**The Christmas Pageant Advent-ure!**

by Jackie Druckhammer

**Scene 1**

*The casting directors are pacing nervously and whispering to one another, checking their lists and glancing off-stage.*

*(Directors enter and walk over to Casting Directors)*

Director 1: *(to Casting Directors)* Good morning! It’s a fine day to begin casting for our Christmas pageant, isn’t it? I have a feeling this year is going to be a “manger” production!

Casting Director 1: *(nervously)* Ha… yeah, it’s looking that way….

Director 2: Hmmm, sounds like someone needs a little Christmas spirit. I know what will help, let’s meet our pageant hopefuls.

Director 3: I hear we have a shoo-in for Baby Jesus this year – the Pastor’s kid! Who could ask for more?! Let’s bring them all in here!

Casting Director 2: Right... if you say so… *(calling off-stage)* Okay everyone, come on in!

*The cast enters. As they enter the Casting Directors continue to look nervous, and the Directors begins to look confused.*

Director 2: Huh… Interesting costume choice for Mary and Joseph.

Director 1: Not a donkey in sight! Are you sure this is the right group?

Director 3: They know this is a Christmas pageant audition, right?

Director 2: Well, let’s see what they’ve got. Who’s first? *(Adam and Eve step forward)*

Adam: That’s us!

Eve: Adam and Eve, at your service!

Casting Director 1: Here we go…

Director 1: Adam and Eve? I’m sorry folks, but I’m afraid you’ve got the wrong Testament. This is a Christmas Pageant.Who here is from the New Testament?

John the Baptist: Behold! I am! John the Baptist, crying in the desert… I mean, auditioning for the Christmas pageant.

Director 2: *(looking around)* Is that it? Just one? This is a disaster! How are we supposed to have a Christmas pageant when the whole cast is from the wrong part of the Bible?!

Director 3:*(to Casting Directors)* How could you let this happen? We’re ruined!

Casting Director 2: I know it seems odd, but I think you should hear them out. Not all hope is lost – in fact, I think you’ll see it’s just beginning.

Adam: She’s right. Weren’t you listening to the hymn the congregation just sang? It’s not, “Come Thou Just-showed-up Jesus.” Christmas is a long-expected event.

Eve: We learned pretty quickly that we need God’s mercy.

Adam: And, thankfully, God was quick to give us hope of a coming Savior.

*First Reading: Genesis 3:14-15*

*As the reading takes place, Adam and Eve light the first candle on the Advent wreath.*

**14**The Lord God said to the serpent
“Because you have done this,
    cursed are you above all livestock
    and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
    and dust you shall eat
    all the days of your life.
**15**I will put enmity between you and the woman,
    and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
    and you shall bruise his heel.”

Eve: We knew we couldn’t fix the mess we made, but God promised that he would send someone who could!

Director 1: Interesting. I guess there is more to the Christmas story than we thought. I wonder who we will meet next.

*(Moses jumps up, responding to the director’s call for the “next” audition).*

Moses: That’s me, I’m next! *(To Adam and Eve)* Hey, nice costumes!

Adam: Thanks, they’re from the new Fall line.

Casting Director 1: *(To Adam and Eve)* Thanks for coming by, we’ll be in touch.

*(Adam and Eve exit)*.

Director 3: *(To Moses)* And you are...?

Casting Director 2: Meet Moses.

Moses: How do you do?

Director 2: Moses?

Moses: The one and only.

Casting Director 2: *(To Director 2)* That’s why the Christmas tree was burning earlier.

Moses: Sorry about that… the tree’s fine, but I didn’t expect the sprinklers to go off like that. I guess we won’t be walking on dry land around here for a while, eh? *(laughs nervously)*

Director 2: So it seems. Are you ready to tell me why you want to be in our CHRISTMAS pageant?

Moses: Of course! Listen to this.

*Second Reading: Deuteronomy 18:15-19*

*As the reading takes place, Moses lights the second candle on the Advent wreath.*

**15**“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— **16**just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ **17**And the Lord said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. **18**I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. **19**And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.

Moses: When I knew that my time as Israel’s prophet was coming to an end God gave me hope in his plan to send an even greater prophet to his people.

Director 1: Wait a minute, weren’t there lots of prophets after you? I’m still not convinced this is a Christmas story.

Moses: There were, but we knew that we were still just messengers. Our hope didn’t come from our words, but from the one all our words were about, the word-made-flesh.

Director 3: So you’re saying that the hope the prophets had is the same hope that’s found at Christmas?

