
EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



ADVENT
HOUSTON

Third Sunday after the Epiphany

JANUARY • 21 • 2024

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.

EPIPHANY

The season of Epiphany is a time of enlightenment. The word Epiphany comes from the a Greek word meaning “to bring of light.” The season is a five to nine week period celebrating and remembering the time that God manifested Jesus as the Son of God as the Savior to and for the world.

During Christmas we joyfully celebrated the coming of [the] light in the birth of Jesus. Now the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6 brings this theme to culmination - the light of Christ made manifest to the whole world as symbolized by the Gentile Magi from the East. Thus the day of Epiphany and the season that follows complete what is sometimes called in the liturgical year the Cycle of Light.

Twenty centuries after the birth and ministry of Jesus, we can take it for granted that Jesus was not just the Anointed One for Israel, but that He was the promised Messiah (meaning anointed one) that would bring salvation to all peoples, all tribes, and all nations. So, the season of Epiphany is a time when we remember that Jesus was made manifest to the Wise Men who came to worship him. It is a time when we remember that manifests his ministry and power to the world around him. And it is a time when we begin to more fully contemplate what it means for us to participate in extending his light to the nations. Allow for this season, to be a time when you think more about how you might be able to make Jesus’ story manifest in your own life and to the lives of others.

REFLECTIONS

“Let us recognize that the ark prefigured the church. Let us be the clean beasts in it. Yet let us not refuse to allow the unclean ones to be carried in it with us until the end of the deluge. They were together in the ark, but they were not equally pleasing to the Lord as a savor of sacrifice, for after the deluge, Noah offered sacrifice to God of the clean, not of the unclean. But the ark was not on that account abandoned before the time by any of the clean because of the unclean.”

- **Augustine**

“The order in which Genesis reports on God and Noah is significant. First it tells us Noah found grace with God. Then it tells us Noah was a person of faithfulness and integrity, and someone who walked about with God like Enoch. Then it tells us how God gave Noah instructions for surviving the coming destruction. Messing with any aspect of the order in this story messes up the theology. Noah is indeed a person of faithfulness and unique integrity, but that somehow follows from God’s grace rather than being its cause. There is a link between grace and faithfulness or integrity, but the link is that grace generates faithfulness and integrity, not the other way around.”

- **N.T. Wright**

Prayer: Loving God, we believe, but help our unbelief.
In the midst of the tempests of our lives,
silence in us every voice but your own and
remind us of the ... love with which you
surround us. Amen.

- **From First Presbyterian Church, Lake Forrest, FL**

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 62:5-7; ESV

Leader: For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.

People: **He only is my rock and my salvation,**

Leader: My fortress; I shall not be shaken.

People: **On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock,
My refuge is God!**

*SONG

Good Good Father

Words and Music by Pat Barrett and Anthony Brown
© 2014 Capitol CMG Paragon

Verse 1

I've heard a thousand stories
Of what they think You're like
But I've heard the tender whisper
Of love in the dead of night
You tell me that You're pleased
And that I'm never alone

Chorus

You're a Good Good Father
It's who You are
It's who You are
It's who You are
And I'm loved by You
It's who I am
It's who I am
It's who I am

Verse 2

I've seen many searching for answers
Far and wide
But I know we're all searching for answers
Only You provide
Because You know just what we need
Before we say a word

Chorus

Bridge

You are perfect in all of Your ways
You are perfect in all of Your ways
You are perfect in all of Your ways to us

Repeat

Verse 3

Love so undeniable I can hardly speak
Peace so unexplainable I can hardly think
As You call me deeper still
As You call me deeper still
As You call me deeper still
Into love love love

Chorus

PRAYER OF ADORATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Jonah 3:1-5; 10

[1] Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, [2] "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you." [3] So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. [4] Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" [5] And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. ...

[10] When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

[29] This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, [30] and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, [31] and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD

People: **Thanks be to God.**

***SONG**

Thy Mercy My God

Words by John Stoker and music by Sandra McCracken
© 2001 Same Old Dress Music

Thy mercy, my God, is the theme of my song,
The joy of my heart and the boast of my tongue;
Thy free grace alone, from the first to the last,
Hath won my affections, and bound my soul fast.

Without Thy sweet mercy I could not live here;
Sin would reduce me to utter despair;
But, through Thy free goodness, my spirits revive,
And He that first made me still keeps me alive.

Thy mercy is more than a match for my heart,
Which wonders to feel its own hardness depart;
Dissolved by Thy goodness, I fall to the ground,
And weep to the praise of the mercy I've found.

Great Father of mercies, Thy goodness I own,
And the covenant love of Thy crucified Son;
All praise to the Spirit, Whose whisper divine
Seals mercy, and pardon, and righteousness mine.

All praise to the Spirit, Whose whisper divine
Seals mercy, and pardon, and righteousness mine.

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

From the Christian Enterprise of Zambia, 1995

Leader: Christian, what is it that you believe?

ALL: **The Father, perfect in holiness, power, wisdom, love, grace, and sovereignty, acts in creation and redemption—caring for creation and recreating the universe.**

The Lord Jesus, came as God in the flesh by a virgin, lived a sinless life, performed miracles by divine power, and died as an atoning sacrifice for sins. The Lord Jesus resurrected bodily, upon his ascension was crowned as king, and now exercises His kingly rule over creation as mediator between God and human beings.

