
EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



ADVENT
HOUSTON

26th Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 29

NOVEMBER • 26 • 2023

WELCOME TO ADVENT!

Advent means “arrival” or “coming.” Many of us have a temptation to believe that we can live a good enough life or do the right things to make our way to God. We think that if we do enough of the right types of things, then God will allow us into His home. But the Bible tells us again and again that we are never the first movers in this relationship. God is always the initiator. He spoke all things into being; He created; and He pursues. He is the one who arrives. And we see this in the first advent of God.

John begins his gospel by saying, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (ESV). God the Son came to us in the first advent: what the church calls the incarnation. He didn’t wait for us to try and make our way to his heavenly abode. He didn’t stand above us to lecture us or condemn us. He came to us. In fact, he became one of us, taking on flesh, pain, sorrows, and death.

And God hasn’t stopped there. After Jesus came into this world to inaugurate the reign of God on earth as it is in heaven, after he died on the cross to atone for our sins, and after he was raised from the dead to defeat sin and death, He ascended to heaven to assume the throne. Scripture tells us that he will come again. And when he comes again, he is bringing the new heavens and the new earth with him.

It is in this second advent, that Jesus promises to make all things new. Though he has already dealt with sin and death, it isn’t until he comes again that death will be eradicated.

PENTECOST

“The season after Pentecost Sunday and leading up to Advent is referred to as Ordinary Time. It does not mean the time is boring and mundane, but rather “Ordinary” refers to the “ordinal” way that the church calendar counts the Sundays from Pentecost until the Season of Advent. Historically the church has used this time to more fully flesh out Christ’s work in the lives of her people, in the church as a whole, or in Christ’s Kingdom over all the earth. Robert Webber writes that during Ordinary Time,

Many worship traditions follow lectionaries that highlight the work of the Spirit in the mission of the church in the world. Other churches organize their worship life around a lectio continua, continuous readings from a given section of Scripture. Some worship traditions have also called this season ‘Kingdomtime,’ focusing on the kingdom of God that is present now and the one that will be realized in more profound ways in the future...

[Thus] the various Sundays are not connected by a particular theme. In Advent we await the coming of Christ; during Christmas, we celebrate his arrival; and at Epiphany, we proclaim that Christ is manifested to the world as Savior. During Lent, we prepare for the death; in Holy Week, we reenact his death; then in Easter, we celebrate his resurrection and complete the Easter cycle with the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit. But in the nonfestive season of the church year, there is no unified theme that ties the Sundays together.

At Advent Houston, we want to use this “nonfestive” season to focus on our particular mission in this particular time and place that God has for particular individuals like us. We want to minister to one another in the distinct ways that we need to hear the good news of what Jesus has done, and we want to practice our faith in light of the truth that Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again.

REFLECTIONS

"The American church avoids lament. The power of lament is minimized and the underlying narrative of suffering that requires lament is lost. But absence doesn't make the heart grow fonder. Absence makes the heart forget. The absence of lament in the liturgy of the American church results in the loss of memory. We forget the necessity of lamenting over suffering and pain. We forget the reality of suffering and pain."

— **Soong-Chan Rah**

"Lament is a cry of belief in a good God, a God who has His ear to our hearts, a God who transfigures the ugly into beauty. Complaint is the bitter howl of unbelief in any benevolent God in this moment, a distrust in the love-beat of the Father's heart."

— **Ann Voskamp**

"Oh Lord our God, To you we cry out, To you we run, For where else would we go? We feel the weight of our broken world, Through wars, famines, and disasters, In injustice, hatred, and oppression. The nations desperately need your deliverance. We weep at our own brokenness For the guilt, shame, and pain we feel Weighed down by sin, held back by fear We mourn our distance from you. Be near to us, Oh God Remember not our sin or failures Reveal your Kingdom to our hearts and our community Restore us to an awareness of your presence. But, we have experienced your grace And we will experience your restoration Through your atoning death our sins are forgiven And in your return we will be made whole."

— **Prayer of Lament, Missio Dei Church, Falcon CO**

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

Adapted from Romans 8:35 (ESV)

Leader: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

Leader: We meet in the presence of God.

People: Who knows our needs.

Leader: Who hears our cries.

