



# ADVENT HOUSTON

## **ORDER OF WORSHIP**

4<sup>th</sup> Week of Advent

December 18, 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.

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

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

## REFLECTION

"Taken as a whole, the story of Ruth is one of those signs. It was written to give us encouragement and hope that all the perplexing turns in our lives are going somewhere good. They do not lead off a cliff. In all the setbacks of our lives as believers, God is plotting for our joy." - **John Piper**

### **"Advent Prayer:**

In our secret yearnings  
we wait for your coming,  
and in our grinding despair  
we doubt that you will.  
And in this privileged place  
we are surrounded by witnesses who yearn more than do we  
and by those who despair more deeply than do we.  
Look upon your church and its pastors  
in this season of hope  
which runs so quickly to fatigue  
and in this season of yearning  
which becomes so easily quarrelsome.  
Give us the grace and the impatience  
to wait for your coming to the bottom of our toes,  
to the edges of our fingertips.  
We do not want our several worlds to end.  
Come in your power  
and come in your weakness  
in any case  
and make all things new.  
Amen."

— **Walter Brueggemann**

# SERVICE OF THE WORD

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## **\*Call to Worship – From Zechariah 3:6 (Written by Ruth Burgess)**

Leader: As farmers wait for rainfall  
As prisoners wait for freedom

**People: We wait for the coming of God**

Leader: As exiles yearn for home  
As peacemakers yearn for justice

**People: We long for the coming of God**

Leader: As travelers search for shelter  
As disciples look for answers

**People: We prepare for the coming of God**

## **\*Song – Light of the World**

### **[Verse 1]**

The world waits for a miracle  
The heart longs for a little bit of hope  
O come, O come Emmanuel  
A child prays for peace on earth  
And she's calling out from a sea of hurt  
O come, O come Emmanuel  
And can you hear the angels singing

### **[Chorus 1]**

Glory to the Light of the world  
Glory, the Light of the world is here

### **[Verse 2]**

The drought breaks with the tears of a mother  
A baby's cry is the sound of love come down  
Come down Emmanuel  
He is the song for the suffering  
He is Messiah, the Prince of peace has come  
He has come Emmanuel

### **[Chorus 2]**

Glory to the light of the world  
Glory to the light of the world  
Glory to the light of the world  
Glory to the light of the world

### **[Bridge]**

For all who wait, for all who hunger  
For all who've prayed, for all who wonder  
Behold your King, behold Messiah  
Emmanuel, Emmanuel

### **[Chorus 3]**

Glory to the light of the world  
Glory to the light of the world  
Glory to the light of the world  
Behold your King, behold Messiah  
Emmanuel, Emmanuel

### **[Ending]**

The world waits for a miracle  
The heart longs for a little bit of hope  
O come, O come Emmanuel

## **Prayer of Adoration**

### **First Reading**

**Isaiah 7:10-16**

[10] Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz: [11] "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." [12] But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." [13] And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? [14] Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. [15] He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. [16] For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. (ESV)

**Leader:** The word of the Lord.

**People:** **Thanks be to God!**

[18] Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. [19] And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. [20] But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. [21] She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." [22] All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

[23] "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us). [24] When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, [25] but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus. (ESV)

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

### \*Song – All Must Be Well

Through the love of God our Savior, all will be well  
Free and changeless is His favor, all is well  
Precious is the blood that healed us  
Perfect is the grace that sealed us  
Strong the hand stretched forth to shield us  
All must be well

Though we pass through tribulation, all will be well  
Ours is such a full salvation, all is well  
Happy still in God confiding  
Fruitful if in Christ abiding  
Steadfast through the Spirit's guiding  
All must be well

We expect a bright tomorrow; all will be well  
Faith can sing through days of sorrow, all is well  
On our Father's love relying  
Jesus every need supplying  
Yes in living or in dying  
All must be well

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

### **Waldensian Confessions of Faith**

*(Taken from Peter Valdes' creed written 1120 A.D. near Lyon, France)*

Leader: We believe that there is one God—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We acknowledge the sacred canonical books of the Holy Bible which teach us:

**People: That there is one GOD, almighty, unbounded in wisdom, and infinite in goodness, and who, in His goodness, has made all things.**

Leader: That Christ had been promised to the fathers who received the law. Knowing their sin by the law, and their unrighteousness and insufficiency, they were to desire the coming of Christ to make satisfaction for their sins.