The Holy Spirit, by his sovereign work regenerates the repentant, indwells believers, and progressively works a holy life in them. All who believe in Jesus Christ for their salvation share a spiritual unity and belong to the universal church, the body of Christ of which He is the head.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Confession of Sin is adapted from Minivan Ministries, minivanministries.com

ALL: **Dear Lord, please forgive us for being disobedient to you: for doing things we know that we shouldn't or for not doing things we know we should. Sometimes we are in a hurry, or lazy, or just don't want to do the right thing. Other times we do wrong by simply choosing to do nothing at all. Please forgive us. Because of Jesus, help us see the good that we ought to do and choose to do it. May we love because he first loved us.**

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Adapted from *Heidelberg Catechism*, 4.056

Leader: Hear the good news!
For the sake of Christ's reconciling work, God will no more remember our sins or the sinfulness with which we have to struggle throughout our lives.

People: **God graciously imparts to us the righteousness of Christ so that we may never come into condemnation.**

*Song of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis)

Words: Luke 2:29-32; Music: LAND OF REST, American Folk Melody
Arranged by David Lutes, 2010

Lord, bid your servant go in peace,
Your word is now fulfilled.
These eyes have seen salvation's dawn,
This child so long foretold

This is the Savior of the world
The Gentile's promised light
God's glory dwelling in our midst
The joy of Israel

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

"Collect" from *Book of Common Prayer*, for the 3rd Sunday in Epiphany.

Leader: Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

*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 6:9–14; 17–19; 22
Genesis 7:1–5; 11–12; 18-19; 23b-24

[9] These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. [10] And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

[11] Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence. [12] And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. [13] And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. [14] Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ...

[17] For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. [18] But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you. [19] And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. ...

[22] Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him. ...

[7:1] Then the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. [2] Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, [3] and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. [4] For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.” [5] And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him. ...

[11] In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. [12] And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. ...

[18] The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. [19] And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. ...Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. [24] And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Rev. Taylor Leachman

“The Origins Story: The Flood”



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: All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, go and be reconciled with one another.

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: All honor and praise be yours always and everywhere, mighty creator, ever-living God, through Jesus Christ your only Son our Lord: for at this time we celebrate your glory made present in our midst.

In the coming of the magi the King of all the world was revealed to the nations. In the waters of baptism Jesus was revealed as the Christ, the Savior sent to redeem us. In the water made wine the new creation was revealed at the wedding feast. Poverty was turned to riches, sorrow into joy.

Therefore with all the angels of heaven we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

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

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Leader: Alleluia, Alleluia
The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
And we have seen His glory.

All: Alleluia

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

Ever Be

Words and music by Kalley Heiligenthal, Gabriel Wilson, Chris Greely, and Bobby Strand
© 2014 Bethel Music Publishing

Verse 1

Your love is devoted like a ring of solid gold
Like a vow that is tested like a covenant of old
Your love is enduring through the winter rain
And beyond the horizon with mercy for today

Pre-Chorus

Faithful You have been and faithful You will be
You pledge Yourself to me and it's why I sing

Chorus

Your praise will ever be on my lips
Ever be on my lips
Your praise will ever be on my lips
Ever be on my lips
Repeat

Verse 2

You Father the orphan
Your kindness makes us whole
You shoulder our weakness
And Your strength becomes our own
You're making me like You
Clothing me in white
Bringing beauty from ashes
For You will have Your bride

Pre-Chorus

Free of all her guilt and rid of all her shame
And known by her true name and it's why I sing
Chorus

Bridge

You will be praised You will be praised
With angels and saints we sing worthy are You Lord
You will be praised You will be praised
With angels and saints we sing worthy are You Lord

Repeat

Chorus

***CLOSING PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & MISSION**

Adapted from "faithandworship.com," Prayers for Epiphany

Leader: We pray for confidence to share your Word with others and for the opportunity to proclaim it. Forgive our reluctance, our timidity.

We pray for wisdom to know what should be said and the moment in which to say it. Forgive our reticence, our anxiety.

We pray for knowledge of the fullness of your Grace and the willingness to live it. Forgive our ignorance, our self-reliance.

Be the center of all we are. The Light by which we walk. The blessing we bring to others. Through Jesus Christ alone we ask.
Amen

***BENEDICTION**

Numbers 6:24-26 (ESV)

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.

ALL: AMEN.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, Feb. 4th 12:00 – 1:00 P.M.

Join us for our second annual Congregational Meeting. All are welcome to attend.

Location: Weekley Family YMCA Multi-purpose Room



NEW PARISH GROUPS ARE COMING

Interested in being more connected at Advent Houston? Join a Parish Group!

Click the QR code, complete the form.



ALL ABOUT ADVENT – MEMBERSHIP CLASS

Sunday, Feb.. 25th 3:30 P.M. at the Leachman's

Whether you're interested in becoming a member of Advent or just learning more about who we are, you are invited to attend our next All About Advent class in February! Childcare included.

Register at AdventPres.org/Events.

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.

CCLI License Info

All songs used by permission. CCLI License #21309482

ADVENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOUSTON

2617 BISSONNET ST. SUITE 200, #208
HOUSTON, TX 77005



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

ALL SONGS USED BY PERMISSION.
CCLI LICENSE #21309482

ADVENTPRES.ORG

713-364-6748