

# Sacred Words and Music

An absurdly brief dash  
through the history of church music

Prepared for the exclusive enjoyment of those who attend the

## Sunday Adult Forum

The Honorable Tricia Herban, Presiding

*(Offered in spite of the goodly advice of Sara Seidel, Director of Music)*

St. John's Episcopal Church, Worthington, Ohio

Sunday December 10, 2017

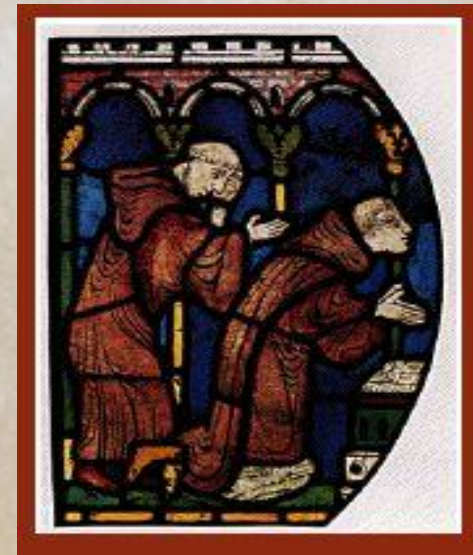
# Focus is (mostly) on England

- Plainchant to Polyphony (10 mins)
- Impact of the Reformation (10 mins)
- The English Christmas Carol (10 mins)

# Liturgy & Chant

- Liturgy is comprised of the texts (and actions) in a worship service
- Chanting is the speaking of the liturgy in a series of tones in fairly close consecutive pitches. No other pitches, no harmony. A plain song.

[Chanting's roots are in Jewish traditions of song (esp. the Psalms) and worship.]



# In the Beginning, there were only words

Early Christians were, for the most part, converted Jews. As such, their traditions included chanting as an integral part of public worship.

As Christian liturgies evolved, chanting was a given. And yet, at the time there was no means of indicating the desired tone, no means of indicating changes in tone, no way to convey rhythm, no way to preserve and replicate how the liturgy should sound – except to learn by imitation.

# Common Liturgy & Chant

Pope Gregory (590-604) called for a common liturgy in order to consolidate as many regional variants as possible. Several sorts of chant had also developed – but most eventually gave way to the **Gregorian Chant** which peaked around 1100.

The **Sarum Use chant** was used in England until the Reformation.


**Veni Creator Spiritus** ("Come Creator Spirit") is a hymn believed to have been written by Rabanus Maurus (776-856) in the 9th century. It is normally sung in Gregorian Chant.

# History of Notation


8th century: That boy took my love away.

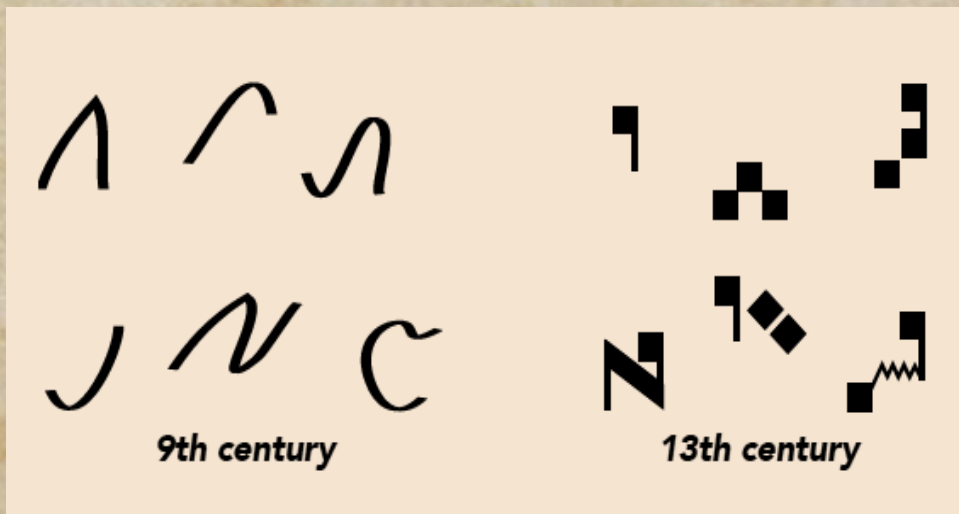
9th century: / ρ . . . / ρ.  
That boy took my love away.

