
EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



ADVENT
HOUSTON

Fourth Sunday Of Lent

MARCH • 10 • 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.

LENT

“Unfortunately some Christians live as though the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ never happened. Our lives become absorbed in the day-to-day experiences of life. We focus on name-brand clothing, the color of our houses, the size of our bank account, the year and make of our automobile, the prestige in which others hold us, and the symbols of our own power. We too easily forget our Maker and Redeemer, replacing God with things and ambition. Lent is the season that does something about this situation. It calls us back to God, back to basics, back to the spiritual realities of life. It calls on us to put to death the sin and the indifference we have in our hearts toward God and our fellow persons. And it beckons us to enter once again into the joy of the LORD – the joy of a new life born out of a death to the old life.”

Lent is a forty-day period in the church calendar that dates back to the 4th century. It was originally a time of preparation and spiritual discipline for all who were being baptized at Easter—the normal time of baptism for all new Christians and their families. As early as the 1st century, we see Christians using a time of preparation for their baptism, and with time, this preparation grew to forty days in association with Jesus’ forty days of prayer and fasting in the wilderness.

Lent is a time that beckons us to remember our own baptismal vows. Martin Luther encouraged his congregation during Lent to “live into [their] baptism.” And so, we too should live into our dying with Christ and rising with Christ. We too are called to live into that pattern of repentance and faith. We are invited to turn away from all distractions and sins and turn toward God.

This lenten practice can take many forms. We can choose to fast from food, reminding ourselves that Christ is our daily bread. As theologians Louis Weil and Charles Price remind us, “The psychosomatic unity of human beings makes it inevitable that a physical glut will cloud mind and spirit.” Alternately, we can fast from some of the distracting behaviors that we have slipped into, like scrolling on our phones at bedtime. Or, we can pursue new habits that help us to pattern our lives on the life of Jesus; we may commit to praying every day or to calling a friend to check on them every day.

During this lenten season, make time to consider the condition of your heart and to enter into a season of living out your baptism in repentance and faith.

REFLECTIONS

On the cross, Jesus voluntarily and willingly bowed his head under the power of Sin and the curse of God. It is vital that we understand that the Father did not do this to the Son; the Son and the Father are doing this together.

— **Fleming Rutledge**

Here is a beautiful antithesis. In ourselves we are scattered, in Christ we are gathered together. By nature we go astray and are driven headlong to destruction, in Christ we find the path that leads us to the gate of salvation. Our sins overwhelm us, but they are laid on Christ by whom we are unburdened. Therefore, when we were perishing and, alienated from God, were hastening to hell, Christ took upon Himself the filthy depths of our sins, to rescue us from eternal destruction.

— **John Calvin**

The debt was so great, that while man alone owed it, only God could pay it.

— **Anselm**

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 22:1-5; ESV

Leader: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

People: **O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.**

Leader: Yet you are holy,

People: **Enthroned on the praises of Israel.**

Leader: In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.

People: **To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.**

*SONG

Thy Mercy My God

Words by John Stocker 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.

PRAYER OF ADORATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 59:15-18a

[15] Truth is lacking,
and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey.
The LORD saw it, and it displeased him
that there was no justice.

[16] He saw that there was no man,
and wondered that there was no one to intercede;
then his own arm brought him salvation,
and his righteousness upheld him.

[17] He put on righteousness as a breastplate,
and a helmet of salvation on his head;
he put on garments of vengeance for clothing,
and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak.

[18] According to their deeds, so will he repay,
wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Galatians 3:10-14

[10] For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” [11] Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” [12] But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” [13] Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—[14] so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

*SONG

Psalm 130 (I Will Wait for You)

Words and music by Jordan Kauflin, Keith Getty, Matthew Merker, and Stuart Townend
© 2018 Getty Music Publishing

Verse 1

Out of the depths I cry to You
In darkest places I will call
Incline Your ear to me anew
And hear my cry for mercy, Lord

Verse 2

Were You to count my sinful ways
How could I come before Your throne
Yet full forgiveness meets my gaze
I stand redeemed by grace alone

Chorus 1

I will wait for You, I will wait for You
On Your Word, I will rely
I will wait for You, surely wait for You
Till my soul is satisfied

Verse 3

So put your hope in God alone
Take courage in His power to save
Completely and forever won
By Christ emerging from the grave

To Chorus 1

Verse 4

Now He has come to make a way
And God Himself has paid the price
That all who trust in Him today
Find healing in his sacrifice
That all who trust in Him today
Find healing in his sacrifice

Chorus 2

I will wait for You, I will wait for You
Through the storm and through the night
I will wait for You, surely wait for You
For your love is my delight

To Chorus 1

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Adapted from the Augsburg Confession

Leader: How are we who are sinners, forgiven and declared righteous before God?

People: **We cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works, or satisfactions. We receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God...**

Leader: By grace for Christ's sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us.

People: **For God will regard and reckon this faith as righteousness.**

CONFESSION OF SIN

Anonymous Source

ALL: **We confess, our Father, that we do not live up to the family name.**
 We are more ready to resent than to forgive,
 more ready to manipulate than to serve,
 more ready to fear than to love,
 more ready to keep our distance than to welcome,
 more ready to compete than to help.
 At the root of this behavior is mistrust.
 We do not love one another as we should,
 because we do not believe that you love us as you do.
 Forgive us our cold unbelief.
 And make more vivid to us the meaning and depth of
 your love at the cross.
 Show us what it cost you to give up your Son
 that we might become your sons and daughters.
 We ask this in the name of Jesus our righteousness.
 Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Galatians 3:13a (ESV)

Leader: **Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.**

 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**

*KYRIE ELEISON (Lord Have Mercy)

Words: Ancient Text, Music: Phil Madeira



LEADER: Lord Je-sus Christ, son of God, have mer-cy on me, a sin-ner.



