

ADVENT AT HOLY GROUNDS

by Linda S. Allen



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A candle-lighting collection on God's kingdom

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SYNOPSIS: The Lord's Prayer contains the line "on earth as it is in heaven." Sometimes we think of God's kingdom as off somewhere else—distant, out of reach, not applicable to the here and now. Jesus came to seek us, save us, and teach us who God is. God's kingdom is made up of hope, peace, joy, and love. We can choose to participate in this kingdom right here, wherever we are—even over coffee at the neighborhood shop. *Included are:* **1. Hope**—Aidan, a bedraggled, runaway teen, shows up in a coffee shop called Holy Grounds where he's offered more than a cup of joe. **2. Peace**—Lauren and Kayla have a falling out over Facebook posts and other grievances. A relationship discussion makes everyone rethink where true peace comes from. **3. Joy**—When grumpiness follows everyone into Holy Grounds, Al recalls Job and the mighty sweep of God's kingdom from Genesis to Revelation to put things into perspective. **4. Love**—Aidan, the runaway teen, returns to the coffee shop to visit his new friends and wistfully wishes everywhere could be like Holy Grounds—and Al reminds him that love is God's kingdom dream for everyone.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7-13 either)

First Sunday of Advent: It Was a Dark and Stormy Night

AL (m/f)..... (20 lines)
 RUSTY (m/f)..... (17 lines)
 CHAPLAIN (m/f)..... (15 lines)
 AIDAN (m/f)..... (26 lines)
 NARRATOR 1 (m/f)..... (8 lines)
 NARRATOR 2 (m/f)..... (6 lines)

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Second Sunday of Advent: Who Started It?

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| AL (m/f)..... | (10 lines) |
| RUSTY (m/f)..... | (10 lines) |
| KAYLA (m/f)..... | (13 lines) |
| LAUREN (m/f)..... | (10 lines) |
| LELAND (m/f)..... | (6 lines) |
| NARRATOR (m/f)..... | (2 lines) |

Third Sunday of Advent: What Color is Christmas?

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| AL (m/f)..... | (22 lines) |
| ARNIE (m/f)..... | (4 lines) |
| CHAPLAIN (m/f)..... | (12 lines) |
| RUSTY (m/f)..... | (13 lines) |
| MEG (m/f)..... | (19 lines) |
| LELAND (m/f)..... | (11 lines) |
| NARRATOR (m/f)..... | (2 lines) |

Fourth Sunday of Advent: God's Dream

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| AL (m/f)..... | (12 lines) |
| RUSTY (m/f)..... | (13 lines) |
| KAYLA (m/f)..... | (8 lines) |
| LAUREN (m/f)..... | (6 lines) |
| CHAPLAIN (m/f)..... | (11 lines) |
| AIDAN (m/f)..... | (13 lines) |
| NARRATOR (m/f)..... | (1 line) |

DURATION: 4 scenes, 6-10 minutes each

PRODUCTION NOTES

These Advent sketches may be used with or without the lighting of the Advent wreath. The series emphasizes God's kingdom that surrounds us wherever we are—even at a coffee shop called Holy Grounds. In the coffee shop, the proprietor, Al, serves elaborate coffee concoctions and invites his customers to share the ups and downs of their lives. Their worries, anger, petty grievances, joys, humor, and even words of advice will keep the audience engaged and attentive each week.

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Because the setting remains the same for each Sunday, the characters remain consistent: Al is the friendly proprietor; Aidan, a teen, struggles for meaning; Chaplain is ready with Scripture verses and kind words; Rusty is the comic relief; Leland is the well-read know-it-all who always uses a big word when a smaller one would do; Lauren and Kayla are friends who don't always get along; Arnie runs high on anger; and Meg is a disillusioned searcher. The gender of each character could be different. There is no reason Chaplain or Al, for instance, could not be played by a female. If more or less cast members are available, the narration could be handled by the same reader each week, or you may use 1-2 different people weekly. Casting, therefore, is flexible.

