
EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



ADVENT
HOUSTON

7th Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 9

JULY • 7 • 2024

WELCOME TO ADVENT!

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

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

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

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

PENTECOST

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

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

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

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

*Robert E. Webber, *Ancient Future Time*

REFLECTIONS

We go through the world with him [the teacher], looking for the solution to life, and at every turn he forces us to admit that here is only vanity, frustration, bewilderment. Life does not provide the key to itself...

You must look for [the key that will unify the whole of life]: God has made you like that, sore travail though it be. But you will not find it in the world; you will not find it in life; in revelation you will find the outskirts of God's ways; in Christ your finger tips touch the key, but no one has closed his fingers on it yet. No philosophy of life can satisfy if it leaves out Christ. Yet even the finest Christian philosophy must own itself baffled. But do not despair. There is a life to be lived day by day. And in the succession of apparently unrelated events God may be served and God may be glorified. And in this daily service of God, we may find pleasure, because we are fulfilling the purpose for which God made us.

— **J. Stafford Wright**

Only when we are finding our ultimate satisfaction in God are we able to relate rightly to one another.

— **Richard and Sharon Phillips**

As long as we maintain meaningful face-to-face relationships, especially with fellow Christians, then our electronic relationships will remain in a good and healthy place. But if we interact with people primarily through glass or some sort of technological screen – such as a television or computer monitor – we shouldn't be surprised that our relationships begin to seem distant, shallow, or artificial.

— **Donald S. Whitney**

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 92

Leader: It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High;

ALL: to declare your steadfast love in the morning and your faithfulness by night,

Leader: to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.

ALL: For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hand I sing for joy.

*SONG

For The Beauty Of The Earth

Words by Folliot Sandford Pierpoint and music by Conrad Kocher

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Verse 1

For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies
For the love which from our birth, over and around us lies

Chorus

Lord of all to Thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise
Lord of all to Thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise

Verse 2

For the wonder of each hour of the day and of the night
Hill and vale and tree and flower, sun and moon and stars of light
Chorus

Verse 3

For each perfect gift of thine to our world so freely given
Graces human and divine, flowers of earth and buds of heaven

Ending Chorus

Lord of all to Thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise
Lord of all to Thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise
Lord of all to Thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise

PRAYER OF ADORATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10

[1] Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Behold, we are your bone and flesh. [2] In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the Lord said to you, 'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.'"

[3] So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel. [4] David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. [5] At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

[9] And David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built the city all around from the Millo inward. [10] And David became greater and greater, for the Lord, the God of hosts, was with him.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

John 15:12-17

[12] "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. [13] Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. [14] You are my friends if you do what I command you. [15] No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. [16] You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. [17] These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

*SONG

It Is Well

Words by Horatio Gates Spafford and music by Philip Paul Bliss

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Verse 1

When peace like a river attendeth my way
When sorrows like sea billows roll
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say
It is well, it is well with my soul

Chorus

It is well (*It is well*)
With my soul (*With my soul*)
It is well, it is well with my soul

Verse 2

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come
Let this blest assurance control
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate
And hath shed His own blood for my soul

Chorus

Verse 3

My sin O the bliss of this glorious thought
My sin not in part but the whole
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord O my soul

Chorus

Verse 4

And Lord haste the day when the faith shall be sight
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend
Even so it is well with my soul

Chorus

*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

Anonymous

People: Jesus, forgive my sins. Forgive the sins that I remember, and the sins I have forgotten. Forgive my many failures in the face of temptation, and those times when I have been stubborn in the face of correction. Forgive the times I have been proud of my own achievements and those when I have failed to boast in your works. Forgive the harsh judgments I have made of others, and the leniency I have shown myself. Forgive the lies I have told to others, and the truths I have avoided. Forgive me the pain I have caused others and the indulgence I have shown myself. Jesus, have mercy on me and make me whole. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

1 John 4:18-19 (NIV)

Leader: There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us.

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

*I LOVE YOU LORD

Words and music by Laurie Klein

© 1978, 1980 House Of Mercy Music

I love You Lord
And I lift my voice
To worship You
O my soul rejoice
Take joy my King
In what You hear
May it be a sweet, sweet sound
In Your ear

ADVENTURERS

CHILDREN (1ST - 5TH GRADES)

All children, 1st through 5th grades, are invited to go to Adventurers, for a children's lesson and activity time during the sermon. The Adventurers will be escorted back to the Chapel during the Passing of the Peace.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Book of Common Prayer

Leader: In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,
let us pray to the Father.

Savior of the world,
be present in all places of suffering, violence and pain,
and bring hope even in the darkest night.
Inspire us to continue your work of reconciliation today.

Leader: Lord, in your mercy,

People: Hear our Prayer.

(Congregants pray aloud, asking for God to intercede. Following their petition, the leader will say, "Lord, in your mercy," and the people will reply "Hear our Prayer.")

