
A Carol for Advent

[A song based on words by Jill Knuth, sent to friends with our pre-Christmas letter in December 2001.]

“Carols” — songs written to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and the spirit of love and generosity that has long been associated with the Christmas season — are among the most delightful songs in the popular cultures of many lands. We begin to hear these familiar tunes each year in late November and throughout the month of December.

But Christians who grew up with a strong liturgical tradition, like my wife and myself, prefer not to sing Christmas carols until December 24, “Christmas Eve,” because the four weeks preceding Christmas Day are traditionally a time of preparation and waiting, called Advent.

That leaves us with four weeks in which there’s a relative dearth of special songs to sing. Therefore Jill was inspired to write the words to an Advent Carol, “A Baby is Promised.” A few months later, I set her words to music, with four-part harmony (soprano, alto, tenor, bass); and we sent it to our friends in time for the Advent season of 2001.

One can, of course, sing the verses in unison, preferably with piano accompaniment (at least until the harmonies become familiar).

This piece is dedicated to our grandsons, Rees Levi Tucker, Carter John Knuth, Kevin Don Knuth, and Kadin Morris Tucker, two of whom were born between the time we wrote it and the time we shared it.

When we first sent out the music we suggested that people might enjoy looking up the following Bible verses: 2 Kings 6 : 33, Isaiah 30 : 18, Luke 2 : 25.

*Incidentally, Jill has also designed and made a dozen or so inspiring banners that are especially appropriate for the days of Advent. They are discussed in the first 23 pages of her book *Banners Without Words* (San José, California: Resource Publications, 1986).*

A Baby is Promised

Jill and Don Knuth

1 It's De- cem- ber al- read- y, There's so much to
2 We're har- ried, we're tired, Con- fused and hard-
3 The world is bro- ken And frac- tured and
4 He's here! * He's here! * The gift from a-

The first system of musical notation is in 3/4 time. It features a treble and bass staff. The melody is written in the treble staff, and the bass line is in the bass staff. The lyrics are printed below the treble staff. There are four lines of lyrics, each corresponding to a measure of the melody. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The bass line consists of quarter notes and rests.

do, To be read- y for Christ- mas: Will we
pressed. Our tem- pers are frazz- led, We
torn. That ba- by, that Sa- vior, When
bove: He's burst- ing with en- er- gy,

The second system of musical notation continues the melody and bass line from the first system. The lyrics are printed below the treble staff. The melody continues with quarter and eighth notes. The bass line continues with quarter notes and rests.

e- ver get through? A Ba- by is
long for some rest. A Ba- by is
will he be born? A Ba- by is
Pro- mise and love. The Ba- by long

The third system of musical notation concludes the piece. The melody and bass line are shown. The lyrics are printed below the treble staff. The melody ends with a final note and a fermata. The bass line ends with a final note and a fermata.

pro-mised, A Sa- vior, the Word! But watch-ing is
pro-mised, A Sa- vior, the Word! But watch-ing is
pro-mised, A Sa- vior, the Word! But watch-ing is
pro-mised, The Sa- vior, the Word! * Watch-ing is

1.

wear- i- some, Wait- ing is hard.
wear- i- some, Wait- ing is hard.
wear- i- some, Wait- ing is hard.

2.

joy when we Wait for our Lord!

* : Omit this note on the final verse.