**1. Guiding light, through the night, lead us right 4. Great yet meek, softly speak, as they peek**

**To that poor stable in the town: At God’s Son lying in the hay:**

**Manger bare; lying there; cattle stare; Infant small. Let us all hear your call**

**Shepherds bow down. *Chorus* This wondrous day! *Chorus***

***‘Praise to God!” all the angels sing,***

***As the shepherds and Magi bring***

***Gifts of love to the infant king.***

***‘Peace to the world!’***

**2. Mary smiled at her child, on straw piled, 5. Every day, seek his way, love and pray,**

**In that crude manger where he curled: Serve neighbours in their hour of need:**

**Son of Man thus began humbler than See his face, grow in grace and embrace**

**Kings of this world. *Chorus* Life from sin freed. *Chorus***

***‘Praise the Lord!’ let all nations sing,***

**3. Wise Men kneel, gifts reveal, wonder feel - *All our love may we daily bring –***

**Worship the child they’ve come to see. *Off’rings for the new-born King.***

**Praises sing, bid bells ring to our King *‘Peace to the world!’***

**Who sets us free. *Chorus M. Rider 1997 {to ‘The Zither Carol’}* © 1999 Methodist LPMA (Hymn Competition runner up)**

1. **When an angel came to Mary,**

**Greeting her as blessed by God,**

**She at first was very wary –**

**For his greeting seemed so odd.**

**Then his message grew much stranger,**

**For he said she’d bear God’s Son;**

**Though she knew it might mean danger,**

**Mary said, “God’s will be done!”**

1. **Mary asked, in some confusion,**

**How could she bear God’s own Son:**

**Would it be some great illusion?**

**How else could the deed be done?**

**She was young and yet unmarried,**

**But the angel said the Lord**

**Would accomplish what was needed**

**When his Spirit was outpoured.**

1. **Mary bowed in glad submission,**

**Took the role the Lord desired;**

**Played her part in our salvation,**

**Praising God with soul inspired.**

**Though she knew both friend and stranger**

**Might condemn her for her state,**

**She resolved to face all danger:**

**Our redemption could not wait!**

1. **After birth in lowly stable,**

**Shepherds’ visit, Magi’s, too,**

**Came the task of raising Jesus –**

**Mundane years most mothers knew:**

**But for Mary came the duty,**

**Teaching Scriptures to God’s Son;**

**Showing him the Father’s beauty;**

**Praising God for all he’s done.**

1. **Faithful Mary, blessed mother,**

**Help us learn to trust like you;**

**Help us serve with glad obedience,**

**To our calling ever-true.**

**Help us – selfishness denying –**

**Freely worship and obey,**

**With the will of God complying –**

**Turn earth’s darkness into day. *M. Rider 14th Dec., 2014, for Amblecote Wordsley (to “Scarlet Ribbons” StF 222)***

***Modified 11th Dec. 2015***

1. **The magi came from lands afar**

**To seek a new-born king,**

**And at Jerusalem they stopped,**

**Led by a wondrous star:**

**But Herod, when he heard their news**

**Was filled with hate and fear.**

**He gathered his advisors round**

**To hear a prophet’s views.**

1. **The chief priests said the one they sought**

**Would come from Bethlehem:**

**He’d be the Shepherd of God’s flock,**

**For thus the scripture taught.**

**So Herod summoned those wise men,**

**Commanded them to find**

**That star-marked child in Bethlehem,**

**Then come to him again.**

1. **The star appeared and guided them**

**As it had done before:**

**It led them to a simple house**

**In lowly Bethlehem.**

**And when they found the child they’d sought,**

**Not in a palace hall,**

**But in a common, humble home,**

**Took out three gifts they’d brought.**

1. **Their gift of gold was for a king**

**Whose reign will never end;**

**Whilst incense owned him Son of God,**

**Who will salvation bring.**

**But myrrh marked out the fate he’d face**

**To break the bonds of sin,**

**For Christ would die upon a cross**

**To save our fallen race.**

1. **And so, like magi, may we seek**