10th century: / ρ . . . / ρ.  
That boy took my love away.

11th century:   
That boy took my love away.

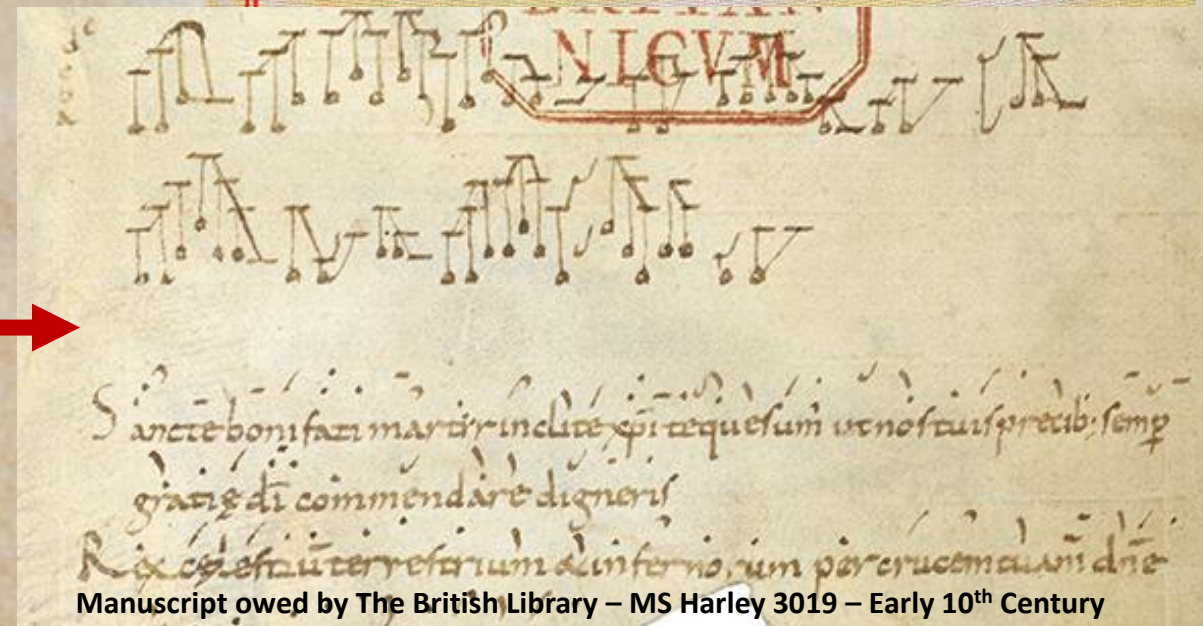
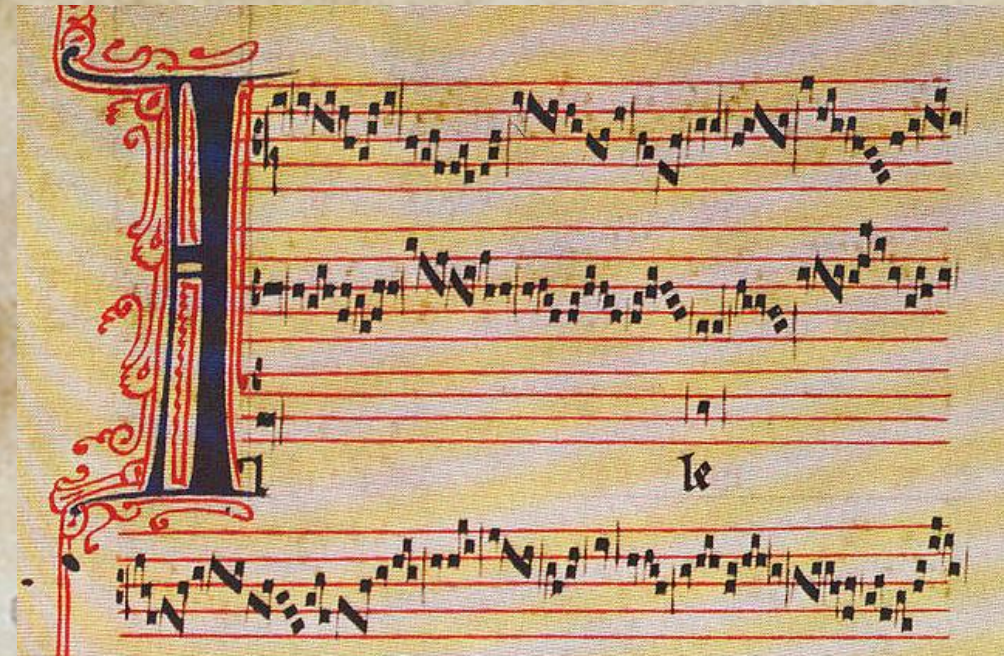
12th century:   
That boy took my love away.

