

The Bum's Rush (Play Copyright 1991 — Barry McWilliams)

A Christmas play and program prepared Barry McWilliams, (Unconsciously inspired, in part, by O'Henry's "The Cop and the Anthem") Presented on Christmas Morning, Dec 25th, 1991 at Lake Stevens Presbyterian Church, Lake Stevens, Wa.

Set: Center Stage A dark, trashy alley (trash can and tire) framed by a "false fronts" hotel and bank. In front of them a pair of Streetlights, a bench and bus stop sign. Bell Ringer beside one Streetlight in front of Bank On the left a church "sanctuary" ("stained glass" windows, piano, Choir "loft"), to the right of the Hotel (a "no vacancy" sign in window) is a "Jr. Patrolmen" Christmas tree lot.— We were worshipping in a Elementary school gym which gave us plenty of stage space.

Principal players: Bum, a homeless woman with a baby(doll), Banker, Policeman, Choir Director, Father, Mother and little girl, Manger Scene children, a Bell Ringer, hotel manager, some "Jr. Patrolmen", and a Choir.

Words of introduction and Explanation:

Meditation: "If Jesus came in our day, where would we find him?. What would we see when we found him? Would we recognize him as one who came from the father to show us the love of God? The Bible says "He came to his own and they received him not."

When Jesus was born, he was born in a stable, because there was no room in the inn. He was welcomed by a few humble shepherds. Yet the Bible says he revealed to us the love of God, the Father, for a dark world..."

Scene 1: Sound of Clock striking 5 P.M. Bank is closing - lights go out - Banker - Comes out of bank and Turns "Open" sign to "Closed", Banker locks door - Turns and stares with disgust at sleeping bum as Policeman walks up.

Policeman Kilpatrick "Good evening Mr. Barker, Everything secure for the night?"

Banker Barker "Oh, Officer Kilpatrick, yes, the bank's all locked up, What's that bum doing on the Bus stop bench in front of my bank?"

Policeman Kilpatrick "He appears to be sleeping"

Banker Barker "Well it's not good for my business to have indigent people - such as him - on the street in plain sight in front of my prestigious bank now, is it?"

Policeman Kilpatrick "He could be waiting for a bus?"

Banker Barker "I doubt it, why this man hasn't a "cent" (sniffs) - well maybe he does. Don't the city have an ordinance concerning this, officer!"

Policeman Kilpatrick "Don't worry, I'll take care of the matter."

Banker Barker "Good, well good night!"

Policeman Kilpatrick "Merry Christmas to you, Sir."

Banker suddenly remembers something

Banker Barker "Christmas? Is it Christmas eve? I'd nearly forgotten. Would you know where I can get a Christmas Tree at this hour? I promised one for the church's Christmas program tonight."

Policeman Kilpatrick "The Church Christmas program is practicing right now. If I might make a recommendation, the Jr. Patrolmen have a charity stand a block over."

Banker Barker "Thank you, I'll go there. Charity - heh, heh, I can claim a double deduction!"

Policeman proceeds to wake Bum

Policeman Kilpatrick "Hey, Bo! Wake up! You can't Sleep here!"

Bum "I was just waiting for the bus."

Policeman Kilpatrick "Well the last bus went by half an hour ago, next bus isn't due till after Christmas."

Bum "I can wait" bum starts to lie down again.

Policeman Kilpatrick "No you don't! Get back into the alley where you belong unless you would prefer to wait for the bus at the police station, that is?"

Bum "Would you be inviting me for Christmas dinner?"

Policeman Kilpatrick "You'd like that, wouldn't you - go on get outta here." Brandishes stick

Bum (Bows) "Since you put it that way I bid you a merry Christmas"

"The Bum's Rush" page 2

Scene 2: Rehearsal at church

(Lights on in church)

Director "Can I have your attention, choir! This is our last rehearsal, so let's get it right ... All Together, and this time I want to hear you sing..."

Song: "Dear Little Stranger"

Director "Thanks, You sounded real good. Now I am sure you'll be great tonight, everyone take a break while we set up the nativity scene."

