
EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



ADVENT
HOUSTON

Third Sunday Of Lent

MARCH • 3 • 2024

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

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

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

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

LENT

“Unfortunately some Christians live as though the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ never happened. Our lives become absorbed in the day-to-day experiences of life. We focus on name-brand clothing, the color of our houses, the size of our bank account, the year and make of our automobile, the prestige in which others hold us, and the symbols of our own power. We too easily forget our Maker and Redeemer, replacing God with things and ambition. Lent is the season that does something about this situation. It calls us back to God, back to basics, back to the spiritual realities of life. It calls on us to put to death the sin and the indifference we have in our hearts toward God and our fellow persons. And it beckons us to enter once again into the joy of the LORD – the joy of a new life born out of a death to the old life.”

Lent is a forty-day period in the church calendar that dates back to the 4th century. It was originally a time of preparation and spiritual discipline for all who were being baptized at Easter—the normal time of baptism for all new Christians and their families. As early as the 1st century, we see Christians using a time of preparation for their baptism, and with time, this preparation grew to forty days in association with Jesus’ forty days of prayer and fasting in the wilderness.

Lent is a time that beckons us to remember our own baptismal vows. Martin Luther encouraged his congregation during Lent to “live into [their] baptism.” And so, we too should live into our dying with Christ and rising with Christ. We too are called to live into that pattern of repentance and faith. We are invited to turn away from all distractions and sins and turn toward God.

This lenten practice can take many forms. We can choose to fast from food, reminding ourselves that Christ is our daily bread. As theologians Louis Weil and Charles Price remind us, “The psychosomatic unity of human beings makes it inevitable that a physical glut will cloud mind and spirit.” Alternately, we can fast from some of the distracting behaviors that we have slipped into, like scrolling on our phones at bedtime. Or, we can pursue new habits that help us to pattern our lives on the life of Jesus; we may commit to praying every day or to calling a friend to check on them every day.

During this lenten season, make time to consider the condition of your heart and to enter into a season of living out your baptism in repentance and faith.

REFLECTIONS

The Christian community has a quality that the critiques do not take into consideration. When the Christian community is working the way it is supposed to, people are brought together who have absolutely nothing in common, who may have diametrically different views on things, who may even actively dislike each other.... Personal likes and dislikes have nothing to do with the body of Christ.

— **Fleming Rutledge**

The brother is a burden to the Christian, precisely because he is a Christian. For the pagan the other person never becomes a burden at all. He simply sidesteps every burden that others may impose upon him.

— **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

There's no doubt in my mind that what's shaped me and my work more than any particular talent on my part has been living out a calling in the midst of a Christ-centered community.

— **Andrew Peterson**

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 121:1-4; ESV

Leader: I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?
People: **My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.**

Leader: He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.

People: **Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.**

Leader: Lead me in your truth and teach me,

People: **For you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.**

*SONG

Good Good Father

Words and Music by Pat Barrett and Anthony Brown
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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 can hardly speak
Peace so unexplainable 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

PRAYER OF ADORATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 3:31-35

[31] And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. [32] And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you." [33] And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" [34] And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! [35] For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother." (ESV)

Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

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

STORIES OF MISSION & MERCY

*SONG

Psalm 19

Words and music by Jess Ray

© 2017 JESS RAY MUSIC

Verse

Purify my heart,
May every word, every thought
Every motive, every intention
Be pleasing in your sight O God

Chorus

For Your voice refreshes my soul,
Brings joy to my heart,
And light to my eyes
Your words more precious than gold,
Sweeter than honey,
Better than life

Repeat all

Ending

Purify my heart,
May every word, every thought
Every motive, every intention
Be pleasing in your sight O God
Be pleasing in your sight O God

*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

Leader: Heavenly Father, you tell us that you are a friend of sinners—a companion to the broken and rebellious.

People: **As we come to you this morning, help us trust that you are our friend. Even in our wickedness and weakness, help us remember that you sent Christ to be our savior and brother.**

Leader: Forgive us for our isolation—our living as if we were alone.

