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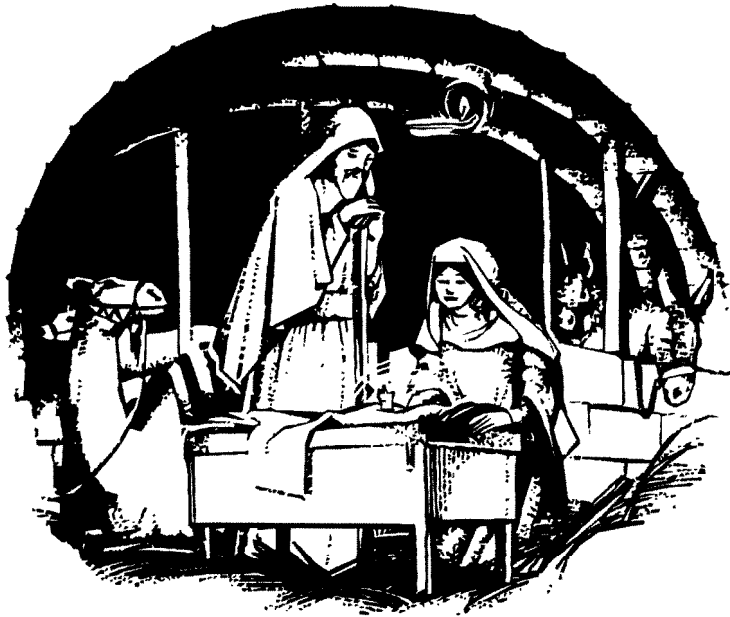
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BETHLEHEM

INN



By Johana Garrison
With music and lyrics by Scott Keys

Published by
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BETHLEHEM INN

**Story by Johana Garrison
Music and lyrics by Scott Keys**

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Let members of your congregation experience the real Christmas. They dress in Biblical attire to partake of a Biblical meal and see the story of the manger unfold. As "guests" eating at the crowded inn, they see Mary and Joseph turned away. Later, they see and hear the shepherds and wise men as they learn of the glorious birth that occurred. Two beautiful, original songs, one for Mary and one for Joseph, as well as other traditional songs highlight this unique program.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m, 2 w, 10 flex, extras)

INNKEEPER

INNKEEPER'S WIFE

READER 1

READER 2

READER 3

READER 4

READER 5

ANGEL GABRIEL

ZECHARIAH

MARY

JOSEPH

SHEPHERD 1

SHEPHERD 2

SHEPHERD 3

WISE MAN 1

WISE MAN 2

WISE MAN 3

EXTRAS - (Optional) Could use extra shepherds and wise men.

PASTOR

CHOIR

SET and PROPS

The set should be decorated as inn would appear in Biblical times. Each table should have simple tablecloths and candles. Props include incense to burn, altar at which to burn incense, small stool and needle work for Mary, mat for Joseph to sleep on.

PROLOGUE

INNKEEPER and his WIFE greet guests as they arrive at the door to the fellowship hall. Hosts and hostesses then guide the guests to tables. All should be dressed in Biblical attire and, depending on the weather, the guests may be as well. Each table should seat about eight people. SCRIPTURE READERS should be mingled among the guests. Eastern music can be playing as guests enter. If allowed by fire/safety code, candles can provide the only light in the room to set the tone for the Biblical setting. Keep the table settings as simple as possible. Wooden or metal dishes and simple cloth napkins are ideal. On the tables there should be fruit, crackers, bread, and blocks of cheese to enjoy as appetizers while waiting for the play to start. After all guests are seated the INNKEEPER and WIFE should take seats at a table near the door which they've closed. The lights dim.)

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: ZECHARIAH is burning incense before the altar. ANGEL GABRIEL appears, standing on the right side of the altar. Zechariah is frightened.)

ANGEL: Do not be afraid, Zechariah. I have come to tell you that your wife Elizabeth will bear a son and you will call his name John. *(ANGEL faces audience.)* He will be great in the sight of God. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb. He will turn many of you to the Lord, your God. He will go before him in the spirit and power of the great prophet Elijah, to make you ready for the Lord, to prepare the way.

