
EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



ADVENT
HOUSTON

24th Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 27

NOVEMBER • 12 • 2023

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.

REFLECTIONS

“As wonderful and sophisticated as the heart is, it was never made to be just a heart, but a part of a body. It has no value to the body outside the body. And the heart itself can’t thrive outside the body. As incredible and wonderful as you are, Christian, you were never made just to be an individual Christian, but a part of body. As every organ and every cell is God-created to be an active member of the human body, so every true Christian is God-created to be an active member of a local body of Christ.”

— **Donald S. Whitney**

“If our sins outnumbered the number of the hairs on our head; yet the merits of the death of Jesus Christ are infinitely greater, and faith in His blood shall make them white as snow.”

— **George Whitefield**

“Our worship together as a church forms us in a particular way. We must be shaped into people who value that which gives life, not just what’s trendy or loud or exciting. I worry that when our gathered worship looks like a rock show or an entertainment special, we are being formed as consumers—people after a thrill and a rush—when what we need is to learn a way of being-in-the-world that transforms us, day by day, by the rhythms of repentance and faith. We need to learn the slow habits of loving God and those around us.”

— **Tish Harrison Warren**

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 9:1-2; (ESV)

Leader: I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart;

People: I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.

Leader: I will be glad and exult in you;

People: I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

*SONG

Jesus I My Cross Have Taken

Words by Henry Lyte and music by Mozart, alt. By Bill Moore

© 2001 Bill Moore Music

Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee.
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shall be.
Perish every fond ambition,
All I've sought or hoped or known.
Yet how rich is my condition!
God and heaven are still my own.

Let the world despise and leave me,
They have left my Savior, too.
Human hearts and looks deceive me;
Thou art not, like them, untrue.
O while Thou dost smile upon me,
God of wisdom, love, and might,
Foes may hate and friends disown me,
Show Thy face and all is bright.

Man may trouble and distress me,
Twill but drive me to Thy breast.
Life with trials hard may press me;
Heaven will bring me sweeter rest.
Oh, 'tis not in grief to harm me
While Thy love is left to me;
Oh, 'twere not in joy to charm me,
Were that joy unmixed with Thee.

Go, then, earthly fame and treasure,
Come disaster, scorn and pain
In Thy service, pain is pleasure,
With Thy favor, loss is gain
I have called Thee Abba Father,
I have stayed my heart on Thee
Storms may howl, and clouds may gather;
All must work for good to me.

Soul, then know thy full salvation
Rise o'er sin and fear and care
Joy to find in every station,
Something still to do or bear.
Think what Spirit dwells within thee,
Think what Father's smiles are thine,
Think that Jesus died to win thee,
Child of heaven, canst thou repine.

Haste thee on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith, and winged by prayer.
Heaven's eternal days before thee,
God's own hand shall guide us there.
Soon shall close thy earthly mission,
Soon shall pass thy pilgrim days,
Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise.

PRAYER OF ADORATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 5:21-26

²¹ "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' ²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. ²³ So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in

prison. ²⁶ Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny. (ESV)

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise be to you, Lord Christ.**

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 18:15-22

¹⁵ “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

²¹ Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. (ESV)

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise be to you, Lord Christ.**

*SONG

In Christ Alone

Words and music by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend
© 2001 Thankyou Music

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light my strength my song
This Cornerstone this solid Ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love what depths of peace
When fears are stilled when strivings cease
My Comforter my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save
Till on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live

There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious Day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF is a family of churches throughout the Middle East, it began in Beirut Lebanon in 1971)

Leader: The Bible reveals the true and living God, Sovereign Creator and Ruler of the universe.

People: **This one and only God is revealed as three distinct persons:**

Leader: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the same in substance, equal in power and glory, working all things after the counsel of His will.

People: **Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, who for us and for our salvation became fully man.**

Leader: Being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, he was born of her without sin. He, by His perfect obedience and atoning death, provided full satisfaction to God for the sins of His elect people.

People: **He was raised bodily from the dead and ascended to heaven where He sits at the right hand of God**

Leader: From there, He reigns over His universal Church and Kingdom. At the last day, a day known only to the Father, He will return in glory to judge the living and the dead: the saved to enjoy His eternal glory and mercy, and the lost to suffer eternal conscious punishment.

People: **The Holy Spirit is the one who inspired the prophets and apostles to write the Scriptures.**

Leader: He authenticated their writings and ministry by means of supernatural gifts. He takes the things of Christ and sovereignly applies them to His people by calling, regenerating, sanctifying and glorifying them for Christ's eternal Kingdom.

People: **The Church is the instrument ordained by God to bring the message of the Gospel to a lost and condemned human race and to carry out His purposes in the world.**

Leader: The mission of the Church is, therefore, the preaching of the Gospel and the discipling of all nations, this mission being accompanied by "doing good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

People: **AMEN!**

CONFESSION OF SIN

Book of Common Worship, Church of Scotland

People: **Almighty God, we confess we have broken your commandments, have sinned by selfishness, worldliness, unbelief and pride. We have not loved our neighbor as ourselves, and have not walked humbly with you. Lord, Almighty God, forgive us and blot out our debts according to your tender mercies, according to your lovingkindness. Give us a humble and contrite heart that we might forgive others as you have forgiven us.**

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Ephesians 1:7-8 (ESV)

Leader: In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight (ESV)

JOINING ADVENT HOUSTON

Elder: Do you acknowledge yourself to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope save in His sovereign mercy? Do You?