**People: That Christ is our life, and truth, and peace, and righteousness—our shepherd and advocate, our sacrifice and priest, who died for the salvation of all who believe, and rose again for their justification.**

Leader: That there is no other mediator, or advocate with God the Father, but Jesus Christ.

**People: That, after this life, there are but two places - one for those that are saved, the other for the damned, which we call paradise and hell.**

Leader: We consider the Sacraments as signs of holy things, or as the visible emblems of invisible blessings. We acknowledge the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper.

**People: Amen.**

## Confession of Sin

(Christ Central Church, NC)

**ALL:** God of grace and truth, in Jesus Christ you came among us as light shining in darkness. We confess that we have not welcomed the light, or trusted good news to be good. We have closed our eyes to your glory in our midst, expecting little, and hoping for less. Forgive our doubt, and renew our hope, so that we may receive the fullness of your grace, and live in the truth of Christ the Lord. Amen.

## \*Assurance of Pardon

Matthew 1:21

Leader: Mary will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

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

### 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*

**Verse 4**

O Come Thou key of David come  
And open wide our heavenly home  
Make safe the way that leads on high  
And close the path to misery

*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.

Your kingdom come

**People:** **Your will be done.**

*Congregants may here publicly offer their own petitions after which the Leader and People reply:*

*Leader: Your kingdom come  
People: Your will be done.*

...

**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.**

[8] But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. [9] The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. [10] And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." [11] But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? [12] Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, [13] would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me." [14] Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

[15] And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." [16] But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. [17] Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you."

...

[13] So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. [14] Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! [15] He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him." [16] Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. [17] And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## **Sermon**

"Mothers of Jesus: Ruth"

**Rev. Taylor Leachman**

## **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

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## 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 -  
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 – Magnificat

### [Verse]

My soul magnifies the Lord  
My spirit rejoices in God  
My soul magnifies the Lord  
My spirit rejoices in God

### [Chorus]

For He who is mighty  
Has done great things for me  
Holy holy  
Holy holy  
Holy holy  
Is His name

*Repeat x2*

## \*Closing Song – On Jordan's Stormy Banks

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,  
And cast a wishful eye  
To Canaan's fair and happy land,  
Where my possessions lie.

All o'er those wide extended plains,  
Shines one eternal day;  
There God the Son forever reigns,  
And scatters night away.

### Chorus

I am bound (I am bound)  
I am bound (I am bound)  
I am bound for promised land (x2 / x4 ending)

No chilling winds nor poisonous breath  
Can reach that healthful shore;  
Sickness, sorrow, pain, and death,  
Are felt and feared no more.

*Chorus*

When shall I reach that happy place,  
And be forever blessed?  
When shall I see my Father's face,  
And in His bosom rest?  
*Chorus*

## \*Closing Prayer of Thanksgiving and Mission

## 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.

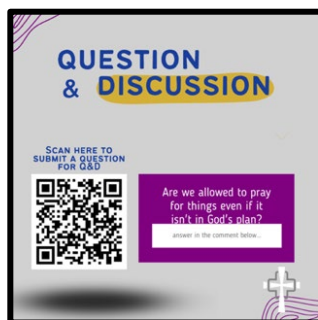


### MEMBERSHIP CLASS

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>



## INTERNAL GIVING - 2022 CY

2022 Budgeted  
Goal:

**\$146,666**

Budgeted to Date:

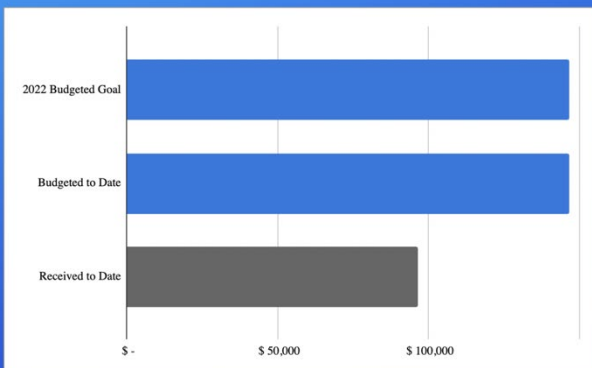
**\$146,666**

Received to Date:

**\$96,514**

2022/23 Expense  
Budget:

**\$427,000**



### 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

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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.

