

A Walk in the Woods

Some people thought a mouse was to blame. In defense of the mouse, others thought it was just some rust in the inner workings of the old organ in the remote Austrian alpine village. The bottom line was there would be no organ music for the church Christmas program. The minister was not sure how they could have a program and music without the organ but hoped that some alternative could be found. As part of his duties, he had to walk out to a remote home in the countryside to visit some parishioners who had recently had a baby. As he returned home in the late afternoon that day, he thought about the beautiful new baby and the beauty of God's creation in the stillness of the forest. He later sat down and wrote out a few verses that expressed the observations of the day and how that there was a night almost 1800 years before when a child had been born: A child who would have a special birth and life and death.

One of the church members helped to put the words to music and when it was done, the pastor and his guitarist friend realized they had created a wonderful little song. When it was sung at the Christmas program everyone enjoyed the little tune. The story would have ended there if it had not been for the next part of the story. The organ repair man came in the Spring and while completing the repairs to the old organ he heard the little song.

Very impressed by the song, he asked if he could circulate it to the other churches that he visited. This is how the song came to be circulated outside the tiny village. The original song was penned in 1818 and approximately 50 years later it was finally translated into English. You will certainly recognize the words...

Silent night Holy night
All is calm all is bright
'Round yon virgin Mother and Child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav'nly hosts sing Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born;
Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth;
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.