



REDEEMER

WINTER HAVEN

To all who are weary and desire rest, to all who mourn and long for comfort, to all who sin and need a Savior, Redeemer City Church opens wide its doors with a welcome from King Jesus the mighty Friend of sinners, the Ally of his enemies, the Defender of the indefensible.

EMMANUEL
GOD WITH US

ADVENT 2023

December 10, 2023 – Second Sunday of Advent

Season of the Cross: Purple for Advent

The season of Advent, a season of waiting, is designed to cultivate our awareness of God's actions—past, present, and future. In Advent, we hear the prophecies of the Messiah's coming as addressed to us—people who wait for the second coming. In Advent, we heighten our anticipation for the ultimate fulfillment of all Old Testament promises, when the wolf will lie down with the lamb, death will be swallowed up, and every tear will be wiped away. In this way Advent highlights for us the larger story of God's redemptive plan.

Advent Introduction

Every year, for the four Sundays leading up to Christmas, we observe the season of Advent. The word Advent means “a coming or an arrival.” It is a time for both honesty, and also hope. Honesty, because the world is broken. Hope, because the world is being redeemed. During Advent, we acknowledge the desolation that is an inevitable part of life in a sin-weary world, while, at the same time, turning our hearts, in joyful expectation, towards the consolation of Jesus’ kingdom come! The truth is, the coming kingdom has already come. In the baby born in Bethlehem. Jesus Christ. Immanuel. God with us.

Each Sunday during Advent, we will emphasize a different theme as we celebrate the heart of God to be relationally present with his people. He has come, in Jesus, to be with us in this mess of our own making. Jesus will soon come again, so that we might dwell with him, forever, in the world that he is remaking. In all the time in between, we wait, sustained by the life-changing truth of the Incarnation. Christmas is God’s way of saying, “I’m here, so you don’t have to be afraid.”

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Song of Advent

In this song of advent we acknowledge our need of a Savior and anticipate His return.

O Come All Ye Faithful

Advent Theme: Hope

Today we light a candle as a call to **hope**. We are hope-shaped creatures. Living ahead of the time. Inhabiting the present moment in such a way that the future is the beating heart of the now. According to the Biblical prophets, the present state of affairs is always being crowded out by what is coming. A way of being-in-the-world that is infused with anticipation, not dread. This is what it means to wait. But waiting is not passive. It is acting today on the basis of the tomorrow God has promised. Hope is also dependent, because the future is the product of God’s grace, not human innovation. For that reason, it is a sure thing. In fact, it’s already here. It is just not very evenly distributed yet. One day. Very soon. God will again dwell with us. Face to face. The comfort of His presence will be enough to make all the sad things come untrue. We know this, because Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, has already come. So, we turn our eyes, in hope, to his second coming. To the day when he will bring to completion what he has already begun.

Advent Reading: Micah 5:2, 4-5a

We read God's Word, the Bible, together. It reminds us of who God is and what He expects from us.

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days...And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace.

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

We pray together, praising God for who He really is (Adoration) and admitting our inability to live up to what He expects of us (Confession).

Assurance of Pardon: Titus 2:11-14

We read God's Word together and are reminded that grace and mercy are freely given to all who have faith in Jesus Christ.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Greeting

In Jesus, we have not only been reconciled to God, we have also been reconciled to one another. Therefore, we greet one another as brothers and sisters.

Songs of Praise and Celebration

Our response to God's free grace is celebratory worship. We express our praise to God for who He is and what He has done to save us

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
What Child is This?

Worship Through Giving: Give Online at redeemerwh.org/give

We respond to the good news of God's mercy and grace for us in Jesus by giving generously to the work of this church and the kingdom of God.

Kid's Worship Dismissal

*Children through **fifth grade** are dismissed for kids' worship.*

Prayer of Thanksgiving & Intercession

We again express in prayer our gratitude to God for what he has done and ask him to continue to act for our good and the good of others in our community and the world.

Proclamation of God's Word

A small portion of God's Word is explained to us and applied to our own lives.

Ezekiel 37:1-14, 24-28

Sacrament of Communion

The ritual meal of Communion is a sign and seal of the grace we have in Jesus. That is, it symbolizes the work Christ did for our salvation (sign) and communicates the grace and mercy we have been given (seal) as a result of His death and resurrection.

O Come All You Unfaithful

Song of Response & Sending

We respond to the good news of God's mercy and grace by singing again of His goodness and greatness.

Is He Worthy?

Benediction

Because the hand of God's wrath was raised against Jesus, we now receive the hand of God's blessing as we are sent out to live our lives to the glory of God.

May the LORD bless you and keep you;
May the LORD make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;
May the LORD turn His face toward you and give you His peace,
Both now and forevermore. Amen.

Proclamation of God's Word

A small portion of God's Word is explained to us and applied to our own lives.

1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. 2 And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. 3 And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." 4 Then he said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. 5 Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. 6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD."

