

## **Advent Week 2: Embodying Hope**

Pastor Kevin Donoho

December 10, 2023

### **Opening Discussion**

- What thoughts, feelings, or impressions do you have about the sermon this week?

### **Prayer**

Loving God,

As we enter the second week of Advent, we're excited and waiting for the coming of your light. Please help us to find peace and to be kind to everyone we meet. We're getting ready for Christmas, and we want to be patient as we wait for Jesus. Let our hearts be open to feel the happiness and hope He brings.

In the days and weeks ahead, remind us that your love is like a bright light in our lives, giving us hope and joy. Guide us on this journey and help us understand the love you have for us.

We pray this, believing in your love and waiting for the joy of Christmas. Amen.

### **Scripture**

Read together Luke 1:26-38

"In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you! Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!" Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin." The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What's more, your

relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. For the word of God will never fail." Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her."

### **Thought #1: Carrying the Hope of Jesus Can Be Overwhelming**

Mary was presented with a huge opportunity, but with it came much fear. Pastor Kevin reminded us that when we make ourselves available, we shouldn't be surprised when He asks of us things that feel much bigger than what we are comfortable with.

We may have questions like Mary did. How? Why? Am I worthy?

Reflect on a time, either past or present, when God asked something big of you. Something that felt far outside your comfort zone. Were you reserved? Did you have questions? What feelings did you have before you said "yes"? How did it unfold? What did you learn through that time or circumstance?

Mary was called to literally deliver Jesus to a world in great need of him. We are called to deliver Jesus to the world around us, still desperately in need of Him.

What does that look like for you during this Advent season and beyond?

### **Thought #2: Carrying the Hope of Jesus is About Being Favored**

Revisit Luke 1:29-30

"Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God!"

What does it mean to be found with favor? Pastor Kevin shared that biblically, it can mean grace & kindness or acceptance & delight. He also reminded us that to be favored doesn't mean easy.

Mary was looked down upon for being pregnant and unmarried.

