



# ADVENT HOUSTON

## **ORDER OF WORSHIP**

3<sup>rd</sup> Week of Advent

December 11, 2022

## ADVENT

The season of Advent is the four-week period of preparation for and anticipation of the arrival of the Light of the World, which the Church celebrates at Christmas. The word “advent” literally means arrival. And during the season of Advent we focus on three different arrivals of Jesus Christ. First, we pay attention to Jesus’s arrival as a baby born in Bethlehem—as the God-man himself in our world. Second, we focus on his return at the end of time when he promises to wipe away every tear from our eyes. Finally, we focus on his “intermediate entrance into our own lives.”<sup>[1]</sup>

Bobby Gross, an author of the book entitled *Living The Christian Year*, has this to say about Advent:

Advent is a season for waiting; we wait for the coming of God. We need him to come. Our world is messed up and we are messed up. We lament our condition and long for God to set things right, to make us better. So we pray and watch for signs of his presence.... In the midst of hardship and disappointment, we continue to wait. We wait in hope. We believe that something is happening in our world, something is taking shape in our lives, something large, light-filled and life giving. Even in December’s lengthening darkness, this seed of joyful hope grows within us. <sup>[2]</sup>

In the season of Advent, we acknowledge the tension that pervades our lives throughout the whole of the year. During these four weeks, we celebrate the arrival two thousand years ago of our savior, Jesus Christ and his second, promised arrival that is still to come. We, like our brothers and sisters before us, cannot do anything to hasten Jesus’ coming, as much as we long for that day. All we can do is prepare for it and live patiently knowing that he has come already and he will come again. During Advent, we practice the patience of the prophets who longed for the LORD to make his people holy. We celebrate what God is already doing in the world, and we wait with expectancy for His work to be made complete!

Thus, the season of Advent is a time for us to eschew the busyness of our day-to-day lives and to remind ourselves of the truth that we so frequently forget: we are a dependent people who worship a faithful God. He is a God who has promised redemption of all things. He has promised that though there is darkness now, one day, someday, we will no longer need the sun itself because the radiance of his glory is all the light that we will need. So, in Advent, we wait, but we do so with expectancy. We practice patience. We look forward to our God’s coming in hope.

---

<sup>[1]</sup> Gross, Bobby, *Living the Christian Year*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009. 38.

<sup>[2]</sup> Ibid, 37.

## REFLECTION

"The season of Advent means there is something on the horizon the likes of which we have never seen before... What is possible is to not see it, to miss it, to turn just as it brushes past you. And you begin to grasp what it was you missed, like Moses in the cleft of the rock, watching God's [back] fade in the distance. So stay. Sit. Linger. Tarry. Ponder. Wait. Behold. Wonder. There will be time enough for running. For rushing. For worrying. For pushing. For now, stay. Wait. Something is on the horizon." – **Jan L. Richardson**

"Matthew lists Rahab as one of the ancestresses of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5), and that may be one reason why there was something about free-wheeling ladies with warm and generous hearts that he was never quite able to resist." – **Frederick Buechner**

"Rahab, who also was a type of the church, expresses the same truth. The command given to her ran: "You shall gather to yourself into your house, your father, and your mother, and your brothers, and all your father's household; and whosoever shall go out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head." This figure declares that all who are to live and escape the destruction of the world must be gathered into one house alone, the church, while if any of the gathered goes outside, that is, if anyone who once obtained grace in the church nevertheless abandons the church, his blood will be upon his head..."

– **Cyprian**

"The Lord is coming, always coming. When you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you will recognize him at any moment of your life. Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord." – **Henri Nouwen**

# SERVICE OF THE WORD

---

## \*Call to Worship – From Luke 1

Leader: My soul magnifies the Lord,

**People: and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,**

Leader: for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

**People: For he who is mighty has done great things for me**

**ALL: And Holy is his name!**

## \*Song – My Hope Is Built

### Verse 1

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness  
No merit of my own I claim  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name  
On Christ the solid Rock I stand  
All other ground is sinking sand

### Verse 2

When long appears my toilsome race  
I rest on His unchanging grace  
In ev'ry high and stormy gale  
My anchor holds within the veil  
On Christ the solid Rock I stand  
All other ground is sinking sand

### Verse 3

His oath His covenant His blood  
Support me in the whelming flood  
When ev'ry earthly prop gives way  
He then is still my strength and stay  
On Christ the solid Rock I stand  
All other ground is sinking sand

### Verse 4

When the last trumpet voice shall sound  
O may we then in Him be found  
Robed in His righteousness alone

Faultless to stand before the throne  
On Christ the solid Rock I stand  
All other ground is sinking sand

## **Prayer of Adoration (From South Yarra Community Baptist Church, Australia)**

Leader: We give you thanks and praise, O God,  
for your mercy embraces the faithful,  
one generation to the next.