People: Who feels our pain.

Leader: Who heals our wounds.

*SONG

Dear Refuge of My Weary Soul

Words by Anne Steele and music by Kevin Twit

© 1998, Kevin Twit Music

Dear refuge of my weary soul,
On Thee, when sorrows rise
On Thee, when waves of trouble roll,
My fainting hope relief
To Thee I tell each rising grief,
For Thou alone canst heal
Thy Word can bring a sweet relief,
For every pain I feel

But oh! When gloomy doubts prevail,
I fear to call Thee mine
The springs of comfort seem to fail,
And all my hopes decline
Yet gracious God, where shall I flee?
Thou art my only trust
And still my soul would cleave to Thee
Though prostrate in the dust

Hast Thou not bid me seek Thy face,
And shall I seek in vain?
And can the ear of sovereign grace,
Be deaf when I complain?
No still the ear of sovereign grace,
Attends the mourner's prayer
Oh may I ever find access,
To breathe my sorrows there

Thy mercy seat is open still,
Here let my soul retreat
With humble hope attend Thy will,
And wait beneath Thy feet,
Thy mercy seat is open still,
Here let my soul retreat
With humble hope attend Thy will,
And wait beneath Thy feet

PRAYER OF ADORATION

Leader: Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation; to you be praise and glory for ever. Through baptism we become members one of another in Christ, members of a company of saints, whose mutual belonging transcends death.

As we bring before you our loss, our fears, our anxiety, strengthen us by your grace, renew us in your faith, and enfold us in your love.

May we be made ready to see your face in the heavenly city where night shall be no more, and all hurt and pain are dispelled.

We pray in the name of Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. One God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Lamentations 3:19-26

¹⁹ Remember my affliction and my wanderings,
the wormwood and the gall!

²⁰ My soul continually remembers it

and is bowed down within me.

²¹ But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:

²² The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;

²³ they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

²⁴ "The LORD is my portion," says my soul,
"therefore I will hope in him."

²⁵ The LORD is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul who seeks him.

²⁶ It is good that one should wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD. (ESV)

(time of silence)

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 69:1-13

69 Save me, O God!

For the waters have come up to my neck.

² I sink in deep mire,
where there is no foothold;
I have come into deep waters,
and the flood sweeps over me.

³ I am weary with my crying out;
my throat is parched.

My eyes grow dim
with waiting for my God.

⁴ More in number than the hairs of my head
are those who hate me without cause;
mighty are those who would destroy me,
those who attack me with lies.

What I did not steal
must I now restore?

⁵ O God, you know my folly;
the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you.

⁶ Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me,
O Lord GOD of hosts;
let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me,
O God of Israel.

⁷ For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach,
that dishonor has covered my face.

⁸ I have become a stranger to my brothers,
an alien to my mother's sons.

⁹ For zeal for your house has consumed me,
and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

¹⁰ When I wept and humbled my soul with fasting,
it became my reproach.

¹¹ When I made sackcloth my clothing,
I became a byword to them.

¹² I am the talk of those who sit in the gate,
and the drunkards make songs about me.

¹³ But as for me, my prayer is to you, O LORD.
At an acceptable time, O God,
in the abundance of your steadfast love answer me in your saving
faithfulness. (ESV)

(time of silence)

***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

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

Chorus 1

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Psalm 23 (ESV)

**ALL: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
 He makes me lie down in green pastures.
 He leads me beside still waters.
 He restores my soul.
 He leads me in paths of righteousness
 for his name's sake.**

**Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of
death,**

**I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
 your rod and your staff,
 they comfort me.**

**You prepare a table before me
 in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;**

**my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
forever. (ESV)**

CONFESSION OF SIN

Adapted from Christ Central Church, Charlotte, NC.

ALL: Gracious God, we confess that in our pain and in our plenty, we have sought to hide from you. We have hungered and thirsted for many things in your world in order to avoid coming before you. Rather than cry out to you in our suffering, we have sought comfort in your creation. Rather than weep for tragedies around us, we have numbed ourselves. Rather than mourn with those who mourn, we have hoarded our emotions. We have avoided hard questions and in running from the opportunity to lament we have become hardened. Forgive us for our sins, purify our struggle, and bring us to a place of true lament for our nation, our neighbors, for those who have suffered, and for our own hearts.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Isaiah 40:1-2a (ESV)

Leader: Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned.

