

YOU CAN'T CANCEL CHRISTMAS: THE MUSICAL

Music and Lyrics

by Christy Long

Script

by Andrea N. Burton



CHRISTIANPUBLISHERS

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You Can't Cancel Christmas: The Musical

A musical version of the popular comedy

Music and lyrics by Christy Long

Script by Andrea N. Burton

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Nate/Shepherd 1

Madi/Innkeeper

Mom

Tristan/Joseph

Noah/Shepherd 2

Nick/Drummer

Emily/Mary

Josie/Angel

Assorted Shepherds and Sheep

Choir

PRODUCTION NOTES

Synopsis

“Dude, your mom has totally lost it,” Noah tells Nate. She’s so busy fretting about Christmas dinner preparations that she forgets about helping the kids practice for the church pageant. The dog eats the pumpkin pie she baked for Grandma, and she’s sick of having her hands inside a cold, dead bird — but her blood pressure really rises when she discovers Nate has taken an early peek at his Christmas present. That’s the last straw — Mom cancels Christmas! Banished from the kitchen, the kids are left on their own to prepare the pageant. King James it’s not — but funny it is! Six original songs fit right into the plot and paint a true picture of Christmas — its stress, but also its depth. When Mom unwittingly stumbles onto the scene of the performance, the beautifully simple truth of Jesus’ birth emerges from the humor and pushes her worries of domestic duties aside. Try as you might, you can’t cancel Christmas!

Cast

You will need four boys, three girls, one woman, and extras. The extras may play shepherds or sheep, plus all the children may help sing as part of the choir. Nate, Tristan, and Noah are around the same age. The three of them are older than Emily, Josie, Madi, and Nick, who are also close in age. Mom, Nate, Tristan/Joseph and Madi/Innkeeper have solos, so bear this in mind when you do the casting.

Costumes

Casual dress for Part 1. A fun addition might be to suggest through costume that Mom is pregnant, but it is by no means necessary. You will need the requisite Christmas pageant costumes and sandals for Part 2, specifically a white robe, wings, and halo for the Angel, a blue robe with white headpiece for Mary, and simple tunic robes in earth tones with headpieces (tied with a cord around the head) for everyone else (except Mom, of course). The children in the choir may wear robes or simply street clothes, in keeping with the informal nature of the play.

Music

This musical features five original songs with piano accompaniment, plus a flute solo or duet. If you are working with a smaller group, you may prefer that all the characters sing

every song without solos. Do what works for your group's size, age, and experience. You will also need a flutist or two — however, if one is not available, you may simply play the “Story to Tell” flute number that is on the *You Can't Cancel Christmas* performance CD (track 4). There are also three short numbers with original lyrics set to the tune of well-known children's songs: “Rock-a-Bye, Baby,” “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” and “Baa Baa Black Sheep.”

Props

Chocolate bar or cookie

Assorted toy boxes and other presents

Suitcase or box (With the above items inside)

Beef jerky

Drum

Baby doll

Set

Part 1 requires a chair.

Part 2 requires a large cardboard box that is painted to look like an inn with a door cut out in the middle.

SONG LIST

1. Story to Tell (Opening)
2. Don'cha Wanna Know?
3. Christmas Is Canceled
4. Story to Tell (Flute Solo/Duet)
5. Please, Mr. Innkeeper
6. Glory to God
7. Story to Tell (Ending)

Part 1

SONG: "Story to Tell" (Opening)

Chorus:

ALL: *(Singing)* There's a story to tell,

The greatest story ever told.

A story to tell

That never will grow old.

There's a story to tell,

Jesus is his name.

Listen to my story,

You will never be the same.

What is Christmas? What does it mean?

Is it only presents and things?

Empty boxes, broken toys,

Are these all the Christmas joys?

(Repeat chorus)

If you listen with all your heart,

You will learn the greatest part.

The gift to us has come from above,

God's son, God's son.

(Repeat chorus)

Listen to my story.

You will never be the same.

(CHOIR exits or sits in front row. NATE and MADI enter

Stage Right.)

NATE: *(To MADI, as she looks around nervously)* Come on, you gotta see this.

MADI: I don't think this is a good idea.

NATE: Aren't you just a little curious?

