



REDEEMER

CITY CHURCH

December 24, 2017 – Fourth Sunday of Advent



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: Love

Upon learning that she would be the mother of the Messiah, Mary sang the oldies. A remake of Hannah’s old song: “My soul magnifies the Lord, because He has come for the weak, not the strong. And that’s me!” Like Hannah, she was overwhelmed by God’s grace to her. It turned her upside-down. All she could think to do was sing!

Mary’s story is a lesson in **love** - our Advent theme this week. Despite all of the reasons why she might not, Mary opened her heart to God’s incredible plan of salvation. She said “Yes!” to what God was doing, at great personal cost. By saying “Yes!” to God she said “No!” to fear. Fear is the opposite of love. When you’re afraid you lock your heart up in a coffin of selfishness. But it’s still not safe. It might not be broken, but it will become unbreakable, which is far worse. Today, we light a candle to remember that, from all eternity, God said “Yes!” to loving us, at great personal cost. We love because He first loved us.

Songs of Gathering and Preparation

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

Christ the Lord is Born Today

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...11 "Afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will rebuild you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with lapis lazuli. 12 I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones. 13 All your children will be taught by the LORD, and great will be their peace. 14 In righteousness you will be established: Tyranny will be far from you; you will have nothing to fear. Terror will be far removed; it will not come near you. 15 If anyone does attack you, it will not be my doing; whoever attacks you will surrender to you. 16 "See, it is I who created the blacksmith who fans the coals into flame and forges a weapon fit for its work. And it is I who have created the destroyer to wreak havoc; 17 no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me," declares the LORD. (Isaiah 54:1; 11-17 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.

Come O Redeemer

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.

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 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. (Titus 2:11-14 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

The First Noel
It Came Upon A Midnight Clear
What Child is This?
God with 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 1:26-38; 46-55 *(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.

Mary Did You Know?

Announcements

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

Year End Giving: All gifts must be received in the church office, made online or postmarked by **TODAY, Sunday, December 31** to be included on your 2017 Giving Statement.

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) and our mobile app (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.)

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 are proudly partner with Renew Polk (renewpolk.org), a missional partnership of churches, that exists to catalyze funds and resources for PCA church planting in Polk County. The aim of Renew Polk is to see 20 new churches planted in Polk County over the next 20 years.

Community Groups

We also meet during the week in homes for what we call Community Groups. If you are interested in visiting a community group, contact Jonathan Winfree, jonathan@redeemerwinterhaven.org or visit our website.

"The purpose of Community Groups is to create a community where Jesus Christ is experienced and mutual ministry is enjoyed."

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