(Lights go down in church and on center stage) Meanwhile Bum mimes poverty - hunger - no food - what to do — getting an idea - beg??! Banker enters, pauses at Bell Ringer (Bum watching)

Bell Ringer "Help the Orphans Sir?"

Banker "Oh why certainly, You do have change for a \$20?"

Bell Ringer "Change? I guess I have enough in here, sir!"

Banker "Well, Here you go" (Tosses a couple of quarters)

Bell Ringer (attempts a smile) "Merry Christmas sir"

Banker "Where's my receipt?"

Bell Ringer "Receipt, Sir?"

Banker "Receipt! For tax purposes!"

Bell Ringer "I guess I could write you one."

Banker "Oh never mind, I guess I can get by without just once."

Banker -Proceeds to Tree stand - "Hey boys, I want your best tree for the church program tonight"

Boy "All our best trees have been sold already"

Banker "Well I want the best you have. Show me what you have got."

Choir Song "Oh Christmas Tree" (alternate verse 1) as the Bum prowls around the Bell Ringer who keeps a watchful eye on him. Woman enters with baby, looking confused and sad.

Woman "Could you tell me where the bank is"

Policeman "It's closed, lady. The Banker left a little while ago to look for a Christmas tree."

Woman "Oh dear - my car is broken down and I've no cash to pay the mechanic, and my baby and I don't have a place to stay tonight either."

Policeman "I'm sorry to hear that lady! You might try the hotel down the street..."

Choir Song "Oh Christmas Tree" (alternate verse 2) as the woman proceeds toward the hotel and the Bum rummages in trash throws away a "will work for food" sign, pulls out a "*elp the 'omeless*" sign and takes his position.

Banker "I guess I'll take that one - but it's kind of crooked - so how about reducing the price?"

Boy 1 "Mr. Barker, we're selling these trees for Charity"

Banker "And I'm buying it for charity - so you ought to mark it down. This is for charity, right?"

Boys together "That's right! For charity - our favorite charity - us!"

Banker "You will help me carry it to the church later, won't you?"

Boys "Yes sir"

Banker proceeds by Bum who's attempting to solicit like Bell Ringer

Bum "Help the homeless sir?"

Banker "You again. That bum who was sleeping in front of my bank ... Impersonating a charity - I'll put an end to this -- Police!"

Policeman comes up spots Bum, "Hey you!"

Bum grabs hat and runs into alley chased by cop as Banker exits. (Lights go down in centerstage)

Scene 3

Lights go up in Church "Parents" and children staging manger scene - in costumes as shepherds, wise men, angels, etc - director trying to get them in place - Director tries explaining manger scene to children

Director "Ok, Mary and Joseph - you are supposed to be by the manger, and the shepherds over there..."

Little girl "Where's baby Jesus?"

Director "He's in the manger"

Little girl "No he isn't - that's just a doll! I want to see the baby."

Director "Missy, I'll explain later... right now we have program to do - Ok, all the shepherds over here... wise men over there... Angels behind the manger... Janey? Where's Janey? Janey?"
Little girl to a friend "Where's the baby Jesus?"
Friend "I don't know either"
Director "OK, Janey stay right there! Now let's sing our song...."

Children's Song "Away in the Manger" (Variant, Choir extra verses)

Director "That was fine! Maybe a few of you can help me set up. Everyone remember to be on time tonight. Remember the nativity can't go on without us."

Scene 4

Children and parents leave church, except for a few people who are talking (silently going through motions). Bum in alley lites fire (Christmas lites in a tire) and rummages through trash can. Meanwhile at hotel.
Woman "I could pay you when the bank opens..."
Man at desk - "Sorry lady! Cash up front - besides We're full up tonight! Can't help you."
Woman sits on bench and starts to cry.
Woman "Oh what are we going to do? You're so helpless and it's starting to get cold and we've nothing to eat and no place to stay."
(Bum walks up and listens)
Bum "Last bus went by an hour ago."
Woman "I'm not waiting for the bus."
Bum "I know, I heard you talking to the baby. He's a cute little guy."
Woman "What can we do - I've no money, no place to stay."
Bum "I've a warm spot in the alley, a fire and a little bit to eat. Stay on this bench and you'll get arrested, if you don't freeze first."
Woman "Thank you! No one else seems to care."