14th century:   
That boy took my love away.



# Polyphony

- Up until around 900 AD, all liturgies were sung in unison (i.e. monodic chant)
- Polyphony is music that results from the simultaneous combination of two or more independent melodic lines
- **Earliest extant polyphonic mss** →
- Between ca 900 AD to 1550 AD, European church music underwent an astonishing transformation




Manuscript owed by The British Library – MS Harley 3019 – Early 10<sup>th</sup> Century

# “Parallel Organum” Polyphony


An early type of polyphonic music based on plainsong, in which other voices sang usually an octave, a 4<sup>th</sup> above or a 5<sup>th</sup> below the melody.

*Parallel organum in oktaven*




Nos\_ qui vivemus\_benedicimus Do-mi-num ex\_hoc\_nunc et us-que in sae-cu lum.

*Parallel organum in kwinten*  
2  
*vox principalis*  
*vox organalis*



Nos\_ qui vivemus\_benedicimus Do-mi-num ex\_hoc\_nunc et us-que in sae-cu lum.

*Parallel organum in kwarten*  
3  
*vox principalis*  
*vox organalis*



Nos\_ qui vivemus\_benedicimus Do-mi-num ex\_hoc\_nunc et us-que in sae-cu lum.

The image displays three examples of parallel organum. Each example consists of a vocal line (vox principalis) and an organ line (vox organalis). The first example, 'Parallel organum in oktaven', shows the organ line an octave below the vocal line. The second, 'Parallel organum in kwinten', shows the organ line a fifth below. The third, 'Parallel organum in kwarten', shows the organ line a fourth below. The lyrics are: 'Nos\_ qui vivemus\_benedicimus Do-mi-num ex\_hoc\_nunc et us-que in sae-cu lum.'



# Dunstaple's Quam Pulchra Es



John Dunstaple (1390-1453) was an early master of English polyphony. Probably composed Song of Solomon between 1435-1450

[Dunstaple's Quam Pulchra Es Link](#)

**How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!**

**This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.**

**Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries.**

**Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus.**

**Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.**

**Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.**

# Polyphony

- Church musicians had been priests and monastics but with greater musical elaboration came the need for special skills and responsibilities
- The steady rise of multi-voiced music triggered need for professional composers, singers, organists, etc.
- The English polyphonic style dominated church music until the 17<sup>th</sup> Century





