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EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



**ADVENT**  
HOUSTON

**Sixth Sunday of Easter**

MAY • 5 • 2024

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## 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.

ADVENT | CHRISTMAS | EPIPHANY | LENT | **EASTER** | PENTECOST | ORDINARY

## EASTER

“Christ is the one in whom life and the new creation, the beginning again of our lives and all of creation, is assured. Our Easter calling is to let him live in us, to embrace by faith his new life, to let it take hold of us, to participate in him and his resurrection for the life of the whole world. In this way we are born again (John 3:3); we are made a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

...The message of Easter is that the way of being in Jesus, the way of living the new resurrected life is through participation. This message is very different than the message I all too frequently hear about Easter day. I hear that knowing God is accomplished through the way of intellectual evidence: Believe the facts and that will transform your life. I also hear that knowing God is accomplished through the way of emotion: Feel God. Feel forgiveness. ... But the emphasis of the early church fathers and the ancient church is knowing God through the way of participation. We participate in Christ by living the life of our baptism into his death and resurrection. This is a daily, existential, moment-by-moment experience as we choose in this or that situation to die to the sins for which Christ died and choose the life of the Spirit for which Christ was raised to new life.”<sup>5</sup>

Easter is a fifty-day period in the church calendar that lasts from Easter Sunday until Pentecost Sunday (the celebration of God’s sending of the Holy Spirit). This fifty day period is not merely meant to be an extended celebration – although it is that. But, as lent was a time of preparation for new Christians to join the church, Easter was a time of continued education of those newly welcomed Christians. This instruction was intended to be a teaching of “mystagogy” – a leading through the mysteries, chiefly the mystery of the sacraments.

Thus, Easter became a time for Christians to learn the pattern of baptism and to learn the expectation and celebration of the Eucharist (what we refer to as Communion). We are to continue in this baptismal pattern – of dying to sin and living to Christ. We too are called to live into that pattern of repentance and faith – to become more and more like Christ in our journey as His disciples.

During this Easter season, may we learn better what it means to PRACTICE our faith by paying attention to our sins, turning from them, and then turning toward our Life and our Lord, Jesus Christ.

5 Robert E. Webber, Ancient Future Time

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## REFLECTIONS

"A job is a vocation only if someone else calls you to do it for them rather than for yourself. And so our work can be a calling only if it is reimagined as a mission of service to something beyond merely our own interests. Thinking of work mainly as a means of self-fulfillment and self-realization slowly crushes a person."

— **Timothy Keller**

"I remember the sense of invitation and joy I felt when I learned that the word "disciple" doesn't mean "expert" or "preacher," "lecturer" or "leader." Instead, it derives from the Latin word *discer* - "to learn." We're learners. We're all in process, all just partway through our studies, all nowhere near the completion of our educations."

— **Rachel Held Evans**

"The images of communal survival and flourishing our culture feeds us all to easily blur our vision of God's new creation - for instance, we think America is a Christian nation, and democracy the only truly Christian political arrangement. Unaware that our culture has subverted our faith, we lose a place from which to judge our own culture. In order to keep our allegiance to Jesus Christ pure, we need to nurture commitment to the multicultural community of Christian churches. We need to see ourselves and our own understanding of God's future with the eyes of Christians from other cultures, listen to voices of Christians from other cultures so as to make sure that the voice of our culture has not drowned out the voice of Jesus Christ."

— **Miroslav Volf**

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

Psalms 98:1-4 (ESV)

**Leader:** Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things!

**People:** **His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.**

**Leader:** The LORD has made known his salvation;

**People:** **He has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.**

**Leader:** He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.

**People:** **All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.**

**Leader:** Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;

**People:** **Break forth into joyous song and sing praises!**

## \*SONG

## Lord I Lift Your Name On High

Words and music by Rick Founds

© 1989 Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publishing

### Verse

Lord I lift Your name on high  
Lord I love to sing Your praises  
I'm so glad You're in my life  
I'm so glad You came to save us

### Chorus

You came from heaven to earth  
To show the way  
From the earth to the cross  
My debt to pay  
From the cross to the grave  
From the grave to the sky  
Lord I lift Your name on high

*Repeat all*

*Repeat Chorus*

## PRAYER OF ADORATION

### FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

1 John 5:1-6

[1] Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. [2] By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. [3] For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. [4] For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. [5] Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

[6] This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

### SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

John 15:9-17

[9] As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. [10] If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. [11] These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

[12] "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. [13] Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. [14] You are my friends if you do what I command you. [15] No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. [16] You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. [17] These things I command you, so that you will love one another. (ESV)

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

## \*SONG

## Help My Unbelief

Words by John Newton and music by Clint Wells

© Words: Public Domain; Music: 2007 Clint Wells Music

### Verse 1

I know the Lord is nigh  
And would but cannot pray  
For Satan meets me when I try  
And frights my soul away  
And frights my soul away

I would but can't repent  
Though I endeavor oft  
This stony heart can ne'er relent  
Till Jesus makes it soft  
Till Jesus makes it soft

### Chorus

Help my unbelief  
Help my unbelief  
Help my unbelief  
My help must come from Thee

### Verse 2

I would but cannot love  
Though wooed by love divine  
No arguments have power to move  
A soul as base as mine  
A soul so base as mine

I would but cannot rest  
In God's most holy will  
I know what He appoints is best  
And murmur at it still  
I murmur at it still

*Chorus*

## **\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Apostles Creed

**Leader:** Christian, what is it that you believe?

**ALL:** I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

## **CONFESSION OF SIN**

**People:** God of love, it is your will that we should love you with heart,  
soul, mind, strength, and our neighbor as ourselves, but we  
are not sufficient for these things. We confess that our  
affections continually turn away from you:  
from purity to lust,  
from freedom to slavery,  
from compassion to indifference,  
from fullness to emptiness.  
Have mercy on us. Order our lives by your holy Word, and  
make your commandments the joy of our hearts. Conform us  
to the image of your loving Son, Jesus, that we may shine  
before the world to your glory. Amen.

