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This Christmas season, we rejoice at the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ and remember how the miracle of Christmas has brought hope to mankind throughout history.

In 1868, Phillips Brooks wrote “O Little Town of Bethlehem” for his Philadelphia Sunday school class. Brooks was inspired to write the hymn after visiting Bethlehem in 1865. While in the Holy Land, Brooks rode horseback to Bethlehem on Christmas Eve, attending a service in the field where it was said that the shepherds mentioned in the gospel of Luke watched over their flocks on the night that Jesus was born. He later wrote:

*Before dark we rode out of town to the field where they say the shepherds saw the star. It is a fenced piece of ground with a cave in it, in which, strangely enough, they put the shepherds. . . . Somewhere in those fields we rode through, the shepherds must have been. . . “keeping watch over their flocks.”*

Later, Brooks’s famous poem was put to music that continues to be sung by believers today. These words remind us of the hope of Christmas, a hope that was simple enough for the children in Brooks’s Sunday school class to grasp, but great enough to save all people of every age. May we be reminded of the eternal significance of our work in educating young people to see the truth of Christ this Christmas and in every season.

O little town of Bethlehem,  
How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary,  
And, gathered all above  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep  
Their watch of wond’ring love.  
O morning stars, together  
Proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing to God the King  
And peace to all the earth.

How silently, how silently,  
The wondrous gift is giv’n!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of his heav’n.  
No ear may hear his coming,  
But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him, still  
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us, we pray,  
Cast out our sin and enter in,  
Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
Our Lord Immanuel!