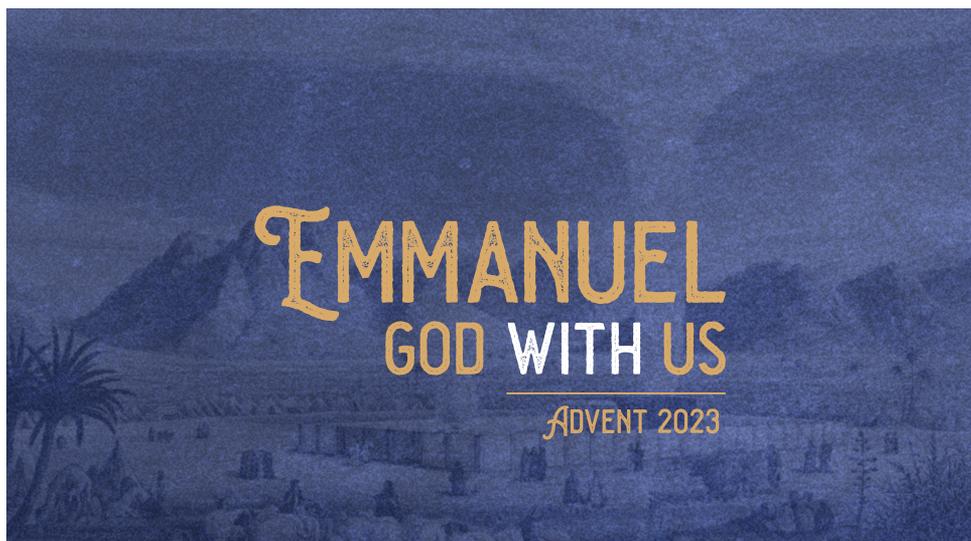




# REDEEMER

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.*



*December 24, 2023 – Fourth Sunday of Advent*

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## **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.”

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## ORDER OF WORSHIP

### Song of Advent

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

The Glorious Impossible

### Advent Theme: Joy

Our Advent theme this week is **joy**. The opening chapters of the gospels are like a real-life musical. Mary sang. Zechariah sang. Simeon sang. The shepherds were treated to an angelic concert. The anthem was the same, “God has come!” His absence is the cause of all our sadness. His coming is the healing! Good news of great joy for all people! Even the mountains join in on the song. The trees clap their hands at his coming. The rocks cry out! Let’s make sure we’re not left out of the celebration. God has come! He is with us! We don’t have to be afraid!

## **Advent Reading:** Luke 1:46-54

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

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

## **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:** Colossians 1:15-20

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

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

## **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*

O Come All You Faithful  
Angels We Have Heard On High

## **Worship Through Giving:** Give Online at [redeemerwh.org/give](https://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.*

John 1:1-18

## **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.*

Immanuel

## **Song of Response & Sending**

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

I Will Wait for You (Psalm 130)

## **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 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. 9 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") 16 For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Pg. 886 (John 1:1-18 ESV)

## Resources

Jonathan Gibson, *O Come on Come Emmanuel*

B.B. Warfield, *"The Emotional Life of our Lord"*

Dane Ortlund, *Gentle & Lowly*

## Family Worship/Group Discussion Questions

1. Prayerfully reflect on your heart, circumstances, relationships, etc. How did you "come" into worship today?
2. Where did the gospel "dwell in you richly" in the service today? In the prayers? In the singing? In the sermon?
3. Specifically, how were you led to turn from sin and trust in Jesus?
4. What is the one thing from the sermon this morning that you would most want to pass on to someone else?

**Sermon Series:** Advent: Emmanuel

**Sermon Title:** The Grand Miracle

**Date:** December 24, 2023

**Intro:** *What the meaning of Christmas?*

## **I. THE WORD BECAME FLESH**

*"In Christ two natures met to be your cure." - George Herbert*

## **II. TO MAKE US HIS CHILDREN**

*Jesus, born of God, makes it possible for us to be born of God*

# the Jesus Storybook Bible®

Advent



Begin by singing “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” or some other favorite Advent/Christmas song.

Light the first three Advent Candles representing **faith, love & hope**.

Light the fourth Advent Candle. The fourth Advent theme is **joy**. Discuss joy, asking the following questions.

*What does peace mean to each family member? How can we bring peace to others during this season?*

*What makes us afraid? How do you feel during a nighttime storm with loud thunder? How do you feel after the storm has passed?*

Read “The Light of the World” from the Jesus Storybook Bible (pg. 184-191) and discuss it together. Asking the following questions:

*Why do you think the shepherds were afraid when the angel appeared? If Jesus is the maker of the stars, how does He light up the whole world?*

*Would you rather be in the darkness or in the light? With your parents present, turn out the lights in the room. Does the darkness make you a little afraid? Why? Now, light one candle or shine a flashlight. How does a flicker of light in the darkness make it less fearful?*

*How is the world dark? Do you think it’s possible to have peace in a dark world? Isaiah tells us that Jesus came to bring life-giving light to a very dark world. Jesus is called: “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, & the Prince of Peace.” John 12:46 says that “Jesus is the light that has come into the world. No one who believes in him will stay in the dark hiding anymore.”*

*Can you trust God when he says, “Do not be afraid?”*

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

*Adore God. He sent His Son, Jesus to be our Emmanuel – which means God with us!*

*Confess the ways when you are fearful and don’t believe God is always with you and will never forsake you.*

*Give thanks for Jesus. He came to be the light of the world and to rescue us from our sins.*

*Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with His peace.*

# Announcements

**Christmas Eve Services:** Join us in the late afternoon for our Candlelight Services at **4 & 5:30pm (childcare through Pre-K4)**.

**Year End Giving:** All gifts must be received in the church office, made online or postmarked **by Sunday, December 31 to be included on your 2023 Giving Statement**. The church office will be closed Dec 25-30, reach out to Joe Ragsdale if you need to coordinate a drop-off during that week.

**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](https://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](https://redeemerwh.org/newsletter)) and our mobile app ([redeemerwh.org/app](https://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](https://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](https://renewpolk.org)) and the Florida Church Planting Network ([flchurchplanting.org](https://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](mailto:jonathan@redeemerwinterhaven.org).

MISSION  
FUND

**GOAL:** \$50,000  
**RECEIVED:** \$18,961

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