# The Reformation & Music

*The Protestant Reformation had a profound impact on church music*

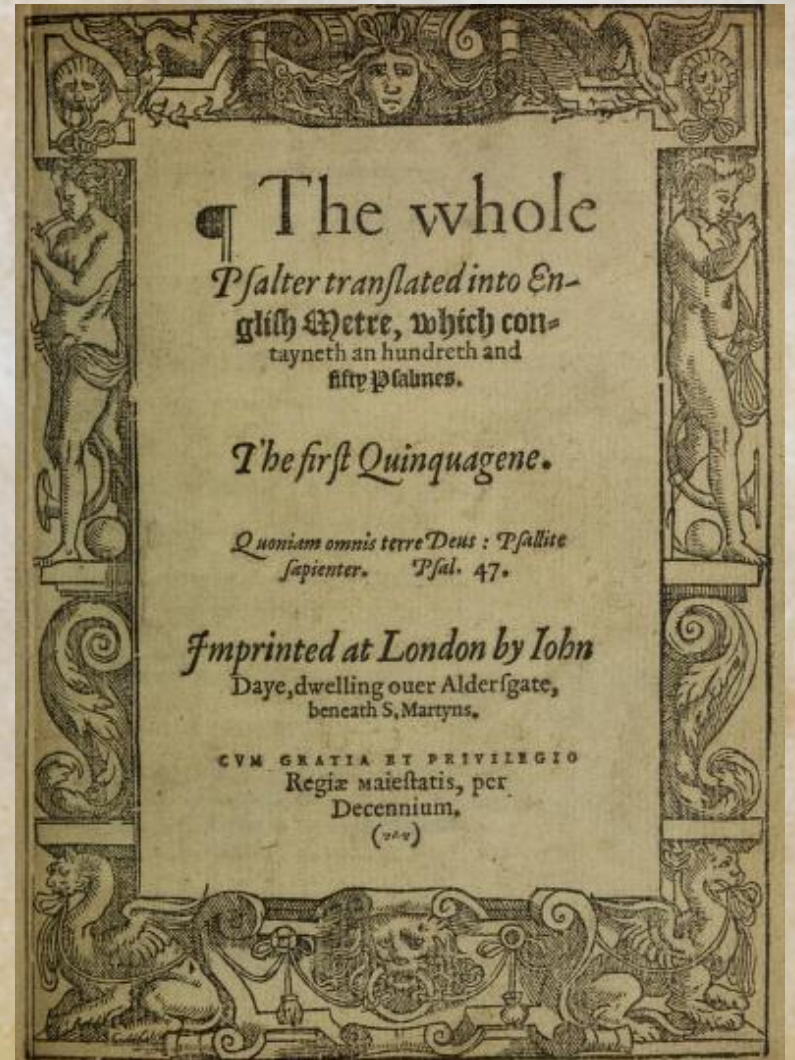
- **Luther** deliberately included music as part of the church service as a means for worship; in fact, he firmly believed in the value of congregational singing. A Lutheran innovation was the “[chorale](#)” - vernacular hymns sung in unison by the congregation.
- **Calvin** worried that artful music would distract from the key messages so he limited texts to Psalms and ensured simple, sacred tunes. Singing was entirely in unison with no polyphony permitted. Instruments were also banned because of their power to distract.

# The Reformation (cont)

- **Zwingli** (Swiss reformed theology similar to Calvin) was even more radical – he banned music completely from the worship service even though he himself played lute, violin, harp, flute, dulcimer, and hunting horn and composed at least 3 hymns
- **The Catholic Church** spent the next many decades working to attract Protestants back to “the fold” through increasingly beautiful liturgy, music, and art

# The English Reformation

- Thomas Cranmer worked quickly to translate much of the **Sarum Rite** into English. The new liturgy (**The Book of Common Prayer**) was issued in 1549.
- Cranmer appreciated the value in congregational singing but rejected Luther's chorales.
- Instead, he opted for the singing of **metrical psalms**, along with translated texts and tunes from the continent.
- Here is the third tune ([Psalm 2: 'Why fumeth in fight'](#)) from Archbishop Parker's 1567 Psalter composed by Thomas Tallis and famously used by Ralph Vaughan Williams' Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis.



# English Reformation Composers



- *John Taverner* (1490-1545) - Most important English composer of his era ([motets](#)) [Catholic]
- *Thomas Tallis* (1505-1585) - Father of English [choral](#) music [Catholic]
- *John Marbeck* (1510-1585) - Produced a standard setting of the Anglican [liturgy](#) [Calvinist?]
- *William Byrd* (1539/40-1623) - Best known for his development of the [English madrigal](#) [Catholic]
- *Orlando Gibbons* (1583-1625) – One of the most [versatile](#) English composers of his time [Protestant]
- *Thomas Tomkins* (1572-1656) - Prolific composer of [verse anthems](#) [Protestant/CofE]

# Instruments in Church



From about the mid-17th century to the middle of the 19th Century, in most English country churches, the singing of services was accompanied by a band of musicians.

Only larger and wealthier churches had organs and choirs



# Instruments Post-Reformation

- After the Reformation, **Catholics** retained instrumental and organ music performed only by musicians -- the congregation was not invited to sing along, and members couldn't have followed the complex music anyway
- **Calvinists** opted for unaccompanied, melody-only, unison, congregational psalm-singing
- **Anglicans** and **Lutherans** adopted a mix of instrumental and vocal music, some of which was performed by amateur and professional musicians and some of which was sung by the congregation.