**The Saviour, Jesus Christ:**

**To know his will and do it still,**

**To serve the poor and weak.**

**Our treasures, though not myrrh nor gold,**

**Nor incense, yet may be**

**Our loving hearts, whose gracious deeds**

**The Christ-child may enfold.**

***Martin Rider – 31st December, 2016 (to “Noel” HP 108 // StF 205)***

***Inspired by Howard Goodall’s setting for ‘It came upon a midnight clear’)***

1. **Let all the world rejoice and sing,**

**For Jesus comes as Christ and King:**

**As Light to conquer sin and pain,**

**Christ comes to make us whole again.**

1. **He comes not as a mighty king,**

**Nor to his heavenly powers cling:**

**Divests himself of all but love**

**And comes the Father’s grace to prove.**

1. **His birth in humble Bethlehem,**

**O’ershadowed by Jerusalem:**

**He lies in lowly cattle stall;**

**He comes with love for one and all.**

1. **Come see where baby Jesus lay,**

**Upon a manger’s bed of hay:**

**God comes as man – a helpless child**

**And rocked asleep by Mary mild.**

1. **The joyful angels sing his praise –**

**The shepherds from their watch-fires raise.**

**Good news they bring about God’s grace;**

**Good news for all the human race.**

1. **They go to see what God has done,**

**They run to see God’s infant Son**

**And, though despised, they’re first to see**

**The Christ-child born to set us free.**

1. **Let us, like them, rejoice and sing**

**Our songs of praise to Christ our King,**

**Whose sacrifice at Calvary**

**From Satan’s bonds has set us free. *Martin Rider – Christmas Day 2017 (7.30 – 8.20a.m.) to “O Waly Waly” StF 607***

1. **Light of our life, you came to us from heaven,**

**Born in a dark, meagre Bethlehem stall:**

**Lord, God in man, you have dwelt here among us,**

**Teacher and healer and Saviour of all.**

1. **True Word of God, you have shared in our sorrow,**

**You knew privation from your earliest hour:**

**Endured rejection, betrayal and mocking,**

**Died on the cross to defeat Satan’s power.**

1. **O Peace of God, the despised Suff’ring Servant;**

**Though crucified, you were raised – glorified.**

**God’s boundless love is revealed in the gospels;**

**And our desire is to walk by your side.**

1. **Great Hope from God, come to all who’re despairing,**

**Bowed down by sickness, by troubles and woes:**

**You came to offer both wholeness and comfort,**

**You are the Source from which true healing flows.**

1. **Deep Joy of God, you relinquished your glory –**

**Except for love – when incarnate you came:**

**Accept our offering of cheerful compassion,**

**Caring for neighbours in your precious name.**

***Martin Rider – 3rd Dec, 2014 (To “Spean” HP 123i or “Epiphany Hymn” HP 700ii ) for Providence Methodist. Mod 19th Jan, 2015.***

**1. God born in a stable, a small homeless boy,**

**Yet angels adore you with anthems of joy:**

**The son of a tradesman, his mother unwed,**

**The hay of a manger was Jesus’ bed.**

**2. God born without powers, except for his love;**

**The sign of his advent a bright star above;**

**He left heaven’s riches to come in great need**

**And lived in a world of indiff’rence and greed.**

**3. The shepherds who ran to the stable were first**

**To greet the Messiah – though low and unversed –**

**Reviled as unclean, yet by God set apart –**

**All they had to offer was their humble heart.**

**4. Wise Men, coming later, though Gentiles, bowed down,**

**Brought gifts for the infant to Bethlehem town.**

**The gospels proclaim Christ’s salvation for all:**

**The poor and the stranger, God welcomes them all!**

**5. God laid in a manger, O carpenter’s child,**

**You dwelt here among us, yet lived undefiled.**

**Receive all our worship, all honour and praise**

**And grant we may follow you all of our days.**

***M. Rider 2nd January, 2005 – {to ‘Away in a manger’ J.R. Murray United Methodist Hymnal 217, or W.J. Kirkpatrick HP94}***