The 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.

***Praise My Soul the King of Heaven (Verses 1-2)**

Words by Henry Lyte and music by Christopher Miner

© 1997 Christopher Miner Music

**Leader: Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
To His feet thy tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like me His praise should sing?**

Praise Him, praise Him,
praise Him, praise Him,
Praise the everlasting King.

ALL: **Praise Him for His grace and favor**
To our fathers in distress.
Praise Him still the same forever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Praise Him, praise Him,
praise Him, praise Him,
Glorious in His faithfulness.

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

Edited Collect from Book of Common Prayer.

Leader: Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake.

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

Jeremiah 29:1-14

29 These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. ²This was after King Jeconiah and the queen mother, the eunuchs, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the metal workers had departed from Jerusalem. ³The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. It said: ⁴“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. ⁸For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, ⁹for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD.

¹⁰“For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. ¹¹For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹²Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. ¹³You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

“Waiting in Exile”

Rev. Curtis Shields



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: Jesus said: “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives, give I unto you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

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 so we have a record of your attendance. Sign-in on the blue 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 up unto the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to Lord our God.

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

Leader: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should always sing of your glory, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

For you are the hope of the nations, the builder of the city that is to come.

Your love made visible in Jesus Christ brings home the lost, restores the sinner, comforts the grieving, and grants peace to the departed.

In his face your light shines out, flooding lives with goodness and truth, gathering into one in your kingdom a fragile, divided and broken humanity.

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: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.

People: **Christ has died!**
Christ is risen!
Christ will come again!

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

Drive Out the Darkness

Words and music by Dan Marotta, Isaac Wardell, John Swinton, and Paul Zach

© 2020 Integrity Worship Music

Chorus

Come, O come, be our light
Drive out the darkness
Come, Jesus, come

Verse 1

Every year under the thorn
Every wrong that we have known
Every valley will be raised
Ancient ruins will be remains

Chorus

Verse 2

Every weapon made for war
Every gun and every sword
Will be melted in the flame
To be used for gardening

Chorus

Verse 3

In the emptiness of grief
Through the night of suffering
In the loss and in the tears
God of comfort, O be near

Ending Chorus

Come, O come, be our light
Drive out the darkness
Come, O come, be our light
Drive out the darkness
Come, and end all the violence
Come, do not be silent
Come, cling to your promise
Come, break all injustice
Come, Jesus, come

*SONG

All Who Are Thirsty

Words and music by Brenton Brown and Glenn Roberts

© 1998 Vineyard Songs

Verse

All who are thirsty, all who are weak
Come to the fountain
Dip your heart in the stream of life
Let the pain and the sorrow be washed away,
In the wave of his mercy
As deep cries out to deep, we sing

Chorus

Come Lord Jesus, come
Come Lord Jesus, come
Come Lord Jesus, come
Come Lord Jesus, come
Repeat verse & chorus

Interlude

As deep cries out to deep
As deep cries out to deep
As deep cries out to deep we sing
Chorus

*CLOSING PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & MISSION

*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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



QUESTION & DISCUSSION

TODAY - 12:00 - 1:00 P.M.

Got questions? Let's discuss. Scan the QR code to submit your questions. Join us in the YMCA Multi-purpose Room for the discussion. A light lunch will be available.



PRAYER & HEALING SERVICE

Dec. 7th – 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.

Invite your family and friends to join you at our Prayer & Healing Service. This is a special time in an often-busy season to take some time for prayer. Location: TBD



LIVE NATIVITY

Dec. 16th – 4:00 – 6:00 P.M.

The Dicks are turning their yard into a manger again this year. Fun for kids of all ages.

This is a great way to share the story of Jesus' birth with friends and family.

Location: 1317 North Blvd



FINANCIAL UPDATE

Income YTD	\$ 63,117
Budgeted Expenses YTD	\$204,000
Budgeted Expenses FY	\$ 611,852

(YTD = July 2023 – October 2023; FY = July 2023 – June 2024)

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
UNIVERSITY, AND THE SURROUNDING
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