# Christmas Carols – Fun Facts

- It was only in the 13th century with the encouragement of St. Francis of Assisi, that a strong tradition of singing Christmas carols in native languages developed. It took another 600 years for carols to be sung **in church** during Christmas
- What we know as Christmas carols today are songs of merriment that were traditionally sung during Christmas as well as Yuletide, the winter festival.
- Many Christmas carols (*Away in a Manger, Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, Joy to the World*) tell the story of the birth of baby Jesus, expressing the hope and joy of a people who waited centuries for a promise to be fulfilled and their Messiah to come.

# Christmas Carols – More Fun Facts

- Carol singing, or Caroling, is singing carols in the street or public places. It is one of the oldest customs in Great Britain, going back to the Middle Ages when beggars, seeking food, money, or drink, would wander the streets singing holiday songs.
- Christmas carols were banned between 1647 and 1660 in England by Oliver Cromwell, who thought that Christmas should be a solemn day
- Christmas carols were only fully popularized again during the Victorian era when they again expressed joyful and merry themes in their carol lyrics. Many of the more Christian lyrics found their way into hymns

# English Carols



**I Saw Three Ships**

BRIGHTLY, NOT TOO SLOW

*mf*

1. I saw three ships come sail-ing in, On Christ-mas day, on Christ-mas day; I  
2. The Vir-gin Mary and Christ were there, On Christ-mas day, on Christ-mas day; The  
3. And all the Angels in Heaven shall sing, On Christ-mas day, on Christ-mas day; And

*mf*

saw three ships come sail - ing in, On Christ-mas day in the morn - ing. And  
Vir - gin Mary and Christ were there, On Christ-mas day in the morn - ing. And  
all the Angels in Heaven shall sing, On Christ-mas day in the morn - ing. Then

what was in those ships all three, On Christ-mas day, on Christ - mas day? And  
all the bells on earth shall ring, On Christ - mas day, on Christ - mas day; And  
let us all re - joice a - gain, On Christ - mas day, on Christ - mas day; Then

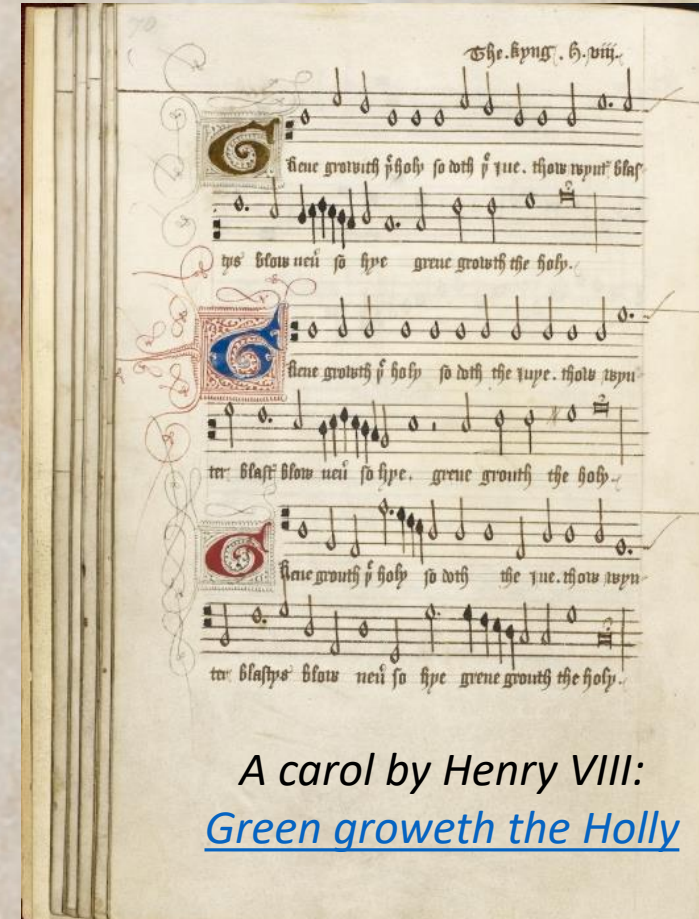
what was in those ships all three, On Christ - mas day in the morn - ing?  
all the bells on earth shall ring, On Christ - mas day in the morn - ing.  
let us all re - joice a - gain, On Christ - mas day in the morn - ing.

