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EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



**ADVENT**  
HOUSTON

**First Sunday Of Lent**

FEBRUARY • 18 • 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.

## 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.

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## REFLECTIONS

Here is one of the most powerful arguments for the truth of the Christian faith: the human religious imagination could not have arrived at a notion so utterly foreign to generally accepted spiritual ideas as that of a crucified Messiah.

— **Fleming Rutledge**

In praying for His enemies, not only did Christ set before us a perfect example of how we should treat those who wrong and hate us, but He also taught us never to regard any as beyond the reach of prayer.

— **Arthur W. Pink**

To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.

— **C.S. Lewis**

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 Psalm 25:1-5; ESV

**Leader:** To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust;  
**People:** **Let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me.**

**Leader:** Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;  
**People:** **Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.**

**Leader:** Lead me in your truth and teach me,  
**People:** **For you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.**

## \*SONG

## All My Ways

Words and music by Jonny Robinson, Rich Thompson, Michael Farren, and Dustin Smith  
© 2016 CityAlight Music

### Verse 1

In days of peace and days of rest  
In times of loss and loneliness  
Though rich or poor Your word is true  
That all my ways are known to You

### Verse 2

No trial has come beyond Your hand  
No step I walk beyond Your plan  
The path is dark outside my view  
Still all my ways are known to You

**Chorus**

And O what peace that I have found  
Wherever I may be  
For all my ways are known to You  
Hallelujah they are known to You

**Verse 3**

I do not fear the final night  
For death will be the door to life  
You take my hand and lead me through  
For all my ways are known to You

*Chorus*

**Bridge**

Open up my eyes so I may see  
That You have made these ways for me  
Open up my eyes so I may see  
That You my God will walk with me

*Repeat*

*Chorus*

**Ending**

Hallelujah they are known to You

**PRAYER OF ADORATION****SCRIPTURE READING**

1 Peter 3:18-22

[18] For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, [19] in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, [20] because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. [21] Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, [22] who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD

People: **Thanks be to God.**

## STORIES OF MISSION & MERCY

### \*SONG

### I Asked The Lord

Words by John Newton and music by Laura Taylor

© 2004 double v music

I asked the Lord that I might grow  
In faith and love and every grace  
Might more of His salvation know  
And seek more earnestly His face

Twas He who taught me thus to pray  
And He I trust has answered prayer  
But it has been in such a way  
As almost drove me to despair

I hoped that in some favored hour  
At once He'd answer my request  
And by His love's constraining power  
Subdue my sins and give me rest

Instead of this He made me feel  
The hidden evils of my heart  
And let the angry powers of Hell  
Assault my soul in every part

Yea more with His own hand He seemed  
Intent to aggravate my woe  
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,  
Cast out my feelings, laid me low

Lord why is this, I trembling cried  
Wilt Thou pursue thy worm to death?  
"Tis in this way" The Lord replied  
"I answer prayer for grace and faith"

"These inward trials I employ  
From self and pride to set thee free  
And break thy schemes of earthly joy  
That thou mayest seek thy all in me,  
That thou mayest seek thy all in me."

## **\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**Leader:** Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?  
**People:** **The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.**

**Leader:** What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?  
**People:** **All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.**

**Leader:** Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?  
**People:** **God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.**

## **CONFESSION OF SIN**

Anonymous Source

**ALL:** **Merciful Lord, we confess that with us there is an abundance of sin, but in you there is the fullness of righteousness and abundance of mercy.**  
**We are spiritually poor, but you are rich and in Jesus Christ came to be merciful to the poor. Strengthen our faith and trust in you.**  
**We are empty vessels that need to be filled; fill us.**  
**We are weak in faith; strengthen us.**  
**We are cold in love; warm us, and make our hearts fervent for you that our love may go out to one another and to our neighbors.**  
**Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## \*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

1 Timothy 1:15a (ESV)

Leader: The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners

## \*KYRIE ELEISON

Citation - 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 (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

Collect for 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent, in the *Book of Common Prayer*

**Leader:** Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*Leader Intercedes for the world, Church,  
and the needs of our congregation.*

**People:** Amen.

## SERMON READING

Luke 23:32-38

[32] Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. [33] And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. [34] And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. [35] And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" [36] The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine [37] and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" [38] There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews." (ESV)

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

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

# SERMON

Rev. Taylor Leachman

The Seven Last Words of Jesus - "Father, Forgive Them"



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](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:** 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.



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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.

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## COMMUNION SONG

## I Shall Not Want

Words and music by Audrey Assad and Bryan Brown  
© 2013 worshiptogether.com songs; Fortunate Fall Music

### Verse 1

From the love of my own comfort  
From the fear of having nothing  
From a life of worldly passions  
Deliver me O God

### Verse 2

From the need to be understood  
From the need to be accepted  
From the fear of being lonely  
Deliver me O God  
Deliver me O God

### Chorus 1

And I shall not want  
No I shall not want  
When I taste Your goodness  
I shall not want  
When I taste Your goodness  
I shall not want

### Verse 3

From the fear of serving others  
From the fear of death or trial  
And from the fear of humility  
Deliver me O God  
Deliver me O God

### Chorus 2

And I shall not want  
No I shall not want  
When I taste Your goodness  
I shall not want

No I shall not want  
No I shall not want  
When I taste Your goodness  
I shall not want  
When I taste Your goodness  
I shall not want  
I shall not want  
Shall not want

## \*SONG

## Beneath the Cross of Jesus

Words by Elizabeth C. Clephane and music by Christopher Miner  
© 1997 Christopher Miner Music

Beneath the cross of Jesus  
I fain would take my stand,  
The shadow of a mighty rock  
Within a weary land;  
A home within the wilderness,  
A rest upon the way,  
From the burning of the noontide heat,  
And the burden of the day.

Upon the cross of Jesus,  
Mine eye at times can see  
The very dying form of One  
Who suffered there for me;  
And from my stricken heart with tears  
Two wonders I confess  
The wonders of redeeming love  
And my unworthiness.

I take, O cross, thy shadow  
For my abiding place:  
I ask no other sunshine than  
The sunshine of His face;  
Content to let the world go by  
To know no gain nor loss,  
My sinful self my only shame,  
My glory, all the cross.



## **\*CLOSING PRAYER**

## **\*BENEDICTION**

Richard Halverson, Former Congressional Chaplain

**Leader:** You go nowhere by accident. Wherever you go, God is sending you. Wherever you find yourself, God has a reason for your being there. Christ who lives in you by the power of the Holy Spirit has something he desires to do in you and through you wherever you find yourself. Believe this and go in His grace, His love, and His power.

**ALL: AMEN.**

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## QUESTION & DISCUSSION

*Sunday, Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> 12:00 – 1:00 P.M.*

Got questions? Let's discuss. Scan the QR code to submit your question. Join us after the worship service today for the discussion. A light lunch will be available.

Location: Weekley Family YMCA Multi-purpose Room



## PICKUP SOCCER

*Friday, Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup> 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. The January game was great fun!

Location: Weekley Family YMCA Soccer Field

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



## ALL ABOUT ADVENT – MEMBERSHIP CLASS

*Sunday, Feb.. 25<sup>th</sup> 3:30 P.M. at the Leachman's*

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

Register at [AdventPres.org/Events](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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EMBODY, AND EXTEND THE GRACE OF JESUS  
TO THE TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER, RICE  
UNIVERSITY, AND THE SURROUNDING  
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