
EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



ADVENT
HOUSTON

12th Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 14

AUGUST • 11 • 2024

WELCOME TO ADVENT!

Advent means “arrival” or “coming.” Many of us have a temptation to believe that we can live a good enough life or do the right things to make our way to God. We think that if we do enough of the right types of things, then God will allow us into His home. But the Bible tells us again and again that we are never the first movers in this relationship. God is always the initiator. He spoke all things into being; He created; and He pursues. He is the one who arrives. And we see this in the first advent of God.

John begins his gospel by saying, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (ESV). God the Son came to us in the first advent: what the church calls the incarnation. He didn’t wait for us to try and make our way to his heavenly abode. He didn’t stand above us to lecture us or condemn us. He came to us. In fact, he became one of us, taking on flesh, pain, sorrows, and death.

And God hasn’t stopped there. After Jesus came into this world to inaugurate the reign of God on earth as it is in heaven, after he died on the cross to atone for our sins, and after he was raised from the dead to defeat sin and death, He ascended to heaven to assume the throne. Scripture tells us that he will come again. And when he comes again, he is bringing the new heavens and the new earth with him.

It is in this second advent, that Jesus promises to make all things new. Though he has already dealt with sin and death, it isn’t until he comes again that death will be eradicated.

PENTECOST

“The season after Pentecost Sunday and leading up to Advent is referred to as Ordinary Time. It does not mean the time is boring and mundane, but rather “Ordinary” refers to the “ordinal” way that the church calendar counts the Sundays from Pentecost until the Season of Advent. Historically the church has used this time to more fully flesh out Christ’s work in the lives of her people, in the church as a whole, or in Christ’s Kingdom over all the earth. Robert Webber writes that during Ordinary Time,

Many worship traditions follow lectionaries that highlight the work of the Spirit in the mission of the church in the world. Other churches organize their worship life around a lectio continua, continuous readings from a given section of Scripture. Some worship traditions have also called this season ‘Kingdomtime,’ focusing on the kingdom of God that is present now and the one that will be realized in more profound ways in the future....

[Thus] the various Sundays are not connected by a particular theme. In Advent we await the coming of Christ; during Christmas, we celebrate his arrival; and at Epiphany, we proclaim that Christ is manifested to the world as Savior. During Lent, we prepare for the death; in Holy Week, we reenact his death; then in Easter, we celebrate his resurrection and complete the Easter cycle with the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit. But in the nonfestive season of the church year, there is no unified theme that ties the Sundays together.

At Advent Houston, we want to use this “nonfestive” season to focus on our particular mission in this particular time and place that God has for particular individuals like us. We want to minister to one another in the distinct ways that we need to hear the good news of what Jesus has done, and we want to practice our faith in light of the truth that Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again.

*Robert E. Webber, *Ancient Future Time*

REFLECTIONS

"[A proper fear of God] is that indefinable mixture of reverence and pleasure, joy and awe which fills our hearts when we realize who God is and what He has done for us. It is a love for God which is so great that we would be ashamed to do anything which would displease or grieve Him, and makes us happiest when we are doing what pleases Him."

— **Sinclair Ferguson**

"Jesus today has many who love his heavenly kingdom, but few who carry his cross; many who yearn for comfort, few who long for distress. Plenty of people he finds to share his banquet, few to share his fast. Everyone desires to take part in his rejoicing, but few are willing to suffer anything for his sake. There are many that follow Jesus as far as the breaking of bread, few as far as drinking the cup of suffering; many that revere his miracles, few that follow him in the indignity of his cross."

— **Thomas A. Kempis**

"It is not how much we have, but how much we enjoy that makes happiness."

— **Charles Spurgeon**

But, as we wait for him to come again, we wait with hope. And as we wait, we live in light of that hope - praying for and acting in the knowledge that God's Kingdom will come in bits and pieces even now, offering us glimpses of the way that it is supposed to be, the way it will ultimately be.

In the middle of these two advents of Christ, there is a third advent. There is the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to be with us, to help us to remember all that he taught and accomplished (John 14:26), and to help us as we follow him by faith. And Jesus tells us to follow him in the same way that he himself came. We are to leave our own comforts and to come into the places that he has called us. And so, in that way, we want to take the example of Christ's first coming to enter into the lives of our community. We want to bear witness to the coming of the Kingdom of God in its fullness in the future. And, we want to minister as the mouthpiece, the hands, and the feet of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit (John 20:21).