1 MADI: No.

2 NATE: Come on, you don't want to see if Mom and Dad got
3 you that stupid doll you've been whining about?

4 MADI: No.

5 NATE: (*Sarcastically*) But Mom, she's so pretty. But Daddy,
6 she wets herself ... Pleeeeeease!

7

8 SONG: "Don'cha Wanna Know?"

9 NATE: (*Singing*) Don'cha wanna know?

10 Don'cha wanna know what's underneath the paper and
11 the bow?

12 Don'cha wanna look, take a little peek?

13 Christmas is coming, but I can't wait a week.

14 Who needs the suspense?

15 Who needs a surprise?

16 I'll hunt like a sleuth,

17 Put on a disguise.

18 Search high and low 'til my gift is found.

19 No package is safe, no package is safe, no package is
20 safe

21 When I am around.

22

23 (*Repeat all*)

24

25 Don'cha wanna know?

26 Don'cha wanna know what's underneath the paper and
27 the bow?

28 Don'cha wanna look, take a little peek?

29 Christmas is coming, but I can't wait a week.

30

31 Don'cha wanna know?

32 MADI: (*Singing*) No, no, no, no.

33 NATE: (*Singing*) Don'cha wanna know?

34 MADI: (*Singing*) No, no, no, no.

35 NATE: (*Singing*) Don'cha wanna know?

- 1 **MADI:** *(Singing)* No, no, no, no.
- 2 **NATE:** *(Singing)* Don'cha wanna know?
- 3 **MADI:** *(Singing)* No, no, no, no.
- 4 **NATE:** *(Singing)* Don'cha wanna know?
- 5 **MADI:** *(Singing)* No, no, no, no.
- 6 **NATE:** *(Singing)* Don'cha wanna know?
- 7 **MADI:** *(Singing)* No, no, no, no.
- 8
- 9 **MADI:** That's it. I'm out. If you want to spoil your
 10 Christmas — fine. But leave me out of it. *(MADI stomps*
 11 *out of the room.)*
- 12 **NATE:** Fine. I already know what I'm getting. I was just
 13 giving you a heads up. *(NATE pulls a large suitcase/box*
 14 *out from behind a chair and opens it. He looks inside, lifting*
 15 *out some of the toys.)* Yes! This is going to be the best
 16 Christmas ever. *(Takes out a chocolate treat and starts*
 17 *eating it.)*
- 18 **MOM:** *(From Off-stage)* Nathan, Noah and Tristan are here.
 19 *(NATE throws the chocolate inside and quickly closes the*
 20 *suitcase/box and puts it back behind the chair. He throws*
 21 *himself into a chair just as MOM enters with NOAH and*
 22 *TRISTAN.)*
- 23 **MOM:** Nathan Eugene, you get your feet off that chair!
 24 Honestly, I just cleaned in here. Not that you could tell
 25 by looking. I said take your feet off my furniture! You
 26 wouldn't do that at someone else's house, would you?
 27 *(TRISTAN and NOAH stifle a laugh.)* Well, would you?
- 28 **NATE:** *(Mumbling)* No.
- 29 **MOM:** What was that?
- 30 **NATE:** *(Defensively)* No.
- 31 **MOM:** You had better not — that's all I'm gonna say. And
 32 you don't do it in my house, either. Especially when
 33 your grandmother will be here in — oh my goodness —
 34 in less than three hours! What was I doing?
- 35 **NATE:** Mom, it's Grandma. You can chill out a little.