You are the creator of heaven, earth and the teeming  
seas.  
You promised mercy to our ancestors  
and sent prophets as an example of suffering and  
patience  
to prepare the Holy Way before of you.

In Jesus Christ we saw your promises take flesh  
as the blind saw the light,  
the deaf heard the music,  
and the lame danced with joy.  
When he was killed, you raised him to life  
and through him your good news still comes to the  
poor  
like springs of water to thirsty ground,  
uplifting the downtrodden  
and filling the hungry from the richness of your table.

Therefore, with our hearts lifted high,  
we offer you thanks and praise at all times

***Leader continues praying as lead.***

## **First Reading**

**Isaiah 35:1-10**

[1] The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;  
[2] it shall blossom abundantly  
and rejoice with joy and singing.  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.

[3] Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.

[4] Say to those who have an anxious heart,  
"Be strong; fear not!

Behold, your God  
will come with vengeance,  
with the recompense of God.  
He will come and save you."

[5] Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

[6] then shall the lame man leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

For waters break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;

[7] the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

[8] And a highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;  
the unclean shall not pass over it.

It shall belong to those who walk on the way;  
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.

[9] No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.

[10] And the ransomed of the LORD shall return  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain gladness and joy,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (ESV)

Leader: The word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God!**

[7] Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. [8] You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. [9] Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. [10] As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. [11] Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. (ESV)

Leader: The word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

### \*Song – Come Thou Fount

#### Verse 1

Come Thou fount of ev'ry blessing  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace  
Streams of mercy never ceasing  
Call for songs of loudest praise  
Teach me some melodious sonnet  
Sung by flaming tongues above  
Praise the mount I'm fixed upon it  
Mount of Thy redeeming love

#### Verse 2

Here I raise mine Ebenezer  
Hither by Thy help I'm come  
And I hope by Thy good pleasure  
Safely to arrive at home  
Jesus sought me when a stranger  
Wand'ring from the fold of God  
He to rescue me from danger  
Interposed His precious blood

#### Verse 3

O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be  
Let Thy goodness like a fetter

Bind my wand'ring heart to Thee  
Prone to wander Lord I feel it  
Prone to leave the God I love  
Here's my heart Lord take and seal it  
Seal it for Thy courts above

### **\*Affirmation of Faith**

### **The Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 52**

*(The Heidelberg Catechism was written 1562 as an attempt to unite the Reformed and Lutheran protestants of the time.)*

Leader: How does Christ's return "to judge the living and the dead" comfort you?

**People: In all distress and persecution, with uplifted head, I confidently await the very judge who has already offered himself to the judgment of God in my place and removed the whole curse from me. Christ will cast all his enemies and mine into everlasting condemnation, but will take me and all his chosen ones to himself into the joy and glory of heaven.**

### **Confession of Sin**

**(Edited from Rev. Nathan Decker)**

**ALL: Lord of Peace,  
we confess that we have sinned against you in thought,  
word, and deed.**

**We have tarnished the gift you gave freely.  
We have buried you so deeply in our hearts, the world  
doesn't see you.**

**We have not followed Christ,  
e have ignored your teachings,  
we have lived lives of apathy  
against your love,  
we have built fences and fortresses to push people  
away,  
and we have silenced the screams of those in need.**

**Forgive us, we pray.  
Free us from our sin,  
Free us from our captivity,  
Free us to a life lived in Joy**

through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## \*Assurance of Pardon

Isaiah 12:2

Leader: Behold, God is [our] salvation;  
I will trust, and will not be afraid;

**People: For the Lord God is my strength and my song,  
And he has become my salvation."**

Leader: Almighty God have mercy on 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.

## \*O Come O Come Emmanuel (Verses 1-3)

### Verse 1

O come, O come, Emmanuel  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear

### Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

### Verse 2

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free  
Thine own from Satan's tyranny  
From depths of hell Thy people save  
And give them victory o'er the grace

*Refrain*

### Verse 3

O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by Thine advent here  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
And death's dark shadows put to flight

*Refrain*

## ADVENTURERS

CHILDREN (K - 3RD GRADE)

All kids from Kindergarten through 3rd Grade are invited to go to Adventurers, a children's lesson and activity time during the sermon. They will be escorted back to the chapel after the Passing of the Peace.

### Prayers of the People (Collect from Book of Common Prayer)

Leader: Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever.