They proceed to the alley where they take "Nativity scene" positions around a "flickering fire barrel" Meanwhile the rehearsal has ended - director, Parents and little girl are leaving - crossing to Stage Right.

Director "Thanks for your help. I tell you I have got a case of the Jitters, I don't know how I'll will make it through tonight."
Mother "It'll be OK - the rehearsal is always a flop"
Director "That Janey Jones can be such a pain"
Mother "Who ever cast her as an angel should have known better - she makes a much better black sheep!" (laughs)
Director "Well be sure and be on time for program tonight - 7:30 sharp!"
Mother "Right, See you tonight"

Director exits stage left as Couple with Child exit stage right, passing by alley they see bum and woman
Father "I do wish the city would do something about all these bums!"
Mother "How can anybody live like that?"
Father "Why don't they just go back to where they came from for the holidays at least - there are enough "beggars" in the streets without them."
But the little girl stops and stares, then chases her mom
Little Girl "Mommy, mommy, I saw the baby Jesus in the alley, mommy! please come look!" (but she is unable to get her to come look.)
Mother "Nonsense child, come along." All lights out, but fire - house lights for intermission

Act 2 - a bum's story

Bum and woman with baby in alley by fire barrel. House lights down

Choir Song: "How Can I fear?"

Woman "Sure is cold in this alley"

Bum "Be a lot colder without this fire - want some more stew?"

Woman "Do we have any more?"

Bum "No, but it's kind of nice to pretend"

Woman "The real thing beats pretending any day of the week."

Bum "How come you and the baby don't have a home to go to on a cold night like this? Where's the baby's father?"

Woman "He's in jail! Can't keep a steady job. Don't know why I ever got mixed up with him! Claims he didn't do it!"

Bum "Did he?"

Woman "I don't know. I don't care. He's all we got."

Bum "I would bet he'd be real unhappy seeing you and the baby on the streets."

Woman "I don't really know for sure. He's a lot like my father - never pays much attention to me."

Bum "What about your parents?"

Woman "My dad kicked me out. Didn't like my boyfriend."

Bum "Doesn't your father and mother love you?"

Woman "If they did, why'd they kick me out when I needed them most? I can't remember when my father was ever nice to anyone - he just got angry a lot and yelled a lot."

Bum "He never told you he loved you?"

Woman "Oh he said it from time to time, but he never showed it. How about you? Your father love you being a bum?"

Bum (defensively) "I like being free and easy. Got tired of the rat race."

Woman "You got family somewhere?"

Bum "Nope. Had a wife, she left me long time ago."

Woman "Nobody loves a bum, huh?"

Bum "Well, I may be a bum, but my father's in heaven, and He loves me just as I am."

Woman (sarcastically) "So God loves a bum - I guess somebody has to..."

Bum "He's no stranger to being homeless - spent a few years wandering from town to town himself. But he told me he loved me and showed me as well."

Woman "I wish I could say that - but I wouldn't know a loving father if I saw one, let alone a heavenly one. And as for heaven, I haven't the slightest idea what that is either."

Bum "Bible says 'God was in the world and the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. The word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only son who came from the father, full of grace and truth. No man has seen God at anytime, but God the only son who is at the father's side has made him known.'"

Woman "Are you a bum or a preacher?"

Bum "Well some preachers are bums and some bums are preachers. but enough of that, its a good night for a story. Bum "Let me tell you a little story I heard once. **"The Story of the Mousewife"** adapted from a story by Rumor Godden. (See Text below)

Policeman enters on Right **Song: Policeman: "I wonder as I wander"**

Act 3: Christmas Cheer

The Choir and Manger children assemble in the Church with the "parents" occupying front seats. "Angel" Janey is missing. Banker, boys and policeman are fetching the tree. As hymn ends, the pianist plays softly a prelude as the ensuing dialog and action takes place ...

Director "OK, children, it's almost time to start. Where's Janey? ... Janey? Everyone stay here while I look for him." She leaves calling softly for "Janey?"

Little girl to friend: "I saw Baby Jesus in the Alley. Want to come see?"

