

**The Heart of Christmas: 1 of 3**  
**“Hope”**  
**Cornerstone Church of Poway**  
**Pastor Ed Turley**  
**December 11, 2022**

**Big Idea:** At the heart of Christmas, we find hope, peace, joy, and love in Jesus.

I pray that God, **the source of hope**, will fill you completely with **joy and peace because you trust in Him**. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Romans 15:13 (NLT2) Remember Verse**

**The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light;** Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them. You shall multiply the nation, You shall **increase their gladness**; They will be **glad in Your presence** As with the **gladness of harvest**, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

**Isaiah 9:2-3 (NASB)**

For a child will be born to us, **a son** will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called **Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace**. There will be **no end** to the increase of *His* government or of **peace**, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this. **Isaiah 9:6-7 (NASB)**

“Look! I am sending my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. Then the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so eagerly, is surely coming,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. **Malachi 3:1 (NLT2)**

**This Christmas We Can Experience Hope By:**

**1. Walking By Faith, Not By Feelings**

“In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a **priest** named **Zechariah**, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife **Elizabeth** was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were **upright** in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations **blamelessly**.” **Luke 1:5-6 (NIV)**

“But they had **no children**, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years. Once when Zechariah's division was **on duty** and he was serving as priest before God, he was **chosen** by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and **burn incense**.” **Luke 1:7-9 (NIV)**

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Gathering People Of Faith Around Us

“And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the **assembled worshipers** were praying outside. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, **he was startled and was gripped with fear**. But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your **prayer** has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John.” **Luke 1:10-13 (NIV)**

“He will be a **joy** and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be **filled with the Holy Spirit** even from birth. **Many of the people** of Israel will he **bring back** to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the **spirit and power of Elijah**, to **turn the hearts** of the **fathers** to their children and the **disobedient** to the wisdom of the righteous--to **make ready** a people prepared for the Lord.” **Luke 1:14-17 (NIV)**

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Trusting In God’s Timing

Zechariah asked the angel, "**How** can I be sure of this? I am an **old man** and my **wife is well along in years**." The angel answered, "I am **Gabriel**. I stand in the **presence** of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now **you will be silent** and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their **proper time**." **Luke 1:18-20 (NIV)**

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and **wondering why he stayed so long** in the temple. When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak. When his time of service was completed, he returned home. After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. "The Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days he has shown his **favor** and **taken away my disgrace** among the people." **Luke 1:21-25 (NIV)**

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**What do you place your hope in?**

**My next right step, I will hold onto hope by:**

[ ] Trusting God in His silence in: \_\_\_\_\_

[ ] Cultivating faithfulness in: \_\_\_\_\_

[ ] Inviting someone to Christmas Eve Service [ ] 4:00 [ ] 6:00 PM

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[This is only a guide – select the points you want to discuss]

**Big Idea:** At the heart of Christmas, we find hope, peace, joy, and love in Jesus.

**Open in Prayer.**

**Icebreaker:** When were you most in need of, or grateful for, a flashlight?

I pray that God, **the source of hope**, will fill you completely with **joy and peace because you trust in Him**. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Romans 15:13 (NLT2) Remember Verse**

**Read Isaiah 9:2-7**

Why is the nation of Israel described to be in darkness?

What attributes are given to this child?

How is Jesus' birth the fulfillment of long-awaited hope?

**Read Malachi 3:1**

Who is this messenger to prepare the way?

**This Christmas We Can Experience Hope By:**

**1. Walking By Faith, Not By Feelings**

**Read Luke 1:5-9**

What do you know about king Herod?

What stands out to you about Zechariah and Elizabeth?

What personal Darkness were they experiencing?

## **2. Gathering People Of Faith Around Us**

**Read Luke 1:10-17**

What was going on while Zechariah was in the temple worshipping?

**Read 1 Chronicles 23:13**

Who are people of faith that you can count on?

## **3. Trusting in God's Timing**

Why would Zechariah doubt?

What do you learn about God's timing?

Why is it so hard to wait on God to move in our lives?

How has God been faithful in your life?

How does that strengthen your trust in Him?

**Close in Prayer:** Start praying. Be bold and pray specifically.