We performed the scenes as Readers Theatre, using our scripts in black folders. That is how this script is written. You have the option of creating a more involved coffee shop set if desired with a couple tables, mugs, plants, etc. We had one longer rehearsal on Saturday mornings before the Sunday performances. We kept costuming simple—all wear black. Al may also wear a white apron over his black clothing. The apron is decorated with a large steaming mug with large letters above it spelling out “Holy Grounds.” The only prop we used, the biggest mug we could find, was for the third Sunday of Advent.

So, welcome to Holy Grounds, where Aidan says in week four's *God's Dream* sketch, “I wish it could be like this all the time. You know? Not just off in heaven or something.” It certainly can, for God's kingdom is all around us.

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It Was a Dark and Stormy Night

First Sunday of Advent

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES: Exodus 3:3-5; Luke 1:28, 30-31; Isaiah 42:16; Hebrews 6:19

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 males, 1-2 either)

AL (m/f)..... (20 lines)

RUSTY (m/f)..... (17 lines)

CHAPLAIN (m/f)..... (15 lines)

AIDAN (m/f)..... (26 lines)

NARRATOR 1 (m/f)..... (8 lines)

NARRATOR 2 (m/f)..... (6 lines)



1 **AT START:** *The Advent wreath should be in place with a long-*
 2 *barreled lighter beside it. None of the candles are lit.*
 3 **NARRATOR(S)** *stand apart from the rest of the cast.*

4

5 **NARRATOR 1:** Moses was tending his father-in-law's sheep when
 6 he noticed a bush aflame. As he drew near, he said, "I will go
 7 over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn
 8 up."

9 **NARRATOR 2:** When he got to the bush, he heard the Lord calling
 10 his name, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." "Do
 11 not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the
 12 place where you are standing is holy ground."

13 **NARRATOR 1:** A lowly shepherd. A desert wasteland. Holy
 14 ground. *(Pause.)* The angel Gabriel came to Mary. "Greetings,
 15 you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you. Do not be
 16 afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive
 17 and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus."

18 **NARRATOR 2:** A young woman. A humble dwelling in Nazareth.
 19 Holy ground.

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1 **NARRATOR 1:** Outside. Inside. Holy ground.

2 **NARRATOR 2:** Then. Now. Holy ground.

3 **NARRATOR 1:** Man. Woman. Holy ground.

4 **NARRATOR 2:** Holy ground.

5 **NARRATOR 1:** Now picture this. In a neighborhood not far away,
6 there's a little coffee shop.

7 **NARRATOR 2:** It's not fancy. Just a little coffee shop called Holy
8 Grounds.

9

10 *AL enters singing a Christmas song, then freezes.*

11

12 **NARRATOR 1:** And so our story begins. It was a dark and stormy
13 night. A young man enters dripping wet, looking lost.

14

15 *AIDAN enters.*

16

17 **AL:** Welcome, my young friend! Dreadful night!

18 **AIDAN:** Yes.

19 **AL:** And you don't have an umbrella! I have an extra. Before you
20 leave, you can take mine.

21 **AIDAN:** That's OK.

22 **AL:** What can I get for you, my friend? A cappuccino? A latte?

23 **AIDAN:** Um, how much for a cup of plain coffee? Maybe I can add
24 some milk. Some sugar.

25 **RUSTY:** (*Enters.*) It's raining pigs and pantyhose outside, Al!

26 **AL:** Hey, Rusty. At least it's raining them *outside*.

27 **RUSTY:** So you finally got your roof fixed. It sure was a mess the
28 last time I was here and it rained.

29 **AL:** Finally got it fixed.

30 **RUSTY:** (*Acknowledging AIDAN.*) Oh, wow! Who's this looking like
31 he got dragged in back'ards through a knothole?

32 **AL:** (*To AIDAN.*) What's your name, son?

33 **AIDAN:** (*Obviously lying.*) Um... Jim.

34 **RUSTY:** Just Jim?

35 **AIDAN:** Yeah. Jim.

36 **RUSTY:** You're not from around here, are you? I know most of the
37 neighborhood kids. Never seen you before.

38 **AIDAN:** Just passing through.