They leave church and go to the alley where they kneel by the Bum and woman

The rest of the "Manger Scene" Children start passing on the word "Baby Jesus is in the Alley! Let's go see. Pass it on!" and they go to the alley as well. Then the Choir follows and then the Parents.

"What's going on?"

"Where is everyone going?"

"Let's go see"

"This ought to be interesting"

"I didn't know we were going to have an outdoor nativity this year"

As the last of the parents are leaving, the director comes in with the lost angel in tow. "Ok, now we are ready..." looks around in disbelief "Where has everyone gone?"

Policeman arrives at alley - "Hey children, what's the commotion? Shouldn't you be at the church?" (Sees bum) "Oh it's you! Still trying for Christmas dinner at the station house!"

Bum "I was just helping the lady with the baby, officer..."

Children "We all came to see the Baby Jesus..."

Policeman "Baby?"

Woman "It's MY baby, officer..."

Policeman "Hey aren't you that woman that was stranded in town? I thought I sent you to the hotel!"

Woman "There was no vacancy - we had no place to stay till this kind man brought us here to warm up!"

Policeman "An alley is no place for a baby. I could let you stay at the jail tonight..."

Children "YOU CAN'T PUT BABY JESUS IN JAIL!!"

Policeman "They can't stay here!"

Banker and boys arrive. "Wait officer, I will take them to my place, and I'm sure the Jr. Patrolmen have spare some money for her - from their Charity Christmas Tree lot. Right Boys?"

Boys "We sure do" Boys step up and give her cash

Woman "This is so kind of you all. Thank you all, and Merry Christmas!"

Choir director comes out of church dragging Janey..."So here's my shepherds and wise men and my choir! What about our program?"

Policeman "Might as well have your program here. The whole town is in this alley tonight."

Someone starts singing "Silent night" - Everyone joins in

As the song ends, Policeman places hand on shoulder of Bum.

Policeman (sternly) "Hey Bo - how about Christmas Dinner!"

Bum (frightened) "At the Jail?"

Policeman "No, with me and my wife and six kids. They love stories."

Song "White Christmas"

Congregational Hymn: "O Come to my heart Lord Jesus."

Closing meditation - God revealed his love to us in sending his Son. Where do we find God's love revealed today. Not just in Church Services, but in the hearts of those who have found His son and are willing to take that love into the alleys and darkness of this world. Jesus said that a cup of cold water given to someone in need in his name, was given to him. This Christmas let's share God's love with those he came to save..."

The story of the Mouse wife (adapted from Rumor Godden)

All old houses have mice. Where ever there are wooden floors and beams and rafters and wooden stairs and wainscots and skirting boards and larders, there are mice. They creep out on the carpets for crumbs, they whisk in and out of their holes, they run in the wainscot and between the ceiling and the floors. There are no signposts because they know the way around their little world, and no mile stones because no one is there to see them run.

Except for, perhaps, Bell the cat, the mice call him "Bell Zebub". When he is about the mice must always be careful, nervously watching, tiny dewdrop eyes twinkling, whiskers twitching, ready to dash at the hint of danger. But Bell was a lazy old cat, and the few mice foolish enough to be caught deserved their fate.

Mice are always the same. There are no fashions in mice, they do not change. If a mouse had a portrait of his great grandfather or even his great great grandfather, it would look exactly like a mouse today.

But once there was a mouse who was different from the rest. She looked the same; same round pink ears, and prick nose and wiskers and dewdrop eyes, the same little bones and grey fur, the same skinny paws and long skinny tail.

She did all the things a mouse wife does; she made a nest for the mouse babies she hoped to have one day; she collected crumbs of food for her mouse husband and herself; once she bit the tops off a bowl of crocuses; and she played with the other mice at midnight on the attic floor.

"What more do you want?" asked her mouse husband.

She did not know what it was she wanted, but she wanted more.

The house where these mice lived belonged to a spinster lady called Miss Barbara Wilkinson. The mice thought the house was the whole world. The garden and wood that lay round it were as far away as the stars to you, but the mousewife used sometimes to creep up on the window sill and press her whiskers close to the glass.

