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| **Slide** | **Sermon** |
| 1 | Title slide – From Hope to Expectation |
| 2 | Great ExpectationsIntro: Christmas is inching in ever closer- 25 DAYS LeftSigns all around us, although not quite as prevalent as before the pandemic:* Decorations, trees up and decorated
* Manger scenes displayed inside and out
* lighted homes all over
* Christmas music fill the airways on certain channels
* Orbs are up in the east part of the city
* your streaming channels on You TV and XM Sirius channels are streaming Christmas music throughout your homes
* shoppers are in the stores, but most are shopping on line to get their presents for loved ones
* And the nonstop Christmas shows are on your TV, day and night!

Expectations and anticipation are building! Christmas is just around the corner!  |
| 3 | The secular song *Santa Claus Is Coming to Town* is hyping the expectation along with the excitement for many children – You better watch out, you better not cry, you better not pout, I’m telling you why, Santa Claus is coming to town!He's making a list, checking it twice, Gonna find out whose naughty or nice, Santa Claus is coming to town!He sees you when your sleeping, he knows when you’re awake, he knows if you’ve been bad or good, so be good for goodness sake.Expectation / Anticipation play a tremendous role in a child's experience of Christmas. Because Christmas has happened every year, the children's expectations are high that it will happen again!And perhaps we adults should take this lesson from them. After all Matt 19:14 says "Let the little children come to me, don't hinder them for to such belongs the Kingdom of Heaven.”  |
| 4 | There is something simple and compelling about a childlike faith! Today on this 1st Sunday of Advent we start with the Hope that yields the expectation that God did and is doing something special in the life of the world.  |
| 5 | For 400 years between the time of the Old Testament until the coming of Jesus, the Jewish people Hoped for the coming of a Messiah, one who would bring Israel back to political power, shuck off the Roman oppression and bring the renewal of God's people so that they might be a blessing to all the world. Yet the expectation of the fulfillment of this hope had waned. Only a few prophets like Simeon and Anna still expected God to fulfill this promise. After all it had been 400 years, 20 generations! When expectation falters then hope is diminished. |
| 6 | Many of us wonder about if Jesus is returning! After all it has been 2000 + years since he ascended to heaven. Our expectation is certainly low and our hope almost depleted. So we turn our attention on celebrating the historical Christmas as a has-been. nothing new for us, just a great time for the kids. |
| 7  | Many are like my dad was when I was growing up, "Don't expect too much, because if you do you will be disappointed." I think that was his way of protecting the 5 of us children, because he didn't make much money and knew Santa would not bring but one main gift for each of us at Christmas. Yet, this attitude seem to permeate his whole life. He didn’t want to get his hopes and thus his expectations too high lest he would be disappointed.You see it is a protection against sadness, anger, and hurt. It is a protection of being up high emotionally and then taking a hard fall when things don't turn out like you hoped. |
| 8 | * If I didn't expect to make a 100 on the test then I would not be disappointed when I made a B.
* If I didn't expect to get the date to the prom that I really wanted, then I wouldn't feel too hurt when I was rejected.
* If I didn't expect to get the job which I applied for then I wouldn’t be too bummed out when I didn't get it after 5 times of applying!
* ►If I didn't expect my family to come for the holidays, then I wasn't too hurt when they didn't show up!
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| 9 | Story of a little girl: She was 6 years old from a poor family. She wanted a new doll for Christmas that year. But times were hard for the family. Father lost his job, lost the savings trying to make ends meet. Couldn’t pay the mortgage so lost the house which was sold for the taxes. This was in 1936. They moved into a dilapidated old house by the railroad tracks. Dora was the little girls’ name. She had an older brother, Len, a teenager, sister Betty, and an 8 year old sister name Annie. All Dora wanted for Christmas was a Shirley Temple doll. Her letter to Santa was short and to the point. "All I want is a Shirley Temple doll.” Of course, this bothered her parents because of their financial situation. But Dora hoped to get this doll, so much so that she excepted it. She was sure that it would be under the tree on Christmas day. And with each passing day she got more excited. On Christmas day she could hardly wait until breakfast finished. Finally, she tore into the living room to the tree and underneath lay a doll.... but it had no golden curls around the face. It’s dress was knitted, with a lace collar and snaps to hold the collar on, a chipped spot on one of the hands had been painted over. She scanned the room over for another doll, but there was none. Her eyes filled with tears and unable to hold back her sobs, she ran to her bed and bawled with disappointment!This is why my dad didn't want us to expect too much. Why we are often taught not to expect too much. We don't want to be disappointed, hurt.  |
| 10 | As hard as such disappointments are, I still believe we sacrifice so very much when we keep our expectations so low.1. When I make a 100 on a test, I miss out on some of the joy and satisfaction I would have had if I had thought that was a real possibility.2. When I did get a great date to the big dance, I was more relieved than joyful.3. When my family does come to visit, I'm not ready and have other things planned that now have to be rescheduled.If real hope is there, then we can live with expectation. With that expectation we can know and experience the depths of joy and excitement when the gifts of God are given. The risk of course—we may be disappointed and hurt. |
| 11 | Hope and its resulting expectation play an important part of the Christmas story.1. We have John the Baptist. His hope in the coming Messiah called him into action. He preached repentance and baptism with water, His hope led him to proclaim the Messiah and soon he encountered Jesus!
2. Mary was completely surprised by the Angel's words to her. But she received them, became excited and nervous about all this would mean. Yet her hope lead to a certain expectation that God had blessed her, and she would bear the Messiah, somehow and in some way.
3. The wisemen saw the bright star in the east and wondered what it meant. They consulted the Hebrew scriptures, and their hope was born. With every step I can hear the astrologers excitement growing!

