
EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



ADVENT HOUSTON

Second Sunday of Easter

APRIL • 27 • 2025

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.

EASTER

“Christ is the one in whom life and the new creation, the beginning again of our lives and all of creation, is assured. Our Easter calling is to let him live in us, to embrace by faith his new life, to let it take hold of us, to participate in him and his resurrection for the life of the whole world. In this way we are born again (John 3:3); we are made a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

...The message of Easter is that the way of being in Jesus, the way of living the new resurrected life is through participation. This message is very different than the message I all too frequently hear about Easter day. I hear that knowing God is accomplished through the way of intellectual evidence: Believe the facts and that will transform your life. I also hear that knowing God is accomplished through the way of emotion: Feel God. Feel forgiveness. ... But the emphasis of the early church fathers and the ancient church is knowing God through the way of participation. We participate in Christ by living the life of our baptism into his death and resurrection. This is a daily, existential, moment-by-moment experience as we choose in this or that situation to die to the sins for which Christ died and choose the life of the Spirit for which Christ was raised to new life.”

Easter is a fifty-day period in the church calendar that lasts from Easter Sunday until Pentecost Sunday (the celebration of God’s sending of the Holy Spirit). This fifty day period is not merely meant to be an extended celebration – although it is that. But, as lent was a time of preparation for new Christians to join the church, Easter was a time of continued education of those newly welcomed Christians. This instruction was intended to be a teaching of “mystagogy” – a leading through the mysteries, chiefly the mystery of the sacraments.

Thus, Easter became a time for Christians to learn the pattern of baptism and to learn the expectation and celebration of the Eucharist (what we refer to as Communion). We are to continue in this baptismal pattern – of dying to sin and living to Christ. We too are called to live into that pattern of repentance and faith – to become more and more like Christ in our journey as His disciples.

During this Easter season, may we learn better what it means to PRACTICE our faith by paying attention to our sins, turning from them, and then turning toward our Life and our Lord, Jesus Christ.

REFLECTIONS

No religion stands or falls with a claim about the resurrection of its founder in the way Christianity does.

— **Craig Blomberg**

Hope in God's promises, therefore, is not a wishful longing but a faith-filled confidence for the future. It is simply impossible to trust one of God's promises and not anticipate its coming true. To know God is to trust Him. And to trust God is to trust His promises. And to trust God's promises is to be sure of their fulfillment. This assurance concerning the future, anchored in God's promises, is what the Bible calls "hope."

— **Scott Hafemann**

We tend to think this life on earth is all there is, and we certainly live that way much of the time. But God wants to radically alter that perspective. He wants us to live with an eternal perspective, putting life on this earth in its proper place, and living in anticipation of an eternity in his presence.

— **Nancy Guthrie**

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

Select verses from Psalm 118 and 150

Leader: Praise the Lord!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
Praise him in his mighty heavens.

People: **Praise him for his mighty deeds;
Praise him according to his excellent greatness**

Leader: You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;
You are my God; I will extol you.

People: **The Lord is God,
And he has made his light to shine upon us.**

Leader: Praise him with tambourine and dance;
Praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with sounding cymbals;
Praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

People: **Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!**

*SONG

Joyful Joyful

Words by Henry Van Dyke and music by Ludwig Van Beethoven and Edward Hodges

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Joyful joyful we adore Thee
God of glory Lord of love
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee
Opening to the sun above
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness
Drive the dark of doubt away
Giver of immortal gladness
Fill us with the light of day

All Thy works with joy surround Thee
Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays
Stars and angels sing around Thee
Center of unbroken praise
Field and forest vale and mountain
Flowery meadow flashing sea
Chanting bird and flowing fountain
Call us to rejoice in Thee

Thou art giving and forgiving
Ever blessing ever blest
Wellspring of the joy of living
Ocean depth of happy rest

Thou our Father Christ our Brother
All who live in love are Thine
Teach us how to love each other
Lift us to the joy divine

Mortals join the mighty chorus
Which the morning stars began
Father love is reigning o'er us
Brother love binds man to man
Ever singing march we onward
Victors in the midst of strife
Joyful music lifts us sunward
In the triumph song of life

PRAYER OF ADORATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Acts 5:27-32, pg. 859

[27] And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, [28] saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." [29] But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. [30] The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. [31] God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. [32] And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

John 20:19-31, pg. 852

[19] On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." [20] When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. [21] Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." [22] And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. [23] If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

[24] Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. [25] So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

[26] Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." [27] Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." [28] Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" [29] Jesus said to him, "Have you believed

because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

[30] Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; [31] but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

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

Heidelberg Catechism Q.45; Westminster Shorter Catechism Q.38.

