*Las Posadas* Litany with Prayers for Refugees

Leader: *Las Posadas* is the Latino celebration of “lodgings,” which reenacts the story of Joseph seeking lodging for his young wife, Mary, who is weary from travel and heavy with child. Participants assume the identity of the weary couple or the innkeepers, moving from one site to the next. At each station, an ancient exchange is repeated. Those playing the role of Joseph knock on the door, pleading:

“In the name of Heaven, we ask those who dwell here to give some travelers lodging. “

From inside, a chorus of fearful people respond:

**“This is not an inn; move on – we cannot open lest you be a scoundrel.”**

Leader: Finally, on the eve of Christmas, Joseph’s request moves the heart of an innkeeper, who offers the young couple all that he has left --- a stable.

**“…because there was no place for them in the inn.”**

Leader: But Jesus grows to befriend any and all with no place, making a place for them at his table.

**Everyone has a place with Jesus.**

Leader: With an out pouring of joy, the door is opened, and everyone in procession of *Las Posadas* is welcomed into the festivity, celebrating the generosity of the innkeeper, the *posada* given to Mary and Joseph, and the surprise of God’s blessing in the presence of the stranger.

**Surprise us again with the joy of hospitality, that in welcoming the stranger, we welcome Jesus: “…as you did it to the least of these, you did it to me.”** (Matthew 25:40)

Leader: Today, couples like Mary and Joseph stand at our door. They have come from somewhere else to find lodging. They have come, not great with child, but pregnant with hope for new life.

**Stir up our hearts, that in welcoming the stranger, we welcome Christ’s coming among us.**

Leader: Let us pray the gift of *posada* for those who have been forced from their homes by persecution and violence.

**Keep them in your care, and bring them safekeeping.**

Leader: Let us pray for refugees languishing in camps; migrants in detention centers; for trafficked children and all who have lost home and loved ones.

**Shelter their souls as well as their bodies.**

Leader: Let us pray for the leaders of the nations, that they may rule with justice and mercy,

**so that no one would become a refugee again.**

Leader: Let us pray for churches, agencies, and individuals who serve vulnerable newcomers.

**Give them patience and perseverance.**

Let us pray that we may be the opened door of *las posadas:* feeding the hungry, calming the anguished, welcoming the stranger --- or whatever else those who are least among us may from time to time require.

**In and through Christ. Amen.**