the dime in her hand.

Father, trembling with wonder and with joy, fell to his knees beside Jamie. Sarah, too, knelt; and Honey, and the man.

"Surely," the woman spoke softly, "The Lord lives this day."

*Very softly*

Narration

"Surely," said Father, "The Lord does live this day, and all days. And He is loving and merciful and good."

(Choir)

Crescendo  
(after narration finishes)

Glo

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

The musical score is written for a piano and voice/choir. It begins with a 'Narration' section marked 'Very softly'. The melody is in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The narration text is: "Surely," said Father, "The Lord does live this day, and all days. And He is loving and merciful and good." This is followed by a 'Choir' section. The choir enters with a 'Crescendo (after narration finishes)' and sings 'Glo'. The melody continues in the treble clef, and the accompaniment continues in the bass clef. The choir text is: 'ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.'

## Angels We Have Heard on High

*joyfully*

♩ = 96-116

Choir  
Choir &  
Congregation

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 Him whose birth the an - gels sing;  
*Unison (verse only)*

And the moun-tains in re - ply Ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.  
 What the glad-some tid - ings be Which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?  
 Come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new-born King.

Glo

ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo

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

*Choir repeats on last verse*