

Lord Christ, God's Only Dear Son

Herr Christ, der einig Gotts Sohn

7.6. 7.6. 7.7.6.

Herr Christ, der einig Gotts Sohn

Elisabeth Cruciger, 1524

Erfurt Enchiridion, 1524

Tr. Christopher J. Neuendorf, 2014

Setting: Composite

Lord Christ, God's on - ly dear Son,
Forth from the Fa - ther's heart sprung,

His from e - ter - ni - ty,
As in Scrip - ture we see,

The Morn - ing Star, He gleam - eth,

His light more bright - ly beam - eth

Than all stars in the sky.

Lord Christ, God's Only Dear Son

2 For us was born of woman

In the fullness of time

He whose pure mother virgin

Kept her chasteness sublime,

Who death for us hath riven,

Unbarred the gates of heaven,

Life restored unto us.

3 Let us in love adore Thee,

In Thy knowledge increase,

In spirit serve before Thee,

Nor from faith ever cease,

That here in earthly weakness

Our hearts may taste Thy sweetness,

Thirsting ever for Thee.

4 Thou who the whole world founded,

Thou of fatherly might,

Who in Thy pow'r unbounded

Reignest o'er day and night:

O let our hearts pursue Thee,

And turn our minds unto Thee

Lest from Thee they should stray.

5 Lord, kill us with Thy goodness,

Quicken us with Thy grace,

Make our old nature perish,

Grant new life in its place

While yet on earth we're dwelling.

Each thought, desire, and feeling

Make to cleave unto Thee.

Lord Christ, God's Only Dear Son

“Lord Christ, God’s Only Dear Son (*Herr Christ, der einig Gotts Sohn*)” was written by Elisabeth Cruciger née von Meseritz, a former nun who, together with her parents, had been won over for the Lutheran Reformation and in 1522 fled to Wittenberg. It was there that Elisabeth met her husband Caspar Cruciger, at that time a student under Luther. Her hymn was included in one of the very first Lutheran hymnals, the Erfurt Enchiridion of 1524, as well as in Johann Walter’s collection of polyphonic hymn settings, the *Geystliche gesangk Buchleyn* of 1524. Due to its emphasis on the Incarnation of Our Lord, the hymn went on to be prescribed for Advent and Christmas, while the first stanza’s imagery of Jesus as the Morning Star caused the hymn to be sung at the Epiphany of Our Lord.

The tune originated with a fifteenth-century love song, “*Mein frewd mächt sich wol meren*,” but the meter was adapted to the new text. It has since been used as the tune for numerous Lutheran hymns, though it has not become common in English usage. The setting used for the Free Lutheran Chorale-Book is a composite of several sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources, owing most to the setting by Johann Hermann Schein.

English Lutheran hymnals have made use of a translation by Arthur Tozer Russell, *Psalms and Hymns*, 1851, No. 41, “The Only Son from Heaven,” which omits the last two stanzas. To some recent hymnals has been added a doxological stanza that is not present in the original. The translation developed for the Free Lutheran Chorale-Book includes all five stanzas, and every attempt has been made to keep it as close as possible to the phrasing of the original. Both text and music may be freely used and reproduced for any purpose whatever and are offered with the prayer that they may serve for the edification of Christian people everywhere. For more information, visit the Free Lutheran Chorale-Book at:

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The Free Lutheran Chorale-Book

presents

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by

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and translated by

Christopher J. Neuendorf

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