*Sometimes called 'Christmas Day in the Morning,' this traditional song was probably written in England during the second half of the fifteenth century.*

14

The early English carol wasn't sung solely at Christmas, and didn't always have a religious theme. In the late 14th century, simple carols were sung at festivals in England, often during processions but also as dances.

In the 15th century, a more complex, polyphonic carol, usually for two or three voices, was sung in monasteries and chapels. These carols were in Latin and French. More than a hundred of these carols survive with their music, in a handful of manuscripts.



The King. h. viij.

**G**rene groweth þe hohy so doth þe tue. thow wynn' blas-  
ter: blas' blow uen so hwe grene groweth the hohy.

**G**rene groweth þe hohy so doth the tupe. thow wynn-  
ter: blas' blow uen so hwe grene groweth the hohy.


**G**rene groweth þe hohy so doth the tue. thow wynn-  
ter: blas' blow uen so hwe grene groweth the hohy.

*A carol by Henry VIII:  
[Green groweth the Holly](#)*

# O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

- Latin words date from the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> Century - known as the "O" Antiphons
- An antiphon is a short chant (Psalm-based) in Christian ritual, sung as a refrain
- 7 Antiphons recited during Vespers in 7 days leading up to Christmas (17<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>)
- First published 1710 - Latin hymn – tune based on a French burial processional
- First modern arrangement in English (1856)

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**  
9th Century Latin, translated by J. M. Neale



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som cap - tive Is - ra -  
2 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, Who to thy tribes, on Si - ra's  
3 O come, Thou Rod of Jes - se, free Thine own from Sa - tan's tyr - an -  
4 O come, Thou Day - spring from on high, And cheer us by Thy draw - ing  
5 O come, Thou Key of Da - vid, come, And op - en wide our heav - enly

- el, That naours in love - ly ex - ile here Un - til the Son of  
- height, In an - cient times didst give the law In cloud and maj - es -  
- my: From depths of hell Thy peo - ple save, And give them vic - to - ry  
- nigh: Dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night, And death's dark sha - dows  
home; Make safe the way that leads on high, And close the path to

*Refrain*  
- God ap - pear.  
- ty and awe.  
- over the grave. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.  
- put to flight.  
- tis - er - y.

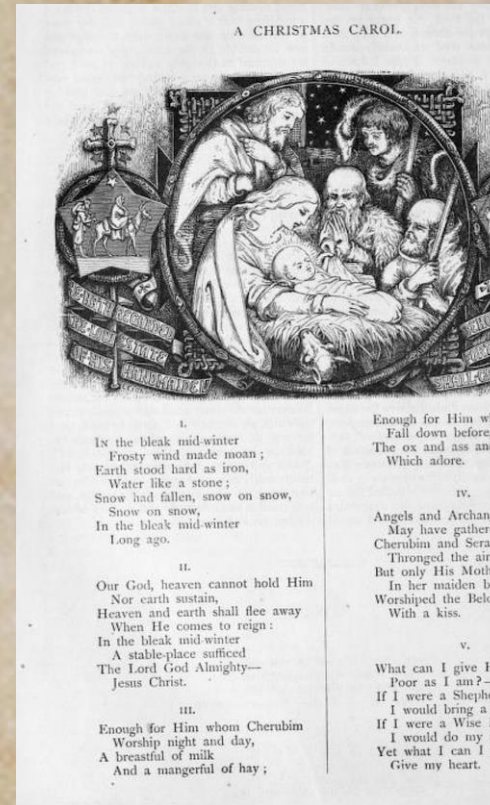
6. O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,  
Who orderest all things mightily;  
To us the path of knowledge show,  
And teach us in her ways to go.

7. O come, Desire of nations, bind  
In one the hearts of all mankind;  
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,  
And be Thyself our King of Peace.

