

ADVENT ANTICIPATION

by Linda Allen



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Advent Anticipation

A collection of readers scripts
for the Advent wreath

by Linda Allen

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INTRODUCTION

Hope, peace, joy, love — the words of Advent. In the midst of Christmas season hubbub and international turmoil, Christians struggle with the very essence of who Christ is in our lives, our homes, and the wider community. *Advent Anticipation* explores, with a touch of humor, God's gifts of hope, peace, joy, and love, manifested in Jesus Christ.

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Hope

First Sunday of Advent

CAST: READERS 1-4.

(READERS gather around the Advent wreath.)

READER 1: The first Sunday of Advent is Hope. So, we're supposed to talk about hope.

READER 2: OK ... hmmm ... I *hope* it doesn't rain for the big game. And I *hope* they score big this time. We could sure use a win for a change.

READER 3: I *hope* Aunt Edna brings her chocolate surprise dessert for the potluck — the one with the nuts and cherries on top.

READER 4: I *hope* the ding-ding-clunk-clunk the car is making isn't a big deal — a busted block or something.

READER 1: I don't think this is the kind of hope we're supposed to be talking about.

READER 4: You mean something churchy?

READER 3: Something more important than football or chocolate or busted blocks?

READER 2: Serious hope?

READER 1: Hope we build our lives around. Hope we rest in.

READER 3: Not like wishing?

READER 1: Wishing is sort of feathery ... wispy. Hope is rock solid.

READER 2: Like we can count on it.

READER 1: When we think of the Christ child as the hope of the world —

READER 4: We think of God's ancient promise to his people.

READER 2: And when God promises *good*, that's for certain. Our own experience with God teaches us that.

READER 1: No matter how bad things get from one day to the next, we know God is with us. We can expect

1 everything to turn out the way it's supposed to.

2 **READER 2:** Now that's the way to live.

3 **READER 3:** We're in a safe place. Resting secure in God's
4 hope.

5 **READER 1:** As we light the first candle of Advent — the one
6 for *hope* — we remind ourselves again that Christ in our
7 lives and for eternity is our hope. (*READER 2 lights the*
8 *candle.*)

9 **READER 4:** Let us pray:

10 (*Optional prayer*)

11 Dear heavenly Father, thank you for the hope you give
12 us. Hope that fills our lives with confident living in the
13 present and for our future. Hope that we can be more
14 than we are now. Hope that banishes fear and
15 embraces life. Hope in Jesus Christ as our Lord and
16 Savior, the light of the world. Amen.

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Peace

Second Sunday of Advent

CAST: READERS 1-3.

READER 1 is a man and

READER 2 is his wife.

READER 3 should be someone in the church known for his/her Bible teaching, preaching, and/or leadership.

(READERS take places around Advent wreath. Loud music plays Off-stage.)

READER 1: Turn that down! (Or, if church musician is playing, "Cut that out!") Give me a break! I can't hear myself think! (Music stops.) Thank you! I need a little peace and quiet.

READER 2: You're the loudest thing in here right now.

READER 1: Is it wrong for a guy to want a little quiet time? Some peace?

READER 3: Actually, _____, (Calls him by name) people have always longed for peace. It's basic. Biblical. And I was just reading —

READER 1: Uh-oh, I hear a sermon coming on from the theologian here.

READER 2: We're in church. What did you expect to hear? A sportscast? The news?

READER 3: Anyway, I was just reading in my Hebrew translation that —

READER 1: (To READER 2) Do you believe this guy? (Or woman) His (Or her) Hebrew translation?

READER 3: That peace is more than quiet. It means prosperity. Soundness. Friendship. It can refer to our covenant relationship with God.

READER 2: I think about how peaceful it must've been in the stable that night with Joseph and Mary and the animals. And baby Jesus. God with us.

1 READER 1: Well, maybe. But they were under Roman rule.
 2 That had to be scary. And they came to register for
 3 taxes. Where's the prosperity there? And Mary had just
 4 given birth to baby Jesus. Then people started showing
 5 up. Like the shepherds. And who knows who else. And
 6 the animals mooing and cooing and lowing. I'll bet
 7 Joseph wanted to give it a rest.

8 READER 2: And that's the way it is now. We have wars.
 9 Violence. Poverty. But God's peace is *with* us. *In* us.

10 READER 3: The Greek word for peace is *eirene*. (*I-ray'-nay*)
 11 It means —

12 READER 1: Here we go again.

13 READER 3: It *can* mean harmony, safety, exemption from
 14 war. But for Christians, it also means the tranquil state
 15 of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ.
 16 (*READER 2 lights two candles.*)

17 READER 1: As we light the second candle of Advent, we
 18 ponder peace. Peace no matter *what*. God's peace in us.
 19 The tranquil state of our souls assured of our salvation
 20 through Christ.

21 READER 3: Let us pray.

22 (*Optional prayer*)

23 Dear creator God from whom all good gifts come, we
 24 thank you for the assurance in our souls of you with
 25 us. In us. We breathe in your peace, and it fills us and
 26 pours out onto our family. Our community. Our world.
 27 Your peace that passes all understanding. Amen.

Joy

Third Sunday of Advent

CAST: Readers 1-3.

PROPS: Shopping bag full of Christmas decorations — tinsel, string of lights, garland, holiday silly hat, etc.

(READERS gather around the Advent wreath. READER 1 carries bag with Christmas decorations. She begins pulling out garland or tinsel and draping herself.)

