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EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



**ADVENT**  
HOUSTON

**11th Sunday after Pentecost**

Proper 13

AUGUST • 4 • 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.

## 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.

\*Robert E. Webber, *Ancient Future Time*

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## REFLECTIONS

“Unless God is our Father, we are orphans. But God’s own Son has become our Older Brother. He comes through His Spirit, with His Father, to live with us. The Holy Spirit dwells in our lives, making us a suitable dwelling place to receive the Father and the Son! As a consequence, by the Spirit we learn that we are not abandoned and unloved, but rather that we are loved by the Father, by the Son, and lovingly cared for by the Holy Spirit (John 14:21).”

— **Sinclair Ferguson**

“If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all. For everything that Christ taught, everything that makes the New Testament new and better than the Old, everything that is distinctively Christian, is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God the Father.”

— **J.I. Packer**

“Since God has a Son of his own, and such a Son, how wonderful God’s love in adopting us! We needed a Father, but He did not need sons.”

— **Thomas Watson**

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 103:8; 10-13 (ESV)

**Leader:** The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

**People:** **He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.**

**Leader:** For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him.

**People:** **As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.**

**Leader:** As a father shows compassion to his children,

**People:** **So the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.**

## \*SONG

## How Great Thou Art

Words by Stuart Wesley Keene Hine and music from a Swedish folk melody  
© 1949 and 1953 Stuart Hine Trust CIO Stuart K. Hine Trust

### Verse 1

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder  
Thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed

### Chorus

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art

### Verse 2

When through the woods and forest glades I wander  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees  
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur  
And hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze

*Chorus*

### Verse 3

And when I think that God His Son not sparing  
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in  
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing  
He bled and died to take away my sin

*Chorus*

### Verse 4

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation  
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart  
Then I shall bow in humble adoration  
And there proclaim, "My God how great Thou art!"

*Chorus*

## PRAYER OF ADORATION

### NEW TESTAMENT READING

Matthew 6:5-15

[5] "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. [6] But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

[7] "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. [8] Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. [9] Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.

[10] Your kingdom come,  
your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

[11] Give us this day our daily bread,

[12] and forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

[13] And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

[14] For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, [15] but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (ESV)

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise be to you, Lord Christ.

## STORIES OF MISSION & MERCY

### \*SONG

### Let Me Find Thee

Words by Joachim Neander and music by Matthew S. Smith

© 2012 detuned radio music

Behold me here, in grief draw near,  
Pleading at Thy throne oh King.  
To Thee each tear, each trembling fear,  
Jesus Son of Man I bring.  
Let me find Thee, Let me find Thee.  
Let me find Thee,  
Lord of mercy, King of grace.

Look down in love, and from above,  
With Thy Spirit satisfy.  
Thou hast sought me, Thou hast bought me,  
And thy purchase Lord am I.  
Let me find Thee, Let me find Thee.  
Let me find Thee,  
Here on earth and then on high.

Hear the broken, scarcely spoken,  
Longings of my heart to thee  
All the crying, all the sighing,  
Of Thy child accepted be.  
Let me find Thee, Let me find Thee.  
Let me find Thee,  
Wounded healer, suffering Lord.

## \*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

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

Adopted from Psalm 51, a Psalm of David

Leader: Heavenly God, you have told us you are our Father.

**ALL: But we have acted like orphans. We have lived as if you  
either lacked the ability or desire to care for us. Forgive us  
for not trusting you as small children trust their parents.**

Leader: Father God, you have given us parents that bear both the  
incredible dignity of being made in your image and the  
incredible curse of being corrupt in their souls.

**ALL: We confess that we have not acknowledged the ways they  
reflected your good and loving parenting over us. Forgive us  
from resenting them and not appreciating them. We confess  
that they did not always trust you to parent well—that they  
guided us in ways that better suited their hope or our desires  
and not your ways and your good purposes for us.**

Leader: Father God, forgive us for not dealing with our parents with love, patience, and hope.

**ALL: We have avoided conversations with them for fear of rejection. We have lashed out in anger to them personally or in our hearts. We have given up on them or our relationship with them—not believing you have the power to restore.**

Leader: Jesus, Brother and Savior, teach us the ways of childhood.

**ALL: Teach us how to honor our fathers and mothers and teach us to believe that your father is our father. Help us to believe that the king of all glory has called you and therefore all in you—children of God. Change our orphan hearts into believing the truth of our adoption in you.**

## **\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Psalm 103:12 (ESV)

Leader: As far as the east is from the west,

**People: So far does he remove our transgressions from us.**

Leader: Almighty God have mercy upon you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

**People: Amen.**

## **\*DOXOLOGY**

“Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow” words by Thomas Ken and music by Louis Bourgeois

© Words and Music: Public Domain

Praise God from whom all blessings flow  
Praise Him all creatures here below  
Praise Him above ye heavenly host  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost  
Amen



## 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

Using the Lord's Prayer as a rubric for our prayers praise and intercession.

**Leader:** As children of God, and heirs with Christ, we cry out in prayer, through the Spirit, to our "Abba," Father.

Let us pray together using the prayer that our Lord taught us to pray.