ALL: Lord Je-sus Christ, son of God, have mer-cy on me, a sin-ner.



LEADER: Ky-ri-e e - le-i-son. Lord Je-sus Christ, have mer-cy on me, a sin-ner.



ALL: Have mer-cy on me, a sin- ner. Have mer-cy on me, a sin- ner.

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

Holy Week "Collect" from Book of Common Prayer

Leader: O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life: Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

*Leader Intercedes for the world, Church,
and the needs of 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 READING

Mark 15:33-39

[33] And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. [34] And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" [35] And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "Behold, he is calling Elijah." [36] And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." [37] And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. [38] And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. [39] And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" (ESV)

Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

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

SERMON

Rev. Taylor Leachman

The Seven Last Words of Jesus - "My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me "



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. 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 each year you give us this joyful season when we prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed. By Your Spirit we grow in loving reverence for you and of willing service to our neighbor.

As we recall the saving acts that give new life in Christ, you bring the image of your Son to perfection within our hearts.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, 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

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, unite us with Christ and with your church in all the world.

All glory and honor are yours, Almighty God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

People: **Have mercy on us.**

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

People: **Have mercy on us.**

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

People: **Grant us your peace.**

Leader: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

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

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

How Deep the Father's Love For Us

Words and music by Stuart Townend

© 1995 Thankyou Music

How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure
That He should give his only Son, to make a wretch his treasure
How great the pain of searing loss, the Father turned his face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One, bring many sons to glory

Behold the Man upon a cross, my sin upon his shoulders
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers
It was my sin that held Him there until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life; I know that it is finished

I will not boast in anything: no gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ; his death and resurrection
Why should I gain from his reward? I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart: his wounds have paid my ransom

Why should I gain from his reward? I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart: his wounds have paid my ransom

*CLOSING PRAYER

*SONG

Benediction (May the Peace)

Words and Music by Stuart Townend and Keith Getty

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Verse 1

May the peace of God our heav'nly Father
And the grace of Christ the risen Son
And the fellowship of God the Spirit
Keep our hearts and minds within His love

Chorus

And to Him be praise for His glorious reign
From the depths of earth to the heights of heav'n
We declare the name of the Lamb once slain
Christ eternal the King of kings

Verse 2

May this peace which passes understanding
And this grace which makes us what we are
And this fellowship of His communion
Make us one in spirit and in heart

Chorus

ANNOUNCEMENTS



PICKUP SOCCER

Friday, Mar. 22nd at 6:30 – 8:00 P.M.

Join the monthly pick-up soccer game for medical sojourner families as an opportunity to have fun, run around, meet people, and share a meal.

Location: Weekley Family YMCA Soccer Field

Register at AdventPres.org/Events.



MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS BAKING CLASS – MAKING MACARONS

Friday, March 22nd, 4:30-6 P.M. at the Leachman's

What a special treat for middle school girls to learn how to make macarons from Pastry Chef Lauren Bergeron! Friends bring friends to this event. The more, the MORE!

Location: Leachman's | 4517 Evergreen Street

RSVP at AdventPres.org/Events.



LADIES SPRING DINNER: GROWING IN GRACE

Saturday, March 23rd, 6-8 P.M. at the Van Meter's

Invite your friends to join you for a ladies evening out. Enjoy dinner and a message from Marisa Shields.

Location: Van Meter's | 3219 Rice Blvd

RSVP at AdventPres.org/Events.

Holy Week Services

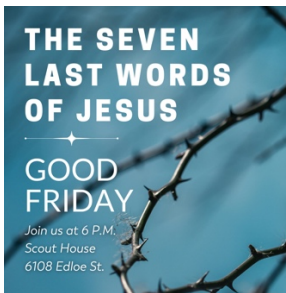


MAUNDY THURSDAY DINNERS

Thursday, March 28th, 6-7:30 P.M.

Several locations. Join one of the existing groups or host your own Maundy Thursday Dinner. Childcare will be provided.

RSVP at AdventPres.org/Events.



GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

Friday, March 29th, 6-7 P.M.

The Season of Lent draws to a close and so does our sermon series, "The Seven Last Words of Jesus." Join us as we mark this special time together at our Good Friday service.

Location: Scout House, 6108 Edloe Street



EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE

Sunday, March 31st, 10 A.M.

Celebrate the Risen Lord with your Advent family. Invite your friends and family to join you.

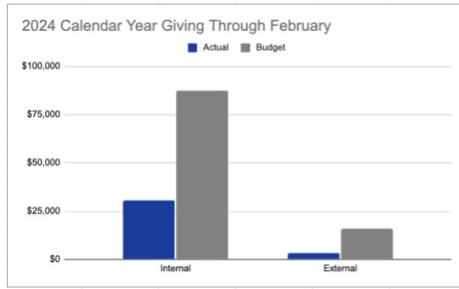
Location: Weekley Family YMCA, Gymnasium



GROUPME – JOIN ADVENT'S GROUPME

Click the QR code and join the Advent Houston GroupMe Community Group. Chat with your friends. Learned something new – share it. Going out to lunch after Worship – let everyone know! Want prayer - post it on the Prayer Group. And more ...

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 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
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