In the spring she saw snowdrops and apple blossoms in the garden and bluebells in the wood, in summer there were roses; in autumn all the trees changed color, and in winter they were bare until the snow came, and they were white with snow.

The mousewife saw all these through the window, but she did not know what they were.

She was a house mouse, not a garden house or field mouse. She could not go outside.

"I think about cheese" said her mouse husband. "why don't you think about cheese?"

Then at Christmas time, he had an attack of indigestion through eating the rich crumbs of a Christmas cake. "They have upset you" said the mousewife. "You must go to bed and keep warm" she decided to move their mouse hole to a space behind the stove where it was warm. She lined the hole with tufts of carpet wool and put her sick hubby to bed in a scrap of grey flannel she had found in the sewing room.

Now it was up to her to find the food for the family, in addition to keeping the hole swept and clean.

While she was doing this, a boy brought a white turtle dove to Miss Barbara Wilkinson. He had caught it in the wood. Miss Barbara Wilkinson put it in a cage on the ledge of her sitting room window. When Bell became too curious about the new houseguest, the old tabby with his twitching tail and flashing eyes was exiled from the room.

The cage was elegant, it had golden bars and trays for water and peas, but being a canary cage was awfully cramped for the poor dove. Miss Wilkinson hung up a lump of sugar and a piece of fat. "There you have everything you want" said Miss Barbara Wilkinson.

For a day or two the dove pecked at the bars and tried to open and shut its wings. Some times it called out a lonely "Roo Coo", then it was silent.

"Why won't it eat?" Said Miss Barbara Wilkinson. "These are the very best peas."

A mouse family seldom has enough to eat. It is difficult to come by crumbs, especially in a neat tidy house as Miss Barbara Wilkinson's. It was the peas that first attracted the attention of the mousewife to the cage when at last she had time to go up to the windowsill. "I have been running here and there and everywhere to get us food" she said. "not allowing myself to come to the sill and here are all these fine peas, not to mention this piece of fat. (She didn't care for the sugar.)"

For a slender mouse it was easy to slip through the bars of the cage, but as she was taking a pea from the tray, the dove moved its wings. I can't tell you how quickly she pressed herself back through the bars across the floor and whisked into her hole. Quicker than a cat can wink its eye. (She thought the noise was Bell, the cat.)

In spite of her fright, she couldn't stop thinking of those peas. She was very hungry. "I had better not go back" she said. "There is something dangerous there", but back she went the next day.

With time the dove grew quite used to the mouse wife going in and out, and the mouse grew used to the dove.

"This is better said Miss Barbara Wilkinson. "The dove is eating her peas" but of course, he was not; it was the mouse.

The dove kept his wings folded. The mouse wife thought him large and strange and ugly with the speckles on his breast and his fine down (she thought of it as fur, not feathers). He was not at all like a mouse, his voice was deep and soft, quite unlike hers, which was a small high squeaking.

Most strange of all, to her, was that he let her take the peas, but refused them when she offered them to him. "Then at least a little water" she begged. But he didn't like water, only "dew, dew, dew"

"What is dew?" she asked. He could not tell her, but he told her how it shines on the leaves and grass in the early morning for the doves to drink. That made him think of night in the woods and how he and his mate would come down with the first light to walk on the wet earth and peck for food, and of how, then, they would fly over the fields to other woods farther away. He told this to the mousewife too.

"What is fly?" asked the ignorant little mousewife.

"Don't you know?" said the dove in surprise. He tried to stretch out his wings, but they hit the cage bars. Finally he sank back down on the perch with a sad look in his eyes.

The mousewife felt his sorrow, but she did not know why.

Because he would not eat the peas, she brought him crumbs of bread. Every day he talked to her of the world outside the window.

He told her of roofs and the tops of trees and of the rounded shapes of hills and the flat look of fields and of the mountains far away. "But I have never flown as far as that" he said, sadly. He was thinking now he never would.

To cheer him the mousewife asked him about the wind; she heard it in the house on stormy nights, shaking the doors and windows with more noise than all the mice together. The dove told her how it blew in the cornfields, making patterns in the corn, and of how it blew up clouds and sent them across the sky.