***Christ is born! Let the world rejoice!***

***God’s own Son, sharing our humanity.***

***Christ is born! Let us raise our voice –***

***God in man, come to set us free.***

**1. Infant born in a squalid byre - 2. Joyfully, shepherds ran to see**

**Only shelter in Bethlehem; Mary’s child, lying in that stable:**

**Shepherds shrank from the angel choir, By the manger, on bended knee,**

**Till they learned of God’s gift to all. *Chorus* Witnesses of God’s gift to all. *Chorus***

**3. Now like the Magi, let us bring**

**All our fruits of the Spirit to him:**

**Treasures for our Infant King,**

**Laid before God’s great gift to all! *Chorus***

***{M. Rider 11th December, 2011 to ‘Il est ne le divin enfant’}***

1. **Light of Life, you came from heaven,**

**Born in dark and meagre stable:**

**God in man, you dwelt among us,**

**So our sins might be forgiven.**

1. **Word of God, you shared our sorrow,**

**Knew privation from your cradle:**

**Bore rejection, pain and mocking,**

**Gave your life for our tomorrow.**

1. **Hope from God, for those despairing,**

**Bowed by sickness, woes and troubles:**

**You came down to offer healing,**

**Love for hate and Good News sharing.**

1. **Peace of God, the Suff’ring Servant;**

**Crucified, yet raised in glory.**

**Agape in human body,**

**Of all righteousness observant.**

1. **Lord of life, laid in a manger;**

**Helpless child, who came to lead us;**

**In your service, Saviour, speed us**

**To our neighbour, friend or stranger.**

1. **Joy of God, who shed his glory –**

**Save for love – to live among us:**

**May our gift be cheerful, caring,**

**Imitating Jesu’s story.**

***Martin Rider – 2nd December, 2014 (To “Ae fond kiss” StF 290)***

**1. To our sin-spoilt world descending,**

**God’s own Son came as a child;**

**Proof that God’s love is unending –**

**Sent to save a world defiled.**

**Mary heard the declaration**

**That she’d bear God’s own dear Son**

**And bowed down in meek submission,**

**To praise God for all he’d done.**

**2. In the Scriptures prophets pointed**

**To the time when God would send**

**One who was his own anointed,**

**By whom Satan’s power would end.**

**Yet God chose a humble mother,**

**Not a princess, for his Son:**

**Not remote, but Friend and Brother –**

**Praise to God for all he’s done!**

**3. In our lives, make room for Jesus:**

**In our hearts prepare his place;**

**Welcome in the One who frees us,**

**Saviour of the human race.**

**Let us worship and adore him,**

**Of our flesh, yet God’s own Son:**

**Be his hands, by working for him –**

**Praising God for all he’s done!**

***Martin Rider {23rd October, 2001. Modified Dec. 2010. It can be sung to several melodies, including ‘St. Winifred’ and ‘Bethany’}***

**1. Bethlehem lay dark and dreamy, 2. As the shepherds broke the darkness**

**Save the star which brightly shone, With their watch-fires by the fold,**

**When young Mary bore sweet Jesus, They heard voices singing sweetly,**

**Son of God, the Holy One. Heard the news that angels told :**

**Wrapped in swaddling, lying warmly Left their flocks in great excitement,**

**In a manger freshly-laid, Travelled quickly as they could,**

**Jesus slept whilst both his parents Till they reached that humble stable**

**Offered thanks and humbly prayed. Above which the Great Star stood.**

1. **As they knelt in sheer amazement, 4. Let us praise our Heavenly Father,**

**In the byre where Jesus lay, Who, in love, gave us our Lord,**

**Could they guess that this small baby Let us share the joy of shepherds,**

**Was God’s Light and Truth and Way ? As they worshipped and adored.**

**Did they find what they expected, Let us bring our gifts to Jesus -**

**When they reached that wayside inn ? What God wanted from the start -**

**Could they tell he was the Christ - child, Neither pearls, nor gold, nor riches,**

**Who would save us all from sin ? But a loving, contrite heart.**

***{to St. Winifred } Martin Rider ( 7th Nov. 1999 - dedicated to the Jesus 2000 group). The Jesus 2000 group was a mixture of Holy Trinity Church and Wordsley Methodist Church dedicated to marking the Millennium by raising money for daffodils in King George V Park, a glass cross and glass containers for Holy oils, given to Worcester Cathedral.***