So, Advent Houston is a **coming** of a group of Christians to the Texas Medical Center, to Rice University, and to the surrounding neighborhoods to embrace, embody, and extend the grace of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.

We are so glad that you are here with us!

SERVICE OF THE WORD

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 34:1-3; 8-9 (ESV)

Leader: I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

People: **My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad.**

Leader: Oh, magnify the LORD with me,

People: **and let us exalt his name together!**

Leader: As a father shows compassion to his children,

People: **So the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.**

Leader: Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!

People: **Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!**

Leader: Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints,

People: **for those who fear him have no lack!**

*SONG

Holy Holy Holy

Words by Reginald Heber and music by John Bacchus Dykes

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Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!

Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;

Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!

God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,

Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;

Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,

Who wert and art and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see,
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in pow'r, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise Thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

PRAYER OF ADORATION

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Acts 9:26-31

[26] And when [Saul] had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. [27] But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. [28] So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. [29] And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him. [30] And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

[31] So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

STORIES OF MISSION & MERCY

*SONG

Steadfast

Words and music by Sandra McCracken, Leslie Jordan, and Josh Silverberg

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Verse 1

I will build my house
Whether storm or drought
On the rock that does not move
I will set my hope
In Your love O Lord
And Your faithfulness will prove

Chorus

You are steadfast,
Steadfast

Verse 2

By the word You spoke
All the starry host
Are called out by name each night
In Your watchful care
I will rest secure
As you lead us with Your light

Chorus x2

Verse 3

I will not trust in the strength of kings
On Your promise I will stand
I will shout for joy I will raise my voice
Hallelujah to the Lamb

Chorus x2

Bridge

In the moment of emptiness all was fulfilled
In the hour of darkness Your light was revealed
In the presence of death Your life was affirmed
In the absence of holiness You are still God

Chorus x4

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Adapted from the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England

Leader: Christian, what is your duty towards God?

ALL: I believe my duty towards God is to believe in him, to fear him and to love him with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul and with all my strength; to worship him, to give him thanks; to put my whole trust in him, to call upon him; to honor his holy name and his word; and to serve him truly all the days of my life.

Leader: What is your duty towards your neighbor?

ALL: I believe my duty towards my neighbor is to love them as myself, and to do to all people as I would have them do to me; to hurt no one by word or deed; to be true and just in all my dealings; to bear no malice nor hatred in my heart, nor to covet or desire the possessions of others and to do my duty in whatever state of life to which it pleases God to call me.

Leader: How will you accomplish all this?

ALL: I believe I am able to love God and walk in his commands only through his grace, which is given to me in Christ and which I am to seek through prayer at all times.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Leader: Almighty God, although this life can be bitter, we have let bitterness grow in our hearts.

ALL: Too often we abandon what You provide because we don't get what we think we deserve.

Leader: We forget that we deserve death.

ALL: And even more we forget that we get what we don't deserve: new life because of Jesus' sacrifice in our place.

Leader: We have suffered many things, but we have also caused great sufferings.

ALL: We have failed our family, our friends, and our neighbors.

Leader: We do not have, because we do not ask you.

ALL: When we ask, we do not receive, because we ask with wrong motives, that we may spend what we get on our pleasures.

Leader: Still we hear you calling our names and we know you will come back for us.

ALL: You saw us as a poor orphan but you brought us into an everlasting home that will not crumble.

Leader: Give to your children repentant hearts filled with thanksgiving and hope.

ALL: In the name of Jesus, our faithful Friend and King. Have mercy on us.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Psalm 103:11 (NIV)

Leader: For as high as the heavens are above the earth,

People: so great is his love for those who fear him.

Leader: Almighty God have mercy upon you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

People: Amen

*GLORIA PATRI

Anonymous

Glory be to the Father
And to the Son
And to the Holy Ghost
As it was in the beginning
Is now and ever shall be
World without end
Amen, amen

ADVENTURERS

CHILDREN (1ST - 5TH GRADES)

All children, 1st through 5th grades, are invited to go to Adventurers, for a children's lesson and activity time during the sermon. The Adventurers will be escorted back to the Chapel during the Passing of the Peace.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Book of Common Prayer, a prayer "For the Mission of the Church"

Leader: Everliving God, whose will it is that all should come to you through your Son Jesus Christ: Inspire our witness to him, that all may know the power of his forgiveness and the hope of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Leader: Lord, in your mercy,

People: Hear our Prayer.