People: **Forgive us for our lack of reliance on the friends and family you have given us.**

Leader: Forgive us for breaking our friendships.

People: **In our own self-protection, we often treat our friends as if they were enemies and don't receive them as good gifts from you.**

Leader: Forgive us for using our friends.

People: **In our fear and rebellion, we'd rather have our friends serve us than serve them.**

Leader: Almighty and Merciful God, you have told to us that as your people we are to love mercy, practice justice, and walk humbly with you. Our lives, however, do not measure up. We have not practiced justice.

People: **Instead, we have acted in ways that promote our own comfort and advancement. And we have often done so at the expense of our neighbors—unmoved and insensitive to how our actions might affect the greater community.**

Leader: We have not loved mercy.

People: **Instead, we have loved control over our lives and the lives of our neighbors. We want to win arguments more than restore relationships; we want to be generous or forgiving, only if we can see its direct benefit on us.**

Leader: We have not walked humbly with You.

People: **Instead, we have run in arrogance and have clung to self-righteousness. We strut through life as if we needed no friends, no family, and worst of all, no God.**

Leader: But we know that you are our God and Father and we can come to you for forgiveness.

People: **So we ask you, God and Father, forgive us for our offenses against you and our neighbor. Subdue everything in us which is contrary to your purposes. By the power of your Spirit make us a community, which acts justly, loves mercy, and walks humbly with you. Through Christ our Lord.**

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

From Isaiah 1:18

Leader: “Come now, let us reason[c] together, says the Lord:
though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool.

*KYRIE ELEISON (Lord Have Mercy)

Words: Ancient Text, Music: Phil Madeira



LEADER: Lord Je-sus Christ, son of God, have mer-cy on me, a sin-ner.



ALL: Lord Je-sus Christ, son of God, have mer-cy on me, a sin-ner.



LEADER: Ky-ri-e e - le-i-son. Lord Je-sus Christ, have mer-cy on me, a sin-ner.



ALL: Have mer-cy on me, a sin-ner. Have mer-cy on me, a sin-ner.

ADVENTURERS

CHILDREN (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 Psalm 121 and 'Shaping Prayer,' by Barbara A. Scott

Leader: Almighty God, as we lift our eyes to the hills and recognize that our help comes from you, we pray this morning for all doctors, nurses and healthcare workers. May they rejoice in the skills you have given them which enable them to bring hope, healing and wholeness to those in their care. May they also know guidance and support in times of pain and frustration when their skills are not enough to prevent permanent injury, disability or death. Bless each one of them, that they may be a blessing to others.

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

People: Amen.

SERMON READING

John 19:23-27

[23] When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, [24] so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill the Scripture which says,

"They divided my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots."

So the soldiers did these things, [25] but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. [26] When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" [27] Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. (ESV)

Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

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

SERMON

Rev. Taylor Leachman

The Seven Last Words of Jesus - "Woman, Here is Your Son"



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: And now we give you thanks because each year you give us this joyful season when we prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed. By Your Spirit we grow in loving reverence for you and of willing service to our neighbor.

As we recall the saving acts that give new life in Christ, you bring the image of your Son to perfection within our hearts.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, forever praising you and singing:

ALL:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,
Hea - ven and earth are full, full of your
Bless - ed is He who comes in the name of the
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho -
san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Leader: Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ.

By your Spirit, unite us with Christ and with your church in all the world.

All glory and honor are yours, Almighty God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

People: **Have mercy on us.**

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

People: **Have mercy on us.**

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

People: **Grant us your peace.**

Leader: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

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

COMMUNION AT ADVENT

Advent welcomes all baptized Christians to participate in the Lord's table. This includes all Christians, whether members at Advent or at another church. Children who have been baptized and admitted to the table by the elders of this church or the leadership of another church are also welcome to the table.

If you're still investigating Christianity, not sure what you believe, or simply choose not to participate, you may either remain in your seat or come forward, cross your arms over your chest, and receive a blessing. Feel free to use the prayers printed in the bulletin below. Non-communing children are encouraged to come forward to receive a blessing while their parents receive communion.