**1. Son of Mary in your manger,**

**Sleeping warmly on the hay:**

**Son of God, our precious Saviour –**

**God enwrapped in mortal clay –**

**While your parents thanked God for you,**

**Choirs of angels all adored you;**

**Love of God, our Light and Life,**

**Love of God, our Light and Life.**

**2. Shepherds in their fold, unwary,**

**First to hear the angel’s news**

**Of the Christ, laid in a manger,**

**Hurried down – no time to lose –**

**Thus in Bethlehem they found him,**

**And in wonder gathered round him:**

**Lowly outcasts God will choose,**

**Lowly outcasts God will choose.**

**3. Magi journeyed, ever-seeking**

**One whose birth reveals God’s love:**

**Over plains and woods and mountains,**

**Guided by a star above.**

**Gentiles reached their destination,**

**Found the Light of our Salvation:**

**Offered gifts in awe and love,**

**Offered gifts in awe and love.**

**4. Hate-filled Herod would destroy him,**

**Slew instead poor Beth’lem’s males:**

**So in Ramah Rachel’s weeping**

**Was fulfilled in mothers’ wails.**

**When he heard an angel speaking,**

**Joseph journeyed, refuge seeking,**

**Leaving Judah’s hills and vales,**

**Leaving Judah’s hills and vales.**

**5. Son of Mary, now in exile,**

**Till it’s safe, in Egypt stay.**

**Son of God, our Friend and Saviour,**

**Light to help us find our way:**

**Gifts and graces, Lord we proffer,**

**All our love and service offer,**

**You, our Life and Truth and Way,**

**You, our Life and Truth and Way.**

***M. Rider 22nd Dec., 2005: verse 5 added 24th Dec. 2007 – { to “Wzlobie Lezy” – ‘Infant Holy, infant lowly’}***

**1. In Bethlehem Jesus was born in the night**

**And shepherds heard angels exclaim with delight,**

**“Rejoice! Rejoice! Now, don’t be afraid:**

**Go to that inn where God’s Son is laid!”**

**2. A bright star led Magi to that very place**

**Where they found the babe filled with God’s love and grace:**

**‘Rejoice! Rejoice!’ Their treasures they brought –**

**Adoring the child whom they had long sought.**

**3. Both Joseph and Mary were truly amazed**

**Both shepherds and Magi had worshipped and praised:**

**‘Rejoice! Rejoice!’ The one they revere –**

**Is not just a child, but God now drawn near!**

**4. Praise God who in Jesus His nature displayed;**

**Our costly redemption so willingly paid.**

**Draw near, draw near our heavenly king!**

**Our gifts of love to Jesus we bring. *M. Rider 10th December, 2001 to ‘Lourdes’ Hymn’ – “O Mary, most holy” – composed at red traffic signals! Amended 10th December,2011***

**1. When Joseph came to Bethlehem, 2. Some shepherds in their fields nearby**

**He found to his dismay Sat round their fires that night.**

**A stable was the only place At once, an angel host appeared**

**Available to stay: And bathed them in bright light.**

**So Mary laid her new-born Son Those humble men were petrified**

**Down on a bed of hay. *Chorus:* By such a wondrous sight! *Chorus:***

***Christ Jesus, the Son of God, is born,***

***Jesus is born!***

***Christ Jesus, the Son of God, is born!***

**3. Then Gabriel, the angel, spoke, 4. The shepherds ran to find the inn –**

**“Now do not be afraid: Star-guided in their quest:**

**Tonight the Christ child has been born They knelt in wonder by the Child,**

**And in a manger laid – Who was in swaddling dressed.**

**So leave your flock; go into town!” And as they left in holy awe,**

**They willingly obeyed. *Chorus:* The Good News they confessed: *Chorus:***

***M. Rider {27th October, 2004 – to “God rest ye merry, gentlemen” HP 103}***

1. **As Bethlehem lay sleeping,**

**Beneath a moonless sky,**

**The first-born son of Mary**

**Uttered his natal cry.**

1. **And as around their camp fires**

**Some shepherds passed the night,**

**An angel brought glad tidings**

**And turned the sky to light.**

1. **The angel told the shepherds**

**About the Saviour’s birth:**

**That God so loves us sinners,**

**He’d sent his Son to earth.**

1. **To Bethlehem the shepherds**

**Set forth without delay**

**And found the infant, Jesus,**

**Asleep upon the hay.**

1. **Then each knelt down and worshipped,**

**In awe and ecstasy,**

**The infant, who, when grown up,**

**Would die for you and me.**

1. **Yes, God so loves the outcast,**

**That shepherds were his choice –**

**The first to see our Saviour –**

**First mortals to rejoice.**

1. **They left that stable singing**

**Their praise to God above,**

**Who in a helpless baby**

**Revealed his boundless love.**

1. **So, let us all sing praises**

**To God, who stooped to save;**

**Whose Son grew up to conquer**

**Both Satan and the grave.**

***(M. Rider, 16th November, 2009 – to “The Cherry Tree Carol” HP195 – at organist, Brian Dimmock’s suggestion)***

1. **We come with shepherds to an inn *M. Rider 14th Dec 2008 (at Bridge Court & Amblecote Wordsley***