Leader: How does Christ's resurrection benefit us?

All: **First,**
by his resurrection
he has overcome death,
so that he could make us share
in the righteousness
which he had obtained for us
by his death.

Second,
by his power
we too are raised up
to a new life.

Third,
Christ's resurrection
is to us a sure pledge of our glorious resurrection.

Leader: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

All: **At the resurrection, believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.**

CONFESSION OF SIN

Anonymous

Leader: Father, you demonstrate your faithfulness to your people again and again;

All: **Yet we forget your faithfulness too quickly and begin to doubt you and your presence again at the first sign of pain or uncertainty.**

Leader: Jesus, you have called your church to live by faith;

All: **Yet we live in self-reliance, sometimes confident in our own abilities, sometimes paralyzed by our own inadequacy, as if you are irrelevant or at least unreliable.**

Leader: Holy Spirit, you are always with us to provide the faith we need, when we need it;

All: **Yet we live as if we are alone, as if we have no one to look to in faith, as if you don't really care about us.**

All: **Forgive us Lord.**

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Hebrews 2:9

Leader: But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

*GLORIA PATRI

Anonymous

Glory be to the Father
And to the Son
And to the Holy Ghost
As it was in the beginning
Is now and ever shall be
World without end
Amen, amen

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

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Adapted from Prayers of the People "D" from *Book of Common Worship*.

Leader: God of heaven and earth, through Jesus Christ you promise to hear us when we pray to you in his name. Confident in your love and mercy we offer our prayer.
Lord, in your mercy,

People: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Empower the church throughout the world in its life and witness. Break down the barriers that divide, that, united in your truth and love, the church may confess your name, share one baptism, sit together at one table, and serve you in one common ministry.
Lord, in your mercy,

People: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Guide the rulers of the nations. Move them to set aside their fears, greed, and vain ambition, and bow to your sovereign rule. Inspire them to strive for peace, mercy, and justice, that peoples may dwell secure, free of war and injustices.
Lord, in your mercy,

People: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Strengthen this congregation in its work and worship. Fill our hearts with your self-giving love, that our voices may speak your praise, and our lives may conform to the image of your Son. Nourish us with your Word and sacraments that we may faithfully minister in your name, and witness to your love and grace for all the world.
Lord, in your mercy,

People: **Hear our prayer.**

*(Congregants are encouraged to make their own petitions, loudly,
so all may hear. Following their petition, we still say,*

Leader: Lord, in your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.)

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

Revelation 1:4-8, pg. 965

[4] John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, [5] and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood [6] and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. [7] Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

[8] "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Leader: The Word of the Lord.
People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Will McKee

"What Now?"

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: May the peace of the Lord be always with you.
People: **And also with you!**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are glad to have you worship with us today. Please sign-in on the pad located at the end of the row 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 worship area.



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: And now we give you thanks because in his victory over the grave a new age has dawned, the long reign of sin is ended, a broken world is being renewed and humanity is once again made whole. And therefore, we join our voices with angels and archangels and the rest of your creation, forever praising you and singing:

SONG

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord (Sanctus)

Holy, holy, holy Lord
God of power and might
Heaven and earth are full
Full of your glory
Hosanna in the highest
Hosanna in the highest
Blessed is He who comes
In the name of the Lord
Hosanna in the highest
Hosanna in the highest

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

ALL: Your death, O Christ, we proclaim.
Your resurrection we affirm with joy.
Your coming we await with hope.
Glory be to you, Lord Jesus. Alleluia!

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

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

Leader: Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People: Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

Leader: These gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

**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

Words and music by Jennie Lee Riddle
© 2004 Gateway Create Publishing

Verse 1

Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain
Holy holy is He
Sing a new song to Him Who sits on
Heaven's mercy seat

Repeat

Chorus

Holy holy holy
Is the Lord God Almighty
Who was and is and is to come
With all creation I sing
Praise to the King of kings
You are my ev'rything
And I will adore You

Verse 2

Clothed in rainbows of living color
Flashes of lightning rolls of thunder
Blessing and honor strength and glory
And power be to You the only wise King

Chorus

Verse 3

Filled with wonder awestruck wonder
At the mention of Your name
Jesus Your name is power breath and living water
Such a marv'lous mystery yeah

Chorus x2

*SONG

Words by Anne Cousin; Based on Samuel Rutherford's Letters; Traditional Folk Tune; Arranged by
Phillip Palmertree
© 2001 Phillip Palmertree Music

The Sands of Time are Sinking

The sands of time are sinking,
The dawn of heaven breaks;
The summer morn I've sighed for -
The fair, sweet morn awakes:
Dark, dark had been the midnight
But dayspring is at hand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Emmanuel's land.

