

# **Covenant Christian Church**

## **2001 Christmas Play**

"Jennifer's Christmas Carol"  
A Short Play By Alan Assad

Prologue:

Children's Choir: "Hark the Herald Angels Sing""Angels We Have Heard On High"

Singer: "O Come, O Come, Emanuel"

Introduction:

Narrator: This is a story about Jennifer, a teenager who made some bad choices in her life -- bad choices that led her to the brink of suicide. Only after a special Christmas Eve, in which she is allowed to visit Christmas past, present, and future, does she learn about the true meaning of Christmas and of life. Join us, as the covenant Christian youth group presents, "Jennifer's Christmas Carol".

Act One

Scene 1 Hillsdale Senior High School

(Mrs. Corday is meeting with Jennifer Thomas, a student in her 12th grade English class. She is meeting with her, after class, to discuss her poor performance.)

Mrs. Corday: Jennifer, your grades continue to drop. You did not turn in the last assignment and failed the last test. At this rate you will fail this course and not graduate.

Jennifer: It's not my fault, my parents are always fighting. I can't concentrate on homework.

Mrs. Corday: Well, even in class, you seem distant and inattentive. You aren't experimenting with drugs, are you?

Jennifer: Hey, are you accusing me? Anyhow, it's none of your business what I do.

Mrs. Corday: I am just concerned about you, would you like me to make an appointment for you with Dr. Maas, the counselor.

Jennifer: No way, I am not going to see some stupid shrink, I am out of here.

(Jennifer leaves classroom. As she leaves, she sees her boyfriend, Jason.)

Jennifer: Jason!

Jason: Hi Jen, I have been looking for you.

Jennifer: I'm all stressed out. Got anything with you? How about we get together...

Jason: Jen, I can't.

Jennifer: Well, just give me the stuff and I'll see you later.

Jason: You don't understand, Jen, I don't want to see you any more, I met someone that I like...

Jennifer: You what, you jerk! (She takes her ring off and throws it at him, she begins crying, hitting him.) You can't do this, you can't, what am I going to do? (She falls on the floor, crying and holding on)

Jason: I'm sorry (he pushes her off and leaves her on her knees crying)

(Jennifer gets up and runs out the school crying)

(While running home she meets a homeless man)

Homeless man: Miss, could you spare something, this Christmas time, for a warm meal?

Jennifer: Get away from me, leave me alone!!

(Jennifer turns, running, talking to herself)

Jennifer: Stupid wino...Why doesn't he get a job? I'm not going to give him any of my money... I need it for some pills to calm down.

Scene 2 -- Living room of the Thomas' home

(Jennifer opens the door and enters the house; her mother is standing in the living room)

Jennifer: Mom! What are you doing home?

Mrs. Thomas: It's Christmas Eve. I took the rest of the day off. What are you doing home from school, it's only 10:30?

Jennifer: We have a half-day. I just left a little early. That school sucks. All the teachers are against me -- they don't like me because I disagree with them. A...is Dad home?

Mrs. Thomas: Yes, but he has a client in his office; wait, he is coming out now.

(Mr. Thomas walks into the living room with Billy Wilkins, his client)

Mr. Thomas: Thanks Billy, good plan, we should be able to get things rolling. Oh, by the way, if you don't have any plans, please join us for Christmas services at our church.

Billy: What is your church?

Mr. Thomas: Hillsdale Bible Church, I am the supervising elder.

Billy: Whoa, I'd better watch what I say around you.

Mr. Thomas: No kidding, Billy, I know your away from home and Cheryl, Jennifer and I would like you to join us.

Jennifer: (overhearing) I'm not going, I have plans.

Mr. Thomas: (yelling) You're going! As long as you live under this roof, you will do what I say.

Mr. Thomas: (quietly) I'm sorry, Billy, that you had to hear that, I'll call you later.

Billy: Okay, thanks John.

(Billy leaves the scene)

Mr. Thomas: Jennifer, I am telling you...

Mrs. Thomas: Yes, Jennifer, you must listen to your father.

Jennifer: I hate church, it's boring.

Mr. Thomas: You are an embarrassment to our family -- don't you know,

that because I am in elder, the congregation looks to us as examples?

Jennifer: There it is, all you care about is your image, all your talk about loving Jesus is a bunch of bull. You're just a hypocrite.

Mrs. Thomas: Don't talk to your father that way!

Mr. Thomas: (grabbing Jennifer by the arm) Why, you spoiled brat, you're not too old for a good spanking. Cheryl get the paddle.