ABOUT THE ELEMENTS

- We serve both wine and grape juice for communion.
- Grape juice is available in the center of the communion trays; wine is available along the edge.
- All communion bread is gluten free.



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

The Church's One Foundation

Words by Samuel Stone and music by Brian Moss

© 1996 Parson John Publishing

Verse 1

The church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord,
She is His new creation
By water and the Word.
From heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.

Verse 2

Elect from every nation,
Yet one over all the earth;
Her charter of salvation,
One Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy Name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued.

Verse 3

Though with a scornful wonder
Men see her sore oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed,
Yet saints their watch are keeping;
Their cry goes up, "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song.

Verse 4

The church shall never perish,
Her dear Lord to defend
To guide, sustain and cherish,
Is with her to the end
Though there be those that hate her,
And false sons in her pale
Against a foe or traitor,
She ever shall prevail

Verse 5

Mid toil and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace forevermore;
'Til, with the vision glorious,
Her longing eyes are blessed,
And the great church victorious
Shall be the church at rest.

Verse 6

Yet she on earth hath union
With God the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we
Like them, the meek and lowly,
On high may dwell with Thee.

***CLOSING PRAYER**

***BENEDICTION**

2 Corinthians 6:16b;18

Leader: We are the temple of the living God; as God said,
I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.
and I will be a father to you,
and you shall be sons and daughters to me,
says the Lord Almighty.

And the blessing of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit be with you and remain with you always.

ALL: AMEN.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



PICKUP SOCCER

Friday, Mar. 22nd at 6:30 – 8:00 P.M.

Join the monthly pick-up soccer game for medical sojourner families as an opportunity to have fun, run around, meet people, and share a meal.

Location: Weekley Family YMCA Soccer Field

Register at AdventPres.org/Events.



MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS BAKING CLASS – MAKING MACARONS

Friday, March 22nd, 4:30-6 P.M. at the Leachman's

What a special treat for middle school girls to learn how to make macarons from Pastry Chef Lauren Bergeron! Friends bring friends to this event. The more, the MORE!

Location: Leachman's | 4517 Evergreen Street
RSVP at AdventPres.org/Events.



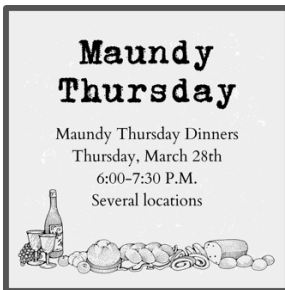
LADIES SPRING DINNER: GROWING IN GRACE

Saturday, March 23rd, 6-8 P.M. at the Van Meter's

Invite your friends to join you for a ladies evening out. Enjoy dinner and a message from Marisa Shields.

Location: Van Meter's | 3219 Rice Blvd
RSVP at AdventPres.org/Events.

Holy Week Services

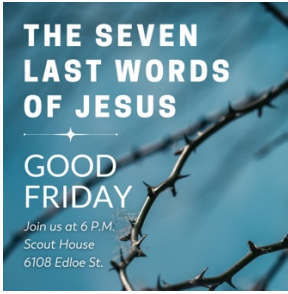


MAUNDY THURSDAY DINNERS

Thursday, March 28th, 6-7:30 P.M.

Several locations. Join one of the existing groups or host your own Maundy Thursday Dinner. Childcare will be provided.

RSVP at AdventPres.org/Events.



GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

Friday, March 29th, 6-7 P.M.

The Season of Lent draws to a close and so does our sermon series, “The Seven Last Words of Jesus.” Join us as we mark this special time together at our Good Friday service.

Location: Scout House, 6108 Edloe Street



EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE

Sunday, March 31st, 10 A.M.

Celebrate the Risen Lord with your Advent family. Invite your friends and family to join you.

Location: Weekley Family YMCA, Gymnasium

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,
EMBODY, AND EXTEND THE GRACE OF JESUS
TO THE TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER, RICE
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