1 **AL:** That your backpack over by the door?

2 **AIDAN:** Yeah.

3 **RUSTY:** Didn't see your car in the parking lot. (*Waits for a reply*
4 *that doesn't come.*) No car?

5 **AIDAN:** Uh, no sir.

6 **RUSTY:** Well, he's polite, even if he don't have much to say.

7 **AL:** Surely you're not on foot.

8 **AIDAN:** I had a ride.

9

10 *CHAPLAIN enters.*

11

12 **AL:** Welcome to Holy Grounds, Chaplain!

13 **CHAPLAIN:** It's miserable out there, Al. So glad to see the open
14 sign in the window. (*Sees AIDAN.*) Wait a minute! What are you
15 doing here?

16 **AIDAN:** I just needed a—um, a—

17 **CHAPLAIN:** I dropped you off almost a mile from here. You said
18 you were only a block from home.

19 **AL:** Do you know this young man?

20 **CHAPLAIN:** He was hitchhiking. I picked him up over fifty miles
21 from here, out in the middle of nowhere. He told me he was trying
22 to get home for Christmas. (*To AIDAN.*) You lied to me.

23 **AIDAN:** Yes, sir.

24 **RUSTY:** Well, now, kid, that's just plain crazy. Any nutcase
25 could've picked you up. Taken your stuff. Beat you up.

26 **AL:** Where are you headed?

27 **AIDAN:** Don't know.

28 **CHAPLAIN:** Well, you can't get to "don't know" from here.

29 **RUSTY:** What about your folks? They're gonna be worried sick.

30 **AIDAN:** No they won't.

31 **AL:** You may be selling your parents short. You're their son.

32 **AIDAN:** Well, someone needs to tell them that!

33 **CHAPLAIN:** You're among friends. Talk to us.

34 **AL:** Here's some more coffee. And take a muffin. Take two.

35 **RUSTY:** Everybody's got a story.

36 **AIDAN:** Yeah. Well, no one wants to hear mine.

37 **AL:** Now you're selling *us* short.

38 **AIDAN:** I just—I can't. I can't go home.

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- 1 **RUSTY:** Did you do something awful? Steal hubcaps? Beat up
2 somebody? Wreck the car?
- 3 **AIDAN:** Yeah, that's right! I must've done something to deserve it.
4 I can't go home because I'm a—a real loser, right? Isn't that the
5 way it is? Whatever happens, it's my fault! I can't do anything
6 right. So there's something really wrong with me. I'm the failure,
7 right? I'm fifteen years old, and I'm done—done with my life.
- 8 **AL:** You're only a failure when you quit trying.
- 9 **AIDAN:** No one cares, so what's the point?
- 10 **CHAPLAIN:** And you know that's true? That no one cares?
- 11 **RUSTY:** Well, you must've been raised by wolves, then... out West
12 somewhere. I'm surprised you know any words at all except wolf
13 words. Who fed you? Sent you to school? Gave you a place to
14 sleep? Took you to the doctor? Bought you the clothes on your
15 back? Wolves?
- 16 **AL:** Someone must've cared, or you wouldn't have gotten this far.
- 17 **AIDAN:** But hey *had* to, didn't they? It's the law or something.
- 18 **CHAPLAIN:** You're made out of better stuff than you think you are.
19 You know, God doesn't make any junk.
- 20 **AL:** And you're tough, kid. You've already survived the worst
21 hundred days of your life, because here you are!
- 22 **RUSTY:** So where are you headed?
- 23 **AIDAN:** Someplace better.
- 24 **CHAPLAIN:** Ah, I like that!
- 25 **AIDAN:** That I want something better?
- 26 **CHAPLAIN:** Sure! I hear hope in "something better." Oh, son, that's
27 what we all want. That keeps us going.
- 28 **AIDAN:** But how? I mean, how do I get there?
- 29 **AL:** That's a great question for me, too. I'm on my own journey.
30 And I couldn't put one foot in front of the other without hope.
- 31 **RUSTY:** The thing is, kid, none of us know much of what we're
32 doing. You've never been fifteen before. And I've never been in
33 my forties before. (*Insert appropriate age decade.*) Whatever is
34 happening, it's all new to us.
- 35 **CHAPLAIN:** There's a wonderful verse in Isaiah that says—
- 36 **AIDAN:** Is that in the Bible or something?

