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 opens wide her doors with a welcome from King Jesus the mighty Friend of sinners, the Ally of his enemies, the Defender of the indefensible.

December 7, 2025 – The 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. Jesus is God running to us!

Song of Ascent

The first song we sing together guides us as we "go up" or approach the presence of God to worship Him. This song is meant to rouse us to worship and awaken our hearts.

Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Advent Theme: Faith

While the law cannot justify us or make us righteous; it is a teacher given to lead us to Christ, the fulfiller of the law.

Our Advent theme this week is **faith**. The message of Christmas is not, "Let me give you some advice." It is, "I bring you glad tidings of great joy." What is this joy? That the lost has been found! Christmas is history. It is the story of what God has done at a particular time in a particular place to find and rescue those He loves. If it is history, then salvation is, indeed, by grace. That is, we are saved by believing, not by doing. There is no moral of the Christmas story. There is just the story. It is gospel. The right response to gospel is to believe that it is not too good to be true. To stop running from God. Stop trying to do it all on your own. Stop trying to save yourself. And turn toward Home. When you do, you'll see the Father running to meet you on the way.

Advent Reading: Luke 1:26-37

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

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. 30 And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end"...

… 34 And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. 36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God."

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 of Advent

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

O Come O Come Emmanuel

Assurance of Pardon: Galatians 4:4-7

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

4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

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.

God With Us
Shepherd

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.

Kids' Worship Dismissal

*Children **through kindergarten** 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.

Luke 15:11-32

Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed

As an expression of our faith in Jesus Christ in solidarity with his people, we declare the substance of what we believe.

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker 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; by the power of the Holy Spirit He become incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. 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, with the Father and the Son He is worshiped and glorified. He 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 forward to 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..

Come To Me

Mercy Offering: Give online at **redeemerwh.org/give**

As an expression of our faith in Jesus Christ in solidarity with his people, we declare the substance of what we believe.

Savant-Sweet Scholarship

Song of Response & Sending

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

Reckless Love

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.

There is a prayer team available following the worship service for anyone in need of prayer.

Proclamation of God's Word

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

11 And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. 13 Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. 14 And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. 16 And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."' 20 And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. 23 And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

25 "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' 28 But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, 29 but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' 31 And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

Pg. 874 (Luke 15:11-32)

Resources

Kenneth Bailey, ***The Cross and the Prodigal***

Sinclair Ferguson, ***The Whole Christ***

Tim Keller, ***The Prodigal God***

Henri Nouwen, ***The Return of the Prodigal Son***

Matt Smethurst, ***Tim Keller on the Christian Life***

Sermon Series: Advent: God Running to Us
Sermon Title: Two Lost Sons
Date: December 7, 2025

Hook: *Two boys. Which is the good son and which is the bad son?*

I. TWO LOST BOYS

"You can rebel against God and be alienated from him either by breaking his rules or by keeping all of them diligently." – Tim Keller

II. THE FATHER'S GRACE

"I have taken all my good deeds, and all my bad deeds, and have cast them together in a heap before the Lord, and have fled from both to Jesus Christ, and in him I have sweet peace." – David Dickson

Takeaway: *Christmas is grace! We are saved by believing, not by doing.*

ADVENT RESOURCES

Advent Activities

redeemerwh.org/advent-kids

Advent Hymns & Songs

Spotify: redeemerwh.org/advent-hymns-spotify

Apple Music: redeemerwh.org/advent-hymns-apple

Behold the Lamb of God (Andrew Peterson)

Spotify: redeemerwh.org/btlog-spotify

Apple Music: redeemerwh.org/btlog-apple

Available in the foyer

Announcements

Christmas Party: Our Christmas Party is **TODAY at 5pm** at the Packing House (302 3rd St SW). We'll have heavy hors d'oeuvres and a coffee cart serving hot & cold (regular & decaf) drinks. This event is for adults only.

Santa's Fun Run: The Winter Haven Optimist Club's "Santa's Fun Run For Our Kids" is Saturday, **December 20**. If you're looking to run, the event will have a 5K, 10K, and a kids' sprint. ***If you register to run, select "Redeemer" as your team at registration.***

Christmas Eve: Make plans to join us **Wednesday, December 24**, for Christmas Eve. We'll have identical candlelight services at **4 & 5:30pm**. Childcare will be provided for children up to three years old.

One Service: Beginning on **Sunday, December 28**, we will transition back into one service at 10am.

Congregational Meeting: The session has called a congregational meeting to be held on **Sunday, January 4**, immediately following the morning worship service for the purpose of electing elders and deacons.

Women's Retreat: Ladies, join us at The Grove Resort in Orlando **January 30-Feb 1, 2026** as we practice and experience Deeper Rest in Christ Alone. To register and to see more details including speakers, cost, schedule, and rooming choices, please visit **redeemerwh.org/womensretreat**. ***Please note that the deadline to register is December 12***.

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 Ashley Bennett, **ashmbennett1013@gmail.com**.

MISSION FUND

2025 GOAL: $50,000
RECEIVED: $11,587