

Title: Birth Pangs: Labor of Hope

Text: Isaiah 7:13-14, Matthew 1:1, 2, 17, Luke 1:26-38

Date: December 5, 2021

WARM-UP QUESTIONS:

1. How would you define “hope”? What has it looked like in your life this past year?
2. We have weathered various experiences of personal stress and grief. Why might living in hope feel costly or even painful?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Reflecting on the Isaiah and Matthew passages, what would keep the people of Israel hopeful in the duration of these centuries of waiting? Why do you think that the fulfillment of that hope, in the coming of Jesus, may have taken so many generations to come about?
2. Reading the Luke Advent narrative, what was Mary’s personal situation? How did her encounter with the angel Gabriel require courage and hope?
3. Pastor Shirley related the symbiotic relationship of faith and hope. How have you seen this to be true in your own spiritual journey?
4. Now that Jesus has come, what is the hope that God has for us today? How do you know it is a sure hope?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you dare to hope for? Additionally what hope has God planted in your heart?
2. What are the main hindrances to your hope? How might God be at work in you to face these challenges and struggles?