(Congregants pray aloud, asking for God to intercede. Following their petition, the leader will say, "Lord, in your mercy," and the people will reply "Hear our Prayer.")

SERMON READING

Ecclesiastes 12:9-14

[9] Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care. [10] The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth.

[11] The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd. [12] My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

[13] The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. [14] For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Rev. Taylor Leachman

Wisdom for the Way: "The Fear"



Do you have a question about today's sermon? If so, click on the QR code for discussion at the next Question & Discussion time.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: May the peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: **And also with you!**

RETURN OF ADVENTURERS

During the Passing of the Peace, the teachers will bring the Adventurers back to the Chapel.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are glad to have you worship with us today. Please sign-in on the pad located near the center aisle and record your information there.

OFFERTORY & PRIVATE PRAYER

All giving is a response to God's generosity to you in all aspects of life, but particularly through the person and work of Jesus. If you are not sure what you think about Jesus or Christianity, or if you are a guest, we would invite you to refrain from giving at this time.

Online giving is available at adventpres.org/give. You can also scan this QR code or place a gift in the offering basket near the entrance of the chapel.



SERVICE OF THE TABLE

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

ALL: We do not presume to come to this your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your abundant and great mercies. We are not worthy to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord, who always delights in showing mercy. Nourish us, therefore, gracious Lord, so that in partaking of this sacrament of your son Jesus Christ, we may walk in newness of life, grow into his likeness, and evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Leader: It is right, our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord; who on the first day of the week overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

ALL:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,
Hea - ven and earth are full, full of your
Bless - ed is He who comes in the name of the
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho -
san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Leader: Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

People: **Christ has died!**
Christ is risen!
Christ will come again!

Leader: Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. By your Spirit, make us one with Christ and with your church in all the world.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

Leader: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People: **Therefore let us keep the feast.**

Leader: These gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

COMMUNION AT ADVENT

Advent welcomes all baptized Christians to participate in the Lord's table. This includes all Christians, whether members at Advent or at another church. Children who have been baptized and admitted to the table by the elders of this church or the leadership of another church are also welcome to the table.

If you're still investigating Christianity, not sure what you believe, or simply choose not to participate, you may either remain in your seat or come forward, cross your arms over your chest, and receive a blessing. Feel free to use the prayers printed in the bulletin below. Non-communing children are encouraged to come forward to receive a blessing while their parents receive communion.

ABOUT THE ELEMENTS

- We serve both wine and grape juice for communion.
- Grape juice is available in the center of the communion trays; wine is available along the edge.
- All communion bread is gluten free.



PRAYER FOR THOSE SEARCHING FOR TRUTH

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Give me the ability to follow you no matter what it might cost me. Give me an understanding for you that is coherent, convincing, and leads to the life that you promise. Amen. A prayer of belief: A prayer for those struggling against sin: A prayer for covenant children who have not yet made a profession of faith:

PRAYER OF BELIEF

Lord Jesus, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever believed, but through you, I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead and are now representing me at the Father's right hand in heaven, I turn from my sins and receive you as my savior. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THOSE STRUGGLING AGAINST SIN

Lord Jesus, give me the ability to see in you the fulfillment of all my needs and desires, and help me to turn from every false source of satisfaction to feed on you, the true and living bread. Enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely to me, and run with perseverance the race that you have set before me, looking only to you, the author and perfecter of my faith. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE NOT YET MADE A PROFESSION OF FAITH

Lord Jesus, thank you for giving me the opportunity to grow up in a Christian family where I am surrounded by the good news of the gospel. Help me to grow in my understanding of who you are and what you have done for me on the cross. Help me learn what it means for me to turn from my sins and trust in you alone for my salvation. Teach me what it means to follow you as one of your disciples. Amen.

COMMUNION SONG

Jesus I Come

Words by William True Sleeper and music by Greg Thompson

© 2000 Greg Thompson Music

Out of my bondage, sorrow and night,
Jesus, I come; Jesus I come.
Into Thy freedom, gladness and light,
Jesus, I come to Thee.
Out of my sickness into Thy health,
Out of my wanting and into Thy wealth,
Out of my sin and into Thyself,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

Out of my shameful failure and loss,
Jesus, I come; Jesus, I come.
Into the glorious gain of Thy cross,
Jesus, I come to Thee.
Out of earth's sorrows into Thy balm,
Out of life's storms and into Thy calm,
Out of distress into jubilant psalm,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