Mrs. Thomas: No, John, she is too old.

Mr. Thomas: I listened to you before and we spared the rod and now we have this spoiled child.

(Crying, Jennifer rips loose from her father's grasp and runs into her bedroom and locks her door.)

The end of act one

Singer: "England's Carol"

Narrator: Alone in her bedroom, Jennifer Thomas feels rejected, lonely, and unloved. She feels that everybody is against her and...life, well, just isn't worth it.

Act Two

Scene 1 Jennifer's bedroom

Jennifer: (crying on her bed) I hate them, I hate them all, I hate God.

Jennifer cries herself to sleep. Jennifer awakens when her mother knocks on her door)

Mrs. Thomas: It's 5 o'clock, Jennifer, aren't you going to join us for Christmas Eve dinner?

Jennifer: (screaming) No! Just leave me alone!!

(Jennifer finds a bottle of aspirin and takes a handful of pills, talking to herself.)

Jennifer: I don't care if I die, what is worth living for?

(Jennifer falls into a deep sleep. She is awakened when her room is lit up.

Startled to see someone in her room, Jennifer sets up in bed.)

Jennifer: Who are you, what are you doing in my room? Wait, Amy, Amy, is that you?

Amy: Yes it's me.

Jennifer: It can't be, your...your dead!

Amy: I am.

Jennifer: Then how, why...?

Amy: I have come to warn you, not to act like I did.

Jennifer: Why? You were the coolest girl in the school.

Amy: (shouting) No!! I cared only for myself, what I wanted, I rejected my family, I rejected God, I hated church, I led a sinful lifestyle.

Jennifer: Hey, everybody makes a mistake or two, don't be so hard on yourself. You were popular, you had boyfriends, that's all that counts.

Amy: That's not all that counts! See this chain that I must wear for all eternity, I made each link by the things that I did and the things that I didn't do. This link was made when I cursed my parents, this one was made when I mocked that real poor girl in school. All these were made when I used people, pretending to be nice to them, but using them to get what I wanted. I have seen your chain, Jennifer, and it is already longer than mine.

Jennifer: Okay, okay, what do you want me to do about it?

Amy: You will see, you will see, at the strike of 1 AM you we visited by an angel of God, he will show you what to do.

Jennifer: (talking to herself) Oh brother! Those aspirin I took are causing me to hallucinate, first I see a dead friend and then I'm supposed to wait for an angel.

(Lights go out and Jennifer falls to sleep)

Scene two

(The clock strikes 1 AM and an angel appears)

Angel: I am the angel of Christmas past, touch my robe.

(Jennifer disoriented and speechless follows the angel's instructions. They are transported in time to a Christmas past when Jennifer was two years old. She sees herself and her mom and dad around the Christmas tree.)

Dad: Here, Jen, another present to unwrap.

Mom: Don't you think you overdid it, John, you don't want to spoil her and we really can't afford it.

Dad: I guess you're right, but I just love her so much.

(Dad gives Jennifer the big hug. Jennifer opens the present and reveals a children's Bible.)

Mom: She can't even read yet, what is she going to do with a Bible.

Dad: It's her first Bible, I'll read it to her. I know in my heart that someday she will be a woman of God, a woman who loves the Lord.

(Spotlight off)

(Spotlight on Jennifer and the angel)

Jennifer: (softly crying) That was a long time ago, things change, I just can't be what my dad wants me to be.

Angel: Come.

(Spotlight off)

(A very dark room lit softly with candles, it is a church. The Angel points to a group of small children. The time is Christmas and Jennifer's 8 years old. It is a nativity scene and Jennifer is Mary)

(Spotlight on nativity scene and another on Jennifer and the Angel)

Angel: Recognize this place?

Jennifer: (confused) It looks like...that's it...the church we used to go to when I was a kid. That's Me! It's the church Christmas Pageant when I played Mary.

Angel: Your parents must have been so proud of you.

Jennifer: They were...my Mom even allowed me to wear make-up, stage make-up, that is.

(Spotlight on Jennifer and the Angel fades)

(Nativity scene illuminates and comes to life, characters move, speak and sing.)

Nativity story ensues, Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus visited by shepherds and the Three Wise Men. Angels are around the stable.

Children's Choir: "Silent Night"

(Spotlight on Nativity Scene fades to dark)

(Spotlight on Jennifer and Angel)

Angel: You did a great job.