Moses: You bet! Hope in Christ our Savior is the hope that lights our lives, even today.

Director 3: Wow, I guess we have a lot to think about.

Moses: While you do that, why don’t you let my people go… take a break. We’ve been here all morning.

Casting Director 1: Whatever you say, Moses *(full cast exits).*

**Scene 2**

*Directors enter, Director 1 is talking on phone*

Director 1: Listen, I know I said I need that troupe of traveling Christmas Cattle, but I’m telling you our plans have changed! *(pause)* What do you mean it’s too late to cancel?! If they show up here we’ll have no room for them in the program *(pause, Casting Directors and Isaiah enter and walk over to Directors).* Okay, call me back when you know more *(hangs up and puts phone away).*

Casting Director 2: I’ve got someone here I think you’ll want to meet.

Director 1: I hope it’s not another prophet.

Casting Director 2: Oh… well this is awkward.

Isaiah: It’s okay, I get that a lot. *(reaches out to shake director’s hand)* The name’s Isaiah, and I’m a prophet and Christmas-lover. Why, I get more excited about Christmas than… well… a kid on Christmas.

Director 2: It’s nice to meet you. Maybe you can help us understand this waiting-for-Christmas thing a little better.

Isaiah: Absolutely. That was more or less my job as prophet. If anyone needed to hear about Christmas it was the people God sent me to tell.

Casting Director 1: What do you mean?

Isaiah: I came to God’s people at a time when they were facing exile. God had a lot to say about the bad things they were doing. But, thankfully, he also had a lot to say that gave us hope.

Third Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

*As the reading takes place, Isaiah lights the third candle on the Advent wreath.*

2The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.3You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. 4For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. 5For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. 6For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Director 2: Wait a minute, you wrote that?

Isaiah: I did.

Director 2: But that’s a Christmas classic! Are you telling me it was written hundreds of years before Jesus’ birth?

Isaiah: I told you waiting for Christmas was my job.

Director 3: But how could you write with so much joy when Christmas was still so far away?

Isaiah: That’s precisely why Christmas brings us so much joy – what we’ve been waiting for all this time is finally here!

*(John the Baptist enters and moves toward center stage)*

Casting Director 2 *(to the Director)* So, do you think there’s still hope for this year’s Christmas pageant?

Director 1: It sounds like there’s more hope now than there’s ever been.

John the Baptist: Ain’t that the truth!

Director 2: Have we met?

John the Baptist: John the Baptist, we spoke earlier.

Director 2: Oh, that’s right. But you’re from the New Testament – why do you want to be in THIS Christmas pageant?

John the Baptist: Because Christmas is still about hope – not just for people in the Old Testament, but for all people.

Fourth Reading: John 1:6-14

*During the reading the fourth candle on the Advent wreath is lit by John the Baptist.*

**6**There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7**He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. **8**He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

**9**The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.**10**He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. **11**He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. **12**Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—**13**children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

**14**The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

*(Paul enters and joins the conversation).*

John the Baptist: *(setting down golden torch)* There, it’s nice to have the light among us, isn’t it?

Casting Director 1: It really is.

Paul: Waiting is so much easier with a little light.

Director 3: Wait, more waiting?

Paul: Well, Jesus is coming again, you know.

Casting Director 2: *(checking list)* I didn’t catch your name –

Paul: It’s Paul. Well, Saul, then Paul. It’s long story. Want to hear it while we wait?

*(all nod in agreement and exit).*

**Scene 3 – Post Benediction**

*(preschool kids enter from back of sanctuary in animal costumes)*

Director 1: Woah, woah, woah! What is this!

Agent: I have one troupe of traveling Christmas Cattle, for one Sunday School Christmas Pageant.

Director 2: You’re too early – it’s not time to celebrate Christmas yet! I better not hear a cattle low for one more week!

Casting Director 1: Oh, come on, a little Christmas spirit won’t hurt.

Casting Director 2: Just think of it as a foretaste of the feast to come.

Director 3: It would be kind of nice to hear the good news again.

Director 2: Maybe John has something he could recite—or Paul! I’ll go check.

Donkey: *(clears throat)* Ahem. I have something prepared.

Casting Director 1: *(checking list)* Wait, are you Balaam’s donkey?

Donkey: Nope, just another merry mule.

Director 1: Let’s see what you’ve got.

Donkey: In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Casting Director 2: Now that’s what I’m talking about. All we need now is a song.

Director 3: You heard the man.

Directors 1&2: Hit it!