READER 2: What's going on?

READER 1: We're doing the joy candle. I'm just getting into it. *(Continues to add more decorations to self.)*

READER 2: And this is what it takes to get into joy?

READER 1: I'm creating a mood here. Atmosphere. Setting the stage, so to speak.

READER 3: This is *so tacky*. Tacky, tacky, *tacky!*

READER 2: I'm afraid to stand still. She might start wrapping *me* in tinsel.

READER 3: This is a *worship* service. Tradition. Decorum. We're supposed to be honoring the Lord. We're coming before God with —

READER 1: With gladness and joy. That's what I'm doing!

READER 2: She *does* have a point. Look around you. *(Gestures about the sanctuary.)* The lights, the tree, the banners. Flowers. Beautiful decorations. *(Substitute words that describe your church's decorating.)* It looks like we have overflowing hearts here. And the choir's going to make a joyful noise too! We're celebrating "God with us"!

READER 1: In the temple they burned incense and lit candles and made offerings because of God's goodness to them. One time David even led a parade dancing for joy.

READER 2: You know, the night Jesus was born, the angels

1 filled the air with their songs of glad tidings. I think it's
2 entirely appropriate. (*Loops some garland around his*
3 *neck.*) Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

4 **READER 3:** (*Big sigh*) OK, I get it. Could you (*Gestures to*
5 *READER 2*) light the joy candle while I borrow some
6 tinsel? (*Drapes tinsel on self or puts on silly hat. READER*
7 *2 lights three candles as READER 3 speaks.*) As we light
8 the joy candle, our hearts are, indeed, filled to
9 overflowing as we ponder what great thing God has
10 done for us.

11 **READER 1:** Let us pray.

12 (*Optional prayer*)

13 Great and gracious God, you are the joy of our
14 salvation. We thank you with humble hearts. We praise
15 you from the depths of our being, and we offer you our
16 very selves as living sacrifices. In Christ's name we
17 pray, Amen.

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Love

Fourth Sunday of Advent

CAST: READERS 1-8 (*Optional number*)

(*READERS gather around Advent wreath.*)

READER 1: Three hundred fourteen.

READER 2: Three hundred fourteen whats?

READER 1: Three hundred fourteen *loves* in my Bible concordance.

READER 3: What are you talking about?

READER 1: I was just looking in my Bible and trying to find a love Scripture Pastor _____ (*Fill in name*) hasn't preached on. I figure he (*Or she*) still has about thirty or so to go. Then he (*Or she*) starts repeating himself (*Or herself*)

READER 4: Three hundred fourteen loves. That's a lot.

READER 1: And I have a pretty basic concordance. There might be more.

READER 5: Like "God is love"? (*1 John 4:8*).

READER 1: In Genesis, God's creation of the earth was an act of love.

READER 6: In Exodus, he tells Moses he shows his love to a thousand generations — that has to include us! (*Exodus 20:6*).

READER 2: "The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion" (*Numbers 14:18*).

READER 7: Abounding in love. I like that.

READER 4: How about "His love endures forever"? (*2 Chronicles 5:13*).

READER 3: And "Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life ..." (*Psalms 23:6*).

READER 7: "For great is your love, reaching to the heavens" (*Psalms 57:10*).

READER 6: "The earth is filled with your love ..." (*Psalms 119:64*).

- 1 **READER 8:** All those references are from the Old Testament.
 2 *(Or Hebrew Scriptures)* Then there was Bethlehem.
- 3 **READER 2:** What a love gift there!
- 4 **READER 5:** When Jesus was baptized, God said, “This is my
 5 Son, whom I love” *(Matthew 3:17)*.
- 6 **READER 2:** Jesus taught us to love the Lord your God with
 7 all your heart and with all your soul and with all your
 8 mind *(Matthew 22:37)*.
- 9 **READER 3:** And love your neighbor as yourself *(Matthew*
 10 *19:19)*.
- 11 **READER 4:** And your enemies *(Matthew 5:44)*.
- 12 **READER 7:** In Christ we saw what love looks like.
- 13 **READER 1:** Love is patient *(1 Corinthians 13:4)*.
- 14 **READER 8:** And kind *(1 Corinthians 13:4)*.
- 15 **READER 4:** Love does not delight in evil *(1 Corinthians 13:6)*.
- 16 **READER 5:** Love never fails *(1 Corinthians 13:8)*.
- 17 **READER 3:** “That we, being rooted and established in love,
 18 **READER 2:** May have power, together with all the saints,
 19 **READER 7:** To grasp how wide and long —
 20 **READER 6:** And high and deep is the love of Christ,
 21 **READER 8:** And to know this love that surpasses
 22 knowledge” *(Ephesians 3:17-19)*.
- 23 **READER 5:** “For love comes from God” *(1 John 4:7)*.
- 24 **READER 1:** As we light the fourth candle of Advent — love
 25 — let us remember ... *(READER 8 lights four candles*
 26 *while everyone else says together John 3:16)*
- 27 **ALL:** God so loved the world that he gave his one and only
 28 Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but
 29 have eternal life.
- 30 **READER 7:** God loves us this much. *(Holds arms wide —*
 31 *gesture indicates bigness of God’s love and also Jesus’*
 32 *outstretched arms on the cross.) Let us pray.*
 33 *(Optional prayer)*
- 34 Dear God of love, we cannot comprehend your love for
 35 each of us — for all creation. How humbled we are.



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