- 1 **MOM:** Shhhh! *(Pause)* Did you hear something? *(Speaking very*
2 *quickly now)* Oh, what on earth is your sister up to now?
3 Honestly, how am I supposed to get anything done
4 when I have to keep cleaning up after the two of you?
5 OK, you boys stay in this room. Do not make a move.
6 Do not make a sound. Do not make a mess that you are
7 not fully prepared to clean up — because no one leaves
8 until you do. I will be back. Do you understand?
- 9 **NATE:** Yeah. *(MOM looks at him a moment.)* Yes, Mother.
- 10 **MOM:** Thank you, you're a good boy. *(Turns to leave.)*
11 Madison Elizabeth!
- 12 **NOAH:** Dude, your mom is losing it.
- 13 **TRISTAN:** Seriously, she's got some issues.
- 14 **NATE:** Tell me about it. I've had to clean my room twelve
15 times in the last two days, and for the last week we've
16 only eaten fast food and those little snack-size boxes of
17 cereal. She's so freaked out we'll use the fridge or mess
18 up the kitchen.
- 19 **NOAH:** I wish my mom would make me eat fast food.
- 20 **TRISTAN:** Yeah, the junk food thing is pretty cool when
21 you think about it.
- 22 **NATE:** I guess you have to live it to get it. It's just weird.
23 Hey guys, wanna see what I'm getting for Christmas?
- 24 **NOAH and TRISTAN:** *(Overlapping)* Yeah! Sure. You found
25 your presents? You are so lucky! *(MADI, JOSIE, and*
26 *EMILY enter.)*
- 27 **NATE:** What are you doing here? I thought you didn't want
28 to get caught up here.
- 29 **JOSIE:** Your mom kicked us out of the kitchen and told us
30 to come up here with you guys. Apparently she wants
31 to keep us kids quarantined.
- 32 **NATE:** Gotcha. What were you doing that got you kicked
33 out of the kitchen?
- 34 **MADI:** Washing our hands.
- 35 **NATE:** Oh, please ...

- 1 **EMILY:** Now what do we do?
- 2 **TRISTAN:** What do you mean?
- 3 **JOSIE:** We're supposed to be practicing for the Christmas
4 pageant.
- 5 **NOAH:** *(To MADI and NATE)* I thought your mom was in
6 charge of that. *(MADI and NATE turn and give NOAH a*
7 *"look.")*
- 8 **TRISTAN:** Back up. What are you talking about?
- 9 **JOSIE:** The Christmas pageant at church. Our grade always
10 does the Christmas pageant.
- 11 **EMILY:** It's a very big responsibility.
- 12 **MADI:** But with Grandma coming for turkey, I think Mom
13 forgot. I think Mom has forgotten a whole lot this
14 Christmas.
- 15 **MOM:** *(Enters with NICK.)* Madi, this young man was
16 knocking on our door — for you. Don't forget, we have
17 to finish getting ready for Grandma. I just took the
18 turkey out of the oven and put the casseroles in. When
19 they are done, it will be time for you all to say good-
20 bye to your friends. Do you understand? Show me you
21 understand. *(Everyone nods.)* Good. *(She smiles and*
22 *retreats.)*
- 23 **NOAH:** *(To NATE)* OK, it's official, dude. Your mom has
24 totally lost it.
- 25 **NICK:** No kidding. She's scary.
- 26 **MADI:** Be nice, everybody. Bandit ate the pumpkin chiffon
27 pie she made for Grandma.
- 28 **NATE:** *(Pumps his fist.)* Yessss! I hate pumpkin chiffon pie.
29 It makes my skin crawl just thinking about it.
- 30 **MADI:** It's a little rich for my taste, too, but that was Mom's
31 Christmas present to Grandma. She worked really hard
32 on it.
- 33 **NATE:** All I can say is easy come, easy go.
- 34 **MOM:** *(Entering)* Sorry to bother you. I just need to grab
35 some of my table linens. Nathan, could you please hand

1 me that box behind the chair?

2 **NATE:** What?

3 **MOM:** The box. There. Thank you. *(She takes the box/suitcase*
4 *and exits.)*

5 **NATE:** *(Shakes head with hand to forehead)* Oh, no ...

6 **TRISTAN:** What's up?

7 **NATE:** It's been nice knowing you. I'm gonna die now.

8 **MOM:** *(From Off-stage)* Nathan Eugene Alexander Ericson!
9 *(Entering)* You are in so much trouble! And you, Miss
10 Madison Elizabeth Ericson, did you know about this?

11 **MADI:** About what?

12 **MOM:** Did you know your brother got into the Christmas
13 presents?

14 **NATE:** Hey, why do you think it was me? It could have been
15 Madi.

16 **MOM:** Because your sister hates chocolate! Why? Why
17 would you two do this? You just ruined your Christmas.
18 How does that make you feel? Do you know how hard
19 I have worked to make this a good Christmas? For two
20 weeks I have had my hands down toilets; inside cold,
21 dead birds; I've restrung cranberries and popcorn;
22 baked a beautiful pumpkin chiffon pie which the dog
23 ate — but oh, well. Do you know why? Because it's
24 Christmas. You just wanted presents? Fine. Here. *(She*
25 *dumps the presents out of the box or suitcase.)* Christmas is
26 canceled.