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. 8 And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. 9 Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

11 Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.' 12 Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. 13 And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. 14 And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD."

24 "My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. 25 They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. 26 I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27 My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 28 Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore."

Pg. 80 (Ezekiel 37:11-14, 24-28 ESV)

Resources

G.K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*

J. Scott Duvall, *God's Relational Presence*

William Osborne, *Divine Blessing & the Fullness of Life in the Presence of God*

Andrew Wilson, *God of All Things*

Sermon Series: Advent: Emmanuel
Sermon Title: A Future for the Walking Dead
Date: December 17, 2023

Intro: *What makes heaven heaven?*

I. THE BONES

*"Why should we grope among the dry bones of the past? The sun shines to-day also."
– Ralph Waldo Emerson*

II. THE WORD AND THE WIND

"Revival is not a green valley getting greener, but a valley full of dry bones being made to live again. It is not good Christians becoming better Christians, but honest Christians being made new." – Roy Hession

III. THE SANCTUARY

"Jesus was God and man in one person, that God and man might be happy together again." – George Whitfield

Takeaway: *Communion with God is spiritual breath!*

the Jesus Storybook Bible®

Advent



Begin by singing “O Come All Ye Faithful” or some other favorite Advent/Christmas song.

Light the first Advent Candle. The first Advent theme is **love**. Light the second Advent Candle. The second Advent theme is **faith**.

Light the third Advent Candle. The third Advent theme is **hope**. Discuss hope, asking the following questions.

What’s your favorite fairy-tale? Why do you like it so much? Did it have a happy ending? Describe the happy ending.

Do you think it’s possible that real life is like a fairy-tale? With a happily-ever-after? That’s what the word hope means. It refers to the happy ending God has promised will come at the end of all our stories.

Read “Operation No More Tears!” from the Jesus Storybook Bible (pg. 144-151) and discuss it together. Asking the following questions:

The world can be a scary place. What’s one thing about the future that makes you nervous or afraid?

When we use the word hope, it often refers to something that is not a sure thing. Like, “I hope I get a puppy for Christmas.” It might happen, but probably not. But when the Bible uses the word hope, it describes something that is absolutely 100% a sure thing. Think back to the letter God wrote to his people thru Isaiah. What part of all God said do you most want to be true?

Can you trust God when he says, “I promise”? How does Jesus coming at Christmas help you trust Him for the future?

Pray together using the A.C.T.S. model

Adore God. He can’t stop loving us.

Confess the ways you don’t listen to God and refuse to believe him when he says, “I promise.”

Give Thanks for Jesus. He is alive. Everything is going to be ok.

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with hope.

Announcements

Santa's Run for the Kids: The Winter Haven Optimist Club's "Santa's Fun Run For Our Kids" is **Saturday, December 16**. If you're looking to run, visit: santasrunfest.org. There is a 5K, 10K, half marathon, and a kids' sprint. Redeemer is sponsoring a recovery table and in need of a handful of volunteers.

15 Year Celebration: Hard to believe it's already been 15 years as a church family. Whether you were with us on day 1 at Winter Haven High School or if you've just found us recently -- we want you to celebrate with us. We're excited to invite you to our 15 year celebration **on Sunday, January 7, 5pm at Venue 650**.

Women's Retreat: Ladies, registration is now open for our upcoming Women's Retreat **February 23-25, 2024**. Please visit: redeemerwh.org/retreat to register. Join us as we "Behold our extraordinary God amidst everyday ordinary life."

Men's Groups: Men, there are two opportunities for you to plug in: **Tuesday mornings from 7-8am in the Fellowship Hall** to read the daily Community Bible Reading. And on **Tuesday afternoons from 4-6 pm we'll meet at Grove Roots** for casual drop-in fellowship. **The group is breaking on 12/26 & 1/2**.

Get Connected: The best way to stay up-to-date with what's happening at Redeemer is through our online newsletter (redeemerwh.org/newsletter) and our mobile app (redeemerwh.org/app).

Worship Playlists: Follow our weekly set list on Spotify and Apple Music so that you can become familiar with the songs that we'll be singing on Sundays. You can find the playlist on the "RedeemerWH" app (above) or at: (redeemerwh.org/worship).

Our Mission

Our mission is to make Jesus' invisible kingdom visible in Winter Haven, Polk County, and the world.

Church Planting

One of the ways we hope to accomplish our mission is by planting new churches throughout Polk County. We proudly partner with Renew Polk (renewpolk.org) and the Florida Church Planting Network (flchurchplanting.org).

Community Groups

We also meet during the week in homes for what we call Community Groups. They are intended to be the primary "church" experience for all who are a part of Redeemer. If you are interested in visiting a community group, contact Jonathan Winfree, jonathan@redeemerwinterhaven.org.

MISSION
FUND

GOAL: \$50,000
RECEIVED: \$18,256

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