**To see an infant, newly born:**

**We find him helpless and in need,**

**Laid in a manger, all forlorn.**

1. **And yet this is the Son of God,**

**To Bethlehem from heav’n come down:**

**No wealth, nor power, nor palace his;**

**Divesting all, except love’s crown.**

1. **We see the infant’s needs and wants:**

**Good shelter, food and light to see,**

**But he is loved by One above**

**And so by God’s great grace are we!**

1. **Ours is the task to bring good news**

**To poor and homeless, hungry, weak:**

**Since in that child we see their plight,**

**For their salvation we must seek.**

1. **So let us all, with faithful hearts,**

**Set out to heal this sad world’s pain**

**And live our lives so we’re prepared**

**To stand when Christ shall come again. *( to “Church Triumphant” HP279)***

1. **When Mary heard the angel’s call, *M. Rider 14th December, 2008 – modified 2nd Dec. 2011***

**Her heart rejoiced that she would bear**

**The One who came to save us all;**

**Expressed her joy in heartfelt prayer.**

1. **Though Joseph doubted as he heard,**

**An angel bade him to be strong**

**And still take Mary as his wife,**

**To raise the Saviour promised-long.**

1. **Then when they came to Bethlehem,**

**They could not find a place to stay –**

**Except a byre, where Christ was born –**

**Laid in a manger on fresh hay.**

1. **As angels sang to God on high,**

**Some shepherds cowered at the sight,**

**But when they heard that Christ was born,**

**Ran into town in sheer delight.**

1. **When Jesus comes a second time,**

**May we prove faithful, strong and true –**

**Prepare our hearts to house the Lord**

**In all we think and say and do.  *(to “Church Triumphant” HP279)***

**1. Mary rode a donkey into Bethlehem, 2. Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ in Bethlehem,**

**Bethlehem; Bethlehem,**

**Bearing God’s own Son, she rode to Bethlehem, In the stable of an inn at Bethlehem,**

**Bethlehem. Bethlehem:**

**She and Joseph came from Galilee – Clothed in swaddling, our Messiah lay**

**Searched for lodgings unsuccessfully – In a manger freshly-filled with hay:**

**Crowded town of Bethlehem. Humbly-born in Bethlehem.**

**3. Angels called to shepherds near to Bethlehem, 4. Shepherds left their flocks and ran to**

**Bethlehem, Bethlehem;**

**Reassured those shepherds near to Bethlehem, Bethlehem.**

**Bethlehem; To a lowly stable there in Bethlehem,**

**Told great news of their Messiah’s birth – Bethlehem –**

**News of blessing spread throughout the earth – In the gloom beheld Emmanuel,**

**Bade them go to Bethlehem. With great joy angelic tidings tell –**

**Praising God in Bethlehem!**

**5. Let us now rejoice like those in Bethlehem,**

**Bethlehem,**

**Sing him Alleluias as in Bethlehem,**

**Bethlehem:**

**Born in coldness, dark and smelliness –**

**God’s own Son has come our life to bless –**

**Holy child of Bethlehem! *M. Rider – 26th Dec, 2003 (To Celtic carol – “Look a star shines!”)***

**1. When God surveyed our broken world,**

**Where sin wrought desolation,**

**He sent his Son to take our place**

**And die for our salvation.**

**He sent him from his throne above**

**To share our mean condition –**

**Divesting all his power, but love,**

**To help him with his mission.**

**2. Of humble stock, Christ shared our lot –**

**Gave hope to those deemed worthless:**

**He healed the sick, proclaimed Good News**

**And dignified the hopeless.**

**At Calvary he bled and died.**

**So sinners are forgiven:**

**His empty tomb death’s power denied;**

**Flung wide the gates of heaven.**

1. **Make room for Jesus in your life,**

**Let service bring you pleasure,**

**For human values wane and die,**

**But Jesus is our treasure.**

**Prepare his way, receive his grace –**

**And bid him live within our heart:**

**For in his life we’ve seen God’s face –**

**Through him we have a new start.**

***M. Rider 30th Nov, 2002 (to ‘How deep the Father’s love for us’ – ‘Source’ No.185) Reworked Nov, 2010 for Upper Ettingshall.***

