

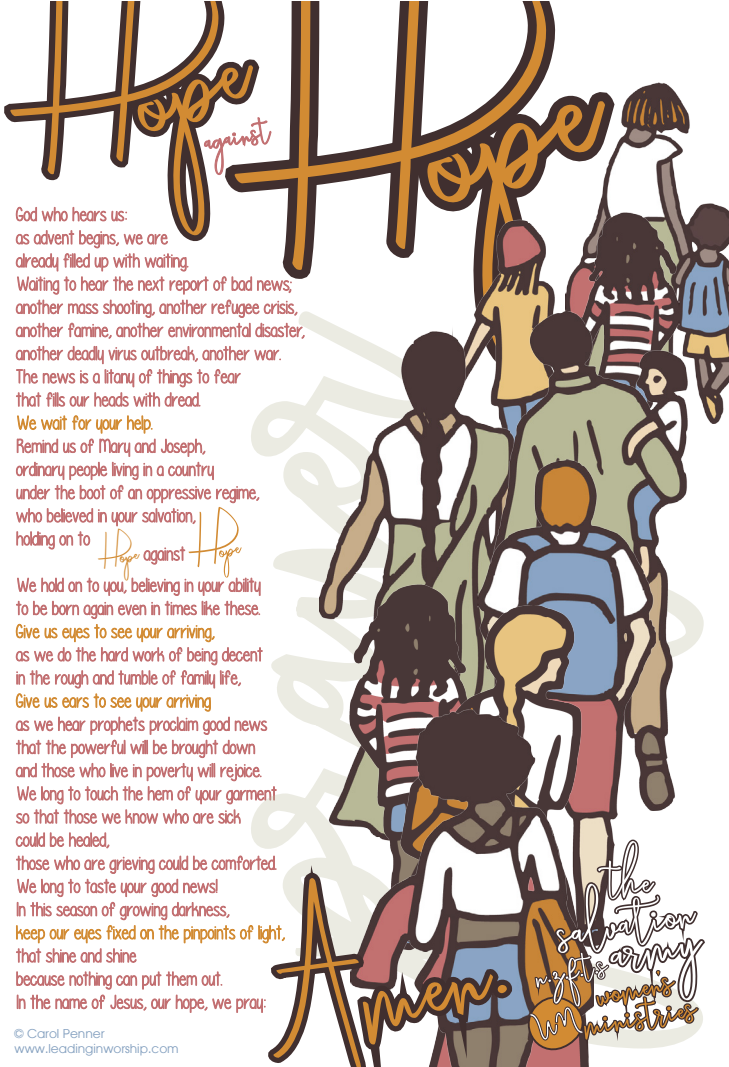
God who hears us:
 as advent begins, we are
 already filled up with waiting.
 Waiting to hear the next report of bad news;
 another mass shooting, another refugee crisis,
 another famine, another environmental disaster,
 another deadly virus outbreak, another war.
 The news is a litany of things to fear
 that fills our heads with dread.
 We wait for your help.
 Remind us of Mary and Joseph,
 ordinary people living in a country
 under the boot of an oppressive regime,
 who believed in your salvation,
 holding on to

Hope against Hope
 We hold on to you, believing in your ability
 to be born again even in times like these.
 Give us eyes to see your arriving,
 as we do the hard work of being decent
 in the rough and tumble of family life,
 Give us ears to see your arriving
 as we hear prophets proclaim good news
 that the powerful will be brought down
 and those who live in poverty will rejoice.
 We long to touch the hem of your garment
 so that those we know who are sick
 could be healed,
 those who are grieving could be comforted.
 We long to taste your good news!
 In this season of growing darkness,
 keep our eyes fixed on the pinpoints of light,
 that shine and shine
 because nothing can put them out.
 In the name of Jesus, our hope, we pray:



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