**People:** **Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Your Name,**

*Leader: (prays more fully in praising our Father)*

**People:** **Your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

*Leader: (prays more fully in asking for God to intercede and to bring His Kingdom)*

**People:** **Give us this day our daily bread.**

*Leader: (prays more fully in asking for the things that we and others need)*

**People:** **And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.**

*Leader: (prays more fully in asking for God to grant His church and her people the fruit of repentance and faith)*

**People:** **And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

*Leader: (prays more fully in asking for God to protect His church and her people from false worship and idolatry)*

**People:** **For Yours is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

## SERMON READING

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

[1] Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil. [2] Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few. [3] For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words.

[4] When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. [5] It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. [6] Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands? [7] For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity; but God is the one you must fear. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

## SERMON

Chris Park

Wisdom for the Way - "Guard Our Steps When You Go to the House of Our Father"



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](https://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:** It is right, our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord; who on the first day of the week overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

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: Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

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

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: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

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

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.



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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

## 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 Savior 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

## Good Good Father

Words and Music by Pat Barrett and Anthony Brown  
© 2014 Capitol CMG Paragon

### Verse 1

I've heard a thousand stories  
Of what they think You're like  
But I've heard the tender whisper  
Of love in the dead of night  
You tell me that You're pleased  
And that I'm never alone

### Chorus

You're a Good Good Father  
It's who You are  
It's who You are  
It's who You are  
And I'm loved by You  
It's who I am  
It's who I am  
It's who I am

### Verse 2

I've seen many searching  
For answers far and wide  
But I know we're all searching  
For answers only You provide  
Because You know just what we need  
Before we say a word

*Chorus*

### Bridge

You are perfect in all of Your ways  
You are perfect in all of Your ways  
You are perfect in all of Your ways to us

*Repeat*



### **Verse 3**

Love so undeniable I, I can hardly speak  
Peace so unexplainable I, I can hardly think  
As You call me deeper still  
As You call me deeper still  
As You call me deeper still  
Into love, love, love  
*Chorus x2*

### **\*CLOSING PRAYER**

### **\*BENEDICTION**

Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV)

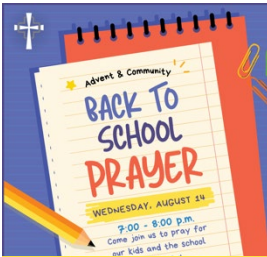
Leader:      The LORD bless you and keep you;  
                  The LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to  
                  you;  
                  The LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you  
                  peace.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



### HOW DO YOU WISH TO SERVE ON SUNDAYS?

Do you like to do a little bit of everything? Or maybe hands-on is more your style? How about being onstage? Want to express your musical talent? Maybe hang out with the kiddos occasionally? Let us know how you prefer to serve on Sundays. New teams are forming now for the fall semester. Scan the QR code and sign up for one or many options!



### BACK TO SCHOOL PRAYER

August 14<sup>th</sup> 7:00 – 8:00 P.M.

Students are going back to school. They're covered in new school clothes, shoes, and backpacks. Let's join in prayer for our students, teachers, administrators, coaches, and all in leadership as all return to a new school year.

Location: Scout House | 6108 Edloe St.



### HUDDLES

Relationship. It's about deepening a relationship with each other and our Lord. Gender-specific Huddles will be established over the next few weeks. Scan the QR code if you're interested in being a member in or a leader of one of new Huddles.

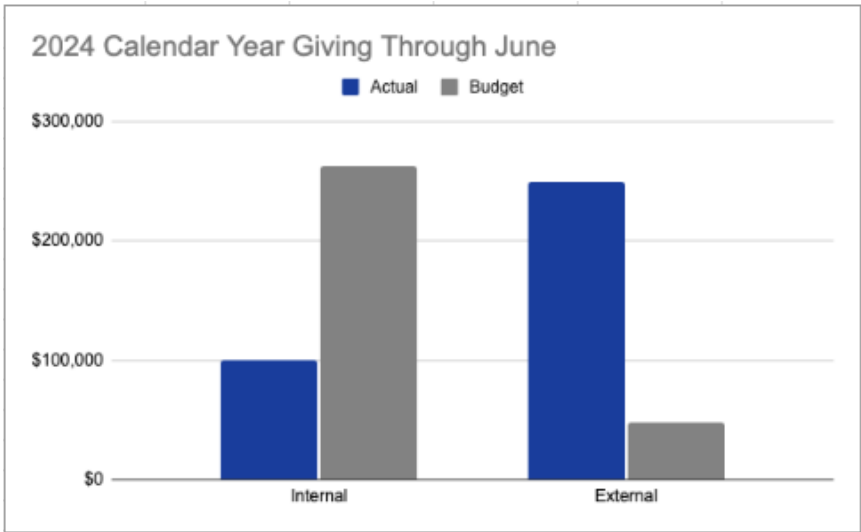


### PARISH GROUPS

Ever wonder how to get connected at Advent? One way it to join one of the several Parish Groups. Whether you are a family or a single there is a Parish Group for you. Take the first step and scan the QR code and complete the form.



## 2024 CALENDAR YEAR GIVING



### Media Release

Advent Houston shares photos taken at our events in our monthly newsletters, on our website, or on social media for the purpose of promoting and highlighting the church’s mission. By being present, you consent to being photographed and having these photos shared. For individuals who are not comfortable being visible in a shared photograph, please notify the church at [admin@adventpres.org](mailto:admin@adventpres.org) to opt out of the media release.

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## **ADVENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOUSTON**

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ADVENT HOUSTON EXISTS TO EMBRACE,  
EMBODY, AND EXTEND THE GRACE OF JESUS  
TO THE TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER, RICE  
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