Out of unrest and arrogant pride,
Jesus, I come; Jesus, I come.
Into Thy blessed will to abide,
Jesus, I come to Thee.
Out of myself to dwell in Thy love,
Out of despair into raptures above,
Upward forever on wings like a dove,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

Out of the fear and dread of the tomb,
Jesus, I come; Jesus, I come.
Into the joy and light of Thy home,
Jesus, I come to Thee.
Out of the depths of ruin untold,
Into the peace of Thy sheltering fold,
Ever Thy glorious face to behold,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

***SONG**

We Will Feast in the House of Zion

Words and music by Sandra McCracken and Joshua Moore

© 2015 Integrity Worship Music

Chorus

We will feast in the house of Zion
We will sing with our hearts restored
He has done great things we will say together
We will feast and weep no more

Verse 1

We will not be burned by the fire
He is the Lord our God
We are not consumed by the flood
Upheld protected gathered up
Chorus

Verse 2

In the dark of night before the dawn
My soul be not afraid
For the promised morning oh how long
Oh God of Jacob be my strength
Chorus

Verse 3

Every vow we've broken and betrayed
You are the faithful one
And from the garden to the grave
Bind us together bring shalom
Chorus

Ending

We will feast and weep no more

***CLOSING PRAYER**

*BENEDICTION

Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV)

Leader: The LORD bless you and keep you;
The LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;
The LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



CHRISTIAN STUDENT FELLOWSHIP DINNER

TODAY, August 11th 6:00 – 8:00 P.M.

Calling all med students! We're having our Christian Student Fellowship (CSF) dinner at the Leachman home this evening. As Taylor says, "Invite your [med student] friends to meet your Advent [med student] friends."

Location: The Leachman's | 4517 Evergreen St.
RSVP: Adventpres.org / events



BACK TO SCHOOL PRAYER

THIS Wednesday, August 14th 7:00 – 8:00 P.M.

Students are going back to school. They're covered in new school clothes, shoes, and backpacks. Let's join in prayer for our students, teachers, administrators, coaches, and all in leadership as all return to a new school year.

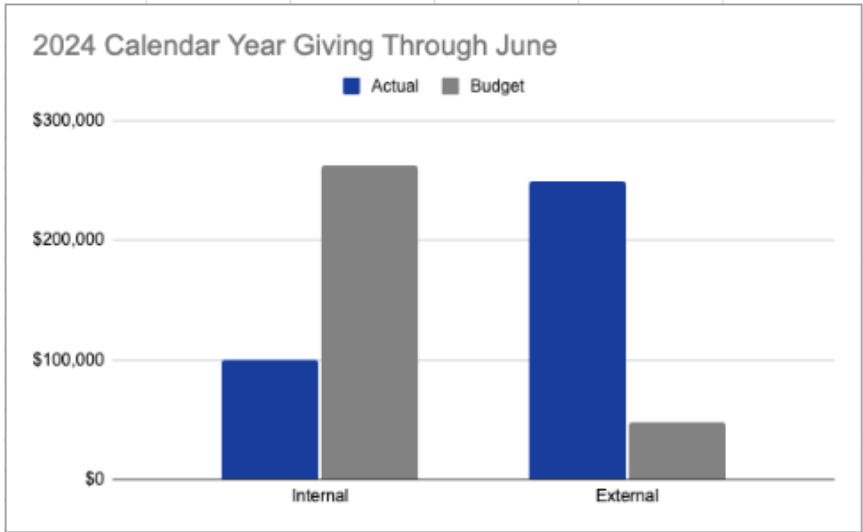
Location: Scout House | 6108 Edloe St.



HOW DO YOU WISH TO SERVE ON SUNDAYS?

Do you like to do a little bit of everything? Or maybe hands-on is more your style? How about being onstage? Want to express your musical talent? Maybe hang out with the kiddos occasionally? Let us know how you prefer to serve on Sundays. New teams are forming now for the fall semester. Scan the QR code and sign up for one or many options!

2024 CALENDAR YEAR GIVING



Media Release

Advent Houston shares photos taken at our events in our monthly newsletters, on our website, or on social media for the purpose of promoting and highlighting the church's mission. By being present, you consent to being photographed and having these photos shared. For individuals who are not comfortable being visible in a shared photograph, please notify the church at admin@adventpres.org to opt out of the media release.

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ADVENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOUSTON

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EMBODY, AND EXTEND THE GRACE OF JESUS
TO THE TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER, RICE
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