(SPOTLIGHT off. SCRIPTURE READERS stand abruptly as though reading under the prophetic influence of the Holy Spirit. They do not cite Scripture reference. They read dramatically, with feeling.)

READER 1: "Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me" -- *(Malachi 3:1)*

READER 2: *(Immediately after 1)* A voice cries in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord" -- *(Isaiah 40:3)*

(SPOTLIGHT on CHOIR. They sing "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus." SPOTLIGHT off Choir and on MARY and GABRIEL. MARY is seated on a small stool, sewing perhaps.)

ANGEL: *(To MARY)* Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you. *(MARY is alarmed.)* Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. You will conceive in your womb and bear a son and his name shall be called Jesus.

MARY: How can this be. I have no husband.

ANGEL: The Holy Spirit will come upon you. The power of the Most High will overshadow you. *(ANGEL turns slowly toward audience.)* The child will be Holy...the Son of God.

MARY: I am the handmaiden of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.

(MARY bows to ANGEL GABRIEL and he leaves. Mary alone, looking down, walking, thinking, crosses hands over breast, looks up.)

MARY: My soul magnifies the Lord. My Spirit rejoices in God, my Savior, *(Pauses musing)*
Henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

(SHE sings "Mary's Song (I Am Yours)." See page 7. *Pause for effect. SPOTLIGHT off.)*

READER 3: "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: A virgin will be with child and bear a son. She will call His name Immanuel which means, God with us." *(Isaiah 7:14)*

(SPOTLIGHT on CHOIR. THEY sing "Oh Come, Oh Come, Immanuel." [Or other appropriate song] SPOTLIGHT off choir and on JOSEPH and ANGEL. Joseph is asleep on a mat. He is visited by ANGEL GABRIEL.)

ANGEL: Joseph, *(JOSEPH awakens.)* do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife...for the Child is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son. You shall call His name Jesus. He will save His people from their sins. *(The ANGEL exits.)*

JOSEPH: Father, what are you asking me to do? Me, a lowly carpenter, raising Your Son? I need your strength for this task!

(HE sings "Joseph's Song (A Simple Carpenter)." See page 12. *SPOTLIGHT off as he finishes song and exits. The CHOIR should go to the tables to sit with the others as READER 4 speaks.)*

READER 4: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." *(Isaiah 9:6)*

(A loud KNOCK is heard at the door.)

INNKEEPER: *(Gets up from where HE is seated)* What is that? *(Drawing attention to the door, another, louder KNOCK. HE goes to the door with his WIFE following him and opens it. JOSEPH and MARY, both tired and Mary, very pregnant, stand at the door. Innkeeper steps back to draw them into room.)*

JOSEPH: We have traveled far. My wife is very tired and ready to give birth. Have you a room for us?

INNKEEPER: *(Looks around the room, using a hand gesture)* We have many guests. *(Shakes head, looks at JOSEPH)* We are filled up. We have no room.

(JOSEPH looks at MARY, then at the INNKEEPER'S WIFE as though asking her for help.)

JOSEPH: My wife is great with child. There must be something. *(Looks at INNKEEPER'S WIFE)*
Can you help us?

INNKEEPER'S WIFE: Oh, husband, there must be some place. *(HE shakes his head no.)* I know. The stable. *(Looks at MARY reassuringly. SHE reaches for Mary's hand to lead her.)* It is warm and dry there. Come. I'll give you some cloths.

(SHE leads MARY and JOSEPH out of the fellowship room and returns in a few minutes to help her husband and the hosts serve the meal. Dinner, consisting of soup, stew, or whole baked chicken (which the guests cut) and whole loaves of bread served on wooden boards, is served. (Or be creative with other Jewish food.) The INNKEEPER and his Wife circulate among guests, inquiring of their needs. Playing soft Eastern music in the background during the dinner adds atmosphere. As soon as everyone has eaten the SHEPHERDS rush in, in awed excitement, all talking at once.)

SHEPHERD 2: Did you see that light?

SHEPHERD 1: I never saw an angel before.

SHEPHERD 3: "Don't be afraid," He said. He told us not to be frightened, but we were anyway. *(Looks at other SHEPHERDS, who nod in agreement. If you use extra shepherds, they should all be talking too.)*

INNKEEPER: What happened? What happened?