- 1 **CHAPLAIN:** Yes—in the Old Testament. Isaiah was a prophet. He
2 said, “I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along
3 unfamiliar paths I will guide them.” We’re all blind, son. We’re all
4 traveling on unfamiliar paths, but we don’t have to feel powerless
5 or fearful.
- 6 **RUSTY:** God is rooting for you!
- 7 **AIDAN:** What if I don’t believe in God?
- 8 **RUSTY:** Well, God sure does believe in you!
- 9 **AL:** God offers us transforming power through his Holy Spirit.
- 10 **AL, RUSTY, and CHAPLAIN:** (*Ad-lib.*) We’ve all experienced it, I
11 believe in God’s power, That’s right.
- 12 **CHAPLAIN:** Paul wrote in the New Testament book of Hebrews,
13 “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul.”
- 14 **RUSTY:** I once heard somebody say, “Things will turn out OK in
15 the end, so if it isn’t OK, then it’s not the end.”
- 16 **CHAPLAIN:** You have an anchor for your soul. Hook onto it. God
17 loves you and offers you hope.
- 18 **AIDAN:** But I don’t know...
- 19 **CHAPLAIN:** Trust in God’s transforming power.
- 20 **AL:** When you finish your coffee and muffins, we need to make a
21 phone call.
- 22 **AIDAN:** Yes, sir.
- 23 **NARRATOR 1:** Transforming power in a coffee shop.
- 24 **NARRATOR 2:** Holy ground wherever you are.
- 25 **NARRATOR 1:** Take off your sandals and worship.
- 26
- 27 *AIDAN lights the first Advent candle, the candle of hope.*

THE END

Who Started It?

Second Sunday of Advent

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES: Isaiah 9:6b; Micah 5:2, 5; Matthew 5:39; Ephesians 2:13-14.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 males, 2 females, 1 either)

AL (m/f)..... (10 lines)

RUSTY (m/f)..... (10 lines)

KAYLA (m/f)..... (13 lines)

LAUREN (m/f)..... (10 lines)

LELAND (m/f)..... (6 lines)

NARRATOR (m/f)..... (2 lines)



1 **AT START:** *Stage directions depend on microphones and space*
 2 *available. Enter and Exit simply mean to step forward toward or*
 3 *away from a microphone, if applicable. It might work for your*
 4 *situation to have people who are “on” face the congregation, and*
 5 *those who are “off” face away. NARRATOR stands apart from the*
 6 *rest of the cast.*

7

8 **NARRATOR:** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away
 9 have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is
 10 our peace... and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of
 11 hostility.

12

13 Think of God’s vision for Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, Magi. It’s
 14 probably not what they could have imagined for themselves
 15 when they encountered God on holy ground. And what of us?
 16 Has God’s vision for his people dwindled? Is our God smaller
 17 than he was in Bethlehem? Do we not also stand on sacred
 18 ground wherever we are? Can we not encounter God and his

1 vision for us everywhere? Anywhere? Perhaps even in a coffee
2 shop nearby called Holy Grounds.

3

4 *AL enters humming or singing a Christmas song.*

5

6 **RUSTY:** (*Enters.*) Well, you sure are cheerful today.

7 **AL:** It's getting close to Christmas!

8 **LELAND:** (*Enters.*) Ah, yes! Peace on earth, goodwill to
9 humankind, and all that.

10 **RUSTY:** And decorating the tree and buying presents and making
11 sugar cookies with sprinkles on top, and—

12 **LELAND:** I was contemplating the theological significance of the
13 Advent season.

14 **RUSTY:** You mean church stuff.

15 **LELAND:** Isn't that what I just said?

16 **RUSTY:** I never know what you're talking about. Where did you
17 come from anyway?

18 **LELAND:** How much time do you have?

