
EMBRACE | EMBODY | EXTEND



ADVENT HOUSTON

22nd Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 25

OCTOBER • 29 • 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

"No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found."

— **Isaac Watts, "Joy to the World," 3rd Verse**

"If there is a "problem of evil" there is also a "problem of good." Wherever we look we see not only confusion but beauty. In snowflake, leaf or insect, we discover structured patterns of a delicacy and balance that nothing manufactured by human skill can equal. We are not to sentimentalize these things, but we cannot ignore them."

— **Kallistos Ware**

"I take it to be crucial that Christians must live in a manner that their lives are unintelligible if the God we worship in Jesus Christ does not exist."

— **Stanley Hauerwas**

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 90:1-2; (ESV)

Leader: Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.
People: **Before the mountains were brought forth,**
Leader: or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
People: **from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**

*SONG

All Creatures of Our God and King

Words by Words by St. Francis of Assisi and music from German hymn tune *Lasst Uns Erfreuen*

© Words and music: public domain

Verse 1

All creatures of our God and King,
Lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou burning sun with golden beam,
Thou silver moon with softer gleam,

Refrain

O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia!

Verse 2

Thou rushing wind that art so strong
Ye clouds that sail in Heaven along,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Thou rushing morn in praise rejoice,
Ye lights of evening find a voice,

Refrain

Verse 3

Thou flowing water pure and clear
Make music for Thy Lord to hear
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou fire so masterful and bright
That givest man both warmth and light,
Refrain

Verse 4

And all ye men of tender heart
Forgiving others take your part
O sing ye! Alleluia!
Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,
Praise God and on Him cast your care
Refrain

Verse 5

Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship Him in humbleness.
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son
And praise the Spirit, Three in One
Refrain

PRAYER OF ADORATION**FIRST READING****Romans 8:18–24a**

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING

Galatians 3:10–14

¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— ¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

*SONG

Your Labor Is Not In Vain

Words and music by Isaac Wardell, Paul Zach, and Wendell Kimbrough

© 2017 Wendell K Songs

Verse 1

Your labor is not in vain

Though the ground underneath you is cursed and stained

Your planting and reaping are never the same

But your labor is not in vain.

Verse 2

Your labor is not unknown

Though the rocks they cry out and the sea it may groan.

The place of your toil may not seem like a home

But your labor is not unknown.

Chorus

I am with you, I am with you.

I am with you, I am with you

For I have called you, called you by name

Your labor is not in vain.

Verse 3

The vineyards you plant will bear fruit
The fields will sing out and rejoice with the truth,
For all that is old will at last be made new:
The vineyards you plant will bear fruit.

Chorus

Verse 4

The houses you labored to build
Will finally with laughter and joy be filled.
The serpent that hurts and destroys shall be killed
And all that is broken be healed.

Chorus x2

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Westminster Shorter Catechism in modern English from City Reformed Church;
Questions and Answers: 17, 20, 27 & 28

Leader: What state did the fall bring for mankind?

People: **The fall brought mankind to a state of sin and misery.**

Leader: Did God leave all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery?

People: **Out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, God chose some for everlasting life, and he entered into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of their state of sin and misery and to bring them into a state of salvation by a redeemer.**

Leader: What did Christ's humiliation consist of?

People: **Christ's humiliation consisted of his being born in a low condition, living under the Law, undergoing the miseries of this life, undergoing the wrath of God and the cursed death of the Cross, and in being buried and continuing under the power of death for a time.**

Leader: What did Christ's exaltation consist of?

People: **Christ's exaltation consists of his rising again from the dead on the third day, ascending to heaven, sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and coming to judge the world on the last day.**

CONFESSION OF SIN

Adapted from Rev. Giorgio Hiatt

People: Almighty God and Father, you have called us to glorify your name through our love for you and for one another. We confess that our praise is more on our lips than in our hearts or expressed with our lives.