Public Domain, Courtesy of the Cyber Hymnal (<http://www.cyberhymnal.org>)

# In the Bleak Midwinter

- The words come from a poem by Christina Rossetti published as “A Christmas Carol” in January 1872 issue of Scribner’s Monthly (an American literary magazine)
- First set to music by [Gustav Holst](#) for the 1906 edition of The English Hymnal – the poignant and simple tune is known as ‘Cranham’
- Another version was composed by [Harold Darke](#) - written in 1909 and published in 1911



**IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER**

Poem by CHRISTINA ROSSETTI  
Music by GUSTAV HOLST

Moderately slow

In the bleak mid-winter  
Frosty wind made moan;  
Earth stood hard as iron,  
Water like a stone;  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,  
Snow on snow,  
In the bleak mid-winter  
Long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold Him  
Nor earth sustain,  
Heaven and earth shall flee away  
When He comes to reign:  
In the bleak mid-winter  
A stable-place sufficed  
The Lord God Almighty—  
Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him whom Cherubim  
Worship night and day,  
A breastful of milk  
And a mangerful of hay;

Enough for Him whom  
The ox and ass adore,  
Which adore,  
Angels and Archangels,  
May have gathered  
Cherubim and Seraphim  
Through the air;  
But only His Mother  
In her maiden bliss  
Worshiped the Beloved  
With a kiss.

What can I give Him  
Poor as I am?—  
If I were a Shepherd  
I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a Wise Man  
I would do my part  
Yet what I can I give  
Give my heart.

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# Tomorrow Shall be My Dancing Day

- Cornish carol – may be derived from medieval mystery plays
- First published in 1833
- Describes the life & incarnation of Christ – in His own words - in the form of a dance
- Arrangements by [Gustav Holst](#), Igor Stravinsky, and many more
- The most popular versions:
  - British composer [John Gardner](#) (1961)
  - British composer [John Rutter](#) (1974)

The image displays two pages of a musical score for the carol "Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day".

The top page is the piano accompaniment, titled "Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day" and "English traditional carol arranged by JOHN RUTTER". It is in 3/4 time, marked "Lilting (♩ = c. 63)", and includes dynamics like *mf* and *leggiero*. The bottom page is for voice and piano, titled "Tomorrow shall be my dancing day" and "For S.P.G.S. JOHN GARDNER Op. 75 No. 2". It includes parts for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, with lyrics: "1. To-mor-row shall be my true love did so chance To play, To call my true love". It also includes parts for Tambourine, Side Drum, and Piano, with dynamics like *p*, *crisp*, *f*, and *dim.*. A copyright notice for Oxford University Press 1966 is visible.

**Notes on Performance:**

1. This piece is primarily for mixed-voice choirs. It can, however, be performed with equal voices, in which case the first three verses are sung in unison and the piano accompaniment in square brackets. The fourth verse is not able for equal and mixed voices.
2. When performed with mixed voices, the four parts should be performed with equal voices, in which case verses 1, 2, and 3 should be sung in unison and the piano accompaniment in square brackets.
3. Percussion can be omitted, but is better included. Instruments other than tambourine and side drum may be used provided the rhythm is marked.
4. The underneath part in the *dim.* line in which should be sung. This line can be given to women, but not to men in mixed-voice version.

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# Reformers and music – more details

## **Luther and Music:**

Luther loved to sing and was able to transcribe folk melodies and to harmonise them, as well as to **write melodies** on psalms in everyday words. He was most noted as inventor of the chorale. As Luther reformed the liturgy, he accorded full importance to the sermon and to community singing.

<https://www.museeprotestant.org/en/notice/martin-luther-and-music/>

## **Calvin and music:**

[http://www.thirdmill.org/newfiles/joh\\_barber/PT.joh\\_barber.Luther.Calvin.Music.Worship.pdf](http://www.thirdmill.org/newfiles/joh_barber/PT.joh_barber.Luther.Calvin.Music.Worship.pdf) and  
<http://www.swrb.com/newslett/actualNLs/instcalv.htm>

## **Zwingli and music:**

He enjoyed music and could play several instruments, including the lute, violin, harp, flute, dulcimer, and hunting horn. He also composed at least 3 hymns that were not intended for use in public worship.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huldrych\\_Zwingli](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huldrych_Zwingli)

## **Thomas Cranmer and music:**

The English lost out here by rejecting the notion of congregational hymn singing. In fact, he rejected the Lutheran chorale but did favor of **Metrical Psalmody** and developed a Psalter with Parker that evolved into the Bay Psalm Book.

