

Singing Around the Advent Wreath

Colleagues:

A decade or so ago our church musician at Bethel Lutheran here in St. Louis, Stephen C. Mager, came to Marie and me with the German text of an “Advent Wreath Hymn” that he had found on some recording. He’d written down the text from what he heard, did likewise with the tune. His request: “Could we render the German text into English?” So we did and ever since it’s part of the liturgy at Bethel when the candles are lit on the Advent wreath. We sing only verse 1 on Advent 1. Vv. 1&2 for the two-candle Sunday, etc.

Seven years ago at Adventtide I posted that English translation [ThTh #77], but not the marvelous music. Crossings webmaster Tom Law now tells me he can put the musical notation on the website. And he has. The link to find it is <https://crossings.org/archive/ed/AdventHymn.pdf>

Here’s the text once more—this time in two versions.

NUMBER ONE is our translation of the German original that Mager gave us.

NUMBER TWO is our tweaking that text a bit to make it more sympatico with the Revised Standard Lectionary pericopes for the Advent season.

Since that ThTh posting back in 1999 we’ve discovered the text and tune in a German Lutheran Hymnal published in 1994. It identifies the original artists as follows—Text: Maria Ferschl; Melody: Heinrich Rohr. The date given for both is 1954.

With words and now melody in hand, you too can sing along with

the rest of us as you light your Advent candles in the days ahead.

Peace and joy!

Ed Schroeder

NUMBER ONE

Original translation of the German text.

M&E Schroeder

Dear Christians, rejoice, for Advent is here,

See the first candle bright and clear.

Attention on these our holiest days:

Prepare your hearts for God's own ways.

Christians, be joyful, with one accord

Near at hand is the Lord.

Dear Christians, rejoice, for Advent returns.

See how the second candle burns.

Now welcome each other in the Lord's name,

For God to us has done the same.

Refrain

Dear Christians, rejoice, for Advent is here.

See the third candle, bright and clear.

Into this dark world your goodness now show.

Let others see your life aglow.

Refrain

Dear Christians, rejoice, for Advent is here.

See the fourth candle, bright and clear.

For truly our God no longer delays;

Let your light shine these holy days!

Refrain

NUMBER TWO

Verses 2-4 tweaked toward the RCL Advent pericopes.
Dear Christians, rejoice, for Advent is here,
See the first candle bright and clear
Attention on these, our holiest days.
Prepare your hearts for God's own ways.
Christians, be joyful, with one accord
Near at hand is the Lord.

Dear Christians, rejoice, for Advent has come.
The second candle signals John.
In our darkness too his message brings light,
Points us to Christ, from faith, not fright.
Refrain

Dear Christians, rejoice, for Advent is here.
See the third candle, bright and clear.
Our God, three in one, sent Mary his call
To bear his Son and bless us all.
Refrain

Dear Christians, rejoice, for Advent is here.
See the fourth candle, bright and clear.
The circle is closed, we soon will be fed
At Bethlehem, God's House of Bread.
Refrain