

CAST

Narrator.....

Shepherd 1

Shepherd 2

Gabriel.....

Mary.....

Joseph

El Diablo – Sheep Inspector.....

El Diablo – Used Donkey Salesman

Innkeeper 1

El Diablo – Food Vendor

Innkeeper 2.....

El Diablo – Fake Innkeeper 3

Innkeeper 3.....

Angels

Sheep

Misc. Animals.....

SCENE 1

NARRATOR

Our story begins in a time without hope. God's people had almost given up. They lived with war and poverty. They felt abandoned by God, and everyone else. It was a dark time.

SHEPHERD 1

But the prophets promised us: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light!"

SHEPHERD 2

A king is coming who will rescue us from our troubles.

SHEPHERD 1

That's right! The prophets said: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder!"

SHEPHERD 2

"And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

SHEPHERD 1

That's right! The Prince of Peace!

NARRATOR

The people who waited in darkness have seen a great light! And we are waiting, waiting for the arrival of the Prince of Peace. But he is not the kind of prince that people expect. This prince has no army, no palace, and no riches. This prince comes as a baby, born in a barn.

The Prince of Peace, who was coming, comes still. This is full of mystery. A mystery is hard to enter sometimes.

Sometimes people can walk right through a mystery and not even know it is there.

It was a dark time. But prophets see past the darkness. Prophets are people who come so close to God, and God comes so close to them, that they know what is most important. The prophets knew which way to go. They pointed the way to Bethlehem. They didn't know exactly what was going to happen there, but they knew this was the place. Stop, they said. Watch. Pay attention. Something incredible is going to happen.

(Carol: #26 – Break forth, O beautiful heavenly light)

SCENE 2

GABRIEL

Hello favored one! The Lord is with you!

MARY

What sort of greeting is this?

GABRIEL

Don't be afraid Mary. You have found favor with God. You will conceive in your womb and bear a son. And you will call his name Jesus.

MARY

How is this possible?

GABRIEL

The Holy Spirit will come to you. You shall know the power of the Most High. And for this, the child shall be called holy. He will be called the Son of God. The Prince of Peace.

MARY

Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let everything happen to me just as you have said.

(Carol: #11 – Ya viene el alba)

SCENE 3

NARRATOR

It seemed like the whole world was on the move. The emperor Augustus ordered that everyone had to be counted. A census was to be taken of the entire world. Every family had to return to its hometown. So Mary and Joseph set off on a journey. They set off for the little town of Bethlehem.

JOSEPH

(To the audience) That “little town” is the City of David!

MARY

(To the audience) The birthplace of a king.

(They take off on their journey)

(Choir: O Little Town of Bethlehem)

SCENE 4

GABRIEL

I have wondrous news, so wondrous that I have brought all of my assistants!

ANGELS

Glory! Glory! Glory!

GABRIEL

Angels, look out in the fields: shepherds guarding their sheep.

ANGELS

Glory! Glory! Glory!

SHEPHERD 1

Look, it's an angel!

SHEPHERD 2

What the....?! Who are you? Where did you come from? And how did you get here?

GABRIEL

Don't be afraid! I have good news! I have good news of a great joy! Good news of a great joy which is for everyone!

ANGELS

Great joy! Great Joy!

GABRIEL

You need to get to Bethlehem. You will see the gift of Joy that God is giving to everyone!

ANGELS

Great joy! Great Joy!

SHEPHERD 1

Let's go to Bethlehem and see the gift that God is giving to us!

SHEPHERD 2

And to ALL PEOPLE! Come on. Let's go!

(Carol: #27 – Angels we have heard on high)

SCENE 5

NARRATOR

But the road to Bethlehem wasn't going to be an easy one for the Shepherds. An adversary would try and stop them before they could see God's gift. Just as the prophets had warned, the hills were full of dangers --- those spreading false vision and speaking lies to confuse people.

SHEEP INSPECTOR

Just one moment, please. Can I see your license?

SHEPHERD 1

License? What license?

SHEEP INSPECTOR

You can't just go off to Bethlehem with a bunch of sheep without a license. Haven't you read the shepherd regulations? *(Pulls out a big folder of papers)*

SHEPHERD 2

Read the shepherd regulations? What do you mean? We can't read – we're shepherds!

SHEEP INSPECTOR

Well, you can't expect to just go to Bethlehem without papers.

SHEPHERD 1

But the angel told us that there was a gift for us in Bethlehem!

SHEPHERD 2

That's right – a gift for us and for everyone!