1. **Humbly he came,**

**Came as a baby, poor and helpless;**

**Incarnate God.**

**God emptied out of all but love:**

**Enwrapped in swaddling, he is sleeping,**

**Whilst angel hosts their watch are keeping –**

**Praising his name!**

1. **Gladly they came,**

**Came at the call of angel voices:**

**To Bethlehem**

**Shepherds from folds have made their way**

**Down to an inn, then, humbly kneeling,**

**Worshipped the Christ – God’s love revealing –**

**Praising his name.**

1. **From far they came;**

**From distant lands, a star pursuing**

**To Bethlehem.**

**Gentiles who sought a future king,**

**Rousing King Herod, who gave orders**

**To kill all boys in Bethlehem’s borders:**

**In his own name.**

1. **To Joseph came**

**Angels who warned him of the danger**

**In Bethlehem;**

**So he and Mary set out at once,**

**Taking God’s Son away from dangers**

**Into a land where they were strangers,**

**Ere soldiers came.**

1. **Gently God came,**

**Not as a warrior, proud and ruthless,**

**But as a child:**

**Carpenter’s son from Galilee.**

**Bringing Good News in words and healing,**

**To humankind, God’s grace revealing.**

**Blessed be his name!**

***Martin Rider – 28th November, 2009 to “The Infant King”/ “Basque Noel” - (‘Sing Lullaby’)***

1. **Let all the world rejoice and sing,**

**For Jesus comes as Christ and King:**

**As Light to conquer sin and pain,**

**Christ comes to make us whole again.**

1. **He comes not as a mighty king,**

**Nor to his heavenly powers cling:**

**Divests himself of all but love**

**And comes the Father’s grace to prove.**

1. **His birth in humble Bethlehem,**

**O’ershadowed by Jerusalem:**

**He lies in lowly cattle stall;**

**He comes with love for one and all.**

1. **Come see where baby Jesus lay,**

**Upon a manger’s bed of hay:**

**God comes as man – a helpless child**

**And rocked asleep by Mary mild.**

1. **Hear joyful angels sing his praise –**

**As shepherds from their slumber raise.**

**Good news they bring about God’s grace;**

**Good news for all the human race.**

1. **They go to see what God has done,**

**They run to see God’s infant Son**

**And, though despised, they’re first to see**

**The Christ-child born to set us free.**

1. **Let us, like them, rejoice and sing**

**Our songs of praise to Christ our King,**

**Whose sacrifice at Calvary**

**From Satan’s bonds has set us free.**

***Martin Rider – Christmas Day 2017 (7.30 – 8.20a.m.) to “O Waly Waly” StF 607 or “Fulda” StF401 or “Old 100th” StF1)***

***Modified 26th Nov. 2018 for “Fulda”***

1. **To this world of sin and sadness**

**God the Father sent our Lord ;**

**Sent him as a helpless baby,**

**All but love, his power outpoured .**

**Born the child of humble parents,**

**In the stable of an inn,**

**Our Lord Jesus lived among us,**

**To deliver us from sin.**

**2. When he preached the gospel message,**

**Many heard him and believed;**

**Yet his pleas for love and justice**

**Were not always well - received.**

**Foes decided they would kill him**

**And for silver he was sold;**

**On the cross he bore our burdens,**

**With his blood broke Satan’s hold.**

**3. Three days later he had risen,**

**And appeared before his friends.**

**Through his death and resurrection**

**We have life that never ends.**

**Ransomed from the chains that bound us,**

**Freed from bonds of sin and greed,**

**Dare we stand in cold indiff’rence**

**And ignore our neighbour’s need?**

**4. Let us serve our Heavenly Father,**

**In the pattern of our Lord:**

**May our love, our gifts and graces**

**Be for Jesus freely-poured.**

**May we feel the joy of helping**

**Those bowed down by want and care –**

**And, empowered by the Spirit,**

**Our world’s brokenness repair!**

***M. Rider 1999 - modified 18th September, 2016 {to ‘Bethany’ HP 796}***

**1. Choirs of angels sang God’s praises,**

**“Hark, the Christ is born today!**

**Seek an infant in a manger,**

**Sleeping on his bed of hay.”**

**So the shepherds left their charges,**

**Hastened into David’s town:**

**Found the baby with his mother**

**And, in homage, they bowed down.**

**2. Joyful shepherds sang God’s praises**

**As they left where Christ was born;**

**Talked about the angels’ message,**

**Blessed by all they’d seen that morn.**

**Humble shepherds, without status –**

**By their living deemed defiled –**

**Through God’s grace were first to witness**

**Israel’s longed-for, Holy Child.**

**3. Let all Christians sing God’s praises,**

**In that child his love outpoured:**

**By whose teaching, death and raising,**

**God and mortals are restored.**

**Let us gladly raise our voices,**

**As we celebrate Christ’s birth:**

**By our lives, our love, our service,**

**Witnessing our Saviour’s worth.**

***M. Rider 22nd November, 2006 on retreat at Hinsley Hall – { to ‘Jubilate Deo’ 150 in “New Hymns & Worship Songs”}***

***Modified 19th December, 2006, to be sung to “Ode to Joy”, “Hyfrydol”, or “Daily Daily”***