He told her these things as a dove would see them, as it flew, and the mousewife who was used to creeping, felt her head growing dizzy as if she were spinning on her tail, but she said, "Tell me more".

Each day the dove told her more. Bell, the cat, from time to time scratched at the door, but was not allowed in. When the Mousewife came the dove would lift his head and call her "Roo Coo, roo coo," in his most gentle voice. He told her of the flowers and trees and of the stars. She tried to picture what they looked like as the dove described them, but all she could think of were brass buttons reflecting the firelight.

"Why do you spend so much time on the window sill?" asked her husband. "I do not like it. The proper place for a mousewife is in her hole or coming out for crumbs and frolic with me."

The mousewife did not answer. She looked far away thinking of what the dove had told her.

Then one happy day in the spring, she had a nestful of baby mice. They were not as big as half your thumb and they were pink and hairless with pink shut eyes and little pink tails. The Mousewife loved them very much. For several days she thought of nothing and no one else. She was also busy with her husband, his digestion was no better.

One afternoon, though he went over to the opposite wall to visit a friend. He was well enough for that he said, but certainly not well enough to look for crumbs. The mouse babies were asleep, the hole was quiet, and the mousewife began to think of the dove. She tucked the nest up carefully and went up on the window to see him. Besides, she was hungry and needed some peas.

What a state the dove was in! He was drooping and nearly exhausted because he had eaten scarcely anything while she was away. He was overjoyed to see her, and spread his wings over her. "I thought you were gone, gone, gone." he said over and over again.

"The Bum's Rush" page 8

"Tut, Tut," said the mousewife. "A body has other things to do. I can't be always running off to you." but though she pretended to scold him, she had a tear at the end of her whisker for the poor dove. (Mouse tears look like millet seeds, which are the smallest seeds I know.)

She stayed a long time with the dove. When she went home, I am sorry to say, her husband bit her on the ear.

That night she lay awake thinking of the dove; mice stay up most of the night but towards dawn, they, too, curl into their beds and sleep. She thought of the dove. "I cannot visit him as much as I could wish." she said. "There is my husband, and he has never bitten me before. There are the children, and it is surprising how quickly crumbs are eaten up. And no one would believe how dirty a hole can get it if it is not attended to every day. But that is not the worst of it. The dove should not be in a cage. It is thoughtless of Miss Barbara Wilkinson to keep it there." She grew more angry as she thought of it in mouse terms. "Not to be able to run in and out and to whisk and feel how you run in your tail. To sit in a cage till your bones are stiff and whiskers grow stupid for there is nothing to smell or hear or see. When there is such a strange and beautiful world out there where the dove belongs."

Her husband and children were breathing and squeaking happily in their sleep, but the mousewife could feel her heart pounding. The, she felt it. She must go to the dove, that minute.

She crept from her bed and out of the hole onto the floor. Sunlight was streaming in a window the maid had carelessly left open. She crept across the pattern of the carpet, stopping here or there on a rose or leaf or the scroll of the border. Her head was swimming and her tail trembled. Her whiskers quivered this way and that, but there was no one and nothing to be seen; no sound, no movement anywhere. She gazed out the window and saw the garden and the trees and knew that is where the dove should be. And for a moment wished she too, could fly free above the trees and see the stars in the sky. She squeezed into the cage between the bars. The dove was sleeping his head in his feathers, which were all ruffled up. He looked plump and peaceful, but he called out sadly "roo coo" in his sleep. "He is dreaming of being free" she thought, poor thing, poor dove.

But her thoughts were suddenly interrupted by a terrible frightening sight. Bell, the cat, had sprung in through the open window. Its eyes flashed with triumph and its tail twitched fiercely. She froze in terror.

Bounding in long well thought out bounds, the cat leaped up to the cage, knocking it over with a loud crash, the dove frantically flapping its wings in a flurry of feathers. As the cat, bird and cage and mouse crashed upon the floor, the cage came apart. The bird suddenly free fluttered to the windowsill, and out into the open air, free.