Their expectation and anticipation focused their attention and helped them make adequate preparations for Jesus’ coming into the world. |
| 12 | Expectation plays a tremendous role in our experience of Christmas too.Christmas is the celebration of the coming of God’s great gift of Love—Jesus* This gift is historical—already given
* This gift is present—Jesus died for you—you can have life and hope and joy now
* This gift is future—God is always looking for ways to love us more and more

Yet we block these gifts of love because we don’t expect too much so we won’t be hurt. |
| 13 | How sad! Because it’s really not much of a risk to expect God to love us because God has already promised to do so! And the great news is that we win either way.When we expect God to work in our lives and meet our needs and we see it happen Oh what joy, what gladness, what confidence, what faith is built!And when it doesn’t happen like we expect, what comfort and teaching God gives! |
| 14 | Dora—no she didn’t get a Shirley Temple doll that year for Christmas. What she got was a doll of LOVE. * Sister Betty knitted the dress
* Sister Annie sewed on the lace
* Mother put on snaps
* Brother Len and daddy helped clean up the old doll

They loved Dora so much, they wanted to do their best for her.Dora didn’t get what she expected—she got so much more! |
| 15 | So my wish for you is to expect much from Christmas this year! Expect God to work a miracle or two.Hope leads to Expectation and that make is keen to look for what God is doing in and through our lives! |
| 16 | Remember—those in the first Christmas story that didn’t **expect** missed it all **together**! The religious leaders, the inn Keeper, the business owners just focused on the income the Roman census brought them. |
| 17 | I’m blessed because I’m reminded every day about the importance of expectation. Years ago I use to jog with our dog, Maggie—she had a blast! She always hope for it and began to expect it, anticipate it—When I would get back from taking Wade to school, she was ready—tail wagging, prancing back and forth, hoping.When I would dress for running and reach for the lead—she knew it was almost time.When I didn’t go jogging and would walk out the door with my brief case, you could see the disappointment in her eyes.Are you hoping for and expecting God’s gift of Love this Christmas or Are you just trying to get it all done.  |
| 18 | Hope leads to Expect Great Things during this Season—God will meet you in your expectationFulfilling your joy andGiving meaning to your disappointment!We continue to walk toward Christmas together—Let us Hope and do it expecting to meet Jesus!Amen |