19 **RUSTY:** Huh?

20 **AL:** Leland always has the long answer to a short question.

21

22 *Enter KAYLA and LAUREN arguing. Move away from each other.*

23

24 **LAUREN:** Sometimes I have no idea where you get your opinions!
25 Fake Facebook news?

26 **KAYLA:** What do you mean, "fake"?! It's on the Internet! It tells
27 where they got their information. The name of the websites and
28 everything.

29 **LAUREN:** And have you actually checked any of this out?

30 **KAYLA:** I don't have to check it out! It's there! You can read it
31 yourself! And besides, they mostly come from my friend Sarah.
32 And you know how solid Sarah is.

33 **LAUREN:** Oh, yes. Back in the day, "solid" Sarah sent chain letters
34 promising the recipient a thousand dollars or divine blessings if
35 they didn't break the chain.

36 **KAYLA:** Don't you dare criticize one of my BFFs!

- 1 **AL:** Whoa! Hold on there, you two. Let's sit down and bring it down
2 a couple decibels. Have a spiced apple pumpkin frappé. Here,
3 take a muffin. Take two.
- 4 **KAYLA:** I don't want a frappé.
- 5 **LAUREN:** I don't want a muffin.
- 6 **RUSTY:** Well, who started all this anyway?
- 7 **LAUREN** and **KAYLA:** (*In unison, pointing to each other.*) She did!
- 8 **RUSTY:** Wait a minute. Aren't you two in the same Sunday school
9 class?
- 10 **LAUREN:** Unfortunately.
- 11 **KAYLA:** That's where she took potshots at me!
- 12 **LAUREN:** Did not.
- 13 **KAYLA:** Did too. She makes me so mad!
- 14 **AL:** Jesus said, "Turn the other cheek."
- 15 **RUSTY:** Yeah, well, Jesus lived a long time ago. Good people like
16 Jesus and the prophets and the disciples and you know...all
17 them? They were in the Bible. News flash: we're in a coffee
18 shop, in the year _____. [Insert current year.] We're not in the
19 Bible.
- 20 **AL:** The Bible is God's message to us. It still works today.
- 21 **KAYLA:** But we have to deal with so much more now than people
22 back then. I mean, the shepherds...what did they have to worry
23 about? No Internet. No cell phones. No twenty-four/seven news
24 shows. No people around them all the time (*Directed at*
25 *LAUREN.*) taking potshots and insulting their friends. They had
26 stars and sheep and sky. How could they get mad at that?
- 27 **LAUREN:** But they were under Roman rule. People were polarized
28 then, too.
- 29 **KAYLA:** But they worked in a field in the middle of nowhere.
- 30 **LAUREN:** Near Bethlehem... with people in it!
- 31 **AL:** That's true, you know. When we think about what Jesus
32 taught—love, forgiveness, peace, kindness—it had to do with
33 relating to other people. How can we practice living out Jesus'
34 teachings in isolation?
- 35 **KAYLA:** You mean like in a field?
- 36 **AL:** It's hard to practice love, forgiveness, peace, and kindness on
37 the sky or the grass.
- 38 **KAYLA:** Without other people.

- 1 **AL:** Right. In community. Paul wrote in Ephesians, “For he (Paul
2 means Jesus) himself is our peace, who has made the two...
3 one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.”
4 **RUSTY:** Now, see, I kinda get that.
5 **AL:** If we’re to be God’s peace here on earth, someone has to start
6 it.
7 **LELAND:** Someone has to take the initiative.
8 **RUSTY:** Do you mean we can’t wait for somebody else to reach
9 out? We have to be nice first?
10 **AL:** In an explosive situation...
11 **KAYLA:** *(With a smile.)* Offer someone a latte or a muffin.
12 **LELAND:** That always works for me. The chemical compounds
13 found in chocolate are even better.
14 **LAUREN:** I just realized something. Jesus was God’s peace
15 initiative.
16 **KAYLA:** In a manger in Bethlehem, Emmanuel. “God with us.”
17 God’s hope, peace, joy, and love for the entire world.
18 **LAUREN:** So God started it.
19 **NARRATOR:** From Micah and Isaiah: “But you, Bethlehem
20 Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out
21 of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel... and
22 he will be our peace.” “And he will be called Wonderful
23 Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”
24
25 *KAYLA lights the first Advent candle and LAUREN lights the*
26 *second, the candle of Peace.*

THE END

What Color Is Christmas?