# Regional Liturgies (1 of 2)

By the end of the 4th century, there existed 4 distinct liturgical types (or rites). Each primary rite included many variations that differed according to region:

**Antiochene Rite (Greek): Byzantine** ([Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom](#) (407 AD) still used by the Eastern Catholic/Orthodox Churches; [Liturgy of St. James \(400 AD, used rarely today by Orthodox\)](#); **Armenian; Maronite; East Syrian/Chaldean:** The Liturgy of Mar Addai and Mar Mari - Approved by Rome, this ancient liturgy (about 200 AD), used by the Chaldean Catholic Church (Iraq) and Assyrian Church of the East, includes no words to recount the Institution of the Eucharist within the Eucharistic Prayer. It has been the subject of great liturgical interest and fascination; [The Liturgy of the Assyrian Church of the East](#) also used by the Assyrian Church, translated from Aramaic; [Liturgy of St. Dionysius](#); [The Syro-Malabar liturgy](#)).

**Alexandrian Rite:** Coptic (Egyptian) Liturgy of St. Basil – 397 AD, still used by Coptic Catholic & Orthodox Churches; Greek liturgy of St Mark; Ethiopian liturgy – still used by Ethiopia Orthodox Church

**Roman Rite:** Used by the Church in Rome, ongoing evolution to present day. Reforms by Gregory included:

- transition from Greek to Latin
- reduction of the amount of wine used
- Eucharistic abuses prompted change to reception of the Eucharist while kneeling, on the tongue
- in order to combat heresy which suggested that Christ's complete Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity was not contained in both Eucharistic species, the chalice of blood was offered to the congregation less and less until it was eventually reserved only for the celebrant. This was intended to convince the faithful that by receiving the Precious Body alone, they were still receiving the complete Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus

**Gallican Rite:** Was used in northwestern Europe. Mostly supplanted by Roman liturgy by 800AD. Liturgy forms include: [Liturgy of St. Germain of Paris](#) (from the 6th century); [Celtic Lorrha-Stowe Liturgy](#) (used until around 7th century, although adapted later according to Roman Liturgy, translated from Latin/Gaelic Missal); Ambrosian Liturgy of Milan (still in use by some religious orders in the city of Milan, recently modified in 1970 to correspond w/ Novus Ordo mass); Mozarabic (Isidorian) liturgy (used by Christian Arabs in those parts of Spain which fell under Moorish rule after 711 AD. used until 12th century)

# Liturgies (2 of 2)

Pope St. Gregory the Great was the first to officially codify a version of the Roman Liturgy, later referred to as the "Rite of St. Gregory." His version would become the standard used by subsequent versions of the Roman Liturgy.

He was responsible for the following:

- Simplification, orderly arrangement, reduction of variable prayers
  - Definitive arrangement of The Roman Canon
  - The Roman Lectionary, which was a collection of readings from Scripture to be read during the liturgy, is given definitive form. It was still subject to later revisions.
  - Codified the "Gregorian Chant" for use during worship.

## **Later modifications:**

- The 'Gloria' was introduced, probably of Gallican influence. Incorporated into the Roman liturgy in about the 11th century.
- The offertory prayers and Lavabo introduced prior to the 14th century.
- Blessing and 'Last Gospel' introduced gradually in middle ages.

- [English text of the Mass according to the Rite of St. Gregory](#): This rite is still used by some "western" Orthodox churches and is typically celebrated in the vernacular tongue. Catholics use the Tridentine restoration.

- By 16th century, Gregory's simplified mass had developed into many forms that varied between regions and religious orders. In its implementation, it had absorbed many local features of primarily Gallican liturgical forms that it replaced in many areas of northern Europe and eventually in Rome itself.

- Discussion on various rites (more appropriately "uses" of the Roman Rite): [Sarum Rite \(of ancient Salisbury, England\)](#), [Sarum Missal in English](#), [Benedictine Rite](#), [Carmelite Rite](#), [Cistercian Rite](#), [Dominican Rite](#), [Franciscan Rite](#), [Friars Minor Capuchin Rite](#), [Premonstratensian Rite](#)