



# REDEEMER

## CITY CHURCH

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December 17, 2017 – Third Sunday of Advent

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### 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.” The coming of Jesus affected a first-order reversal of all previous arrangements – an altogether new creation *ex nihilo*, out of nothing. This expectation was announced by the prophet Ezekiel ahead of time: “Things shall not remain as they are. Exalt the low, and bring low that which is exalted” (Ezekiel 21:26). Indeed, the post-Christmas *kosmos* is something entirely new. It turns the world upside down and refuses to pick up what falls out of its pockets. It is a world where the last are first and the first last (Matthew 20:16). Nowhere is this more evident than in a theme woven throughout the entire Bible: a child supernaturally born from a barren womb. Sarah. Hannah. Elizabeth. Even more so, Mary. These women and their stories are a powerful reminder that salvation is by grace. It is God’s doing. Therefore, it only comes to the humble. The only thing you need to enter God’s upside-down kingdom of grace is need...Each Sunday during Advent, we will emphasize a different theme – a lesson we learn from the lives of these women of faith. This Christmas, may the rearranging truth of the gospel rearrange you.

### Advent Theme: Hope

Luke’s gospel begins with a familiar cast of characters: an aging couple struggling with infertility. Those familiar with the story of Abraham and Sarah would have thought, “Oh boy! Watch out! God’s about to do something really amazing!” That’s how Zechariah and Elizabeth should have been thinking, because nothing is too difficult for the Lord. With God, it never is what it is. What really matters is what will be. Life is a story. You have to see it through to the end.

Elizabeth’s story is a lesson in **hope** - our Advent theme this week. We are hope shaped creatures. How we live today is controlled by what we believe tomorrow will be like. The opposite of hope is cynicism. Zechariah and Elizabeth had given in to cynicism and fear. ... Today we light a candle to remember that whatever today might be, the story isn’t over yet. There is a happily-ever-after that is on its way. One day Jesus will come again, and when he comes all of our disappointments and regrets will become like a bad dream. Everything sad is coming untrue.

# Songs of Gathering and Preparation

*We prepare our hearts, and bodies for worship by singing about the God we serve.*

Hope is Here  
Angels from the Realms of Glory

## Call to Worship

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

1 "Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married," says the LORD....7 For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you. 8 In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you," says the LORD, your Redeemer. 9 "This is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and will not rebuke you. 10 For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54:1, 7-10 ESV)

6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:6-7 ESV)

## 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).*

## Song for Advent

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

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

## Assurance of Pardon

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

10 "For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. 13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile. (Jeremiah 29:10-14, ESV)

## 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*

Emmanuel (Hallowed Manger Ground)  
He Has Come for Us

## 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.*

*(Children through fifth grade are dismissed for kid's worship)*

## Proclamation of God's Word

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

Luke 1:5-15, 18-20; 57-58, 67-79 *(see insert)*

## Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen...We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end...We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son], who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

## 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.*

He Who is Mighty

## Songs of Response & Sending

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

### Go Tell It On the Mountain

## 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.

## Announcements

Greeting this morning are the **Bennett & Lear** Community Groups.

**Christmas Eve:** We will gather in the morning for our regular Sunday morning service. For our annual Candlelight Christmas Eve service we will have two services here at Redeemer City. Those services will be at **5 & 6:30pm**. Childcare will be available through pre-k.

**Renew Polk Worship Service:** Save the date! **Sunday, January 28, 5p, Branscomb Auditorium at Florida Southern College**, Redeemer and all of our sister churches and core groups in the Renew Polk Network will come together for a joint worship service. Everyone is welcome!

**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)).

*(There is no offering taken during the service. An offering box is located at the front and the back of the sanctuary.)*