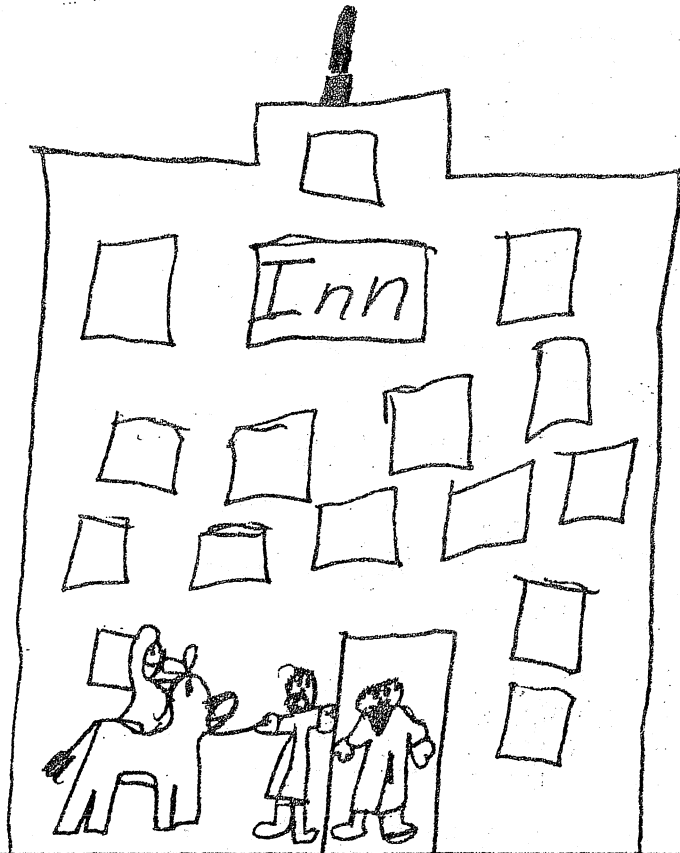


1986

WELCOME TO THE BETHLEHEM INN



CHRISTMAS, 1986

WELCOME TO THE BETHLEHEM INN

"Welcome to The Bethlehem Inn,"  
Said the innkeeper's gentle voice,  
"Sorry, there's no vacancy tonight.  
A stable in the rear is your only choice."

Poor Joseph,  
What else was there to do!  
Mary was full of life  
And now her time was due.

So he took the innkeeper's offer  
And carried Mary to the rear  
Choking back the bitter sorrow  
That she must birth the child here.

He did his best to comfort her  
Supporting her as best he could.  
With no mid-wife, nurse or doctor,  
Alone with her he stood.

Amid the cruel surroundings  
He made a straw-lined bed  
And gave Mary a resting place  
To put her weary head.

And so she labored in the night  
With Joseph by her side  
Striving there with all her might  
To birth the child inside.

It was in the deep of the night  
That the little child was born,  
And the stars up in the heavens  
Announced the dawning of a new morn.

Not the morn of another day,  
The stars announced to earth,  
But the dawn of a new creation  
To give our lives a second birth.

As Joseph took the Christ-child  
And held his little boy,  
He held there in his burly arms  
God's greatest gift of joy.

For Christ was born in Bethlehem  
Those many years ago  
That you and I and all the earth  
God's grace and love might know.

There was no room in Bethlehem  
When Christ was born, they say,  
But a greater tragedy than this  
Is when we have no room for him today.

In Christ, God comes to you and me  
To share His love and grace  
So that each and every day of life  
We might meet Him face to face.

We may pity those in Bethlehem  
Who turned the Christ away,  
But the question today for us in our hearts  
Is "do we make Christ a place to stay?"

C. Handlee Vige  
Christmas 1986

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

During this Holy Season, we wish you all the joy of the love of God, which come to us through the birth of the Christ-child at Christmas. May each day of the coming year find the chambers of your heart filled with the love and peace of Christ.

Peace and Joy in Christ!  
The Vige Family  
Pastor, Lynne, Beth and Timmy

\* Line drawing by Beth