27 **NATE:** But Mom, I didn't — I didn't mean to.

28 **MADI:** Mom, I'm sorry.

29 **MOM:** No. I've had it. *(Points to MADI and NATE.)* You,
30 you — your rooms. Everybody else — home. *(Exits.)*
31

32 **SONG:** "Christmas Is Canceled"
33

34 **Chorus:**

35 **MOM:** *(Singing)* Christmas is canceled, not coming this year.

1 Christmas is canceled, no joy or good cheer.
 2 The spirit of Christmas just cannot be found,
 3 So I cancel Christmas!

4

5 The goose will have no stuffing,
 6 The berries won't be strung.
 7 Stop the church bells ringing,
 8 No carols will be sung.
 9 Unwrap all the presents,
 10 Untie all the bows.
 11 Return all the gifts so everybody knows that ...

12

13 *(Repeat chorus)*

14

15 Take down all the lights
 16 From the Christmas tree.
 17 Put them in the attic
 18 Where no one can see.
 19 No kisses under mistletoe,
 20 No families gathering.
 21 Disregard goodwill to men 'cause Christmas isn't
 22 coming!

23

24 Christmas is canceled, not coming this year.
 25 Christmas is canceled, no joy or good cheer.
 26 The spirit of Christmas just cannot be found,
 27 So I say ...

28

29 *(Repeat chorus)*

30

31 **NATE:** *(Spoken)* You can't cancel Christmas!

32 **MOM:** *(Singing)* I cancel Christmas!

33 **MADI:** *(Spoken)* Aw, Mom.

34 **MOM:** *(Singing)* I cancel Christmas!

35 **EMILY:** Wait!

- 1 **JOSIE:** Mrs. Ericson, please!
- 2 **MADI:** Mom —
- 3 **EMILY:** Now what?
- 4 **JOSIE:** If your mom isn't going to help us, what are we
5 going to do?
- 6 **MADI:** We'll figure something out.
- 7 **NATE:** You just have to talk about Jesus.
- 8 **EMILY:** What do you know about Christmas pageants?
- 9 **NATE:** Well, I've been in one or two of them in my time.
- 10 **MADI:** Yes, you have, and now you're going to do one more.
- 11 **NATE:** What? No way. I'm not playing dress up with a
12 bunch of girls.
- 13 **NICK:** Hey!
- 14 **MADI:** Oh, yes you are. You got us into this mess. (*Everyone*
15 *looks at NATE.*)
- 16 **NOAH:** She's got a point. Besides, how bad can it be?
- 17 **NATE:** Dude, it's my sister.
- 18 **TRISTAN:** Dude, it's Christmas.
- 19 **NATE:** Fine. Madi, go and get a Bible.
- 20 **EMILY:** Why?
- 21 **NATE:** Because Christmas is about Jesus. If you want to
22 find out about Jesus ...
- 23 **ALL:** (*Together*) You have to read the Bible.
- 24 **NATE:** OK, this is what we're going to do ... (*Lights fade and*
25 *KIDS go change clothes.*)
- 26
- 27 **SONG:** "Story to Tell" — Flute solo or duet
- 28
- 29

Part 2

- 30
- 31
- 32 (*The chair has been removed and replaced with a large*
33 *cardboard box Upstage Left. It is decorated to look like a*
34 *stable/inn. INNKEEPER is behind it. The ANGEL appears*
35 *Stage Right.*)