Third Sunday of Advent

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES: Philippians 4:4, 8, 10a, 11b-13. Job 38:4-7.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 females, 4 males, 1 either)

AL (m/f)..... (22 lines)
 ARNIE (m/f)..... (4 lines)
 CHAPLAIN (m/f)..... (12 lines)
 RUSTY (m/f)..... (13 lines)
 MEG (m/f)..... (19 lines)
 LELAND (m/f)..... (11 lines)
 NARRATOR (m/f)..... (2 lines)

PROPS: The largest coffee mug you can find. It needs to be hidden On-stage near AL, if at all possible. Ours was stashed behind a poinsettia.



1 **AT START:** *Stage directions depend on microphones and space*
 2 *available. Enter and Exit simply mean to step forward toward or*
 3 *away from the microphone, if applicable. It might work for your*
 4 *situation to have people who are “on” face the congregation, and*
 5 *those who are “off” face away. The NARRATOR needs to stand*
 6 *apart from the rest of the cast.*

7

8 **NARRATOR:** Joy. What a difficult word for some at this time of
 9 year. We have to dig underneath the gift wrap and reach beyond
 10 the plastic Santas, lifting our heads above the strings of lights
 11 adorning rooftops. Our gaze must go up to the heavens, yet
 12 simultaneously sink into our innermost self, where suffering and
 13 joy coexist.

14

1 As Paul wrote in Philippians, “I rejoice greatly in the Lord...for I
 2 have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know
 3 what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I
 4 have learned the secret of being content in any and every
 5 situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or
 6 in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.
 7 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”

8

9 We find joy in our relationship to God and with others on holy
 10 ground—even in—hmmm... let’s say a little corner coffee shop
 11 called Holy Grounds.

12

13 *AL and LELAND enter singing a Christmas song. MEG enters.*

14

15 **LELAND:** Top o’ the morning to you!

16 **AL:** Welcome to Holy Grounds!

17 **MEG:** That’s a funny name for a coffee shop.

18 **AL:** Well, it’s a little play on words, you know? God is everywhere—
 19 even in a coffee shop where the ground and even the *grounds*
 20 are holy!

21 **MEG:** Look, don’t get all churchy on me. I want coffee, not a
 22 sermon.

23 **AL:** Ah, of course. Try my latest concoction! A chocolate
 24 peppermint bonbon café with whipped cream on top!

25 **MEG:** What’s the biggest cup you have?

26 **AL:** (*Holds up the giant cup.*) This is the *groot*. (*Pronounced with a*
 27 *growling gr at the beginning and a long o.*) That’s Dutch for big.

28 **MEG:** Make it two, with an extra shot of espresso.

29 **AL:** Coming right up! (*Replaces mug nearby.*)

30 **LELAND:** You look as though you have a lot on your mind.

31 **MEG:** If you only knew. (*Beat.*) Um, I have a question for you. What
 32 color is Christmas?

33 **LELAND:** Well, one usually thinks of the traditional colors of red,
 34 green, gold, and white.

35 **AL:** I think of purple—the color of the Advent season. It stands for
 36 repentance.

37 **MEG:** (*Snarly.*) Repentance? I’m not at church—and haven’t been
 38 for a long time.