## \*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

1 John 5:1a (ESV)

**Leader:** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God

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 (1<sup>ST</sup> - 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADES)

All children, 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> 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

Collect for 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Easter; *Book of Common Prayer*.

**Leader:** O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.



*Congregants may pray for concerns from our congregation, city, and world. After each petition, the following is recited:*

**Leader:** Lord, in your mercy.

**People:** Hear our prayer.

**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 READING**

**Acts 10:44-48**

[44] While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. [45] And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. [46] For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, [47] “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” [48] And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days. (ESV)

**Leader:** The Word of the LORD.

**People:** **Thanks be to God.**

## SERMON

An Easter State of Mind: "The Who"

Rev. Taylor Leachman



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](http://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:** And now we give you thanks because in his victory over the grave a new age has dawned, the long reign of sin is ended, a broken world is being renewed and humanity is once again made whole.

And therefore, we join our voices with angels and archangels and the rest of your creation, forever praising you and singing.

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

ALL: **Your death, O Christ, we proclaim.  
Your resurrection we affirm with joy.  
Your coming we await with hope.  
Glory be to you, Lord Jesus. Alleluia!**

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: Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

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

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-communicating 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.



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### 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

## The Goodness of Jesus

Words and music by Fiona Aghajanian, Harrison Druery, Michael Farren, Jaywan Maxell,  
Jonny Robinson, and Rich Tompson  
© 2018 CityAlight Music

### Verse 1

Come you weary heart now to Jesus  
Come you anxious soul now and see  
There is perfect love and comfort in your tears  
Rest here in His wondrous peace

### Chorus

Oh the goodness the goodness of Jesus  
Satisfied He is all that I need  
May it be come what may that I rest all my days  
In the goodness of Jesus

### Verse 2

Come find what this world cannot offer  
Come and find your joy here complete  
Taste the living water, never thirst again  
Rest here in His wondrous peace

*Chorus*

### Verse 3

Come and find your hope now in Jesus  
He is all he said He would be  
Grace is overflowing from the Savior's heart  
Rest here in His wondrous peace

*Chorus x2*

### Ending

May it be come what may that I rest all my days  
In the goodness of Jesus

## \*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

## COMMISSIONING OF COLLEGE GRADUATES

Every Christian is in "full-time ministry," no matter what they are doing, no matter what it says on their business card, no matter if they punch a time clock or are on salary, no matter if they are doing technical work or people work, no matter if they are paid or a volunteer, no matter if they work for their boss or for their family as a homemaker.

Every line of work and study, no matter what it is, is full-time ministry and a form of worship. Because every line of work needs to be transformed into a calling from God "to fill the earth and subdue it," to work it and take care of it. And so, we want to pray for and commission the recent college graduates in our midst to continue in God's calling on their life – as they leave their studies and move toward a new way of full-time ministry.

All members and attenders who are graduating from their undergraduate studies are invited to come forward so that we can commission them out into the world.

### SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 1:26–28  
1 Corinthians 10:31 (ESV)

[26] Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

[27] So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.

[28] And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

[31] So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.



## **\*CLOSING PRAYER FOR GRADUATES, THANKSGIVING & MISSION**

### **\*BENEDICTION**

Numbers 6:24-26 (ESV)

Leader:      May the riches of God's blessing never become a thing of pride  
but an overflowing well of His love and grace daily shared both  
far and wide.

So, 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



### CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR - *Job Opportunity*

Do you or someone you know have a heart for Children's Ministry? Want to make a life-long difference in a child's life? Join Team Advent! Enjoy flexible work schedule while creating & promoting program and relational pathways for children's discipleship. Applicant need not be an Advent Member or even regular attender to apply.

Job Description at [adventpres.org/jobopportunities](http://adventpres.org/jobopportunities)  
Submit resume to [Admin@AdventPres.org](mailto:Admin@AdventPres.org)



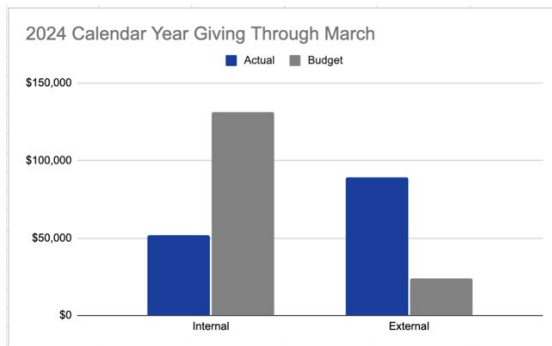
### KINGDOM PRAYER

*Wednesday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 – 6:30 P.M.*

We invite you to come for an evening of prayer where we ask the Lord for his kingdom to come: where we pray for Him to heal sickness, for people to come to know Jesus, for Him to comfort us and one day end all our sorrows, and anything else we hope for in his coming kingdom.

Location: West U Scout House | 6108 Edloe St.

## 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](mailto:admin@adventpres.org) to opt out of the media release.

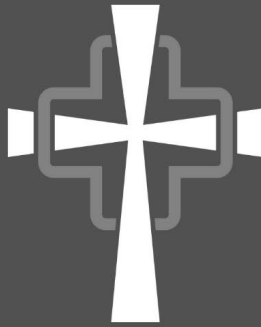
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## ADVENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOUSTON

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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  
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