

**On this holy night**

**We gather around the manger**

**Around this virgin mother**

**Around a poor carpenter**

**Around a little baby**

**Around a king**

**Around our God**

**It is telling who else is here**

**And who is not here**

**There are no powerful, influential kings**

**There are no important religious leaders**

**There are no rich land owners**

**Everything we grasp for as humans is missing**

**Everything we think is important**

**Everything we think makes for a full life**

**All these are missing**

**This family finds themselves in a stable**

**No more than a small cave**

**Because there is not even a room available at the inn**

**Even more, there is not even room in the heart of the inn keeper**

**Who is there?**

**The young mother**

**Whose faith has brought her to this day**

**The human father**

**A carpenter, going to his ancestral home**

**He arrived to fulfill a human decree**

**He ended up fulfilling God's decree**

***To you Bethlehem***

***Too small to counted among the clans of Judah***

***From you shall come forth for me***

***One who is to be ruler in Israel***

**There are a variety of animals**

**All giving glory to God**

**Simply by being what they are**

**Creatures of God**

**There are the shepherds**

**A simple, uneducated people**

**Outcasts**

**More likely associated with thieves and robbers**

**And there are angels**

**A multitude of heavenly hosts**

**And at the center of this scene**

**A tiny baby**

**One who will draw all to him in future ages**

**Kings and rulers**

**Subjects and slaves**

**And everyone in between**

**The rich and powerful**

**The poor and meek**

**Because in view of this child**

**We are all alike**

**Made in his image and likeness**

**And so we pray:**

**May your presence, Prince of Peace**

**Bless the world with peace**

**The poor with care and prosperity**

**The despairing with hope and confidence**

**The grieving with comfort and gladness**

**The oppressed with freedom and deliverance**

**The suffering with solace and relief**

**Loving Jesus, you are the only true joy of every human heart**

**May the witness of our lives shine**

**Like the star that brought the Magi to your manger**

**To bring all hearts into your presence**

**Merry Christmas**