***Christ Is Born! A Refugee Story***

**A Bible-Based Christmas Pageant**

Arranged in 2015 by Anna Flowers for Greenpoint Reformed Church

**Welcome** [one of the pastors leads]

**Leader:** Who are we?

**All:** We are young and old, gay and straight and in between. We are single and partnered, happy and sad, confused and inspired. We are street smart and college- educated. Some of us can’t pay our bills and others have more than enough to share.

**Leader:** Who are we?

**All:** We are God’s people. We are the Body of Christ. Leader: Whoever you are and wherever you are on life’s journey,

**All:** You’re welcome here.

**Narrator 1:** Today our children tell us the story of the birth of Jesus.

**Narrator 2:** The story we celebrate at Christmas.

**Narrator 1:** It’s easy for all the details to be tinsle-ed over with Christmas cheer.

**Narrator 2:** But before there was Santa Claus, and presents, and fat turkeys in the oven – before there were any of the traditions we know and love – there was a child.

**Narrator 1:** A small, fragile child.

**Narrator 2:** Born in a dirty stable.

**Narrator 1:** Because no one would give his parents shelter.

**Narrator 2:** And there was an evil king, who wished the small baby harm.

**Narrator 1:** So his parents had to flee – in the darkness of night.

**Narrator 2:** They became refugees – a family on the move.

**Narrator 1:** Fleeing their homeland to protect the life of their child.

**Narrator 2:** Our child.

**Narrator 1:** Our Savior.

**Narrator 2:** Join us as we listen with our hearts for the message God has for us this day. [Lights 3rd Advent Candle]

[Pause]

**Narrator 1:** Now before we begin, we’d like to invite some congregational participation throughout the story. Here’s what we’d like you to do: Every time a narrator says, “Herod”...

**Narrator 2:** You Boo and Hiss.

**Narrator 1:** Let’s Practice. There once was an evil King named Herod…

**Narrator 2:** [with congregation] *Boooooooooo….* And the second thing we’d like you to do is: Every time you hear the narrator say, “Where will they go?”

**Narrator 1:** You say, “Follow the star!”

**Narrator 2:** Let’s practice: Mary and Joseph were wandering around. Where will they go?

**Narrator 1:** [with congregation] *Follow the star!*

**Narrator 2:** Fantastic. We’re now ready to begin...

[Pause]

**Narrator 2:** This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists. This first enrollment occurred when Quirinius governed Syria. Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled. Since Joseph belonged to David’s house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David’s city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. He went to be enrolled together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant. Where will they go? [with congregation] *Follow the star!*

O Little Town of Bethlehem

[An Angel carrying a star dangling from a pole walks ahead of Mary and Joseph. Mary and Joseph walk down the LEFT AISLE to the stage. They pause center stage.]

**Narrator 1:** While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. But there was no room for them in the inn. Where will they go? [with congregation] *Follow the star!*

I Wonder as I Wander – could the band play this as a solo? Or only instrumentals?

[Angel with star leads Mary and Joseph down the center aisle. 3 kids are staged in front pews. Joseph pretends to knock on the door of the pews. Innkeeper kids fold their arms and shake their heads, “No!” Mary and Joseph make their way back to center stage and sit beside the manger.]

**Narrator 2:** She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger.

The Friendly Beasts

[Jesus is placed in the manger. Animals take to the stage.]

**Narrator 1:** Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night.

The First Noel

[Shepherds begin walking down the center aisle. Angel with star comes out to meet them mid-way.]

The Lord’s angel stood before them, the Lord’s glory shone around them, and they were terrified.

[Shepherds crouch on the ground in fear.]

**Narrator 2:** The angel said, “Don’t be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David’s city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger.” Where will they go? [with congregation] *Follow the star!*

Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, “Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors.”

Angels We Have Heard on High

[Shepherds gather around the manger. All the Angels join them on stage.]

**Narrator 1:** When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go right now to Bethlehem and see what’s happened. Let’s confirm what the Lord has revealed to us.” They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.

**Narrator 2:** After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod [Booooooo!!!] , magi came from the east to Jerusalem. They asked, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We’ve seen his star in the east, and we’ve come to honor him.” Where will they go? [with congregation] *Follow the star!*

We Three Kings

[The Magi come in the pulpit door and walk down the LEFT AISLE holding their hands to their brows in search of the baby Jesus.]

**Narrator 1:** When King Herod [Booooooo!] heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him. He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born. They said, “In Bethlehem of Judea.”

Then Herod [Booooo!] secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you’ve found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him.”

Coventry Carol

[Offering Plate is passed around]

**Narrator 2:** When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Away in a Manger [BRITISH TUNE. Kids sing 1st verse alone. Congregation joins in after.]

[The Magi walk down the CENTER AISLE and kneel before the manger, holding up their gifts [INCLUDING THE OFFERING PLATES] to the baby. Everyone on stage at this point.]

**Narrator 1:** Because the magi were warned in a dream not to return to Herod [Boooooo!], they went back to their own country by another route. When they had departed, an angel from the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up. Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod [Boooo!] will soon search for the child in order to kill him.” Joseph got up and, during the night, took the child and his mother to Egypt. He stayed there until Herod [Boooooo!] died.

**Narrator 2:** And that’s how the story goes. The story of Jesus’s birth.

**Narrator 1:** We tell it every year, and yet its meaning comes to us with freshness each season.

**Narrator 2:** This year, with so many people homeless, displaced, or seeking a new land as refugees, let us remember that Jesus himself was a refugee.

**Narrator 1:** Born in a stable. Running from death towards safety far from home in Egypt.

**Narrator 2:** Please rise and join with us in our Christmas Affirmation of Faith, from the Salt Collective:

**ALL:**

As Christians, we believe in a God who creates all things: people, religions, languages, beauty, and every color in the rainbow.

As Christians, we believe in a God who becomes flesh, is born in a stable, a refugee with nowhere to lay his head.

As Christians, we believe in a God who fills us with the courage to welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, and love the foreigner because we were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

This is who we are as Christians: people created to love, to welcome the stranger, and to walk, hand in hand with all God's people, through God’s starry night and into the dawn.

**Narrator 1:** And now as people created in love, let us join together and sing Joy to the World as we celebrate Jesus’s birth and the fantastic performance by all our young church members!

Joy to the World

[Baby Jesus gets picked up. Entire cast walks/dances down CENTER AISLE and then loops back around the take bows in front on stage.]

**Pastor:** Thanks children and parents for participation. Invites congregation to join us tomorrow night for Blue Christmas at 7:00 p.m. and then on Christmas Eve at 5:00 p.m. for Family Service and 7:00 p.m. for Candlelight Service.