- 1 **ANGEL:** Once upon a time, many years ago ...
- 2 **JOSEPH:** *(From Off-stage)* Two thousand years ago.
- 3 **ANGEL:** All righty then, two thousand years ago, a decree
- 4 went out from Caesar Augustus that all of the world
- 5 should be taxed. To tax all the people, they had to
- 6 know how many people there were. So Caesar made all
- 7 the people go back to their home towns. A man named
- 8 Joseph *(JOSEPH and MARY enter and walk forward from*
- 9 *the back of the sanctuary)* and his betrothed, Mary, were
- 10 among those who had a journey to make.
- 11 **MARY:** Are we there yet?
- 12 **ANGEL:** And, oh yeah, Mary was pregnant.
- 13 **MARY:** Are we even close?
- 14 **JOSEPH:** I can't tell. Things have changed a lot since the
- 15 last time I was down this road.
- 16 **MARY:** My back is killing me.
- 17 **JOSEPH:** I think you may have mentioned that. Can you be
- 18 patient just a little bit longer? *(She takes a deep breath*
- 19 *and nods.)*
- 20 **ANGEL:** Mary was a blessed woman, because she was
- 21 carrying a special baby.
- 22 **MARY:** Can you slow down a little? Precious cargo here.
- 23 Remember what the angel said?
- 24 **ANGEL and MARY:** *(Together)* Thou shall bring forth a son
- 25 and call him Jesus. He shall be called the Son of the
- 26 Highest, and of his kingdom there shall be no end
- 27 *(Author's paraphrase from Luke 1:31-33). (They all pause*
- 28 *and smile.)*
- 29 **JOSEPH:** I know. The angel spoke to me, too. Look, we're
- 30 almost there. *(Points.)* See?
- 31 **MARY:** Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.
- 32 **JOSEPH:** Are you OK? You don't look so good. *(MARY looks*
- 33 *offended.)* I mean, you look nice, just ... not quite
- 34 yourself.
- 35 **MARY:** Can we please find an inn or something? I really

1 need to lie down.

2 ANGEL: Blessed or not, Mary was great with child. Now
3 Bethlehem was one of those towns where once you
4 grow up and move out, they don't really expect you to
5 come back. So it didn't take long for all the inns around
6 town to fill up. And with Mary in her condition, uh, our
7 couple didn't make the best time. In fact, they were
8 pretty slow. Happily, as with all things, God had a plan.

9 JOSEPH: I'll be right back.

10 MARY: Please find a place for us to stay.

11 JOSEPH: (*Knocks on the door of the inn. INNKEEPER emerges.*)

12 Excuse me, we've come a very long way. My betrothed
13 is great with child. May we have a room for the night?

14 INNKEEPER: No. (*Tries to shut the door, but JOSEPH blocks*
15 *it.*)

16 JOSEPH: (*Sings to the tune of "Rock-a-Bye, Baby."*)

17 The baby is coming, coming real soon.

18 The sky is all dark and there is no moon.

19 The wind is quite crisp, it blows left and right.

20 Oh, please don't make Mary stay out all night.

21 MARY: (*Approaches door.*) Please, good innkeeper.

22 INNKEEPER: Wow! You look like you're about to pop!

23 MARY: I feel like I'm about to pop. Kind innkeeper, do you
24 have a room?

25 INNKEEPER: Not a one.

26 MARY: Please. I just want to lie down. Please!

27 INNKEEPER: I'd give you my room if I could, but I've even
28 rented that.

29 JOSEPH: The cellar?

30 INNKEEPER: Don't have one.

31 JOSEPH: Kitchen?

32 INNKEEPER: Taken. (*CHOIR stands at one side of the stage.*)

33

34 SONG: "Please, Mr. Innkeeper"

35 MARY: (*Singing*) Please, Mr. Innkeeper, don't you have a

- 1 room?
 2 Please, Mr. Innkeeper, baby's coming soon.
 3 Dear Mr. Innkeeper, I'm so very tired.
 4 Riding all these weary miles, my patience has expired.
 5
 6 Chorus:
 7 ALL: *(Singing)* A king is coming, coming today.
 8 Jesus is his name.
 9 So open the door, make room in your heart,
 10 God's Son will soon be born under Bethlehem's star.
 11
 12 MARY: *(Singing)* Kind Mr. Innkeeper, you must have a
 13 heart.
 14 I've got to find a place to rest before contractions start.
 15 Good Mr. Innkeeper, I just need a bed.
 16 A quiet place where I can go and lay my weary head.
 17
 18 *(ALL repeat chorus. CHOIR then exits or returns to front row*
 19 *seats.)*
 20
 21 MARY: Come on, guys, think outside the box.
 22 INNKEEPER: *(Sings to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little*
 23 *Star.")* I know I should let you in.
 24 Soon contractions will begin.
 25 You can't stay on donkey's back
 26 Though in rooms I have a lack.
 27 I know I should let you in,
 28 Soon contractions will begin.
 29 *(Speaking)* I've got it! The stable. It's not glamorous, but
 30 it's warm. With a few blankets and some straw, I bet
 31 we could make it pretty comfy!
 32 JOSEPH: Comfy is good.
 33 MARY: Can comfy be fast? I really think I should lie down.
 34 JOSEPH: Well?
 35 INNKEEPER: Right this way. *(INNKEEPER leads MARY and*

