**Carol 14 – O Christmas Tree**

Our carol today has its roots in a Christmas song based on a traditional folks song which was totally unrelated to Christmas. Since the middle of the 19th Century it has been sung as a Carol with the modern lyrics written by Ernst Anschutz.

You may notice that the words do not refer to the Christmas story at all which means it rarely sung in church despite it remaining a popular Christmas Carol. Instead it focus’ on the Christmas fir tree and takes its evergreen quality as a symbol of God’s constancy and faithfulness.

THe lyrics have continued to slowly evolve with many different versions available in many languages. The tune has gone on to be used as a number of state songs in America such as Florida, Maryland and Michigan, it has been the college song for a number of edicational institutions, the anthem of the British and Irish labour parties and adaped by Swedish children to be sung when travelling by bus! (according to Wikipedia!)

This year Shrewsbury URC have had an external tree for the first time and invited church folks and the community to hang baubles and wooden disks with names of loved ones on. Some photos appearing on the “For the love of Shrewsbury” facebook page really do show off it’s light as it brings light to our dark nights.



I have long since been sceptical of Christmas trees in worship spaces as they rarely tell the story of Jesus and their symbolism gets lost amongst traditions and rituals. However, I have soften over the years and recognise the act of putting a tree together, or lighting it and of it’s presence does bring joy that can echo our joy at Jesus’ birth. Using the tree trunk for an Easter Cross then reminds us the two festivals are not unrelated after all.

**Some versions to enjoy.**

<https://youtu.be/iKGYsd02DeI> with lyrics

<https://youtu.be/pQf0_DeW4XM> with signing

<https://youtu.be/5iN1zWBSdg4> full choir, lovely harmonies

[O Christmas Tree - SATB - Full Choir Guide - Bing video](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=o+christmas+tree+choir&&view=detail&mid=17819D201FE452C8EDA017819D201FE452C8EDA0&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Do%2520christmas%2520tree%2520choir%26qs%3Dn%26form%3DQBVR%26sp%3D-1%26ghc%3D1%26pq%3Do%2520christmas%2520tree%2520choir%26sc%3D3-22%26sk%3D%26cvid%3DD9839946D81B480E92447BEC63E012E3) a mash up swing version!

<https://youtu.be/Wnhx2MLWWlo> brass virtual recording trad then jazz.

**O Christmas Tree – A Christian take on the traditional words.**

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree
How lovely are thy branches!
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree
How lovely are thy branches!

Your boughs so green in summertime,
Stay bravely green in wintertime.
O tannenbaum, O Christmas Tree
How lovely are thy branches!

Let us all remember in our gift giving and merriment
With our family and friends and loved ones
The real and true meaning of Christmas.
The birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

O tannenbaum, o tannenbaum
How lovely are they branches!
O tannenbaum, o tannenbaum
How lovely are, how lovely are thy branches.

The pillars all please faithfully
Our trust in God unchangedly,
O tannenbaum, o tannenbaum,
How lovely are thy branches.

On Comet, on Cupid, on Donder and Blitzen!