**We profess repentance while we resist change;
We talk of peace while we prepare for war;
We sing of love but we curse our enemies;
We pray your will be done but insist on our way.**

Have mercy upon us, patient and loving God, and cleanse and forgive our selfish ways.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Galatians 3:13a (ESV)

Leader: Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us

*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

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.

CHILDREN (1ST - 5TH GRADES)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Edited Prayers “For the Church” from *Book of Common Prayer*.

Leader: Gracious Father, we pray for your one holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in any thing it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son our Savior.

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.**

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be contrary to your husband,
but he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷ And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
‘You shall not eat of it,’
cursed is the ground because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.
¹⁹ By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread,
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
for you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.”

²⁰ The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. ²¹ And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

²² Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. (ESV)

Leader: The Word of the LORD.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Rev. Taylor Leachman

"The Origins Story: The Curses"



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: God has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation.

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 truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord. For through his Paschal Mystery, he accomplished the marvelous deed, by which he has freed us from the yoke of sin and death, summoning us to the glory of being now called a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for your own possession, to proclaim everywhere your mighty works, for you have called us out of darkness into your own wonderful light. And so, with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

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 -
Lord. 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

Words by Joseph Hart and music by Darwin Jordan

© 1980, Darwin Jordan Music

Come Ye Sinners

Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus, ready, stands to save you,
Full of pity, joined with power.
He is able, He is able;
He is willing; doubt no more.

Come ye needy, come, and welcome,
God's free bounty glorify;
True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings you nigh.
Without money, without money
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.

Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
Bruised and broken by the fall;
If you tarry 'til you're better,
You will never come at all.
Not the righteous, not the righteous;
Sinners Jesus came to call.

Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requires
Is to feel your need of Him.
This He gives you, this He gives you,
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam.

Lo! The Incarnate God, ascended;
Pleads the merit of His blood.
Venture on Him; venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude.
None but Jesus, none but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good.

*SONG

All Must Be Well

Words by Mary Bowley-Peters, alt. by Matthew S. Smith and music by Matthew S. Smith
© 2007 Detuned Radio Music

Through the love of God our Savior, All will be well
Free and changeless is His favor, All is well
Precious is the blood that healed us
Perfect is the grace that sealed us
Strong the hand stretched forth to shield us
All must be well

Though we pass through tribulation, All will be well
Ours is such a full salvation, All is well
Happy still in God confiding
Fruitful if in Christ abiding
Steadfast through the Spirit's guiding
All must be well

We expect a bright tomorrow; All will be well
Faith can sing through days of sorrow, All is well
On our Father's love relying
Jesus every need supplying
Yes in living or in dying
All must be well

On our Father's love relying
Jesus every need supplying
Yes in living or in dying
All must be well

*CLOSING PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & MISSION

*BENEDICTION

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 (ESV)

Leader: Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



SUNDAY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

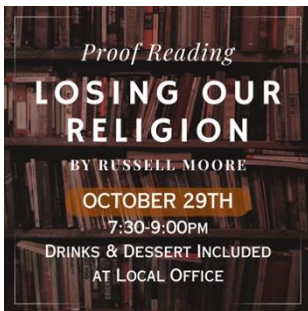
Let us know how you would like to be involved on Sundays. There are lots of behind the scene as well as onstage opportunities. Click the QR code and complete the short form or just let Jonathan Stepp or Beverly Gault know of your interest.



QUESTION & DISCUSSION

TODAY, Oct. 29th - 12:00 - 1:00 P.M.

Got questions? Let's discuss. Scan the QR code to submit your questions. Join us in the YMCA 2nd Floor Conference Room for the discussion. A light lunch will be available.



PROOF READING

TODAY, 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 the Leachman's home (4517 Evergreen St.). Register for this free event at Adventpres.org/events page.



LUNCH FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Nov. 12th - After Worship

Calling all college students ... join Advent's monthly lunch for undergrad, graduate & medical students. Register for this free event at Adventpres.org/events page so we can have a good headcount. Invite a friend to meet your friends! Location: TBD

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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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
UNIVERSITY, AND THE SURROUNDING
NEIGHBORHOODS.

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