The mousewife, experiencing the flight of the dove for the first time was amazed. She forgot the cat in her amazement, yearning to fly away with the dove. But the cat, having missed the bird, quickly recovered and leaped upon the mouse, its paw pinning the mousewife's tail to the floor.

The mousewife's heart seemed to stop. The Cat grimaced with a fiendish grin at catching the mouse. But before its sharp teeth could grasp the mouse, there was a flapping flurry of feathers. The dove had flown back into the window and right into the cat's face, not just once, but twice, three times. The cat tried to swipe at the bird with its free paw, but finally had to lift its paw off the mousewife's tail to seize the dove in mid air.

With a tremendous whisking scamper, the mousewife fled to her hole. Only as she gained its safety did she look back to see the Cat, the bird in its mouth.

The door opened with a bang and Miss Barbara Wilkinson shrieked at the cat in anger, but it was too late for the dove, now dropped lifeless on the floor.

If it were not for her friend, the dove, the mousewife would have perished. In coming back, he had died instead.

It was several days before the mousewife ventured out of her hole. And only when it was very dark and very quiet. But at long last she ventured upon the window sill where she had spent so much time with the dove.

As she looked out over the garden, she thought of all the dove had told her. "How shall I remember the hills and the corn and the clouds, when there is no one to tell me and so many children and crumbs and bits of fluff to think of." But as she looked up out of the window, millet tears in her eyes, she remembered how the dove set free from its cage had come back to save her. "I shall never forget the love of the dove" she said.

As she blinked the tears out of her eyes, she gazed up into the darkness and saw the stars.

It has been given to few mice to see the stars; so rare that the mousewife at first did not know what they were. They seemed as brass buttons flashing the fire light. "They are too far for me to see, farther than the garden, or the wood, beyond the farthest trees." To her they were something far and big and strange. "But not so strange to me, she thought for the dove told me of them. Now I have seen them for myself. But for the dove, I never would have known they were there. But I have seen them now for myself. And slowly, sadly, but proudly, she crept back to her bed.

The mousewife is a very old lady mouse now. Her whiskers are grey and she cannot scamper any more; even her running is slow. But her children and grand-children treat her with much respect. Many times they have heard the story of the dove. But few understand it. She is a little different from them, though she looks the same. I think she knows of a world they do not, and has known a love greater than life itself.

The Bum's Rush – Lyrics to Songs

Dear Little Stranger (1928, Renewal, Homer A. Rodeheaver) <http://www.hymntime.com/tch/htm/d/e/a/dearlitt.htm>

Low in a manger - dear little stranger, Jesus, the wonderful Savior was born;
There was none to receive Him, none to believe Him,
None but the angels were watching that morn.

Dear little Stranger, slept in a manger, No downy pillow under His head;
But with the poor He slumbered secure, the dear little Babe in His bed.

Angels descending, over him bending, chanted a tender and silent refrain;
Then a wonderful story told of His glory, Unto the shepherds on Bethlehem's plain.

Dear little Stranger, born in a manger, Maker and Monarch, and Savior of all;
I will love you forever! Grieve You? No, never! You did for me make your bed in a stall.

O Christmas Tree (Alternate Lyrics)

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,
What story do you tell to me?
A story of the Christmas day,
When in a country far away, The Christ Child came from Heaven above,
The world's great Christmas gift of love.
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree
This story sweet you tell me.

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,
What story do you tell me?
Of gifts the wisemen came to bring,
To Christ the little baby King!
And every gift your branches hold
Tell again the story old.
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree
This story sweet you tell me.

White Christmas (Alternate Lyrics)

I'm praying for a real Christmas, Just like it was so long ago:
When the Savior came and Angels sang
Praise to the name of God's dear Son.

I'm praying for a real Christmas. Let's make this prayer of mine come true.
By God's holy power I pray
Keep the Christ of Christmas in this day.

How can I Fear? (1984 Joysong II, 1985 Praises II Ron Hamilton)

http://www.hymnlyrics.org/requests/how_can_i_fear.php

When shadows fall and the night covers all, there are things that my eyes cannot see.
I'll never fear, for the Savior is near; My Lord abides with me.

How can I fear? Jesus is near. He ever watches over me.
Worries all cease; He gives me peace, How can I fear with Jesus.