SHEEP INSPECTOR

Angel? That sounds pretty ridiculous to me. Now if you'll just start filling out these forms, you can be on your way in --- thirty or forty days! (*diabolical laughter*)

(*Carol: #31 – Good Christian friends, rejoice*)

SCENE 6

NARRATOR

The going wasn't much easier for Mary and Joseph. As they drew closer to Bethlehem they began to worry about where they would stay – and where they might have the baby that Mary was carrying in her womb. And a familiar adversary was coming near.

MARY

Joseph, there's a light up ahead. That must be Bethlehem.

JOSEPH

I think you're right Mary. I hope there will be room for us. There are so many travelers on the road and they all seem to be going to Bethlehem.

MARY

Let's keep going. I'm so tired. And our donkey keeps slowing down!

JOSEPH

(rousing the donkey). Get up! Get up! Just a little ways more, my friend!

USED DONKEY SALESMAN

How are you folks doing this evening? Hey – looks like your donkey is just about ready for the glue factory. How about a brand new, latest model, super awesome --- DONKEY!
(Pulls out donkey sales brochure)

JOSEPH

Um...Thanks all the same...But we're perfectly happy with our little donkey.

MARY

That's right, he's been with us since we started our journey – and besides, we don't really have any money...

USED DONKEY SALESMAN

Oh – you don't have to worry about money! You can buy a new donkey on our easy to use payment plan! *(Pulls out folder with a stack of papers)* Everyone's buying on credit these days, and for just a little down, and a balance at 35% interest on the rest of the payment over twenty-five hundred easy payments this beautiful new donkey can be yours!

JOSEPH

Like I said...

USED DONKEY SALESMAN

You don't want the neighbors looking down on you for riding last season's donkey...

MARY

No, really, we're fine...

USED DONKEY SALESMAN

I don't think you understand --- I said YOU WILL BUY ON CREDIT *(diabolical laughter)*.

(Carol: #36 – God rest you merry, gentlemen)

SCENE 7

NARRATOR

When they finally arrived in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph found the place crowded with people from every part of Judea. Everyone with family ties to Bethlehem had come home for the emperor's census. Inns sprouted up on every corner. People rented out rooms. Some people even camped out in the fields around town. But Mary needed a safe place to have her baby. Staying out in the cold was out of the question. So they went from inn to inn looking for a place to stay.

MARY

Hello, my name is Mary and this is my husband, Joseph.

JOSEPH

We've come from Nazareth and Mary's going to have a baby. But we need a place to stay. Do you have a room for us?

INNKEEPER 1

No! No way! Absolutely not! We're all full! And we don't take in people from Nazareth.

MARY

Please don't turn us away. We're cold.

JOSEPH

We're hungry.

MARY

And I'm going to have my baby very soon!

INNKEEPER 1

You can't have a baby in my inn. Go to the hospital. Don't bother us. I wish the city would do something about these homeless people.

(Carol: #19 – Savior of the nations, come)

SCENE 8

NARRATOR

Meanwhile, the shepherds were making their way to Bethlehem, hoping to see the gift that God had promised: the Prince of Peace. They crossed meadows and hills and rivers slowly making their way. But – it happened again! The closer they got to Bethlehem, the more obstacles got in their way.

SHEPHERD 1

We've been walking so long! And I'm hungry. I wish that we'd brought some food for our journey.

SHEPHERD 2

I know. But we're so close to Bethlehem. I can just see the lights of the town over there. I'm hungry too – but we're almost there!

FOOD VENDOR

Did I hear you say that you're hungry? I've got lots of delicious things here for you to eat. *(Pulls out a big basket of food)*

SHEPHERD 1

Really? That's awfully nice of you, sharing your food with us.

FOOD VENDOR

Sharing? No, no, no – I'm not sharing food. I'm SELLING food. And I've got whatever you want. What's your favorite food?

SHEPHERD 2

But we don't have any money – we're shepherds! All we have are sheep.

SHEPHERD 1

My favorite food is pizza. What kind of pizza do you have?

FOOD VENDOR

I've got your favorite (*pulls out a pizza box*) peanut butter and anchovy!

SHEPHERD 1

Peanut butter and anchovy! How did you know that was my favorite?!

SHEPHERD 2

Hey – remember – we don't have any money. And we're almost to Bethlehem. Don't let this guy throw us off track. Say – he looks awfully familiar...

FOOD VENDOR

It's full of deliciousness! Why don't you slow down and take a break. What's the harm? You don't really need to get to Bethlehem...

SHEPHERD 2

It's you!! You're the one who keeps trying to slow us down!

