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EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



**ADVENT**  
HOUSTON

**First Sunday after the Epiphany**

JANUARY • 7 • 2024

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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 out 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.

\*Robert E. Webber, Ancient Future Time

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## REFLECTIONS

“Light is experienced brightness, the sphere of natural life. Earthly light neither derives from transcendent light nor is contrasted with it. Radiance surrounds God, but God’s glory is not light. God is our light (Ps. 27:1), and he causes his light to shine (Job 37:3).”

- **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament**

“Truth, by which the world is held together, has sprung from the earth, in order to be carried in a woman’s arms.”

- **St Augustine**

“We should ask God to increase our hope when it is small, awaken it when it is dormant, confirm it when it is wavering, strengthen it when it is weak, and raise it up when it is overthrown.”

- **John Calvin**

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 29:1-4; ESV

**Leader:** Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

**People:** **Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.**

**Leader:** The voice of the LORD is over the waters;

**People:** **The God of glory thunders, the LORD, over many waters.**

**Leader:** The voice of the LORD is powerful;

**People:** **The voice of the LORD is full of majesty.**

## \*SONG

## Crown Him With Many Crowns

Words by Matthew Bridges and Godfrey Thring and music by George Job Elvey

© Words and Music: Public Domain

Crown Him with many crowns  
The Lamb upon His throne  
Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns  
All music but its own  
Awake, my soul, and sing  
Of Him who died for thee  
And hail Him as thy matchless King  
Through all eternity

Crown Him the Lord of love  
Behold his hands and side  
Rich wounds yet visible above  
In beauty glorified  
No angel in the sky  
Can fully bear that sight  
But downward bends His wandering eye  
At mysteries so bright

Crown Him the Lord of life  
Who triumphed o'er the grave  
And rose victorious in the strife  
For those He came to save  
His glories now we sing  
Who died and rose on high  
Who died eternal life to bring  
And lives that death may die

Crown Him the Lord of heav'n  
On with the Father known  
One with the Spirit through Him giv'n  
From yonder glorious throne  
To Thee be endless praise  
For Thou for us hast died  
Be Thou O Lord through endless days  
Adored and magnified

Crown Him the Lord of years  
The Potentate of time  
Creator of the rolling spheres  
Ineffably sublime  
All hail Redeemer, hail  
For Thou hast died for me  
Thy praise shall never never fail  
Throughout eternity

## **PRAYER OF ADORATION**

Adapted from "faithandworship.com," Prayers for Epiphany

**Leader:** For John the Baptist, preparing the way by repentance and baptism.

**People:** **We thank you**

**Leader:** For Jesus Christ, your Son, our savior, revealed by water and Spirit.

**People:** **We thank you**

**Leader:** For Good News, that Salvation has come to the earth.

**People:** **We thank you**

Leader: For your love, undeserved and graciously given.

People: **We thank you**

Leader: For the Holy Spirit, working in, transforming, and empowering lives.

People: **We thank you**

Leader: For your promise of a life everlasting, a new creation, and a home with you.

People: **We thank you**

## **FIRST SCRIPTURE READING**

**Acts 19:1-7**

[1] And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. [2] And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." [3] And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." [4] And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." [5] On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. [6] And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. [7] There were about twelve men in all. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD

People: **Thanks be to God.**

## **SECOND SCRIPTURE READING**

**Mark 1:4-11**

[4] John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. [5] And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. [6] Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. [7] And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. [8] I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

[9] In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. [10] And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. [11] And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (ESV)

Leader: The Gospel of the LORD

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

## **\*SONG**

## **Psalm 116 (I Love You Lord)**

Words and music by Jessica Ray Langdon

© 2020 Integrity's Praise! Music

### **Chorus**

I love You Lord  
For You have delivered me  
I love You Lord  
For You have delivered  
My soul from death  
My feet from stumbling  
I will walk in the land of the living  
My soul from death  
My feet from stumbling  
I will walk in the land of the living

*Repeat*

### **Verse**

I will bless You Lord  
For You heard my cry  
I reached out my hand  
And You saved my life  
I will bless You Lord  
For You heard my plea  
And the God of Heaven  
Turned His ear to me  
I will bless You Lord  
For unending love  
For Your grace and mercy  
Raining down from above  
And I will bless You Lord  
To the very end  
I will call on You  
As long as I may live

*Chorus*

## \*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Apostles Creed

Leader: Christian, what is it that you believe?

All: **I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## CONFESSION OF SIN

Adapted from *Book of Common Worship* (1946)

Leader: Gracious and forgiving God hear our confession:

People: **We acknowledge that we are sinners and we confess our sins—  
those known to us that burden our hearts, and those  
unknown to us but seen by you. We know that before you  
nothing remains hidden, and in you everything is revealed.**

Leader: Gracious and forgiving God hear our request:

People: **Free us from the slavery of sin; liberate us from the bondage  
of guilt; work in us that which is pleasing in your sight; for the  
sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.**



## \*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

John 8:12, NIV

Leader: When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

## \*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 (1<sup>ST</sup> - 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADES)

All children, 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> 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

Adapted from "Prayer of the Day" in Epiphany from *Book of Common Worship*

Leader: Holy God, you sent your Son to be baptized among sinners, to seek and save the lost. May we, who have been baptized in his name, never turn away from the world, but reach out in word and deed to all in need; by the mercy of Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*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 5**

[1] This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. [2] Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. [3] When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. [4] The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters. [5] Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died.