When I'm alone and I face the unknown, And I fear what the future may be,
I can depend on the strength of my friend - He walks along with me.

Jesus is King, He controls everything; He is with me each night and each day.
I trust my soul to the Savior's control; He drives all fear away.

"The Bum's Rush" page 10

AWAY IN A MANGER

Tune: This will be sung to the "Cradle" melody, not the traditional tune

Singers: Verse one will be sung by the nativity cast only, verses two and three will be sung by everyone.

1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
2. 'Tis Christmas, 'tis Christmas,
The Christmas bells ring the birthday of Jesus Our Savior and King.
'Tis Christmas, 'tis Christmas,
The candles all glow, The birthday of Jesus, Let everyone know.
3. 'Tis Christmas, 'tis Christmas,
The Christmas star shines. The birthday of Jesus, A glad happy time.
'Tis Christmas, 'tis Christmas,
Our Bible recalls, The birthday of Jesus, God's love gift to all.

MEDLEY

Tune; Sung to tune of White Christmas

I'm praying for a real Christmas
Just like it was so long ago,
When the Savior came, and angels sang
Praise to the name of God's dear Son.

I'm praying for a real Christmas
Let's make this prayer of mine come true.
By God's holy power I pray,
Keep the Christ of Christmas in this day.

Tune: Sung to tune of "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

Rejoice! Rejoice! It was for you,
The Saviour came that day.
To bring to pass God's perfect plan
There was no other way.
He came. He died. He rose. He lives!
Salvation to impart.
Believe on Jesus Christ today,
He'll live within your heart.

Also **I wonder as I wander** sung as an acapello solo by the policeman

And **Joy to the World** and **O Come to my heart Lord Jesus** sung by the Congregation.

Bulletin:

Prelude:

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath
Invocation

Call to Worship: Narrator

Our program was inspired by this thought: If Jesus would have come in our day to our world, where would we look for Him? Would we recognize Him? Would we welcome Him?

Act One:

It is Christmas eve in Anytown. Business is shutting down for the holiday. The Church program is in the midst of its final rehearsal. Most of the shoppers have gone home, but a few bell-ringers and Christmas tree stands are still hoping for that last donation or purchase before Christmas brings it all to an end. In the midst of the city, there are those who are lonely, or needy or have no home of their own...

Scene 1 : A Street in Anytown

Scene 2 : At The Anytown Church

Song "*Dear Little Stranger*" (Nativity Choir)

"Dear Little Stranger, slept in a manger, No downy pillow under his head; But with the poor He slumbered secure, the dear little babe in his bed." (Unsung Chorus)

Scene 3 : A Christmas Tree stand

Song "*O Christmas Tree*" (Jr Patrolmen Choir)

Scene 4 : At The Anytown Church

Song "*Away in a Manger*" (Nativity and Patrolmen Choirs)

The symbols of the holiday - the bright decorated trees, the gifts, the candles and lights, the carols and bells derive their true joy from the Savior who has come.

Scene 5 : A Street in Anytown

Congregational Hymn # 171

Our Tithes and offerings

Act Two:

A raw cold night. No room in the inn. Two misplaced people, for whom Christmas Eve is just another night of struggling to survive. The Word became flesh, and lived for a while among us. Cold. Hungry. Weary. Unwanted. He shared our sorrows. And He showed us God's love.

Song "*How can I fear*" (Adult Choir)

Scene 1: An Alley in Anytown

Scene 2: In your imagination

"The story of the Mousewife"

Song "*I wonder as I Wander*" (Solo)

Congregational Hymn # 193

Act Three

When we were lost, Jesus came seeking us. He provides for us everything we need to have fellowship with God - forgiveness, acceptance, a new heart and new life. All He asks of us is to turn from our sins and welcome Him into our hearts.

Scene 1: At The Anytown Church

Scene 2: An ally in Anytown

Songs "*Silent Night*"

"I'm praying for a white Christmas"

"Rejoice, Rejoice" (Ensemble)

Congregational Hymn # 170

Conclusion: Narrator

Benediction

Refreshments and fellowship follow our program