SHEPHERD 1: We were out in the field...keeping watch over our flock.

SHEPHERD 2: An angel of the Lord appeared...full of light. The light was very bright and shone all around. We were afraid.

SHEPHERD 3: *(Nods)* But the angel said "Be not afraid." He said he brings us "good news of a great joy which is for...*(Turns to the audience somewhat overcome and gesturing)*...all the people...all of you people."

SHEPHERD 1: "This day is born in the City of David" --

SHEPHERD 2: "A Savior...who is" --

SHEPHERD 3: "Christ the Lord."

SHEPHERD 1: "The babe is wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

WIFE: *(Stands up, with an in-drawn breath of awe and puts her hand over her mouth)* Could this be the child in the stable? *(With stricken look SHE sits back down.)*

SHEPHERD 2: Then, there were so many angels all around. They just came out of no where. We fell on our faces.

SHEPHERD 3: And then, they all praised God. They said, "Glory to God in the highest."

(SHEPHERDS nod in agreement. They sit on hay or stage. Shepherd/Angel Medley -- [Other options would be the choir or have everyone join in singing lively] "While Shepherds Watch--" "The First Noel," "Hark the Herald Angels Sing.")

INNKEEPER'S WIFE: (To the SHEPHERDS) Come, come. To the stable. (To HERSELF in amazement) My swaddling cloths. (SHEPHERDS and WIFE exit.)

(WISE MEN break in imperiously, {Through a back door, if possible} inquiring of the INNKEEPER.)

WISE MAN 1: (Looks around room, says somewhat softly) Where is He? (Looks around again, somewhat desperate, says loudly) Where is He?

INNKEEPER: Who are you looking for?

WISE MAN 1: The King of the Jews.

(WISE MEN begin meandering through the tables, meeting the INNKEEPER at center of the room.)

WISE MAN 2: We saw His star...(Gesturing)...in the East.

WISE MAN 3: (Seeming somewhat exhausted) We followed and followed it.

(Song: "We Three Kings" - WISE MEN sing as they meander through crowd.)

WISE MAN 1: We were told that the King would be born in Bethlehem of Judea. (All WISE MEN nod in agreement.)

(In the darkness during the song the Nativity scene has been set on stage or at the front of the room with JOSEPH, MARY, BABY JESUS, SHEPHERDS, and INNKEEPER'S WIFE. Add animals if possible.)

READER 5: "But as for you, (Opens arms to all the people) O Bethlehem, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days." (Micah 5:2)

(Song: "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem." LIGHT on Nativity Scene. INNKEEPER and WISE MEN join the tableau. Songs for a children's choir, if desired, might include "Away in a Manger" and "What Child Is This?" LIGHT off Nativity Scene.)

PASTOR: Let us all worship Him. (Community sing. Suggested songs include "O Come, All Ye Faithful," "How Great Our Joy," "Angels from the Realm of Glory," "Joy to the World," "Silent Night," and an exit song, "Go Tell It on the Mountain." Pastor thanks everyone for coming, acknowledges cast, says prayer, etc., dismissing group.

THE END

Mary's Song (I Am Yours)

Music & Lyrics by
Scott Keys

legato *mp*

5

How can this be? I'm sore a- fraid This hea- ven- ly

Em Em/D C(add2) Em/D

9

plan made that I should be a hand- maid of the Lord. Are You

Em Em/D C(add2) Em/D

13

test- ing me? I walk t'ward an un- cer- tain des- ti- ny How did I come to

Em Em/D C(add2) Em/D

I AM YOURS-2

17

be so blessed? In me You trust this di - vine re - ward? I am

Em Em/D C(add2) C/D Em Em/D

cresc.

21

Yours. My life is Yours. My bo - dy,

Cmaj7 Bm7/E Cmaj7 Bm7/E

f

25

Yours, my heart be stilled, it has been willed I am here to see your

Cmaj7 Bm7/E Cmaj7 Bm7/E

dim.

29

pro - phe - cy ful - filled.

