

Sermon Title: **This is the First...**

Bible: **Isaiah 9:6-7 & Luke 2:1-20**

Where & When: at Gilroy UMC on Christmas Eve, December 24, 2020

Audience: about 30 Zoom Participants and YouTube Viewers

Since March 15th, our church has worshipped via YouTube. It is on YouTube live-streaming. Because it is not recorded, but live, I have made many mistakes. But, at least we can worship together at the same time, even though we cannot be together in person at the same place. Now, we are having our first Zoom Christmas Eve service. I am so grateful we can see each others' faces even through screen to screen. Even during this difficult time, we can be together. And thank you so much again for joining our Christmas Eve Service via zoom and via YouTube.

### **1. Because of the first registration**

Mary and Joseph had to leave their town, Nazareth. Because of the first registration order, Mary and Joseph had to leave for Bethlehem, the town of Joseph's ancestors, even though they were expecting a child. At Nazareth, Mary and Joseph might have had a baby registry. They might have received many gifts. They might have already prepared a room and bed for the child. They might have been very well-equipped already for the child at Nazareth. However, suddenly, there was an order for them to leave and to go to another place. Because it was the FIRST registration, nobody could have planned ahead for it. .

Unfortunately, there was no u-haul. They could not take the gifts that they received. They would have to leave many baby gifts at Nazareth. When they made a baby registry, and when

they received many gifts and love from their families, friends, and neighbors, they must have been full of joy and gratitude. However, when they had to leave everything behind, when they had to give up many things for the baby, what would they have been feeling? To make matters worse, there was no place for them in the new place, Bethlehem. They must have wanted to give the best to the baby. But what they could give as the best was only a manger.

## **2. Messy First Christmas?**

It was the MESSY first Christmas. There was nothing that went as planned. But you know what? There was a birth of a child. The baby was born. The new life started. The baby breathed. The baby smiled and cried. The baby was together with his mom and his dad. Furthermore, there were special guests that Mary and Joseph could not have expected. Bethlehem Shepherds were there. They did not know who Mary and Joseph were. But they came to celebrate the first Christmas. And later, the wise men from the East came to celebrate the birth of the child, too. Our nativity scene reminds us of who was there: Mary, Joseph, shepherds, and the wise men.

## **3. Thanks to your presence, Merry Christmas!**

Because of the COVID-19, there are many challenges. We need to give up many things. We cannot do as we planned before. We cannot meet each other freely. But I am thankful to be together even via Zoom or via YouTube. Even though we cannot know everyone here, we are here together to celebrate the birth of the child. The child was born. Like Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men, we are here together. Thanks to all of your presence, I will say, "It is not a Messy Christmas, but a Merry Christmas!" Merry Christmas to all of you.

**Closing Prayer**

Gracious God, we are so grateful that the child was born. The child gives us hope, peace, joy, and love. Thanks to the birth of the child, and thanks to those who are here, we can have a Merry Christmas. Please lead us to bring Merry Christmas to others, and to our community. In Jesus' name. Amen!