- 1 **AL:** And what color do you envision for Christmas?
2 **MEG:** Black and gray.
3 **AL:** Hmm.
4 **LELAND:** Black and gray symbolizing... what?
5
6 *RUSTY enters.*
7
8 **AL:** Welcome, my friend!
9 **RUSTY:** *(Voice is gruff.)* Just pour me the usual.
10 **AL:** My, my. Somebody's grumpy today. You want just the usual?
11 Nothing spicy? Sugary? How about frothy?
12 **RUSTY:** Now, do I look like I'm in the sugary, frothy mood to you?
13 **AL:** Well, not exactly. Um... have a muffin. Here—take two. *(Beat.)*
14 Something not going right for you today?
15 **RUSTY:** Too much to tell.
16 **AL:** You might be surprised.
17 **RUSTY:** Believe me, I'm hardly ever surprised about anything
18 anymore. Just when I think things can't get any worse...
19 **MEG:** They do! They spiral downward. *(Beat. Then, to RUSTY.)*
20 What color is Christmas to you?
21 **RUSTY:** Christmas ain't a color. It's the Lord's birthday. Good grief.
22 Everybody knows that.
23 **LELAND:** And why, my friend, are you so very concerned about
24 colors?
25 **MEG:** I'm a painter.
26 **RUSTY:** Well, great. I could sure use my house painted.
27 **MEG:** I've been commissioned to do a painting for a woman who
28 loves Christmas. Her husband wants to surprise her with
29 something that captures the essence of the season in colors and
30 textures and symbols, and— and I don't have a clue what the
31 essence of the season is.
32 **RUSTY:** For my birthday, I got one of those adult coloring books
33 with real good art in it. Pictures of the shepherds and wise men
34 and baby Jesus and Santa Claus and reindeer. And I got a box
35 of sixty-four markers—any color you can imagine. They're out in
36 the car if you want me to get 'em. They might give you an idea
37 or two.
38 **MEG:** *(With utter disdain.)* No thanks.

- 1 **ARNIE:** (*Enters.*) It's a wonder I'm not dead! A nutso driver just
2 missed hitting me by an inch! I'm just furious. Drivers don't know
3 how to drive anymore. They can't find their turn signal. They use
4 right on red like a green light. They drive sixty miles an hour in a
5 thirty-five-mile-an-hour zone. They drive and text. And put on
6 makeup. The guy that almost hit me was eating a burger— (*A*
7 *beat, then gesturing for effect.*) with both hands!
- 8 **RUSTY:** Whaaat?!
- 9 **ARNIE:** I'm around difficult people everywhere. In traffic. At work.
10 In the government. On Facebook. I hate to think about the
11 annual family Christmas Eve with my mouth-breathing brother-
12 in-law. I'm so frustrated!
- 13 **RUSTY:** I know! That's why I come here.
- 14 **AL:** (*With humor.*) Ah, God must love us clueless people because
15 he made so many of us! Have a muffin. Take two.
- 16 **CHAPLAIN:** (*Enters.*) Good morning.
- 17 **AL:** Welcome, Chaplain. Last time we saw you, it was a few weeks
18 back.
- 19 **CHAPLAIN:** On a dark and stormy night. There was a bedraggled
20 young man in here.
- 21 **AL:** The hitchhiker you gave a ride to.
- 22 **CHAPLAIN:** And when we found out he was a runaway, you were
23 going to make a phone call. What happened?
- 24 **AL:** We made a start toward reuniting him with his parents.
- 25 **CHAPLAIN:** Just a start?
- 26 **AL:** As a Chinese proverb says, "A journey of a thousand miles
27 begins with a single step."
- 28 **CHAPLAIN:** So true. (*Looks around.*) Hmm... I see some
29 unhappy-looking faces this morning.
- 30 **LELAND:** The dreary souls gathered here this day are wallowing
31 in a sense of hopeless despondency—the depths of despair in
32 the dark nights of our souls.
- 33 **CHAPLAIN:** Well, no one's happy all the time.
- 34 **AL:** But we can be joyful!
- 35 **MEG:** That makes no sense.
- 36 **ARNIE:** Absolutely no sense at all.
- 37 **AL:** But it's Christmas! The most joyful season of the year.
- 38 **MEG:** For whom?

