
EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



ADVENT
HOUSTON

20th Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 23

OCTOBER • 15 • 2023

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.

REFLECTIONS

"Death serves all alike; as he deals with the poor, so he deals with the rich: is not awed at the appearance of a proud palace, a numerous attendance, or a majestic countenance; pulls a king out of his throne, and summons him before the judgment seat of God, with as few compliments and as little ceremony as he takes the poor man out of his cottage. Death is as rude with emperors as with beggars, and handles one with as much gentleness as the other."

— **Jonathan Edwards**

"To say "Oh, death is just natural," is to harden and perhaps kill a part of your heart's hope that makes you human. We know deep down that we are not like trees or grass. We were created to last. We don't want to be ephemeral, to be inconsequential. We don't want to just be a wave upon the stand. The deepest desires of our hearts are for love that lasts. Death is not the way it ought to be. It is abnormal, it is not a friend, it isn't right. This isn't truly part of the circle of life. Death is the end of it. So grieve. Cry. The Bible tells us not only to weep, but to weep with those who are weeping (Romans 12:15 NASB). We have a lot of crying to do."

— **Timothy J. Keller**

"People who want to die well must be willing to confront finitude. We must be prepared to say, 'Yes, I am human, and therefore mortal.'"

— **Lydia S. Dugdale**

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 54: 4-7 (ESV)

Leader: Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life.
People: **He will return the evil to my enemies; in your faithfulness put an end to them.**

Leader: With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you; I will give thanks to your name, O LORD, for it is good.

People: **For he has delivered me from every trouble, and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies.**

*SONG

Be Thou My Vision

Words by Eleanor Henrietta Hull and music from a traditional Irish tune

© Words and music: public domain

Be Thou my vision O Lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word
I ever with Thee, and Thou with me, Lord
Thou my great Father, and I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise
Thou mine inheritance now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

High King of heaven, my vict'ry won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

PRAYER OF ADORATION

“General Prayer of Thanksgiving” edited from the *Book of Common Prayer*

Leader: Our Loving and Creative God, we thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of your love. We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side.

We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us. We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom.

Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know him and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things.

People: Amen.

FIRST READING

Matthew 10:27-33

²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. ²⁸ And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. ³² So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³ but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

Leader: The Gospel of the LORD.

People: Praise be to you, Lord, Christ.

6 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Leader: The Word of the LORD..

People: **Thanks be to God.**

***SONG**

Steadfast

Words and Music by Sandra McCracken, Leslie Jordan, and Josh Silverberg
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Verse 1

I will build my house
Whether storm or drought
On the rock that does not move
I will set my hope
In Your love O Lord
And Your faithfulness will prove

Chorus

You are steadfast, steadfast

Verse 2

By the word You spoke
All the starry host
Are called out by name each night
In Your watchful care
I will rest secure
As you lead us with Your light

Chorus x2

Verse 3

I will not trust in the strength of kings
On Your promise I will stand
I will shout for joy I will raise my voice
Hallelujah to the Lamb

Chorus x2

Bridge

In the moment of emptiness all was fulfilled
In the hour of darkness Your light was revealed
In the presence of death Your life was affirmed
In the absence of holiness You are still God

Chorus x4

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Doctrinal Statement from *Discipline of the Korean Methodist Church* written in 1931.

People: We believe in one God, Maker and Ruler of all things,

Leader: Father of all men; the source of all goodness and beauty, all truth and love.

People: We believe in Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh,

Leader: Our Teacher, Example, and Redeemer, the Savior of the world.

People: We believe in the Holy Spirit,

Leader: God present with us for guidance, for comfort, and for strength.

People: We believe in the forgiveness of sins,

Leader: In the life of love and prayer, and in grace equal to every need.

People: **We believe in the church**

Leader: As the fellowship for worship and for service of all who are united to the living Lord.

People: **We believe in the final triumph of righteousness, and in the life everlasting.
AMEN.**

CONFESSION OF SIN

People: **Father of the Fatherless, God of gods and Lord of lords,
Husband to the widow, Defender of the helpless, Judge
of all the earth, have mercy on us/
We have not sought freedom for the oppressed, even though
you freed us.
We have not bound up the broken even though you healed
us.
We have not forgiven others even though you forgave us.
We withhold kindness from the needy even though you freely
gave us your own Son.
We are without excuse, but not without hope.
By your power and grace, account our sins to Jesus' sacrificial
death and amend our ways by the power of his glorious
resurrection.**

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Romans 6:4 (ESV)

Leader: We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

***Gloria Patri**

Author unknown

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 the Chapel during the Passing of the Peace.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Adapted from Prayers for the World, "For the Human Family," and "For Peace" from *Book of Common Prayer*.

Leader: God our heavenly Father, guide the nations of the world into the way of justice and truth, and establish among them that peace which is the fruit of righteousness, that they may become the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And, so mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and forever.

Leader intercedes in prayer on behalf of the world, the Church, and our congregation.

Leader: We pray all of this in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray, saying ...

People: **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be Your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Yours is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

23 Sarah lived 127 years; these were the years of the life of Sarah. ²And Sarah died at Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. ³And Abraham rose up from before his dead and said to the Hittites, ⁴“I am a sojourner and foreigner among you; give me property among you for a burying place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.” ⁵The Hittites answered Abraham, ⁶“Hear us, my lord; you are a prince of God among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs. None of us will withhold from you his tomb to hinder you from burying your dead.” ⁷Abraham rose and bowed to the Hittites, the people of the land. ⁸And he said to them, “If you are willing that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me and entreat for me Ephron the son of Zohar, ⁹that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he owns; it is at the end of his field. For the full price let him give it to me in your presence as property for a burying place.”

