From Heaven Above To Earth I Come

CHRISTMAS

Words: Martin Luther, 1535. translated by Catherine Winkworth, 1855.
Music: 'Vom Himmel Hoch' traditional German from Schumann's Geistliche Lieder, Leipzig, 1539.
Setting: "Common Service Book" (ULCA), 1917.
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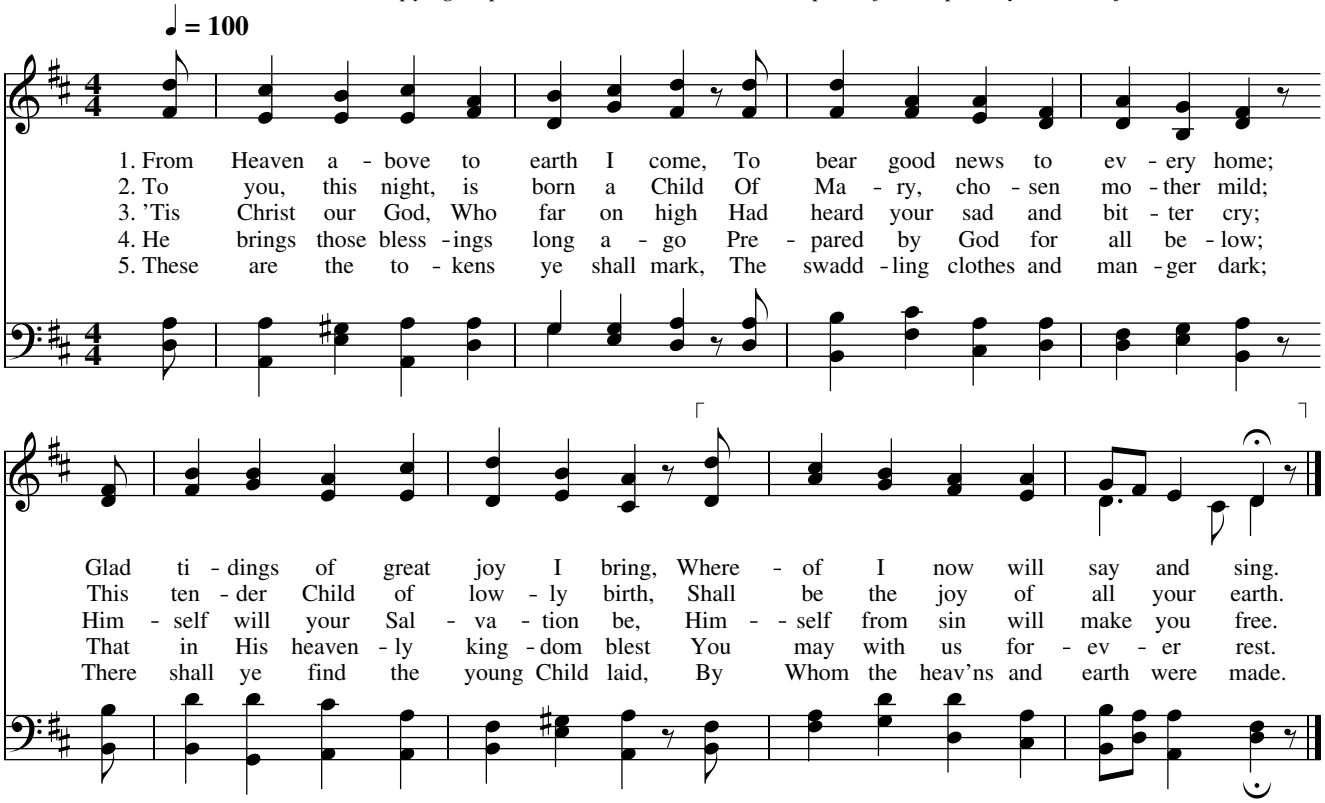

6. Now let us all, with gladsome cheer,
Follow the shepherds, and draw near
To see this wondrous Gift of God,
Who hath His own dear Son bestowed.

7. Give heed, my heart, lift up thine eyes!
What is it in yon manger lies?
Who is this Child, so young and fair?
The blessèd Christ Child lieth there!

8. Welcome to earth, Thou noble Guest,
Through Whom e'en wicked men are blest!
Thou com'st to share our misery,
What can we render, Lord, to Thee!

9. Ah, Lord, Who hast created all,
How hast Thou made Thee weak and small,
To lie upon the coarse dry grass,
The food of humble ox and ass.

10. Were earth a thousand times as fair,
Beset with gold and jewels rare,
She yet were far too poor to be
A narrow cradle, Lord, for Thee.

11. For velvets soft and silken stuff
Thou hast but hay and straw so rough,
Whereon Thou King, so rich and great,
As 'twere Thy heaven, art throned in state.

12. Thus hath it pleased Thee to make plain
The truth to us, poor fools and vain,
That this world's honor, wealth and might
Are naught and worthless in Thy sight.

13. Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
Here in my poor heart's inmost shrine,
That I may evermore be Thine.

14. My heart for very joy doth leap,
My lips no more can silence keep,
I too must sing, with joyful tongue,
That sweetest ancient cradle song.

15. Glory to God in highest Heaven,
Who unto man His Son hath given,
While angels sing, with pious mirth,
A glad New Year to all the earth.

This hymn was written by Martin Luther to teach his 3 year old son about Christmas, and became a part of the Luther family Christmas tradition. One of the adults would dress up as an angel and sing the first 5 verses to the family. The rest of the family would sing verses 6 through 15.