SERMON READING

Ecclesiastes 4:7-16

[7] Again, I saw vanity under the sun: [8] one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

[9] Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. [10] For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! [11] Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? [12] And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

[13] Better was a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who no longer knew how to take advice. [14] For he went from prison to the throne, though in his own kingdom he had been born poor. [15] I saw all the living who move about under the sun, along with that youth who was to stand in the king's place. [16] There was no end of all the people, all of whom he led. Yet those who come later will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Will McKee

Wisdom for the Way "Life Together"



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. 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.



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

Take My Life

Words by Frances Ridley Havergal and music by Henri Abraham Cesar Malan

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Take my life and let it be
Consecrated Lord to Thee
Take my moments and my days
Let them flow in ceaseless praise
Let them flow in ceaseless praise

Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee
Swift and beautiful for Thee

Take my silver and my gold
Not a mite would I withhold
Take my intellect and use
Ev'ry pow'r as Thou shalt choose
Ev'ry pow'r as Thou shalt choose

Take my will and make it Thine
It shall be no longer mine
Take my heart it is Thine own
It shall be Thy royal throne
It shall be Thy royal throne

Take my love my Lord I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store
Take myself and I will be
Ever only all for Thee
Ever only all for Thee

*SONG

Ever Be

Words and music by Kalley Heiligenthal, Gabriel Wilson, Chris Greely, and Bobby Strand
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Verse 1

Your love is devoted like a ring of solid gold
Like a vow that is tested like a covenant of old
Your love is enduring through the winter rain
And beyond the horizon with mercy for today

Pre-Chorus

Faithful You have been and faithful You will be
You pledge Yourself to me and it's why I sing

Chorus

Your praise will ever be on my lips
Ever be on my lips
Your praise will ever be on my lips
Ever be on my lips
Repeat

Verse 2

You Father the orphan
Your kindness makes us whole
You shoulder our weakness
And Your strength becomes our own
You're making me like You
Clothing me in white
Bringing beauty from ashes
For You will have Your bride

Pre-Chorus

Free of all her guilt and rid of all her shame
And known by her true name and it's why I sing
Chorus

Bridge

You will be praised You will be praised
With angels and saints we sing worthy are You Lord
You will be praised You will be praised
With angels and saints we sing worthy are You Lord

Repeat

And it's why I sing

Chorus

*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



WOMEN'S SUMMER EVENT

Saturday, July 13th at 6:00 P.M.

Calling all Advent women and their friends! Join us for dinner and a time to just sit back and chat. This is a great opportunity to invite your family, co-workers, neighbors, and gal-pals.

RSVP: adventpres.org | events

Location: 2202 McClendon St



MEN'S SUMMER EVENTS

Wednesday, July 17th at 7:00 P.M.

Calling all Advent men and their friends! Join us for dinner, discussion, and fellowship. Bring a friend to meet your friends!

Discussion podcast: Man to Man: Men and Sleep with Gregg Marshall // Lead Courageously

RSVP: adventpres.org/events

Location: The Pit Room | 1201 Richmond Ave.



Overnight Prayer Retreat

from August 2nd at 4:00 P.M. to August 3rd at 2:00 P.M.

RUAH Spirituality Center

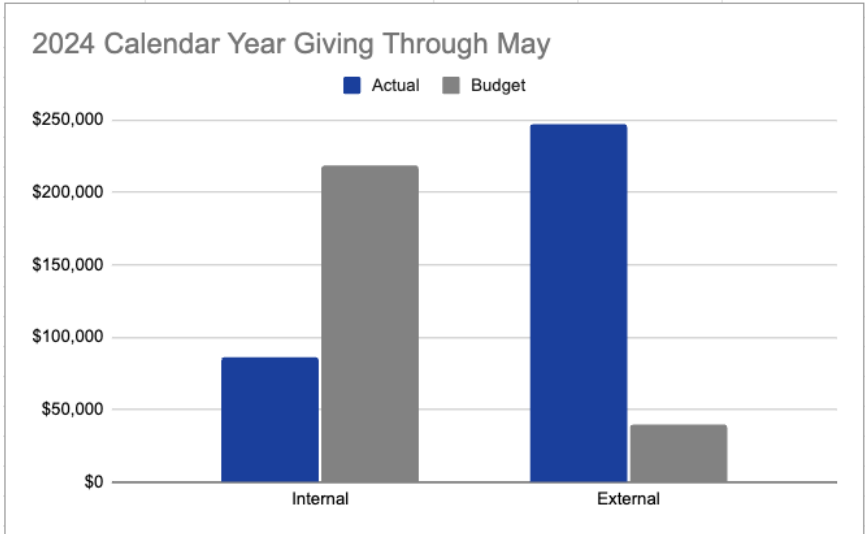
OVERNIGHT PRAYER RETREAT

August 2nd 4:00 P.M. to 3rd 2:00 P.M.

We're going back to the Villa de Matel, this time for an overnight of prayer and quiet reflection. This is a special place to be still or simply wander. Meals are provided. Advent has 12 slots available for you and your friends.

Register at adventpres.org/events

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 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,
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TO THE TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER, RICE
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