*Leader intercedes on behalf of the community.*

...

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.**

**Matthew:1:1-5**

[1] The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. [2] Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, [3] and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, [4] and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, [5] and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab... (ESV)

**Joshua 2:1-21**

[1] And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. [2] And it was told to the king of Jericho, "Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land." [3] Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land." [4] But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, "True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. [5] And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them." [6] But she had brought them up to the roof and hid them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. [7] So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out.

[8] Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof [9] and said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. [10] For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. [11] And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. [12] Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will

deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a sure sign [13] that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death." [14] And the men said to her, "Our life for yours even to death! If you do not tell this business of ours, then when the LORD gives us the land we will deal kindly and faithfully with you."

[15] Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she lived in the wall. [16] And she said to them, "Go into the hills, or the pursuers will encounter you, and hide there three days until the pursuers have returned. Then afterward you may go your way." [17] The men said to her, "We will be guiltless with respect to this oath of yours that you have made us swear. [18] Behold, when we come into the land, you shall tie this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and you shall gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your father's household. [19] Then if anyone goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be guiltless. But if a hand is laid on anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head. [20] But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be guiltless with respect to your oath that you have made us swear." [21] And she said, "According to your words, so be it." Then she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.  
(ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## Sermon

Rev. Taylor Leachman

"Mothers of Jesus: Rahab"

## Passing of the Peace

Leader: The Peace of the LORD be always with you.

**People: And also with you!**

## RETURN OF CHILDREN

*During the Offertory, "ADVENTURERS" teachers will bring the children back to the Sanctuary. Feel free to pick up younger children at this time as well. You may also wait to retrieve them, as childcare is provided for the duration of the service.*

## Announcements

WE'RE SO GLAD TO HAVE YOU WORSHIP WITH US. PLEASE SIGN IN SO WE HAVE A RECORD OF YOUR ATTENDANCE.

OPTION 1: TAKE THE BLUE SIGN-IN PAD FROM UNDER THE SEAT AT THE END OF THE ROW AND RECORD YOUR INFORMATION THERE.

OPTION 2: SCAN THE QR CODE WITH YOUR PHONE'S CAMERA AND FILL OUT THE FORM THERE. YOU MAY ALSO DO THIS AFTER THE SERVICE.



## 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](https://adventpres.org/give). YOU CAN ALSO SCAN THIS QR CODE OR PLACE A GIFT IN THE OFFERING BASKET TOWARD THE ENTRANCE OF THE SANCTUARY.



# SERVICE OF THE TABLE

---

## Celebration of Holy Communion

**People:** 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 the LORD, our God.

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

**Leader:** It is very good and right, our duty and privilege, to at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God. Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify your glorious Name; evermore praising you, and singing...

People:

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 -  
Lord. san - na in the high - est.

### Words of Institution

Leader: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**All:** Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.

Leader: Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us.

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

Leader: The gifts of God are for the people of God.

*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.*

*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.

**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.

**PRAYER FOR 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.

## Communion Song – Jesus I Come

### Verse 1

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.

### Verse 2

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.

### Verse 3

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.

### Verse 4

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.

## \*Closing Prayer of Thanksgiving and Mission

### \*Benediction Song – The Blessing

The Lord bless you  
And keep you  
Make His face shine upon you  
And be gracious to you  
The Lord turn His face toward you  
And give you peace

Amen, amen, amen (x3)

May His favor be upon you  
And a thousand generations  
And your family And your children  
And their children  
And their children

May His presence go before you  
And behind you  
And beside you  
All around you  
And within you  
He is with you  
He is with you

In the morning  
In the evening  
In your coming  
And your going  
In your weeping  
And rejoicing

He is for you  
He is for you (x4)

Amen, amen, amen (x2)

# Announcements



## CHRISTMAS EVE & CHRISTMAS DAY

December 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>

Mark your calendars for our Christmas Eve service on Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. and our Christmas Day service on Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.



## MEMBERSHIP CLASS

January 27<sup>th</sup>

Interested in church membership? Our next membership class will be held at the Leachman's on January 27<sup>th</sup>. Come and hear "All About Advent". More details to follow.



NEXT DISCUSSION: January 29<sup>th</sup>



### 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.

### Advent Presbyterian Church of Houston

2617 Bissonnet St  
Suite 200, #227  
Houston, TX 77005

(713) 364-6748

[adventpres.org](http://adventpres.org)

ADVENT'S HOUSTON EXISTS TO **EMBRACE, EMBODY, AND EXTEND** THE GRACE OF JESUS TO THE TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER, RICE UNIVERSITY, AND THE GREATER WEST UNIVERSITY AREA.