New Members: We do.

Elder: Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel? Do You?

New Members: We do.

Elder: Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ? Do You?

New Members: We do.

Elder: Do you promise to support the church in its worship and work to the best of your ability? Do You?

New Members: We do.

Elder: Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the church, and promise to study its purity and peace? Do You?

New Members: We do.

Pastor: Having confessed the faith and promised to participate in the life of the church, we now welcome you into the family of our congregation and into the ministry of the church. As active followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to spread his Good News. We encourage you to accept that call through your involvement in the church.

New Members: We gladly receive your invitation and commit ourselves to using our time and talents for the good of the congregation and the mission of the church. We will strive to live lives worthy of the calling to which we have been called and will work with you to embrace, embody, and extend the grace of Jesus Christ.

Pastor: Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for new members to this church who have been called to Advent Houston. Bless them in their life's journey; nourish their souls and be a light on their path. We thank you that you have given them this new spiritual home here at Advent. May their lives be enriched through ministry and community, may they be blessed and may they each bring their gifts into your service. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray.

All: Amen

***Gloria Patri**

Author unknown

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

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.

CHILDREN (1ST - 5TH GRADES)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Edited Collect for Unity in the Church from *Book of Common Prayer*.

Leader: Almighty Father, your Son Jesus prayed for his disciples that they might be one, as you and he are one: Grant that your Church, being bound together in faith and love to you, may be united in one body by the one Spirit, that the world may believe in him whom you have sent, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Leader intercedes in prayer on behalf of the world, the Church, and our congregation.

Leader: We pray all of this in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray, saying ...

People: **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be Your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Yours is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

SERMON SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 4:8-16

⁸ Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. ⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" ¹⁰ And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. ¹¹ And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹² When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." ¹³ Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. ¹⁴ Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." ¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. ¹⁶ Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Rev. Taylor Leachman

“The Origins Story: The Blood”



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: God has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation.

Therefore, 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 so we have a record of your attendance. Sign-in on the blue 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 up unto the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to Lord our God.

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

Leader: It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord. For through his Paschal Mystery, he accomplished the marvelous deed, by which he has freed us from the yoke of sin and death, summoning us to the glory of being now called a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for your own possession, to proclaim everywhere your mighty works, for you have called us out of darkness into your own wonderful light. And so, with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

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: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.

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

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

Psalm 126

Words and music by Isaac Wardell

© 2012 Bifrost Arts Music

Verse 1

Our mouths they were filled, filled with laughter
Our tongues they were loosed, loosed with joy
Restore us, O Lord
Restore us, O Lord

Chorus

Although we are weeping
Lord, help us keep sowing
The seeds of Your Kingdom
For the day You will reap them
Your sheaves we will carry
Lord, please do not tarry
All those who sow weeping will go out with songs of joy

Verse 2

The nations will say, "He has done great things!"
The nations will sing songs of joy
Restore us, O Lord
Restore us, O Lord

Chorus

Ending

All those who sow weeping will go out with songs of joy
All those who sow weeping will go out with songs of joy
All those who sow weeping will go out with songs of joy

***CLOSING PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & MISSION**

*SONG

Benediction Song (Edelweiss)

May the Lord, Mighty God
Bless and keep you forever
Grant you grace, sovereign grace
Joy in every endeavor

Lift your eyes and see His face
And His love forever
May the Lord, Mighty God
Bless and keep you forever

ANNOUNCEMENTS



LUNCH FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

TODAY – After Worship

Calling all college students ... join Advent's monthly lunch for undergrad, graduate & medical students. Register for this free event at Adventpres.org/events page so we can have a good headcount. Invite a friend to meet your friends! Location: The Leachman's



SOCCER PICK-UP GAME

Nov. 17th – 6:30 – 8:00 P.M.

Join the monthly pick-up soccer game for medical sojourner families as an opportunity to have fun, run around, meet people and share a meal. The October game was a blast! Location: Weekly Family YMCA soccer field. Register to play or help on the Adventpres.org/events page.



FRIENDSGIVING POTLUCK DINNER

Nov. 18th – 4:00 – 7:00 P.M.

The Prices are hosting the 2nd Annual Advent Friendsgiving Potluck Dinner again this year. They will provide the turkey and invite the Advent family to bring the appetizers, side dishes, desserts, etc. to share. Email Judy at jyliu31@yahoo.com to RSVP and to let her know if you'd like to bring something to share. Location: 2202 McClendon St



QUESTION & DISCUSSION

Nov. 26th - 12:00 - 1:00 P.M.

Got questions? Let's discuss. Scan the QR code to submit your questions. Join us in the YMCA Multi-purpose Room for the discussion. A light lunch will be available.



FINANCIAL UPDATE

Income YTD	\$ 63,117
Budgeted Expenses YTD	\$153,000
Budgeted Expenses FY	\$ 611,852

(YTD = July 2023 – September 2023; FY = July 2023 – June 2024)

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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ADVENT HOUSTON EXISTS TO EMBRACE,
EMBODY, AND EXTEND THE GRACE OF JESUS
TO THE TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER, RICE
UNIVERSITY, AND THE SURROUNDING
NEIGHBORHOODS.

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