Jennifer: I didn't have one line to say, but I thought I was going to be the next Julia Roberts. I used to pray every night that God would make me a famous movie star--stupid kid, like God ever answers anyone's prayers.

(Spotlight on)

(The Angel leads Jennifer back to the family room. The time is the Christmas of Jennifer's 13th year. Her best friend, 15-year-old Amy, is at the family Christmas party. Jennifer and Amy are alone.)

(Spotlight on)

13 year or old Jennifer: I don't know, Amy, my family would freak out if I ever to drugs.

Amy: They're just pills -- they're not really drugs, not like cocaine or anything. They just make you feel relaxed and kind of happy. Just try one, if you don't like it...

13 year or old Jennifer: No, I don't think...

Amy: I thought you want to be popular. All the popular kids in school are taking pills. You like Jason, right, he won't even notice you, if you are going to be some goody-too-shoes.

13 year or old Jennifer: Well, all right, you win, just this once.

(Spotlight off)

(Spotlight on Jennifer and the angel)

Jennifer: She was right. All the popular kids started liking me and I got Jason.

Angel: Follow Me.

(Spotlight switches to graveyard)

(Graveyard, Amy's funeral, Amy's parents, and friends around her grave.)

Amy's mother: (crying) Why? Why? Why did she have to die? (Turns to one of Amy's friends) You were her friend, why didn't you stop her. (Turns to other parents) You saw us every Sunday at church, why didn't you tell us she was taking drugs, you knew and you didn't tell us.

(Spotlight switches to angel and Jennifer)

Angel: Where were you, Jennifer, why weren't you at your best friend's funeral?

Jennifer: I was sick, I was sick, okay!

Angel: Not an ordinary illness, was it?

Jennifer: All right, Amy and I did the same stuff together, bad stuff, it was from a bad batch, she died and I only got sick. Am I supposed to feel guilty or something?

Angel: Come.

Jennifer: Where are we going, now?

Angel: You will see.

(Spotlight moves to man on telephone in office)

Man: Look, John, whatever I have is yours, bring Cherry and Jennifer over tomorrow and I will take you up to the north acre -- just pick what you need. I know what it's like to struggle. When my dad died, this farm was nearly bankrupt. I took it over and barely made ends meet. But, now, five years later, I have plenty to share. No, no, you don't have to pay me anything. When you get on your feet, you can help someone else or who knows, I might need you to help me.

(Spotlight off)

(Spotlight on Jennifer and the angel)

Jennifer: I remember him, that's Mr. Coates, he was so nice to us. When I was six we would go to his farm and pick what ever we wanted, strawberries, vegetables, apples, you name it, all for free. He was so generous. I wonder what ever became of him?

Angel: My time is up. When the clock strikes 2 a.m. you will be visited by one of my messengers.

(Spotlight off )

Scene three

(Spotlight on Jennifer in bed, clock strikes 2 AM, Jennifer awakens to see a woman and her room)

Jennifer: Grandmother, your early, you're not supposed to be here till tomorrow afternoon.

Grandmother: I have been sent by the angel to show you things as they are, the things of this Christmas. Come on with me, honey, hold my hand.

(Jennifer holds her grandmother's hand and is transported to the dining room were her mom, dad and brother are having Christmas Eve dinner.)

Mr. Thomas: I am afraid we lost her, Cheryl, she is so distant. You don't think she is doing drugs do you?

Mrs. Thomas: No, she never would.

Mr. Thomas: I don't know what to do. I love her so much, so much, so much... (begins to cry)

(Mrs. Thomas reaches over, all three hug each other her)

All: crying

(Spotlight off)

(Spotlight on grandmother and Jennifer)

Grandmother: See, honey, your parents love you very much.

Jennifer: (sobbing softly) I... I really wasn't sure, all they ever did was preach to me, and try to force me to go to church.

Grandmother: Before I leave, Jenny, I want to show you one more thing.

Jennifer: You're leaving? Aren't you going to be here for Christmas dinner?

Grandmother: Yes, dear, I will, but I will not remember this visit. Look over there!

(Spotlight off)

(Spotlight on homeless man being turned down by numerous people)

Jennifer: That's the beggar that bothered me today, the one I told to leave me alone. I needed the money that I had, I wasn't going to give it to him, so he could buy some more wine.

Grandmother: Yes, that's the one, just watch.

(Homeless man walks away, finds a spot on the street, lays out a blanket and goes to sleep, hungry.)

Grandmother: Jenny, I want you to get real close to the man, he won't be able to see you. I want you to see if you can recognize him.

