



# 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 14, 2025 – The Third 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. 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.*

Is He Worthy

## Advent Theme: Hope

*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 **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. God is waiting, too. Like the father eagerly looking for his son over the horizon. Already decided in his love for us. Longing to embrace us, clothe us with his finest robes, and seat us at his table. One day. Very soon. He will gather his people to himself. So, we turn our eyes, in hope, to his Christ's second coming. To the day when he will bring to completion what he has already begun.

## Advent Reading: Matthew 1:18-25

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

1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins"...

...22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

## 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: John 3:16-17

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

16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

## 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 So Loved  
King Of Kings

## 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.*

## Kids' 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.*

Luke 15:11-24

## **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 became 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..*

Oh Righteous Branch

## **Song of Response & Sending**

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

Good Good Father

## **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.

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***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.

Pg. 874 (Luke 15:11-24)

## Resources

Kenneth Bailey, *The Cross and the Prodigal*

Tim Keller, *The Prodigal God*

Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*

James K.A. Smith, *On the Road with Saint Augustine*

**Sermon Series:** Advent: God Running to Us

**Sermon Title:** Sin and Salvation

**Date:** December 14, 2025

**Hook:** *What's the worst thing you've ever done? Did you get away with it?*

## **I. THE DEATH WISH**

*"Theologically, Jesus is affirming that humankind in their rebellion against God really want him dead!" – Kenneth Bailey*

## **II. THE FACE-SAVING PLAN**

*"One of the greatest challenges of the spiritual life is to receive God's forgiveness."  
– Henri Nouwen*

## **III. THE GRACE CONFRONTATION**

*"We find rest because we are found; we make it home because someone comes to get us." – James K.A. Smith*

**Takeaway:** *Thank God for his thwarting!*

# ADVENT RESOURCES

## *Advent Activities*

*redeemerwh.org/advent-kids*

## *Advent Hymns & Songs*

*Spotify: redeemerwh.org/advent-hymns-spotify*

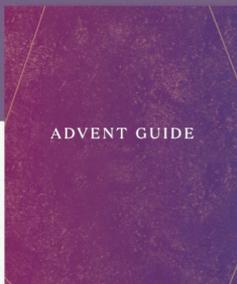
*Apple Music: redeemerwh.org/advent-hymns-apple*

## *Behold the Lamb of God (Andrew Peterson)*

*Spotify: redeemerwh.org/btlog-spotify*

*Apple Music: redeemerwh.org/btlog-apple*

## Available in the foyer



## Announcements

**Santa's Fun Run:** The Winter Haven Optimist Club's "Santa's Fun Run For Our Kids" is **Saturday, December 20**. The event will have a 5K, 10K, and a kids' sprint. ***If you register to run, select "Redeemer WH" as your team at registration.*** If you'd like to volunteer, please reach out to Brad Scholten at [bradleyscholten@gmail.com](mailto:bradleyscholten@gmail.com).

**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.

**Year-End Giving:** All gifts must be received in the church office, made online or postmarked by **Wednesday, December 31** to be included on your 2025 Giving Statement. Please reach out to Joe Ragsdale ([joe@redeemerwinterhaven.org](mailto:joe@redeemerwinterhaven.org)) if you need to schedule a drop-off or to donate stock. If you're interested in making a year-end gift or pledge for our upcoming Growing Deep for Greater Reach Campaign (Building Fund) contact MattE Diaz at [campaign@redeemerwinterhaven.org](mailto:campaign@redeemerwinterhaven.org).

**Women's Retreat:** Ladies, we'd love for you to 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, please visit [redeemerwh.org/womensretreat](http://redeemerwh.org/womensretreat). ***Please note that the deadline to register has been extended but there are limited spaces still available.***

**Get Connected:** The best way to stay up-to-date with what's happening at Redeemer is through our online newsletter ([redeemerwh.org/newsletter](http://redeemerwh.org/newsletter)) and our mobile app ([redeemerwh.org/app](http://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](http://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](http://renewpolk.org)) and the Florida Church Planting Network ([flchurchplanting.org](http://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](mailto:ashmbennett1013@gmail.com).

MISSION  
FUND

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

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