The king there in His beauty,
Without a veil is seen:
It were a well-spent journey,
Though seven deaths lay between:
The Lamb with His fair army,
Doth on Mount Zion stand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Emmanuel's land

O Christ, He is the fountain,
The deep, sweet well of love!
The streams on earth I've tasted
More deep I'll drink above:
There to an ocean fullness
His mercy doth expand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Emmanuel's land.

The bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear Bridegroom's face;
I will not gaze at glory
But on my King of grace.
Not at the crown He giveth
But on His pierced hand;
The Lamb is all the glory
Of Emmanuel's land.

O I am my Beloved's
And my Beloved is mine!
He brings a poor vile sinner
Into His house of wine
I stand upon His merit -
I know no other stand,
Not e'en where glory dwelleth
In Emmanuel's land.

***CLOSING PRAYER**

BENEDICTION

Adapted from Hebrews 13:20-21

Leader: Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord!

ALL: AMEN.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Sabbatical Send-Off Dinner

Saturday, May 10th at 6:30 P.M.

Taylor's sabbatical begins on Monday, May 12th. Join us at Betsy's to give Taylor and his family a warm send-off.

Location: Betsy's | 4400 Bellaire Blvd.



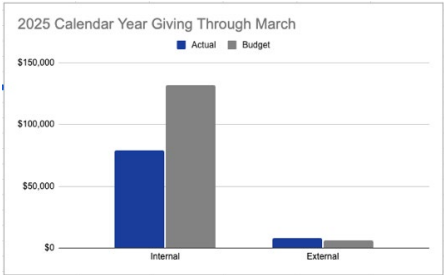
SERMON SERIES – INWARD GRACE FOR OUTWARD GLORY

Starting May 18th

Our next sermon series, "Inward Grace for Outward Glory", will be led by Rev. Paul Long, Sabbatical Interim Pastor.

Location: Weekley Family YMCA Gymnasium

2025 CALENDAR YEAR GIVING



DAILY LECTIONARY READINGS

These daily readings come from the Revised Common Lectionary and are intended to complement the readings heard in worship. The first three days readings reflect on the prior Sunday's readings, while the last three days lead into the upcoming Sunday's readings.

Date	Psalm	Old Testament	New Testament
4/27	Psalm 150		Acts 5:27-32 Revelation 1:4-8 John 20:19-31
4/28	Psalm 122	Esther 7:1-20	Revelation 1:9-20
4/29	Psalm 122	Esther 8:1-17	Revelation 2:8-11
4/30	Psalm 122	Esther 9:1-15	Luke 12:4-12
5/1	Psalm 30	Isaiah 5:11-17	Revelation 3:14-22
5/2	Psalm 30	Isaiah 6:1-4	Revelation 4:1-11
5/3	Psalm 30	Genesis 18-1-8	Luke 14:12-14
5/4	Psalm 30		Acts 9:1-20 Revelation 5:11-14 John 21:1-19
5/5	Psalm 121	Ezekiel 1:1-25	Acts 9:19b-31
5/6	Psalm 121	Ezekiel 1:26 - 2:1	Acts 26:1-18
5/7	Psalm 121	Isaiah 6:1-8	Lukes 5:1-11
5/8	Psalm 23	Ezekiel 11:1-25	Revelation 5:1-10
5/9	Psalm 23	Ezekiel 20:39-44	Revelation 6:1 - 7:4
5/10	Psalm 23	Ezekiel 28:25-26	Luke 12:29-32
5/11	Psalm 23		Acts 9:36-43 Revelation 7:9-17 John 10:22-30



DAILY LECTIONARY READINGS – QR CODE

Use the table above or scan this QR code to access the Revised Common Lectionary daily readings via BibleGateway.com.

Media Release

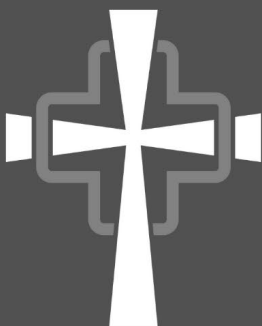
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ADVENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOUSTON

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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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