Jennifer: I already told you, grandmother, that's the beggar I met today.

Grandmother: I know you did, sweetheart, but, for me, take a closer look.

(Jennifer moves near the man and looks into his face.)

Jennifer: He looks familiar, I can't place him, wait, oh my God, it's Mr. Coates, the farmer that I was telling the angel about. What... What happened to him?

Grandmother: He, like many others, lost his farm. His wife became very ill, he had no insurance, he lost everything to pay the bills. And then he lost his wife. I guess, he just gave up. I must leave now, Jennifer, but you will be visited by another, at the strike of three.

Jennifer: Oh no, I can't believe that happened to him. I am so sorry, the way I talked to him, after all that he did for us, I really am a selfish, rotten person. I am sorry Mr. Coates, I didn't know, I didn't know...

(Spotlight out)

Scene 4

(Spotlight on Jennifer in bed, crying)

Jennifer: I didn't know, I didn't know...

(Clock strikes 3. Jennifer abruptly sets up in bed. She sees an elderly man in her room.)

Jennifer: Pastor Carl, are you the messenger of Christmas future?

Pastor: I am.

Jennifer: I know I haven't been to church, but you know, school and all, and, well, church is kinda boring to a teenager.

Pastor: Jennifer, Jennifer, don't worry about it, we have much more important business. Are you ready to see the future?

Jennifer: I'm ready.

(Spotlight off)

(Spotlight on ambulance workers working on a man)

Worker No. 1: It's no use, he is gone.

Worker No. 2: What do we do with him, notify next of kin?

Worker No. 1: These street people, have no next of kin, they have nobody. We will just take him down to the morgue -- scientists use these people for experiments.

Worker No. 2: It seems so sad, being Christmas and all.

Worker No. 1: After you're on the job a couple of years, stuff like this won't bother you.

(Spotlight moves to Pastor and Jennifer)

Pastor: Look closely, Jennifer, at the body.

Jennifer: (looking closer) It's Mr. Coates. He died without anyone, alone on the street on Christmas eve. How horrible!

Pastor: Yes, it is.

Jennifer: Pastor, can these things be changed or are they fixed as you have shown me?

Pastor: I will answer your question Jennifer, but, first look over here.

(Spotlight off)

(Spotlight on hospital room, sheet covering a body, doctor and two nurses.)

Nurse No. 1: She was only 35.

Nurse No. 2: She probably died of ill temper. She was the grouchiest, meanest person I have ever seen. She had no visitors, not even her own parents.

Nurse No. 1: She wasn't married?

Nurse No. 2: Yeah, right, who would marry her?

All: Laughter

Doctor: Actually, she died of liver and kidney failure -- too much alcohol. Here is the death certificate. What was her full name.

Nurse No. 1: Jennifer Marie Thomas

(Spotlight off)

(Spotlight on pastor in Jennifer)

Jennifer: Oh, no, is that what my life will become, is there are no chance of changing these things, please pastor, I want to change, I want to change. I don't want things to turn out the way that you have shown me. I have been wrong. I have not listened to my parents, I was wrong. I shouldn't have listened to Amy and followed her, or to Jason, and did what he wanted.

Pastor: Well, Jennifer, yes, you can change, both yourself and the future, and you just completed the first step. You just admitted that you have been

wrong, that you have sinned. The next step is to turn away from those mistakes and not to do them again and, instead, to turn toward doing other things, unselfish things, things to help others and things that please God. And you must receive Jesus Christ as your Lord. As your Lord, you commit to obeying Him. You can do this right now -- would you like to?

Jennifer: Yes, yes, yes!

(Pastor Carl and Jennifer hold hands and quietly pray together)

(Spotlight off)

Singer: "Angels We Have Heard On High"

Narrator: Sometimes when things don't go right and nothing seems to work we can give up on life. Jennifer found that through Jesus Christ she could start living again. She is now prepared to take that message to others that also have given up and forgotten the life changing power of Christ--her parents and Mr. Coates.

Act Three

Scene 1

(Spotlight on Jennifer in bed; alarm goes off, she awakes.)

Jennifer: It's Christmas!!!

(Jennifer runs into the dining room, where her mother and father are having breakfast)

Jennifer: Mom, dad, Merry Christmas! I love you both so much. (She gives her mom and dad a big hug) Where is Tim?

Mom and dad: (silence and amazement)

Jennifer: Where is Tim?

Mom: He is in the living room...a... Jennifer, are you all right, honey?

