

In the Light of the Nativity

By Terri Dill
Music and lyrics by Bob Marshall

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I would like to dedicate this play to my dad, Dwayne Jackson, Jr. who passed away in August 2015. During the last few months of his life he would read this play every day and kept a copy of the script by his chair. When I would visit him, he would pick it up and tell me how proud he was of me and that my plays helped him to see the stories of the Bible in a new way. He would always have a list of questions about scripture, and we would ponder them together. Over those months, my father and I became the best of friends. I saw my dad in a different light. I saw how God had touched his life, and how he truly had become a man of God. Thanks, Dad, for being there when I needed someone to lean on and to pour my heart out to. You loved me unconditionally and I miss you so much.

STORY OF THE PLAY

It is Christmastime, 1855, in a small fishing village in Maine. The mayor and his wife try to keep the villagers on their toes with harbor rules and planning of a traditional Christmas Eve celebration, but the villagers are reluctant to work together. During a relentless snowstorm, Holly, a young mother, finds solace and shelter in the town's Nativity stable where she nestles her son in the manger. While she sleeps, her baby is taken. Quickly, Prophete Harbor rallies around Holly and helps search for her missing son. God's messengers provide saving grace in a tough situation.

It is in the light of the Nativity that these villagers find the true meaning of Christmas as they experience it firsthand. The miracle of the unexpected is a message of hope and love.

As we look on, we too are reminded that it is His light that shines for us in every darkness, helping us to find our way and filling our hearts with the love of the Christ child. It is a gift, freely given, so we may experience the unconditional love of the Savior.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(8 m, 8 w, 4 children, extras.)

JOE: Older, helpful villager.

PASTOR SAYWARD: Pastor of the small church.

CATHERINE MOORE: Owner of the dry goods store.

PETE MATCHET: Married to Margaret, has not been to church in years. Estranged brother to Elisa.

HOLLY: A young mother leaving an abusive marriage.

MARGARET MATCHET: Married to Pete.

MAYOR KEATING: The mayor of Prophyte Harbor.

JESS: Sailor.

JACKSON: Older villager.

MAUDE: General store owner.

ELISA KEATING: Knows her own mind. Sister to Pete, wife to Mayor Keating.

NETTIE: Young woman who works in the general store.

CAPTAIN: Works in the Chart House, tries to keep the peace.

CHRISTY, BILLIE, NATE, MAGGIE: Children of the village.

HANNAH: An angel.

GABRIEL: An angel.

ISABELLE: Pastor's wife.

EXTRAS: Villagers and sailors.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

Fort Morgan United Methodist Church, Colorado, December 11th and 12th, 2015 under the direction of the playwright. The cast: Bob Kula, Dan Schiller, Laurie Hecker, George Saiter, Jennifer So, Norma Saiter, John LaPorte, Jarry Schaefer, Pam Nestor, Alan Meyer, Mike Hecker, Sue Schaefer, Erin Hecker, Lillian Jones, Jeremiah Saiter, Aurora Bullard, Braydin Schreiner, Shirley Bowles, Mitch Church, Mary Zorn, Sarah Butler and Joe Woodard.

SONGS

1. My Sweet Baby.....*Holly*
2. Rules.....*All villagers*
3. When the Stars Fell.....*Hannah and Gabriel*
4. A Miracle.....*Gabriel, Pastor Sayward,
Captain and Jackson*
5. Christmas Is His Story.....*Catherine, Isabelle and
Margaret*
6. In the Light of the Nativity.....*Everyone*

SETTING

It is mid-December 1855, and Prophte Harbor, a small fishing village off the coast of Maine, is feeling the effects of another harsh winter. Working lampposts line the main street which has a general store, the dry goods store, and the chart house. A modest church with stained glass windows is on the corner. Near the church is a temporary stable where a Nativity is going to be placed. A manger, bales of straw, and a pretend donkey are inside. In the background upstage the working lighthouse is a constant reminder for the villagers and for sailors that this place is a safe harbor even in the worst of times.

PRODUCTION NOTES

While the scenes are labeled for rehearsal purposes, the changes from scene to scene should be almost instantaneous to keep the action moving, allowing the play to flow easily.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: A calm night, just outside the church. The lighthouse continues to shine brightly and offers comfort as it falls on the water's edge. The stained glass windows in the church on the corner reflect that light. Lampposts have been lit. JOE brings straw to the Nativity stable. He scatters some of it about, then stops to look out over the water. He places the manger in its rightful place.)

JOE: *(Brushes hands together to get the hay off.)* Just a few more days and this here stable will be full of people. *(Talking to the donkey, he moves it off to one side.)* Now, there you go, Gus. You just sit there 'cause your time is coming soon. Mary and Joseph will be filling this stable with God's light. *(Pause.)* Now, don't look at me like I just lost my mind. You know what I mean, Gus. Light, you know light. *(Uses his hands to demonstrate something big.)* Do I have to draw you a picture? See this manger? Well, the baby Jesus will go in there and at some point the light will shine for all to see, because He is God's light. *(Pause as if he is listening to the donkey.)* What do you mean, what do I mean? *(Chuckles.)* Well, my friend, you are just going to have to trust me on this one. *(Pats the donkey on the head and chuckles as he walks away.)*

(PASTOR SAYWARD exits the church and turns to lock door. He adjusts the small church sign hanging on a stand. FX: It begins to snow. Pastor pulls on gloves and adjusts his scarf. He sees JOE coming and steps out to greet him.)

PASTOR SAYWARD: Good evening, Joe. It is kind of a late night for you. *(Pause.)* What brings you to town? *(FX: It snows harder and the Pastor brushes snow from his hat.)*

JOE: The mayor's wife is pushing to get the stable set up for the Nativity. I told her we have plenty of time to get it done before Christmas. She starts to get a little jumpy if everything isn't up and ready for the Christmas Eve display by the 15th.

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PASTOR SAYWARD: I do believe that woman could run this state if given the chance. *(JOE nods in agreement.)* I just want you to know how much we all appreciate you putting up the Nativity scene every year. This year it seems colder than ever. If you need help with any of the details, let me know.

JOE: Will do, Pastor.

PASTOR SAYWARD: Do you want to go into the church to warm up? The fire went out a little bit ago but the church still feels pretty warm.

JOE: Thanks, but the captain asked me to spend the night in the lighthouse to make sure everything goes all right with this storm comin' in. He worries about some of the fishermen who think they can fish in any weather. *(Pause.)* Everything should go smoothly. I told everyone I saw down by the pier this morning that a storm was brewin' and they best be watchful.

PASTOR SAYWARD: Yes, but you know how that goes. Always one person thinks they can fish just one more hour before they need to get back to land.

JOE: I think we both best be going before this snow really starts to get bad. *(Pause.)* You have a nice night, Pastor, and say hello to the misses for me. *(Starts to walk towards the lighthouse and realizes the Pastor is still standing on the street.)* Pastor, you okay?

(The PASTOR stares into the sky, fixated.)

JOE: *(Cont'd.)* Pastor Sayward? What are you lookin' at?

(Even as he speaks the PASTOR continues to stare, almost taken aback.)

PASTOR SAYWARD: *(Hesitates then lets out a long breath.)* Didn't you see that? *(HE looks at JOE who stands, questioning.)* I looked up to see if the snow was picking up, and I saw three stars falling to the ground, almost at the same time!! Strangest thing I have ever seen.

End of Freeview

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