SHEPHERD 1

Yeah – you do look kind of familiar. Weren't you the one trying to tell us we had to have all kinds of paperwork...

FOOD VENDOR

(Diabolical laughter) You foolish shepherds are more clever than I thought! I guess if I can't trick you into stopping, maybe I can just force you to stop. *(He goes to grab them, but they slip away).*

SHEPHERD 2

Come on!! Let's get out of here!!

SHEPHERD 1

But I'm still hungry!

(Carol: #35 – Go tell it on the mountain)

SCENE 8

NARRATOR

Mary and Joseph keep looking for a place to stay. They go from house to house, and each time they hear the same thing...

INNKEEPER

(From off stage) Sorry – no room!

NARRATOR

One by one, Mary and Joseph try every inn and every house in Bethlehem.

JOSEPH

In the name of Heaven, I beg you for a room! Look at my poor wife – she can barely walk!

INNKEEPER 2

This isn't an inn so keep going. I can't let you in. For all I know you could be a criminal.

JOSEPH

Please show us pity! How can you be so hard-hearted? Look at Mary, she's so worn and so tired. We are poor, but I'll give you what I can. Surely God will reward you for giving us a room!

INNKEEPER 2

You are trying my patience. I'm tired too and need to get some sleep. I've told you nicely, but you won't go away. If you don't go and stop bothering me, I'll call the police. Go away, go away! *(Slams door closed)*

(Mary and Joseph move along, and then run into the shepherds)

SHEPHERD 2

Oh! Excuse us...I didn't see you there. You see we've been running from the meanest man! He keeps popping up out of nowhere and trying to stop us on our quest.

SHEPHERD 1

You see, we came because an angel told us that if we came to Bethlehem, we'd receive a gift from God – the Prince of Peace! *(Mary and Joseph look at each other)*

SHEPHERD 2

But this mysterious man keeps getting in our way! We can't seem to get away from him. But look at you two – you look so tired, and *(looking at Mary)* you shouldn't be out on a cold night like this – not in your condition!

JOSEPH

Good shepherds, it is so good to meet friends like you. Our journey has been long and difficult and now that we have arrived in Bethlehem, we can't find a place to rest.

MARY

And we've come to Bethlehem because of an angel's message. I am here to give birth to God's gift. I am the mother of the Prince of Peace!

SHEPHERD 1

(To the other shepherd) Did you hear that? She's the mother of the Prince of Peace! She's bringing God's gift!

SHEPHERD 2

We'll help you! We'll convince them to let you in. Just you watch – we're very convincing shepherds.

SHEPHERD 1

That's right – if we can't get you a room, nobody can!

SHEPHERD 2

Here's one last place. *(knocks on the door)* We'll find you a place to stay!

FAKE INNKEEPER 3

Well, what have we here? Can I help you?

SHEPHERD 2

It's you!

SHEPHERD 1

The man with the pizza!

SHEPHERD 2

And the paperwork!

JOSEPH

And the used donkey salesman!

FAKE INNKEEPER 3

That's right! I'm here to tell you that in all of Bethlehem there is NO ROOM FOR YOU! *(diabolical laughter)*

GABRIEL

Away with you! Your time is over! For today a Savior is born, who is Christ the Lord! He will be great and will be called the Prince of Peace!

FAKE INNKEEPER 3

Angel! You are too powerful for me! Curses! Curses! *(He falls to the ground).*

(Carol #25 – Away in a manger)

SCENE 9

REAL INNKEEPER 3

(With a broom, sweeping away the adversary) What a mess. Always popping in when you're least wanted. *(Turning to the shepherds, Mary and Joseph)*. So, how may I help you tonight?

JOSEPH

Kind innkeeper – is there, by any chance a place here for us?

REAL INNKEEPER 3

I'm very sorry. We love to take visitors, but as you can see *(points to sign)* there's no room in the inn. But, I've got an idea! You can stay in our stable. It's warm and clean.

SHEPHERD 1

And the animals will keep you company.

REAL INNKEEPER 3

It isn't much, but it's the best we can do.

JOSEPH

Oh, thank you! Thank you very much! It's so good to know that we won't be out on the streets.

MARY

Especially when our child is born!

SHEPHERD 1

You see, they're bringing us a gift – a child who will be the Prince of Peace. Someone who will be for us shepherds...

SHEPHERD 2

...And for everyone else too.

REAL INNKEEPER 3

Come with me. The stable is just over here. *(Leads them all to the altar)*

(While they move to the altar we sing Carol: #23 – Lo! How a Rose e'er blooming)

NARRATOR

“While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.”