¹⁰Now Ephron was sitting among the Hittites, and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, of all who went in at the gate of his city, ¹¹“No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. In the sight of the sons of my people I give it to you. Bury your dead.” ¹²Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land. ¹³And he said to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, “But if you will, hear me: I give the price of the field. Accept it from me, that I may bury my dead there.” ¹⁴Ephron answered Abraham, ¹⁵“My lord, listen to me: a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between you and me? Bury your dead.” ¹⁶Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver that he had named in the hearing of the Hittites, four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weights current among the merchants.

¹⁷So the field of Ephron in Machpelah, which was to the east of Mamre, the field with the cave that was in it and all the trees that were in the field, throughout its whole area, was made over ¹⁸to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the Hittites, before all who went in at the gate of his city. ¹⁹After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah east of Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. ²⁰The field and the cave that is in it were made over to Abraham as property for a burying place by the Hittites. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Mr. Jon Huang

“The Reality of Death”



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: Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,
since as members of his body you are called to peace.
Therefore, 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 so we have a record of your attendance. Sign-in on the blue 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 up unto the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to Lord our God.

People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Leader: It is indeed right, it is our duty and our joy, at all times and in all places to give you thanks and praise, holy Father, heavenly King, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

For he is your living Word; through him you have created all things from the beginning, and formed us in your own image.

Through him you have freed us from the slavery of sin, giving him to be born of a woman and to die upon the cross; you raised him from the dead and exalted him to your right hand on high.

Through him you have sent upon us your holy and life-giving Spirit, and made us a people for your own possession.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever 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: According to Jesus' commandment:

People: **We remember his death,**
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory.

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

Jesus I Come

Words by William True Sleeper and music by Greg Thompson

© 2000 Greg Thompson Music

Out of my bondage, sorrow and night,
Jesus, I come; Jesus I come.
Into Thy freedom, gladness and light,
Jesus, I come to Thee.
Out of my sickness into Thy health,
Out of my wanting and into Thy wealth,
Out of my sin and into Thyself,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

Out of my shameful failure and loss,
Jesus, I come; Jesus, I come.
Into the glorious gain of Thy cross,
Jesus, I come to Thee.
Out of earth's sorrows into Thy balm,
Out of life's storms and into Thy calm,
Out of distress into jubilant psalm,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

Out of unrest and arrogant pride,
Jesus, I come; Jesus, I come.
Into Thy blessed will to abide,
Jesus, I come to Thee.
Out of myself to dwell in Thy love,
Out of despair into raptures above,
Upward forever on wings like a dove,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

Out of the fear and dread of the tomb,
Jesus, I come; Jesus, I come.
Into the joy and light of Thy home,
Jesus, I come to Thee.
Out of the depths of ruin untold,
Into the peace of Thy sheltering fold,
Ever Thy glorious face to behold,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

*SONG

On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand

Words by Samuel Stennett and music by Christopher Miner

© 1997 Christopher Miner Music

Verse 1

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wishful eye
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie.

Verse 2

All o'er those wide extended plains,
Shines one eternal day;
There God the Son forever reigns,
And scatters night away.

Chorus

I am bound (I am bound)
I am bound (I am bound)
I am bound for promised land,
I am bound (I am bound)
I am bound (I am bound)
I am bound for promised land.

Verse 3

No chilling winds nor poisonous breath
Can reach that healthful shore;
Sickness, sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more.

Chorus

Verse 4

When shall I reach that happy place,
And be forever blessed?
When shall I see my Father's face,
And in His bosom rest?

Chorus x2

***CLOSING PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & MISSION**

***BENEDICTION**

Numbers 6:24–26 (ESV)

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



SUNDAY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Let us know how you would like to be involved on Sundays. There are lots of behind the scene as well as onstage opportunities. Click the QR code and complete the short form.



LUNCH FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

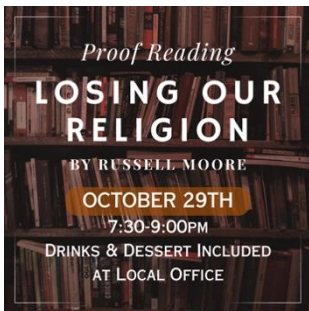
Oct. 15th - After Worship **TODAY**

Calling all college students ... join Advent's monthly lunch for undergrad, graduate & medical students. Click on the QR code & RSVP, so we can have a good headcount. Invite a friend to meet your friends. Location: The Abrahams



SOCCER PICK-UP GAMES

Beginning Friday, October 20th, we are going to be putting on a monthly pick-up soccer game for the families of medical sojourners as an opportunity to have fun, run around, meet people and have a meal. Register to play or help in the Adventpres.org/events page.



PROOF READING - DATE CHANGE

Oct. 29th - 7:30 - 9:00 P.M.

Join us as we discuss the book *Losing Our Religion* by Russell Moore. Come if you read the entire book or just the back cover; join in the discussion or just listen. Invite a friend to accompany you. We'll meet at Local Office, 2617 Bissonnet, Suite 200 (above Cavo Coffee). Register for this free event at Adventpres.org/events page.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Income YTD	\$ 37,200
Budgeted Expenses YTD	\$153,000
Budgeted Expenses FY	\$ 611,852

(YTD = July 2023 – September 2023; FY = July 2023 – June 2024)

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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