

# 2021 Fall Spiritual Renewal

## Redeemer Lutheran Church

### The Church Lives

#### Week 1

#### **The Fullness of Time**

From all over the United States and beyond people travel to northwestern Arizona to view the Grand Canyon and feast their eyes on one of the most amazing natural wonders on Earth. The thing about the Grand Canyon is that snapshots and video simply don't do justice to all of its grandeur. People can try to describe it, artists try to paint it, and nothing measures up (I simply refer to the Grand Canyon as "sensory overload"). Nothing compares to the Grand Canyon's breathtaking beauty.

If you've made this pilgrimage you may have vivid memories of children in the backseat asking, for the umpteenth time, "Are we there yet?" Then, as the moment finally arrives, all the hours of travel seem like nothing as you stand on the edge of the canyon (behind the safety rails, please) and your eyes span the chasm. People standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon are often hushed, as if they're experiencing a kind of "holy moment," in a state of awe.

Throughout the pages of the Old Testament, prophecy after prophecy has been uttered pointing God's people to the coming of Messiah. Through the centuries God's Old Testament people kept asking, "Are we there yet?" And then the long-awaited Savior of the world, the Lord of Glory, arrives ... in a small town bursting at the seams with emigrants for the Roman census ... laid in a manger bed. This is a moment for a holy hush. This truly is a spiritual moment. The One who made the Grand Canyon, the rest of the universe, and all that exists is wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. The time has come! God is in this manger. We have arrived!

#### **Talk About It**

Share about a time you traveled a long way to see someone and something. Describe how you felt when you finally arrived.

#### **Discussion**

Jesus has various names which are included in His story. Go through the following names and discuss what it means and how you've experienced it to be true of Jesus:

**Jesus:** the Word

**Jesus:** is God

**Jesus:** the Maker of all things

**Jesus:** the Way, the Truth, and the Life

**Jesus:** the Light

**Jesus:** the only-begotten Son

**Jesus:** the one who brings grace and truth

Read Luke 1:26-38 and Matthew 1:19-24. God spoke to both Mary and Joseph through angels. What was the angel's message and how did Mary and Joseph respond to this heavenly messenger?

Mary and Joseph were real people who lived in a real small town. How might Joseph's family and the townspeople have reacted when Mary turned up pregnant before the wedding day? What might they have reacted to "An angel told me that God would make me pregnant, but Joseph and I are still both virgins" story?

Jesus was born of a virgin and was conceived without sin. Why does this matter for our salvation?

Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem to be counted in the census; it was a hard journey for anyone, let alone a pregnant woman. But God used the census to get them to Bethlehem to fulfill the prophecy that Messiah would be born in that town. Recall an event in your life which seemed inconvenient and unnecessary, only for you to look back later and realize that God was doing great things even though you didn't realize it.

The Christmas account has three main features: Jesus born in Bethlehem, the angelic announcement of His birth, and the reaction of the shepherds (Luke 2:15-18, 20). How have you shared your faith story to people outside your small group ... people who may not be followers of Jesus?

Jesus is Immanuel (God with us). As you follow Jesus as Lord, how does it help you to know that He is God and that He is with you all the time?

When do you need to be reminded most that God is with you? How can your small group pray for you as you go through those moments in your life?

### **Reflect**

When we fully grasp the truth that Jesus frees us from our sins, we are filled with inexpressible joy. Take time during this week to thank God for sending His Son to pay the price for your sins. Praise Jesus for the great love He demonstrated by offering Himself on the cross as the world's only perfect sacrifice for sin.