Jennifer: I've never been better and I can't wait to go to church for Christmas.

Dad: What? What?

Jennifer: It's okay dad, don't worry.

(Tim comes in the room)

Tim: What's going on?

Jennifer: (lifts Tim up in a big hug and gives him a kiss) Merry Christmas, little brother, I love you.

Tim: Yuck, let me down, your nuts.

Jennifer: Maybe I am (Jennifer puts her coat on her pajamas and puts her shoes on.) I got to go find someone.

Dad: Jennifer!!

(Jennifer leaves)

(spotlight off)

## Scene 2

(Spotlight on Jennifer as she searches all over Hillsdale for Mr. Coates. She checks various homeless people until she finally finds him. She runs over to him and shakes him awake.)

Jennifer: Mr. Coates, Mr. Coates, wake up, it's Christmas.

Mr. Coates: Who are you? Leave me alone!

Jennifer: Mr. Coates, its Jennifer Thomas, you know my dad, John Thomas. We used to come to your farm.

Mr. Coates: (now alert) I remember you, that was a long time ago, a long, long time ago. You are all grown-up.

Jennifer: Come on, your coming with me, please get up.

Mr. Coates: (standing up) Where are you taking me?

Jennifer: Never mind, just come with me.

(Jennifer leads Mr. Coates to the front door of her family house)

Jennifer: Wait here, don't go away.

(Jennifer enters the living room)

Jennifer: I'm home; mom, dad, I have a friend I want you to meet.

Dad: If it's Jason, tell him to come back later.

Jennifer: It's not to Jason, he dumped me.

Mom: Oh, I'm sorry honey, are you okay?

Jennifer: Yeah, I'm glad it happened.

Dad: Well, if you must, bring your new boyfriend in.

(Jennifer opens the door)

Jennifer: Come on in Mr. Coates.

Mr. Coates: I can't, look at me.

Jennifer: So?

(Jennifer grabs him by the hand and drags him into the house)

Dad: Oh, my God!

Mom: Jennifer!

Jennifer: Just take it easy, I'd like you to meet an old friend. This is Mr. Coates, the farmer that used to give us food when we were poor.

Mom: It can't be.

Dad: Philip, is that you, what the hell happened to you?

Jennifer: Dad! Your language.

Mr. Coates: It's a long story, John.

Mom: Where's Felicia?

Mr. Coates: She died after a long illness. We lost the farm and went bankrupt.

Mom and Dad: I'm so sorry.

Jennifer: Mr. Coates is going to join us for Christmas dinner and he is going to go to church with us, right Mr. Coates?

Mr. Coates: Church? I don't know Jennifer. I kind of gave up on God.

Jennifer: So did I, but, last night I realized I was wrong and I accepted God into my life. Mom, dad, have you ever accepted God into your lives.

Dad: Yes, Jennifer! You know I'm head elder at our church and your mom and I accepted Christ many years ago.

Mom: But, maybe, we need to do it again -- or at least, renew our commitment.

Dad: Jennifer, I had almost forgotten, but, years ago, I prayed that you would be a woman of God. I guess God is answering my prayer. (He begins to softly cry)

Jennifer: I know dad (she gives her dad a hug). Well what do you say, let's pray. Mom and dad, you can recommit to God and Mr. Coates can too.

Dad: Don't let us force you, Philip, if you're not ready.

Mr. Coates: No, it is time, it is time for me to begin living again, to be born again.

(All hold hands, Jennifer leads the prayer)

(Spotlight off)

The End

Narrator: Maybe you are like Jennifer, things have gone wrong in your life and you have turned to drugs, sex or anger. Or maybe, you are like Mr. Coates, tragedy has struck your life and you have given up on God. And, possibly, there are many of you like Jennifer's parents, once, you knew the life changing power of Jesus, but

somehow, somewhere you lost that life. Don't let this Christmas go by without the life changing Jesus. While the singer sings "O Holy Night", listen to the words and ask Jesus to come into your life and restore that life giving power that you once had and then start living again.

Singer: "O Holy Night"

Singer: Please join me in singing, "O Come All Ye Faithful"

All and Audience: "O Come All Ye Faithful"

#### Stage Areas

1. Classroom/Office/Dining Room
2. Street
3. Bedroom/Hospital Room
4. Graveyard
5. Nativity Scene

#### Location of Stages

#### Platform

Area #1

Props: Table & Chairs

#### Side by the

Handicap

Entrance

Area #3

Props: Bed/Cot

#### Front of

Platform

Areas #2 & #4