- 1 **CHAPLAIN:** Well, certainly not for everyone. I'm a hospital
2 chaplain, and I've just left my overnight shift. I see a lot—death,
3 disappointment, tragedy. Sometimes it seems like that huge
4 Christmas tree in the hospital entrance makes it all the more
5 jarring—there's a festive tree sparkling with glitter and lights
6 while there's suffering on the next floor and despair in the waiting
7 rooms. I'll be honest with you. I'm feeling no joy right now.
- 8 **MEG:** So the colors of Christmas are black and gray for you too?
- 9 **CHAPLAIN:** Sadly, yes. I'm ashamed to admit it. I rail at God. Why
10 all this pain and grief? And why now? And why at all? Why ever?
- 11 **LELAND:** We belong to the company of Job, do we not? When I
12 think of misery, Job certainly comes to mind. He questioned
13 God.
- 14 **AL:** (*Thoughtfully.*) And God's reply was, "Where were you when I
15 laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who
16 marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a
17 measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who
18 laid its cornerstone—while the morning stars sang together and
19 all the angels shouted for joy?"
- 20 **LELAND:** Who laid the earth's cornerstone, indeed.
- 21 **RUSTY:** Boy! That sure makes God seem big and grand.
- 22 **ARNIE:** And it makes me feel whiny and petty.
- 23 **AL:** Yet for as big as God's sweep of the universe was, God
24 became tiny. So tiny he could fit in a manger. So lowly his bed
25 was straw.
- 26 **MEG:** The Christmas story. I haven't heard it in a long time.
- 27 **RUSTY:** Well, it's in your Bible.
- 28 **MEG:** I'm sure it is.
- 29 **CHAPLAIN:** Christ—ushering in God's kingdom.
- 30 **LELAND:** God's kingdom—from Genesis to Revelation—and
31 before—and after.
- 32 **MEG:** I wonder what God's colors are. I may have to rethink this.
- 33 **CHAPLAIN:** Maybe the color of hope.
- 34 **LELAND:** The hues of gratitude and beauty.
- 35 **AL:** The shades of friendship and kindness.
- 36 **RUSTY:** Of forgiveness and acceptance.
- 37 **CHAPLAIN:** The richness of salvation.
- 38 **LELAND:** The brilliance of wonder and curiosity.

1 **CHAPLAIN:** The tint of purpose and service.

2 **MEG:** And the palette of talent and ability. I wish I could paint
3 Christmas—God’s Christmas—with every color, every texture,
4 every tint and hue.

5 **RUSTY:** Remember, I’ve got my markers out in the car if you need
6 ‘em—sixty-four different colors.

7 **MEG:** That may not be enough.

8 **NARRATOR:** Joy. From Philippians: “Finally, brothers and sisters,
9 whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever
10 is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is
11 excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

12

13 *MEG lights two Advent candles and then the third, the candle of joy.*

14

THE END

God's Dream

Fourth Sunday of Advent

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Matthew 1:18-25; Matthew 19:14; 1 John 4:8

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 females, 4 males, 1 either)

AL (m/f)..... (12 lines)
 RUSTY (m/f)..... (13 lines)
 KAYLA (m/f)..... (8 lines)
 LAUREN (m/f)..... (6 lines)
 CHAPLAIN (m/f)..... (11 lines)
 AIDAN (m/f)..... (13 lines)
 NARRATOR (m/f)..... (1 line)

COSTUMES: LAUREN and KAYLA wear antlers and red foam noses.



1 **AT START:** *Stage directions depend on microphones and space*
 2 *available. Enter and Exit simply mean to step forward toward or*
 3 *away from a microphone, if applicable. It might work for your*
 4 *situation to have people who are “on” face the congregation and*
 5 *those who are “off” face away. The NARRATOR needs to stand*
 6 *apart from the rest of the cast.*

7

8 **NARRATOR:** In Matthew we read the story about Joseph and his
 9 reluctance to wed the woman to whom he was betrothed. She
 10 was unmarried and with child. That was a disgrace. So Joseph
 11 decided not to marry her after all. But God came to Joseph in a
 12 dream. An angel spoke to Joseph and told him to not be afraid.
 13 Angels were always telling people to not be afraid. Now that's
 14 something to think about! The angel said Mary would bear a son,



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ADVENT AT HOLY GROUNDS

by Linda S. Allen.

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