- 1 *JOSEPH behind the inn.)*
2 **ANGEL:** In the meantime, while Mary was preparing to give
3 birth to our incarnate Lord, some shepherds were
4 watching their flocks by night. (*SHEPHERDS enter.*)
5 **SHEPHERD 1:** So you'll need to round up the sheep and
6 take them to water.
7 **SHEPHERD 2:** But I just fed them.
8 **SHEPHERD 1:** Now they need water.
9 **SHEPHERD 2:** I just need a little break. I've been chasing
10 these crazy animals all day.
11 **SHEPHERD 1:** Yes, and I will remind you that these sheep
12 were your idea. I told you they would be work. You
13 said you would take care of them.
14 **SHEPHERD 2:** I take it back. I don't want to be a shepherd
15 anymore.
16 **SHEPHERD 1:** No, I don't think so. You wanted the sheep.
17 You got the sheep. You take care of the sheep!
18 **SHEPHERD 2:** I thought they'd be more fun.
19 **SHEPHERD 1:** And they are fun — in their own kind of
20 way.
21 **SHEPHERD 2:** So you say.
22 **SHEPHERD 1:** Tell you what, go and get the sheep, take
23 them to drink, and when you get back, we'll have some
24 of that beef jerky.
25 **SHEPHERD 2:** Can I have some now?
26 **SHEPHERD 1:** Get on with you. (*Exits.*)
27 **MOM:** (*Bursting into the sanctuary*) Nathan Eugene, you are in
28 so much trouble! At this point, you'll be lucky if I let
29 you out of your room to go to college. What were you
30 thinking?
31 **NATE:** (*Breaking character*) Mom?
32 **MOM:** Obviously.
33 **NATE:** Uh, Mom, we're kinda in the middle of something.
34 (*Gestures to audience. SHEPHERD 2 enters with sheep.*)
35 MOM realizes she's not alone with the KIDS and turns to see

- 1 *the congregation. She's horrified.)*
- 2 **MADI:** Mom? We thought you forgot about this. Why don't
- 3 you sit down right here? You're only a little late. (*MADI*
- 4 *leads MOM to a seat, then returns to her place.)*
- 5 **SHEPHERD 2:** Uh, I see something kind of weird.
- 6 **SHEPHERD 1:** You just need something to eat. (*Hands him*
- 7 *some beef jerky.)* Have some jerky.
- 8 **SHEPHERD 2:** I'm telling you, there's something over
- 9 there — (*Points*) and it's coming this way!
- 10 **SHEPHERD 1:** What is that thing?
- 11 **SHEPHERD 2:** I don't know, but it's coming fast.
- 12 **SHEPHERDS 1 and 2:** (*Together*) Ahhhh! (*They fall to the*
- 13 *floor.)*
- 14 **SHEPHERD 1:** Cover yourself!
- 15 **ANGEL:** And then appeared a great light. And an angel
- 16 spoke to the shepherds, and they were afraid.
- 17 **SHEPHERD 1:** What do you want?
- 18 **ANGEL:** (*Helping them up*) Do not be afraid.
- 19 **SHEPHERD 2:** Huh?
- 20 **ANGEL:** Do not be afraid, for I bring you tidings of great
- 21 joy. For unto you and to all people a savior is born this
- 22 day. Go, for you shall find, in the city of David, a baby,
- 23 wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.
- 24 This shall be a sign unto you that Christ the Lord is
- 25 born (Author's paraphrase from Luke 2:10-12). (*CHOIR*
- 26 *assembles in front.)*
- 27
- 28 **SONG:** "Glory to God"
- 29 **ALL:** (*Singing*) Join the song of angel throng,
- 30 Grab your sheep and come along.
- 31 The star is bright, a glorious light,
- 32 Shining through the darkest night.
- 33
- 34 **Chorus:**
- 35 Singing glory to God!



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by Andrea N. Burton and Christy S. Long.

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