Am7 Bm7 C C/D Bm7/E

mp

I AM YOURS-3

33

I am to be Jo - seph's wife, Jo - seph's bride

Em Em/D C(add2) Em/D

37

A fam - i - ly, a life guid - ed by the hand of God What You re -

Em Em/D C(add2) Em/D

41

quest of me, I nod my head, face my des - ti - ny How did I come to

Em Em/D C(add2) Em/D

45

be so blessed, in me You saw the grace to tread a path that none have

Em Em/D C(add2) Em/D

49

trod I am Yours. My life is

Em Em/D C^(add2) Em Em/D Cmaj⁷ Bm⁷/E

53

Yours. My bo - dy, Yours, it's been fore - told

Cmaj⁷ Bm⁷/E Cmaj⁷ Bm⁷/E

57

what my fu - ture will hold Fit my life in - to your

Cmaj⁷ Bm⁷/E Cmaj⁷ Bm⁷/E

61

mold For I am Yours. My soul is

Cmaj⁷ Bm⁷/E Cmaj⁷ Bm⁷/E

I AM YOURS-5

65

Yours. My bo - dy, Yours, my heart be stilled, it has been

Cmaj7 Bm7/E Cmaj7 Bm7/E

sim.

69

willed I am here to see your pro - phe - cy ful -

Cmaj7 Bm7/E Am7 Bm7 C C/D

73

filled.

Bm7/E

diminuendo e ritard

Joseph's Song (A Simple Carpenter)

Music & Lyrics by
Scott Keys

Musical notation for the first system, measures 1-3. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The music is marked *mp* and *Gently In 2*. The piano part consists of chords in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand. Chords are labeled B^b, E^b (add2), and E^b m⁶.

Musical notation for the second system, measures 4-6. Measure 4 is marked with a box containing the number 5. The piano part continues with the same chord progression. Chords are labeled B^b, E^b (add2), and E^b m⁶. The lyrics "A sim - ple" are written under the notes in measure 6.

Musical notation for the third system, measures 7-9. Measure 7 is marked with a box containing the number 9. The piano part continues. Chords are labeled B^b, E^b (add2), and E^b m⁶. The lyrics "car - pen - ter" are under measure 7, and "My life is plain, my home is" are under measures 8-9.

Musical notation for the fourth system, measures 10-12. Measure 10 is marked with a box containing the number 13. The piano part continues. Chords are labeled B^b, E^b (add2), and E^b m⁶. The lyrics "spare" are under measure 10, and "A hus - band's love must be" are under measures 11-12.

A SIMPLE CARPENTER-2

17

free of doubt do I de-serve one so rare so

Gm Gm/F Gm/E

poco cresc.

21

bless-ed and de-vout A low-ly

E^b/F E^bm⁹/F

ritard e dim.

25

car-pen-ter My arms are strong, my hands are

B^b E^b(add2) E^bm⁶

29

rough. A fath-er's touch should be a

B^b E^b(add2) E^bm⁶

A SIMPLE CARPENTER-3

33

gen - tle one Am I worth - y e - nough to hold Your

Gm Gm/F Gm/E

cresc.

37

Son? A chair, a ta - ble or a

E♭/F Dm

f

41

bench That's all I know how to

E♭ Dm

45

build I will pre - pare the best I'm

E♭ Dm

A SIMPLE CARPENTER-4

49

ab - le, Your in - ten - tions I will serve Carve out a

E^b Dm

53

life for them and see Your pro - phe - cy ful - filled

Cm⁷ F⁷sus⁴

57

A hum - ble car - pen - ter

E^bm⁹/F B^b

61

My soul is pure, my heart is full

E^b (add2) E^bm⁹ B^b

A SIMPLE CARPENTER-5

85

A car-pen-ter's faith must be sol-id as wood

E^b(add2) E^bm⁶ Gm Gm/F

89

God give me strength to han-dle fath-er-hood

Gm/E E^b/F

73

I will build the child a cra-dle

Dm E^b

77

It may be rough, it may be flawed

Dm E^b

A SIMPLE CARPENTER-6

81

But there he'll dream and sleep and I will keep him safe

Dm Eb

85

Your Son, my son the Son of

Cm7 Dm7 Eb Eb/F

89 (alternate higher note)

God.

Bb Eb (add2) Ebm6

93

Bb Eb (add2) Ebm6 Bb