[6] When Seth had lived 105 years, he fathered Enosh. [7] Seth lived after he fathered Enosh 807 years and had other sons and daughters. [8] Thus all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died.

[9] When Enosh had lived 90 years, he fathered Kenan. [10] Enosh lived after he fathered Kenan 815 years and had other sons and daughters. [11] Thus all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died.

[12] When Kenan had lived 70 years, he fathered Mahalalel. [13] Kenan lived after he fathered Mahalalel 840 years and had other sons and daughters. [14] Thus all the days of Kenan were 910 years, and he died.

[15] When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he fathered Jared. [16] Mahalalel lived after he fathered Jared 830 years and had other sons and daughters. [17] Thus all the days of Mahalalel were 895 years, and he died.

[18] When Jared had lived 162 years, he fathered Enoch. [19] Jared lived after he fathered Enoch 800 years and had other sons and daughters. [20] Thus all the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died.

[21] When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. [22] Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. [23] Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. [24] Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

[25] When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he fathered Lamech. [26] Methuselah lived after he fathered Lamech 782 years and had other sons and daughters. [27] Thus all the days of Methuselah were 969 years, and he died.

[28] When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son [29] and called his name Noah, saying, "Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands." [30] Lamech lived after he fathered Noah 595 years and had other sons and daughters. [31] Thus all the days of Lamech were 777 years, and he died.

[32] After Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD

People: **Thanks be to God.**

## SERMON

Will McKee

"The Origins Story: Follow the Flow"



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:** Christ came and proclaimed the gospel: peace to those who are far off and peace to those who are near.

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](http://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 -  
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-communicating 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.



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### 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

## Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me

Words and music by Jonny Robinson, Rich Thompson, and Michael Farren

© 2018 CityAlight Music

What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer  
There is no more for heaven now to give  
He is my joy my righteousness and freedom  
My steadfast love my deep and boundless peace  
To this I hold my hope is only Jesus  
For my life is wholly bound to his  
Oh how strange and divine I can sing all is mine  
Yet not I but through Christ in me

The night is dark but I am not forsaken  
For by my side the Saviour he will stay  
I labor on in weakness and rejoicing  
For in my need his power is displayed  
To this I hold my Shepherd will defend me  
Through the deepest valley he will lead  
Oh the night has been won and I shall overcome  
Yet not I but through Christ in me

No fate I dread I know I am forgiven  
The future sure the price it has been paid  
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon  
And he was raised to overthrow the grave  
To this I hold my sin has been defeated  
Jesus now and ever is my plea  
Oh the chains are released I can sing I am free  
Yet not I but through Christ in me

With every breath I long to follow Jesus  
For he has said that he will bring me home  
And day by day I know he will renew me  
Until I stand with joy before the throne  
To this I hold my hope is only Jesus  
All the glory evermore to him  
When the race is complete still my lips shall repeat  
Yet not I but through Christ in me



When the race is complete still my lips shall repeat  
Yet not I but through Christ in me  
Yet not I but through Christ in me

## **\*SONG**

## **Great is Thy Faithfulness**

Words by Thomas Obediah Chisholm and music by William Marion Runyan  
© Words and Music: Public Domain

### **Verse 1**

Great is Thy faithfulness O God my Father  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not  
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be

### **Chorus**

Great is Thy faithfulness, great is Thy faithfulness  
Morning by morning new mercies I see  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided  
Great is Thy faithfulness Lord unto me

### **Verse 2**

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest  
Sun moon and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love

*Chorus*

### **Verse 3**

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth  
Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow  
Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside

*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**

Church of England

Leader: Christ our Lord,  
To whom Kings bowed down in worship and offered gifts,  
Reveal to you his glory and pour upon you the riches of his  
grace;  
And the blessing of God almighty,  
The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
Be with you and remain with you always.

**All: AMEN.**

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



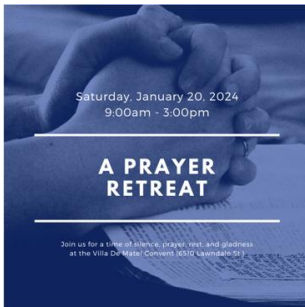
## PICKUP SOCCER

*Friday, Jan. 19<sup>th</sup> 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. The fall games were great fun!

Location: Weekley Family YMCA Soccer Field

Register at [AdventPres.org/Events](http://AdventPres.org/Events).



## PRAYER RETREAT

*Saturday, Jan. 20<sup>th</sup> at the Villa De Matel Convent*

When was the last time you spend a few hours in quiet prayer? Come and join your Advent family in experiencing a time of prayer at a local haven within our city. The event is free.

Register at [AdventPres.org/Events](http://AdventPres.org/Events).



## ALL ABOUT ADVENT – MEMBERSHIP CLASS

*Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 P.M.*

Interested in learning more about Advent Houston? Attend the Membership Class on February 25.

Register at [AdventPres.org/Events](http://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](mailto:admin@adventpres.org) to opt out of the media release.

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**ADVENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOUSTON**

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