(Lights come up in the rotunda. On the altar is a manger. The cast gathers around the table.)

REAL INNKEEPER 3

Enter, blest pilgrims, my house is your own.
Praise be to God who calls us to this manger.
Please come in, please come in!
Enter, holy pilgrims.
Welcome to this humble stable.

(Congregation sings #22 – O Come all ye faithful – and comes to the altar)

REAL INNKEEPER 3

We'll sing the Lord's Prayer at number 41 in your book. After each bidding, take turns calling out your own prayers aloud. Number 41.

SHEPHERD 2

For peace in the whole world; for peace in Bethlehem – and for which other places shall we pray? (*free prayers from the people*). Let us pray to the Lord.

ALL

Lord have mercy.

JOSEPH

Pray for the hungry and sick and afraid. (*free prayers from the people*) Let us pray to the Lord.

ALL

Lord have mercy.

MARY

Pray for prisoners and those without homes. (*free prayers from the people*) Let us pray to the Lord.

ALL

Lord have mercy.

SHEPHERD 1

Pray for enemies and for friends. (*free prayers from the people*) Let us pray to the Lord.

ALL

Lord have mercy.

GABRIEL

Pray for the violent and for those who suffer at others' hands. (*free prayers from the people*) Let us pray to the Lord.

ALL

Lord have mercy.

NARRATOR

Pray for the dead and for mourners. (*free prayers from the people*) Let us pray to the Lord.

Give thanks for God's work among all of her people, (*free prayers from the people*) Let us pray to the Lord.

ALL

Lord have mercy.

LEADER B

In fellowship with Mary, Christ's Mother, with Gregory of Nyssa, and with all God's holy people of every time and place, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life through Christ to God.

ALL

To you O Lord our God.

PRESIDER

O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven. We ask it in his name...

MARY

This child is born to bring peace to the whole world. Greet each other in his name!

PRESIDER

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

ALL

And also with you.

Eucharistic Prayer

MARY

Holy God, Mother and Father of all life,
from the beginning of time your Spirit breathed light over
darkness.

GABRIEL

You scattered stars in the heavens and raised up the mountains. You poured out great rivers and blessed the earth with life.

JOSEPH

You made men and women in your image, and loved us in our weakness, promising to stay with us wherever we go.

PRESIDER

In the winter of our longing, you came to the prophet Mary offering your Spirit to make creation whole.

You gave her a child, Jesus, your beloved son to turn the broken world upside down.

Jesus stayed with us, healing the sick and feeding the hungry unbinding prisoners and raising the dead.

He ate with strangers, showed mercy to sinners, and taught us to follow him in love without fear.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread;

and when he had given thanks to you,

he broke it and gave it to his friends and said—

“Take, eat: This is my body, which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.”

After supper he took the cup of wine;

and when he had given thanks,

he gave it to them and said—

“Drink of this, all of you:

This is my blood of the new covenant,

which is shed for you and for all

for the forgiveness of sins.

Whenever you drink it,

do this for the remembrance of me.”

Therefore, Father, of all the things
that are yours we offer you these,
which are yours especially.
We offer them gladly, as he told us,
remembering his death and resurrection,
and rest in the manger,
his welcome to shepherds and strangers as
we praise and bless you:

ALL

*We praise you, we bless you, we give thanks to you, and we
pray to you Lord our God.*

PRESIDER

Now pour out your spirit on this bread and wine
to make them the body and blood of Christ
for your waiting people.

Come among us and abide with us that we may be the
body of Christ for the world you love.

Shine upon us tonight as you shone upon the faithful Mary
as you shine upon your people in the darkest times and
places that lit by your love we may raise our voices
with saints and angels in the heavenly song:

ALL

Holy, holy, holy...

LEADER A

Jesus welcomes everyone to his table, and so we offer
everyone, without exception, the bread and wine, which are
Christ's body and blood.

(Presider's name), the Body of Christ. (Amen)

The Blood of Christ. (Amen)

PRESIDER

Go with us, O Lord,
as we journey to the heavenly country:
that following your star we may not wander
in the darkness of this world's night,
while you who are the true and living way
shine with us to the journey's end.
Blessed be the name of the Lord, henceforth and forever
more. Amen

LEADER A

Now seeing how greatly God loves us, let's share freely of
the good things we've received. Bring your gifts of money for
the work of the church right up here to the table. Tonight's
service represents the time and gifts of our whole community.
Please give generously to support all the ministries here.